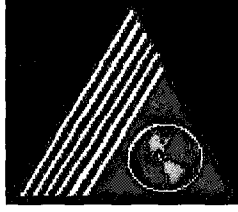


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T.C
YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
PROBLEM IN BRIAN FRIEL'S
'TRANSLATIONS' AND 'THE COMMUNICATION
CORD'

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SP Selected Plays (by Brian Friel)

CC The Communication Cord (by Brian Friel)



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ABSTRACT

Language and communication are the two important elements in human beings' life. Any kind of a deficiency that occurs, spoils the existence of these two elements.

The mentioned deficiency exists either between two different cultures or languages, or in distorted dialogues. The spoil in language and communication affect human life negatively.

Ireland is the place in which these problems take place mostly, since the English presence in Ireland affects its both culture and language negatively. Furthermore, it eradicates them gradually.

This thesis examines how the relationship and the results of these two different languages are studied in Brian Friel's 'Translations' and 'The Communication Cord'. The differences between two cultures are explained with the terms below:

- Language
- Communication
- Alienation
- Making Translation
- Changing the Place Names

A further contribution of this work is how the Irish culture disappears by the British, and what kind of an influence does the English presence has on daily life, education and work systems.

Both the plays, handle the points above and accentuate Brian Friel's sensibility on language.

ÖZET

Dil ve iletişim, insan hayatının dayandığı en önemli unsurlardandır. İçlerinde oluşabilecek herhangi bir eksiklik bu iki unsurun varlığında sarsıntılar yaratır. Bahsedilen eksiklik, ya iki farklı kültür veya dil arasında, ya da kurulan bozuk dialoglarda mevcuttur. Dil ve iletişimde oluşabilecek sarsıntılar, insan hayatını olumsuz şekilde etkiler.

Bu sorunların en çok yaşandığı yer İrlandadır, çünkü İrlandadaki İngiliz varlığı, oranın hem kültürünü hem de dilini olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir ve hatta yavaş yavaş ortadan kaldırmıştır.

Bu tez çalışması, bu iki farklı dil arasındaki ilişkinin ve sonuçlarının, Brian Friel'in `Translations` ve `The Communication Cord` oyunlarında nasıl işlendiğini inceler. İki dil arasındaki farklılıklar aşağıdaki terimlerle açıklanır:

- Dil
- İletişim
- Çeviri
- Yabancılaşma
- Yer İsimlerinin Değişmesi

Bu çalışmada aynı zamanda İrlanda kültürünün İngiliz varlığıyla nasıl ortadan kalkmaya başladığı, bu varlığın güncel yaşam, eğitim ve iş alanlarında nasıl bir etkiye sahip olduğu sunulmuştur.

Her iki oyun da, yukarıdaki noktaları ele almış ve Brian Friel'in dil konusundaki hassasiyetini vurgulamıştır.

Brian Friel is one of Ireland's most prominent playwrights. Besides his published plays, he has written short stories, screenplays, film, tv and radio adaptations of his plays.

The issues raised in his plays are very much related to his childhood and family background. While reading Friel's plays, one should always remember that he is a Catholic, Northern Irish. Being from North is a geographical distinction and it indicates Friel's sense of cultural, political and linguistic alienation. As William Kerwin claims, Friel refuses Britain's colonialism and he feels an outsider in the Republic.

Brian Friel was born on 9 January 1929 in Omagh, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland. When he was ten, his family moved to Derry, where his father was a teacher at the Long Tower School. Between 1941 and 1946 he was educated at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth until 1948. However, he left without becoming ordained. Afterwards he was enrolled at St. Joseph's Training College, Belfast. He starts teaching in Derry in 1950 and continues for about ten years. In the meantime he starts writing.

In 1952, his writing career begins with the publication of "The Child" in "The Bell Magazine". In 1954 he marries Anne Morrison and has five children. In the following years, he starts writing his well known plays. Some of the most significant plays are "The Enemy Within" (1962), "Philadelphia, Here I Come!" (1964), "The Freedom of the City" (1973), "Volunteers" (1975), "Living Quarters" (1977), "Aristocrats" and "Faith Healer" (1979), "Translations" (1980), "The Communication Cord" (1982), "Making History" (1988), "Dancing at Lughnasa" (1990), "Wonderful Tennessee" (1993) and "Molly Sweeney" (1994). Brian Friel still lives in Donegal.

