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Nicholas Allen

Excerpt

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## CHAPTER I

*Civil wars*

Looking out across Dublin's south inner city from the height of the Four Courts dome in late June 1922, Ernie O'Malley forgot himself for a brief moment. Officer in charge of the republican forces who had barricaded the building in protest at the Anglo-Irish Treaty, O'Malley was waiting for an assault he knew was coming. After years of sporadically intense violence there had been a brief lull the previous months. The Treaty's acceptance by a slim majority of Dáil representatives had promised a new beginning, the freedom to achieve freedom. The price of that promise was too much for many, partition from the north and an oath of allegiance to the crown two unbearable demands. Violence resumed in the Four Courts with rifle and artillery fire, old comrades split between acceptance and refusal, Free State and Republic. The dissidents' choice of location was dramatic. Pearse and Connolly had taken the General Post Office some six years before, possessing briefly the centre of communications. Their proclamation of the republic was planned to reverberate across the empire. Republicans now took possession of Ireland's legal centre in hope of unravelling the terms of the Treaty by force. Designed by James Gandon, the Four Courts sit by the Liffey and are visible from all over the central city. These proportions appealed to O'Malley. He had long loved painting. When imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol during the Anglo-Irish War he kept etchings by Dürer in his pocket. Now in the Four Courts he viewed his predicament as an artist, looking at the candlelit masonry as if a Rembrandt etching. When the government troops attacked, O'Malley wormed his way through a tunnel to his bullet-pocked quarters.

I picked up some of my books from a shelf. Baudelaire, two al fresco prints, Tintoretto and Piero della Francesca, a portfolio of drawings. There were two bullet holes through a copy of Vasari's *Lives of the Italian Painters*. Authors had been drilled and taken out of all proportion to the number of books. 'Bad luck to

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them, anyhow', I said in the direction of a piece of artillery gone through a Synge illustrated by Jack Yeats. 'They mustn't like books or anything to do with books'.<sup>1</sup>

As the masonry fell, O'Malley gathered himself with Vasari's description of Andrea del Sarto, the Renaissance brought for a fleeting moment to the Liffey's banks. Of all his books, only a volume of Montaigne had escaped damage. He slipped this into his pocket to rest beside a copy of Shakespeare's sonnets. Returning to the battle O'Malley and his fellow officers soon realised the futility of their resistance. For all its symbolic suggestion, the Four Courts was a strategic disaster, hemming the republicans into a defensive position inadequately prepared. As they discussed surrender they looked into the courtyard. A mine exploded in the public records office and caused the works of a thousand years to waft slowly down, stray pages like 'hovering white birds'<sup>2</sup> above the ground. It rained ashes for a week.

With its shattered walls and fragmented archive, the Four Courts is symbolic of a deep erasure in the history of those dissident decades, the 1920s and 30s. Now forgotten cultures flared and disappeared, little magazines, cabaret clubs, riots and theatres erupting in a fluctuating public sphere. A smouldering city found form in art and literature. The fires of the Four Courts, the dishevelled military campaign to follow, the confused politics, the assassinations, are all failures too bitter for speech. A silence has ensued, broken intermittently. This silence has haunted Irish society, the replacement idea that the vital commitment of the revolution died in the first years of a state born old. Art was antithetical, to use William Butler Yeats's phrase. Revival became counter-revival, the Abbey Theatre lost to state subsidy and peasant plays, writers censored, embittered or exiled. William Butler Yeats swept between France, Italy, England and Ireland. James Joyce found a home in Paris. Samuel Beckett followed him. For all that we now know of these writers' lives and works, their relations are unclear to this most traumatic and least considered period in modern Irish cultural history. A gathering of loose threads, this book comprises a series of readings by which to refigure emerging and established artists in context of each other and their time. It does so by placing chapters that concentrate on a particular writer or artist beside chapters that range more widely in the period's cultural history. From these associated perspectives I hope to change the critical orthodoxy of

<sup>1</sup> Ernie O'Malley, *The Singing Flame* (Dublin: Anvil, 1978), 105. O'Malley's concern for the printed word is questionable of course given he shared responsibility for the subsequent destruction of public records.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

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the period and its literature, complicating the presumption that Ireland was a place only of dull and isolating repressions.

