SCÉALTA DHARACH UÍ DHIREÁIN: A LINGUISTIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Volume II

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English Summary of Chapter 1 (Volume 1): Réamhrá / Introduction

The chapter begins with a discussion on the benefits of an interdisciplinary analysis of an Irish language collection of folklore. The Flower/Ó Direáin Collection is an important primary source that is herein made accessible to a general readership and to academic disciplines including Irish Linguistics, Irish Studies, Folklore and Anthropology. To date, there is but one published collection of folklore from Árainn, i.e. *Scéalta Mháirtín Neile* (Munch-Pedersen 1994). The F/Ó D Collection provides material from a younger generation of storytellers from a different part of the island, adding to its linguistic significance. Linguistic studies have been conducted on the Irish of the Aran Islands for over a century, including Finck (1899), Wardlaw (1987), Ó Murchú (1991), Duran (1994), Ó Catháin (2001) and the recent comprehensive study by Ó Direáin (2015). The availability of the current collection considerably lessens the gap, of some ninety odd years, between the first and second of these studies and will provide the linguist with a primary source of material relating to the Irish of Árainn in the 1930s.

The central objective of the editing process and linguistic analysis of volume one is to provide an edition of the stories that retains the linguistic and dialectical characteristics of the storyteller. The anthropological analysis of volume two offers a discourse-centered approach and provides a social and cultural background to the stories. In offering an interdisciplinary analysis that examines both the linguistic and anthropological significance of the F/Ó D Collection, I am heeding the advice of Irish folklorist Diarmuid Ó Giolláin who calls for 'a closer relationship between the two ethnological traditions that have long worked in Ireland, folklore and anthropology' (2000: 183).

Careful consideration was given to the layout of this thesis in terms of volume one being presented in Irish and the anthropological analysis being presented in the English language. The dual language presentation is not intended to suggest that either language is incapable of expressing the theoretical approaches of the other volume. The main reason for the decision was logistical given that Irish is the working language of the Dept. of Modern Irish and English is the daily working language of the Anthropology Dept. Although linguistic studies have been conducted on the Irish language through the medium of English (see Ó Curnáin's 2007 four volume study *The Irish of Iorras Aithneach, Co. Galway*), I decided to conduct the present linguistic study in the same language as that of the manuscript source. The majority of the anthropological source material used in volume II is in English and it is hoped that the presentation of the following anthropological analysis in the same medium makes it accessible to a wider linguistic anthropology audience.

Chapter Six — Introduction to Volume Two

6.1 Introduction

Volume one of this thesis presents an edited and annotated version of the Flower/Ó Direáin collection of folklore. It begins with an introduction to the storyteller Darach Ó Direáin, providing information that was compiled from published and unpublished written sources and from personal recollections from local Aran Islanders. A short discussion on Robin Flower's visit to Árainn and a description of the contents of the collection follows. The chapter *An Modh Eagarthóireachta* details the various amendments that were applied to the manuscript form for the purpose of providing an accessible edition of the stories for both a scholarly and general readership — the preservation of Ó Direáin's dialect and linguistic characteristics being of paramount importance to the edited outcome. The editing process is categorised under various headings including: the modification of both pre-standard and phonetic orthography; the adjustment of abbreviated spellings; reinstating instances of elision and implementing punctuation. The chapter *Teanga na Scéalta* offers a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the speech of Darach Ó Direáin as it is presented in this collection. The various parts of speech are examined in relation to their morphological, phonological, semantic or syntactic significance and comparisons are made with examples from various other texts relating to Aran and Conamara linguistics. The concluding chapter of volume one presents the edited version of the entire F/Ó D Collection.

Volume two examines the dialogic processes that inform the construction of place, person and text as they relate to the F/Ó D collection of folklore. A traditional view of the collection would take the manuscript form — the text-artifact that is preserved in the National Folklore Collection — as the starting point for analysis, and a publication of the material based on an edited version such as that presented above, or from another perspective, as the final stage in the life of the text. A discourse-centered approach takes a more processual view of the collection and investigates how multi-faceted discourses become bounded and structured texts. The following chapters apply a 'natural history of discourse' approach (Silverstein and Urban 1996) to the F/Ó D material. A natural history of discourse investigates 'contextually contingent semiotic processes involved in achieving text — and culture' (Silverstein and Urban 1996: 2) or, as summarised by Mary Bucholtz:

> the path that discourse takes on its way to becoming text, the transformations it undergoes, as well as the changes wrought when a text is transplanted into a new discursive situation
> (Bucholtz 2003: 61).

Central to this perspective is the underlying entextualisation process (Bauman and Briggs 1990) that it entails whereby a piece of discourse is rendered 'extractable [from] its interactional setting' — referred to as 'decontextualization' — and reinserted, as text, or 'recontextualized' into new or additional contexts of use (1990: 73). The dialogic nature of speech is crucial to this process as it addresses the interdependent links between current, past, and future discourses and contexts.

Another key factor in a discourse-centered analysis is the means by which certain texts become imbued with authority through the 'metadiscursive practices' (Briggs 1993) that are employed during the process of entextualisation. Describing such practices as '[the] methods used in locating, extracting, editing, and interpreting discourses' (1993: 387), Charles Briggs explores the use of these methods in the creation of authoritative academic texts, including those produced by anthropologists and folklorists, and advises against submitting to the assumption held by many academics which is that only the observers — and not the natives — engage in metadiscursive activity.

The aim of volume two, then, is to investigate elements of a discursive history of the F/Ó D Collection. A deconstruction of this collection, in both its manuscript form and the edited version that is presented in this work, motivates an analysis of the multiple discourses and voices that constitute a folkloric text from the Aran Islands. A mere scratch of the surface uncovers many of the sociohistorical and political discourses that are embedded within the text. A more indepth analysis also brings to light the subtle voices that are buried beneath the louder, more authoritative tones. This interplay between dominant discourses and minority voices is evident at the various stages of construction and brings to light the interrelationship between power and discourse, especially as presented in representations of people and place.

A number of recontextualised texts, in the form of written representations, visual portrayals and verbal accounts of the Aran Islands and Aran Islanders, are investigated below and each is explored in terms of the underlying entextualisation process and the related metadiscursive practices of the practitioners. In an attempt to balance the scales of representation, I uncover the voice of the native at every opportunity, whether it be the voice of the local inhabitants of tourist dominated discourses, the Aran storyteller in the folklore collecting enterprise, or the native researcher, and present it as a valid and valuable contribution to the overall process of representation. While such an approach does not completely eliminate the authoritative undertones of academic writing, it does expose some of the discursive building blocks and metadiscursive practices involved in the process and

aims to avoid producing a ‘preferred reading’ of the discourse, text or, indeed, culture that is being presented.

Chapter seven explores the notion of place, as it is constructed and represented in the Aran Islands, and more particulary the largest of these islands — Árainn.[1] The chapter begins by exploring Aran’s place within the sociohistorical context of the 18th and 19th century and discusses its representation through the discursive frameworks of that time period. Three important texts are chosen to represent the late 18th and 19th century representations of Aran, and each of the three is examined in terms of the entextualisation process that allowed them to become viewed as authoritative accounts on the islands. A metadiscursive reading of these particular accounts allows for otherwise concealed voices to emerge and engage with the authoritative representations put forth by the authors. Part two of the chapter introduces the contemporary discourses of tourism to the dialogue of representation and deconstructs various depictions and interpretations of the islands and their people as viewed from a tourist point of view. Preconceived images gained from the intertextual discourses discussed in part one of the chapter, and a conflicting view of social space and social roles, are among some of the factors that underlie many tourist/local relationships. By not conforming to the social roles ascribed by the tourist, natives are reflexively engaging with the metadiscursive systems that are generally assumed to be the domain of the tourist. Tourism, therefore, becomes another discursive component in the dialogue of representation of Aran.

In chapter eight, I explore the various discourses and texts that relate to the storyteller of the Collection, Darach Ó Direáin, and inquire into the implications of compiling various fragments of situated discourses into a bounded biographical narrative. In accordance with the interpretive framework of the thesis, I acknowledge the original contexts from which the different pieces of information were extracted and analyse their recontextualisation into an assembled life-history of Ó Direáin, thereby examining my own metadiscursive practices in the process. My indexical positionings regularly came to the fore during the course of my research in Árainn, especially in relation to my local status. The ways in which islanders shared information with me and made implicit references to my insider status, along with the local-specific method of referencing Ó Direáin, prompted a discussion on the construction of locality in Árainn. A pragmatic inquiry into the naming system that exists in Árainn, and other Irish-speaking areas, offers an insight into native

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[1] Throughout this thesis, the term *Árainn* is used to refer to the largest of the Aran Islands that is sometimes referred to in the literature as Inis Mór. I use the terms the Aran Islands and Aran interchangably in reference to all three Aran Islands.

ways of connecting people to their kin and locality through ever-changing and context-dependant indexical stances.

Chapter nine reverses the pattern of knowledge construction that is presented in the two preceding chapters. Whereas chapters seven and eight begin with an analysis of outsiders' perspectives on Aran and Aran Islanders and conclude with an exploration of local ways of reflexively constructing knowledge and meaning, chapter nine opens with a discussion of local ways of creating performances and oral texts and concludes with an examination of the folklore endeavour that collected, reified and preserved these stories into enduring written texts. The chapter begins with a review of the Aran Islands storytelling scene as it transpired in the early to mid 20th century. The occasion of narration is examined through a framework of entextualisation in terms of the various 'keys to performance' (Bauman 1977) that structure the event. The pivitol role of the audience, and their knowledge and negotiation of indexical positionings, is an important contributing factor to the successful outcome of a performance event. A discussion on the professionalisation of folklore follows with particular attention given to the folklore collecting enterprise that seeked to define the folk in terms of their perceived authenticity and their lack of metadiscursive awareness.

Finally, in chapter ten, there is a return to a discussion on the benefits of reflexive research and an invitation to view the F/Ó D Collection as a collaborative affair between narrator, audience, researcher and the entextualised discourses of, among other factors, the folklore collecting endeavour of the early 20th century.

Chapter Seven — Constructing Place: Representations of the Aran Islands

7.1 Introduction

The west of Ireland, and in particular, the Aran Islands have long been a source of inspiration and investigation to visiting scholars of various professions and this scholarly attention has, in relatively recent years, led to a lucrative touristic interest in the islands. Considered remote, residual and tradition-bearing vessels of authenticity, these islands have often been prime targets for those searching for the last vestiges of a traditional Ireland.

This chapter traces a discursive history of some key texts relating to the Aran Islands and explores their impact on modern-day interpretations of the place. Exploring various genres of representation, from the visual to the ethnographic, throughout the late 19th and the 20th century, I provide a background to current discourses surrounding the islands and its people. An array of written material exists in relation to Aran, all aiming to describe, represent or interpret it from one perspective or another. As an analysis of all renowned representations of the Aran Islands is far beyond the scope of this thesis, I have chosen three key texts as representative of the written and visual portrayals of Aran: Alfred Haddon and Charles Browne's *Ethnography of the Aran Islands* (1891-3); Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934) and John Messenger's *Inis Beag: Isle of Ireland* (1969).

I begin the chapter with a brief introduction to the historical context that inspired the early accounts of Aran. In accordance with contemporary modes of thought, some of the earliest descriptions of Aran Islanders defined them in relation to their perceived difference on the basis of geography, language and even race. Each of the three texts mentioned above has played a unique part in the construction of the islands as different and enduring, and each has sparked debate on the implications of representation of people and place. In offering a metadiscursive analysis of these texts, I aim to deconstruct some of the images that have been created, put forth and readily accepted as true representations of Aran life. Exposing the frameworks and building blocks that form the basis of these representational texts uncovers some important facts regarding power relations and the affiliations, agendas and biases of the respective authors. Furthermore, a deconstruction of the texts allows the reader a more open-ended and inconclusive interpretation of the material. The chapter concludes with an examination of modern day representations of the islands, through the lens of tourism. Informed by the myriad of textual and visual representations available for consumption, the first-time visitor to Aran will often go in search of the constructed images contained within their literature and are sometimes confused when confronted with the reality of

Aran life. Guidebooks and other descriptive accounts directed at, or written by, tourists are fraught with Othering adjectives that give rise to expectations of difference, and hence colour the experience of the Aran Islands visitor. As with antiquarian accounts of old, attention is directed to the same sites of interest and accounts are couched in similar romantic terms. Likewise, the metadiscursive practices of the modern visitor mirror those of their precursors in the sense that many tourist representations of Aran attempt to interpret and depict the native within a discourse of Otherness. In an attempt to counterbalance these marginalising representations, the voice of the native is consistently engaged with throughout the chapter.

7.2 The Aran Islands in Context

The island of Ireland had been subject to much interest and investigation throughout the Romantic era, and with its natural and rugged landscape, rural Ireland became the focus of romantic descriptions throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The discourse of Celticism also gained currency in the 19th century as scholars developed a fascination with the Gaelic and so-called Celtic world. In the case of Ireland, the west of the country acquired a great deal of romantic value in so far as the landscape in the western extremities was viewed as particularly wild and sublime and, not surprisingly, places on the western seaboard that were Irish speaking were viewed as Celtic havens and received even greater scholarly attention. The landscape of the west was fitting to the Romantic ideals of beauty, and the Irish-speaking inhabitants of places such as the Aran Islands and Conamara were considered exemplaries of the traditional lifestyle. A quest for authenticity instigated many of these excursions westward and framed the resultant accounts accordingly. Johann Gottfried Herder's philosophy that every nation contained its own unique national genius, permeates the following statement by Ernest Renan where he describes the 'Celt' of the western peripheries as:

> still faithful to its own tongue, to its own memories, to its own customs, and to its own genius [and "the surviving Celts are distinguished by"] the purity of their blood and the inviolability of their national character (cited in Ó Giolláin 2000: 26).

This discussion surrounding the Irish race, and its purported purity in peripheral outposts, was commonplace in the early to mid 19th century, and led to what J.W. O'Connell terms 'the rediscovery of the Aran Islands' (Waddell, O'Connell and Korff 1994: 183). O'Connell's account documents the arrival of many prominent antiquarians to the shores of the Aran Islands, most notably George Petrie, John O'Donovan, Eugene O'Curry, Samuel Ferguson and Thomas. J. Westropp. In fact, these five scholars, along with William Wilde and many other distinguished

guests and speakers, would reconvene in Aran in 1857 for an elaborate banquet and conference on ethnological matters, held inside the monumental pre-historic fort *Dún Aonghusa*. The following observation by Samuel Ferguson, from an earlier visit in 1853, is framed within the discourse of racial purity, and offers an early insight into how islanders were viewed by many visiting scholars:

> They are a handsome, courteous, and amiable people. Whatever may be said of the advantages of a mixture of races, I cannot discern anything save what makes in favour of these people of the pure ancient stock, when I compare them with the mixed populations of districts on the mainland (cited in Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 781).

Furthermore, he states:

> if any portion of the existing population of Ireland can with propriety be termed Celts, they are this race (ibid.: 782).

Some decades later, John Beddoe, author of *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe* (1885), described the islanders as possessing 'their own strongly marked type, in some respects an exaggeration of the ordinary Gaelic one' but, in contrast to the earlier notions of racial purity among islanders, he concluded that the English garrison left by Cromwell essentially diluted the pure Celtic blood of the islanders and 'vitiated the Firbolgian pedigree' (Beddoe cited in Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 780).

Many other visitors of note visited the islands in the second half of the 19th century, among them: Lady Gregory, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Symons and John Millington Synge. The same time period also witnessed the arrival of many international linguists, including Jeremiah Curtin, Franz Finck and Holger Pedersen.

The islands, then, were inundated with scholarly inquiry during the 19th century and the resultant antiquarian, linguistic and literary texts, paved the way for the late 19th and 20th century accounts that are discussed below.

7.3 Anthropology and the Other

In an attempt to provide a more detailed historical context for the ensuing discussion, it is important to distinguish between the two pioneering anthropological trains of thought that were prevalent in ethnological disciplines — diffusionism and evolutionism. The latter of the two is of more concern to the present discussion on the role of folklore and anthropology in Ireland, and most especially in the Aran Islands. Edward Tylor's comparisons between primitive and peasant culture and his notion

that cultural 'survivals' indicated an earlier state in the evolutionary schema, were significant influential factors in the foundations of European folklore. Towards the end of the 19th century, both folkloristic and anthropological endeavours began to focus on the primitive lifestyle and belief systems of contemporary so-called primitive or peasant societies. This type of antiquarian research operated within an evolutionary framework that allowed primitive culture to be studied as a means of gaining insight into the modern world of the folklorist or anthropologist. According to contemporary understandings, the primitive tradition bearers were a dying breed whose culture and traditions were remnants of a past society, lending a certain sense of urgency to the collection and documentation process. The search for authenticity, of course, played a significant role in the folklore collecting enterprise of the 19th century and, indeed, the concept informed collecting endeavours well into the 20th century as well. These issues are discussed at length in chapter 9 where I deal with the construction of the folklore text in Ireland. At this point in the discussion, I wish merely to provide a context for the collection of the ethnography discussed below.

7.4 Haddon and Browne's *Ethnography of the Aran Islands, Co. Galway*

Alfred Haddon, along with Charles Browne, travelled to the Aran Islands in 1891 to conduct *The Ethnography of the Aran Islands*. A leading figure at the time in British Anthropology, Haddon trained in both anatomy and zoology and held an academic position in the latter at the Royal College of Science in Dublin. During a visit to the Torres Strait in 1888, he became dedicated to the discipline of anthropology, and subsequently held a lecturing position — the first of its kind — in physical anthropology at Cambridge University. In 1898, ten years after his initial visit to the region, he led the renowned Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait. With a particular emphasis on fieldwork, the expedition was a shaping factor in the foundation of British anthropology and, in particular, the functionalist school of thought. Shortly after his first visit to the Strait, Haddon co-founded an Anthropometric Laboratory in Dublin and presented a proposal to the Royal Irish Academy that would result in his co-authored work *The Ethnography of the Aran Islands.* Using anthropometric, as well as observational and interrogative tools of inquiry, Haddon and his assistant Charles Browne, compiled their ethnographic study of the Aran Islands 'in the belief that the ethnical characteristics of a people are to be found in their arts, habits, language, and beliefs as well as in their physical characters' (Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 769). The list of topics at the outset of the study offers an informative insight into the research agenda:

> (1) Introduction; (2) Physiography of the Aran Islands; (3) Anthropography (Methods; Physical Characters; Vital Statistics; Psychology; Language; Folk Names); (4) Sociology (Occupations; Family-life and Customs; Clothing; Dwellings; Transport); (5) Folk-Lore; (6) Archaeology (Survivals; Christian Antiquities; Pagan Antiquities); (7) History; (8) Ethnology; (9) Bibliography (Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 768).

The resultant ethnography offers a wide range of findings relating to the islands and their inhabitants. Central to the study is the anthropometric strand of inquiry which should be read within the context of contemporary anthropological methods and discourses of the late 19th century.

A seminal work in the area of physical anthropology was the previously mentioned *The Races of Britain* (1885), and it was Beddoe's Index of Nigresence, along with various measuring instruments, that served as the scientific basis for Haddon and Browne's research. Following a host of statistical tables relating to eye and hair colour, physical attributes, cranial measurements etc., Haddon and Browne embark on a description of a wide range of topics covering everything from health, to psychology and folklore. The islanders are investigated in relation to their mainland cousins and distinctions are also made between the inhabitants of Árainn and the two smaller Aran Islands. The concept of purity permeates the various subject matters, whether it be the fresh Aran air which results in the general good health of the islanders or a discussion on their defining characteristics as interpreted by George Petrie, Samuel Ferguson and Haddon and Browne themselves (Haddon and Browne 1881-3: 799-803). By quoting George Petrie's findings during his visits to the islands, in 1821 and 1857, regarding criminal activities among locals, Haddon and Browne are participating in, and endorsing, the common essentialist and primitivistic dialogue that depict Aran Islanders as having a pure character, and one that is prone to contamination from the outside world. Petrie concludes that external forces, in the form of visiting mainlanders, are to blame for introducing crime to the naturally honest and virtuous islanders. Commenting on the character differences between people from Inis Meáin and the other two islands, Petrie notes:

> In the island of Innishmain alone, then, the character of the Aran islander has hitherto wholly escaped contamination, and there it still retains all its delightful pristine purity (Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 803).

With the juxtaposition of terms such as 'contamination' and 'purity', this quote encapsulates the essence of a stereotypical representation of an Aran Islander. These same terms appear in present day touristic representations of the islands and, as will be discussed in chapter 9, similar terms were also popular in the context of the cultural revival era of the previous century. Almost two hundred years have elapsed since Petrie's first visit to the Aran Islands but the notion that the place is

exotically insular and should be protected from the contaminating influences of the wider society does not appear to have lost its currency. This, of course, is not a coincidence but is, rather, the result of carefully contained entextualisations, as will be discussed at various intervals throughout the thesis.

Scott Ashley (2001) provides an interesting interpretation of Haddon and Browne's ethnography in which he asserts that the text should be read within the framework of literary romantic writings on Aran rather than in opposition to them. He takes particular exception to the 'limited sample' from which the authors 'extrapolated an ideal Aran type' (Ashley 2001: 9). From a population of 2,907 for all three islands, Haddon and Browne used 436 individuals for their study on hair and eye colour and this number, according to Ashley, could not provide an accurate representation of an Aran type. It should be noted that the number of people used in the study is, indeed, recorded within each table or section in the *Ethnography* but one must look elsewhere, under the section on 'vital statistics', for a table on the population of the islands as recorded in all 6 censuses and then calculate for themselves the percentage of people used as subjects for Haddon and Browne's study. In other words, and if my calculations are correct, it is not explicitly stated that a mere 15% of the islands' population was used for the study on hair and eye colour, and an even less impressive 0.9% used for the findings on physical measurements. Despite these percentages, the authors made essentialising deductions and offered the following detailed description of a typical Aran Islander face:

> The face is long and oval, with well-marked features. The eyes are rather small, close together, they are marked at the outer corners by transverse wrinkles. The irises are in the great majority of cases blue or blue-gray in colour. The nose is sharp, narrow at the base, and slightly sinuous or aquiline in profile. The lower lip is, in many cases, rather large and full. The chin is well developed. The cheek-bones are not prominent. In quite a large number of cases the ears, though not large, stand well out from the head. In many men, the length between the nose and the chin has the appearance of being decidedly great. The complexion is clear and ruddy, and but seldom freckled. On the whole, the people are decidedly good-looking (Haddon and Browne 1891-3: 778-9).

Ethnography of the Aran Islands, then, is written within the reception framework of prior and contemporary discourses, such as celticism, primitivism, racial science and anthropometry. The intertextual relationships between the *Ethnography* and previous scientific and antiquarian findings are made apparent through multiple quotes and references to Beddoe, Ferguson, Petrie and others. In Bauman and Briggs' (1992) terms, the intertextual gaps between Haddon and Browne's work and

the discipline of science are minimised, or not brought to attention, so that the ethnography appears to fit squarely into the generic model of scientific scholarship, and thus assumes an authority over other non-scientific or literary writings on the islands, from the same era. Furthermore, such an ethnography that is presented by a scientist from the Royal College of Science in Dublin, and published by the Royal Irish Academy, is deservedly framed as a legitimate scientific study and is, therefore, granted a certain amount of automatic academic credence before the intended reader so much as thumbs the first page. Additionally, the *language* of science also lends power and authority to a text and legitimises it as empirical fact as opposed to what might otherwise be deemed uncorroborated surmisings. Take for instance the section scientifically entitled 'psychology', and the ensuing discussion on the character of locals. Except for a couple of short paragraphs of the authors' own observations on characteristic features, the remainder of the section is given to observations made by Mary Banim, Ferguson, and especially Petrie, some decades earlier. This section of others' observations regarding the character of the islanders is sanctioned by Haddon and Browne with the premise — 'We believe the following to be a fair and unbiassed description of their psychology' — thus framing the entire segment as legitimate findings. Given that the discussion is enveloped between classificational and statistical tables on other 'scientific' matters, a reader is encouraged to accept the section as empirically concluded facts rather than a culmination of observations made, some decades earlier, by two antiquarians and a novelist.

Commenting on the consistent inclusion of Ferguson, Petrie and others' observations, to either support Haddon and Browne's own findings or, indeed, to be used in place of them, Ashley denounces the way in which various texts, from different genres, and from various decades, are bound together to form an ethnographic narrative:

> Their method of quoting as many of the authorities on Aran as could be incorporated resulted in texts dating from the 1820s to the 1890s — during which period the islands had experienced famine, emigration, political violence and forced modernization — being brought together to describe some perfect ethnographic present. Romantic travelogue, antiquarian scholarship, a civil servant's memoir and popular novels promiscuously intermingled in Haddon and Browne's bibliography, each finding (rather than earning) its place in the account, irrespective of genre and viewpoint. Coherence was sacrificed on the alter of authority and inclusivity, as fieldwork struggled (and failed) to assert its primacy over the interpretation and synthesis of accounts at second-hand, a practice legitimated by the massive prestige of Tylor and Frazer.
> (Ashley 2001: 14).

Metadiscursively speaking, these texts are decontextualised from their original contexts of production and recontextualised into a scientifically framed discourse, shedding their prior contexts

of interpretation along the way. The preferred reading is then presented to the intended audience which will, if successfully assembled, be interpreted within a new reception framework. Intertextual gaps between this recontextualised work and its discursive building blocks are not emphasised so as not to undermine the authority of the recentered narrative.

Of course, the benefit of hindsight should not dismiss the scientific and discursive settings in which this research was conducted. The disciplines of antiquarianism and anthropology are, after all, inextricably linked. Whether we follow Ashley's suggestion and read *Ethnography of the Aran Islands* within the same interpretive framework as we would read Synge's *The Aran Islands*, or whether we understand it as an authoritative account of the physiography and the psychology of 19th century 'Aranites', one thing is clear: a metadiscursive analysis of this text allows for a number of readings, including Haddon and Browne's intended one, and can only serve to enrich the dialogue of representation in relation to the Aran Islands and its people.

7.5 Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran*

Another genre of representation that has played a crucial part in past and modern day interpretations of the Aran Islands is Robert Flaherty's classic film *Man of Aran*.

Robert Flaherty was born in Michigan, USA to parents of Irish and German ancestry. From an early age, he explored and worked in some of the most remote regions of Canada providing him with the material for his first and widely acclaimed silent film *Nanook of the North* (1922). His next major project was shot in Samoa and materialised as the similarly themed *Moana: A Romance of the Golden Age* (1926). The prevalent theme in both of these films — primitive man's struggle against the elements of nature — was to be the dominant theme in *Man of Aran* (1934). A quote from his wife, and collaborator on many of his films — Frances Hubbard Flaherty, describes the film-maker's passion:

> Robert Flaherty loved primitive peoples, he loved their simplicity and their dignity, and the way they were free to be themselves. He loved the courage and generosity he found absolute in Eskimo life. But because he made his films of primitive cultures and cultures that are dying, and because he was not interested in their dying but only in them when they were most alive, he has been called a romantic and escapist (Ellis & McLane 2005: 24).

My concern here is with the film *Man of Aran*, hereafter referred to as *MA*, and the contribution of this piece of cinematic art to the dialogue of representation in relation to the Aran Islands. While filming *Industrial Britain* (1931) with John Grierson during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Flaherty was making a return trip to England by boat, and it was on this voyage that he was first introduced

to the Aran Islands in all their primitive glory, through stories of field-making, the use of currachs and harsh weather conditions.[2] The film-maker finally had a potential location for his 'Man against the Sea' film — a film that he initially intended to shoot in Samoa but was forced to discard of the idea as the location proved unsuitable. Not only was the Samoan climate too mild for this epic struggle between man and sea but it was reportedly too westernised due to years of missionary influenced acculturation. At Grierson's suggestion, Flaherty began familiarising himself with the Aran Islands by reading Synge's *The Aran Islands* and *Riders to the Sea* before his first actual visit in late 1931 (Calder-Marshall 1963: 142).

Following this brief initial visit, Flaherty arrived on the island in January 1932, with his wife Frances and three daughters, for what was to become the best part of a two year stay. His main local contact was a man by the name of Pat Mullen (of whom more below, in chapters 8 and 9) who acted as his island guide and is credited as assistant director on the film. Purpose built cottages were constructed in the village of Kilmurvey, a cast was selected, and the film-making began. *Man of Aran* premiered in London in 1934 with the traditionally attired Aran cast in attendance.[3]

MA portrays a small nuclear family battling the harshness of island life. A series of shots depict the everyday existence of the main characters, where scenes of seaweed-gathering and field-making are shot against a backdrop of awe-inspiring Aran landscape. The scene of field-making depicts a lone male figure — Tiger King — breaking slabs of limestone with nothing more than a sizeable boulder, held high above his head. Scenes of shark hunting and cliff-top fishing introduce other perilous feats that the islanders supposedly faced on a day-to-day basis. The dramatic final scene depicts men ferociously rowing their currachs through a barrage of death-defying waves. In this instance at least, the Aran men have won their battle against the perilous sea.

The release of the film sparked a heated debate on the accuracy of representation: in short, was *MA* to be interpreted as a fictional or a factual portrayal of Aran life? Reviews of the film were mixed: some were complementary, some scathing. In order to comprehend the vast differences in critical opinion, one must appreciate the cinematic and political scene of Ireland at the time of the film's release. Unlike in England, Ireland's indigenous film industry was in its infancy in the early

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[2] The following is an excerpt from Calder-Marshall's biography of the film-maker (1963: 141):

> A young Irishman had broken in impatiently. He knew an island off the West Coast of Ireland, he said, where life was so primitive that the islanders had to make soil by hauling seaweed up the cliffs and mixing it with sand to join a top-soil in which to grow their potatoes; where the curraghs which they used were little better than the coracles of the ancient Britons and the struggle for bare subsistence made booms and slumps look silly.

[3] The cast spent a number of weeks in London to record the dialogue for the film and to participate in publicity meetings (Calder-Marshall 1963: 163).

1930s and thus had no film production facilities to speak of.[4] Therefore, the arrival of such a prestigious director as Robert Flaherty, with his Gaumont Studios production team in tow, could only have been welcomed by the Irish Government and its budding film industry. Added to this, at the time of the film's release, Ireland was still coming to terms with an emergent post-colonial identity and a contemporary portrayal of the country would be a welcome relief from the plethora of previous representations of the Irish as barbaric, drunk, idiotic folk. It was hoped that a fresh portrayal would mortally wound the stage Irishman that had hitherto frequented English theatre stages. According to Gearóid Ó Crualaoich (as cited in Ó Giolláin 2000: 147), a folk or peasant-type society boded well with President Eamon de Valera's romantically-grounded political stance. A documentary type film then, based in the emblematic Aran Islands, and portraying staunch and industrious islanders, would serve the cultural nationalist agenda well. As stated by Breandán and Ruairí Ó hEithir:

> [MA] was seen as confirming those values of self-reliance and frugal material comfort which the government espoused. It also seemed to confirm the officially sanctioned view that the West was the residual repository of all that was best in Irish life, a pure and untarnished bastion of Gaelic civilization (1999: 207).

In contrast to the previous written accounts of the Irish, the genre of documentary/film-making would, by way of its far-reaching influences, repackage the Irish stereotype from one born and marketed in Britain to one endorsed by the Irish government — an important step in the de-anglicisation of Ireland. It would provide the wider cinematic world with a more contemporary and realist image of the country where the nuclear and hard-working rural family battled it out against the harsh natural elements; in other words, a depiction of Irish peasant life from the nativistic point of view. The many positive reviews from national newspapers around the time of *MA*s release thus endorsed the emergent image of the Irish peasant, as portrayed in the film:

> We have become almost resigned to being traduced in literature, whether under the guise of the comic "Paddy" of Victorian music halls or the drunken swindler of some Irish farces or the 'gunman' of more sombre writers today. Not three generations of protesting could do as much to rehabilitate the Irish people in the imagination of other countries as this faithful and beautiful motion picture will do (Dorothy Macardle cited in Luke Gibbons 1987: 195).

[4] *Man of Aran* (Kevin Rockett, p. 44). [Incomplete reference, see List of References.]

In keeping with the view of the West as exemplar for the emerging nation, some reviews were expressed in cultural nationalist terms:

> Here is Irish realism at last, grim, sad, beautiful realism that seems to clutch at the heart of our nation. To look at his characters, those Aran men and women of the West, is to feel proud to belong to such a race. It is an epic film that should be seen by everyone; no Irishmen, at least, should miss it.[5]

In his essay, *Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema,* Luke Gibbons (1987) cautions against this blurring of realist representations and romantic portrayals. He contends that *romantic* descriptions of people and place did indeed explore the harshness of rural life in the form of the sublime. Therefore, an examination of poverty and human suffering does not necessarily amount to a *realist* description. According to Gibbons, the idealisation of rural life in all its hardship, as seen in *MA*, is neither a romantic nor a realist representation, as described in some of the reviews, but is rather a primitivist depiction of life in the Aran Islands. Offering Panofsky's pastoral distinction between soft and hard primitivism, where soft primitivism 'conceives of life as a golden age of plenty, innocence and happiness — in other words, as civilised life purged of its vices', and hard primitivism as 'primitive life as an almost subhuman existence full of terrible hardships and devoid of all comforts — in other words, as civilised life stripped of its virtues' (Panofsky cited in Gibbons 1987: 198-200), Gibbons concludes that *MA* is a clear example of the hard primitivist model. The solitary toil of the main character, his struggle against nature, the lack of community support or involvement, and the complete avoidance of social and political issues, all further cement the film within this model. Indeed, some reports at the time of the film's release recognised the inconsistencies with actual life on the islands, and offered harsh reviews as a consequence:

> The producer brought a faintly pagan atmosphere into his picture of Aran life. Perils and hardships were grossly exaggerated for dramatic effect, and the humans were represented in an almost animal-like struggle for existence.[6]

Many critical reviews focused on Flaherty's generous use of creative licence. The obsolete practice of shark fishing, for example, was reintroduced and taught to the islander cast members for the purpose of the film. In the past, islanders hunted basking sharks for their liver oil but had, by the 1930s, been using paraffin for half a century (Calder-Marshall 1963: 150). Flaherty hired a trawler

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[5] *Man of Aran* (Rockett, p. 48).

[6] *Man of Aran* (Rockett, p. 50).

to follow the sharks and called upon a whaler friend of his to teach the art of harpooning to the cast. According to Calder-Marshall (1963: 150), Flaherty had hoped to 'revive an industry which would bring fortune to these poverty-stricken islands' and even had the liver oil analysed for any potential health benefits that it might contain.

Across the channel in Britain, the reception was also somewhat mixed, but for different reasons. The positive reviews focused on the pervading theme of man's struggle against nature as it met the popular demand for a naturalistic school of cinema. On the other hand, the fact that there was a strong leaning in British film-making towards documentaries that explored contemporary social and political issues resulted in many negative reviews being published due to the film's lack of engagement with man's *social* existence. In response to such challenging reviews of the film, Flaherty's biographer, Calder-Marshall states:

> Flaherty was never his own theorist. He would talk about making a picture. But he never discussed what he was really trying to do. In this respect, he was like most great creative artists. Doing was hard enough, he had no time left over to explain exactly what he *was* doing [...] Flaherty was a film poet. He used images out of real life. But it was the images with which he was concerned, not the social-economic situation. The actual making of the picture was in the true Greek sense a 'poiesis', a making, a creative act. Man of Aran was something which Flaherty, his unit, Maggie, Mikeleen, Tiger King, Pat Mullen and all the rest had done together. It was not a denunciation of social conditions (1963: 154).

Thus far, I have discussed the opinions of various reviewers and Flaherty's biographer, but what stance did islanders themselves take on the discourse surrounding *Man of Aran*? In his articles *Islanders Who Read* (1988) and *Man of Aran Revisited* (1967), John Messenger examines the response of Aran Islanders to previous accounts of life on Aran including Haddon and Browne's *Ethnography of the Aran Islands*, Synge's *The Aran Islands* and Flaherty's *Man of Aran*.[7] Messenger reports that he and his wife, through ethnographic research, 'discovered 50 abuses of reality in the film' (1988: 19) and contends that Flaherty believed he was 'describing reality or, at least, wanted [the] viewers to believe so' (1988: 17). Messenger finds examples of nativism and/or primitivism, albeit to varying degrees, in all of these works and mentions the impact that these representations of Aran have had on subsequent interpretations of the place. In relation to the work of Synge, Mullen and Flaherty, Messenger states:

> Certainly our informants and most visitors to Aran whom we interviewed also believed that the three attempted to portray reality. In the case of outsiders it is this belief that is mainly

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[7] Pat Mullen's *Hero Breed* (1936) and P.A. O Síocháin's *Aran: Islands of Legend* (1962) are also examined in the study.

> responsible for drawing them to Aran and once there causing them to perceive selectively the local milieu (1988: 17).

George Stoney's documentary *How The Myth Was Made* (1977), investigates the issue of representation and also 'weigh[s] the consequences, when life becomes myth.' When inquiring into locals' opinions on *MA*, Stoney receives mixed responses. One elderly man stated that the film didn't accurately represent life on the islands and claimed:

> I don't know, lots of them didn't like it alright. Flaherty, of course, made a good bit on that, very cheap labour here. Oh no no no, lots of the old crowd didn't like that at all, no afraid not. I mean it made very little of them you know, even the poorest, they have their pride, as you know (Stoney 1977).

Another individual who was responsible for showing the film once a week during the summer months claimed: 'It's a very good film and all the island people are delighted with it' (Stoney 1977). A particularly engaging scene in Stoney's documentary portrays a group of local people, gathered in the school, to participate in a viewing and discussion of *MA.* A lively debate ensues when one of the men present claims that Aran women were never required to assist in manual labour as is portrayed in the scene of Maggie carrying a pannier of seaweed on her back. A couple of women dispute this man's claims and one woman states that she recalls her aunt carrying seaweed in this manner. The man insists that it was the men of Aran, and not the women, who carried out this type of labour, and so the scene plays out.[8] Other islanders are interviewed throughout the documentary regarding the economic benefits brought to those associated with the film. We learn that the project brought financial gain to those involved, whether directly or indirectly, for the duration of the filming and it benefited the bourgeoning tourism industry as well. One woman tells how she bought a house and started her own guesthouse business, from the money she earned while working on the film. Another woman saved fifty pounds while working for 'Mrs. Flaherty', with which she bought a cow. A bus driver whom Stoney interviewed was appreciative of the business that *MA* had generated for the island over the years. He noted that during the past three years, ten different camera crews had passed through the island, all searching for similar material to what Flaherty had depicted on screen, some four decades earlier.