As it is stated, his family background is important in terms of his writing career. Brian Friel mentions that "an Irish Catholic teacher with a nationalist background, living in a schizophrenic community, son of a teacher, grandson of peasants who could neither read nor write. The process was disquieting because it is still going on...." (Delaney, 103). Friel's this statement is a clue for the issues raised in his plays. His own experiences lead him to show Ireland's situation so clearly and brilliantly. Donegal is another influence that features strongly in Friel's life and work. He moved there in 1969 because he always felt his roots lay in Donegal. Many of his plays are set in Ballybeg, a remote part of Donegal. Here a large amount of Catholics live and there exists political and economic oppression.

Brian Friel can not be talked without Field Day. Field Day is a theatrical company established in Derry in 1980. Apart from Friel, a group of Catholic writers, poets, playwrights and actors such as Seamus Deane, Stephen Rea and Seamus Heaney are the founders of this company. Their project was to reinvigorate the political consciousness of Irish literary arts with a respect for traditions of nation, self and language which extended past the republican rhetoric of the late 19th and 20th Centuries. Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Rea wanted to establish the city as a theatrical center with this company. They also find the Field Day as a literary movement which set out to redefine Irish Cultural identity in the last quarter of the 20th Century.

Friel and Rea was supported by both the Northern Ireland Arts Council and the Arts Council in Dublin. However, the money was not enough to provide financial security. Field Day was for bringing the theatre of professional worth to Irish people and free Irish voices to speak to Irish ears. Field Day was going to keep away from the theatrical orthodoxies of both London and Dublin. The aim was to be individual, not to try to sound acceptable to London or Broadway. With Field Day, there aimed to provide an artistic basis for some kind of a peace between the majority and minority cultures in the North.

The first aim of the Field Day is to produce an annual touring play. The second one is to invite literary critics to write pamphlets on the situation in Ireland. The third aim is to publish an anthology of Irish literature in the Field Day Anthology. The Field Day Anthology is a literal remembering of the Irish heritage by translating Irish sources in English back to Irish. Although the Anthology is comprehensive, it has been severely criticized for its underrepresentation of women writers.

Language has a significant place for Brian Friel. Through the nature of language, Brian Friel deals with identity, truth and communication. For instance, the names of places include the history, both public and private memories, associated with them. However, there is always a gap in communication because of this difference in association. Friel uses the concept of the inadequacy of language in his plays and move towards an exchange beyond language. Friel states that.

It is language that speaks. Man begins speaking and man only speaks to the extent that he responds to and hears language addressing him, concurring with him. Language is the highest and foremost of those assents which we human beings can never articulate solely out of our own means. (Kerwin, 85)

In an interview “The Man from God Knows Where” with F. O’Toole in Dublin, on October 1982, Brian Friel says:

I had parents who were native Irish speakers and also two of our four grandparents were illiterate. It is very close you know. I actually remember two of them. And to be so close to illiteracy and to a different language is a curious experience. In some ways I do not think we have resolved it on this island for ourselves. We flirt with the English language, but we have not absorbed it and we have not reguritated it.

Many critics and writers analyze Friel’s understanding of language. According to lecturer Alan J. Peacock, although Brian Friel approaches language kindly, he has a distrust of language and a preference for silence. Peacock states that:

His dialogue is impacted with awareness, but he can also write an English cadenced like Burke’s and like his, one attentive to the need to control while at the same time retaining the potential for surprise. His English is spare too and suspicious, written by some one intensely aware of the presence of a hidden language in modern Ireland: Irish. (Peacock, 148)

According to Richard Kearney, for Friel, the ‘aesthetic’ and ‘cultural’ dimensions of the language crisis lead to a third one, which is the ‘political’. Friel says “ It is back to the

political problem. It is our proximity to England, how we have been pigmented in our theatre....with the use of the English language, the understanding of words, the whole cultural burden that every word in the English language carries is slightly different to our burden.” (Kerwin, 83)*

Language is always used as a weapon both politically and socially. As McGrath mentions, it is used to oppress a “colonized”(McGrath, 203) people and “to police the borders of social class.” (McGrath, 203).