The first two decades of independence were fraught. The state was founded in difficulty and underwent several political and constitutional transformations. Recent historical thought has downplayed the actual effect of these changes, arguing for a remarkably stable transition from Free State to republic.<sup>3</sup> While this argument may hold at the level of political representation, it seems inadequate to the period's cultural production. The state was a continual controversy. Subsequently it was subject to constant scrutiny, 'language and culture' the spheres, as Joe Cleary puts it, 'in which conflicts are experienced and evaluated'.<sup>4</sup> The conditional perception of what Ireland was, should or might be coincided with a revolution in the arts. Never before had the relationship between the novel, the poem, the painting, the artist and audience been subject to such productive uncertainty. This coincidence of Irish secession from the British Empire and the development of modernism is one of this study's foundations. Tracing the abstractions of Joyce, Yeats and Beckett into the early controversies of the Free State asks wider questions of how we might locate an experimental literature in relation to the formation of a post-imperial state. The conditional, unfinished spaces of the modernist novel or the abstract painting were an unfinished civil war that maintained the dissident energies of the revolutionary period into the new dispensation. It does not follow that all such experiments were designed with liberty in mind. Much of W. B. Yeats's work played with rebellion as a provocation to a desired reaction. Further, antagonism to the state did not mean sympathy with republicans. For all that, reading Irish culture through the Civil War allows for a reconsideration of the relations possible between the work of art and its time. Aesthetic controversy, and its political location, is one register of ongoing debates about art and citizenship.

This book arises from a feeling left from my previous work that so much remained untold of Ireland in the 1920s and 30s. The intimacies of constitutional argument and of political history are well mapped. Similarly, the

<sup>3</sup> John Regan has argued that Irish democracy is 'incomprehensible' without acceptance of 'a nationalist consensus'. Despite 'much drama' it is 'the absence of real extremes' and 'the monotony of Irish nationalist politics' which make for the most compelling historical picture. It is striking that this same period encompasses the late work of Jack and W. B. Yeats, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the emergence of Samuel Beckett, Sean Keating and Liam O'Flaherty. Culture was disaffection's province. John Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution 1921–1936: Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999), 383.

<sup>4</sup> Joe Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day, 2006), 21.

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personal lives of Yeats, Joyce and Beckett are recorded in brilliant detail. So too do the institutions, the Abbey Theatre and the Gate, have their memorials. Still, we know next to nothing of the ways in which people might encounter these artists, objects and places. The period's received narrative, which runs from revival to reaction, is complicit with this lack of observation, dismissing the 1920s and 30s as a cultural wasteland. The evidence from newspapers, diaries, photographs, letters, sketchbooks, paintings and journals suggests otherwise. In mining these sources complex relations become visible between literature, art and the fractured state that emerged after the Treaty. Ireland is no longer a dead site of faded ideals. It is a continuing space in which to test culture's influence on a new state, a state rethinking itself in context of its experience of empire, partition and withdrawal.<sup>5</sup> In this respect looking at Ireland of the 1920s and 30s is to observe a culture centrally engaged with the problems of global modernity post-world war. Standing in the Four Courts and thinking of the Italian masters, Ernie O'Malley is one example of the widespread attempt to rethink the cultural geography of this transformed place. Like a later Beckett landscape, this Ireland of 1922 and after was strange and familiar all at once. Part of this book's ambition is to translate the terms of that alienation into literature and art, tracing connections between a state founded in violent controversy and the increasingly experimental, and as I would argue dissident, arts of writing and painting. To restore a picture of these arts to the historical narrative I have written a book that is associative and impressionistic. The study is founded in material evidence but I have tried throughout to combine significance with suggestion, mostly because I do not believe that marginal practice makes minor art. The very variety and contradiction of social thought in the 1920s and 30s is a rebuke to our ignorance of the period's creativity. That creativity grew from the tragedy of a civil war that was an intricate, perhaps unavoidable, part of Ireland's partial secession from empire. Looking at and reading in such energetic deviation from the inherited boundaries has required a flexible, free-flowing critique, the success of which is for the reader to judge.