As for the cast themselves, little is known of their true opinions on the film. Maggie Dirrane spoke fondly of her starring role in *MA* and appeared to enjoy the fact that visitors, at the time of

[8] Frances Hubbard Flaherty notes the following in *The Odyssey of a Film-Maker* (1960): 'Her husband having broken his back carrying a load of kelp without a donkey to help him, it was Maggie who now had to carry these heavy loads' (Ó hEithir 1999: 228-9).

Stoney's documentary, were still coming to visit her at her home because of her association with the film. Both Tiger King and Michaelín moved to England and little was heard of either of them ever again. Tiger King was once asked in a rare television interview how he felt about taking part in particular scenes in the iconic film, to which he reportedly stated:

> *Ara, bhí fhios againne go maith gur bullshit a bhí ann ach ba chuma linn*
> (Yerra, we knew well it was bullshit but what did we care) (B & R Ó hEithir 1999: 208).

Flaherty, himself, said little in print or on camera regarding his views on the controversy surrounding his film. In fact, he never publicly offered an opinion on how it should be interpreted — as a true representation of life on Aran or as a fictitious account of the same. This is how Frances Hubbard Flaherty described the film in a television interview for the Film Studies Centre at Harvard University:

> These three men in the currach became characters out of one of their old, own heroic legends. The film became a saga, it was more than a documentary, it was the archetype, it was an old Irish tale. It was poetry.[9]

Perhaps, as suggested by Calder-Marshall, Flaherty was not obligated to label his film. Given that he is lauded by the film world as 'father of the documentary', however, it is understandable that *MA* was criticised as purporting to represent a realistic documentary-style account of the islands. Viewed as a poetic interpretation of life on climatically challenged islands, this work is accepted as a cinematic masterpiece. It is only when one attempts to interpret it within the generic model of documentary that difficulties arise. Thus classified, its creator has been lambasted as constructing a misleading and primitivist piece of reportage that betrays the multitude of social realities that constitute Aran life. Portraying obsolete traditions such as shark hunting, for example, and ignoring the more modern realities of the islands, casts the islands back in time some 50 odd years, thus lending an image of timelessness to the place.

Whatever the generic moorings of *MA,* this film is a significant building block in the presentation of a 'natural history' of Aran. It neatly encapsulates the process of entextualisations that is at play in any given literary or cinematic representation of place. Jan Blommaert states:

> in so far as representation is always a semiotic act (discursive or non-discursive, material), and in so far as representation always involves the 'replication' of an object, a phenomenon or an event

[9] *Flaherty and Film* A Robert Gardner interview with Frances Flaherty in *Man of Aran* DVD.

> into other modes of existence and other moments of happening, it is a form of entextualization (2004: 14).

From its inception on a trans-Atlantic boat ride, to its realisation in the form of premieres in London and New York, *MA* traversed a challenging terrain of primitivist valleys and nationalist outcrops. Flaherty's first introduction to the islands, we will recall, was a romantically couched description from an Irishman. From there, he is steered in the intertextual direction of Synge's *The Aran Islands* and *Riders to the Sea*, and following a couple of years of selective scene shooting and post-production editing, the next significant intertextual link in the process of representation of the islands emerges. The release of the film marks a further set of entextualisations, in the form of reviews. Many of *MA*'s reviews, as quoted above, make explicit links between the film and past and contemporary discourses of primitivism, romanticism and realism. Some of the reviews, as shown, make reference to the positive recontextualisation of the Irishman's image and there is even a sense of ownership over this emergent recentered image, in contrast to the formerly ascribed portrayal of the stage Irishman. Furthermore, Flaherty's portrayal of strong silent peasant types, battling an unforgiving harsh climate, placed his film in the centre of the nationalist discourse regarding the ideal Irish type. Finally, according to Messenger's research, the film influenced future conceptualisations in the sense that it informed potential tourists' expectations and interpretations of the islands.

Flaherty makes a significant contribution to the rich dialogue of entextualised representations of the West. The discursive links between the film and the politics of representation on the one hand, and the nativistic orientated dialogue of the emergent state on the other, are important components in this process of entextualisation. No matter what Flaherty's intentions, whether he intended *Man of Aran* to be interpreted as a true representation of Aran or whether he expected the film to be accepted as a poetic interpretation of place, the fact remains that for many who have viewed the film, it has created an enduring image of the Aran Islands as a timeless repository of tradition.

7.6 John Messenger's *Inis Beag: Island of Ireland*

Another important link in the chain of Aran Island representations is John Messenger's ethnography *Inis Beag: Isle of Ireland* (1969). Messenger's book is based on research that he and his wife conducted in Inis Oírr during 1959 and 1960 and for a number of months in 1961. His objective was to provide a comprehensive account of 'the "culture and personality" of countrymen on all three Aran Islands' (Messenger 1988: 17). The ethnography covers many topics of interest including: division of labour and land; occupations; social control; religion; entertainment and emigration, to

name but a few. Messenger's other writings relating to the islands include an article on the sexual repression of islanders (1971); a follow-up book to his original ethnography (1989), and two articles on the issue of ''distortions' of cultural 'reality' in literary and film works dealing with Aran' (Messenger 1967: 16).[10]

The part of Messenger's research that gained most notoriety in Irish circles was the section in his ethnography entitled *Religion and Personality* and the similarly themed article *Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community* (1971). Issues relating to sexual practices and conceptions are explored and, as the title of the article suggests, the islanders are found to be a sexually repressed group of people. Despite the fact that islanders were reluctant to discuss particular topics with the anthropologist, including income and sex,[11] Messenger came to the following conclusion regarding the latter:

> Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies (1969: 109).

Such assertions caused outrage among islanders and fellow Irish countrymen alike and sparked an interesting dialogue regarding textual authority and the politics of representation.

One common thread in the works discussed so far in this chapter is that in constructing their texts, each author/film-maker produces another intertextual stage in the production of a discursive history of Aran. Whereas with Haddon and Browne, Flaherty and the many other authors of Aran, only the texts themselves — be it a scientific ethnography, a subjective account or a documentary film — are available for analytical dissection. The creators themselves participated very little, if at all, in the subsequent discussions about their work. Messenger, on the other hand, obliges us with his own commentary and analysis of the production and reception of his controversial account. In particular, *Inis Beag Revisited* (1989) provides an insight into the difficulties a researcher is faced with when conducting sensitive research, as well as the consequences of disseminating the resultant contentious findings. A critical reading of his various works also reveal the active role played by his informants, and the Irish readership, in shaping future interpretations, and thus recontextualisations, of his Irish based ethnographic research. It is these various accounts that emerged in the aftermath of *Inis Beag,* then, that provide ample material on the metadiscursive practices employed by both ethnographer and informants.

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[10] See also Messenger (1989).

[11] 'It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex' (Messenger 1971: 11).

In *Islanders Who Read*, Messenger firmly places his research within the scientific examinations of the islands and is keen to distance his work from the more artistic and literary orientated accounts of the place which, he asserts, have obscured the reality of Aran life due to the primitivist and/or nativistic approaches of the authors. His is a scientific study whose findings are deduced from many months of empirical research on the island as opposed to the accounts produced by 'unskilled observers' who spent comparatively less time in Aran, many of whom spent only the summer months there (Messenger 1989: 4). He concludes that 'often their personalities and esthetic frames of reference have caused them to perceive and analyse their data selectively' (1989: 4) and their findings, he claims, are at odds with two scientific studies of the islands — Haddon and Browne's ethnography and his own study *Inis Beag* (Messenger 1964: 41-2). As with Haddon and Browne's ethnography some decades earlier, Messenger's research is presented as a culmination of empirically-gained conclusions and is thus imbued with a degree of textual authority that less scientific works of literature are not. Messenger's explicit statement that other works 'have presented a distorted view of the local culture' (Messenger 1989: 4) directs the reader to interpret his own work as a factual and unbiased representation of life on the island. Considering that reflexive anthropology has only gained proper currency in the last couple of decades, one cannot expect the author of *Inis Beag* to recognise that his research is but another interpretation of Aran, produced through the lens of a particular interpretive frame. Another indication of Messenger's conscious framing is in the introduction to *Inis Beag* where he informs the reader of his intended audience:

> most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States (Messenger 1969: 8).

Both author and intended readership, then, are producing and interpreting the research within the same framework of reference, that of culture and personality studies of peasant societies, within the discipline of anthropology. Such readers will make intertextual connections between Messenger's ethnography and similar works within the same field of theoretical inquiry. Aran Islanders are presented as Others from a distant land, whose way of life contrasts with that of the anthropologist, his students and the intended readership. Issues arise, however, when the subjects themselves, along with their fellow country men and women, also engage in the dialogue of representation and show concern regarding the circulation of their voice or, indeed, the lack thereof. Importantly, the text is evaluated within a different reception framework from that of the intended readership and the intertextual links are made, not necessarily with anthropological texts, but with the many other texts

that purport to represent their home place and their fellow inhabitants. Rather than accept the implied textual authority of a scientific study, many Irish readers challenged the accuracy and legitimacy of *Inis Beag*, some in the form of fierce written repudiations to local newspapers, as well as to the ethnographer himself.

In *Inis Beag Revisited*, Messenger confronts these refutations and retaliates by classifying Irish reactions to his work under 20 general headings, some of which he borrows from Honor Tracey's observations from 1950s Ireland. Too numerous to repeat here, the following is a summary of the types of grievances aired, as classified by Messenger. The anthropologist is accused of being ill-informed; ignorant; a liar; of describing the stage Irishman; of providing a generalising and out-dated account; of not speaking fluent Irish and therefore not consulting important texts in that language; and — in stark contrast to his own claims — he is criticised for possessing less insight into island life than the novelists, playwrights and poets who preceded him (1989: 115-6).

Presumably unaccustomed to being challenged in such a manner, Messenger retaliates with sweeping, and mostly insulting, generalisations regarding the basic Irish personality type. In an attempt to regain authority over the interpretation and recontextualisation of his text, he classifies the various reactions to his research in scientific and authoritative tones. Still speaking from the theoretical position of culture and personality studies, Messenger claims that Irish people are especially sensitive to negative, albeit accurate, portrayals of them since:

> Among the prominent traits of Irish basic personality (shared by the folk of Inis Beag, several of which traits have already been alluded to) are sexual repression, masochism, depression, conformism, ambivalence toward authority, secretiveness, envy and jealousy, indolence, dogmatism, a feeling of inferiority, and verbal skills (1989: 117).

Furthermore, in relation to 'the generalizing nature of science, [a] lack of understanding also characterises the "ordinary people" of Ireland, as well as many Irish scholars whom we know' (ibid: 117). Indeed, he muses, 'only the Irish may attack Ireland, so listeners must remain silent and impassive' (ibid: 120).

And herein lies the crux of the representational dilemma. Silence and passivity are qualities generally associated with the subject, not the researcher. In this case, however, the traditionally disparate relationship between observer and observed is challenged: the subjects are asserting their own uninvited authority on the text, they are speaking for themselves rather than through a scientific mediator, and what they have to say is at odds with the findings of their observer. Bauman

and Briggs note that in the case of an audience to a particular performance remaining silent during the event itself:

> their role becomes active when they serve as speakers in subsequent entextualizations of the topic at hand (e.g. in reports, challenges, refutations, enactments of consequences, and the like) (1990: 70).

The same is true of informants who are not privy, at the time of 'informing', to the intended recentering of their words, and only in reading their views in print are they accorded access to the discursive economy in which they were participating. It is only at this latter point in the dialogue that they truly have an opportunity to respond.

In presenting an authoritative account from a scientific point of view, Messenger is emphasising the intertextual links that exist between his and other scientific writings on Aran life. He is minimising these intertexual gaps (Bauman and Briggs 1992) in an attempt to create greater textual authority for his work. In contrast, through their refutations and open criticism of Messenger's ethnographic outcomes, Irish readers are questioning the legitimacy of his account and are thus emphasising or maximising the intertextual gap between *Inis Beag* and the reported culture and personality of his informants.

In *Man of Aran Revisited*, Messenger encourages his Aran informants to express their opinions in relation to works that preceded his. These opinions formed part of his research into the 'distortions of cultural reality' supposedly displayed in other accounts of the Aran Islands. Islanders are given a voice within the context of this particular research agenda but importantly, are not accorded the same privilege in relation to his own scientific account. Indeed, on the rare occasions that islanders' opinions do surface in Messenger's research, they are dismissed as mere surmisings or blatant falsities. In his article, *Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community*, Messenger inquires into the reasons that, despite being surrounded by the sea, very few islanders are able to swim. He is offered the following four reasons:

> the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved" (1971: 18).

This information is disdainfully dismissed, however, by way of this authoritative statement: '*[t]he truth of the matter is* that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill' (ibid. 18 [my emphasis]). So although four reasonable rationales were offered to explain the general lack of ability to swim, Messenger disregards his informants' explanations and proceeds to use his sexual repression frame of reference to explain matters. Similar authoritative terms are employed in response to the accusation that he didn't speak fluent Irish and was, therefore, at an ethnographic disadvantage when it came to understanding and communicating with islanders during the course of his research. We are informed that '*[t]he truth of the linguistic matter is* that all of the Irish speakers of the Gaeltacht speak English as well as the vernacular' (1989: 123 [my emphasis]).[12]

The issue of the islanders' lack of fluency in the English language is addressed through the fictional lens of Pádraig Standún's novel. Standún, who served as a curate on Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin for over ten years, first began 'priesting the islands', as he phrases it, in 1971 — two years after the publication of *Inis Beag*. A prolific writer of short stories, novels and plays, Standún produced a short Irish language novel entitled *Na hAnthropologicals* [The Anthropologicals] (1992) wherein a reporter investigates the impact that a recently published ethnography has on the inhabitants of a small village.

> "*Tá súil agam nach mbeidh tú ag oibriú an chloiginn ormsa, mar a rinne tú orthu siúd.*"
> *"Ach tá tusa difriúil. Tá Gaeilge agatsa. Tuigeann tú céard atá mé ag rá."*
> *"Ach nach bhfuil Béarla agatsa chomh maith le Gaeilge?"*
> *"Tá Béarla agam, ach níl sé chomh maith le mo chuid Gaeilge. Agus dá mbeadh féin ní dóigh liom go dtuigfeadh Meirceánaigh é. Bheidís ag léamh rudaí isteach i gcaint na ndaoine nach raibh ann ar chor ar bith. Ní bheadh a fhios acu cá raibh an greann agus cá raibh an dáiríreacht."*
> *"Séard atá tú ag rá ar bhealach eile nár thuig siad cultúr na ndaoine?"*

[12] To my knowledge, research has not been conducted on the issue of past and present bilingualism in the Aran Islands. However, I have personally known many people in Árainn a generation or two older than I — therefore the same age as many of Messenger's informants at the time that he was conducting his fieldwork — who understood only very basic English (learnt mainly through school) but never learnt to speak it with any confidence. I have also known people who spoke and understood no more than one basic greeting and farewell in the English language. Given the relative isolation of Inis Oírr in comparison to Árainn then, it is doubtful that the islanders of Inis Oírr were as fluent in the English language as Messenger contended.

"Sin é an chaoi ceart len é a chur, ach ní bheinnse in ann é a chur mar sin, an dtuigeann tú? Níl aon léann ormsa mar atá ortsa, bail ó Dhia ort. [...]*"* (1992: 10-11).[13]

The preceding excerpt is a clear reference to the difficulties of effectively communicating ideas and information in one's second language. The nuances associated with humour and similar communicative frames are lost on the untrained ear; opinions and statements are decontextualised from the context of production and are committed to print stripped of their indexical meanings. At the end of the excerpt above, the protagonist cites his lack of formal education as another distinguishing factor between himself and his interviewer — a dichotomy mirrored by many an anthropologist and informant. Elsewhere, in an article entitled *The Aran Islands Today: A Personal View,* Standún openly conveys his displeasure at recentered discourse being interpreted as truths:

> I wouldn't dare say 'I know the islands' or 'I know the people'. I don't think anyone is entitled to say that, and it irks me to read of anthropological studies on islands by people from distant cultures quoted as scientific gospel (1994: 309).

Following the publication and subsequent poor reception of his book in Ireland, Messenger would himself learn the affects of suppression, in the sense that attempts were made to censor and thus repress *his* voice.

> As far as I know, the book was not sold in the Republic for six years after it was published; it has been reviewed only once in the Irish media; and it seldom has been alluded to by Irish and Irish-American scholars in their works (usually only in bibliographies) (1989: 113).

Elsewhere, he discusses his efforts to obtain a copy of his book from various bookshops throughout the Republic. Unsuccessful in his endeavour, he concludes:

> to join such censored greats of yesteryear as Joyce and Sean O'Casey is good for one's ego, but bad for anthropology, folklore and Irish studies (1989: 127).

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[13] "I hope you won't be messing with my head, the way you did with themselves."
"But you're different. You speak Irish, you know what I'm saying."
"But don't you have English as well as Irish?"
"I do speak English but it's not as good as my Irish. And even if it was, I don't think Americans would understand it. They would be reading things into what people are saying that weren't there at all. They wouldn't know what was said in jest and what was serious."
"What you are saying, in another way, is that they didn't understand the people's culture?"
"That's the correct way to put it, but I wouldn't be able to say it like that, you know. I'm not educated the way you are, God bless you."
All translations, unless otherwise referenced, are my own.

The refusal to circulate *Inis Beag* might be interpreted as an attempt to reclaim a measure of textual control over the dissemination, and thus recontextualisation, of disputed representations of the Irish. After all, is Messenger himself not guilty of similar censorship? He dismisses any contradictory opinions and evaluations of his study and attempts to put any dissenting voices to rest through the use of authoritative declarations. Indeed, he asserts his textual authority over future entextualisations as well, when he makes it known that he has retained items of written correspondence from his dissenters and may, at any point in the future, publish these views. In his own words:

> over a hundred personal letters, mostly abusive (from priests and professors on the one hand to psychotics on the other), which are lodged in a filing cabinet for occasional consultation and possible eventual publication (1989: 113).

Messenger's ethnography is intertextually connected to the many other texts that describe or portray the Aran Islands. Whether Messenger frames his text in dialogue with, or in opposition to these other texts, the link remains. As an ethnographic account of the islands' inhabitants, *Inis Beag* is connected by discipline to, among other works, Haddon and Browne's ethnography, as well as to the folkloric research of the Irish Folklore Commission. A disciplinary thread may even connect the work to Synge's *The Aran Islands*, especially given that Messenger himself acknowledged the writer and playwright as 'an "intuitive" ethnographer [who] painted a reasonably accurate, although superficial, picture of Aran culture' (Messenger 1989: 41 n.11). In spite of the distinction Messenger creates between his work and that of Synge, Flaherty and other so-called romantic descriptions of the islands, we have seen that all representations of Aran are inextricably and dialogically linked. By itself, the ethnography *Inis Beag* is an authoritative account of the culture and personality of the people of the Aran Islands, and in particular Inis Oírr. Taking into account *Inis Beag Revisited*, and the other articles from which various metadiscursive practices can be gleaned, Messenger's work, as a whole, results in an unintentional collaborative account of sorts. The active engagement of the informants, turned readers, ensures that the presentation of *Inis Beag* is not determined by the author alone; it can no longer be presented as a bounded object but is instead part of an open-ended dialogic enterprise, involving ethnographer, informants and informed readers.

7.7 Tourism and the Development of Modern Day Representations of the Aran Islands

A discussion on the discursive history of the Aran Islands, and their emergence as exemplary peripheries, would be incomplete without mention of their present day significance to the visitor who chooses Aran as his touristic destination. European tourism can be traced back to the 17th century when young English gentry participated in the Grand Tour which involved travelling to various places in mainland Europe, immersing themselves in local culture, art and politics, all the while keeping travel journals of their excursions. From the late 18th century, these excursions attracted sons of middle class families, during which time the travel accounts changed from a prior emphasis on scholastic matters to a more involved eyewitness observation (Urry 1990: 4). This Classical Grand Tour gave way to the Romantic Grand Tour of the 19th century where the west coast of Ireland, among other geographically remote places, became a favourite destination of the traveller. Whereas the accounts of the Classical Grand Tour placed an emphasis on objective observation and recording, the Romantic Grand Tour offered more subjective descriptions of *experience*. The Romantic interest in the rural and the natural landscape, along with the tendency to appreciate the imagination and the sublime, thus saw the beginnings of 'scenic tourism' (Urry 1990: 4).

The Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, where the world was on display through a series of selected images, first introduced the concept of tourism-as-spectacle and pioneered the tendency to interpret people and place as readymade images. The images of the Great Exhibition were initially selected for a European market and often consisted of stereotypical representations to suit western expectations. By 1851 'distinct expression' was already being encouraged as a means of preserving and celebrating human diversity, and following the success of the Exhibition, this distinct expression, taking the form of national dress and style, was disseminated as national cultural representations within emergent nation states. Sightseeing essentially involved the search for these cultural symbols (Brett 1994: 120).

What follows is a glimpse of present day tourism in the Aran Islands. I will explore how sightseeing in Aran is carried out within the confines of a discursive system of previous and contemporary representations, and how the search for predetermined cultural symbols defines the tourist experience in Aran. The account is peppered with vignettes from my personal experience as

a native Aran Islander, as well as personal communication I have had with fellow islanders on matters relevant to the discussion.[14]

7.8 Aran Tourism: Defining People and Place

The tourist embarking on a trip to the Aran Islands is entering, and participating in, an existing dialogue of representation and image construction. They are, by virtue of assuming the role of tourist, about to take part in a process whereby they experience the place and its people through various situated lenses, and create anew or perpetuate, further images and representations of people and place. Those who have read or viewed any of the previously mentioned works relating to the islands, whether they perused Synge's *The Aran Islands* or viewed Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, may do so in order to gain a sense of history of the place that they are about to visit. Perhaps, in an attempt to gain more insight into the islands and its people, some potential visitors have studied Messenger's more relatively recent, and presumably more reliable, ethnography. Some visitors may have ignored all the literature pertaining to Aran and simply invested in a guide book, or learnt of the place through a ferry promotional brochure, a website, or perhaps through word of mouth. Whatever the case, the tourist, more often than not, has an abundance of preconceived notions of the islands, gained through interdiscursive links to prior discourses and/or texts, before they set foot on the ferry at *Ros a Mhil* pier. It is my intention here to deconstruct some of these notions and investigate the various ways in which islanders themselves respond to, and engage in, the dialogue of representation.

John Urry's concept of the 'Tourist Gaze' (Urry 1990) is a useful place to begin in attempting to understand the significance of travel and sightseeing for both the tourist and the local inhabitants of popular tourist destinations. According to Urry, an essential element of the tourist experience is the concept of departure, both in the sense of a physical departure from their home place, and also a departure from their everyday life experiences associated with work and routine. The tourist gaze is thus constructed as a gaze of *difference* wherein his or her attention is drawn towards items of interest that contrast with their everyday life. Furthermore, '[t]he gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs,' so that a couple kissing against the backdrop of the

[14] It has not gone unobserved that these vignettes could be interpreted as an attempt to enforce some textual authority of my own on the following discussion. The objective of the use of my personal recollections is to offer an opposing and native view to many of the written and oral accounts on Aran. In contrast to the accepted metadiscursive norms, these short accounts offer examples of a native contextualising the non-native's speech. My personal or native voice, however, should not be read as being any more or less authoritative than the academic voice that frames the entire thesis.

Eiffel Tower is encapsulated, through the tourist gaze, as an expression of a ‘timeless romantic Paris’ (Urry 1990: 3). Likewise, an Aran Island farmer cutting hay with a hand-held scythe is often gazed upon, and interpreted, through the frame of traditional quaint Ireland. Such an image is charged with indexical relations to other images of the Aran Islands — perhaps Tiger King breaking stones with a boulder in *Man of Aran* is brought to mind — and serves to reinforce the notion of departure intrinsic to the tourist experience. Urry notes that, ‘[t]ourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work’ (1990: 2). The image of the farmer working in an Aran Island field, however, is also validly gazed upon as different, in so far as it is viewed as unpaid and traditional work, carried out in the simpler and more physically enduring manner of times past. As Barbara O’Connor notes: ‘One way to romanticise work is to collapse it into nature’ (1997: 72). Through contrast with the everyday work of the visitor, then, the farmer’s work reinforces the modern existence of the tourist. The same scene will be interpreted differently by a local person. Firstly, it is not a scene or a frameable image at all; it is, rather, an unremarkable occurrence that is part of an everyday modern existence. Secondly, it is viewed as the only practical solution to the farmer’s task. Given that the fields are so small and are surrounded by stone walls, many without a gate, it would be impractical to carry out this work with machinery. In fact, doing so would create a gazeable object for the local: imagine a farmer using a sickel-bar mower attached to a Massey Ferguson tractor in a field that measures no more than a quarter-acre in size.

7.9 *Isteach go hÁrainn*[15]

The use of directional adverbs in speech gives a unique insight into how one feels associated with the Aran Islands as a place in relation to themselves. A tourist, for instance, usually perceives themselves going ‘out’ to Aran, reinforcing the image of departure from the centre of their everyday life, i.e. their home, but also in keeping with the image of the islands as periphery to the rest of Ireland, and indeed Europe. A local Aran person, in contrast, generally refers to the island(s), in both English and in Irish, using the adverb ‘in’, as in the following common examples:

(a) ‘*Ar tháinig an bád isteach anocht?’* [‘Did the boat come *in* tonight?’] (a common question in the event of rough weather when scheduled sailings might be cancelled);

(b) ‘*’Bhfuil tú ag dul isteach anocht?’* [‘Are you going *in* tonight?’] (in the event of meeting another islander in Galway and inquiring whether or not they intend to travel to the island that evening);

[15] [Into Árainn.]

(c) ‘*Chuaigh sé amach aréir’*. [‘He went *out* last night’] (in reference to a person taking ill and being taken to hospital in Galway, generally by lifeboat).[16]

Although these examples may be read as a distinction between going *out* to sea and coming *in* to land, an understanding of local spatial awareness in relation to the islands reveals that the position of the speaker is relevant to a pragmatic interpretation of these utterances. The speaker’s position in the first of these utterances, for example, is on the island; the same sentence may, indeed, be used from the position of the mainland with only the verb form (not the adverb) changing from ‘come’ to ‘go’ as in the example: ‘Did the boat go in tonight?’

Sentence (b) also positions the speaker (and addressee) on the mainland and can only mean: ‘Are you going in [to the island] tonight?’ The tourist will ask the same question using the adverb ‘out’. For an islander, the use of *out* in this same sentence would denote (as it would in everyday English speech): ‘Are you going out [on the town] tonight?’ The use of these adverbs then are not only indexing direction, they are also indexing the speaker’s location at the time of the utterance, and also the speaker’s *and* the addressee’s positionality in relation to their construction of social space. In these contexts then, the adverbs are more than simple indexical terms that are dependant on the context of the utterance; they also presuppose a certain pragmatic understanding that interprets *in* as referring ‘to the island’ and *out* as referring ‘to the mainland’. They are, in other words, deictic terms that are ‘relative [….] to the location of the speaker at the time of utterance; and to the identity of the speaker and the intended audience’ (Fillmore 1966 quoted in Duranti 1997: 209).

Example (c) is slightly more context dependent, in the sense that the use of the deictic pronoun ‘he’ indexes a former utterance that referred to a particular person. Depending on the context then (whether the person is being discussed in relation to his social life or his state of health) the sentence could be interpreted as ‘He went out (to the pub) last night’ or ‘He went out (on the (life)boat) last night’. The former is, of course, a commonly accepted statement in the English and the Irish language where *out* refers to a social night out. The latter interpretation, however, indexes the speaker’s and the hearer’s location on the island, at the time of the utterance and also presupposes their shared pragmatic view of spatial interpretation.

If I may recount an incident from my early teenage years that first brought this spatio-temporal distinction to my attention:

[16] Irish speakers from Conamara also used the adverb *in* when referring to islands, including the Aran Islands. See *Foirisiún Focal as Gaillimh* (1985: 127) ‘istigh’ 2. In oileán. *Nach maith nach [istigh] a bhí sib!* […..] *Bhí sé in Árainn [istigh] go minic*. [Aren’t you lucky that you weren’t in [on the island]; He was often [in] on Aran.]

7.10 ***Marooned on Aran***

One afternoon, a number of years ago, my sister and I were having lunch in one of the local pubs. A tourist began chatting to us and we three embarked upon a standard tourist/local conversation wherein the visitor inquires into the daily lives of the islander and the islander duly responds. This continued until he inquired about the ferry service and learnt that in the eventuality of high gale force winds, the ferry would not operate until the winds had subsided (such winds usually lasting no more than a day or so). In disbelief he asked, 'So, when the ferry doesn't go, you mean that you're stranded here?', to which we responded, in equal disbelief, 'No, if we happen to be in Galway during these winds and can't travel home, then we're stranded!'

I recall marvelling at the fact that someone would consider us stranded at home. It also, however, brought to my attention the view of transiency associated with this place I call home. Granted, the tourist himself is always in a somewhat transient state, with being away from his normality for a certain period of time. He does not always, however, consider the place he visits to have a temporary nature. Why, then, do the Aran Islands invoke this sense of ephemerality?

In an attempt to answer this question, let me begin by analysing a typical written introduction to the islands, as it appears in *The Aran Islands*: *A World of Stone* (2003: 7):

> Árainn, Ára na Naomh, the Aran Islands: the name alone is so evocative, the images it brings to mind reeking of salt spray and cold winds. Out here in the waves of the Atlantic, creeping one by one away from Ireland's western coastline, is a group of bare, windswept rocks that harbour memories of ancient Ireland, the history and traditions of Gaelic culture, and the spirit, songs and stories of an island people.

A sense of departure is firmly embedded in this common description of the islands. In the first instance, the visitor will be venturing *out*ward, *away from* their home place. There, they can expect to view and experience some dominant motifs that are commonly associated with the islands, including the harsh natural landscape, historic ruins, traditional culture and, of course, the inhabitants who are presented as a unified group steeped in the traditions of the past. Thus, the name of the islands is indeed evocative, but more so in the sense that it brings to mind these perpetuated images gained from similarly themed intertexual discourses.

Seeking 'to get away from it all', the tourist sets out for places such as the Aran Islands to release the tensions of modern life. In taking a break from their modern existence, there is a tendency to construct the place of holiday as traditional and other before they even arrive, resulting in quotes such as:

> If I could go for a month and bring no computer, no cell phone, and no pressing deadlines, I'd be thrilled. All I'd need would be a big stack of paper and lots of pens. Maybe a bicycle. And some postage stamps[17].

Not begrudging the tourist a break from their everyday life, and appreciating that a person is entitled to visit an area for whatever reason they so desire, it is nevertheless important that the reality of local life is also acknowledged, thus allowing locals to continue with their sometimes stressful, invariably modern, existence of computers, mobile phones and pressing deadlines. David Brett, using Edward Said's notion of 'uneven exchange,' maintains:

> tourism represents the world as spectacle – as a representation of representations; and that the relation between the tourist and the toured is, always, a relationship based upon […] an 'uneven exchange'" (Brett, 1994: 117).

Brett describes the conflicting interpretation of reality that is experienced by the two main groups of actors in the field — the tourist and the native. These conflicting realities can cause tensions for the native that lead to a split consciousness, creating a 'for-self' and a 'for-others', and this duality of selves has a potential impact on what he terms an 'authentic self-understanding'. There is no such tension for the tourist, however, who in viewing the destination as spectacle, sees the local reality as a show of sorts (1994: 117).

Our tourist friend from earlier then — he from 'marooned on Aran' fame — was simply speaking from the same positionality as his many co-travellers, one that interprets the islands as a gateway to a world of Otherness. His experience was informed, and perhaps even predetermined, by his participation in an interdiscursive economy that represents Aran as a place of departure, steeped in difference. Furthermore, if Aran is presented as a spectacle, then natives are unwittingly cast into various roles of traditional Aran men and women. As with any show, however, reality is suspended only for the duration of the viewing itself, and thus every show — every similarly constructed touristic destination — has a temporary, ephemeral quality. Conceptualising social space in this way allows for a deeper understanding of the social roles that are performed on a daily basis by tourist and native alike in the Aran Islands, and can also explain the friction and discord that can sometimes arise due to infringement of private space and expectations of social roles.

[17] Retrieved from www.43places.com (2007).

7.11 *Creig a Cheirín Theme Park*

A friend once described an incident to me where she had arrived home from work to find two tourists at her kitchen sink, filling their water bottles from the tap. She shouted at them to get out of her house and they tried to explain that they were simply replenishing their water bottles as the nearest shop was at the other end of the island. As they continued to fill their bottles at her kitchen sink, she yelled that this was not a theme park where one could wander in and out of peoples' houses. She threatened to call the gardaí and they subsequently left her home, all the while protesting their innocence to any wrongdoing. She got the impression that they believed if only they could communicate their intentions (English was not their first language), she would understand and forgive the intrusion. She said she was more irate at the fact that not only had they failed to understand the appalling inappropriateness of their behaviour, but she was made to feel like an unwelcoming local in the process.

The tourist, according to Dean MacCannell, is in a constant search for the authentic and is continuously trying to get beyond the front stage that is presented to him in tourist settings. According to this theory, the tourist is a type of modern-day pilgrim in search of authenticity, and back regions of tourist destinations offer such 'intimacy of relations and authenticity of experiences' (MacCannell 1973: 589) that front regions do not. Using Erving Goffman's front-back distinction in relation to social space, MacCannell provides a continuum that represents six categories of social space within tourist settings. These range from: clear front regions that are completely open to, and sometimes designed especially for, tourists; a front region that has some back region features for atmospheric purposes (an Aran Islands restaurant with sally rod baskets hanging on the walls); a front region that is designed to appear like a back region (Árainn's heritage centre)[18]; a back region that is open to tourists (Maggie Dirrane from *MA* welcoming film-crews and tourists into her home)[19]; a back region into which a tourist may occasionally enter (perhaps the private quarters of an Aran guesthouse) and finally, true back regions that rarely, if ever, permit entry to tourists.

Such an understanding of social space offers a plausible explanation for the transgression that we happened upon above in 'Creig a Cheirín Theme Park'. In MacCanell's terms, what are clear back regions to natives — their private homes — were perhaps viewed by the intruders as 'back region[s] that [are] open to outsiders' (1973: 598). Taking into consideration Brett's analysis of tourist spaces, where the entire island would be viewed as a spectacle to the tourist, or as aptly put by our victim of home intrusion, as a theme park, then perhaps local homes are even considered front regions that are designed to look like a back region.

[18] Eamonn Slater (2003) examines how knowledge is constructed within the Aran Islands Heritage Centre and suggests that the visual narrative that is presented to the visitor serves to emphasise the difference and otherness of the islands and their inhabitants.

[19] [As shown in Stoney's (1978) *How The Myth Was Made*: *A Study of Robert Flaherty's Man of Aran*]

Appadurai describes the native/non-native relationship in terms of perceived mobility and confinement:

> [N]atives are not only persons who are from certain places, and belong to those places, but they are also those who are somehow *incarcerated*, or confined, in those places (1988: 37).

Furthermore, he states:

> Natives are in one place, a place to which explorers, administrators, missionaries, and eventually anthropologists, come. These outsiders, these observers, are regarded as quintessentially mobile; they are the movers, the seers, the knowers. The natives are immobilized by their belonging to a place (1988: 37).

This concept of the native neatly encapsulates the Aran Islands tourist/local relationship. The native of Aran has been *textually* incarcerated ever since the very first differentiating descriptions were written and disseminated. They have been depicted and represented through various lenses, including those of antiquarians, playwrights, anthropologists, film-makers and novelists, but rarely have they been asked to participate in the discussion themselves. They have also been incarcerated *temporally* in the sense that many of these Othering descriptions have succeeded in confining them to a timeless and static condition, giving the notion that the mobile visitor is entering a time-machine of sorts when they disembark on the islands. The tourist then is simply perpetuating the philosophy of the many preceding observers — one that views the islanders as immobile and unchanging. As with the common disparate relationship that existed between anthropologist or folklorist of old and their informants or consultants, the same passive/active dichotomy often defines the tourist/native relationship as well. Just like the informant, the native must remain silent in order not to disrupt their constructed image. In his analysis of the Aran Islands heritage centre, Slater observes that silence and 'muteness' is intrinsic to the exotic depiction of Aran Islanders:

> The represented other can never speak on its own behalf, as this would undermine the carefully constructed exoticism, by overcoming the created distance between them and us. In speaking directly to us and sounding normal, they would no longer seem exotic or mysterious. Therefore, the depicted people of Aran have to remain mute in order to maintain their supposedly unique exotic nature (2003: 117).

On the face of it, locals in Aran are relatively passive in any given tourist encounter. It is the tourist, for example, who generally begins a conversation whether it be asking directions to one of the historic sites or seeking practical information of some kind. Having gained an answer to their inquiry, it is not uncommon for the tourist to then seek personal information regarding the native's life. Questions such as 'Can you tell me the way to The Seven Churches?' invariably lead to ones such as 'Are you from here?'; 'What was it like growing up here?'; 'Do you live here all year round?'; 'Would you like to come back here to live someday?'; 'Do you think you would like to raise a family on the island?'; 'Would it be easy to earn a living here?'; 'You must be a fluent Irish speaker then,' and so on. In the space of a five minute conversation, it is not unusual for a tourist to gain personal information from a virtual stranger. I believe it fair to say that most locals do not, in fact, mind such encounters and have come to accept that normal rules of conversational behaviour do not apply whilst occupying their role as passive native.[20] Sometimes, however, the niceties are dispelled with altogether and the personal, and potentially intrusive, questions directly launched as this brief encounter demonstrates:

7.12 ***Accosted by a head***

A friend and I were out for a walk a couple of summers ago in the western part of the island. We were engaged in conversation when up, from behind a wall, pops a head. Slightly startled by the sudden movement, we each looked at the stranger who had seemingly appeared from nowhere.
'Are you speaking Irish?' barked the head.
'No,' we answer in unison.
'Are you from here?' shot the head.
'Well, I am,' replied the dutiful islander.
'Do I sound like I'm from here?' replied my slightly irritated New Zealander friend.
'Did you grow up here?' The inquiring tourist is now ignoring the dispensable non-local and addressing only myself.
'Yes, I did,' I replied.
'What do these monuments stand for, do you know?' pointing to a couple of roadside monuments.
'Well, as far as I know, they commemorate particular people who died, but I'm not sure if it's known why they were erected at these particular places along the road,' I offered.
'Hmmm, that's not what someone else told me,' he muttered dismissively, almost to himself.
I uttered some sort of a farewell as we continued on our walk, leaving the indifferent tourist to his examination of the monuments. As I attempted to resume our conversation at the point of interruption, I was instead forced to appease the bewildered and appalled antipodean and explain to him that normal contextualisation cues do not apply in many native/tourist encounters.