McGrath claims that both ways have been used in Ireland. When Ireland becomes a colony of the British, Gaelic was “out-lawed”(McGrath, 203) and its use “stigmatized” a class of people who were impoverished. Irish accented English caused social hierarchies before independence in 1922. If the accent was close to British, then the class was rising.

Brian Friel believes that language plays a very important role in solving the problem of Ireland. During an interview with Fintan O’Toole in 1982 Friel states that:

The political problem of this island is going to be solved by language in some kind of way. Not only the language of negotiations across the table. It is going to be solved by the recognition of what language means for us on this island. Whether we are speaking the kind of English that I would use, or whether we are using the kind of English that Enoch Powell would use. Because we are in fact talking about accommodation of marrying of two cultures here, which are ostensibly speaking the same language but which in fact are not. (Murray, 115)

Friel’s plays especially became to concern with the problem of language in the 80’s. As William Kerwin mentions, words became both the form and the content of his dramas. He also claims that “.....this replay of language within the plays themselves may well indicate a

* ‘The Man From God Knows Where’, Interview by F. O’Toole, in Dublin, No 165, Oct. 1982, p. 21

critical process of self-reflection wherein the native movement of verbal theatre is beginning to take stock of itself, to put itself into question and reassess its own assumptions.(Kerwin,82)

McGrath also pays attention to language and mentions its importance in reading Friel's texts. He claims that if someone pays attention only to the social and political issues in Brian Friel's plays, and ignores his preoccupation with language, then misreading of the plays is inevitable. However if one focuses on language, then the play presents "fresh interpretations of the texts"(Kerwin, 2). Concentrating on the language also opens the play to some of the main intellectual issues of that time.

Brian Friel's views on language are very much related to George Steiner. They find their shape after Steiner's "After Babel: Aspects of Language on Translations". Brian Friel read "After Babel" when he was preparing to translate Chekhov's Three Sisters from English into Irish English. McGrath claims that George Steiner reinforced Friel's sense of the fictive powers of language "which had been incipient in his early stories and plays."(McGrath,40)

McGrath also points out in his book that Steiner's theory of language and translation, Friel had the chance to achieve one of his goals, that McGrath also wished to mention in his book. This goal was "the patient assembly of a superstructure which imposes a discipline and within which work can be performed in the light of an insight, a group of ideas, a carefully cultivated attitude. (McGrath,3)

At the same time, he adds that this "superstructure" can be characterized as a discourse on language for which Steiner's book provided Friel access. He states that this discourse has a genealogy not only in Western Culture but also a specific one in Ireland. According to McGrath, Friel's "idealist" (McGrath, 3) views on language places him within a tradition of Irish language which includes George Berkeley, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge and James Joyce.

McGrath uses Richard Kearney's quote and supports his statement. Kearney points out "Friel brilliantly contrives of refashion Steiner's academic research in the form of a drama concretely situated in his native cultural and historical context." McGrath claims that although George Steiner insists on the historical specificity and probability of any act of communication, he does not provide the means for theorizing that probability. However, that theoretical power is available in postcolonial theory.

Richard Pine also mentions Friel's taking example from Steiner and gives examples that how Friel is affected by him. One of them is that Steiner says "languages are wholly arbitrary sets of signals and conventionalized counters" (Steiner, 21). It says in Friel's 'Translations' that "words are signals, counters. They are not immortal" (SP, 419). Pine claims that a translation is not only to free a word from one language to another. For him, it is "an act of betrayal".

In addition to all of these, it would be useful to remind that, as Richard Kearney states, Friel is one of the playwrights who used the words which tend to confirm character, action and plot before, in his language plays.

Another important person is Homi Bhabha for Brian Friel in terms of differences between cultures. But Friel is not the only playwright who is influenced by Bhabha. Irish writers started to see linguistic idealism as a cultural survival with Bhabha's theory.