The years from the civil war to the Emergency, when Ireland declared neutrality in the Second World War, coincide with the great achievements of Irish literature, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* bookends to a cultural transition from empire to independence. These essays read revolution in

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of how these questions might be reconsidered in contemporary scholarship read Joe Cleary, 'Amongst Empires: A Short History of Ireland and Empire Studies in International Context', *Eire-Ireland*, 42: 3/4 (2007), 11–57.

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art and politics as coincident to continuing negotiations over private and public identity in the new state. In so doing, they shorten the distance between us, as readers, and a culture committed to think through and against the art and politics of an independence whose legacy of conflict is formative of Ireland to this day.<sup>6</sup> This connection has been contentious historically. The first critics of Joyce and Yeats were concerned above all to create modernism as a supra-national category whose adherents were, typically, men of genius, whose works transcended, as if this were possible, the messy particulars of their background. Currently, the tendency is to question this separation of text from context, and to locate Ireland as a particular site of specific textual relations.<sup>7</sup> This project faces its own complications. There is continuing debate as to how 'modern' Irish society was (or is).<sup>8</sup> There is the general problem of how to connect an *avant-garde* literature with a culture that seems in received retrospect to be wholly conservative, if not deadly reactionary.<sup>9</sup>

Modernism, for the purposes of this book, represents experimental art that challenges a state whose institutions and operations encode other persistent forms of regulation, James Joyce inscribing the civil war into the foundations of *Finnegans Wake*, Jack Yeats maintaining a possible space for freedom in his

<sup>6</sup> The civil war began on 28 June 1922 and ended formally on 30 April 1923, with an estimate of over 1,000 dead. Its place in Irish historiography is obscure compared to the years that preceded it. Bill Kissane argues for the civil war 'of 1922–23' as 'a crucial moment in Irish social and political development', a moment that still reverberates in political society, the two parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, who maintain the legacy of post-Treaty politics still never in office as a coalition. *Explaining Irish Democracy* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2002), 164. Eunan O'Hallpin writes: 'The divisions marked by treaty and civil war have haunted Irish politics ever since.' *Defending Ireland. The Irish State and its Enemies Since 1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>7</sup> John Wilson Foster made an early attempt to 'make larger claims of a fitful native Modernism than have so far been advanced' in his essay 'Irish Modernism', *Colonial Consequences. Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1991), 45, directing discussion primarily to problems of chronology and genre. More recently Gregory Castle has argued for the importance of anthropology to *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), while Emer Nolan connects 'Modernism and the Irish Revival' in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 165.

<sup>8</sup> The groundbreaking study of this subject writes of 'Thomas MacGreevy, Brian Coffey, Samuel Beckett, Denis Devlin, and the publisher-poet George Reavey' that 'All except Reavey were more or less self-exiled by their common dissatisfaction with the narrow, anti-intellectual culture of the new Irish state and what they felt to be its coercively nationalist, ruralist and bigoted ideology'. In rethinking the context we might reignite the literature. Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis (eds.), *Modernism and Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Terence Brown has written that 'Artistic and cultural expression in the Irish Free State in the 1920s and especially in the 1930s would certainly give the cultural historian apparently sufficient ground for concluding that modernism and post-colonial nationalism (another capacious and accommodating term) are antithetical in their particular manifestations'. 'Ireland, Modernism and the 1930s', in Coughlan and Davis (eds.), *Modernism and Ireland*, 25.

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sketches.<sup>10</sup> The forms of representation I trace in this book coincide with the model of mobile resistance of ‘anti-colonial nationalism’ that Elleke Boehmer has identified as ‘allusive, cross-cultural, intertextual’.<sup>11</sup> My work asks how, and why, elements of these ‘nationalisms and resistance-movements’ continue to be ‘multiply-constituted, opportunistic and fluid’<sup>12</sup> even after independence is achieved. In this book, reading dissident art and literature is to read a politics and aesthetics articulated in moments of challenge, the borders of social interaction not set, Ireland indefinitely a democracy, dominion, republic or state.<sup>13</sup> The shifting subjectivities of many of the works I discuss form a strategy by which to question the power of past, present and future, the boundaries between the individual and the state re-imagined in the disordering of time, place and space that makes for the public protests and private entertainments to follow.