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[20] As an experiment, I once tried to engage in a normal two-way conversation during one of these barrages of questions. When asked what it was like growing up in Aran, I answered the question and then asked in return: 'And how about New York, that must have been an interesting place to grow up?' I also wondered if my co-conversationalist would like to live in New York all of his life, and so on. A potentially interesting conversation about the differences between an Aran Island and a New York City upbringing wasn't enough to engage the tourist. Appearing uncomfortable with the strangeness of a two-way conversation in this setting, he soon moved on, bringing an end to the encounter.

Consider, in contrast, asking a stranger in a *non*-tourist setting for the time, directions or something equally banal, and then delving into their personal life on a fact-finding mission. Or, indeed, consider the inappropriateness of a stranger interrupting two people engaged in conversation in an urban setting, firing questions at the useful one, ignoring the other, and then dismissing their response anyway. Quite incredulous thoughts; yet, all in a day's work for a native Aran Islander.

7.13 Aran Islanders as Cultural Objects: The Art of Objectifying and Commodifying the Native

The natural landscape is a familiar motif, both pictorially and in print, in the marketing of the West of Ireland, and the Aran Islands are no exception in this regard. The prehistoric fort *Dún Aonghasa* is a popular tourist attraction that regularly appears on tourist brochures. The high cliffs that traverse the south coast of the island are another, and the tiny fields surrounded by limestone walls are also a common image. So it is of no surprise to find them described and framed as gazeable objects, in Urry's sense of the term. Problems arise, however, when islanders themselves are objectified and treated as part of the landscape. When locals are inserted into descriptions of place, along with the high cliffs, the stone walls and the rugged landscape, distinctions are not always made between them and other cultural objects. Consider the following descriptions that list local people alongside the various other gazeable objects, and note how even their dispositions are framed and advertised in advance.

> Rugged, wild and unspoilt; the islands of the Emerald Isle are steeped in thousands of years of rich heritage and tradition. Craggy shores and dramatic beaches provide the backdrop for ancient ruins and traditional villages as you are welcomed ashore by the friendly locals on your tour of Ireland's islands.[21]

> Whether on bike or in tour van, travelers to Inis Mór are never immune to its timeless scenery, stone walls, emerald pastures, hidden beaches, and friendly locals.[22]

The consequences for marketing locals in the same manner as the landscape are significant given that the premise does not account for the unpredictability factor that defines humans. Despite the tendency to represent islanders as a unified group, or as 'an island people', the fact remains that Aran Islanders, the same as any other community, are a group of individuals with various characteristics, personality types and dispositions. According to Barbara O'Connor:

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[21] Retrieved from www.travelsolutionsireland.com (2007).

[22] Retrieved from www.suite101.com (2007).

> One of the consequences of this emphasis on people as part of the tourist package is that Irish people become more inscribed within tourist expectations. Tourists expect a certain type of behaviour and are disappointed if these expectations are not met (1997: 73).

This is certainly the case when the visitor to Aran expects to be 'welcomed ashore by the friendly locals' and they are instead bombarded with offers of tours and services from bus drivers, bicycle hire employees and the like.[23]

O'Connor (1997: 73) suggests that Irish people are more susceptible to being packaged as cultural markers today than our European counterparts, due to a continuation of the images of difference and Otherness that were created during our colonial past. This does not explain, however, the propensity for some Irish people themselves, especially in the guise of tourist, to view Aran Islanders as cultural markers. The advent of the now-deceased Celtic Tiger, no doubt, went some way to alleviate the internationally-constructed images of gaiety and intoxication that had, for so long, been associated with the Irish people. I would suggest that while 'the Irish' were busy becoming modern cosmopolitans, a chronic case of cultural amnesia set in, and the unwanted images associated with tradition and the past were expertly reappropriated to the west of the country, and especially to the Irish speaking peripheries. Still within easy reach for the purposes of a quick dose of tradition, and used as a synecdoche for the rest of the country during times of nostalgia, or when abroad, the Aran Islands were denied access into modern Ireland by their mainland cousins. In the sense of the tourist/native dichotomy that is herein discussed, therefore, there is no distinction made between the Irish tourist and the international tourist.

Irvine and Gal (2000) describe the continuation of such dichotomising processes as 'fractal recursivity' where tacit binary oppositions are recursively reproduced at other levels. Thus, the racialising and essentialising discourses that were evident in the early accounts on Aran have, through the centuries, been recalibrated and recategorised (Gal 2002: 81) for use in future framings of Aran and Aran Islanders. In fact, essentialising discourses gain validity as social facts through centuries of entextualisations, making them easier to recategorise for future contexts.

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[23] It should be mentioned that islanders are not always framed as cultural markers in the promotional literature; they are, in fact, sometimes completely absent from descriptions of place. Not dissimilar to the dominant imagery of the West of Ireland during colonial times, descriptions that are devoid of any sense of community also perpetuate the romantic notion of natural and uninhabited landscape (O'Connor 1997: 74).

7.14 Capturing Natives: The Act of Photographing in Aran

The act of photographing is another area where active and passive roles are assumed and can lead to possible contention. When locals are objectified and viewed as cultural markers, no different from the surrounding landscape or the prehistoric ruins, there is a tendency to want to capture their image in a similar fashion. The act of photographing locals while they go about their everyday lives is a daily, and at times problematic, occurrence in Aran. In most cases, locals either pretend not to notice, or are actually unaware, that their image is being snapped by a passing tourist. Some locals, however, will decline their image being framed for eternity as 'local island woman/man' by raising their hand to their face or by turning their back on the photographer. Some years ago, local *Gardaí* were called to the scene of an assault where an elderly man — angered at the fact that a tourist had taken his picture without his consent — violently snatched the camera from the woman's hand, injuring her wrist in the process.

7.15 *How much am I worth?*

A couple of years ago, a relative of mine was told that a photograph of him was being sold in one of the local craft shops. Off he went to the shop to investigate, (a) 'how much he was worth' and (b) the outcome of the shot. The photograph displayed the man, dressed in his farming work attire of old jeans and a worn top and jacket, pushing a bicycle that was laden with five-gallon water drums. Although impressed that his framed image was valued at €150, he was disappointed at the shot itself, noting that he wasn't suitably dressed and wished that he had not appeared so unkempt. He had no idea how the photograph could have been taken without his knowledge. At this particular point in the road, he told me, he would have seen someone approaching from a good distance and he, therefore, could not understand how he hadn't noticed someone taking his photograph. I suspect that the photographer hid from view in order to capture an unposed iconic image of a 'Man of Aran' and, furthermore, I imagine that he was more than suitably dressed for his unwitting role.

7.16 *The native shoots back*

The traditional thatched cottage is often regarded as a cultural symbol associated with the Aran Islands. Although they are far outnumbered by modern slate roofed houses, a few still remain and are thatched every year in late August or early September. This was the case a couple of years ago when my father and I thatched his former home that is now used for storing purposes. There are only a few houses in the village that are still thatched every year and for this reason it becomes quite an attraction to passing tourists and even some locals. A neighbour of ours commented on the fact that thatching was 'a dying tradition' and asked if she may record it for a few minutes on a video recorder, and so she did. Throughout the day numerous tourists also stopped to watch, a couple of people asked permission to take photographs while most snapped away without permission. At one point I happened to be taking photographs of the surrounding view from my vantage point on top of the roof while tourists were photographing me at the same time. For my part, I was trying to ascertain the potential view from particular vantage points on the structure, for the purposes of renovation. Although I was taking photographs in their direction, I was aiming above the visitors as they were actually obstructing my view. It was not until after the event that I realised the ethnographic opportunity missed by not including the photographing tourists in my shot! Although I must admit taking some pleasure in the fact that somewhere out there a tourist is

likely annoyed at the fact that a perfectly good image was ruined by a digital-camera equipped local.

7.17 The Natives Speak Back: The Active Role of Locals in the Process of Commodification

The objectification and commodification of the native is certainly common practice in any given tourist setting, but the practice can not be attributed entirely to the tourist: the active role of the native should also be considered. To not do so would be to, once again, ignore the voice of the local and perpetuate the dichotomous image of active tourist / passive native.

The anecdotal incidents that are interspersed throughout this chapter intend to portray the potential strife that is never far from the surface of particular touristic encounters. Thus far, I have attempted to explain this friction in terms of conflicting interpretations of social space and the related notion of ascribed social roles. What is viewed as private space by one group of people is treated as public space by another. In the event of Aran being viewed as an exhibit, it stands to reason that islanders would be viewed as performers for the benefit of tourists, and would be gazed upon accordingly. Even if the islands are not viewed as a spectacle, I have shown clear examples of islanders being described as cultural markers no different from other gazeable objects, such as the landscape and historic sites. Given that locals are often objectified in this way, it stands to reason that they would be treated as unequal parties in many tourist encounters.

The conflict can also be defined in terms of a vying for control over the entextualisation process that attempts to define and confine the native within a particular discursive setting. It has previously been discussed that the tourist to Aran is, from the outset, participating in an interdiscursive and intertextual system of representations that defines the native in an unequal and Othering fashion. Central to all of these defining discourses and texts are the metadiscursive systems of the dominant authorities, whether they be an author, a film-maker, an academic discipline or a state. Through their association with, and participation in these entextualising discourses, the tourist becomes the latest author of representations and thus assumes the role of dominance and authority over the associated metadiscursive practices. The tourist expects to unproblematically recentre the islands and islanders into their emerging interpretations and the traditional native is, once again, expected to remain passive and disengaged from the modern activities of the tourist. As I have demonstrated at various intervals throughout this section on tourism, however, the native is often not content with being decontextualised from the various defining (and, themselves, entextualised) texts or genres that have formed the basis of modern preconceptions of a unified 'island people' and then recontextualised, again as a group and without consultation, into new depictions in the form of tourists' characterising discourses.

There is no doubt that locals, especially those directly involved in the tourism industry, are acutely aware of the value attached to visitors' perceptions of them, and many locals, indeed, capitalise on these images of the islands and islanders, for financial purposes. The bus driver from Stoney's documentary, for instance, recognised that it was Robert Flaherty's portrayal of Aran life that was responsible for bringing the growing number of tourists to the place, at least in the 1970s. Indeed, *Man of Aran* is, to this day, available for purchase in the local craft shops and has regular screenings in Kilronan's Heritage Centre. Local hotels and guest houses use highly romanticised language in their promotional brochures or internet sites, in a bid to entice the potential customer. Some local tour bus drivers have established their own websites and they too describe the various sites of interest couched in romanticised terms. They have, in other words, engaged in careful market research on their product — the Aran Islands — and advertise it accordingly. Recall the local who spoke of thatching as a 'dying tradition' in the same manner that folklorists spoke of salvaging the lore (see chapter 9). This self awareness is by no means a recent phenomenon in the islands but is merely a continuation of the self marketing strategies that have long been employed by locals who are conscious of their attraction, and their cultural worth, to the visitor.

Take, for instance, the process of traditionalisation (Bauman 1992) that is displayed in J.M. Synge's *The Aran Islands*. The well-known storyteller Máirtín Neile Ó Conghaile was Synge's main informant on Árainn while Pat Dirrane provided him with his tales and lore from Inis Meáin. There is an interesting dialogue of traditionalisation at play from the outset of Synge and Ó Conghaile's relationship whereby the storyteller explains his pedigree as such by tracing his connection to previous visitors of high esteem, thus proving his cultural value to the latest learned guest. We learn that, upon first meeting Synge, the storyteller recounts his impressive list of former international clients, among them: George Petrie, Sir William Wilde, Franz Finck, Holger Pedersen and Jeremiah Curtin (Synge 1996: 256). The fact that the evidently sought after Ó Conghaile then recommends Dirrane from the middle island to the playwright, is testament to the latter storyteller's competence, and so on. This particular process is discussed at greater length, in relation to folklore in chapter 9, but, for now, suffice it to say that islanders have long been aware of their value as cultural objects to outsiders, and many play it to their advantage. John Messenger would have it that:

> During summers when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of outsiders, abetting self-fulfilling prophecies: attire becomes more traditional and newer garb is worn; canoes are rowed with greater vigour; conversations become more boastful; and the like. [......] Behaviour that gives credence to such character traits as strength, courage, and spirituality are exaggerated, while those that belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden (1988: 18).

He further observes that '[s]ome island people, for reasons too complex to consider here, attempt to behave according to the expectations of tourists' and he even contends that said islanders have a 'summer personality' as compared to a 'winter personality' (Messenger 1989: 44). Unfortunately, Messenger does not expand on this theory but he seems to be suggesting that islanders are displaying a for-self and a for-others personality. Unfortunately, such a description serves to portray Islanders as whimsical, almost humorous, beings whose basic personality is a consumable performance.

I would suggest that islanders who participate in the romanticised notion of their homeplace do so in order to promote their business that depends on the tourism industry; they are acutely aware of the entextualised version of their homeplace to which the tourist has come to view and experience. Outside of business hours, however, these islanders, as well as their fellow locals who are not involved in tourism, expect to be treated as equals and not as Others or cultural markers available for consumption. In other words, they expect to participate in, and to regain a certain amount of control over the metadiscursive economy that aims to define and contain them.

7.18 The Irish Language in Aran: An Example of Active Behaviour?

As a *Gaeltacht* or an Irish-speaking region, the Aran Islands attract a number of people each year who wish to learn or practice the Irish language. Many groups of young teenagers from various parts of Ireland attend the local Irish colleges each year as part of the CONCOS[24] scheme — an initiative set up to encourage young people to experience Irish as a living community language, as opposed to a compulsory school subject. Courses normally last for a period of three weeks and are designed to immerse the attendees in the Irish language. Students attend language classes and participate in leisure activities during the day. In the evening a *céilí* or a similar activity is organised. The teenagers live in local Irish-speaking homes while attending the course so that they are engaging with, and immersed in, the language at all times whether through formal classes or informal family situations. For many years, this was the only experience many Irish people had of Irish as a living language. The advent of *Teilifís na Gaeilge* in 1996, or *TG4* as it became in 1999, was responsible for many of the changing attitudes to the Irish language. The introduction of the *Gaelscoileanna* offered people living outside of the *Gaeltacht* an opportunity to send their children to Irish-speaking primary and post primary schools. Irish also became an official working language of the European Union in 2007 which lent further credence to its validity.

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[24] *Comhchoiste Náisiúnta na gColáistí Samhraidh* [National Joint Committee of Summer Colleges].

The current practices of language use is nowhere more evident than in the *Gaeltacht* regions of Ireland, where Irish is still the main community language for the majority of people. Many learners of the language who intend to use their basic Irish whilst visiting the Aran Islands, however, often find themselves unable or unwilling to do so when met by native Irish speakers who use the language on a daily basis. Lack of confidence is one reason given, while another reason cited is the unwillingness of islanders to interact with them through the medium of Irish.[25] One can only imagine the frustration that occurs in such interactions or, indeed, non-interaction. The Irish learner, in the unavoidable guise of tourist, has travelled to one of the few places in the country where Irish is the daily spoken language of the community, and is even here refused entry into the speech community. Why might this be? Perhaps, an examination into the position of the native speaker in such instances might provide an explanation.

Given than these days many of the younger generation of native speakers are as competent conversing in English as they are in Irish, it is often out of ease of communication that they will revert to English when it is plainly obvious that that is the native language of the visitor. Even a learner of the language, who speaks quite a bit of Irish, may have difficulties in understanding a native speaker due to dialectal differences or the speed in which they converse. At other times, no doubt, it is out of frustration or unwillingness that a local may refuse to respond in Irish. Whatever the case may be, it is important to note, once again, the expectations and assumptions made with regard to native/tourist roles. For example, it is the *choice* of the learner of Irish to assume the role of the student, although granted they have little choice in where they may practice the language in a natural environment. To date, they may have been attending Irish classes or simply watching Irish language television or reading Irish language newspapers. Whatever the pedagogical method used, there was a natural allocation of teacher/student roles. Upon entering a *Gaeltacht* area, the same role of learner is assumed — what better way, after all, to practice — but crucially here, the role of teacher is *bestowed* upon an often-unwitting local. In other words, the Aran Islander is framed as 'native Irish speaker' over other aspects of their personality. Far from there being a role reversal then where islanders are, for once, accorded an active role, that of teaching, I would suggest that they are rather expected to passively assume whichever role is bestowed upon them by their observers. Viewed from this position, declining to assume the role of instructor is perhaps the only *active* stance an islander might take. Demanding enough it is to divulge one's life story to an

[25] I have by no means conducted an exhaustive study on this matter. The opinions presented here are those of a small number of past adult students of mine.

inquisitive visitor, but expecting to give a lesson in Irish whilst doing so is, for some locals, far beyond their call of duty.

It is important here to distinguish between visitors who speak a little Irish and wish to practice while visiting a *Gaeltacht*, and those who are fluent or quite competent in the language. Those who can speak Irish 'well' regardless of the dialect are rarely met with the same reluctance experienced by learners. A problem rarely occurs, in other words, if both parties can converse on an *equal* standing and a local is not expected to assume a given role.

7.19 *Níl uaim ach ham sandwich*[26]

A friend, whom I will name Áine, recounted an amusing incident that occurred when she waitressed at a local café some years ago. A tourist was scanning the display menu (written in English) that hung on the wall behind Áine, while she stood awaiting his order. He eventually decided on his lunch and announced: "Anraith agus ceapaire liamhais" [Soup and a ham sandwich]. Áine was surprised at the fact that he ordered his lunch in Irish, especially as he had initially greeted her in English and appeared to pronounce the Irish words with some difficulty. Moreover, she had no idea what the word 'liamháis' meant but was reluctant to admit this to the tourist of the 'cupla focal'.[27] *A local man was standing in the queue behind the visitor as he searched his wallet for change to pay for his mystery lunch. Áine looked to the local customer for a translation and he shrugged indicating that he, like her, had no idea what 'liamháis' might mean. Áine, in a bind, repeated the order to the man in English saying something to the effect of: 'So, that was a soup and ... what sort of sandwich again?' The man, understandably irritated at her apparent refusal to take his order in Irish, repeated, 'Sea, anraith agus ceapaire liamháis' [Yes, soup and a ham sandwich]. Both Áine and the other local were attempting to contain their laughter at the situation while Áine returned to the kitchen to order the soup, and tried to figure out what type of sandwich the man had ordered. She had two choices: admit to the customer that she had no idea what the offending word meant and could he please translate for her – the native Irish speaker – or alternatively, she could try and work out the meaning herself. She decided to persist with the latter. She recalled that she saw the man examining the menu board before he ordered so that the mystery filling must, she deduced, be written somewhere on the menu. By process of elimination, she decided that the only filling it could possibly be was 'ham' and returned to the customer to confirm her suspicion. Placing his soup on the table, she said once again, in English, 'And, a ham sandwich as well, wasn't it?' The customer answered in the affirmative and wondered, no doubt, as to the waitressing skills of Áine.*

Considering that a local would be more likely to request a ham sandwich in the following ways: 'Ham sandwich, *le do thoil*' [A ham sandwich, please]; or perhaps more casually, '*Toram* ham sandwich, *maith an bhean*' [Give us a ham sandwich, good woman!], the tourist was blissfully unaware of the sociolinguistic minefield into which he stumbled, with the selection of those particular words. The use of lexical borrowings is one defining feature of Aran Irish and is often a

[26] [All I want is a ham sandwich]

[27] [The tourist of little Irish]

distinguishing factor between native Irish speakers and learners of the language: islanders will casually insert particular English terms into an Irish language conversation while learners of the language will deliberately avoid that very practice, perhaps believing that the use of English words will further distinguish them from native speakers in a speech event or for reasons associated with language purity. There are, in fact, different categories of loan words, including those that are used in place of the also-known Irish term ('bicycle' vs. *rothar* and 'sandwich' vs. *ceapaire*) and those that are used in place of unknown Irish alternatives ('ham' vs. *liamhás*).[28] Although all serve to index outsiderness, only some will lead to a breakdown in communication. Unfortunately for *Fear an Liamháis*,[29] he chose a word from the second category which resulted in the non-comprehension of the term by the native speaker. In choosing to speak Irish over English, this particular visitor may have been hoping for partial acceptance into the local speech community. Instead, the episode highlighted the insider/outsider binary oppositions, this time in relation to language use. This incident may be categorised according to Michael Silverstein's orders of indexicality where language comprehension is an example of first-order indexicality and second-order indexicality comes into effect with the resulting characterisation of, and confrontation between, insider and outsider.[30]

The ways in which locals characterise themselves and others through local naming practices is discussed within these very semiotic frameworks in the following chapter. For now, I will simply echo the sentiment of *Man of Aran*'s Robert Flaherty who stated: 'Prestige never bought anyone a ham sandwich' (Calder-Marshall 1963: 209).

7.20 Conclusion

The Aran Islands and their inhabitants have been observed and described by many observers throughout the centuries. This chapter offered a glimpse into some of these textual and discursive representations. I began by examining three key texts, that were produced some three decades apart, (in the 1890s, the 1930s and the 1960s respectively) and presented them as significant accounts in

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[28] See Steve Coleman's discussion on 'we' language vs. 'they' language in the Ráth Cairn *Gaeltacht* and how the use of certain English loan words indexes familiarity with local language use. One such word is 'bicycle' /baisik´il´/ in place of the Irish term *rothar* where the use of the former indexes localness and the use of the latter points to outsiders' speech. As stated by one local Ráth Cairn woman: 'I suppose you use the word **rohər** but we always say **baisik´il´**' (Coleman 1999: 223). This is a clear example of the metapragmatic awareness of speakers in relation to local styles of speaking.

[29] [The Ham Man]

[30] The term *ceapaire liamháis* has since been used, in jest, in subsequent speech acts relating to a ham sandwich, between Áine, myself and others who know of the incident through our co-membership of the particular speech chain that discussed the event. The use of the term has even, on occasion, been accompanied by an overpronounced accent indexing a non-native manner of speaking thus further emphasising the alien use of the term.

the presentation of a discursive history of the Aran Islands. An investigation into the entextualisation process of each of these texts elicits interesting questions regarding the politics of representation. I have shown how dominant discourses of the day, including racial science, nativism, primitivism and cultural nationalism shape the outcomes of accounts relating to the islands, as well as responses to them. Furthermore, a metadiscursive analysis of the accounts offers an insight into (a) issues of textual authority and (b) control over the circulation of representations of people and place. Whether islanders are portrayed as racially distinct and inherently pure scientific specimens or as exemplaries for the emerging nation state, or indeed whether they are deemed sexually repressed peasants, one thing is clear: past textual representations influence future entextualisations of Aran Islanders, within the context of touristic representations.

Part two of the chapter provided a more contemporary discourse regarding representations of the islands and its people, thus presenting a current chapter within the 'natural history' of the Aran Islands. Tourist experiences in Aran are inextricably connected to the multitude of prior discourses and texts that relate to the islands. Certain themes have proven dominant throughout the numerous representations of the Aran Islands with key undertones to many depictions relating to notions of departure and Otherness. The sense that one is departing to a place that is both steeped in difference and fixed in time, lends a certain chronotopic quality to the islands in so far as the name 'The Aran Islands' can evoke images of a past and traditional way of life. To locals, the name of the islands primarily evokes an image of home — and every modern association that goes with that term — rather than images of Otherness. Nowhere are these conflicting interpretations more evident than when locals refer spatially to the islands in terms of 'in' and non-locals with the use of 'out'. This spatio-temporal understanding of the islands informs the conflicting interpretations of social space, and the related issue of the ascription and performance of social roles, within tourist encounters. Rather than being passive bystanders within these encounters, I have demonstrated with various examples that locals are reflective about their ascribed roles and often attempt to actively engage in the dialogue of representation. Even instances of disengagement cannot be presumed passive responses given that silence is often the only voice available to the subaltern and marginalised subject — more of which in chapter 9.

With such an inherently unequal foundation to the visitor/native relationship — and whether the visitor is in the guise of antiquarian, film-maker, anthropologist or tourist — the native's participation in the dialogue of representation disrupts the dominant metadiscursive framework that aims to encapsulate them in time and place.

Chapter Eight — Constructing Locality: *Cérbh é Darach Ó Direáin?*[31]

8.1 Introduction

Whilst editing the Flower and Ó Direáin collection of folklore (hereafter the F/Ó D Collection) that forms part one of this thesis, research led to some interesting questions regarding the identity of the storyteller, Darach Ó Direáin. What was presumed to be a straightforward task of collecting factual and anecdotal information about the narrator, for the purposes of a biographical account, led instead to an investigative exercise on matters of locality, naming practices and biographical construction.

Previously, I have discussed how the Aran Islands, and Aran Islanders, are constructed in discourse and in text, from the viewpoint of mainly external observers. This chapter addresses the means by which one islander in particular — Darach Ó Direáin — is located in official and written texts, in the form of state documents and folkloric references and how he, and other locals, are located in discourse by fellow Aran Islanders. During the course of my research, I became aware of the fact that various written records were offering conflicting pieces of information with regard to the name and age of Ó Direáin. Further investigation revealed that the official naming system that refers to the storyteller as Darach Ó Direáin (among other variants) is not as potentially useful, nor as accurate, as the local method of naming in Árainn. Furthermore, my attempts at placing the narrator textually, within a biographic description, brought to light issues of power and authority with regard to the textual construction of a deceased individual.

I begin below with an examination of various fragments of information relating to Ó Direáin, information that I acquired from three main sources: records in the national folklore archive; official state records; and interviews with local people in Árainn. I then explore the intricacies of the local naming system in Árainn, including its referential and non-referential functions of locating individuals within a social landscape of people and place. The naming system in Árainn is doubly effective: not only does the use of a particular name create reference to an individual, it also establishes indexical links between people, place and kin. Exploring the pragmatic effects of the naming practices in this island community exposes a number of pertinent questions, in particular: what types of relationships are being indexed or established through the use of a particular name and how are people characterising themselves, and others, through these acts of reference? Throughout the discussion on naming, specific reference is made to the various names of the

[31] Parts of this chapter have been published in Ní Mhaoláin 2007. The material has been significantly revised and updated for this thesis.

storyteller, concentrating in particular on the indexical ground of each type of name. My positionality as native researcher was regularly brought to the fore in the interviewing process, insofar as my various alignments to the social landscape were being assessed by my fellow locals. Finally, I explore the implications of producing a biographical account of Ó Direáin, from these varied sources and positions.

8.2 Darach Ó Direáin: An Ethnographic Investigation

In what follows, I illustrate the various snippets of information that emerged as I attempted to build a clearer picture of the narrator of the F/Ó D Collection. In order to demonstrate clearly the biographical information that came to light during the research, the following section explores written and oral accounts pertaining to the storyteller, in the order that they were revealed to the researcher.

8.2.1 Written Sources

In his article *Bláithín agus an Béaloideas*, Bo Almqvist (1998) mentions the existence and the importance of Robin Flower's collection of folklore from Árainn, and determines that the storyteller of the collection is the same person who is mentioned in the following two archival sources: The first is a quote taken from the diaries of James Delargy (Séamus Ó Duilearga), in August 1932:

> on the quay at Kilmurvey met "The Fairy Cobbler" Darach Ó Direáin, who has a large no. of tales and willing to record (Almqvist 1998: 98-9).

The second quote is by Máire Mac Neill who worked for the Irish Folklore Commission from 1935 to 1949:

> Random Notes made in Aran 1944 […] during the months of July, August and September, 1944. Máire Ní Néill, *Oifigí an Choimisiúin*. My informants were: [….] (3) Dara Ó Direáin, c. 68, Eoghanacht. By way of being a sgéaluí. Robin Flower recorded from him. Visitors often brought to him. Speaks slowly and distinctly. Farmer and fisherman (Almqvist 1998: 98-9).

Using these sources, as well as notes from the F/Ó D Collection itself, Almqvist deduces that the storyteller from whom Robin Flower collected most, if not all of the material, was Darach Ó Direáin and he contends that it was collected in either 1932 or 1933.

The collection itself reveals the following information regarding the identity of the storyteller, and the year in which the material was collected. The first of three notes within the collection reads:

‘these tales recorded by R.F. in Aranmore, Co. Galway. 1932 or 1933. S.Ó.D.’ The initials ‘R.F.’ presumably stand for Robin Flower and ‘S.Ó.D’ for Séamus Ó Duilearga, then director of the Irish Folklore Commission. The second reference which appears to be in Flower’s handwriting reads: ‘Folklore from Aran Islands 1933. Mss. Unpublished.’ Finally, the third note, also in Flower’s hand, states: ‘*Scéalta as Árainn*, Dara Ó Direáin 1933.’[32] Considered together, then, the first of these notes reveals an uncertainty regarding the year in which the material was collected, while the second and third reference have the specific year of 1933.[33] An analysis of the stories yielded an interesting piece of information regarding the storyteller’s identity. At the end of one of the stories, the narrator identifies himself in a traditional formulaic ending in which he refers to himself by name and in relation to his home village:

> *Agus phosadar agus bhí Darach Ó Direáin ar an mbainis as Eoghanacht.*
> [And they married and Darach Ó Direáin, from Onaght, was at the wedding.]

Apart from the material collected by Robin Flower, and the sources mentioned by Bo Almqvist, the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore contains other unpublished material from Ó Direáin that contains the following references:

(1)‘“The Voyage of Fionn Ma-Cuhil” as told by The Fairy Cobbler. Storyteller: Darach Ó Direáin, Eoghanacht’ [Séamus Ó Duilearga] (NFC 79: 93);

(2) ‘*MacDara Ó Dioráin (65) Eoghanacht a thug an scéal seo dhom Eanair 12adh 1931* […]’[34] [Seosamh Ó Flannagáin] (NFC 73: 243).

It is evident, then, that some of the abovementioned sources contain conflicting information regarding the name and the age of the storyteller. According to Máire Mac Neill, her source Dara Ó Direáin was c. 68 years of age in 1944, which indicates that he would have been born in c. 1876. According to Seosamh Ó Flannagáin, on the other hand, the storyteller MacDara Ó Dioráin was 65 years of age in 1931, which would have his year of birth at 1866, leaving an age difference of 10 years between the two sources.[35] Considering that one source referred to the storyteller as ‘*Dara* Ó Direáin’ and the other as ‘*Mac*Dara Ó Dioráin’, and with there being quite a substantial age

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[32] [Stories from Árainn, Dara Ó Direáin 1933.]

[33] Brian Ó Catháin (2004) discusses Robin Flower’s visit to Árainn in relation to the Robert Flaherty film *Oidhche Sheanchais* and concludes that the year in which Robin Flower visited the island was, indeed, 1933.

[34] [[It was] MacDara Ó Dioráin (65) Eoghanacht who narrated this tale to me, January 12th 1931].

[35] None of the other abovementioned sources refer to the storyteller’s age.

difference between the two, it was conceivable that the previously examined sources may have being referring to two separate people — one 'Dara' and the other 'MacDara'. The surname Ó Direáin — and its many orthographic variations Ó Dioráin/Derrane/Dirrane — is a particularly common name in Árainn so that the possibility of two individuals bearing the same first and last name would not have been implausible. The 1901 and 1911 censuses also offer conflicting information regarding the storyteller's age. In 1901, the son of Neid and Barbara Dirrane was reported to be 22 years of age (i.e. born 1878/79). According to the 1911 census, the same individual was now 39 years old (i.e. born 1871/72).[36]

Jacqueline Wardlaw's *Liosta Focal as na hOileáin Árann* (1987) contains a comprehensive list — *inter alia* — of the various storytellers who contributed to the Irish Folklore Collection at University College Dublin. In relation to Dara(ch) / MacDara Ó Direáin, Wardlaw has two separate entries:

(1) Ó Direáin, Dara. (Dara Nedda Phaddy) Eoghanacht, Árainn;
(2) Ó Direáin, MacDara. Eoghanacht, Árainn. (Wardlaw 1987: 1036).

This information would suggest that there were, indeed, two storytellers with similar names, both from Eoghanacht in Árainn, who provided material to the Irish Folklore Collection. Upon further inspection, however, the manuscript reference numbers accompanying the two names corresponded to the abovementioned material collected by Delargy, Mac Neill and Ó Flannagáin, and not to any new sources that could shed light on the identities of the narrator(s).[37] The question remained then, did two separate storytellers, as Wardlaw seemingly presumed, provide material to the various above-mentioned collectors? And if this was the case, from which of the two did Robin Flower collect? Could it be determined with certainty, for instance, that a '*Mac*Dara Ó Dioráin' (and not the presupposed 'Dara(ch) Ó Direáin') was *not* responsible for the F/Ó D Collection? Surely, official channels would provide answers to such questions.

The Registry of Births and Deaths in Dublin was the next port of call and it revealed a single entry, in the form of a birth certificate, for the various versions of the name Darach Ó Direáin:[38]

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[36] The introduction of the Old Age Pension in 1908 encouraged many instances of age-exaggeration in the census of 1911. See Guinnane 1996: 113.

[37] The local name 'Dara Nedda Phaddy' was not included in any of the archival references. Wardlaw's references, however, did include some narrators' genealogical names, including the first of the two references to (Mac)Dara Ó Direáin.

[38] I was unable to locate a death certificate for either name.

McDarra Dirrane, Oatquarter.[39] Born: 08 July 1876.
Father: Edward Dirrane.
Mother: Barbara Dirrane (formerly O'Brien)

Armed with this official information, it was presumably safe to conclude that the various archival sources previously examined, all referred to the same person — i.e. the individual whose birth was officially recorded in the Registry of Births — albeit with variants of the same name, and with an age difference of 10 years. Seeking only to confirm this fact, and in an attempt to verify and cross reference the year of Ó Direáin's death with the other archival sources, I visited Kilronan Parochial House in Árainn, to consult the baptismal, marriage and death records. The records revealed the following *two* entries:

(1) MacDara Ó Direáin (70). Died Dec 1949 [i.e. born c.1879]
(2) Darach Ó Direáin (72). Died January 1950 [i.e. born c.1878]

The result of these findings led to a new understanding — there were, according to these records, two individuals with versions of the same Christian name and with the same surname from the same time period. Oddly though, neither of the probable years of birth that can be determined from these records (i.e. 1879 and 1878 respectively) corresponded with the official birth certificate of 'McDarra Dirrane' (08 July 1876). The question now became, which of the two was the storyteller from whom the various folklore collectors recorded? A reference from Aran Island poet, Máirtín Ó Direáin (no relation to the storyteller) would provide a lead. In his poem *Do Dharach Ó Direáin* (Ó hAnluain 1980: 66), the poet offers the following biographical information alongside the title:

Do Dharach Ó Direáin (Seanchaí as Eoghanacht, Árainn, a d'éag Eanáir 1950)
[For Darach Ó Direáin (A *seanchaí* from Eoghanacht who died January 1950)]

Finally, a source that connected a name to the occupation of storyteller, to a place of residence and to a date of death. Interviews with local people would, with any luck, provide answers to the remaining questions.

[39] I was informed by local people in Árainn that Neid (Edward) Dirrane was originally from the village of Oatquarter, but subsequently moved to the village of Onaght where Darach was born.

8.2.2 Oral Sources

With these conflicting written sources and two somewhat obscure photographs in hand,[40] I proceeded to interview a number of local people who were either related to Ó Direáin or who had personal recollections of him. In response to my open-ended question, 'By what name was Ó Direáin best known?', each of the eight respondents (including Ó Direáin's daughter, who was by then in her mid-eighties) referred to the man as either 'Dara Neide Pheaidí' or 'Dara Ó Direáin'. Not one person knew him as 'MacDara', although one man assured me that 'Dara' and 'MacDara', as well as another variant 'Mackey', are all versions of the same name. Only one person had heard of the moniker 'The Fairy Cobbler', as mentioned by Delargy. Interestingly, not one of the interviewees knew of another individual by the name of 'MacDara Ó Direáin', so although there is a record of his death I have, as yet, been unable to discover any additional information regarding this individual. Many attested to Ó Direáin's great skill as a cobbler and all knew of him as an accomplished storyteller; some saying that the stories were handed down through the generations while others said that he created his own. Amongst other items of information to emerge was his ability to swim, a fact confirmed by Máirtín Ó Direáin (Ó hAnluain 2002: 62), and his skill at making little dolls from *cipiní* (small sticks). When presented with the two mysterious photographs, all those interviewed agreed that they depicted the same man, who was known locally as Dara Neide Pheaidí. Several offered comments such as, 'yes, he was a small man', or 'he's coming back from so and so's house in that photograph' and other corroborative information that only persons with such local knowledge could infer from seemingly vague photographs. One particularly rewarding interview resulted in a grandnephew of Ó Direáin producing a black and white, perfectly clear, headshot of his granduncle.[41] Finally, I had a face to the various names.

Local information, then, provided connections between the official and local names of Ó Direáin; verification that the man known as Dara Ó Direáin/Dara Neide Pheaidí was indeed a storyteller; and a visual representation of the man in the form of a photograph. In short, the storyteller was given a name, a face and fragments of a life history.

The task of connecting local oral information and official written documentation to Ó Direáin, the storyteller, proved possible due to connections between person, kin and locality — characteristics intrinsic to local naming practices in Aran and other Irish-speaking communities.

[40] Two published photographs of Ó Direáin (Ó Duibhginn, 1970) depict him walking along a road with his back to the camera. The caption refers to him as 'Darach Ó Direáin' with a reference to Máirtín Ó Direáin's poem.

[41] See appendix 1.

This local naming practice connects the individual to their family, and at times to their village, and avoids any confusion that may result from the use of their official name alone. The majority of written sources examined in the case of Ó Direáin refer to the man as either 'Dara' or 'Darach'. It would appear that the personal name 'MacDara' was used in a more official sense, as in the case of the Registry of Births and by the local schoolteacher and folklore collector Seosamh Ó Flannagáin.[42] An entry for the same Ó Direáin in the Register of Onaght National School for the years 1888 and 1889, for example, also appears as 'McDarra Derrane'.[43] Both of these official references provide additional information apart from the first and last name; the address is given as Onaght in both instances and the parents' names listed as Edward Dirrane and Barbara O'Brien proving, without doubt, that the name MacDara was used synonymously with the name Dara. Thus, it was through this supplementary information that a reliable link was formed between the officially named Darach Ó Direáin and the locally named Dara Neide Pheaidí.

As demonstrated in this overview of written and oral sources that refer to the storyteller, the man in question is referred to by different names depending on the source and the context. The personal names offered thus far are 'Dara', 'Darach' and 'MacDara/McDarra'; the surname appears as 'Ó Direáin', 'Ó Dioráin' and 'Derrane'; and other variations of his name include 'The Fairy Cobbler' and 'Dara Neide Pheaidí'. What is usually the first point of reference, then, in both describing a person and situating them in their social world — i.e. their proper name and surname — can, in some instances, lead to confusion and possible misunderstandings. Although I am now confident that the individual referred to by each of the names above is, indeed, the storyteller who narrated all of the stories in the collection at hand, the confusion that arose in determining this fact lead to some interesting questions regarding naming practices and their uses.