As McGrath explains, Bhabha's theories accomplish many things for Ireland's colonial and post colonial experiences. Firstly, "they can account for the popularity of, indeed the necessity for, idealistic linguistic philosophies in colonial situations. They are the means by which the colonized imagine an alternative to their condition." (McGrath, 4). He also talks about the thing that is provided by Bhabha, with this statement: "Bhabha provides a theoretical apparatus that is sufficiently flexible and nonprescriptive to account for the complexities of the Irish situation" (McGrath,4)

For McGrath Bhabha theorizes " a nonmimetic narrative of identity"(McGrath,5) which appears from the limits of conflicting cultures and this makes Bhabha go beyond Steiner's observation that:

Language is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is. Without the unceasing generation by the mind of counter-worlds- a generation which can not be divorced from the grammar and optative forms- we would turn forever on the treadmill of the present. (McGrath, 5)

Briefly, Brian Friel is very much interested in the term 'language' and he successfully points out the language problem in his plays, and as it is mentioned above, he is influenced by Steiner and Bhabha, and uses their ideas in his characters. 'Translations' and 'The Communication Cord' are the plays which present the significance of language problem. After 'Translations', Brian Friel is very criticized for being too political. However, Friel is strongly disapprove of that kind of an opinion and he insists that his only aim was to accentuate the importance of language. After misreadings and misunderstandings of 'Translations', Friel writes 'The Communication Cord' as a farce to 'Translations' and he deals with language once again.

'Translations' is a challenging drama which uses the richness of language and history to achieve its ends. It takes place in 1833 in Ballybeg, County Donegal. Ballybeg means a small town, which is Baile Beag in Gaelic, and it is invented by Friel. The play tells a story of a small Irish speaking community which faces with the problems and changes caused by the arrival of Royal Engineers, who are going to map Ireland and rename all the places. The Hedge Schools are going to be replaced with National Schools. Meanwhile, there is a potato blight. Everything starts becoming unfamiliar for the people of the community, because of the renaming process. Most of the action takes place at the house of the Hedge School master Hugh O'Donnell, where in accordance with British law, Catholic pupils are taught classics and mathematics.

Characters in the play are faced with questions about themselves in which the words they speak are central to understanding from where they have come and to where they are going. Tales from Ovid and Homer recited in class blend with Irish history and the translation of placenames is related to a transformation of the landscape itself. This trauma will affect these people on more levels than one, and though by the close of the action the story has not been resolved, the audience is made aware of the threads of change which have begun to unravel the lines of communication between peoples, countries and language.

The characters are a part of the language system in the play. In one way or two, they are all related to language. Manus is one of the most important characters in the play. He is the son of the Hedge School headmaster. He is teaching at the school as well. The play opens with the scene in which Manus is trying to teach Sarah how to say her name. He has strong feelings

for one of the students, Maire. He is lame and lives at home. At the end of the play he leaves Ballybeg to teach at a school.

Sarah, a student at the Hedge School has an importance in terms of representing Ireland. She is the mute girl, whom Manus tries to make her tell her name in the opening act. Many critics studies Sarah's silence as a symbol of people who has lost their tongue. Richard Pine claims that Friel is very successfully forms a simple and private world, in looking at its inner activity and tensions. McGrath also gives place for Sarah in his book and emphasizes the relationship between Sarah and George Steiner's *After Babel*. He mentions that Sarah helps the play to present a community loosing its culture. Manus tries to encourage her to talk and when he succeeds, Sarah goes back to her silence with Captain Lancey's threats. According to McGrath, this situation comes from 'After Babel'. He quotes George Steiner saying "The patronized and oppressed have endured behind their silences...". *(McGrath, 192) McGrath gives place to Seamus Heaney's ideas about Sarah. Heaney sees Sarah as a symbolic figure of Ireland. McGrath considers the ideas of both Steiner and Heaney, and claims that "Sarah's problem suggests the 'hidden Ireland' that in 1833 had begun to emerge after a century of oppression by the penal laws only to be devastated in the next decade by the famine years."(McGrath, 192)

Captain Lancey attracts attention with being a typical British Captain. He seems to have no emotion and does not have any intimate feelings towards Ireland. William Kerwin states that Captain Lancey has little or no culture. He is like a "stage English" but Friel does this without going beyond the limits.