Irish society was exposed to an entirely new set of problems post-1922, from the design of a coinage to the management of the army. Art’s gift was to maintain a dissident space in public discourse. The foundations of literature and painting were challenged by the apparent conditionality of all institutions, the new state critiqued from its foundation as the compromised expression of persisting possession, Britain’s departure no end in itself.<sup>14</sup> The following essays place canonical and fugitive texts back into this

<sup>10</sup> The question can be asked as to how previous modernist forms might relate to this definition of experimental art against the state, particularly given that episodes in a work like Joyce’s *Ulysses* gesture towards the later, post-independence work of *Finnegans Wake*. My answer is that the definition holds so long as the different nature of the state in question (say, for example, Ireland before 1922) is taken into account.

<sup>11</sup> Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Daly describes how the Irish state occupied shifting positions with regard to its constitutional definition. Its dominion status was unclear since dominion was a term in evolution; its borders were, until 1925, under examination by a Boundary Commission whose proposals were in any event ignored; the 1936 External Relations Act removed the oath of allegiance to the British Crown as a prerequisite to sit in the Dáil, but the following year’s constitution did not call Ireland a republic since Eamon de Valera felt this was a title best kept until sovereignty was returned to the island’s thirty-two counties; Ireland became a republic in the formal sense in 1949 when an Inter-Party Government that did not include Fianna Fáil left the Commonwealth, an organisation in which Ireland had not participated in since 1932. Mary Daly, ‘The State in Independent Ireland’, in Richard English and Charles Townshend (eds.), *The State: Historical and Political Dimensions* (London: Routledge, 1999), 66–94.

<sup>14</sup> This continuing state has been deconstructed by Bill Kissane, who observes that ‘In Ireland both “Free Staters” and republicans came to preside over the most centralized democratic state in western Europe, but the phenomenon of the state has not been seriously addressed by Irish social science’. *Explaining Irish Democracy*, 164. Kissane’s latest study goes further, using comparative models to rethink, strikingly, the conflict during and after 1922. See *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

world of newspapers, radical clubs, cabarets and paintings. This creates what Frederick Jameson calls ‘episodic, molecular strings of events’<sup>15</sup> by which to imagine alternate relations between art and society. My idea is to trace texts to the moment of their original production, to access the oppositional energies of a literature that recognised the limits of ‘freedom’ after empire.<sup>16</sup> Proposing this allows a space for politics in art forms dismissed as abstract, suggesting a new aesthetic of text and society that breaks the seal between experiment and activity, interactive solidarities opened between artist and audience.<sup>17</sup> Post-Treaty Ireland was in flux, the country partitioned, the economy fragile, the relationship between state and military fractious.<sup>18</sup> Writing possessed the power to settle, or disturb, this equilibrium as a discourse embedded in the revolutionary experience. In his later fictional memoir of the period, *Black List Section H*, Francis Stuart wrote of H’s hopes for conflict.

The civil war created doubt and confusion, and thus a climate in which the poet could breathe more easily. Instead of uniting in a conformity of outlook that had to appeal to dull-witted idealists as well as those of intelligence, it divided people. And once the process of division had started, H foresaw it continuing, and subdivisions taking place, especially on the Republican side, perhaps creating small enclaves of what he looked on as true revolutionaries whose aim had less to do with Irish independence than in casting doubt on traditional values and judgments.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Frederick Jameson, ‘Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism’, in Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks (eds.), *The Jameson Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 176.