In the following section, I offer a detailed description of the type of naming system that allows for such a range of names to be used in reference to a particular individual. Integrated in this discussion is an examination of the pragmatic aspect of naming in Aran; in particular, how the various types of names express particular social relationships between the speaker, the addressee, and the named individuals.

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[42] Haddon and Browne's *Ethnography of the Aran Islands* (1891-1893), for example, lists the Christian name 'McDara' as occurring eight times (throughout the three islands) at the time of their study. There is no listing for the name 'Dara' or 'Darach' even though 'Dara Neide Pheaidí' was born c. 1878. Either he was not recorded at all for this study or the name Dara was officially recorded as McDara.

[43] Prior to the inception of the Irish Free State, English was the official language of instruction in the National Schools' System explaining why this entry is written in the English language.

8.3 The Naming System in Árainn: A Pragmatic View

> From an anthropological perspective, names are not simply arbitrary labels. How we get them, who says them, how they are used, and in what context they are spoken are inseparable from a human being's social identity (Rymes 2000: 163).

The intricacies of the type of naming system that exists in Árainn were evident to me from the outset of my research. A local myself, one might assume that I was spared the task of introducing myself to potential informants. More often than not, however, the first contact I made with those whom I wished to speak was by telephone, thereby rendering my introduction-free position invalid. As there was no visual evidence of who was on the other end of the telephone line, the conversation invariably began with an explanation of who I was. In such situations, I, as with all Aran Islanders, have (at least) three names to choose from; in my case, the names are Marion Mullin; Marion Ní Mhaoláin and Marion John Sheáin Tom. Only one of these names, however, sufficiently describes who I am to other local Aran Islanders. Something to the effect of 'Hello X, this is "Marion John Sheáin Tom" speaking' thus sufficed, both as an introduction and as an explanation of who I was, socially. Introductions established, I would proceed to enquire whether or not the person remembered the individual whom I was researching and, if so, would they mind if I called to them so that I might learn more about him. Once again, in referring to Ó Direáin, I would use his local name — Dara Neide Pheaidí — to allow for the same connections to be made. In most cases, however, I would also need to refer to him in relation to his living daughter, i.e. *athair Khate Dara* (father of Kate Dara) who is herself named in relation to her father. This extra verification, when needed, would arise from the fact that Ó Direáin himself died fifty odd years ago, and his daughter Kate, being of similar age to those I interviewed, had become the main point of reference for many people. The use of genealogical names[44] in these instances, as opposed to official names, proved to be the most effective at obtaining the primary desired outcome of naming, that of creating reference. In Aran, the use of one's official name is not usually, by itself, a sufficient means of securing reference, and would require other corroborative information to place a person within the local social landscape. Aside from identification, the act of naming achieves pragmatic outcomes as well, as will become evident in the discussion below. But first, a couple of contextualising points.

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[44] These name types that, in most instances, link the individual to their kin are referred to in the literature as: '*ainm baile'* (home name / local name) (Steve Coleman 1999); 'by-names' (Nancy Dorian 1970); 'string name' (Robin Fox 1963); '*ainm áitiúil*' (local name) (Veerendra Lele 2009). I use the terms 'local name' and 'genealogical name' interchangeably throughout this chapter.

A distinguishing factor between members and non-members of a speech community is the store of context-dependent linguistic and social currency that the former have at their disposal. An awareness and knowledge of the various sociolinguistic registers that operate within their speech community allows the speaker to make informed decisions regarding language use and context. Understanding registers as 'alternate ways of "saying 'the same' thing" considered "appropriate to" particular contexts of usage' (Silverstein 2003: 212), allows for a similar interpretation to be applied to the naming practices of Árainn.[45] As I shall demonstrate, the act of naming involves an element of decision making, similar to that of register-in-use. The choice of name used, for example, tells us something about the speaker, the named, and the relationship between the two. Furthermore, the choice of name not only presupposes a certain context, for example one of formality or intimacy, but the opposite is also true in that the context can determine the type of name that is used in a given situation. A formal situation such as a conversation with a state official would direct one to use their official name. Similarly, the use of a genealogical name presupposes that other participants in the conversation understand local naming practices and their effects. It is this knowledge that context affects language use, and conversely that language affects context, and the subsequent choices that a person makes in conversation, that characterises naming in terms of linguistic register.

It is important to emphasise, from the outset, that naming practices in Árainn do not fit neatly into an organised system, determined by an unchanging set of rules. It is rather a context-dependent strategy that people use to locate a person relative to the shared social-indexical world of speaker and addressee. Or to use Erving Goffman's model of communication (Goffman 1981: 137), the act of naming takes into account the indexical alignments of all participants involved in the utterance whereby the combined relations to the speech act is referred to as the 'participation framework'. In other words, participants in a given speech event or a 'moment of talk', such as the uttering of a particular type of name — whether official, genealogical or other — are maintaining a particular stance, or 'footing', in relation to the potential interpretations of the encounter. The notion, then, that meaning derived from speech is a *collaborative* endeavour is central to an understanding of the naming practices of Aran.

Finally, it may be helpful to view naming as a *process*, as well as an act; a process that changes and evolves throughout a person's lifetime depending on the context of use. From the naming ceremony of an infant, to how they are addressed or referred to at different stages throughout their

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[45] This method of analysis is applied in Veerendra Lele's 2009 article *"It's not Really a Nickname, it's a Method": Local Names, State Intimates, and Kinship Register in the Irish Gaeltacht.* This article, as well as personal communication with Lele, has greatly informed my analysis of the pragmatic uses of local naming practices.

life, by various people, and in various social domains and contexts, to the way they are remembered upon their death (in eulogies and on gravestones, for example) and, indeed, how they are referred to after their death in discourse, is all part of the processual life of a name and of the named individual.

The following sections deal with the objective of the naming system that operates in Aran, with particular reference to the names of Ó Direáin. In examining this process, a number of questions are brought to the fore, including: How is Ó Direáin described, referenced or indexed in the various accounts of him? Who is doing the referencing and who are they referencing for? What stances are being negotiated in the act of reference? Which social person(s) comes to light in the process of naming? Exploring the context of each source allows us to examine, in more detail, matters of indexicality and reflexivity as found in the interdiscursive activities of folklorists, scholars, local people, researchers, and Ó Direáin himself. The first section below examines the written archival descriptions of Ó Direáin. Following this are some interview extracts from my fieldwork in which local people refer to both Ó Direáin and myself in the locally-specific manner described.

8.4 Official Names

The official name is that which appears on one's birth certificate and on official documentation of any kind. Most people in Aran have an Irish version and an English version of their official name. As regards personal names, a child would typically, in past years, be given the name of a family member, a relative, or a saint. This is sometimes still the case, although current naming tendencies reflect those of anywhere else in the country, where the aesthetics of the name is becoming an increasingly more important feature in name consideration. The name given to a child at birth, and subsequently, the name with which they are christened, is the name used in the home and amongst friends and neighbours. If a child is given an English name such as 'Mary', for example, she will be referred to as this, or some version of this name, in the private and public domain. Sometimes a diminutive form of the christian name is used by family and friends, such as 'Coilmín' for the boy's name 'Colm'. Once Mary starts attending primary school, however, she is renamed by the teacher and referred to by her Irish name 'Máire' along with the Irish version of her surname, so that 'Mary Flaherty' becomes 'Máire Ní Fhlaithearta'. The Irish name is written into the roll book and is used by the teacher at roll call and throughout the day. If one happens to meet the teacher outside of school, it is at the teacher's discretion by which name he/she refers to the child. Veerendra Lele (2009: 105), in his study of naming practices in a west of Ireland *Gaeltacht* community, recounts an incident where a local mother was unhappy with the fact that, despite her protests, her daughter 'Theresa' was continuously being referred to at school as 'Treasa' (the Irish version of her name). It

is indeed a contentious notion, the fact that one's given name is translated into an often phonetically different appellation for the duration of one's school-going years. Consider, for example, the difference between the name Noel and Nollaig, between Conor and Conchobhor, and so on. A relative of mine, who is in his late thirties and whose name in Irish differs as greatly as those just mentioned is, still to this day, referred to by the Irish version of his name, by a former teacher of his. Like many people whose name was translated, without consultation, for the school's roll book, he does not have a strong affinity to his Irish name and, therefore, corrects his former teacher on each occasion of use. He maintains that while he had no choice in the matter during his school years, he refuses to be misnamed as an adult. In many such cases, the teachers will be the sole users of the Irish name unless, as is sometimes the case, the name is used in jest by one's classmates who are members of the same speech-chain.[46] The use of such an obsolete name by an authority figure of old can often, then, be cause for mirth amongst the same, now adult, peer group. Such names are highly indexical in so far as they point to a particular spatio-temporal point in a person's life. Just as, for Bakhtin (1981: 293), '[e]ach word tastes of the context [...] in which it has lived its socially charged life', the names of an individual in this *Gaeltacht* community also carry with them voices of a social past. This type of translated name also holds a chronotopic element, in that when it is uttered years later by a past teacher, it transports the addressee back to his childhood and school-going years. Alessandro Duranti states:

> Footing [...] is another way of talking about indexing, the process whereby we link utterances to particular moments, places, or personae, including our own self at a different time or with a different spirit (1997: 296).

In order to avoid contentious situations, then, it is important that speakers and addressees are ever ready to change footing in relation to naming so that they may select the appropriate name for the context. Realising that names have a discursive history is therefore crucial to their successful use in context.

Some of the most common surnames on the island today are Conneely (Ó Conghaile), Derrane/Dirrane (Ó Direáin), Flaherty (Ó Flaithearta), Mullen/Mullin (Ó Maoláin), among others.[47] These

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[46] The concept of speech-chains is discussed in more depth below.

[47] A grammatical note: Many Irish surnames contain an implicit reference to kin in that the 'Ó' in the surname 'Ó Direáin' historically stood for the 'grandson of' Direán; the 'Ní' in 'Ní Dhireáin' stands for the 'daughter of' Ó Direáin. If a woman takes her husband's surname upon marriage, say 'Ó Direáin', her surname becomes 'Bean Uí Dhireáin' (literally woman/wife of Ó Direáin). The 'bean' is often dropped from the surname leaving the simplified form 'Uí Dhireáin'.

Irish language versions of surnames are, in fact, rarely used by locals in a local context. Once again, they are reserved for official domains such as school, church and the state, although it is becoming increasingly common that one might choose to use their Irish (sur)name in certain contexts, such as in relation to their work. This is the case for a local sean-nós singer who is known as 'Treasa Ní Mhiolláin' in the context of her work, and in local terms as 'Teresa Millane' or 'Teresa Bhaba Pheige'. Likewise, I choose to use the Irish version of my name in relation to my work. More often than not though, it is the English surname that appears on one's birth certificate so that the use of the Irish name by teachers or by one who chooses the Irish version over the English version, involves an act of translation on behalf of the name-assigner who may also, of course, be the name-bearer.

Asif Agha (2003), following Saul Kripte (1972) and Hilary Putnam (1975), discusses the means by which a name transforms from being a mere denotational label for a particular person to a social fact that validates the 'name-referent pairing'. According to Agha, a series or 'chain' of speech events carries the name-person association from the original naming ceremony that officially connects the two, to wider circles of people throughout the person's life.[48] Everyone who knows a particular person's name, whether or not they are personally acquainted with them, are all members of a particular speech chain. That is to say that each member has, at some point, been involved in a speech event, in which they assumed the participant role of 'hearer' or 'addressee', and gained access to the knowledge that a certain name referenced a particular individual in society. Any person who simply knows this individual's name then is indexically linked (a) to every other person who knows his/her name and (b) to the naming ceremony that officially named the person, through a series of speech events, or more specifically, through a single continuous speech *chain*, consisting of multiple speech events, in which the individual was named. The information contained in a name-referent pairing transfers from person to person in this way, all the while gaining validity as a social fact.

Let us take the *official* name of the storyteller at the centre of this chapter, as a case in point. As we will recall, the storyteller was known by a number of names, amongst which were various official forms of his name: i.e. 'Dara Ó Direáin'; 'Dara Dirrane'; and 'MacDara Derrane/Ó Dioráin'. The sources referring to him as such included the registry of births (McDarra Dirrane); the parish death records (MacDara Ó Direáin/Darach Ó Direáin); the school roll (McDarra Derrane); a poem written in his memory (Darach Ó Direáin); folklore archival references (Dara Ó Direáin/

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[48] It should be noted that speech events between parents, family members, friends and relatives normally connect the name to the person *prior* to the official naming ceremony.

Darach Ó Direáin/MacDara Ó Dioráin), and of course, Ó Direáin's tale in which he identifies himself as Darach Ó Direáin. Each of these names, given that they are variations of one 'original' official name, relate back to the same naming ceremony. Importantly, the use of such official names (i.e. forename + surname) in Aran creates a context of formality or officialdom, especially as they are chosen over other available registers. Thus, we will note that the majority of accounts that refer to Ó Direáin by variations of his formal name, are state sources and/or written records, which is in keeping with Lele's observation:

> The official name is heard stereotypically as being spoken by a state agent or a state document, addressing the person as a subject of the state (2009: 103).

But what of the other aspects of a person's identity that are not represented by their official name? Considering the reoccurrence of the same first and last names in Aran, one's official name is often an inadequate means of reference, and is subsequently rarely used by locals when referring to other locals. Another, more tangible, means of identification and referencing is required.

8.5 Genealogical Names

Given the likelihood that more than one person will have the same first and last name in this island community, other referents are required in order to distinguish one person from another similarly named individual. The genealogical naming practice that is common in many *Gaeltacht* regions connects an individual to their kin and avoids the possible confusion that sometimes results from the use of their official name alone. Not only does the local system place a person within an existing web of kin relations but it also operates, on a pragmatic level, to index a context of shared knowledge and informality between the speaker, addressee and the named. As observed by Steve Coleman:

> [t]hey [string names] index intimacy as well as functioning very well to "place" individuals in terms of both identity and location in the local kin universe (1999: 83).

This type of naming system typically includes the individual's first name followed by either their mother or father's name, which is itself connected to one of *their* parent's names. This is one of the most common forms of genealogical naming and it is the format used in Ó Direáin's local name — Dara Neide Pheaidí, where Dara is the son of Neid and the grandson of Peaidí.

Although it is more often than not the father's lineage that is used in local names, the mother's kin may also be used; this depends on a number of eventualities. Say, for instance, a man from the

eastern part of the island married a woman from the west and moved to her home village, their children would most likely be referred to in relation to the main local referent, which in this case would be the woman. If a woman moves from her local village to her husband's village, she will retain her original genealogical name in her home village but she may acquire her husband's first name as part of her new local name, in his village, e.g. Nóra Conneely, whose genealogical name in her home village might be Nóra Pheadair Thomáis, can become Nóra Choilm (i.e. Colm's Nóra) in her husband Colm's village.[49] This might be necessary when the people referenced in her original genealogical name might not be (well) known to her new neighbours on the other end of the island, and thus for the simple purpose of identification, she is referenced in relation to the existing referent in the village — her husband. Interestingly, their children can be referred to using either the mother or the father's genealogical name, depending on by whom, and in which village, they are being referenced. In other words, a person can sometimes have two local names: one inherited from the mother and the other from the father and it will depend on the context as to which of these names is used. For example, is the speaker better acquainted with the mother or the father? Are relatives of either the mother or father present while the name is being uttered? Furthermore, a mother's local name might also be inherited over the father's where she is the only local — thus only placeable person — of the two. In the event of both parents being local, the mother's name may still be inherited if she is a better-known, and therefore easier-placed, individual; she may be what is known as a character or she may simply be more socially visible than her husband. Overall, it is a matter of assessing one's stance in relation to the named individual and to the other participants in the speech event, as to which name is used.

People marrying into the island, as mentioned, will often be identified through their spouse or their spouse's kin. People moving to the island who have no marital connection to the place, however, sometimes also acquire a nickname of sorts for the same purpose of identification and locating. Those who have spent some time working on the island can be referred to in reference to their trade or occupation, where their personal name, if known, might be uttered alongside their mode of transport, for example. Alternatively, a particular tool or material used in their trade might be substituted for their name altogether.

Genealogical names generally include either two, three or four generational labels. The two-generation names are common when a woman is named as 'wife of' her husband, i.e. 'Nóra

[49] I have not come across examples wherein the opposite is true and the man acquires only his wife's *personal* name as a referent in his new local name, although there are instances where the man will unofficially inherit the wife's local name or even surname so that he can be identified in his wife's village. This is often the case when the man is originally from the mainland, or overseas. In the absence of his own local kin landscape, he will generally be referenced in relation to his local wife.

Choilm', 'Bríd Thomáisín'. A son or daughter can also be named in this way, as is Ó Direáin's daughter, Kate Dara. As two-generation names are not as common as three-generation names, it would appear that if a person has an uncommon name (either forename or surname) for the island as a whole, or even for that village or part of the island where the individual is from, the name will not need to be qualified by a third name. The name Dara, for example, is not exceptionally common in the western part of the island and therefore suffices as a locatable referent in the name 'Kate Dara'. If, however, it was the grandparent or great grandparent who had the uncommon name, that name can become the main referent for generations to come, so that the apical ancestor suffices as a locateable referent. This also occurs in the case of a person having a relatively uncommon surname, such as 'Gillan' or 'King', in which case they may be equally known as 'X Gillan', 'X King' or by their genealogical name. The objective, after all, is to accurately *identify* and *place* the person. In her study of Scottish Highland by-names, Nancy Dorian observes the following:

> If a particular family name is unique in one of the villages, it may itself come to function almost as a genealogical by-name – that is, it becomes inseparable from the given name in referring to the individual, and the combination is spoken with the same characteristic stress pattern as a by-name (main stress on the last element) (1970: 312).

Three-generation, and sometimes four-generation genealogical names, are the most common of all local names in Aran. This occurs when a person is named after a parent who is himself/herself named after their parent as is the case, once again, with Dara Neide Pheaidí. I will use my own local name, and that of my family, as an example of a four generation name. My father's local name is 'John Sheáin Tom' whose father before him was 'Seán Tom'. A four-generation name comes into effect in my case, whereby I am known locally as 'Marion John Sheáin Tom'. In the case of my first name not being known, I would be referred to as '*iníon* (daughter of) John Sheáin Tom'. Dorian notes the *rarity* of skipping a generation when it comes to genealogical names in the Scottish Highlands. In fact she states:

> In such a case the parental generation is skipped over in favour of the grandparental generation in the genealogical tags (1970: 307).

Skipping a generation is not a rare occurrence in Aran; in fact, it is quite common. Similar to Dorian's findings, however, the grandparent's name is often retained over the parent's name. Returning to the example of my local name, I have on occasion been referred to as 'Marion Sheáin Tom', (where my father's name is omitted in favour of my grandfather's) but never as 'Marion John

Sheáin' (which would involve omitting my great-grandfather's name). If a name is to be dropped permanently from such a local name, it is often, but not always, the parent's name and not the grandparent's name that is omitted. I would suggest that this is due to the fact that a person such as my grandfather 'Seán Tom', although deceased, is an already socially-established individual and remains, therefore, the main referent within the community. The alternative of 'Marion John Sheáin' would involve creating a new social person in 'John Sheáin' when a perfectly effective, although longer, one already exists in 'John Sheáin Tom'. Considering the popularity of the name 'Seán' in this region, there is no contiguous link between John and Seán in this instance as there is with 'John' and 'Seán Tom' (i.e. John, son of Seán, son of Tom)'. It makes sense, then, to keep the main referent for the current generation in place, and in the event of the name becoming too cumbersome, drop the name that will least affect linking the named to their kin.[50] If one must learn the name of a new referent, as opposed to simply observe a genealogical link, it renders the local naming system as futile as the official naming system. In other words, why learn a local name when one might just as easily learn the official name; the aim, of course, being not to *learn* names at all but, rather, to make links that enables one to *place* a person.

8.6 Descriptive Local Names

Another common tendency in the naming practices of Aran is the addition of a physical attribute to a person's name. Common descriptive adjectives that accompany such names include *beag* (small); *mór* (big); *óg* (young); *rua* (red-haired), so that a red-haired woman named Bríd, for example, might be known as 'Bríd *Rua*'. A son bearing the same name as his father, or indeed, close relative might be known as 'John *Beag*' or 'John *Óg*', and so on. This practice functions in the same way as regular genealogical names in so far as descriptive names place a person, by describing them in some way and, perhaps more importantly, distinguishing them from other individuals bearing the same name. Similarly, the children of so-named individuals will also carry the descriptor as in 'Áine Bhríd *Rua*' or 'Jimmy John *Beag*'. The name 'Bríd *Rua*' or 'John *Beag*' again acting as a unit, or as described by Dorian (1970: 307) as 'two-generational by-names with a double second element'. In other words, it is not necessary that the descriptive term recalls the actual personal attribute of the named to every person using the name, especially as younger generations may not remember that Bríd had red hair or that John was the younger of two Johns in that family. It is only necessary that

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[50] Of course, there are occasions where the older generation's name is dropped but this can only happen if the main referent is still easily recognisable in the shorter version of the name. If a person is equally known as Máirtín Sheáinín or Máirtín Sheáinín Tom, for example, then his son 'Colm' can bear the name Colm Mháirtín Sheáinín or Colm Mháirtín Sheáinín Tom. Indeed, if Colm's father is a well known individual, then even the name Colm Mháirtín may suffice.

the name assigner, and the addressee, be discursively aligned with a speech event that once made this connection.

Some of these descriptive names can carry negative connotations similar to those which Dorian (1970: 306) describes as ‘derisive by-names’. These include the adjective *fada* (long) used to describe an exceptionally tall person, which is sometimes used in place of the alternative non-offensive adjective *ard* (tall). Some descriptive names are not explicitly offensive but are not, nevertheless, openly used in the presence of the named. Such names might include a reference to a particular facial feature, such as a beard or a moustache, where the noun itself is used alongside, or in place of, the person’s personal name. Even these type of names can sometimes gain a negative twist; say, for example, the substitution of *meigeal* (a goat’s beard) in place of *feasóg* (a man’s beard). In contrast to genealogical names, derisive names can be composed at any time and will endure depending on the accuracy of the description or, indeed, the standing or character of the person uttering the name. These are perhaps the most contentious of names, as they are so regularly used in casual reference to a person that they can be accidentally used in the presence of the named, or a relative of theirs, and inadvertently cause offence or embarrassment to either the named or to the name user.

Any person who is aware that a particular name points to a certain individual in the community can use this name for the purpose of reference. It requires a certain store of prior contextualised knowledge, however, to *successfully* use a local name in the various contexts of use. A newcomer to the community, who may be oblivious to the inherent social history incorporated within a genealogical name, can technically use the name through the speech chain that exists in all name-referent pairs. In other words, by being present at a speech event that referred to a person by their local name, one is indexically linked to the locally named individual as well as to the particular forbears thus referenced. However, as noted by Agha:

> co-membership in a speech chain network requires neither conscious knowledge nor verifiability of a shared discursive history by participants themselves, only an awareness of the symbolic values transmitted across the chain (2003: 248).

Accordingly, then, a non-initiated newcomer to the speech community who uses a person’s local name as opposed to their official name, is not consciously indexing the rich discursive history contained within the name. They may simply have learnt the name as a means of securing reference to an individual. After all, the speech chains that make reference to genealogical names are more

prevalent in a *Gaeltacht* community such as Aran, than a speech chain than references official names.

As already noted, some descriptive local names can carry an element of ridicule and such names are thus used only in specific situations and amongst particular individuals. A person familiar with local naming practices and local kin relations, will understand the embedded derogative feature and will know *not* to use such a name in the presence of the name-bearer, or in the company of his family or friends. A person unfamiliar with either of these factors can create a potentially uncomfortable situation by innocently using a derisive name in the presence of its bearer or a relative of his. Importantly, the versed individual does not always feel compelled to explain negative connotations in names to the newly-christened speech chain member, because in so doing, one is moving from simply using a name for the purpose of referencing to explicitly citing the embedded derogative character of such a name. This is especially true of names that are only slightly derisive, and over time and through regular usage, the name has all but lost its negative connotation until one day, one must spell out the meaning to a newcomer who has recently become privy to the name. Clearly then, it is not sufficient to simply be present at a speech event that referred to a person, it is also crucial to social relationships that one understands the significance and nuances of the names they use.

Veerendra Lele applies Michael Silverstein's orders of indexicality (Silverstein 2003) to the naming practices of a Gaeltacht community and explains that:

> the different registers produced through the different uses of names are examples of Michael Silverstein's distinction between first-order and second-order indexicals [where] the first-order is a system of securing reference, the second-order "effect" being generalized kinship values (Lele 2009: 108).

There is indeed, in Silverstein's terms, a strong element of presupposition involved in the use of genealogical names in so far as the user presupposes the addressee's membership of the speech chain wherein the significance of the local name is appreciated. There is also an entailing element in that the type of name used can determine or shape the context where (a) the use of one's official name can index a sense of formality; (b) genealogical names evoke a level of informality, intimacy and localness and (c) the use of derisive names may, if inappropriately used, be construed as name-calling as opposed to name-using. Second-order indexicality refers to the pragmatic awareness of the speaker in interaction and is also at play in instances of local name use, in so far as the name users are indirectly characterising themselves and the other participants in the speech act of naming.

In other words, by using a genealogical name, one is not only identifying oneself as being familiar with the local naming system, thereby evoking their own localness,[51] they are also indexing the status of the addressee in that they too have access to this local system.

8.7 Naming in Death

The general distinction of official formal forms vs. unofficial informal forms of naming often converge in matters relating to death. Take for example, the initial announcement that a local person has passed away. Whether the news be related in person, or one receives a phone call or text that a neighbour has died, it is essential that the bearer of the news accurately and sufficiently places the deceased for the addressee. One's local name is therefore used in such informal, yet important, instances where the speaker might announce to the addressee, '*Cailleadh Tom Mhicil Thomáis aréir'* ['Tom Mhicil Thomáis died last night']. Upon hearing such information, informed individuals will tune into the death notices on *Raidió na Gaeltachta* to listen to the removal and funeral arrangements of the deceased. The news bulletins on this radio station follow a particular format. Beginning with national and international news at the beginning of the bulletin, the news is then divided into three segments according to the three regional dialects of Irish. Each segment is read in the appropriate dialect and is followed by *Scéalta Báis* [Death Notices] for that particular region. A notice will begin as follows:

> '*Bhasaigh Tomás Ó Conghaile, nó 'Tom Mhicil Thomáis' mar a b'fhearr aithne air, as Inis Mór, Árainn aréir* [...]*'*
> [Tom Ó Conghaile (Conneely) or 'Tom Mhicil Thomáis' as he was better known, from Inis Mór, Aran died last night [...]']

This format explicitly recognises the significance of one's local name for the purposes of identification. The same format occurs at the funeral mass where the priest will usually refer to the deceased by both his official *and* his local name. As noted earlier, there is an element of intimacy embedded in the local name, and this sense of connection is particularly evident in these moments where the deceased is verbally connected to their (often also-deceased) kin. The uttering of one's genealogical name at a funeral mass, therefore, can evoke more emotion than the mention of their official name. It is almost as though the mention of the local name confirms the death of the person known in the community. Both the *Raidió na Gaeltachta* death notice and the celebrant of the

[51] The term local is used here to encompass the variant degrees of being local; i.e. regular locals (those who were born and/or brought up locally); people who have lived on the island for long enough to use and understand the various contexts of these names; people from, or living in, one of the other *Gaeltachtaí* who use a similar naming system.

funeral mass acknowledge the death of the officially-named person *and* the locally-named person. The deceased, in other words, is both officially dead and socially dead. This is the case everywhere, of course, but it is made more explicit when a different name applies to each different persona, as is the case in this particular local naming system.

It should also be noted that although genealogical names are usually reserved for the oral domain, and the official form of one's name appears in written state and other formal documents, the church in Árainn negotiates between both registers in quite a seamless fashion. Not only does the celebrant of the funeral mass verbally recognise the genealogically named deceased individual, but the parish newsletter frequently provides a local name (in written form), beside one's official name, in birth and marriage announcements or when referring to any occasion of note.

8.8 Naming the Landscape

Other instances where genealogical names appear in written form are in accounts written by locals, whether in the form of memoirs, semi-fiction or research. A book published by a group of local women who operate under the name *Mná Fiontracha* [Enterprising Women] provides numerous examples of both official and genealogical names written side by side. Their book *Árainn: Cosáin an tSaoil* [Árainn: Pathways of Life] is the result of meticulous research into the names of every road, natural well and hill in each village in Árainn, as well as the names of residents, past and present, of each house on the island. As regards the geographical features, each location is named and numbered with the number corresponding to a reference on a map of the particular area. Some names of geographic features are explicitly linked to individuals while others are linked to the landscape, as these examples demonstrate: *Tobar Sheáin Sheáinín* (Seán, (descendent of) Seáinín's well); *Carcair an Tí Mhóir* (The hill of the big house); *Bóithrín an Dúin Bhig* (The little road of the small fort) (Mná Fiontracha 2003: 43). With regard to the information on past and present residents of Árainn, an entry appears in the following format: [52]

> Peaidí Mhaidhcín & Peige Mháirtín Thaidhg (Ní Dhioráin) Mac Donnchadha / Maidhcilín Pheaidí Mhaidhcín & Maggie Sheáinín Aindí (Ní Ghoill) Mac Donnchadha / Micheál Mhaidhcilín Pheaidí Mhaidhcín & Eibhlín Pheait Dharach (de Búrca) Mac Donnchadha (Mná Fiontracha 2003: 25).
>
> Maggie Bheairtlín (Ní Fhlaithearta) & Maidhcil Stephen Ó Dioráin / Máirtín John Thomás Sheáin na Creige Ó Dioráin (Mná Fiontracha 2003: 41).

[52] The underlined print (bold in the original) indicates that the named individuals are deceased. Other information that is provided includes whether the occupiers of the house are temporary residents and whether a house is no longer standing, or is in ruins.

These are excellent examples of the genealogical history contained within local names. Clearly the book was written for a local readership, and considering that the information in the book was gathered *by* locals and *from* locals, it is an important and current contribution to the social, and indeed, 'natural history' of Árainn.

Although not represented in *Mná Fiontracha's* work*,* the tiny fields that form the iconic Aran landscape also have cause to be referenced on many occasions, and many of these fields have therefore acquired names similar to those of the wells, roads and hills mentioned above. The use of these field names operate in the same manner as the local naming system in so far as, on many speech occasions, a particular field will need to be distinguished from another field in the same area. Take, for instance, a speech act that involves a farmer discussing cattle that are currently in one field and need to be moved to another, it is far more economical to refer to each field by name rather than by detailed description. As is the nature of many placenames, many of these field names are descriptive in origin. Some examples from the western part of the island should demonstrate this: *Góirtín na Seabhac* (The little glen of the hawks); *Creig na Mullán* (The *creig*[53] of the small pools) and *Creig an Phoill Mhóir* (The *creig* of the large hole). As there are many named fields, hills etc. in Árainn, locals' knowledge is usually confined to the named features of their own locality, with the exception of well known sites throughout the island. Similar to the genealogical naming system, then, only certain people will have access to the names that reference particular fields and other geographic features in Árainn, and the use of these local-specific names positions the user and the addressee relative to levels of locality and informality. An official from the Department of Agriculture that is in Árainn investigating compliance to the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), for example, will probably never hear of these names in his annual conversations with local farmers. He will visit, with the farmer, a field that is known to him as a number on a map and known to the farmer as, let us say, *Creig na gCarnán* (The *creig* of the mounds). Similarily, the farmer will only ever be known to the visiting department representative by the official name that appears on his documentation, and never by his discursively rich genealogical name.

The future of the naming system that embeds a person within an intricate network of kin relations is uncertain. This is due in part to the wider range of forenames (and to a lesser extent,

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[53] Niall Ó Dónaill's *Foclóir Gaeilge Béarla* describes a *creig* as 'barren, stony ground'.

surnames) that are used today in comparison to the past. So whereas a man named ‘John Choilm Sheáinín’ (Ó Conghaile) was so referenced in order to distinguish him from ‘John Phádraig Rua’ (Ó Conghaile), it is becoming considerably less likely that today’s children will have the same first name and surname, given (a) the greater use of more modern forenames and (b) the higher proportion of locals marrying non-locals, which leads in many cases to the introduction of new surnames to the island of Árainn. That being said, as long as Árainn continues to be a community in which social location is an important aspect of daily life, the same need for placing individuals relative to their kin should prevail. When we consider that genealogical naming is so prevalent in Árainn that some islanders don’t actually know the surname of their fellow locals, then the introduction of new surnames into the island might not have any great effect on genealogical name usage. The same may apply to unfamiliar first names in the sense that instead of learning yet another unusual name, one might refer to the unusually-named individual as son/daughter of X, in the usual genealogical manner. In spite of the fact then, that a person may be the sole bearer of a particular name in this community, they will likely still continue to be named and referenced in relation to their forebears. In other words, an influx of so-called unusual names to Árainn may have the same effect as an influx of similarly named individuals, which called for the use of the clearer genealogical naming system in the first place.

8.9 The Fairy Cobbler

Let us now take a closer look at another of Ó Direáin’s names that appeared in written and in spoken form — The Fairy Cobbler. Given that Ó Direáin was indeed a cobbler who narrated stories relating, amongst other things, to fairies, this name could be considered by some, an accurate means of reference. Consider, for instance, a group of folklorists who have returned from the field of Aran Island narrators, people who are referred to locally by cumbersome genealogical names. These local names will have little referential value to the non-local folklorist who, unless he comes to know the person’s kin, is indifferent to the implicit kin connections being made as a method of identification. But considering the aforementioned duplicity of official names in this community, the alternative (some might say normal) means of identification and distinction, i.e. official forenames and surnames, is equally ineffective to the now office-bound folklorist. Thus, there may arise a need for another means of identification, — there is, after all, a method and function to such genealogical naming — this time on behalf of the folklorist: enter the name The Fairy Cobbler. There is no evidence to suggest that this is the reason for the composition of The Fairy Cobbler; it is rather a possible explanation in the absence of any tangible information on the matter. More importantly for

the current discussion, perhaps, is the fact that the name itself, despite its apparent fictional character, does correspond to the criteria for successful name-referent pairing. There is, at the very least, an existing speech chain consisting of: folklorists; the readership of either of the above quotes referring to Ó Direáin as 'The Fairy Cobbler'; anyone who has heard him referred to as such, (including local Aran Islanders answering in the *negative* when asked by the current researcher 'Did you ever hear Dara Neide Pheaidí referred to as "The Fairy Cobbler?"')[54] and, of course, anyone who may read the current study. As previously mentioned, only one local person that I interviewed had heard of this name in relation to Ó Direáin, to which he offered the following statement: *'Sé an t'ainm [a] thugadh na strainséirí air, Fairy Cobbler.*[55] Although this local man had heard of the name in relation to Ó Direáin, and is therefore a member of that particular speech-chain, he is explicitly excluding himself from the group of people who refer to the storyteller as such. He is, at once, making a statement regarding his own, mine, and others' local status and register use. The fact that such a speech chain exists, however, albeit among a somewhat specific group of members, further validates the name Fairy Cobbler as a legitimate name-referent pair. Any use of a name, then, whether local, official, or other, entails being a member of a particular speech chain. Most people, of course, are members of more than one speech chain as they may use different names, and thus negotiate different stances, depending on the context, as demonstrated in various examples above and as is evidenced by three specific references to the name 'Fairy Cobbler' by Delargy. We will recall that Delargy's diaries referred to Ó Direáin as '"The Fairy Cobbler" Darach Ó Direáin'. In this instance, the fictitious name is immediately supported by his full official name, as would be expected in an archival reference of this type. The omission of Ó Direáin's local genealogical name is also to be expected in such a reference as the intended readership presumably consists of other folklorists and not local Aran Islanders. This being the case, any inclusion of Ó Direáin's local name would merely serve as an additional appellation as opposed to an identification aid. Described as having 'a large no. of tales and willing to record', Ó Direáin is portrayed as a valuable resource in that he not only has a large repertoire of stories but is also prepared to narrate — an important fact for any future folklorists who may find it difficult locating a willing narrator. A second and third reference to this name appears in two letters written by Robert Flaherty, the first to Adolf Mahr of the National Museum of Ireland in which Flaherty mentions 'our local story-teller, The Fairy Cobbler' and the second in a letter to Delargy in which Flaherty states: 'The Fairy Cobbler, who told you stories when you were here, we do not think is a good enough type' (for the part of

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[54] This outright approach was taken only after more open-ended methods of questioning were exhausted.

[55] [The name the visitors would give him was 'Fairy Cobbler'].

Aran storyteller in the film *Oidhche Sheanchais*)[56]. Yet another reference is found in the endnote to a story narrated by Ó Direáin and translated to English by Pat Mullen. The reference reads as follows:

> "The Voyage of Fionn Ma-Cuhil" as told by The Fairy Cobbler.
> Storyteller: Darach Ó Direáin, Eoghanacht
> Translated from Irish by Pat Mullen. Recorded by Barbara Flaherty (17) Feb. 1933 in Kilmurvey, Aranmore Island, Co. Galway. SÓD (NFC 79: 92 - 105).

This account introduces the notion of social personae, and recognises two in relation to Ó Direáin. The person who recounted the tale to Delargy is referenced as one Darach Ó Direáin. In the guise of storyteller, however, he is rechristened The Fairy Cobbler, lending a mythical quality to his name and to this particular social persona. Alessandro Duranti, in his summary of Goffman's participation frameworks and of Marcel Mauss's notion of person, reminds us that:

> speakers in real life continuously enter different roles or *personae* [...] in recounting experience. [...] Speakers do not just *pretend* to be different characters, they *become* and are treated *as if* they were those characters [emphasis in original] (1997: 297).

This is represented clearly in the employment of names in Aran where a particular name secures reference to a particular social person. Rather than presuming that all forms of a person's name unproblematically reference the same individual then, it is important to realise that a particular name represents a certain *aspect* of a social person.[57] In the case of these, and similar, references in relation to Ó Direáin, the Fairy Cobbler represents the storyteller to the visiting folklorist; (Mac)Dara Ó Direáin the official or state personae; and Dara Neide Pheaidí the son (of Neid), father, husband, farmer, fisherman, cobbler and any other local category that may be attributed to him, including local storyteller. The merging of these various names in the written and oral sources pertaining to Ó Direáin represents the everyday merging of the various aspects of any social person and highlights the situationality of identity.