Maire, a student at the Hedge School, is Manus' love. She is important, because she is very much eager to learn English. She wants to emigrate, therefore she thinks that English will open the doors of America. She is also an important character with the relationship between her and Lieutenant Yolland.

* George Steiner, *After Babel*, p. 34

Lieutenant Yolland is such a sympathetic character with his love for Ireland and Irish people. However he is unfamiliar to the community because he does not know the language and this is an obstacle for communication. In spite of this reality, in his relationship with Maire, language disappears as a barrier for them. Their love creates a kind of communication between them. Their relationship is very much related to language. Elmer Andrews claims that both of them challenge the incomprehension and this challenge creates comic situations. It can clearly be seen that their speech makes the border disappear between them. William Kerwin emphasizes the repeated misunderstandings between Maire and Lieutenant Yolland. However, when one utters a name, the other repeats it and they become closer with this strange communication.

McGrath studies the love between Maire and Lieutenant Yolland, and he agrees that although they can not speak each other's language, they achieve a kind of communication. However their communication does not solve the problem of language. McGrath also mentions the importance of the word 'always'. Unknowingly they keep on saying the word in their own language. While Yolland says that he wants to live with Maire in Ireland always, Maire says that she wants to live always with him, anywhere.

According to McGrath, the word 'always' comes from Steiner. He points out that Steiner studies it in connection with the problem of language and future time.

The love scene between them is brilliantly written which conveys theme and characterisation perfectly. It is also the clearest illustration of having the whole play performed through English while expressing linguistic and cognitive distance between characters who are supposed to be speaking Irish, and those who speak only the language linked by verbal association to the British English.

The scene also expresses a longing for understanding on more than just the obvious level. Throughout the first half, we see tentative relationships developing despite the distances between characters. Following this scene, the play becomes darker, reflecting the historical reality of the events. This is where the drama turns and it is well constructed.

William Kerwin also points out the importance of the scene. Lieutenant Yolland is wearing his tunic, which he thinks it would be red. When Sarah interrupts them, she is wearing

a green dress which she later reminds. As Kerwin claims, the contrast between the colours is a sign of the conflict between Ireland and England.

When McGrath mentions the influences of Steiner and Bhabha on Friel, he points out Yolland and these influences. He claims that “ the problem of incommensurability in translating between cultures”(McGrath,186) emerges with Yolland’s desire to get into Irish Culture . According to McGrath, Yolland is aware of the cultural differences between Ireland and England, and although he wishes to stay in Ireland, he knows that he will never be able to get into the culture. Yolland says “ Even if i did speak Irish, i would always be an outsider here, wouldn’t i? I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always be.....hermetic, won’t it?” (SP, 416). For McGrath, with this statement Yolland accepts ‘a cultural idiolect’ and that the Irish language will always be something different for him than the native speakers. McGrath claims that George Steiner gives the same idea with different examples , and that Lieutenant Yolland’s words are like a brief summary of Steiner’s ideas. Steiner says :

There are innumerable near-identities or, more strictly speaking , overlaps of associative content which English men share by virtue of historical or climatic experience but which an American, emitting the same speech sounds, may have no inkling of the French language, as self consciously perhaps as any, is a palimpsest of historical, political undertones and overtones. To a remarkable degree, these embed even ordinary locutions in a “chord” of associations which anyone acquiring the language from outside will never fully master.* (McGrath,187)

Homi Bhabha talks about translating between cultures in ‘Location Of Culture’ and he claims that there are somethings that are untranslatable. He adds that difference can not be reconciled by a ‘transcendental, universal subject position’ . McGrath gives emphasize on the

* Gerorge Steiner, *op. cit.*, p. 180

impossibility of 'cross-cultural identity' at that point. He adds that this is not only a question of cultural codes which Yolland implies, but also, as Bhabha mentions, 'a problem of the structure of the signifier.'