<sup>16</sup> Or as David Lloyd puts it, ‘Hybridization or adulteration resist identification both in the sense that they cannot be subordinated to a narrative of representation and in the sense that they play out the unevenness of knowledge which, against assimilation, foregrounds the political and cultural positioning of the audience or reader. To each recipient, different elements in the work will seem self-evident or estranging ... It is precisely their hybrid and hybridizing location that makes such works the possible objects of such contestations, contestations that can be conducted oppositionally only by reconnecting them with the political desire of the aesthetic from which they are continually being separated. The same could be said for the multiple locations that make up the terrain of a post-colonial culture: it is precisely their hybrid formation between the imperial and the national state that constitutes their political significance’. *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 115.

<sup>17</sup> Raymond Williams charged his own version of modernism with a further hope. ‘If we are to break out of the non-historical fixity of post-modernism, then we must search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century, a tradition which may address itself not to this by now exploitable because quite inhuman rewriting of the past but, for all our sakes, to a modern future in which community may be imagined again’, *The Politics of Modernism* (London: Verso, 1989), 35.

<sup>18</sup> For an idea of this persistent conflict read the year by year chronologies of Unseann MacEoin, *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923–1948* (Dublin: Argenta, 1997), an indispensable guide to the minutiae of republican culture.

<sup>19</sup> Francis Stuart, *Black List Section H* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1995), 72.

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The cracks in the post-Treaty political code hid the ghosts of those outside the new regime. Poems were read in solace for imprisonment, mythic figures imagined to be present, just as the Proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916 cried freedom 'In the name of God and of the dead generations'. Writers played on their status as media between the actual and the possible, continuing to imagine alternatives after 1922. The young poet Charles Donnelly died a commissar in the fight against Franco, while William Butler Yeats was sympathetic to Mussolini. Irish republicans protested the Italian invasion of Abyssinia while James Joyce undercut the idea of a national epic in *Finnegans Wake*. Through all this period Ireland occupied an anomalous state between empire and independence, its politics and culture both attempting to find representative forms that could incorporate and refigure their troubled histories.

Nowhere is this anomaly more apparent than in 1922, the year of Irish independence, *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. One immediate reason for this revolution was the collapse, or weakening, of empires after the First World War. A breakdown occurred the day the Anglo-Irish Treaty passed the Dáil, opening a rupture that is not closed still. Historians have considered this break as a constitutional question. An alternative is to read the moment from the horizontal, placing Ireland of 1922 in its quotidian perspective. Reading the newspaper accounts of the days around the Treaty debates a sense emerges of an as yet unknown Ireland emerging. In Belfast, there were riots and violence.

Rival crowds fired at each other from Townsend Street and Divis Street, and later in the evening a bomb was thrown at a police lorry in the same locality, but fortunately without doing any damage. The police returned the fire of the snipers, and a woman was badly wounded. Two bombs exploded in the Grosvenor Road, and a youth was slightly wounded in the arm. Very few people were about at the time, and where the bomb came from remains a mystery.<sup>20</sup>

Ireland became more mysterious the more trouble occurred. Reporting an inquest of deaths in Belfast from the previous month, the *Cork Examiner* recorded the coroner's opinion that 'there was a large Bolshevik association which was out to cause strife between Catholics and Protestants and secure plunder'.<sup>21</sup> No evidence was offered in support. Cork, long a centre of revolutionary violence, and soon to become so again during the civil war, welcomed the Treaty with a certain humour. The same edition that

<sup>20</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 January 1922, 5.      <sup>21</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 7 January 1922, 5.



informed its readers of the agreement's successful progress through the Dáil also carried an advert that read:

Peace Treaty signed. Lasting compact sealed in Sinn Fein House. By Sinn Fein House in this instance I mean 'Our Own Home', as father has just ordered our Winter's Supply of Coals and Potatoes from Kearney & Co., 4, Merchant's Quay, Cork. As a matter of fact Mother gave him no Peace till he did so, as she believes in Quality, not Quantity. If you want to have a Happy & Peaceful Home, do as Dad did. Phone 479 Cork.<sup>22</sup>