Pat Mullen's referencing of Ó Direáin in *Hero Breed* (1936) deserves a preliminary mention prior to its discussion, in more detail, in chapter 9. A local Aran Islander, Mullen worked as assistant director in Robert Flaherty's classic film *Man of Aran* (1934) and penned a book by the

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[56] *Oidhche Sheanchais* Correspondence File, NFC.

[57] This discussion on social personae derives, with gratitude, from personal communication with Veerendra Lele.

same title a couple of years after the film's release. His second book *Hero Breed* (1936) is a semi-fictitious account of various people, occurrences and events on the largest of the Aran Islands. One of the chapters of this book contains a collection of descriptive events including one entitled *Dara, the Story-Teller*. In this, Mullen describes an evening of storytelling with Darach Ó Direáin in which he refers to him interchangeably as Dara; Dara Nedda Faddy;[58] the story-teller; the great story-teller from the west; and the Cobbler. Interestingly, regarding the name 'the Cobbler' he states; 'He is the man they call the Cobbler because he learned to mend shoes when he was with the fairies long ago' (Mullen 1936: 219). Given that Ó Direáin was in actual fact a cobbler, one would expect an explanation such as this to accompany the name 'The *Fairy* Cobbler' as opposed to simply 'The Cobbler'. This may well have been a popular anecdote at the time to explain how Ó Direáin acquired his trade or it could alternatively be a simple case of creative writing on the part of Mullen; either way the sentence does not explicitly refer to him as The Fairy Cobbler. We know, however, that Mullen was, indeed, associated with the speech-chain that referred to Ó Direáin as such, given that he was responsible for the translation of *The Voyage of Fionn Ma-Cuhil* above that was, according to Delargy, 'told by The Fairy Cobbler'.

8.10 Storytellers and Self-Referencing

Thus far, I have discussed how various individuals, both locals and non-locals, referred to Ó Direáin. But how did Ó Direáin refer to himself? Returning to the reference from earlier in the chapter, we will recall that he referred to himself, in a traditional formulaic ending, as follows:

> *Agus phosadar agus bhí Darach Ó Direáin ar a mbainis as Eoghanacht.*
> [And they married and Darach Ó Direáin, from Onaght, was at their wedding.]

In this case, given that we have very little information about the narrational event that produced the Flower/Ó Direáin collection of folklore, we cannot know with certainty to whom this statement was directed. We know, for example, that Robin Flower was certainly present at the storytelling event(s), but were others also present? And if so, were they locals or other visiting folklorists? The evidence from other written tales from roughly the same era suggests that narrators did, in their capacity as professional storytellers, use their formal names in these types of formulaic endings, whereby they insert themselves in the narrational event. In fact, the examples to follow, as well as Ó

[58] Pat Mullen used phonetically-spelt genealogical names in many of his accounts.

Direáin's mention of his home village, introduce the importance placed on geographical location as well as kin location, a matter that is discussed in more detail below.

> *agus bhí mé héin ann, Máirtín Ó Conghaile as Baile na Creige atá istigh in Árainn Mhór* (Munch-Pedersen 1994: 52).
> [and I was there myself, Máirtín Ó Conghaile from Baile na Creige that is in[59] in Árainn Mhór.]

> *gach uile fhear go deo dá léifidh mo scéal — Éamon a Búrc as Aill na Brón i gConamara thiar i gConnachta.* (Ó Ceannabháin 1983: 88).
> [to every single man forever that may read my story — Éamon a Búrc from Aill na mBrón in Connamara, back in Connacht.]

The first of these references is from the only published collection of folktales from Árainn, *Scéalta Mháirtín Neile,* collected in 1895 by Danish scholar Holger Pedersen and edited by fellow Dane, Ole Munch-Pedersen. Interestingly, the title of the book attributes the stories to the genealogically named Máirtín Neile but the narrator refers to himself within the story by his official name Máirtín Ó Conghaile. The second reference above is from the collection *Éamon a Búrc: Scéalta.* These stories were collected from the renowned Conamara storyteller in 1928, by folklore collecter Liam Mac Coisdeala. According to the editor of the collection, Peadar Ó Ceannabháin, the storyteller was better known as Éamon Liam but once again, it is his official name that is used in this instance of self-referencing and, in this case, as evidenced by the title, the stories are attributed to the official persona — Éamon a Búrc.

As with the stories of Darach Ó Direáin, the contents of these two books were either recorded or written as the storyteller narrated, lending a further sense of formality to the already-formal occasion of storytelling.[60] Although the main audience in all of these cases was the folklore collector and the implied future non-local audience, the official context of the folklore occasion would, in itself, call for a formal name to be used irrespective of the audience. We will recall that the naming system of Árainn and other *Gaeltachtaí* can be compared to register use, where not only does the choice of name presuppose a particular context but also that context can affect name choice, and we will consequently note that the use of 'Darach Ó Direáin' in the self-reference above is similar to other instances of official name use in formal contexts. In this case, the use of the narrator's formal name indexes the official occasion of oral performance.

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[59] This first 'in' is in reference to the local spatial referencing that was discussed in chapter 7, i.e. '*in*to the island' vs. '*out* to the island'

[60] See the discussion on storytelling as formal speech event in chapter 9.

8.11 Máirtín Ó Direáin: Poetic Interpretations of Kin Connections

Máirtín Ó Direáin (1910 – 1988) was from the village of Sruthán in Árainn. Widely considered to be one of the greatest Irish-language poets of the 20th century, Ó Direáin produced numerous volumes of poetry over a period spanning four decades, including *Coinnle Geala* (1942); *Ó Mórna agus Dánta Eile* (1957) and *Craobhóg Dán* (1986), as well as a collection of autobiographical essays in *Feamainn Bhealtaine* (1961). Ó Direáin left Árainn as a young man and a common theme throughout much of the poet's work is one of reminiscence and nostalgia for his island home. Often contrasting his modern urban dwelling with that of the seemingly simpler life of the islands, Ó Direáin infused much of his poetry with mournful longing for Árainn. In his own words, from his poem *Deireadh Ré* [End of an Era] (translation by Mac Síomóin & Sealy 1992: 36-7):

Fir na scéal mo léan!	I grieve for the tellers of tales!
Is an bás á leagadh	Death lays them low;
Mná na seál á leanacht	The shawled women follow
Is mise fós ar marthain	While I live on
I measc na bplód gan ainm	Among the nameless crowds;
Gan 'Cé dhár díobh é' ar a mbéal	'Who is he?' doesn't spring to their lips,
Ná fios mo shloinne acu.	My name to them unknown.

A sense of personal displacement features prominently in Máirtín Ó Direáin's work and frames many references to his home place. In many of these references to Árainn, Ó Direáin emphasises the interconnection between person, kin and place that is intrinsic to Aran life but is lacking in his adoptive home in mainland Ireland. The connection to the physical landscape of Árainn is an important aspect of Aran identity, in the sense that many local men have, especially in the past, built or contributed to the building of, their own homes. Furthermore, many families on the island own a number of small fields in close proximity to their homes, and the maintenance of boundary limestone walls is a routine task for the Aran farmer. The significance of this connection to the land is wonderfully captured in Ó Direáin's poem *Stoite* [Uprooted] (ibid. 12-3). The translation is also from Mac Síomóin and Sealy:

Stoite

Thóg an fear seo teach	One man built a house
Is an fear úd	And another
Claí nó fál	A dyke or a wall
A mhair ina dhiaidh	Which outlived him
Is a choinnigh a chuimhne buan.	And kept his name alive.

These interlinking connections between person, kin and place are regularly acknowledged in Ó Direáin's work and it is such indexical links that make his poetry particularly relevant to the present discussion. Some of Ó Direáin's poems are poetic recountings of historical incidents that occured in Árainn. One of these poems *Triúr a Bádh* [Three who Drowned] is in memory of three neighbours who died at sea in 1939. The aforementioned schoolteacher and folklore collector Seosamh Ó Flannagáin was one of these men. He, along with my great grandfather Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin[61] and another local man by the name of Jamesy Ó Flaithearta had travelled by currach to Conamara to make a pilgrimage at Croagh Patrick (*Turas na Cruaiche*). Their return journey from Litir Mealláin to Árainn on the 31st July 1939 was an ill-fated one: all three men lost their lives to the sea on this day.[62] The poem below is taken from Eoghan Ó hAnluain's latest collection of Ó Direáin's poems (2010: 41); the translation is mine.[63]

Triúr a Bádh

Beidh cuimhne fada thiar ansiúd,	Long will the memories last in this western place,
Beidh cuimhne cruinn is géar,	Memories both precise and sharp,
Beidh cuimhne dubhach go héag,	These sorrowful memories will last forever,
Ar thriúr a tugadh ar siúl.	Of the three who were taken from us,
ag filleadh abhaile ó thuras na cruaiche,	On their return journey from Croagh Patrick
Agus i lár na mara thiar ansiúd.	And they deep in the western ocean.

[61] Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin, also known as Seáinín Tom Sheáin Phádraig an tSrutháin, was an accomplished narrator in his own right. He was also the storyteller in Robert Flaherty's *Oidhche Sheanchais* (1934).

[62] A truly poignant account of this incident is recounted in *Ó Thrá Anoir* (1985) written by Dónal Ó Flannagáin, son of Seosamh.

[63] The poem was first published in Ó Direáin's *Coinnle Geala* (1942); the translation is mine.

Beidh cuimhne ar oide oilte cóir, *M'oide féin seal thiar ansiúd,* *Fear a raibh gnaoi na ndaoine air,* *Ó tháinig sé chugainn ó Chontae an Chláir,* *Ní fheicfidh mise é arís go brách.*	Memories will remain of the just and learned educator, My own educator for a while back west, A man who had the love of the people, Since he came to us from Co. Clare, I, for one, will never set eyes on him again.
Beidh cuimhne ar sheanchaí thiar ansiúd, *De chine na nDireánach as Baile an tSrutháin,* *Seáinín mórchroíoch, croí na féile,* *Nár choigil an fial ar neach ariamh,* *Coimhthíoch ná muinteartha ina chall,* *Mairfidh a chuimhne lá is faide anonn.*	Memories will remain in this westward place, of a *seanchaí* from the Ó Direáin clan from the village of Sruthán, Big-hearted Seáinín, the life of the party, Never sparing his genorisity on anyone, Neither outsider nor local, His memory will last into the distant future.
Bíonn cuimhní fada in áit mar siúd, *Oícheanta garbha go ciúin cois teallaigh,* *Beidh cuimhne ar Shéamus aniar as Eoghanacht,* *De chine na bhFlaithbheartach thiar ansiúd,* *Séamus síodúil, saoithúil, béasach,* *Séamus múinte cainteach caoin.*	Memories last long in a place like that, Long stormy nights spent by the hearth, Memories will last of Séamus coming from Eoghanacht in the west, He of the Flaherty family back there, Gentle, pleasant, mannerly Séamus, Polite, talkative, refined Séamus.
Mise anseo anois i bhfad ó bhaile, *I measc daoine nach díobh mé,* *Dream nach eol dóibh fáth mo bhuartha,* *Dream nach dtuigeann cúis mo bhróin,* *Óir níorbh aithnid dóibh an triúr,* *Ach ba mhór le rá iad thiar ansiúd.*	And I here now far from home, Amongst people to whom I am not related, People who know not the reason for my grief, People who do not understand my sorrow, As they knew not the three, But they were well renowned in that westward place.

The poem begins with a proclamation that the three individuals will long be remembered amongst their kin in their home place. The poet proceeds to recall each of the three men individually, recounting their connections not only to their kin, but also to their home village. We are reminded that Ó Flannagáin came to us from Co. Clare, indexing both his former home and his local status in Árainn while explicit references are made to the two local mens' kin as well — they are of Dirrane and Flaherty stock respectively — and to their respective villages of Sruthán and Eoghanacht. The connection that islanders make between themselves and their geographical and social home, are made explicit in this poem. Not only are each of the three men referenced in relation to their village but the poet himself is in a state of discontent with being removed from these connections. Living

far from home amongst people who know neither him, his kin, nor those to whom the poem is dedicated, he is reluctantly disconnected from the myriad of social relationships that constitute Aran life.

The second poem is from one of the poet's better known collections, *Ó Mórna agus Dánta Eile* (1957) and features a poem entitled *Do Dharach Ó Direáin*, a tribute to the storyteller at the centre of this study.

Do Dharach Ó Direáin (Seanchaí as Eoghanacht, Árainn, a d'éag Eanáir 1950)[64]

Cén scéal, a Dharaigh, ón tír úd thall? *Ar casadh Seáinín ort ná Séamus fós?* *An bhfuil Mac Rí Éireann féin san áit?* *An bhfuil Fionn Mac Cumhaill ná Conán ann?* *An raibh an Chailleach Bhéara romhat sa ród?* *Scaoil chugainn do scéal, a Dharaigh chóir!*	What news, Darach, from the land beyond? Did you meet Seainin yet, or Seamus? Is the King of Ireland's Son himself there? Is Fionn Mac Cumhaill or Conan there? Was Cailleach Bhearra out in front of you on the road? Let us have your story [i.e. news], Darach, my honest man!
Chuireas do thuairisc uair ar Cháit *Ach d'fhágais ise féin gan tásc;* *Fóir orainn, a Dharaigh, go beo,* *Is aithris dúinn gach eachtra i gceart,* *Ach b'áil liom a rá cén mhaith bheith leat,* *Tá an fód, mo léan, i do bhéal go beacht.*	I enquired after you one time from Cait But you have left even her without tidings; Come quickly to our aid, Darach, And narrate every adventure correctly for us, But, I would want to say, what's the use of going on about you, Since, to my great sorrow, the sod sits trimly in your mouth

This poem is particularly pertinent to the present discussion in that it provides numerous links to the storyteller's various social personae mentioned earlier. As with the previous poem, the poet characterises himself through his use of reference. The informal register of the first couple of lines define both the storyteller's and the poet's local statuses. On first name terms with Darach,[65] the poet proceeds to enquire after their two deceased neighbours, two of the three men who drowned in

[64] Poem from (Ó hAnluain 1980: 66); translation from Ó Crualaoich (2005: 47-48).

[65] 'Daraigh' is simply the vocative case of 'Darach'. It is not surprising that the poet selects the storyteller's official name as opposed to his local genealogical name, both in the title and in the examples throughout the poem, especially given that the poem is presented in *written* format and for a wide audience of mainly non-local people. Interestingly, though, in the dialect of Irish that is spoken in Árainn, there is no phonetic distinction made between 'Daraigh' and 'Dara' so that when reading the poem in the dialect of both the storyteller and the poet, one is essentially speaking the more intimate, and local, version of his name — Dara.

the aforementioned boating accident — Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin and Jamesy Ó Flaithearta. This line provides a rich source of local social information and brings Darach as local man and neighbour to the fore. The remainder of the verse, however, enquires into mythical figures that presumably appeared in the narrator's stories, evoking Darach the storyteller. 'Cáit' of the second verse refers to his wife 'Cáit Mhicil Mhaitiú' who, according to the second line, is herself 'left without tidings' of her husband. In this instance, the role of spouse is the stronger voice. Next comes a petition to 'narrate every adventure correctly for us' signifying, once again, the professional narrator of lore. The reader of this poem is also indexically assessed: only those with a certain amount of contextualised local knowledge would understand the significance of the mention of Seáinín and Séamus. A conscientious reader might also, of course, make the intertextual link with Ó Direáin's aforementioned poem *Triúr a Bádh*. Apart from being neighbours of Darach Ó Direáin, there is a further connection indexically linking the men to each other, a connection that was brought to my attention during my interviews in Árainn: the currach in which the men made their ill-fated voyage was lent to them by Darach Ó Direáin.[66] The fact that Seáinín Tom was himself a renowned storyteller provides yet another connection to Darach's role as narrator and offers an apt introduction to the lines of enquiry that follow in the remainder of the verse.

Through these various connections the poet characterises his own local status. Indeed, the use of the first person plural, prepositional pronouns (*scaoil chugainn; fóir orainn; aithris dúinn*)[67] also signify the poet's local stance within the community. He personally spoke to Cáit about her late husband and he is perhaps indicating his dual status as local and as professional verbal artist when he laments both the loss of his fellow islander as well as the loss of a proficient narrator of lore. Árainn or, perhaps modern society itself, is a lesser place with the absence of such a talented verbal artist. As noted by Gearóid Ó Crualaoich, the poet realises the cultural significance of the seanchaí and petitions him to return to this world and impart his expert knowledge and lore on the living:

> [...] the poet turns to his remembered experience of the imaginative riches of the *seanchaí*'s repertoire and performance. Everything could be right again if only Darach would let loose his stories and his storytelling, narrating each item and event of lore exactly as tradition had it (2005: 47).

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[66] See the section 'Oral accounts revisited' for local articulations of this fact.

[67] [Release to us (your story); come quickly to our aid; narrate to us.]

8.12 Oral Accounts Revisited: The Benefits of Reflexive Research

During my interviews with Aran Islanders, it was revealing to note how locals constructed themselves, as well as the researcher, through various acts of reference. By using Ó Direáin's local name 'Dara Neide Pheaidí', informants were not only indexing themselves and me as members of the particular speech-chain that comprehends such a name, they were also signifying our combined local status that understands the kin connections made manifest in the genealogical name. Each informant endeavoured to place Ó Direáin for me, in as much detail as possible, within his kin network. Usually beginning with where Ó Direáin was born and where his family before him came from, the conversation would invariably lead to a discussion on the storyteller's siblings and relations. All of this, not only placed Ó Direáin spatio-temporally, but also served to place the interviewee and myself in relation to Ó Direáin, and in relation to one another. Some interviews contain pages of this placing where Ó Direáin's siblings are mentioned, as well as to whom they were married, and at times, who their spouses in turn were related to. This intricate charting involved the recollection of a multitude of referents, for the benefit of the researcher. At times, I was unable to immediately place an individual, in which case my informant would summon yet another set of referents. This continued for some time, linking various (sometimes living, often-deceased) individuals through their genealogical connections, eventually leading to a living referent that I could successfully place. Only when the respondent was satisfied that he had effectively located Ó Direáin for me, within this web of kin relations, would the interview proceed. There was also, I came to notice, a geographic aspect to this social placing whereby the location of a person's house became an important factor in identity configuration. As noted by Lele:

> These two coordinates, genealogies or family lines and homes or physical residence, serve to help one navigate the cultural landscape (2009: 104).

The following extract from an interview offers an example of this social and physical placing and demonstrates the importance that this particular informant placed on both the ancestral and the geographic location of individuals.

P *Dara… Dara… Dara Neide Pheaidí an t-ainm a bhidís a thabhairt air, ma déara. Rugadh in Eoghanacht é. Ta mé a ceapadh gurb ea..gur in Eoghanacht..mar bhí an teach…an teach a raibh siad ag maireachtáil ann…. Ansin aníos ag t'Chóilín Mhicilín.*
[Dara .. Dara .. Dara Neide Pheaidí was what they used to call him, you know. He was born in Onaght. I think it was there, that it was in Onaght, because the house was, the house that they were living in, there, up from Coilín Mhicilín's [house]..]

M *Sea an teachín beag sin a …*

[Yes, that little house that...]

P *Bhí sé ann uair amháin*
[It was there once]

M *Sea*
[Yes]

P *An teach a bhfuil… Bhí deartháir eile ansin aige, Stephen Neide Pheaidí. Bhí sé sin pósta le… thiar ag… le bean… Bríd Rua. Ní chuimhníonn tusa uirthi b'fhéidir.*
[The house that .. He had another brother then, Stephen Neide Pheaidí. He was married to ... back at ... to a woman .. Bríd Rua. You don't remember her maybe.

M *Ah ní chuimhním uirthi ach chuala mé caint uirthi.*
[Ah, I don't remember her but I have heard of her]

P *Ná ar Dara. Ní chuimhníonn tú ar Dara ach an oiread.*
Agus ansin bhí deartháir eile aige. Tom Mór ansin. Ach níl fhios agam cá raibh sé sin ag maireachtáil.
[Or Dara either. You don't remember Dara either. And then he had another brother. Tom *Mór* [big] then. But I don't know where he was living.

M *Tom, ab ea, a bhí air?*
[Tom, was it, he was called?]

P *Sea. Tom Mhór a thugaidís air, a bhfuilis agat* ..[*focal dothuigthe*].. *máthair Pádraig Tom Mhóir, ba iníon leis é.*
Julia Tom Mhóir. Ba é [*focal dothuigthe*] *Pádraig Tom Mhóir ansin ... Dirranes. Agus bhí deartháir Patch Neide Pheaidí. Sin deartháir go ... Patch… bhfuil fhios agat? Deartháir go Dara é Patch… agus Dara go Stephen.*
Sea. Ach Tom.. Neide agus Tom.
[Yes. Tom Mór they used to call him, you know, [unclear word] Pádraig Tom Mhóir's mother, she was his daughter. Julia Tom Mhóir. [unclear word] Dirranes. And there was a brother, Patch Neide Pheaidí. That's a brother of.. Patch.. you know. Patch was a brother of Dara, and Dara was a brother of Stephen. Yes. But Tom .. Neide and Tom.

M *Deartháireacha [iad].*
[[They were] brothers].

This informant, along with many others whom I interviewed, made explicit reference to a connection between myself and Darach Ó Direáin through the inanimate object of a currach — a connection of which I was unaware until I began the interviewing process. The story of my great grandfather's accident at sea was often retold to me during interviews, but I was also routinely informed that the currach in which the men were travelling that day belonged to Darach Ó Direáin. The introduction of this fact provided an immediate link between a relative of mine and the man whom I was researching and, importantly, it prompted a change in footing in so far as it summoned my local persona, complete with local social history, to the fore as opposed to my position as academic researcher. Once I realised the unifying value of this fact, I eventually began to introduce Seáinín Tom into the conversation myself as a means of establishing a tangible connection between all those involved — whether by presence or by reference — in the speech event. The following interview excerpts demonstrate these various connections:

Interview 1:
An churrach sin a bádh do Dheaidó, Seáinín Tom inti, aige bhí sé sin.
[That currach that your *Deaidó* was drowned in, it was he [Dara] who had that.]

Interview 2:
Ba le Dara an churrach a bhí aige an lá sin nuair a bádh é fhéin agus Flannagan[68] *agus Jamsie.*
[It was Dara's currach that he [Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin] had that day when himself and Flannagan and Jamsie drowned.]

Interview 3:

Interviewer:	*Nár bádh é sin in éindí le…* [Didn't he [Seosamh Ó Flanagáin] drown along with….]
Respondent:	*Bádh, bádh, bádh, in éineacht le do Dheaidó.* [He did, he did, he did. Along with your *Deaidó*.]

Both researcher and respondents are attempting to reconnect all those present, to one another and to the individual at the centre of the research, establishing links that contribute to an intricate web of indexical connections.

As demonstrated above, in relation to various instances of naming, the stances that individuals take in conversation are situationally based so that the way in which one aligns oneself to another, and to the speech event can change depending on, amongst other factors, who else may be present. On asking one individual if he would mind some day being interviewed for any information he may have regarding Ó Direáin, he politely declined, stating that he 'wouldn't be the best person to ask' and suggested, instead, that I speak to another more qualified individual. I did as directed; I spoke with the person so recommended, and an interview was arranged for a particular night that week. Upon entering the house, however, both the person that I first approached and the person that I had arranged to interview were present, and a lively and informative conversation ensued. Unbeknownst to me until the time of the interview, the person whose house we were in — i.e. the person to whom I was directed — was a grandnephew of Darach Ó Direáin, which presumably explained the initial reluctance of the first individual to be the *main* informant in matters relating to the storyteller. It would appear then that immediately upon my request, the man whom I had originally approached began to pre-assess his stance with respect to the narrator Ó Direáin, and to the storyteller's grandnephew with whom he advised me to speak. Although declining my request to interview him

[68] Note the use of Seosamh Ó Flannagáin's name. He was commonly referred to in interviews by his surname alone which is in keeping with my observation that if one has an unusual surname it is sometimes used in isolation.

directly, he was more than willing to participate as a secondary informant in a narrational event that recognised the appropriate hierarchical alignments.

During the interview, the usual social placing of myself, the informants and Ó Direáin took place. In the course of these stance negotiations, one of the men began to distinguish between the various Ó Direáin/Dirrane[69] families on the island and provided me with incredibly detailed genealogical trees of each family with that surname, all the while ensuring to reference individuals from families that I, as a younger generation, would recognise. Both men participated in the discussion, taking turns explaining the genealogical links between various locally-named persons, explaining how each person's surname, or in some instances their maiden name, was Dirrrane. As they spoke, I attempted to draw a chart of the four Dirrane families that were mentioned, paying particular attention, of course, to the family tree of Darach Ó Direáin. Upon completion, I was surprised to note that they had not, at any point, mentioned my connections to the name Dirrane and casually asked which of the four families my grandmother — whose name was Dirrane before she married a Mullin — belonged to. The response was a cautious '*O bhuel*, *dream eile ar fad iad sin.*' ['Oh well, they're a different lot altogether'.] Not altogether content with this answer, I gently persisted and was told, rather hesitantly, the following story:

My grandmother's father was a man named Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin and his great grandfather came from across the bay in Conamara. He (the great grandfather of Seáinín Tom, that is) and a couple of other men were fishing one day when an accident occured and their currach capsized. In those days, I was told, fishermen would use a plank of sorts – that was four or so feet in length – as a float for their nets: such a device was being used this particular day. The men all survived and my great grandfather's great grandfather came ashore at An Gleannachán, in the village of Eoghanacht, in Árainn, holding on for dear life to this plank. He stayed and married on the island and subsequently started another family of Dirranes, of which the aforementioned Seáinín Tom was one. The nickname 'Na Plainceannaí' [The Planks] was born from this incident and I was informed that when Seáinín Tom was involved in an argument (a number of generations later), he was met with the following observation:
'Ar ndóigh, ní as Árainn sibhse ar chor ar bith. Nach isteach ar phlainc a tháinig sibh' [Sure ye're not even from the island. Wasn't it in [to Aran] on a plank that your people came.]

My point here, apart from relating an amusing story regarding kin relations, is that astute participants are ever-ready to change footing relative to the situation at hand. There is a constant, often subconscious, awareness of the numerous social factors that are at play in any given speech situation and the observant and competent speaker will use their linguistic and metapragmatic skills

[69] In keeping with the version of the name used by my informants, I use the English version 'Dirrane' for the purpose of this discussion.

to alter their alingments accordingly. Although the topic at hand, in the interview above, was the genealogical history of the various Dirrane families on the island, one entire family and their interrelated kin was omitted without hesitation. I can think of only two reasons why this occured. Perhaps, it was presumed that I, as a member of this family, would be more qualified to speak of my own genealogy than my two informants. Or alternatively, it may have been felt that the history of this particular family could not be told without including the anecdotal story regarding the non-local origins (albeit some seven generations earlier) of 'Na Plainceannaí'. Either way, it is revealing in terms of metapragmatic awareness, that neither respondant introduced these Dirranes into the conversation, until I wondered as to their blatant omission.

8.13 Constructing a Biography: Creating an Identity[70]

The completion of the interviews that I conducted in Árainn signalled the conclusion of the information-gathering process in relation to Darach Ó Direáin. All that remained to do, at that point, was to assemble the various fragments of information that I had gathered, from both written and oral accounts, into a short biographical description of the storyteller. In this climate of reflexive research, however, it was imperative that I inquire into the implications of producing such a seemingly systematic account from such a wide array of varied sources. Presenting the life of Ó Direáin in the format of a biographical piece, creates what Pierre Bourdieu (2000 [1986]: 300) refers to as a 'biographical illusion' wherein:

> [life is] organized as a history, and unfolds according to a chronological order, with a beginning, an origin (both in the sense of a starting point and of a principle, a *raison d'etre*, a primal force), and a termination, which is also a goal.

Such order and organisation is, of course, considered necessary for reasons of legibility and understanding; without some form of logical direction, biographies and life histories would merely consist of a conglomeration of seemingly unrelated and, often disputed, facts. Bourdieu suggests that in the process of constructing a life-story, biographers become aware of their role as 'professional interpreters' of related biographical events. It is equally important, he notes, that biographers acknowledge the extent of their own involvement in the construction process — a process that inevitably results in a *coherent* account that describes a structured series of events, i.e. a life history. Heeding the advice of Pierre Bourdieu, Charles Briggs, James Clifford and others, and

[70] This section is a prelude to a more indepth discussion, on matters of textual construction and textual authority, in chapters 9 and 10.

putting into practice a metadiscursive analysis similar to that discussed in chapter 7 of this thesis, it became crucial to the project at hand that I examine the contexts in which the multiple written accounts relating to Ó Direáin — including this one — were collected. Each of the examined sources, within the context of its own frame of reference, offers valuable fragments of information regarding the individual. The process by which I extracted these fragments of information from their institutional and intertextual framings, with a view to recontextualising them into a single coherent biography, is central to a reflexive understanding of the project. The written references to Ó Direáin by the folklore collectors of the nineteen thirties, for example, were composed with folklore archive regulations in mind.[71] Likewise, the requirements of the Birth and Death records are basic facts such as name, date of birth or death, and parents' names. The context of the many other written sources all give details required by the discipline or institution to which the collecting agents were affiliated. They are, in other words, already framed and entextualised by the time the current researcher, intent on producing a biographical account, happens upon them.

The same is true of the information acquired orally through the interviewing process and it is my own role and position of responsibility within this process that I now briefly address. Speaking to the last generation who had personal recollections of Ó Direáin as neighbour, friend, farmer or storyteller is, indeed, a valuable resource of information but it also poses questions regarding the authority over which aspects of an identity surface and those which will never come to light. The ethnographic interview situation has an inevitable impact on the outcome of research. Such determining factors might include: interview guidance; the presence or absence of a recording device; gender, class or racial differences between researcher and interviewee.[72] In the case of the project of biographical research, however, there are yet further deciding factors: these include the accuracy of the interviewees' recollections of another individual as well as their willingness to divulge and circulate certain information. This willingness, or reluctance, to disclose information may depend on the informant's relationship to the person they are describing as well as their relationship, or level of familiarity, with the researcher (an example of which is discussed in chapter 10).

Multiple voices are thus responsible for the creation of a textual representation of Darach Ó Direáin; and this representation, according to the laws of textual authority, will eventually contribute to an *ascribed* identity of Ó Direáin. The role of the researcher in compiling these

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[71] Once again, the context of these references are explored more fully in chapter 9.

[72] The interview situation is discussed further in chapter 10.

various sources into a cohesive narrative becomes one of responsibility to the person being described. There is an even greater responsibility on the biographer in the case of the subject of a biography being deceased, as the person whose life story is being told cannot participate in the dialogue of representation. Furthermore, as with the various accounts discussed in chapter 7, in relation to a discursive history of Árainn, once a life-story is committed to print, a certain textual authority prevails. An awareness of the editorial role of the researcher, then, in the construction of such a textual account is germane to any research project. The detailed description of how the various information on Ó Direáin was acquired, and the discussion on the pragmatic effects that are indexed in the use of his various names, is intended to expose some of the metadiscursive practices that are otherwise embedded in this project. Having considered and interpreted the various sources that I collected regarding Darach Ó Direáin, I can offer the following tentative biographical account of the storyteller involved in this collection.

Dara(ch) Ó Direáin, known locally as Dara Neide Pheaidí, was from the village of Eoghanacht in Árainn, Co. Galway. He was born in c.1878 and died in January 1950 at around the age of 72. He was a farmer, fisherman, cobbler and storyteller. The son of Neid Pheaidí Ó Direáin and Barbara Ní Bhriain, Darach was the eldest of five children. He married Cáit Mhicil Mhaitiú (née Mullin) from the village of Creig an Chéirín, Árainn and, according to local sources, had six children – Éamonn, Kate, Nan, Bid, Baba and Mary.
Ó Direáin was a renowned storyteller from whom such notable scholars as James Delargy, Máire Mac Neill and Robin Flower collected. Many of his stories are, as yet, unpublished. One notable exception is the tale 'An Eascon Nimhe' ('The Poisonous Eel') which was collected by Seosamh Ó Flannagáin in 1931 and which appears in the journal Béaloideas (1939). Describing him as 'a seanchaí, a man of stories and a type of philosopher' the poet, Máirtín Ó Direáin, wrote a poem in his memory in which he petitions the storyteller to speak to him from beyond the grave but accepts, in the concluding line, that: 'Tá an fód, mo léan, i do bhéal go beacht'.

A biographical account such as this will inevitably omit various contributions, deductions, assumptions and conclusions involved in the process of construction. It is hoped, however, that this reflexive explanation can contribute to an awareness of the complexities involved in constructing, assembling and editing the so-called facts that constitute the representation of a biographised individual. Further facts will probably surface regarding this individual and the account will develop as additional information emerges. New documentary sources may be uncovered, or new interviews conducted, and a coherent edited account will eventually materialise in accordance with, among other factors, the affiliation of the researcher. This account, then, is an interim report on an ongoing project. Anthony Cohen revisits a description he once made of a Shetland Island man named Henry — a description that emerged from personal communication

with the man himself and also from local people's opinions of him — and surmises, '(h)e would not recognise himself in other people's versions of him' (Cohen 1992: 222). One wonders if the same would be true of Darach Ó Direáin.

8.14 Conclusion: What's in a Name?

Archival references, anecdotal accounts and ethnographic findings all contribute to the construction of a biographical description of Ó Direáin. Depending on the source, the man is referred to as Dara/Darach/MacDara, Ó Direáin/Ó Dioráin; McDarra Derrane; The Fairy Cobbler or Dara Neide Pheaidí. During the course of my research, it became important to place this individual in relation to the wide array of names that were emerging from the various sources, especially when other typical identifying factors such as age, and date of birth and death, were incongruent. This process led to an investigation of the naming practices of Árainn. An analysis of name usage in everyday interaction brought to light the underlying social life of names and opened up interesting avenues of exploration in terms of indexical relations between name users and name bearers in this particular speech community. Equally important is the role of the audience in the various instances of name usage where the type of name that is used, or not used, in certain contexts can be determined by who the addressee is or, indeed, who the *intended* audience is. Considering the various participants that are involved in an act of naming, then, the act itself is a collaborative accomplishment, not unlike the production of a text. Furthermore, a common theme in all the instances of naming explored above, is that each type of name — whether it be an official name, a genealogical name or a nickname — is produced and presented within an interdiscursive economy that contains a social past, present and future. An awareness of this fact allows for a more pragmatically meaningful relationship to the various usages of names. Such interdiscursive activity connects instances of speech to prior occasions of speech — a phenomenon that was discussed in the previous chapter and will be explored again, in relation to texts, in the following chapters. Touching on the notion of textual construction, I attempted to provide an intertextually and interdiscursively transparent account of the information gathering process that resulted in a short biographic description of Ó Direáin. In so doing, my role in the process was evaluated and, it is hoped, that presenting an authoritive preferred reading of Darach Ó Direáin was avoided.

Chapter Nine — Performing Folklore: Constructing Texts

9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the various stages of construction involved in the Robin Flower and Darach Ó Direáin collection of folklore. Continuing with the theme of entextualisation that has framed the preceding chapters, I investigate the social life of folklore stories, from their narration, to their collection and inscription, and eventually to their afterlife as folklore texts.

By the time Robin Flower came to visit the Aran Islands in 1933, their status as traditional repositories was already firmly established in the national imaginary. In examining a collection of folklore from Árainn, then, one must take into consideration its interrelationship with the broader sociohistorical and political processes that are at play. In this respect, the F/Ó D Collection is viewed as a series of events, or a process, as opposed to a complete and bounded object.[73]

With respect to the narration of the F/Ó D Collection, the stories are presented to us in written form, without an aural record and without any references to the storytelling event. In an attempt to provide insight into the narration events that produced such stories as presented in this collection, I begin below with a general discussion on storytelling nights in the Aran Islands, with an emphasis on the performance event and on the collaborative role of the audience in the production of folktales. Following this, I discuss the folklore endeavour of the early 20th century that encouraged the transcription and recording of these stories as part of the nation-building agenda of that time period. Finally, I pay attention to the role of collectors and editors in the process of text production. Central to the latter part of the discussion will be a return to the notion of power and textual authority in academic disciplines.

9.2 Telling Stories: Performance and the Narration Event

> The art of the folk-tale is in its telling; it was never meant to be written, nor to be read, nor to be studied by students interested in its linguistic content — it was meant to be told (Séamus Ó Duilearga 1942: 32).

Many of us will never have had an opportunity to hear a gifted verbal artist narrating in a traditional setting. We will, instead, read their stories in the form of annotated texts that comment on everything from the morphology of the tales to the linguistic features of the narrator. In an attempt to reconcile the written F/Ó D Collection with the performance of the stories, I explore various

[73] This interpretation of the text is in keeping with the essays presented in A. Paredes & R. Bauman (1972): '[a] reorientation from the traditional focus upon folklore as "item" — the things of folklore — to a conceptualization of folklore as "event" — the doing of folklore' (1972: xi).

accounts relating to the art of storytelling in the Aran Islands. During this discussion, I shall demonstrate that the process of entextualisation began not with the folklorist extracting the story from its 'original' setting, but with the narrator offering his audience a piece of discourse that is framed as performance. Consequently, the performance is but one in a series of recontextualisations of the narrated folktale.

Prior to the advent of performance studies in the 1970s, the occasion of narration was, generally speaking, viewed as secondary to the resultant folklore material. In the early part of the previous century, for example, the dominant approach to folklore was one of rescue and preservation and the primary objective of folklore organisations was the transfer of lore into tangible and enduring written texts. Despite the fact that the primary objective of the Irish Folklore Commission was to accumulate as much material as possible for the purpose of preservation, and that as a consequence, the particulars of the individual storytellers were confined to basic details such as name, age and geographic location, this is not to suggest that the role of the storyteller was viewed as insignificant. To the contrary, collectors were encouraged to record more detailed biographical details from their informants, but due to budget and time restrictions, such information was rarely recorded (Briody 2008: 432-4). Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook of Irish Folklore* also encouraged a detailed description of the setting of the storytelling event[74] but, once again, this information did not accompany the published stories. In the absence of this contextualising information for each storytelling event, we must look instead to the general accounts that have been produced on the traditional storytelling event in Ireland, most notably James Delargy's (Séamus Ó Duilearga's) seminal essay *The Gaelic Storyteller* wherein he states: '[t]he real story-teller is a creative literary artist' (1945: 17) and Georges Zimmermann's comprehensive and decade-spanning book *The Irish Storyteller* (2001).