Owen, the Hedge School master's other son also plays an important role in the play in terms of being Anglicized and the importance of language. Owen lives outside of Ballybeg and returns as a translator for the British army, comes to rename and Anglicize Ballybeg. One of his duties is translating Captain Lancey's words, however it can not be said that his translations are all accurate. Firstly, Captain Lancey speaks an official language and Owen turns it into a more simple one. The second change Owen does is to translate Captain Lancey's threatening speeches into a more kind and unfrighting statements. Owen's mistranslations are evidences for the strenght of translation to decieve people. His translations raise a number of issues, related to the significance of language in understanding different cultures to each other and to find a common point between them. McGrath studies this issue in his book and gives examples from Bhabha. He states that according to Bhabha, to prove the cultural difference, translation is a good example.

Owen's second duty is to help Lieutenant Yolland in changing Gaelic place names into English. This is an act of Anglicizing but Owen is Anglicized himself before. Lieutenant Yolland and Captain Lancey call him 'Roland'. When Manus questions this, Owen replies "It is only a name. It's the same me, isn't it? Well, isn't it?" (SP, 408). Later on, when Captain Lancey wants him to translate the new Anglicized placenames into Gaelic, he will understand that he is in a kind of colonial situation. To change names is to make the familiar the unfamiliar. That is a total difference and at that point the essence of the community begins to disappear. Since Owen is not aware of this fact at the beginning, he considers changing names only in terms of hills and streams.

The headmaster of the Hedge School is Hugh, who drinks a lot. He is different from other characters with his property of being a spokesman for Steiner's and therefore Friel's insights. At the beginning, Hugh focuses on past and he is not close to the idea of change. However later on, he tries to adopt to change, because he realizes that living in the past is nothing but an imprisonment and he understands that there need to be a change. Since he tries to create a balance, he becomes to be lost between past and present, tradition and change. For

Hugh, accepting to learn the new names is a very big and important step. He says that they should learn to make them their new home. Elmer Andrews states that this is a new initiation for Hugh. Andrews also claims that Hugh is representing Brian Friel's acceptance of the English language and the need to change. To sum up, Hugh is aware of the occurring changes and that there is no need to stuck on past. He becomes to use the past to enlighten present conflicts.

George O'Brien gives place to Brian Friel's words during an interview with Ciaran Carty in 1980. We can relate his words to Hugh's statement that the Irish people should learn to accept the new English words. Here, the similarity between Brian Friel and Hugh is so obvious that it makes us consider Hugh as a spokesman for Friel's thoughts. Friel says:

There will be no solution until the British leave this island, but even when they have gone, the residue of their presence will still be with us. This is an area that we still have to resolve and that brings us back to the question of language for this is one of the big inheritances which we have received from the British.... We must continually look at ourselves, recognize and identify ourselves. We must make English identifiably our own language. (O'Brien, 80)

Elmer Andrews points out Hugh's words "..... difficulties of interpreting between privacies...." (SP,446). According to Andrews, this is Friel's main concern. He claims that Hugh's words suggests that " a process of interpretative transfer characterizes not only translations between languages but also communications within a single language." (Andrews, 169). Andrews believes that the idea, even the phrase, comes from George Steiner. He adds that for Steiner, the communication is an ' act of translation and interpretation.'

Andrews adds that " Thus, authenticity lies in ' the dark and private places of the individual soul', in an essential privacy, which can never be fully expressed in Irish nor in English. Friel explores the dreadful silences, cultural and personal, lying underneath the surfaces of language." (Andrews,169)

McGrath also finds similarities between Hugh and Steiner. According to him, Hugh is significant in terms of the language issue. As McGrath states, Hugh's ideas on language derive from Steiner. During the renaming process, Hugh says "But remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal" (SP,419). McGrath mentions that what Hugh's words imply is that arbitrary traditions, which are subject to changes, govern the language.

Jimmy Jack is an old teacher who is totally lives in the past. It can be said that he is far away from reality. He escapes into romantic fantasy. He acts as if he is a part of the old mythologies. He is very fond of Latin. With speaking Greek and Latin, in a way he shows his alienation. Jimmy Jack is "the infant prodigy" (SP, 383). He is so close to Homer, Virgil and Ovid, and they lead him to stay innocent and isolated from the real world.