The Bolsheviks had not infected Cork, as business proceeded apace, content now to adopt the language and symbols of independence as evidence of its community credentials. Meanwhile, Ireland remained informed of the global economy as newspapers reported the progress of international markets: 'On the Stock Exchange yesterday, business was restricted, but the tone was good. US, Exchange, 4.20. Marks, 792½'.<sup>23</sup> Unemployment remained a major problem, with 107,000 individuals on the register in the last week of 1921. Belfast and Dublin were worst affected. The fragility of the emerging states, north and south, was reflected in their permeable borders. A body of armed republicans from around Ireland was routed by the northern police at Dromore, County Tyrone. Over thirty soldiers of three British Army regiments, the Oxford and Buckinghamshires, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Tank Corps, and three members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, were received into the Catholic Church in a Limerick service.<sup>24</sup> On another field of play, Dolphin Rugby Football Club celebrated the final match of a successful Dublin tour, drawing six points apiece with the National University at Terenure.<sup>25</sup> Less fit for exercise was the painter William Orpen, who was hospitalised with nicotine poisoning. Orpen estimated that he had smoked over 60,000 cigarettes at a rate of fifty per day from the age of seven. His cure was strychnine injections: 'I knew I had recovered when I made an 80 break at billiards to-day'.<sup>26</sup>

All this took place during the drama of the Treaty debate itself. Writing of the Friday session previous to the Saturday vote, the *Cork Examiner* recorded Eamon de Valera's 'sensational declaration'<sup>27</sup> that he would resign as president of the republic and take the cabinet with him to stop the Treaty. Michael Collins answered that if the proposal to accept 'was beaten the President of the Republic could have a united Cabinet in ten minutes'.<sup>28</sup> The Treaty was carried on the Saturday by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven, a

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1922, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1922, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1922, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1922, 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1922, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1922, 5.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1922, 5.

margin that did not reflect in the *Cork Examiner's* opinion the 90 per cent of Irish people in favour of the agreement. The reporting of events subsequent is high melodrama, and it is easy to imagine readers engrossed, the newspaper gripped. De Valera:

... obviously labouring under great emotion, made a speech, and indicating that as a result of the verdict he would resign his office as Chief of the Executive of Dáil Éireann. He, however, had only concluded, when Mr Collins rose, and in striking fashion made a stirring appeal for unity within the ranks of their movement. Miss MacSwiney followed, and in a short speech, pointed out that they could not unite the ideal of a Republic and a betrayal worse than Castlereagh's.<sup>29</sup>

De Valera's failure of speech signifies realisation that independence was a first fragmentation. Collins still believes in unity, but MacSwiney attacks him, speaking on behalf of the dead martyr, her brother. The trauma following is buried so deep that it remains neglected. Its lasting moment is de Valera's collapse.

President de Valera rose, and in a very subdued voice said: 'Before we rise I should like to say my last word' – but he had only added one more word when he absolutely broke down, and resuming his seat placed his head between his hands resting on the table at which he sat for a moment. There was complete suspense, and the intense nature of the scene will never be forgotten. A number of Deputies, especially prominent supporters of President de Valera, then sobbed and wept like children. For some moments it was a most intense and deeply affecting scene, and it was only terminated by the Speaker's announcement that the House would be adjourned until Monday morning.<sup>30</sup>

That house is not yet reconvened. The great moment of independence, the endpoint, as history promised, of hundreds of years of struggle, was lost to silence, with no speech from the dock or funeral oration, only quiet. De Valera recovered himself by early in the week, photographed in defiance before the Dáil, posed in front of the tricolour. The moment was lost.

Dublin continued all the while with its own entertainments. In the Gaiety Theatre, the pantomime *Aladdin* continued to be popular. The Tivoli staged performances by Fred Brezin, 'the French magician', 'turns by the Murtagh, McKenna and Connolly dancing trio', and sets by 'Arthur Gilroy, whistler and entertainer; Molly McCarthy, character comedienne; Bi-Bo-Bi, "The Sousa of the Bells"; George Casey, comedian and dancer; and Clarke and West, in vaudeville'.<sup>31</sup> The sense of energy, however channelled, contradicts the received impression of an Irish society on its knees after six

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1922, 7.    <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1922, 7.    <sup>31</sup> *Irish Times*, 7 January 1922, 3.