The performance approach to folkloristics began to highlight the storytelling event as a 'mode of communicative behaviour' and 'a specially marked mode of action' (Bauman 1992: 41 & 44) that was worthy of analysis in its own right. The nature of this mode of analysis focuses less on the resultant texts and encourages an examination of the many interpretive and emergent aspects of the narration event. Using the tools of performance theory, we begin to see that storytellers of times gone by were themselves in the business of *creating* texts, long before the folklore collectors began

[74] "Give an account of the setting in which the story was told. [...] What conditions were necessary on the part of the story-teller and the audience? Describe the scene. Were certain stories favourites with both narrator and audience? Give details. Did story-tellers tell only tales of their own choice, or did they comply with requests for particular tales? Did they use gestures? Describe. Were interruptions or interjections during the telling of a story resented or welcomed by the story-teller and the audience? What was the usual type of comment or interjection by a member of the audience during the course of a tale?" (Ó Súilleabháin 2014 [1942]: 556).

committing their stories to print. We start to understand that the seemingly raw material that was described as falling from the lips of the storyteller onto the page of the folklorist consisted, instead, of creative pieces of verbal art being delivered by highly skilled performers. Viewing narrators as performers, rather than passive conduits of lore, enables us to examine their *modus operandi*, including the reciprocal relationship with their audience, in a more constructive manner. Richard Bauman (1977), drawing on the works of Erving Goffman (1974) and Gregory Bateson (1972), provides us with metacommunicative frames that serve as markers or 'keys' to performance, and highlights the collaborative relationship between narrator and audience in the performance setting. Through the presentation and interpretation of various keys to performance, both storyteller and audience are responsible for setting up the frame within which the ensuing speech act is to be interpreted. Performance, as described by Bauman and Briggs:

> puts the act of speaking on display – objectifies it, lifts it to a degree from its interactional setting and opens it to scrutiny by an audience. Performance heightens awareness of the act of speaking and licenses the audience to evaluate the skill and effectiveness of the performer's accomplishment (1990: 73).

I turn now to the storytelling scene in the Aran Islands. In the absence of any account of the event that produced the F/Ó D stories, I rely on information drawn from a number of other sources relating to storytelling events in these western islands. We are fortunate to have an account, albeit a fictionalised one, of Darach Ó Direáin's narration abilities and style from Pat Mullen's embellished account of Aran life (Mullen 1936). In order to provide a more detailed description of storytelling in the Aran Islands, I supplement Mullen's account with the findings from John Messenger (1964: 202-204) and Heinrich Becker's (2000: 15-23) separate accounts of storytelling in Inis Oírr. Both Messenger and Becker presumably used the same narrator as their main informant, who is referred to as Joe O'Donnell in the former account and Joe Ó Domhnaill in the latter. I also provide examples from the stories of Darach Ó Direáin and fellow Aran Island narrator Máirtín Neile Ó Conghaile, in support of the findings from the aforementioned accounts. Another important contribution to the Aran Islands storytelling scene is Robert Flaherty's short Irish language film *Oidhche Sheanchais* (1934) and the published text of the story narrated by the film's storyteller Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin.[75] The film, of course, is a staged performance based on an Aran storytelling scene and, accordingly, cannot be viewed as a regular storytelling event but, rather, '[a] record of an

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[75] The published texts referred to are the undated pamphlet published by the Department of Education around the time of the film's release and the recent transcription and translation provided by Natasha Sumner in Sumner, Hillers and McKenna (2015).

event staged in a London film studio [where] [a]ll of the participants had gained experience as actors through their roles in Flaherty's *Man of Aran*' (Sumner, Hillers & McKenna 2015: 7). References to the film in the context of the following discussion on Aran storytelling are thus provided in the form of footnotes. Finally, Delargy's *The Gaelic Storyteller* and Zimmermann's *The Irish Storyteller* also serve as invaluable supplementary sources of information, in regard to the Irish storytelling event.

My aim for the following section is twofold: I wish to provide a picture of the storytelling scene in the Aran Islands at the time that Ó Direáin was narrating his stories, and in so doing, I explore the narrative event in terms of the various keys to performance that frame and guide the event. Audience participation is central to the discussion as a whole.

According to Zimmermann (2001: 458), the traditional time of year for storytelling in Ireland was from Hallowe'en through until May Day. It would appear that this varied slightly in Inis Oírr, of the Aran Islands, where the storytelling season ended at Christmas in time for the recommencement of the fishing season in the New Year (Messenger 1964: 202). It was customary for people to visit their neighbours on these long winter nights, a custom known as *áirneán*. For the night to become one of storytelling, however, people either visited the house of a known narrator or another's house where a storyteller was known to frequent. The average audience was about twelve people, comprising mostly of men and older children although the women and younger children of the hosting house were also present. The typical session lasted for a few hours, from between seven and nine o'clock in the evening until midnight, and anything from a portion of a lengthy story, to one or more shorter narratives were delivered on any given night. The same narrator might hold the floor for the evening, or he or a member of the audience might call upon another to contribute once a story was completed. Neither food nor drink was served at these events but the host provided a pipe and tobacco (of which more below) that was passed between the men for the duration of the narratives. A seat to the right of the open hearth was reserved for the storyteller, and the host, or his wife, would occupy the left-hand fireside seat. This combined synopsis of storytelling taken from Messenger and Becker's accounts is corroborated by Zimmermann's description of the Irish storytelling setting, wherein the left-hand seat was generally preferred by the woman of the house primarily so that she could continue her cooking duties by the fire whilst people gathered around the hearth (Zimmermann 2001: 455). Before any storytelling commenced, the day's events or particular incidents of interest were discussed. Becker (2000: 16-18) describes various local incidents that would catch the interest of the householder and engage the gathering crowd in

conversation. At this time, there was also the opportunity for those who had travelled or worked abroad to relate their experiences in foreign lands to the assembled crowd. All of these anecdotes served as appetisers, if you like, to the main event; not quite fully-fledged performances, yet setting the scene and paving the way for the anticipated night of entertainment.

Pat Mullen's fictionalised account of Darach Ó Direáin corroborates the preceding accounts by Becker and Messenger. The first section below tells of the manner in which information regarding an anticipated night of storytelling was circulated. It also demonstrates the high standing of Ó Direáin as a storyteller in the community and describes the highly social aspect of the storytelling event:

> "Hugh," said Peadar one Sunday night, "how would you like to come up to Patch Feetoe's and hear Dara Nedda Faddy, the great story-teller from the west, telling a story? They say he is coming to-night. He is the man they call the Cobbler because he learned to mend shoes when he was with the fairies long ago. What do you say?"
> "I never heard any of those old story-tellers at it," said Hugh. "I'd like to go very much."
> "Yes, do, Avic," said his mother, "[……] Besides," she added, "it won't do you any harm to mix a little more with the young men of the village." (Mullen 1936: 218-219).

A seat of honour is left vacant for the narrator, which he assumes upon entering the home, indicating that both he and the audience are aware of their respective roles for the evening. The social atmosphere and the air of excitement surrounding the arrival of the narrator is also evident in the following passage:

> A dozen young men had already gathered at the Feetoe's by the time Hugh and Peadar arrived. One and all had made themselves as comfortable as possible in expectation of the story-teller's coming. They had taken down armfuls of dried ferns from the loft to lie on and were now stretched out at full length on top of the bracken. The Feetoe sat in one of the chimney corners, the other being reserved for Dara Nedda Faddy.
> [……] Suddenly there came a rap on the door.
> "He is here," muttered the men in hushed voices. "This is Dara."
> "Come in," said the Feetoe. The latch was pulled and the story-teller came in, important and dignified-looking.
> Hugh looked at him attentively. He saw a man of about sixty years of age with a fortnight's growth of beard on his face. He had twinkling blue eyes and wore a white bauneen. His vest and trousers were dyed a rich deep blue. He wore stockings and a pair of pampooties. His hair was rather long and was turning grey and most of it was covered with a very rakish and battered felt hat.
> "A hundred thousand welcomes to you," said the Feetoe; "sit in the corner there and make yourself comfortable."

> “Indeed I was thinking it was for me the seat was left empty,” he said as he sat down, and tipping his hat well back on his head he warmed his hands by the fire (ibid. 219-220).

Next comes the customary discussions and relaying of local news. This allows the narrator to ease into his surroundings and prepare for his impending performance. It also adds a further element of anticipation to the atmosphere:

> “What news have you hereabouts?” he [i.e. Dara] asked. “I heard ye got a lot of the flour that was going the time of the wrack.”
> Patch Feetoe answered most of Dara’s questions (ibid.: 220).

Eventually, either the host or an audience member will put forward a request for a story. The narrator reluctantly obliges and the performance begins:

> After about half an hour, Peadar, seeing that the story-teller was in good humour, said: “Dara, you ought to tell us one of your old stories. Hugh here never heard the likes of you telling the stories of long ago.”
> “There are so many stories running through my head,” he answered, “that they are going astray on me. However, I may have one for ye in a minute.” He bent his head and covered his face with his hands and seemed to be lost in profound thought. They all waited expectantly, some with serious faces and some with sly winks at one another that said: “He has the story in his mind all the time, he just wants to get us all worked up so we will take more interest in it.” After a few minutes, with a couple of coughs and clearing of his throat, the Cobbler began his story
> (ibid.: 221).

Indeed, it is commonplace for a storyteller to state that he must take a moment to recall a tale, indicating to his audience that he is not eagerly awaiting an opportunity to perform.[76] Bauman describes this display of initial reluctance as a specific key to performance. In his own words, such a ‘disclaimer of performance’ :

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[76] The following is a transcript from Flaherty’s *Oidhche Sheanchais* as provided in Sumner et al. (2015: 10). The translation is from the same source (2015: 13). I have altered the names of the storyteller and the audience members to denote both their local first names and their surnames.

> [Peaits Rua Ó Maoláin] *Bhuel ó tharla an t-amhrán thart anois tá sé chomh maith dúinn ... do Sheán píosa sea ... seanchas d’amhrán a thabhairt uaidh nó de scéal a thabhairt uaidh.* [Well, since the song’s over now, John may as well tell us a bit of song-lore or a story.]
> [Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin] *Á, ar ndóigh.* [Ah, I suppose so.]*
> [Coilín an Ghabha Mac an Rí (Tiger King)] *Déan, a Sheáin, mas é do thoil é.* [Please do, John.]
> [Maggie Tom Uí Dhireáin] *Tabharfaidh sé go deimhin.* [He will, surely.]
> [Seáinín] [...] *go gcaithfidh mé, ar ndóigh. Ar chuala sibh an scéal seo riamh faoi Mháirtín Mac an Rí agus faoina chlann?* [I suppose I’ll have to. Have you ever heard the story about Martin Conroy and his children?]
> [Micilín Ó Dioláin] *Níor chuala.* [No.]
> [Peaits] *Níor chuala muid.* [We haven’t.]

*The phrase *Á, ar ndóigh* can also be translated as a more hesitative ‘Ah, sure...’ or ‘Ah, well..’ which perhaps instigated the continued coaxing that transpired.

> serves both as a moral gesture, to counterbalance the power of performance to focus heightened attention on the performer, and a key to performance itself (1977: 22).

It is clear from Mullen's description that this act of reluctance certainly focused attention on the narrator and informed the gathering that a performance was imminent. Messenger, in his account from Inis Oírr, also attests to this common tradition of displayed modesty prior to a performance:

> Some narrators were overly eager and launched into their stories without being asked once the audience was seated; but most storytellers waited until called upon, and then they thought a bit, head in hands, before commencing, even though they had probably settled on the narrative long before (1964: 204).

The preceding extracts from Mullen's account of the storytelling event wonderfully describes the pre-performance scene in which a certain sequence of events is adhered to by all participants. We notice that the narrator is not expected to perform immediately upon taking his seat by the fireside. Instead, he is allowed to transition gradually from his role as a regular, albeit high-standing, member of the community to his impending role as storyteller. These storytelling nights followed a fairly structured sequence of events, so much so that elements of the setting itself served as specific keys to performance. The fact that word would circulate regarding a storyteller's visit to a particular person's house that night or, indeed, that a number of people decided to visit the narrator's house, was perhaps the first indication that a night of storytelling would ensue. The storyteller seated by the hearth, or a vacant fireside seat in anticipation of his arrival, would also indicate that he intended to perform. The furnishing of the clay pipe and the banter could only have added to the expectations of what the evening would bring. Finally, the request for a story and the subsequent act of reluctance to immediately launch into a tale is a further pre-performance signal. In fact, the verbal disclaimer serves as the final scene in the prelude to performance as once the storyteller begins to narrate, the performance proper commences.

In an Aran context, the pipe would also appear to have been instrumental in the keying to performance. We will recall that its initial presence and distribution among the convening men served as one of many signals to the intention of storytelling. During the narration of the tale, the pipe was passed around the audience while the narrator performed but the storyteller himself refrained from smoking until such time as he took a break from narrating. In Becker's words:

> [the storyteller] can do nothing else while telling the tale. He would stop at a certain point in the story if he wanted to smoke the pipe, to smoke tobacco. [........] When he had smoked his pipe, he would set it aside, the talk would stop and everybody would be silent until he recommenced the tale (2000: 21).

The use of the pipe by the hitherto abstaining narrator informed the audience that he was taking a break from performing. As noted in Becker's description above, informal chatter amongst the audience would cease as the narrator set the pipe aside, signaling that he was about to re-enter the elevated mode of speaking that constitutes performance.

The beginning of the narrated tale is usually marked by another of Bauman's indices to performance, that which he refers to as 'special formulae' (Bauman 1977: 21). These can range from an unembellished short sentence that simply places the dramatis personae temporally and/or geographically within the tale, to a more elaborate formulaic passage that incorporates non-referential language. Darach Ó Direáin appeared to favour the former, as demonstrated in these examples from the collection (F/Ó D Collection: stories no. 49 and 32 respectively):[77]

> *Bhí fear fadó ann agus bhí triúr mac aige.*
> [There was a man long ago and he had three sons.]

> *Fear a bhí in Árainn insa tseanaimsir a dtugaidís Seán a' Bhailís air.*
> [[There was] a man in Árainn in the old days that they called Seán a' Bhailís]

Becker offers an abridged version of one of the more embellished formulaic introductions that was commonly used by Inis Oírr narrator, Joe Ó Domhnaill:

> Once upon a time, a long time ago. If I were alive then I would not be so now, I would have an old story or a new story, or I would have no story ....
> There was a king's son ..... (2000: 21).

I turn to renowned Conamara storyteller — Éamon A Búrc, for the completed and Irish language version of Ó Domhnaill's introduction. The following example appears in his published version of the story 'An Dochtúir Ó Laoi agus Beag-Árainn':

> *Bhí anseo fadó agus fadó a bhí, dá mbeinnse an uair sin ann ní bheinn anois ann, dá mbeinn anois agus an uair sin ann bheadh scéal úr nó seanscéal agam nó bheinn gan scéal ar bith. Ach*

[77] All examples from the F/Ó D Collection are from the edited version as presented in volume one of this thesis.

ar aon nós, pé ar bith mar atá an scéal seo agamsa anocht ná raibh sé leath chomh maith agaibhse san oíche amárach! (Ó Ceannabháin 2000: 288).
[A long, long time ago - if I were there then, I wouldn't be there now; if I were there now and at that time, I would have a new story or an old story, or I might have no story at all.[78] But how and ever, whichever way I may have this story tonight, may you [plural] have it half as good tomorrow night.]

In this example, the opening formula does not situate the story as neatly in the past as in the examples from Ó Direáin or, indeed, as in the common English example of 'once upon a time', but as explained by Zimmermann:

[t]he various opening formulae for overtly fictional tales often emphasize their extra-temporal nature: the past referred to is *not* historical (2001: 487) [emphasis in the original].

Clearly, the manipulation of time is a common theme in folktales of this type and the competent narrator can transport his audience as effortlessly into a mythical era as he can to an historical point in time. Similarly, the insertion of the narrator himself into ahistoric situations is an expected turn of events, especially in the opening and closing scenes of a tale. This temporal and spatial shifting is accepted without question by the audience and is achieved through the intertextual relationship that exists between the folktale and its generic anchors, a point that shall be revisited below. As explained by Briggs and Bauman:

As soon as we hear a generic framing device, such as "once upon a time," we unleash a set of expectations regarding narrative form and content. Animals may talk and people may possess supernatural powers, and we anticipate the unfolding of a [particular] plot structure (1992: 147).

It is important to note that the use of a recognisable formulaic introduction, whether it be of the relatively simple or the more elaborate type, also brings with it a marked change in footing. The narrator is now delivering an elevated piece of discourse to an assembled audience, thus affecting the role alignments previously established in the community. While, granted, the repositioning of stances in relation to one another had already begun to take place in the pre-performance stage described earlier, the realignment of positions, where say Dara Neide Pheaidí becomes Darach the storyteller, and members of the community become an audience, is more firmly established once the story commences.

[78] The translation up to this point is from Zimmermann (2001: 487). The remainder of the translation is mine.

The opening passage delivered by Ó Domhnaill and A Búrc displays a number of Bauman's other indices including: special codes; figurative language; and parallelism. The extract is obviously poetic in structure, for example, and serves as a clear demarcation from the former everyday speech that is used in the pre-performance conversation. Such a passage, filled with poetic and non-referential language, regularly appears at the beginning of a folktale further signaling the ensuing genre of speaking. The embedded parallelism also keys an imminent display of verbal art in which the literal meanings that are gleaned from the story are but one aspect of the whole performance: aesthetic qualities, including parallelism and various paralinguistic features are equally valued and assessed by the audience.

The physical setting of storytelling, then, is an important index to performance in an Aran Island setting. Various features of the setting inform the participants that a special discursive event is taking place and each member of the gathering — host, visitors and storyteller — will know from experience what to expect and how to behave as the evening unfolds. Other previously-mentioned markers, including disclaimers to performance and the use of special formulae, also frame the emergent storytelling event as something set apart from a non-performance speech event and inform the participants how to deliver and interpret the subsequent speech.

9.3 Audience Participation: Co-authorship of the Folktale

> [W]e must regard performers and audience members not simply as sources of data but as intellectual partners who can make substantial theoretical contributions to this discourse (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 61).

At the outset of the performance event, both narrator and audience enter a social contract of sorts wherein the storyteller will hold a position of responsibility and accountability to his listeners in delivering a competent piece of verbal art. The audience, for their part, will respectfully give their attention to the competent narrator and evaluate his performance skills throughout the event (see Bauman 1977: 11).

When one considers the accepted norms of communicative behaviour, where turn-taking is a crucial element of successful verbal experiences, it may appear that a performance of the storytelling type is reversing these rules of behaviour or is comparable, in form, to a lecture or a sermon. This can appear to be the case if one looks upon the storytelling event as consisting of one speaker (i.e. the performer) and a virtually silent audience. In actual fact, we know that similar rules of verbal behaviour are at play in performance as in regular discourse, or more accurately, in discourse that is not framed as performance. The preceding chapters have shown that an audience,

whether they are readers of anthropological texts, viewers of documentaries or addressees/listeners in a conversation, are far from passive spectators. They, rather, negotiate various stances and indexical alignments to the verbal situation at hand. The same is true in a storytelling event where the audience has a valuable and intrinsic role to play and has a definite effect on the outcome of the narrative event. In fact, without audience participation, the event would surely fail as a performance. As already stated, the narrator holds a position of responsibility to his audience whereby he is expected to deliver a competent piece of narration. He is not, however, solely responsible for the interpretation of the speech event: this is the combined responsibility of all those present and participating in the occasion. As Alessandro Duranti states in relation to the text:

> [t]he recipe for the interpretation of a text is never fully contained in the text [...] because interpretation is itself an *activity* and as such depends on the context within which it takes place (Duranti 1986: 244) [emphasis added].

In his discussion on an 'anthropological theory of value', David Graeber (2001) argues that whereas value in an economic sense is realised in the spheres of production, exchange and consumption, the value of a performance is realised in a sphere of circulation and realisation. Applying this theory of value to a storytelling performance, we notice that the narrator's role is not elevated over that of the audience, as although the performer certainly *contributes* to the value that diffuses through the sphere of circulation and realisation, this value would not exist if it were not received, realised and evaluated by an audience. In other words, value circulates between performer and audience during the entirety of the event and is moulded, interpreted and assessed along the way.

The idea that 'value always exists in the eyes of someone else' (Graeber, 2001: 40) is in keeping with Bakhtin's hybrid approach to language, where 'a word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor' (cited in Brenneis 1986: 339). This approach, then, appreciates the agency of an audience in a storytelling event and also reinforces one of the framing concepts of this thesis — that interlocutors work in collaboration with one another in order to produce a shared meaning of events. In this regard, Goffman's notion of participation status and framework that I discussed in relation to naming practices is equally relevant to the present discussion. Allowing for the various alignments that a speaker takes to oneself and to others in a given utterance, Goffman's classification of participants in a speech event proposes the use of more

inclusive terms than 'speaker' and 'hearer' and highlights the participatory nature of discourse.[79] Goffman's proposal is particularly relevant to performance-orientated discourse such as storytelling, where one's participation in the event is not defined by whether or not they *speak* but rather by a host of discursive markers including, but not exclusively so, speech. We shall see below that although the storyteller might be the main 'speaker' in the event, he is also constantly listening to, and assessing, his audience's responses. Similarly, the audience are the main 'hearers' on these occasions but they also occupy a role as speaker at various points throughout the performance and, of course, they also communicate in ways that do not involve speech. It has been widely noted that communication involves many other senses apart from sound. Sight, for example, is often an integral element of interaction where interlocutors, including audience members, have at their disposal various non-verbal contextualisation cues. An unsuppressed yawn, a shifting from one's position, a slumped posture, or a glazed look would signal boredom or disinterest to a relatively astute speaker and/or performer. Similarly, nodding in agreement, smiles of encouragement, a laugh at an appropriate juncture etc. would indicate an interest in what is being communicated and would allow the speaker/performer to continue with confidence. Furthermore, a silence borne from boredom is quite distinctive from a captivated silence and co-members of a speech community know how to deliver, and interpret, both.

Returning to the storytelling scenario then, the listeners may be relatively silent but they are certainly participating in the event: they are engaging in a verbal and non-verbal interaction with the narrator with the use of silence, gestures, displays of interest or boredom, sporadic words of praise and encouragement, and so on. Let us now investigate some of these instances of audience participation in more detail. As touched upon above, the audience of a folktale will allow themselves to be transported through time by a gifted narrator, but this can only be accomplished by a competent storyteller who works within the existing parameters of the folktale genre. The informed audience makes a mental connection between the current tale and past discourses and performances, and judges the form, content and deliverance of the latest tale according to their familiarity with the story and their knowledge and interpretation of applicable generic standards. The competent narrator will not deviate too far from these generic guidelines as he too is mindful of the intertextual links that exist between his current rendition and past performances of the tale. Each

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[79] Goodwin and Goodwin argue, however, that Goffman's terminology is itself limiting in so far as it results in a speaker-focused structure:
'The speaker is endowed with rich cognitive and linguistic capacities, and the ability to take a reflexive stance toward the talk in progress. However, all other participants are left cognitively and linguistically simple' (2006: 225).

telling of a story, therefore, involves a decontextualisation from a prior context and a recontextualisation into a new one, and both audience and narrator are making these connections during the course of the narrative event. Messenger has this to say on the subject of creative license and flexibility within the recontextualised discourse of performance:

> Myths, legends, and tales were never embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a story, his audience interrupted and corrected him. Stories newly acquired or otherwise unknown to the islanders were embellished by the narrators who introduced them and by subsequent storytellers until they were well known. Gradually they became standardized and the point reached where no one telling them could effect further alterations (1964: 203).

Evidently, the narrator is constantly aware of his audience as co-participants in the event who not only observe, but who *affect* the outcome of the tale and the performance event. Only proficient narrators were tolerated and those who attempted to hold the floor, but who were insufficiently skilled in their art, were ridiculed or urged to stop by either an experienced narrator or by the audience. Not surprisingly, an audience will only suspend their communicative right of turn-taking for a performer who succeeds in fulfilling *his* obligation of competency to the same audience.

> When a young storyteller performed, he had to be certain of himself, for if he blundered (paused too often or for too long or left out portions of the narrative) he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called upon in the future. A popular storyteller could ruin the reputation of a young man by criticizing him after he told a story poorly (Messenger 1964: 203).[80]

And the following, according to Messenger (1964: 203), were the traits of a talented narrator:

> [H]e told stories often and he loved to tell them; he had an outstanding memory and was able to master a huge body of narratives and recite them perfectly; he had a musical voice both when speaking Gaelic and English; he used few bodily movements and spoke slowly; he knew when to pause for effect (especially after an important event in the story, to allow each listener to picture the event in his imagination and savor it), and these pauses were never more than ten seconds or so; he looked at each member of the audience, then down for a time, then into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after telling something amusing that aroused great merriment among his listeners.[81]

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[80] For similar examples of a narrator's competency, see Delargy (1942: 38) and Zimmermann (2001: 467-9).

[81] This same passage is quoted in Zimmermann (2001: 469) but is described as an 'anonymous passage in a school-book' taken from the book *Island Stories: Tales and Legends from the West* (1977: 238).

The competent narrator who successfully entertained his audience was verbally rewarded. Zimmermann (2001: 466) mentions some of the popular expressions of approval and encouragement at these events including: *maith thú* [good on you]; *is fíor dhuit* [true for you]; and *go mba slán an scéalaí* [may the storyteller prosper] and notes that 'responses helped the narrator to decide how to continue.' According to Becker's account of storytelling in Inis Oírr, similar praise was lavished on Aran Islander storytellers at appropriate junctures in the tale, where the audience 'would praise the storyteller and the valorous deeds of the heroes until the tale was recommenced' (Becker 2000: 21).[82]

The competent narrator was also skilled at introducing mini intermissions at appropriate junctures in the tale. According to Becker (2000: 21), these breaks from narrating often followed an intense episode in the story and would provide ample conversation material for the audience whilst the narrator rested, perhaps smoked some tobacco, and listened to his audience. Presumably, these timely pauses following engaging battle scenes served to maximise anticipation for the recommencement of the tale. These short intermissions are also where the value of the narration is circulated and realised, in that they provide a forum for the audience to express their approval regarding the narrator's competency allowing, in turn, the storyteller to gauge and interpret their responses. A partial shift in footing also occurs during these intermissions, as the narrator temporarily suspends his role as performer. Importantly, he does not revert to being on an equal standing with the audience: he is, after all, still seated in the place of honour by the fireside and he refrains from verbally participating in the discussion surrounding his story. But neither is he actively performing during these short intermissions. As Becker's account demonstrates, he is simply taking a break from narrating but is continuing to actively work on his performance by assessing the audience's reaction to his work. Once sufficiently rested, the storyteller might call upon his listeners to assist him in the recommencement of the tale, perhaps as much to assess their attentiveness to the story as to inform them that he is, once again, about to change alignments.

> Then he would say: 'I am going to continue the story. Where did I stop?' He would be told. 'Oh, yes,' he would say and then he would continue (Becker 2000: 21).

In the event of a story being too lengthy to complete in one sitting, the narrator would inform the audience that he was stopping for the night and would invite them to return the following night to

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[82] Oddly though, Messenger's account that was collected from the same source used by Becker — Joe Ó Domhnaill, states:
'No interruptions were allowed once the storytelling commenced. No one asked questions. No words of encouragement or praise were given as in singing and dancing' (1964: 204).

participate in the remainder of the tale. This, once again, provided the audience with an opportunity to express their opinions on the performance thus far and to lavish praise on the worthy narrator:

> 'All right,' everybody would say. 'Thank you and long life to you. That much of the story was fine. You told it well. It could not have been told better and we will not be satisfied until we hear the rest of the story' (Becker 2000: 22).

The second installment of the story on a subsequent night provided yet another opportunity to show one's appreciation whereby the increased or, indeed, decreased size of the returning audience was testament to the proficiency of the narrator.

> They would praise the storyteller again when the tale was finished and thank him and the housewife for the good fire and the heat during the two nights. The storyteller would answer them.
> 'I am proud that you liked the story so much, because I could see from the attention, from the silence you gave me and from the extra people who came here tonight that you were very interested in my story and the way I told it.'
> 'Oh, indeed!' they said, 'you told it very well. No storyteller could tell it better'. (ibid: 22)

As evidenced by this passage then, the narrator and audience would engage in a dialogue, and verbal assessment, of the preceding performance. The narrator would acknowledge that he was cognisant of the positive reception to his story from his interpretation of the various contextualisation cues delivered by his audience, such as: the attention given to his performance, the silence accorded him during the telling, and the size of the audience. The audience would, in turn, reconfirm their approval of the successful performance.[83]

Speaking directly to the audience was not confined to intermissions and post-performance assessment. On occasion, the talented narrator would break the fourth wall, so to speak, and use metanarrational devices to communicate directly with the audience as himself, and not in the guise of storyteller or as a character in the tale. Bauman (1986: 998-101) discusses the means by which accomplished Texan storyteller Ed Bell utilised metanarration as a means of linking the narrated event of his story to the narrative event in which he and his audience were participating. Darach Ó Direáin employed the same technique to transport his listeners in and out of narrated and narrative time. Many of Ó Direáin's metanarrational comments appear at the end of his stories and I will

[83] In his analysis of Éamon a Búrc's storytelling and verbal artistry, Ó Ceannabháin states that a Búrc would have undoubtedly used these longer breaks between sittings to work on the content and delivery of the remainder of the story (2000: 18).

explore these examples in more detail momentarily. First, let us explore three examples that appear in the middle of his tales. The metanarrational comment is underlined in each example below:

Example 1. (F/Ó D Collection: Story no. 35):
Chuir sé síos ansin lá, pota mór stirabout agus tine bhreá faoi. Scar siadsan iad fhéin anuas timpeall ar an tine. Nuair a fuair Tomás socraithe síos iad, chuaigh sé agus thug sé leis mullán deas rabhnáilte agus chuaigh sé suas ar bharr an tsimléir. Bhí sé ag tóigeáil marc ar an bpota chomh maith agus 'b fhéidir leis. Bhí na similéir insa[n] am sin níos fairsinge ná atá siad anois. Scaoil sé anuas an mullán insa bpota agus bhris sé an tóin ann.
[Then, one day, he made a large pot of stirabout on top of a large fire. They [the old hags] spread themselves down around the fire. When Tomás found them all settled down, he went and he took with him a nice round boulder, and he went up to the top of the chimney. He was taking a mark on the pot as best he could. The chimneys in those days were more generous in size than they are now. He let the boulder drop into the pot and it broke the bottom of it.]

Example 2. (F/Ó D Collection: Story no. 37):
"An bhfuil rud ar bith insa domhan a dhéanfadh aon mhaith daoibh?" a deir an deirfiúr.
"Tá," a deir siadsan, "caonach na mbollán, é sin a thriomú leis an ngrian, é a chardáil leis an gcarla (ach níl na carlaí sin [ar] chor a[r] bith anois ann), agus déanfaidh tú trí gheansaí dhe sin le cur orainn, agus gan thú fhéin aon fhocal a labhairt amach as do bhéal ar feadh lá agus bliain, ná pé ar bith rud a éireos duit, gan aon deoir a shilt. Má níonn tú sin, tiúrfaidh sé ar ais muide."
["Is there anything in this world that would do you some good?" said the sister.
"There is," said they, "to dry the moss from the large rocks in the sun, to card it with the card[ing machine] (but those cards [carding machines] are no longer around today),[84] and from it you will make three jumpers for us to wear, and for you not to speak one word from your mouth for the duration of a year and a day, and whatever may happen to you, not to spill one tear. If you do these deeds, it will bring us back.]

Example 3. (F/Ó D Collection: Story no. 42):
"A bhean chóir, ná déan é sin leis an mbacach ach gabh siar go fial agus tabhair aniar go fairsing agus tabhair agam pláta fataí nó buidéal bainne nó treabhsar breá ceanneasna — an chéad chuide den bhréidín — a choinneos uaim an fuacht lá an tsioc agus an tsneachta."
["Good woman, don't do that to the beggar but go back [to the room] and return with plenty, and bring to me a plate of potatoes or a bottle of milk or a grand pair of homespun trousers — the first part of the tweed[85] — that will keep the cold from me on the day of the frost and the snow."]

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[84] The original unedited text appears as follows.: *treabhsar breá ceann asna* *an cheud chuide gon bhréidín.* The presentation of the metanarrational comment in superscript suggests that it is not to be interpreted as part of the beggar's speech. Furthermore, the dialectical features of the comment suggests that it was indeed communicated by Ó Direáin and is not simply a 'note to self' by the collector.

[85] The unedited text in this case is also presented in parentheses, indicating that Robin Flower was demarcating the speech of the narrator from that of the protagonists.

In example 1, the incident of metanarration is encased between short descriptive statements that chronicle the sequence of events in the episode. Ó Direáin is simply recounting the unfolding of events as they would be expected to occur in a narrated event of this type. In the middle of the episode, he communicates an additional piece of information that may not have otherwise been available to his audience, i.e. that the chimneys in the days of the narrated event were wider than those of the present time. Perhaps, it makes the story more believable if one can imagine a boulder fitting through the size of a chimney. After all, the narrator does not need to lose the attention of his audience while they ponder geometrical quandaries. In contrast to this metanarrational qualification, and as per folktale conventions, the intention of the protagonist to fatally harm the three hags with the boulder does not need an explanation: this is, after all, the expected fate of the folktale villain. In this example then, the narrator steps out of his role as recounter of events in order to insert an explanatory comment to his audience, and once delivered, re-employs the voice of narrator of events.

The second and third examples of metanarration are both enveloped in instances of direct discourse, making them especially marked cases of communication with the audience. In each of these two cases, Ó Direáin is not interrupting his role as narrator of events (as was the case in the first example) but is rather suspending the voice of the dramatis personae while he delivers his comment to the audience. Of course, in the case of the F/Ó D Collection, we must ask whether these explanations are for the benefit of the visiting folklorist who might hitherto be incognisant of the information contained within the metanarrational remark. In examples 2 and 3, it is clear from Robin Flower's use of formatting such as superscript and parentheses, that he was demarcating Ó Direáin's non-narrational voice from the other voices employed in the tale. Nevertheless, and no matter who the audience, these explanatory comments function as informative pieces of information that bridge the gap between narrated time and narrative time (Bauman 1986: 99). Encased, as they are, in the middle of an episode, they also allow the narrator to briefly reshift his footing in relation to the indexical alignment he takes to his audience.

A more common position for metanarration within the Irish folktale is in the concluding sentence where the narrator is afforded a final opportunity to verbally include his audience in the storytelling event. While some folktales end with a very brief summation sentence, others include an elaborate formulaic ending similar to the formulaic openings discussed earlier. All endings, whether or not they specifically include the audience, signal a key to the end of performance. In the F/Ó D

Collection, the majority of tales conclude in a comparatively simple manner, along the lines of the following examples (F/Ó Collection: Stories no. 43 and 50 respectively):

Sin é anois scéal an Ghabha Dubh
[There, now, is the story of the Blacksmith].

Agus leag sé an ubh ar an mballa insa teampall agus chuaigh sé abhaile ag a mháthair chomh folláin agus ' bhí sé ariamh
[And he lay the egg on the wall in the temple and he went home to his mother as healthy as he had ever been].

On some occasions, however, the narrator Ó Direáin availed of a final opportunity to change footing and speak directly to his audience, not solely as recounter of events but as storyteller expressing his personal opinion (F/Ó Collection: story no. 51 and story no. 36 respectively):

Sin í an argóinteacht a bhí idir Máire agus an fear agus, go siúráilte, chomh fada le mo mheabhair fhéin, níl na mná iontrust.
[That was the argument that transpired between Máire and her husband and, to be sure, if my memory serves me right, women are not to be trusted.]

"Tá go maith," a deir an breithiúnas. "Is tusa, an dreoilín, rí na n-éan."
Dúradh liom go bhfuil leigheas ina chuid fola le a lán tinneasachaí.
["Very well," came the judgement. "You, the wren, are the king of the birds."
I've been told that his blood provides a cure for many illnesses.]

Another type of conclusion sentence might appear at the end of a moral tale where the narrator's own opinion on the message of the tale serves as the concluding remark, as seen in this example, also from Ó Direáin (F/ Ó D Collection: story no. 5):

Sin é an fáth gur fearr an fhírinne go deo ná an bhréag.

[That is the reason that the truth is always better than the lie.]

Yet other tales will place the storyteller himself in the narrated event (F/ Ó D Collection: story no. 49):

Agus phósadar agus bhí Darach Ó Direáin ar a(n) mbainis as Eoghanacht.
[And they married and Darach Ó Direáin from Eoghanacht was at the/their wedding.]

A similar ending appears in a tale from fellow Árainn narrator Máirtín Neile Ó Conghaile:

> *agus bhí mé héin ann, Máirtín Ó Conghaile as Baile na Creige atá istigh in Árainn Mhór* (Pedersen 1994: 52).
> [and I was there myself, Máirtín Ó Conghaile from Baile na Creige which is located in Árainn Mhór.][86]

It is evident from these particular stories that situate the narrator within the narrated event, that they are not meant to be interpreted as having occurred during the storyteller's lifetime. The titles, *Scéal Mac Rí Éireann* [The Story of the King of Ireland's Son] and *An Mhaighdean Mhara* [The Mermaid] respectively, as well as the presence of giants and mythical figures throughout the tales, firmly situates the stories in the past or in the realm of the supernatural. In this regard then, the insertion of the storyteller as a character in the tale, invites the audience to connect the narrated time of the story to the here-and-now and thus begin the transition back to reality. Whereas every folktale ending indicates to the audience that the story has concluded, I would suggest that the various conclusions mentioned above have a more pragmatic function in the storytelling event. The type of conclusion that incorporates the personal reflections of the narrator, for example, provides a clear return to reality in the form of the storyteller's voice which changes from *recounter* of events to *interpreter* of events. Furthermore, a controversial statement relating to the trustworthiness of women would surely instigate further conversation and merriment, thereby providing an easy transition from performance to post-performance discussion. The narrational device that situates the narrator within the world of the supernatural, or indeed the formulaic runs that appear at the end of some tales, all allow for a more gradual return to reality. Although still in his role as storyteller, and conveyer of events, the narrator begins the inevitable process of realignment that brings himself and his audience back to the present situation. Importantly, and as discussed in chapter 8, the storytellers tend to use their formal name over their genealogical name in these story endings which would suggest a conscious postponement of full social realignment until the completion of the story.