Translations is a very controversial play with the issues raised in it. It is very much criticized in terms of its themes and political aspects. While Friel and the Field Day want the play to be considered as a linguistic criticism of conventional nationalism, most of the critics see the play full of repeated traditional nationalist perspectives. Elmer Andrews presents some of the important critics' ideas on the play and Brian Friel in his book. Edna Longley, the Belfast critic mostly has negative criticisms against Friel that he very much deals with the old myths of dispossession repeatedly and that he does not question them. In addition to this, she also thinks that the Field Day was nothing but a Catholic, Nationalist tendency. Longley also claims that the play is a nationalist enunciation.

Brian McAvera complains about the play's political implications and believes that the play includes nationalist myths and dangerous impressions such as cultural dispossession by the British. McAvera and Longley argues that because of the nationalist perspective of the play, there is an exaggeration on the British army's suppression. They also mention that the officers of Ordnance Survey did not carry knives and did not help in evictions.

Sean Connolly is another critic who criticizes 'Translations' with being too nationalist. He also mentions that the decline of the Irish is not only because of external forces, but also because of the forces within the Irish community itself. Connolly claims that teaching in English at the National schools which are replaced with Hedge Schools, is very necessary since English is the language of the law, commerce and the Catholic Church. Connolly adds that Friel presents the Irish as poor but well educated and on the contrary the English is

presented as ignorant, materialistic and uncultured. For instance, Captain Lancey does not understand the difference between Latin and Irish. Elmer Andrews uses a quotation from Sean Connolly, implying his ideas on 'Translations'. According to Connolly, the play is "a crude portrayal of cultural and military imperialism visited on passive victims....substituting caricature and political cliché."* (Andrews, 167)

In Andrews' book, the one and only positive criticism comes from a historian, J. H. Andrews. Andrews defends Friel for his handling of the facts. Because for Andrews, Brian Friel is interested in another kind of truth than the only factual. Andrews uses quotations from J. H. Andrews' ideas on the play, saying " an extremely subtle blend, of historical truth and some other kind of truth."(Andrews,168) J. H. Andrews also mentions that he sees the play as:

As a set of images that might have been painted on screens, each depicting some passage from Irish history, ancient or modern, the screens placed one behind the other in a tunnel with a light at one end of the tunnel and the audience at the other, so that it's only the strongest colours and the boldest lines that appear in the composite picture exhibited on the stage. ** (Andrews, 168)

According to Elmer Andrews, Friel's interest is studying a mythology of dispossession which even today shapes the Northern Catholic soul. Andrews gives an example from Hugh, saying " It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language." (SP, 445)

McGrath seems as if he understands the aim of Friel and believes that language was much more important for Friel than the colonial issues in the play. He adds that Friel also

* Sean Connolly, 'Dreaming History: Brian Friel's Translations', *Theatre Ireland*, 1987, pp.43-4

** J. H. Andrews, 'Translation and A Paper Landscape' p. 102-121

accepts the nationalism of the play, however his nationalism does not repeat the old myths. He gives Friel's words as an example saying "I have no nostalgia for Celtic Ireland. I think one should look back on the process of history with some kind of coolness. The only merit in looking back is to understanding, how you are and where you are at this moment."*(McGrath,196). Friel also adds that he does not believe in "the wholeness, the integrity, of that Gaelic past"**. McGrath takes Friel's words as an evidence for what his main concern was. He also claims that Hugh, Manus and Jimmy Jack are representatives of the death of the Gaelic culture. As he mentions, the play does not put the blame on British and states that Owen also prepares the disappearance of his language and culture on his own.

In McGrath's point of view, Brian Friel knows the importance of the native past and its place in colonial and postcolonial occasions. For McGrath, Lancey and Hugh are completely opposite to the colonial stereotypes of the cultured, knowledgeable English and the ignorant Irish. Moreover, since Friel is a citizen of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, he becomes not only colonial but also postcolonial. As McGrath points out, since Friel studies the colonial politics more clearly than the language issue, many misunderstandings of the play occur and Brian Friel becomes to be criticized with being too nationalist.