It is worth mentioning, however briefly, a couple of examples of the lengthier and more formulaic type, as delivered by Máirtín Neile Ó Conghaile and Éamon a Búrc respectively. The majority of the stories from *Scéalta Mháirtín Neile* [The Stories of Máirtín Neile] end similarly to

[86] In a tale with a similar ending, Conamara storyteller, Éamon a Búrc, cites a number of people who attended the fictional wedding with him, among them members of the audience and the collector Liam Mac Coisdeala (2000: 21):

> *agus mé féin in éineacht leo agus Liam Mac Coisdeala, Pádraig Ó Maoilchiaráin agus Pádraig Ó Conaire, Micil Ó Flaithearta, Micil Ó Donncha agus Liam Ó Ceannabháin - ar an mbainis* (2000: 88).
> [and I myself with them and [the names above] - at the wedding.]

those of fellow Aran Islander Darach Ó Direáin. A couple of tales, however, conclude with a more traditional type of formulaic ending, complete with the classic 'run' type formula:

> *Bhí bainis seacht n-oíche ann agus seacht lá. Chuaigh siadsan na cnocáin, chuaigh mise na clocháin. Bádh iadsan is tháinig mise. Ní bhfuair mé dá mbarr [nach] stocaí bainne ramhair agus bróga páipéir, agus chaith mé leob héin iad* (Pedersen 1994: 115).
> [There was a feast that lasted seven nights and seven days. They went to the hills and I to the shores. They were drowned and I came safe. All that I received as a result was stockings of thick milk and paper shoes and I threw them back at them.]

Finally, some endings of Irish folktales will make specific reference to the audience during the process of realignment, as shown in the example above from the stories of Éamon a Búrc and the following example from the same narrator:

> *Beannacht dílis Dé agus na hEaglaise le hanam na marbh agus go mba seacht gcéad déag míle fearr a bheas sinn féin agus an comhluadar bliain ó anocht! Ní haon scéal bréagach é seo siúráilte, mar tá a fhios agamsa an áit a bhfuil an baile agus is minic a bhí mé ann – Cora na Rón – an áit a mbíodh an bád aige agus teach déanta ag Dochtúir Ó Laoi. Agus ní achar fada blianta ó bhí sé ann. Scéal fírinneach siúráilte é a d'éirigh i bpobal Charna i gConamara* (Ó Ceannabháin 2000: 291).
> [The loyal blessings of God and the Church on the souls of the departed and may ourselves and our families[87] be seventeen thousand times better off a year from tonight! This is no lie of a story, surely, because I know myself where the village is and many is a time I was there - Cora na Rún - the place that he had the boat and the house that Doctor Ó Laoi built. And it is not a long stretch of years since he was there. It is a true story, for sure, that arose in the village of Carna in Conamara.]

Wishing God's blessings on the departed and good health on all those present, a Búrc proceeds to attest to the veracity of the account, stating that he himself had been at the location, not too many years previously. These affirmations of truth are fairly common in Irish folktales and function similar to the examples above from Árainn, where the storytellers claimed to be present at supernatural events. In a Búrc's version, the audience is encouraged to continue the willing suspension of disbelief that they held during the tale itself while the narrator concludes his formulaic ending and performance.

Sometimes, as we see below, a discussion on the supposed veracity of the account continues past the formal conclusion of the story. This excerpt, from Pat Mullen's account of Ó Direáin, offers a glimpse into such a scenario and introduces the storyteller as a protagonist in the story:

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[87] The term *comhluadar* can mean both 'company' and 'family'.

> "Then," said she, "I shall come for you. My call shall reach you in the night wind."
> At this point in the story the Cobbler paused, and Hugh asked a question.
> "Did you ever hear her, Dara?"
> "Oh yes, she comes for me often," replied the story-teller dreamily. "Ha," he whispered, as he listened to the sough of the wind in the chimney. "She is calling now, do you not hear her singing?"
> Then in a low voice he began to croon softly, the song of the mermaid: [.............][88]
> "Some day," said Dara with a whimsical smile, "I may go to her, but as it is late now and I have a long way to go I will be heading for home." He got to his feet and opened the door, then he turned with a smile: "Good night, good night," he said.
> "Good night and God bring you safe home," they shouted after him as he became lost in the darkness of the night outside (Mullen 1936: 222).

Explicit reference can also be made to future audiences and, thus future recontextualisations of a tale, as evidenced by the following formulaic opening and closing by Éamon a Búrc:

> *Ach ar aon nós, pé ar bith mar atá an scéal seo agamsa anocht ná raibh sé leath chomh maith agaibhse san oíche amárach!* (Ó Ceannabháin 2000: 288).
> [But how and ever, whichever way I may have this story tonight, may you [plural] have it half as good tomorrow night.]

> *Agus beannacht dílis Dé agus na hEaglaise le hanam gach uile fhear go deo dá léifidh mo scéal — Éamon a Búrc as Aill na Brón i gConamara thiar i gConnachta.* (Ó Ceannabháin 1983: 88).
> [And the blessings of the Almighty and the Church on the soul of every single man forever that may read my story — Éamon a Búrc from Aill na mBrón in Connamara, back in Connacht.]

In all of the above examples, we have seen how the storyteller employs various voices throughout the narration event, an act that is accomplished through the metapragmatic discourse of footing wherein:

> [w]e let the hearer know how an utterance should be taken, the illocutionary force we mean to give it, the scene in which it should be placed, the character it is being said by, to, or on behalf of (Duranti 1997: 296).

The competent narrator will execute the perfect story with ease, seamlessly stepping in and out of various roles through the employment of different voices. With each role change comes a change in footing and alignment to his audience. During the course of a story, the narrator may present himself as recounter of events, as a character in the story or, while delivering metanarrational

[88] A poem or song, six verses in length, follows.

comments, as his non-storyteller persona. The engaged audience will pick the various voices without difficulty and follow the story in and out of narrated time, as the storyteller intends. Of course, in the performance event itself, there will also be many paralinguistic contextualisation cues, such as prosodic changes of tone and pitch, as well as gestures, that will assist with the interpretation of voices. Zimmermann (2001: 493) notes, for example, that 'the storyteller may 'enact' his tale by impersonating the various characters, imitating their voices, and using gestures.' Given that these cues are unavailable to the reader of the folktale, however, it falls to the collector or future editor of the text to delineate the various voices with the use of quotation marks and other formatting devices.

It is hoped that the preceding discussion provided some insight into the active and participatory event of storytelling, as it transpired in the Aran Islands. Various keys to performance announce the narrative event in the islands, as elsewhere in the country, and the collaborative role of the audience is crucial to a successful outcome of the performance event. The following sections deal with the collecting of these stories as part of the nation-building agenda of the early to mid 20th century and explores the process of entextualisation that underlies the folklore endeavour.

9.4 Preserving Tradition: Producing Texts

Thus far, I have explored the relationship between narrator and audience in terms of the indexical positionings that are negotiated throughout the interactional event of storytelling. I turn now to the process by which the product of these, and similar narration events, are transformed into written and enduring texts and explore the relationship between these texts and the broader social structure of which they are a part. Social, political and historic discourses are embedded in the processes of textual production and reception, and an analysis of the multiple voices contained within a text reveals some of these broader contexts. We will recall from chapter 7 that texts are infused with authoritative discourses that are sustained and validated through the process of entextualisation and through the use of metadiscursive practices. I continue this discussion in relation to the F/Ó D Collection in my examination of the socio-historic context of the folklore text. Before proceeding further with this discussion, however, I should introduce the collector of the stories and offer a preliminary description of the F/Ó D collection.

9.5 Robin Flower and the Flower/Ó Direáin Collection

Born in Meanwood, Yorkshire in 1881, Robin Ernest William Flower had Irish connections on both sides of his family. He was awarded a scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford where he earned a degree in Classics. From 1906, he was employed in the British Museum cataloguing Welsh manuscripts and soon became interested in the Irish manuscripts preserved in the museum. This work ignited an interest in the Irish language and inspired him to learn the language through private lessons. Flower was subsequently given the task to compile the Irish manuscripts at the Museum and was also subsidised to enrol in *Scoil Ardléinn na Gaeilge*, Dublin to further improve his mastery of the language. It was here that Carl Marstrander advised him to learn spoken Irish from Tómas Ó Criomhthain in the Great Blasket Island. In 1911, Flower and his wife travelled to the island for their honeymoon and returned with their family for many years thereafter. It was on the island that he earned the pet name 'Bláithín'. Robin Flower collected an abundance of folklore on the Blasket Island from such well-known islanders as Peig Sayers and Tomás Ó Criomhthain, and was responsible for the English translation of Ó Criomhthain's autobiographical account of life on the island *The Islandman* (1951). One of his bestl-known works was published posthumously in 1947 as *The Irish Tradition*. Highly regarded for his scholarly work on early Irish poetry and history he was also, for a number of years, involved in the compilation of The Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum. In 1929 Flower was appointed Deputy Keeper of Irish manuscripts at the British Museum. He retired from this position due to ill health in 1942. Robin Flower died in 1946 and his ashes were scattered in the Blasket Island.

Considering the close ties Flower had with the Great Blasket, he is most often associated with the southern region of Ireland and with the dialect of Irish spoken by his instructor and informant Tomás Ó Criomhthain. In 1933 Flower also paid a visit to the largest of the Aran Islands and collected folklore whilst there. Flower's visit to Árainn is discussed in relation to the Robert Flaherty film *Oidhche Sheanchais* in Brian Ó Catháin's 2004 article on the subject. Flaherty was asked by the Irish Department of Education to produce a short Irish Language film — the first in history — to be shown as a curtain-raiser to *Man of Aran*. The film, *Oidhche Sheanchais* [A Night of Storytelling], depicted the previously mentioned storyteller Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin sitting by the fireside, narrating a story to a small assembled audience, all of whom had starring roles in *Man of Aran*. Ó Catháin's research demonstrates that Flower went to Árainn to visit Flaherty during the making of the films. James Delargy was also on the island to assist Flaherty in the selection of a storyteller for the Irish language film and a photograph taken at the time depicts Flower, Delargy,

Flaherty and the cast members from both films assembled together by a fireside (Ó Catháin 2004: 207). *Oidhche Sheanchais* was for many years believed lost and it wasn't until 2012 when the Harvard Online Library Information System (HOLLIS) was updated to include material contained in Houghton Library's 'Z-Closet' that the film finally came to light. The film described as '1 sound film in 1 locked metal case' shared the Z-Closet with 'death masks, locks of hair of important writers [...], T.S. Eliot's Panama hat [...] and James Russell Lowell's meerschaum pipe' (Sumner et al. 2015: 4). The discovery and the process of restoration is described in detail in the aforementioned article by Sumner et al.

The fact that Robin Flower collected quite a substantial amount of folklore from Darach Ó Direáin during his time in Árainn was first mentioned by Bo Almqvist (1998: 98) where he highlights the importance of the material and emphasises that such a collection should be edited for publication. The stories of Darach Ó Direáin are now preserved, as part of Flower's *Nachlass*, in the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore, University College Dublin. The material collected from Ó Direáin comprises 56 components (c. 300 pages), the majority of which are stories, and is recorded in Flower's handwriting. A note written by Delargy appears on the cover of one of the two folders in the collection and refers to the material as follows:

> Ms Collection made by R.F. in Kilmurvey, Aranmore, Co. Galway. 1932 or 1933. I was there at the time. S. Ó. D. Largely illegible.

Having spent many months reading and deciphering Flower's script, I would agree with Bo Almqvist's assessment (1998: 98-9) that although Flower's handwriting is by no means easy to read, neither is it completely illegible. The presentation of the material gives the impression that the stories were written in haste suggesting, perhaps, that an ediphone was not used on this occasion and that the stories were instead written down as the storyteller narrated. Some of the stories were transcribed in pencil but the majority are written in ink. Five of these stories are rewritten, again by Flower, in a separate notepad within the collection. These second versions are presented in a more legible manner than the first, with some of the abbreviations spelt out and, in some cases, a more standardised spelling substitutes the phonetic script of the first version. These changes between the two versions, inconsistent as they are, might suggest that Flower himself intended to provide an edited version of the stories. One thing is clear: the fact that the material was transcribed phonetically, thus retaining many of the narrator's linguistic characteristics, entextualised the stories for future linguistic analysis.

9.6 Professionalising Folklore: From Croker to Delargy

The F/Ó D Collection was compiled at an important juncture in the history of folklore collecting in Ireland. As established in chapter 7, the Aran Islands were well renowned as exemplary repositories of tradition and lore by the time of Flower's visit in 1933. Many scholars collected tales while residing on the islands including Jermiah Curtin and J. M. Synge and, of course, both Franz Finck and Holger Pedersen collected a substantial amount of material from Joe Mháirtín and Máirtín Neile respectively. The interest in Irish language folktales that enticed these scholars to the western islands was, of course, preceded by a general interest in English language lore from around the country. By the 1930s, the scientific model of folklore had replaced the previous more literary-guided presentation of stories, and the manner in which narrators were represented in text had changed considerably. I introduce below a broad overview of these literary and scholarly approaches to the collecting of folklore in Ireland during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries.

Thomas Croker's 1825 book of tales *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* was the first publication of folk tales from Ireland and was warmly received by the British public for whom it was written. Even the Brothers Grimm applauded Croker's efforts and, by translating it into German, introduced his *Fairy Legends* to a wider audience. On Irish soil, however, Croker has been criticised for presenting a stereotypical view of the Irish character. His characters speak with a distinctly marked brogue that is peppered throughout with malaprops and grammatically incorrect idioms. According to Croker, the circulation of these tales among the peasantry of Ireland functions to 'retard the progress of their civilization.' (cited in Markey 2006: 26).

Samuel Lover presented his *Legends and Stories of Ireland* (1831) in a similar style. William Carleton offered a different approach in his writing, especially in his 1830 publication *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, where he attempted to steer clear of the 'grotesque blunderer' that had hitherto characterised the Irish in literature and promised instead 'to exhibit them as they really are' (cited in Markey 2006: 30). Carleton's background, as the son of an unwealthy Catholic farmer from Co. Tyrone, brought him into contrast with his wealthy Protestant predecessors, a fact that he believed gave more credence to his childhood recollections used as the basis for his work. Despite his best intentions to portray an accurate picture of the Irish peasantry he was, nevertheless, writing from memory and, as noted by Zimmermann (2001: 252), 'selecting, combining, heightening, and sometimes inventing to make a point or for sentimental or horrific effects'.

The Great Famine of 1845-1848 instigated the sense of urgency that was to surround Irish folklore for many decades thereafter. William Wilde supported the idea that lore needed to be

obtained from the folk before it disappeared forever and set about compiling customs and superstitions, some of which were subsequently published in the form of *Irish Popular Superstitions* (1852). The Wexford-born Patrick Kennedy attributed a similar code of urgency to the collecting of folklore and lamented the unavoidable loss of tales he had heard in his childhood due, in part, to 'the diminishing of our population by want and emigration, and the general diffusion of booklearning [...]' (Kennedy 1891, preface).

No synopsis, however brief, of early contributors to the Irish folklore scene would be complete without mention of William Butler Yeats. His approach differed considerably to the scientific method that was beginning to take force in the late 19th century. Yeats praised the work of the early contributors to Irish folklore who 'have made their work literature rather than science' (Yeats 1888: xiv) and made no apologies for his own similarly themed approach. In stark contrast to the scientific method advocated by Douglas Hyde (of whom more below), Yeats applauded the work of Lady Wilde, in particular, whose vivid literary descriptions may have captured 'the innermost heart of the Celt' (Yeats 1888: xv). Her 'entire ignorance of Irish [that] is apparent every time she introduces an Irish word', of which Hyde (1910: Preface) wrote, was of no concern to the Dreaming Celt framework to which Yeats subscribed. For Yeats, the legends and tales that he had heard during his childhood, or those that he read in texts, provided a basis for his mystical and spiritually themed work so that a folktale would serve as a plot line or a theme in his poems or literature rather than as literature in its own right. Not surprisingly, perhaps, this unique approach to folklore earned him both praise and criticism within the Irish literary movement. Yeats himself, however, could see the value in both the literary and scientific use of folklore, describing the empirically-orientated Hyde as follows:

> He is, perhaps, most to be trusted of all. He knows the people thoroughly. Others see a phase of Irish life; he understands all its elements. His work is neither humorous nor mournful; it is simply life (Yeats 1888: xvi).

As a key figure in the Gaelic Revival movement, Douglas Hyde strongly encouraged a more scholarly approach to the collecting of folklore. His seminal essay *The Necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland* (1892) stressed the national importance, and the interconnectivity of, the Irish language and traditions. The preservation of this cultural heritage would involve rejecting the increasingly dominant Anglicised culture of the day and instead, 'cultivate everything that is most racial, most smacking of the soil, most Gaelic, most Irish (because Ireland) is and will ever remain Celtic to the core.' (Hyde cited in Ó Giolláin 2000: 117). In 1893 Hyde co-founded, and was subsequently

elected president of, the Gaelic League — a society that promoted the Irish language and culture — and in accordance with its cultural nationalist agenda, advocated a cultivation of all things natively Irish. The League encouraged its members and the wider community to recognise Ireland's distinctive character and to look within the country itself for nation-building inspiration. It also provided a forum for nationwide storytelling competitions and for the publication of Irish language folklore, prior to the foundation of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1927. In true cultural nationalist form, it was the peasantry who possessed the basis of a national literature, but unlike his Anglo-Irish predecessors, Hyde venerated the Irish language form of the tales, and promoted a literal transcription from 'the mouth of the storyteller' over popular literary compositions.

The first official folklore organisation — The Folklore of Ireland Society — was founded in 1927 with Hyde as treasurer and James Delargy as editor of the society's journal *Béaloideas*. The society subsequently became the government-established Irish Folklore Commission in 1935 and received annual government funding for the purposes of collecting, cataloguing and publishing folklore material. In 1937 Delargy, by now director of the Commission, devised the Schools' Collection Scheme.[89] Supported by the Department of Education and the Irish National Teachers Organisation, the scheme launched a collaborative collecting venture in which school children aged between 11 and 14 years, from the various participating schools, collected and recorded material from their own localities. The collecting was carried out in accordance with specific Commission-issued guidelines, recorded in copybooks, and returned to the Commission in Dublin. This innovating scheme resulted in an impressive 40,000 copybooks (Briody 2008: 270) (or over half a million manuscripts pages)[90] of folklore being forwarded to the Commission and is preserved today, in both original and bounded manuscript form, in The National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin. Apart from the Schools' Manuscript Collection, the National Folklore Collection consists of a Main Collection, comprising over 2 million pages of material, as well as thousands of photographs and recordings (Ó Giolláin 2000: 135-6). This expansive amount of material is the product of fieldwork conducted by both full-time and part-time collectors — as well as occasional contributions from interested parties — for the Commission and its successors.

[89] A similar scheme was attempted in 1934 under the direction of the Folklore of Ireland Society but due to inadequate planning and poor execution, it produced a limited amount of material (Briody 2008: 260-1)

[90] http://www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore/en/schoolsfolklorescheme1937-38/

Mícheál Briody (2008) provides a detailed account of the 'history, ideology and methodology' of the Irish Folklore Commission, and its precursors, from its inception in 1935 until it became the Department of Irish Folklore in 1970. Briody's expansive overview explains the inner workings of the Commission, from the problems that were encountered during the establishment stage, to the methodology employed by the collectors during their fieldwork. Briody informs us that Delargy had initially envisaged that all collectors would partake in a training course run by the Commission but, due to a lack of funding, such a programme never came to fruition. To overcome the obstacle of insufficient training, the first full-time collectors were expected to be fluent in the Irish language and to have a basic knowledge of, and interest in, the lore and traditions of their own localities. This, coupled with some minimal training, usually from Delargy himself, was the extent of many of the collectors' initiation into the task of fieldwork.[91] The full-time collectors were equipped with an ediphone and a large supply of cylinders, as well as pens, ink and notepads for their field trips. They usually travelled by bicycle, with the recording machine fixed to their mode of transport. Once they had recorded as much material as possible from a willing narrator, they returned to their lodgings where they transcribed the stories from the ediphone to their notepads and, once filled, returned them to the Commission for examination and archiving. Initially, collectors used a series of questionnaires to aid them in the collecting process. In 1937, however, Seán Ó Súilleabháin — the first appointed archivist of the Commission — published a guidebook on folklore collecting entitled *Lámhleabhar Béaloideasa*, a more comprehensive version of which was published a few years later in *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (1942). Ó Súilleabhán's *Handbook* became essential reading for any folklorist about to embark on a field trip under the auspices of the Folklore Commission and, as such, offers an interesting insight into the collecting requirements and methods of the day. The instructions issued in the introduction of the handbook range from advice on the type of information to be recorded, to requests for neat and legible presentation of the material, and requests for information relating to the narrator, all of which are prefaced with: '[t]he good collector, then, should be an opportunist, ready to take advantage of every chance to reap his [i.e. the narrator's] harvest of lore' (Ó Súilleabháin 1942: xii). The collector is subsequently requested to 'use [his] intelligence and initiative' when in the field and to '[f]ollow every clue' whilst there (ibid. xii). Furthermore, information should be written down as soon as possible after the event; variants of tales should be collected if the opportunity arises; tales were not to be translated by the collector: they were to be recorded in the language in which they were told by the narrator, the 'exact words

[91] Seán Ó hEochaidh, on the other hand, was one of the fortunate few to spend several weeks in the company of Delargy whilst learning his craft (Briody 2008: 234-6).

of the speaker' were optimal. In fact, the collector was urged to 'make no "corrections" or changes' (ibid. xiii). A number of similar guidelines in the list are devoted to field methodology, event description, and the desired method in which the written material will be presented to the Commission. In short, Ó Súilleabháin's guidelines provided a standard for the collectors regarding the most optimal way to record and present folklore according to the requirements of the Folklore Commission.

9.7 Contextualising the Folk: Creating 'Authentic' Narrators for a New Cultural Nationalist Narrative

> Once a cultural good has been declared authentic, the demand for it rises, and it acquires a market value (Bendix 1997: 9).

From the very outset, there was a sense of immediacy associated with the task of folklore collecting in Ireland. The fact that many tales had already been 'irrevocably lost' (Kennedy 1891, preface) and those that remained were fast disappearing, heightened the sense of urgency associated with the project. A discourse of preservation and rescue thus permeated many early discussions on the matter of folklore collecting. The nation-building inspiration behind the folklore endeavour allowed the founders and organisers to call upon the patriotism of the Irish nation to support and partake in the project. Delargy's editorial introduction to the first edition of *Béaloideas*, brims with references to salvaging the vanishing lore, and his call to 'let us not fail' would inspire any self-respecting Gael to participate in the pressing endeavour:

> *Is féidir dúinn ár sean-bhéaloideas a shábháil, agus a theasbáint do'n saol gur rud luachmhar é gurbh fhiú é shábháil [……] Chuige sin atá an iarracht so á dhéanamh. Táimíd ag braith orraibh-se, a Ghaedheala, chun cuspóirí an Chumainn a thabhairt chun dea-chríche. Ná teipidh orainn! Má theipeann, ní móide go dtabharfar arís fé bhéaloideas na tíre a shábháil agus imeóidh sé go brách gan fiú a thuairisg* (Ó Duilearga 1927: 3-4).[92]

A decade later, the Commission would call upon school teachers and their students to participate, in the form of the aforementioned Schools Collection project:

> The collection of the oral traditions of the Irish people is a work of national importance. It is but fitting that in our Primary Schools the senior pupils should be invited to participate in the task of

[92] [We are capable of saving our old folklore, and to show to the world that it is a valuable thing, that is worth saving [...] It is to that effect that this attempt is being made. We are depending on you, Irish people, to fulfil the objectives of the organisation. Let us not fail! If we fail, it is doubtful that the feat of saving the country's folklore will ever again be undertaken, and it will be gone forever without even a mention.]

> rescuing from oblivion the traditions which, in spite of the vicissitudes of the historic Irish nation, have, century in, century out, been preserved with loving care by their ancestors. The task is an urgent one for in our time most of this important national oral heritage will have passed away for ever (cited in Ó Giolláin 2000: 134).

With the founding of the folklore society in Ireland, there became an official state-sponsored organisation that was actively involved in producing an archive of oral culture for the emerging state. The professionalisation of folklore in Ireland sheds light on a number of important issues for the present discussion. Firstly, in accordance with the discourse of authenticity that was intertwined with folklore studies in Europe and elsewhere, there was a specific notion of what constituted *genuine* folklore, and certain precautions were taken to ensure that only authentic tales became part of the archive of traditional culture. Secondly, the scientific approach to folklore involved a concerted effort at decontextualising narrated stories from their traditional storytelling contexts and recontextualising them, for posterity, into written and lasting texts. Once again, a measure of scholarly authority pervades such a process, from defining the storytellers as traditional and passive folk to the selection of particular narrators who were believed to best represent the nation's traditional narrative. I shall explore each of these interconnected issues below.

The search for genuine lore, in the form of tales and *seanchas*, defined the discipline during the formative decades. As a result of this defining feature of folklore, the people who possessed the sought-after lore were themselves classified in relation to, or indeed, in contrast to the modern world of the folklorist. Notwithstanding some of the early commission collectors who recorded material from their own localities, and in spite of Ó Súilleabháin's desire that 'anyone who [goes] among the people must go among them as one of themselves and have no high-faluting nonsense about them' (Briody 2008: 230), the professional discipline of folklore was nevertheless, and perhaps unavoidably, based on a notion of difference, disparity and unequal power relationships that created and perpetuated an authoritative discourse of Otherness. Inherent in this discourse, according to James Clifford (1986: 113), is an assumption 'that the other society is weak and "needs" to be represented by an outsider (and that what matters in its life is its past, not present or future).' Ó Giolláin (2000: 142) uses a host of directional adverbs to describe the social and geographical contrasts intrinsic to the formative years of the discipline:

> Folklore was distant from the observer, necessitating a journey outwards from the big cities, westwards towards the most remote, isolated and backward rural districts, and downwards,

> towards the poorest and most humble stratum of settled rural society. The social distance is obvious in the literature, yet is rarely commented upon except in the most superficial way.

In spite of the early folklore mission being presented as a combined effort, where professionals and patriotic lay people worked together in order to preserve the country's vanishing store of traditional oral wealth, the reality of the process perpetuated a culture of disparity between folklorist and folk. Collectors were classified as conscious rescuers of national cultural wealth while narrators were deemed passive tradition-bearers in so far as they were marketed as an unconscious source of tradition. As Charles Briggs notes: '[w]hile contemporary poets wrote consciously and intentionally, the creative process that gave rise to oral tradition was unconscious of itself' (1993: 403).

Delargy (1945: 13) distinguishes between active and passive tradition-bearers, but only in the sense that an active bearer of tradition recounts his tales whenever an opportunity arises so that he is actively sharing his repertoire with an engaged audience. The passive bearers, on the other hand, are those narrators who also have a large repertoire but due to various circumstances, 'have been content to remain passive, and have neither practised telling their tales, nor given others the chance of learning them.' He proceeds to tell of an active storyteller who, with his dying breath, recounts one last story, demonstrating 'the story-teller's realisation of his responsibility as guardian of inherited tradition' (1945: 20). Indeed, according to Delargy:

> Good story-tellers, proud of their art, were intolerant of badly told tales, and sometimes stopped the unskilful narrator in the middle of his story, saying such nonsense should not be allowed to represent the real traditional narrative! (1945: 24).

Although storytellers may have been described as passive or active with respect to their contribution of material to the folklore project, and according to the excerpt above, appeared to have an opinion on what was worthy of preservation, their voice was limited and governed by a frame of reference that categorised them as traditional folk. Given that education was a strong hallmark of modernity, and that narrators were being marketed as *traditional* folk, an educated storyteller was seen as a contradiction in terms that disrupted the modern collector/traditional storyteller dichotomy. As succinctly worded by Briggs:

> like most images of the Other, the image of the folk that helped create the self-identity of the bourgeoisie was generated by inverting all of the qualities that its inventors thought themselves to possess (1993: 404).

Indeed, the folklore endeavour relied, to a degree, on this important distinction between folk and collectors in order to legitimise the sense of immediacy associated with the ambitious undertaking. Furthermore, educated storytellers could very possibly obtain so-called contaminated lore from books, that if left undetected, could make it into the national folklore archive as 'genuine popular tradition' (see the excerpt from Ó Súilleabháin below). Delargy's notes and observations taken from both his own diaries and from the manuscripts of other collectors are telling in terms of the perceived position of the narrator in the collecting process. In describing a narrator by the name of Mícheál Turraoin, Delargy (1945: 14) praises the storyteller as 'a cultured man in oral letters, unspoiled by books — which he cannot read — and by the laboured commentaries of the learned'. This is in keeping with a perceived connection between authenticity and an uneducated peasantry which dominated folklore studies throughout Europe and the United States. We come across a similar guideline in Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook of Irish Folklore* which further demonstrates the commonly-held distrust of literate narrators, as is evidenced by the short extract below:

> Be very cautious in dealing with a storyteller who can read. Make sure before you write down a tale that he has not learned it directly from a book, newspaper, or manuscript. All tales recorded should be *genuine popular tradition* so far as the recorder can determine (Ó Súilleabháin 1942: 555) [emphasis added].

The strict instructions issued to the collectors regarding the type of lore they were to record, as well as the caution to only collect from reliable sources, served to ensure that the anticipated recontextualisation of the material was highly controlled by the official folklore organisation. Renowned republican activist, writer and poet Pádraig Pearse, sums up the prevailing attitude to the folk in the early 20th century and implicitly comments on their place in the entextualisation process:

> (The traditional style) is not, and never has been, the possession of the nation at large, but only of a class in the nation. And those who would build up a great national art (…) they must take what the peasants have to give them and develop it (cited in Ó Giolláin 2000: 123).

This statement reveals the metadiscursive practises that are at play in the collection and production process of a folklore text. Although recognising the value of the folk to the folklore project, Pearse simultaneously indexes their Otherness in relation to the nation at large. The *traditional* style of the peasants is in opposition to the *modern* folklorists who, by virtue of their more civilised existence, no longer possess such traditions. Furthermore, the customary attitude of the active collector is implicit in the 'taking and developing' of what the peasant has to offer. A metadiscursive

understanding of this terminology would consider 'taking' as a decontextualisation from its former discourses and contexts, and the term 'developing' as a recontextualisation into the narrative of folklore and nation-building and its associated discursive settings.

Reviewing how informants have been represented throughout the history of folklore collecting, we notice a change in terms of the textual framing of their voices. The methodology of many of the early collectors, for example, consisted of them speaking *for* the Others whom they aimed to represent. In these early accounts, we notice that the framing voice of the narrator is spoken in a standard register while the characters' voices are enveloped in a thick non-standard brogue. This is the case, to varying degrees, in the works of Croker, Carleton, Kennedy and Lady Gregory, amongst others. Douglas Hyde makes a welcome diversion from this type of representation in *Beside the Fire* where he prefaces the translated stories with a detailed description of his methodology. Hyde is concerned with translating the essence of his informants' speech, and unlike his predecessors, avoids literal translations that result in meaningless English-language idioms that, in reality, are used neither by the informant nor by the general Irish public. Indeed, according to Zimmermann, '[Hyde] represented his storytellers as normal human beings, not as "picturesque characters"' (2001: 315).

The professional folklorists of the 20th century adhered to similar principles of representation in so far as they were encouraged to record the words of the narrator as he spoke and were instructed to avoid making any alterations to the story. This methedology gives the appearance that the informant's voice is emphasised over that of the collector/author. However, the collector's voice still acts as a framing device for the text as a whole and the reader is privy to the storyteller's voice only after it has been examined and contextualised by the narrating author. In fact, when these tales are then used for the purpose of a linguistic analysis, as are the stories of Darach Ó Direáin in the current study, the informant unwittingly becomes an exemplary model of a particular dialect, once again changing the way he is framed and represented in text.

As we have seen from the recommended guidelines of the Folklore Commission, the discourse of informants is managed and controlled prior to their words appearing in print. The caution against literate storytellers ensures that only informants who do not have access to certain modern discourses will represent the folklore archive. The maintenance of intertextual gaps between the discourse of informants and that of the collectors is crucial to a folklore project that defines itself in terms of tradition and modernity. In stark contrast to the tradition-bearers, then, the folklorist is placed in a position of power and authority, allowing him control over the establishment of

authoritative texts, the power to determine the authenticity of a tale and even control over the selection of worthy narrators.

With regard to the latter of these — the selection of suitable narrators — I return, for a moment, to the folklorists' accounts that were mentioned in relation to naming in chapter 8. We see from these accounts that folklore collectors were frequently engaged in a process of evaluation and authentication when it came to narrators, which led to the selection of particular storytellers being chosen to represent the national archive. The following quotes by various scholars of folklore are examined in terms of what they reveal about the social arena in which they were written. Taken at face value, they may simply read as informative fragments of information regarding a storyteller in that they offer important 'factual' information such as name, age, place of origin etc. A more in-depth look would pose the question: how can an interdiscursive reading of such accounts enlighten our understanding of the broader social, cultural and political processes that are at play? Let us revisit the following two descriptions of the narrator from the diary of Delargy and the 'random notes' of Máire Ní Neill, respectively, both of which are quoted in Almqvist (1998: 99):

> (O)n the quay at Kilmurvey met 'The Fairy Cobbler', Darach Ó Direáin, who has a large no. of tales and willing to record.

> Dara Ó Direáin, c. 68, Eoghanacht. By way of being a sgéaluí. Robin Flower recorded from him. Visitors often brought to him. Speaks slowly and distinctly. Farmer and fisherman.

In describing Ó Direáin as 'willing to record', Delargy is specifying that he is a viable and willing source of lore. Likewise, Mac Neill's brief account is highly descriptive and markets Ó Direáin for a particular audience — folklore enthusiasts/collectors. The description not only commends the narrational abilities of the storyteller whose slow pace and clear diction are prized attributes for dictation purposes,[93] it also reinforces his folkloric competence by stating the magnitude and the significance of his visitors. Not only does Ó Direáin welcomingly narrate for visitors but the eminent Robin Flower also recorded from him. In specifying this fact, Mac Neill creates an interdiscursive link to Flower's renowned work on the Blasket Island, indicating that Ó Direáin is indeed a suitable candidate for narration purposes.

It is worth casting an eye over the remainder of Mac Neill's descriptions of her Aran informants where she provides information that is in keeping with the Commission guidelines published in the

[93] Note the similarities with a description of an informant of Franz Boas, quoted in Bauman & Briggs (1999: 486) "who after very short practice, learned to speak slowly and distinctly, and whose dictation was perfectly satisfactory."

same year. As well as basic information such as name and age of storyteller, the folklorist offers some contextually contingent observations that essentially grade the narrators' level of proficiency:

> (4) Mike Chuilm Ó Domhnaill, 59, Gort na gCapall. Reputed to know a lot about sean-aimsireacht. Farmer, fisherman, and stone-breaker.
> (5) Peaits Bhartla 'ac Dhonacha, 73, Creig a' Chéirín. Seanchaí. Has songs.
> (6) Cóil Mhac a' Rí, Fearann a' Choirce. Not sure of age. Probably over 70. Smith. Likes to give out seanchas.
> (7) Michael a' Ghabha. Son of (6). About 30. Makings of a seanchaí. Interested in seanchas.
> (8) George Gillan, Fearann a' Choirce. About 50. Weaver. Well-informed and intelligent man. Fond of talking (UCD NFC 1134: 1).

The name(s), age (if given), occupation and village of the informant appears at the beginning of each reference, as advised in the *Handbook*: also mentioned is their willingness to narrate. A willing narrator, we have seen, is an active one making him a viable source of lore for the intended audience of these descriptions — the collectors of the Folklore Commission and the future readership of the collected material. Some of those listed are described as *seanchaí* while others merely have the makings of one. Furthermore, we will recall Ó Súilleabhain's guidelines that urged collectors to beware of literate storytellers, and wonder whether no. 8 above is a warning to 'read with care' (more so than a compliment to his intellect) the material gathered from the well-informed and intelligent George Gillan. The details offered in anecdotes such as these, then, are selected according to the requirements of the discipline which, in turn, suggests that storytellers were selected based on these models of description and evaluation. In short, these quotes serve to index multiple relations and discourses between Mac Neill, the storyteller, the possible other informants ('*reputed* to know a lot about sean-aimsearacht' suggests other voices), and the presumed audience of the folklore community. Given that discourses are indexically linked to other sociocultural and political discourses, it is important to remember that they are constantly in the process of decontextualisation from their former life and are being recentered as they circulate in new social and political spheres. These descriptions of narrators then, are not only contextually situated in their immediate discursive settings, they are also part of a wider sociocultural discourse on authority, authenticity and tradition.

As for the selection of tales, it seems as long as they had not been obtained from a book, a narrator was free to recount stories of his choice to the collector. In the section *Storyteller and their Art* from the *Handbook of Irish Folklore*, Ó Súilleabháin stresses the importance of collecting information on the narrator and the setting, including: 'Did storytellers tell only tales of their own

choice, or did they comply with requests for particular tales?' (Ó Súilleabháin 1942: 556). George Thompson recalls a technique that he used to extract a particular tale from a narrator:

> The best way to get [an Irish storyteller] started with telling a particular tale is to remark that a certain rival has told it well. He will then insist that you have never heard the story really told as it should be, and he then proceeds to demonstrate (cited in Zimmermann 2001: 464-5).

One method of authenticating stories that, in effect, authenticates the narrator of the story, is through the discourse of traditionalisation (Bauman 1992). I touched upon this subject in chapter 7, in relation to a particular narrator providing Synge with a list of previous visitors of note who collected from him, thereby marketing his own viability as a suitable subject. The narrator, one Máirtín Neile Ó Conghaile, proceeded to recommend another storyteller from Inis Meáin, and considering the impressive clientele of Ó Conghaile, such a recommendation would have held considerable weight with the latest esteemed guest. Further examples of traditionalisation appear at the end of particular tales whereby a genealogy of previous narrators is provided either by the storyteller or by the folklorist. Let us revisit the following passage that Seosamh Ó Flannagáin wrote at the end of a story he collected from Darach Ó Direáin:

> *MacDara Ó Dioráin (65) Eoghanacht a thug an scéal seo dhom Eanair 12adh 1931. Chuala sé féin é ó shean mhnaoi de mhuinntear Ó Dioráin a cailleadh tuairim deich mbliadhna ó shoin i n-aois 79 mbliadhanta. M.S. Ó Flannagáin 15/1/1931* (NFC 73: 243).[94]

An avid folklore collector, Ó Flannagáin also collected a number of other stories and prayers from various Aran narrators which were published in the folklore journal *Béaloideas* (1937). One of the narrators was Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin whose contribution was concluded with the following note:

> *Seán Ó Dioráin (60), An Sruthán a fuairear I-III, XIV. Fuair seisean ó n-a mháthair iad a cailleadh c. 1880 i n-aois a 90 mbl. "Níor luigh sí agus níor eirigh sí ariamh gan na paidreacha seo a rádh."* (Ó Flannagáin 1937: 190).[95]

These are classic examples of the act of traditionalisation in which the folklorist is indexically linking the story and its narrator to prior stories and narrators, thus authenticating the current story

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[94] [MacDara Ó Dioráin (65) Eoghanacht recounted this story to me January 12th 1931. He, himself, heard it from an elderly woman from the Ó Dioráin family who died around ten years ago, aged 79 years. School Master Ó Flannagáin 15/1/1931].

[95] [stories numbers 1- 3, & no. 14 were collected from Seán Ó Dioráin (60) from 'An Sruthán'. He obtained them from his mother who died c. 1880 at the age of 90 yrs. "She neither retired at night nor rose in the morning without first saying these prayers"].

as traditional and therefore, once again, worthy of collection. Considering that the genealogical history that is provided in the examples above is not embedded in the story that is being recounted but appears, rather, as a type of endnote, it is impossible to know whether the information was volunteered by the narrator or whether it was in response to a question posed by the folklorist. Either way, the storyteller and/or the collector are creating an interdiscursive link with a broader discourse of traditionalisation. The quotation marks enclosing the last line of the quoted piece above presumably indicate the storyteller's voice and gives an added sense of authority to the information contained within. The same may be said of the common formulaic ending that appears in many folktales of this type:

> *Sin é mo sgéal-sa! Má tá bréag ann bíodh! Ní mise a chum ná a cheap é* (Delargy 1945: 20).[96]

Despite the lack of a provenance of sorts, this type of ending serves precisely the same process of traditionalisation. Apart from it being a common traditional phrase, or a key to performance through its 'appeal to tradition' (Bauman 1977: 21-2), the lack of a genealogical history provides an acceptable anonymity, a prized characteristic even, commonly associated with the peasant folktale. Importantly then, it is not necessarily the folklorist alone who participates in the act of traditionalisation: the storyteller can also be an active participant in the process.

9.8 Bláithín: Robin Flower's Blasket Research

Considering that Robin Flower was not associated in any official sense with the Irish Folklore Institute of the day, we cannot assume that he adhered to the same guidelines adopted by the Commission although it is likely that, through his association with Delargy, he had a reasonable knowledge of their recommendations. In order to gain a sense of what Flower himself valued as worthy narration, we must take a closer look at his Blasket research. Speaking of a well-known local narrator, from whom he recorded a substantial amount of material, he states:

> Big Peig – Peig Mhór – is one of the finest speakers on the Island; she has so clean and finished a style of speech that you can follow all the nicest articulations of the language on her lips without any effort; she is a natural orator, with so keen a sense of phrase and the lifting rhythm appropriate to Irish that her words could be written down as they leave her lips, and they would have the effect of literature with no savour of artificiality of composition (Flower 1992: 49).

[96] [That is my story! If there be a lie in it, be it so! It is not I who invented it.]

This passage reveals the high esteem in which Flower held Peig Sayers' narrational abilities. It also highlights the aesthetic traits that were considered commendable in the recording process. Her speech, it seems, is already perfectly entextualised as is, thereby smoothing the process of its anticipated recontextualisation into folklore texts.

Another of Flower's renowned works *The Islandman* was a translation from the original Irish language publication *An tOileánach* (1929). The autobiography was a unique concept at the time in the sense that it purported to demonstrate Blasket life from a native's point of view. This work, along with other popular Blasket autobiographies, most notably *Twenty Years a Growing* (1933) and *Peig* (1935), formed a series of postcolonial texts representing an emblematic and exemplary Ireland for the emergent nation-state. At Brian Ó Ceallaigh's instigation, Ó Criomhthain began sending him a series of letters that recorded his daily activities as well as a written record of past events in his life. Once accumulated, the diary manuscript was sent to Pádraig Ó Siochfhrada for editing. The editing process, as explained by Mark Quigley (2003: 389), involved a 'significant redaction of text as Ó Siochfhrada cuts parts of the text he finds unsavory.'

Interestingly, the well-established lines of demarcation between traditional Other and educated collector, that were so valued in the discipline of folklore, were distinctly blurred in the genre of autobiography. In direct contrast to the orally narrated tales of the storyteller, the writing process was an inevitable and foregrounded aspect of the autobiographical projects. The published text then, as well as Robin Flower's translation, contains a number of voices apart from the author's own, voices that are indexically linked to the broader social and political discourses of postcolonial representation and cultural nationalism. Indeed, according to Quigley (2003: 387), 'autobiography at once creates subjects for the state and channels their voices into an articulation of postcolonial national identity.'

In his critique of *The Islandman*, Quigley argues that Ó Criomhthain is keenly aware of his role in the postcolonial state's agenda of representation and, through his blatant disengagement with the text, resists his commodification as subaltern subject. He maintains that while Ó Criomhthain's frank accounts of the hardships endured by him and his fellow islanders might be interpreted as being in keeping with the primitivist ethos of the autobiographical project, they may alternatively be read as a conscious refusal to attribute his opinion or personal *voice* to any representation of himself. Flower hails the book as a true and transparent account of Blasket life from a member of a dying generation, thereby minimising the intertextual gaps between the autobiography and the entextualising discourses of postcolonial representations. Quigley, on the other hand, maximises the intertextual gaps when he invites the critical reader to appreciate Ó Criomhthain as an intelligent

observer on the processes that serve to represent and commodify him as an exemplary subject. According to Quigley, Flower frames the *The Islandman* as:

> a direct and unadorned account [providing] a rare insider's perspective untainted by modernity or any anthropological awareness …… [and] …… seems to suggest that the text functions more effectively as representation the more Ó Criomhthain obliterates himself as representing subject (2003: 389-90).

But Ó Criomhthain, Quigley observes, is very much present, firstly, and ironically, through his stark absence. 'Absence haunts the text' but absence, he points out, 'is quite distinct from emptiness' (ibid.: 403-404). Silence, of course, can be a powerful communicative tool as discussed earlier in relation to the audience in a storytelling event and as summarised succinctly by Foucault:

> There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses (1990: 27).

Considering the conscious use of silence among marginalised and minority groups, it is quite plausible that Ó Criomhthain was, indeed, using the only voice available to him as a subaltern subject — the voice of silence. Secondly, according to Quigley, Ó Criomhthain's reflexive presence is evident through his direct and implicit commenting on the commodification process of which he is a part. Ó Criomhthain remarks on his obligations to the many visitors who came to him down through the years as Irish teacher or tradition bearer and of the difficulty of balancing these obligations with his daily activities and responsibilities: 'I had to spend a time in the company of each one of them, and do my own work into the bargain' (Ó Criomhthain cited in Quigley 2003: 398). Quigley's alternative reading of *The Islandman*, then, as a 'meta-autobiographical reflection […] of Marstrander, Ó Ceallaigh and others that work *upon* [Ó Criomhthain] to bring forth the commodified product of "the islandman"' (2003: 399) lies in stark contrast to Flower's interpretation of the account, as articulated in the foreword to his translation of Ó Criomhthain's autobiography:

> The great value of this book is that it is a description of this vanishing mode of life by one who has known no other, and tells his tale with perfect frankness, serving no theory and aiming at no literary effect, but solely concerned to preserve some image of the world that he has known, or, in his own words, 'to set down the character of the people about me so that some record of us might live after us, for the like of us will never be again' (Ó Criomhthain 1951: vii).

As with Peig Sayers, Ó Criomhthain is stripped of any conscious artistic or literary input: the reader is asked to believe that his sole purpose in the autobiography is to provide a frank, and to the point, account of life on the island — the fact that it reads well is an added, but unintended, bonus. Both of these accounts, then, praise the authenticity of the speakers' narrations: hailing them as *natural* narrators relieves them of any active or theoretical input of their own. The relatively passive role attributed to the narrator is praised as a worthy attribute as it produces a more natural, and therefore more authentic, product. Crucially here, the more natural and authentic the speech, the more malleable the product for the purposes of decontextualisation and recontextualisation.

Such was the cultural value of the folk: they were, on the one hand — through being distinguished from, and Othered by, the visiting folklorists — denied an equal standing in the nation-building endeavour. On the other hand, the folk were accorded a prime position in this process in that they were making a tangible contribution to the very project that defined them. So although, as Joep Leerssen (1996: 163) states, the peasantry was seen to exist in 'the timeless repository of a primeval, timeless life, primitive in the root sense of that term, aboriginal and untouched by modernizing influences from outside', the same folk were intrinsically linked with the modern project of nation-building. It is this paradoxical relationship between collector and narrator that raises an interesting dialogue on representation, because within this presumed active collector/ passive narrator relationship, lies the oft-unheard participatory voice of the (un)represented.

9.9 Conclusion

This chapter traced the discursive history of a folklore collection, from the circulation of the stories in a performance event, to the collection of the tales and their subsequent compilation into a written text. I have demonstrated that a series of entextualisations underlie the processual life of a text. An examination of the framing devices used by the various contributors along the way, including narrator, audience, folklore collector and — as will be discussed in the following chapter — ethnographic researcher, sheds light on some of the variables that determine the outcome of a folklore text. Such framing devices include the indices to performance implemented in the narrative event and the discourse of authenticity and tradition that framed and determined the collecting stage of the process. This discussion is continued in the following chapter in relation to the disciplinary conventions, academic authority and researcher's positionalities that guide the linguistic and anthropological text.

Chapter Ten — Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The Robin Flower and Darach Ó Direáin collection of folklore is the product of interconnected events, relationships and discourses: viewing it as a reified text divorced from these connections ignores the collaborative effort of the various participants involved in the process. I begin this conclusion with an overview of the preceding chapters in this volume. I then return to the F/Ó D Collection and inquire into the central and positioned role of the researcher in compiling entextualised discourses into an assembled and structured folklore text. The chapter concludes with some reflective thoughts on my personal research experience.

10.2 An Overview

The discussion in the previous chapters highlighted a range of important issues relating to the construction of place, person and text as they pertain to the various collaborators of this particular collection of folklore. I began the discussion with an analysis of the discursive history of the Aran Islands and found the essentialising and marginalising discourses of the past to have a distinct effect on modern interpretations of the islands. Various popular representations of Aran were deconstructed and their role in the disenfranchisment of the islands was explored in terms of their intertextual and interdiscursive links to various dominant discourses of the day, including racial science, primitivism and cultural nationalism. A critical reading of three main representational texts revealed the metadiscursive activities of the producers and introduced one of the prevailing themes of the thesis — the maintenance and control of intertextual gaps in the implementation of textual authority. The second half of chapter seven examined the discursive activities of the modern tourist to Aran. Interdiscursive links with past marginalising discourses underlie many contemporary interpretations of the islands and contribute to the place being viewed as a predetermined established site, not unlike the notion of a text as a bounded object. When place, and inhabitants of place, are confined within this structure, difficulties are bound to arise due to conflicting notions of social space and the expression of ascribed and achieved social roles. Although Aran Islanders, I argue, are aware of the entextualised interpretation of their homeplace, and at times use it to their advantage in terms of cultural marketing, they are constantly attempting to break through this incarcerating structure that aims to strip them of their metadiscursive agency. This tension results in a disruption of an established tourist narrative and can lead to charged encounters between insiders and outsiders, as demonstrated throughout the chapter in the form of anecdotal contributions.

Chapter eight continued with the theme of entextualisation and textual authority, this time in relation to the construction of a biographic narrative. From the outset of my research, I began to collect and compile as many fragments of information as possible relating to the storyteller Darach Ó Direáin with the intention of producing an accurate account of the narrator. My naivety in matters relating to knowledge construction obscured the fact that this was an unrealistic, in fact impossible, expectation and as conflicting or partial fragments of information came to light, I realised that any such biographical description would call for a contextualising account of the information-gathering process. Local naming practices, for example, allowed me to make connections that were otherwise unavailable in the official and written documentation relating to the storyteller and necessitated an analysis of the naming system that indexically aligns people to their kin and locality. While investigating the social life of names, it became clear that every instance of name use involves an element of stance taking in relation to the speaker, hearer and other indexically linked individuals. This same negotiation of social alignments was apparent in the interviewing process and instigated a discussion, that is continued below, on the implications of conducting research in one's own locality.

Chapter nine investigated the social life of stories such as those contained within the Flower/Ó Direáin Collection, from their narration in an oral setting to their inscription in text. Beginning with a description of an Aran Islands storytelling scene, I attempted to recreate the site of production and decontextualisation of folktales prior to them being recontextualised into written texts. This description included an analysis of the occasion of storytelling in terms of its indexical structure and also emphasised another recurrent theme in this work, that of the collaborative role of the audience in the act of speaking and performance. The preceding chapters have demonstrated numerous examples where collaboration between interlocuters is paramount to a successful and harmonious speech event: this co-operation is also an essential factor in an effective oral performance. The successful use of local names in Aran, we will recall, is contigent on a shared understanding of the various indexical alingments and the discursive history contained within the name. Likewise, many of my field interviews were prefaced with an explicit discussion on indexical relationships. Chapter seven revealed the friction that can occur when collaborative participation is either abandoned or viewed as insignificant to a discursive event. When people are defined and represented through a set of pre-established frameworks, their attempted participation in the production of a shared meaning of events is an inconvenience to the observer who, through his association with dominant authoritative discourses, intends on being the sole author of representations and thus the sole bearer of metadiscursive awareness.

Returning to the storytelling scene, the next stage in the entextualisation of folklore came in the form of the stories, and their narrators, being extracted from their oral settings and recentered into the discursive settings of cultural nationalism and nation building that defined the early 20th century folklore enterprise. The written material collected from Darach Ó Direáin eventually made its way to the National Folklore Collection and has been further recontextualised, in the form of this research, into a linguistic and anthropological study. The following section pays attention to the current stage in the life of the Flower/Ó Direáin stories by revisiting the edited, annotated and analysed collection of folklore that is the subject of this thesis. In this respect, the edited collection of folklore, and the accompanying linguistic and anthropological analysis, is viewed as the most recent development in the processual life of the F/Ó D Collection.

10.3 The Researcher's Role: Reflexive Research Continued

In this section, I continue with the discussion on academic authority in relation to the process of textual construction and comment further on the metadiscursive practices employed by ethnographers, and academics in general, during the course of their research. As editor of the F/Ó D Collection, and as ethnographic researcher, my own role in the process of constructing this text needs to be considered. In this light, I am following the likes of Bauman & Briggs (1990), Briggs (1993), Clifford (1988), Cohen (1992), Okely (1992) and the many others who discuss the issue of reflexivity in academic research. In addition to this, I engage with my role as native researcher and explore the implications of conducting research within one's own community.

Firstly, in my role as academic researcher, the stories, as they are presented here, are so arranged in accordance with departmental recommendations, existing models of published folklore collections, academic conventions, and a measure of personal choice. As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, I am registered with two separate departments — Modern Irish and Anthropology — within my affiliated university. Volume one is therefore presented in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Modern Irish and formatted similarly to other recently published Irish language folklore material, the objective being the accessibility of the material to a general readership and the provision of a linguistic analysis of the particular dialect of Irish spoken by the storyteller. This being my intention, I have organised the material in such a way as to foreground these particular aspects: another researcher might pay attention to the morphology of the tales or gender issues, for example. I have highlighted examples of linguistic traits particular to this regional dialect and have classified them according to conventional linguistic standards.

Although I have made every attempt not to disrupt the flow of the stories, as they appear in Flower's manuscript, I have also applied general organisational formatting to the text as dictated by academic writing conventions.

Academic institutions impose certain criteria, and indeed restrictions, on texts produced therein. Doctoral theses are generally submitted under the auspices of academic departments and the decision to register with a particular department predetermines, to an extent, the general direction and sympathies of one's research. In fact, many research funding bodies specifically ask how the proposed work builds upon the existing body of research within a discipline, thereby further framing and determining the direction, context and readership of the completed product. The word limit indexes a desired length which in turn, establishes the number of themes and issues to be discussed in the study, and so forth. The number of regulations and possible restrictions that partially predetermine the outcome of any academic text are too great, and indeed tedious, to cover here so that a detailed analysis of such would be a redundant exercise. They are worth noting, however, as a pretext to the academic authority and power relations that are at play before one begins to embark on her research.

James Clifford (1988) explores the impact of ethnographic authority on anthropological research through an analysis of various models of research: the experiential approach; interpretive ethnography; a dialogic or discursive approach; and a polyphonic mode of inquiry. Calling for an increased awareness of the construction process of ethnography, Clifford emphasises the collaborataive role of the informant in the ethnographic experience. The task of translating the intersubjective experience that defines ethnography into a textual written form has traditionally been the charge of the researcher alone. This will not always be the case, Clifford contends, as the time will come when:

> [a]nthropologists will increasingly have to share their texts, and sometimes their title pages, with those indigenous collaborators for whom the term *informants* is no longer adequate, if it ever was (1988: 491).

Ethnographic writing that incorporates and portrays the multiple contributive voices, Clifford notes, encourages an understanding of the multiple discourses within an ethnographic text so that, 'polyphonic works are particularly open to readings not specifically intended' (1988: 491). It is important to note, however, that even though such collaborative texts may include excerpts from interviews, thus attempting to provide a dialogic reading of the research, the inclusion of

interviewees' words does not necessarily amount to an equal balance of power, nor does it index an 'authentic' example of anOthers' speech. In fact, as Bauman and Briggs remark:

> collaborative texts are no more resistant to attempts to open up questions of authority, representation, and textual hierarchy than other modes of ethnography writing (1999: 520).

When informants' words are inserted into an ethnography it can give the impression that one is being granted access to the uninfluenced voice of the respondent: the interview is portrayed as somehow capturing the thoughts of the speaker. Considering the many framing devices involved in a typical interview situation, including the presence of a tape recorder, power relations and sometimes gender roles, the interview is often, in fact, another instance of unequal power relations between researcher and informant. Furthermore, the inclusion of interview extracts in ethnographies can create the illusion that the spoken, often recorded, word can be automatically transferred to the printed page, without reference to the several framing devices and instances of entextualisation that guide the transition of spoken discourse into written text.

Interviews, by definition, involve one party seeking information from another. Interviews conducted during fieldwork can often take the form of an informal and friendly chat resulting in the informant being potentially misled in terms of their anticipated control over the information they relay during the encounter. In other words, informal spoken discourse generally has an element of equality and reciprocity where each party has a forum to discuss, concur, contradict or elaborate on the discussion at hand. When this conversation is decontextualised from the site of production and recontextualised into a new discursive context by *one* of the participants in this friendly chat, the balance of power, control and textual authority immediately sways in the direction of the interviewer-turned-author: the researcher now continues to speak for the informant by interpreting and contextualising his words.

The discussion in the preceding chapters has shown that the words of Others are already highly entextualised by the time they appear in text, given that they have been extracted from one context and recontextualised into another discursive setting. Ethnographies are no exception considering that informants' words are recentered into an academic discourse on the particular subject at hand. While researchers today may not have a check list of willing participants in their field site, such as that provided by Máire Mac Neill to the Folklore Commission, we undoubtedly grade informants along similar criteria including knowledge, clarity of speech and willingness to depart information. Having conducted interviews with willing informants, researchers then decide which parts of the discourse are relevant to their study and recenter it into their text-in-construction. As Briggs notes:

> Fieldworkers set up the situation and shape its contents; scholars control the selection of what to transcribe (and translate), which performances to include in scholarly texts, how to present them, how they are to be interpreted, and which audiences to address (1993: 406).

In many cases, informants will never read the ethnography to which they have contributed and, therefore, never voice an opinion on the recentering of their words. In some instances, however, people have strong reactions to their (mis)representation in text and attempt to regain some control over the situation, leading to highly charged circumstances such as that discussed in relation to Messenger's *Inis Beag* ethnography. A similar vying for textual control surrounded Nancy Scheper-Hughes's ethnography *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics* (1979). In her critical review of Scheper-Hughes's ethnography, Eileen Kane (1982) suggests that some of the negative reaction to the book by the villagers of 'Ballybran' could have been avoided if more inclusive research methods were employed. Kane echoed the general sentiment in Ireland towards the book when she stated that the work 'contains serious ethnographic inaccuracies, unfounded generalizations, and methodological weaknesses' (1982: 2) which resulted in many 'Ballybran' residents feeling hurt, betrayed and misrepresented. Kane provides the following suggestions for a more inclusive approach to ethnography:

> a draft of the study [should be sent] to the community and make it available to anyone who cares to or who should read it. Ethnographic data which is in dispute can be checked and corrected if necessary. Challenges to interpretation can be considered, as well. People can be invited to submit comments about disputed points, unresolved issues and alternative interpretations, to be published as an appendix to the study, so that community members have a forum for responses and contributions which circulates with the book. I have tried this method, and although it is time-consuming and expensive, I find it worthwhile because people have generally welcomed the opportunity to act as what they in fact are, participants in research (1982: 3).

In a similar vein, Lillis Ó Laoire (2003) discusses the problematics of representation in relation to conducting fieldwork in his native Donegal. He recognises a 'contract of trust' that exists between himself and the natives of Tory and overcomes possible instances of misrepresentation by providing informants with drafts of his ongoing research. Appreciating that 'the sometimes abstruse language of academic discourse is often difficult for general readers' (2003: 128), Ó Laoire sees the physical accessibility of his work, so that his informants may assess how they are represented in text, as an important clause in the commitment to trust.

A further method of giving expression to the various contributing voices of an ethnography is the method promoted by Bauman and Briggs and that which is adopted as an analytical framework for this research. In a bid to demonstrate how the scholarly authority of folklorists and other researchers is a product of social relations, usually in situations of inequality, between researcher and his sources, Bauman and Briggs recommend that we reveal rather than conceal the metadiscursive practices and intertexual links that are employed during ethnographic research. An exploration of the discursive history of the Aran Islands and the texts and (meta)discourses produced therein is an attempt at such transparency. Recognising that the bounded text is a product of many interconnected discourses contigent upon relationships between particular people, places and times, and not the result of a natural and unguided sequence of events, allows us to appreciate the complexity of the process, but more importantly, allows for varied readings of the presented text. Although not even reflexive or dialogic ethnographies can claim to be completely transparant, nor are they devoid of academic authority (Bauman & Briggs 1999: 521), they do allow for a more inclusive and open dialogue between informant, researcher and reader and expose the academic and contextualising voice of the ethnographer as but one of the many contributing voices in the process.

10.4 A Native Researcher's Experience

> There are choices to be made in the field, within relationships and in the final text. If we insert the ethnographer's self as positioned subject into the text, we are obliged to confront the moral and political responsibilities of our actions (Okley 1992: 24).

I return now to the interviewing process that produced the oral accounts discussed in chapter eight and reflect, for a moment, on my role and position of responsibility within this process. Central to my experience of the information gathering process was my dual role as local and researcher — a position that either complemented or impeded the information acquired during my research. Although, in many cases, I was separated from those I interviewed by factors such as age, occupation, and in most cases, gender, I discovered that the unifying factor of *locality* brought opportunities and hindrances, but most importantly an added dimension of responsibility, to the research at hand. Being a co-member of the same speech community as my informants, for example, brought an awareness and an understanding of the culturally-specific metacommunicative norms of which Charles Briggs speaks (1993: 407-11). Briggs explores the issue of metacommunicative competence in fieldwork situations and concludes that informants are selected, and interviews conducted, based on the communicative standards of the researcher. An

understanding of native metacommunicative norms regarding language acquisition and use, he argues, can assist the researcher in conducting a more cohesive and effective interview.[97]

Having a store of local knowledge often prompted spontaneous questions relevant to my particular research topic. Conversely though, I was also at times excluded from being offered certain information precisely due to this local status. The fact that I might have been related to an individual being discussed or, at the very least, have my own personal locally-situated context through which to interpret the information being offered, sometimes prevented me from accessing local peoples' views and information on certain issues. Returning to the interview situation that revealed the story of the *Plainceannaí,* had I not been related to my ancestral Dirranes, I would never have known to inquire after them. On the other hand, because I was related to this family, the respondents were reluctant to relate the story of the plank, in case it might offend. The initial hesitance in relating this story to me, served not only as a framing device for that particular narrational event (i.e. this is not to be interpreted maliciously), it also, I believe, provided an important unspoken cue for future retellings of the incident. In other words, I would be expected to relate the initial reluctance of the respondents, whenever and to whomever I might repeat this story, in order to avoid upsetting any social relations between the informants and any of protagonist's relations who could potentially take offence. Native metacommunicative competence, I might then suggest, allowed me to duly note the hesitance displayed and yet persevere with the issue at hand, with (a) the knowledge that I wasn't overstepping boundaries or being overly forceful and (b) the understanding that any future recontextualisations of this incident, where the informants were specifically named, would incorporate the reluctance involved in the initial telling.

Research conducted within one's own community informs the work in a unique way but does not neccesarily amount to a more authentic account than one produced from an outsider's perspective. Whatever our stance we, as ethnographers, must simply acknowledge our positioned place in the constructed text and engage with our role in a reflexive manner so that we may, as Anthony P. Cohen suggests, 'begin to exploit the intrusive self as an ethnographic resource rather than suffer it as a methodological hindrance' (1992: 226).

[97] Recall the characters in Standún's *Na hAnthropologicals* discussing this very issue with regard to the English-speaking anthropologist conducting research in a predominately Irish-speaking community:

> "They would be reading things into what people are saying that weren't there at all. They wouldn't know what was said in jest and what was serious."
> "What you are saying, in another way, is that they didn't understand the people's culture?"

10.5 Conclusion: Some Reflective Thoughts

When I first began this research, I envisioned a story of two complementary halves. As the work progressed, I started to view the project as a work of dualities: I was, afterall, officially registered with two separate academic departments; working with two supervisors, one from each discipline; I was known by my English name in one Department, by my Irish name in the other; I was conversing and writing in two languages on a daily basis and aiming to present the work in two separate volumes. It was not until I was fully immersed in both sides of the research that I began to reunite both disciplines and appreciate how each informed the other at various stages throughout the research. Each of the disciplines, Modern Irish, Folklore and Anthropology offers its own distinct insight into a folklore text: using the dialogic relationship between these disciplines as a point of departure, however, offers a uniquely rewarding approach to the material. An analysis of the linguistic traits of Ó Direáin — preserved due to Flower's meticulous attention to phonetic detail — provides us with an important comparative template for 1930s Aran Irish and it also provides us with contextual information regarding the linguistic competency that was considered essential to the successful storytelling ocassion. The dialectical features of the narrator, that were brought into view through the restoration of the linguistic text, index a particularly Aran storytelling scene thereby allowing a new audience to be partially reunited with the narrator of the tale and the oral setting from which it was extracted.[98] An anthropological analysis that draws attention to these factors, and to the construction process of the traditional Aran narrator and his recontextualised stories, encourages the reader of the folktale to inquire into the infinitely rich contextually-contingent discursive processes that constitute a folklore text.

The first stage of my research involved spending the best part of a year in the archives of the National Folklore Collection, deciphering and writing by hand the stories that Robin Flower collected from Darach Ó Direáin. This amount of time immersed in the folklore archives gave me some insight into, and an appreciation for, the enormity of the Irish folklore enterprise, both past and present. It also allowed me to absorb and reflect upon some of the recontextualising work being undertaken by both staff and visiting researchers, including myself. Given the slow pace of the initial stages, in terms of copying written material from a difficult to decipher, sometimes illegible base, this stage of the research did not allow me immediate access to the stories. At one point in the process, a story was reduced to a mere conglomerate of words, each to be deciphered and analysed,

[98] Of course, it can only ever be a diluted reconcilement in the absence of the narrator's paralinguistic features, the intimate setting of the storytelling ocassion, and the collaboration of the audience.

firstly in relation to Robin Flower's handwriting, and only when a sufficient amount of text was revealed, in relation to the context of the story. Such stalled access to the material creates an unusual relationship to the stories: not only is it completely at odds with the oral setting in which the stories were originally told — the fundamental *performative* nature of the tales is all but obscured until a certain amount of *written* text is uncovered[99] — the delayed access to a story's context was also incompatible with my research agenda of reuniting text with context.

While completing this thesis, many of my trips to visit family in Árainn also served as opportunities to conduct fieldwork. As touched on above, and as discussed in detail in the linguistic analysis of chapters 3 and 4, some words in Robin Flower's manuscript were either difficult to decipher or, in some cases, completely illigible to this researcher. An analysis of the handwriting and an attention to the context of the story usually revealed a likely term to be inserted in the text, with an accompanying footnote detailing the associated ambiguity: in other instances, I was left with no choice but to insert a blank space in place of the indecipherable word. During one of my visits to Árainn, I had on hand a list of difficult to read terms to ask of family, friends and neighbours. Given that this was not an organised fieldwork visit, I did not have a copy of the stories with me on this particular occasion — only a list of decontextualised words from the collection. During these casual fieldwork inquiries, the first port of call was my parents' kitchen where I would read the list of unclear words to my father and he would either offer a suggestion or inform me that it was probably 'something the old people used to say' indicating that it wasn't in his own vocabulary. This was the case with a word that I was having particular difficulty with. Having gone through the various possibilities where Robin Flower's *ph*- might actually be a *fh*-, the -*m*- could in fact be a -*nn*- or -*nr*-, -*r*- might also be read as -*s*- and so on, we were unable to decipher the word.

A few days later, during the same visit, my six-foot-something father was holding my then one year old son on his knee. Towering above his grandson, he decided to play the part of a giant and spontaneously uttered the following narrative:

> *Is mór liom go phlaic 'ú agus is beag liom go dhá phlaic 'ú. Cuirfidh mé i* <u>*snaoisín*</u> *i mo shrón 'ú, cuirfidh mé séideog [ort] agus cuirfidh mé sa domhan thoir 'ú* .[100]

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[99] Importantly, the written medium is now a crucial element to this process of reconciling the archive folktale to the performance event.

[100] [You would be big enough for one bite, but not for two bites. I'll put you in [a piece of] snuff in my nose and blow you to the Eastern World.]

There it was — the offending word (underlined above) that had seemingly defeated my father only a few days earlier was now flowing effortlessly from his lips. Furthermore, it was encased in a narrative almost identical to Ó Direáin's in the Collection in which a giant threatens the hero of the story with the same fate.[101] When I asked him to repeat what he had said, my father stated:

'Oh *muise*, it's nothing, it's just something they [the old people] used to say to us when we were young. I think it's from the old stories.'

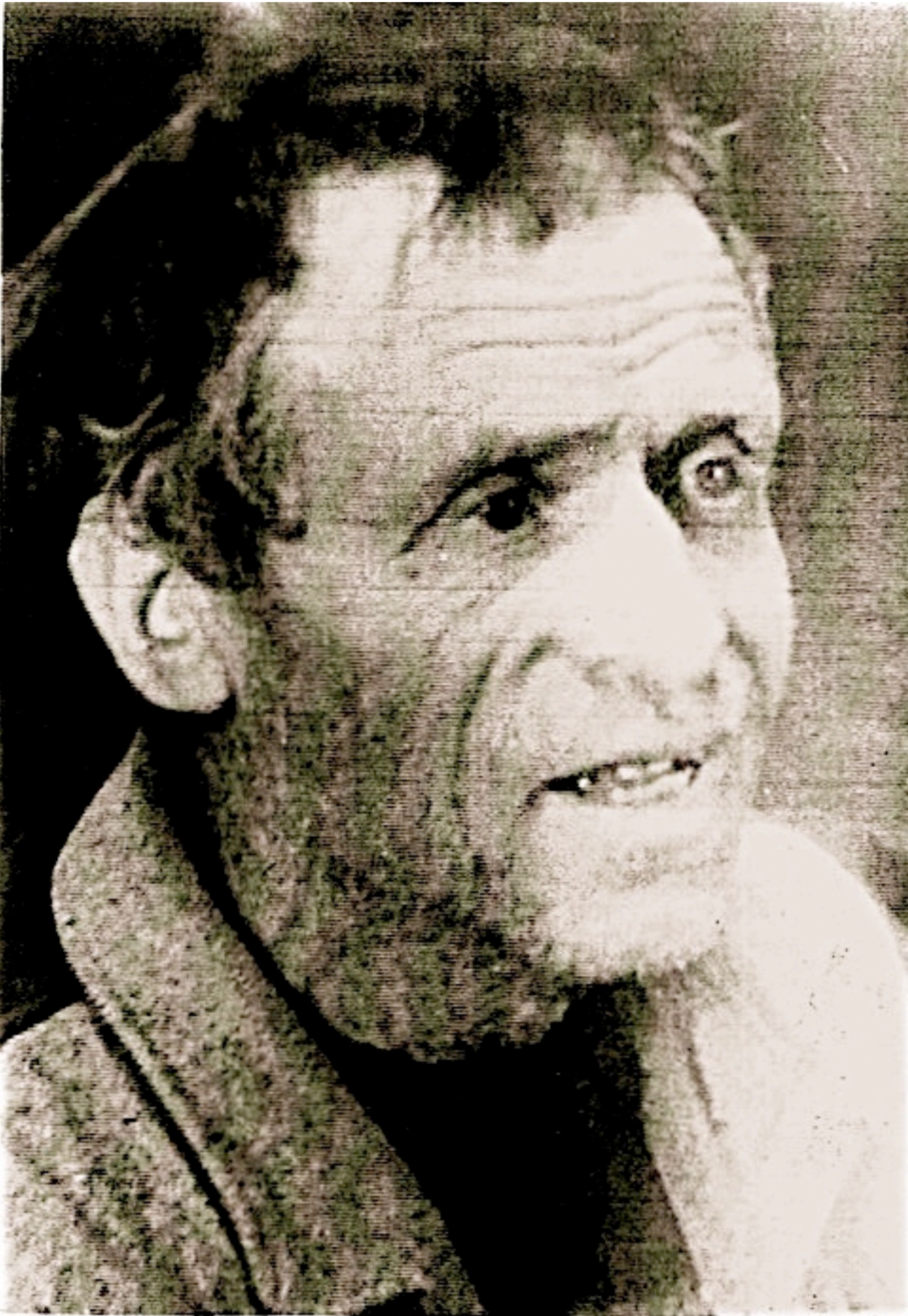
I reminded him of the words that we had discussed some days earlier (from these 'old stories', no less) to which he responded:

'Oh, was it *pinse snaoisín* you were asking about? Oh yes, well that's what the old people used to do instead of smoking,' and both he and my mother proceeded to inform me about the common past practice of sniffing powdered tobacco.

This was a defining moment in my research. I realised that, in this early deciphering stage, I was relating to the stories primarily as archive texts whose oral origins were in a distant past: here I was reducing the stories — however momentarily — to linguistic units that were extractable from their social and linguistic context. This incident reminded me that Ó Direáin's stories were once part of the social fabric of Aran, intertwined with the people, their language, traditions and cultural practices: inseparable, in other words, from their context. A central objective of this interdisciplinary analysis, then, is one of reuniting text with context at every opportunity, including connecting representational texts, tourist and native verbal encounters, official and genealogical names, biographical descriptions, oral storytelling settings and written folklore texts to their contextual discursive histories. The social occasion of storytelling no longer exists in Aran but indexical links to the stories remain and as long as new indexical connections are being created between written stories and their oral origins, between researcher and informant and, indeed, between grandparents and their grandchildren, important elements of the Aran folktale will survive.

[101] See story no. 49: *Scéal Mhac Rí Éireann*. Vol. 1: 313 (final paragraph).

Aguisíní / Appendices



1. Darach Ó Direáin (Dara Neide Pheaidí).
Courtesy of Steven Dirrane, Árainn.

2. Darach Ó Direáin's house, Eoghanacht, Árainn.

...n Bhéaloideas Éireann
...rtment of Irish Folklore
...oláiste Ollscoile
...Átha Cliath 4
... Ireland.

3. Sample page no. 1: Flower/Ó Direáin manuscript.
(Edited in Vol. I: 331-332 as story no. 51).
Le caoinchéad ó Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann.

4. Sample page no. 2: Flower/Ó Direáin manuscript.
(Edited in Vol. I: 259 as story no. 36).
Le caoinchéad ó Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann.

Do Dharach Ó Direáin

Cén scéal, a Dharaigh, ón tír úd thall?
Ar casadh Seáinín ort ná Séamus fós?
An bhfuil Mac Rí Éireann féin san áit?
An bhfuil Fionn Mac Cumhaill ná Conán ann?
An raibh an Chailleach Bhéara romhat sa ród?
Scaoil chugainn do scéal, a Dharaigh chóir!

Chuireas do thuairisc uair ar Cháit
Ach d'fhágais ise féin gan tásc;
Fóir orainn, a Dharaigh, go beo,
Is aithris dúinn gach eachtra i gceart,
Ach b'áil liom a rá cén mhaith bheith leat,
Tá an fód, mo léan, i do bhéal go beacht.

For Darach Ó Direáin

What news, Darach, from the land beyond?
Did you meet Seainin yet, or Seamus?
Is the King of Ireland's Son himself there?
Is Fionn Mac Cumhaill or Conan there?
Was Cailleach Bhearra out in front of you on the road?
Let us have your story [i.e. news], Darach, my honest man!

I enquired after you one time from Cait
But you have left even her without tidings;
Come quickly to our aid, Darach,
And narrate every adventure correctly for us,
But, I would want to say, what's the use of going on about you,
Since, to my great sorrow, the sod sits trimly in your mouth.

5. Poem by Máirtín Ó Direáin (1910-1988) from (Ó hAnluain 1980: 66); translation from Ó Crualaoich (2005: 47-48).

Fís an Daill

Bhí seanchaí ar m'aithne,
É liath agus dall,
A d'aithris an méid seo
Do scata gan aird:
'Bíonn longa faoi sheolta bána
Ar farraige thiar,
Is fós faoi shoilse geala'
Ar an seanchaí liath.
'Bíonn fir is mná ina gcéadta ar bord
Is iad gléasta go gléigeal'
Ar an seanchaí dall.
'Bíonn fíon is beoir is feoil le fáil
Is iad á roinnt ar chách go fial'
Ar an seanchaí liath.
Is chonaic mé an scata
Ina thimpeall ag magadh
Is dúirt duine amháin
Nach raibh ann ach dall
Is nach raibh ina chaint
Ach rámhaillí ard;
Is chonaic mé gné
An tseanchaí léith
Is í ar lasadh ag fís na háille,
Is d'éirigh mé faoi fheirg
Gur fhág mé an áit,
Is gur dhúras nárbh eisean
Ach iadsan a bhí dall.

The Blind Man's Vision

I knew a storyteller,
Grey-haired and blind,
Who recited these words
To a heedless throng:
'Ships with white sails
Cross the western sea,
Ablaze with lights'
Said the grey-haired storyteller.
'Hundreds of men and women on board,
All richly adorned'
Said the blind storyteller.
'There's plenty of wine and meat and ale
And a generous share is given to all'
Said the grey-haired storyteller.
And I saw the crowd
Around him mocking
And one man said
He was just a blind man
And that his talk was only
Raving nonsense.
And I saw the face
Of the grey-haired storyteller
Shining with visionary delight,
And I rose in anger
And left that place,
And said not he
But they were blind.

6. Poem by Máirtín Ó Direáin. Poem and translation from Mac Síomóin and Sealy (1992: 32-33).

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