Christopher Murray gives place to Brian Friel's hesitations about the criticisms against 'Translations' in terms of political aspects, in his book ' Brian Friel Diaries, Interviews'. Friel takes notes while writing ' Translations'. In one of these notes, on May 22, 1979 Friel says "The thought occurred to me that what I was circling around was a political play and that thought panicked me. But it is a political play, how can that be avoided? If it is not political, what is it? Inaccurate history? Social Drama?"(Murray, 74). Friel was surrounded with the idea that 'Translations' was nothing but a political play. However, Friel insistently kept on saying that the play was only about language. This quotation proves inner conflicts of Friel. He also studies this issue in an interview with Ciaran Carty in 1980 and he says:

* ` Talking To Ourselves` Interview by Paddy Agnew. Magill, Dec. P. 61

**` Talking To Ourselves` Interview by Paddy Agnew, *op. cit.* P. 58

Somebody asked me if it had a political message. Well, if it has, i do not know what it is. Of course the play is also concerned with the English presence here. No matter how benign they may think it has been, finally the presence of any foreigner in your land is malign. Even if the people who were instrumental in bringing it in have the best motives as some of them had. (Murray, 80)

Although Friel tries to keep away from the idea of being nationalist and writing a political play, he can not deny that the play includes these kind of issues. Moreover, as it is stated in the above quotation, he accepts the possibility of being political. During another interview, Paddy Agnew asks him “Is it wrong then to suggest that *Translations* is a political, polemical play?” and Friel answers “ I really do not know. I am the last person to ask really.” (Murray,86)

The conflicts of Brian Friel emerge when ‘ *Translations*’ and his notes, interviews are compared. He claims that he wanted to write only about language, but afterwards he says that he does not want to write about the death of Irish language or about naming places which is a kind of heart of the play. On 29 May 1979, he writes down:

I do not want to write a play about Irish peasants being suppressed by English sappers. I do not want to write a threnody on the death of the Irish language. I do not want to write a play about land surveying. Indeed i do not want to write a play about naming places. And yet portions of all these are relevant. Each is part of the atmosphere in which the real play lurks. (Murray, 75)

Three days later, he writes down that “ What worries me about the play-if there is a play – are the necessary peculiarities, especially the political elements. Because the play has to do with language and only language. And if it becomes overwhelmed by that political element, it is lost.” (Murray, 75). In a way, the play became overwhelmed by a political element indeed. The more Friel repeats the word “language” the more political became the play.

Friel also worries about the play's issues on public and society. On 6 July 1979 he writes down:

One of the mistakes of the direction in which the play is presently pulling is the almost wholly public concern of the theme: how does the eradication of the Irish language and the substitution of English affect this particular society? How long can a society live without its tongue? Public questions issues for politicians and that is what is wrong with the play now. The play must concern itself only with the exploration of the dark and private places of individuals souls. (Murray,77)

On 5 November 1979 Brian Friel writes down his thoughts on the completed 'Translations' and Christopher Murray presents this note in his book as follow:

The play, named Translations, completed. The task of writing the play, the actual job of putting the pattern together, itself generates belief in the pattern. The act and the artifact sustain one another. And now that the play is finished the value of the pattern and belief in the pattern diminish and lethargy sets in: the life process. But only after the play is produced will i be completely cleansed of my subscription to this particular pattern, this ordering of things. Then a vigour will be summ oned. Then a new pattern will have to be forged. The process seems trivial and transient because the patterns are so impermanent. But is there another way? It's a kind of vigilance – keeping the bush from encroaching into the yard. All art is a diary of evolution; markings that seemed true of and for their time; ad justments in stance and disposition; opening to what seemed the persistance of the moment. Map-makings. (O'Brien, 77-78)

In 'Translations' the place and the importance of Gaelic and English is such a significant issue and the difference between them is so sparkling. According to Friel, it is an irony that the play should have been written in Irish. McGrath claims that many writers of the Irish literary Renaissance use English for their own past and gives 'Translations' as an example. He adds that the play recreates the old Gaelic culture with the Hedge School image

and this becomes possible with representing Irish in English. According to McGrath, the Hedge School image renders the old Gaelic language into another language. The translation does not only occur among languages but also time. For McGrath, Friel makes a translation with rendering a Gaelic past into an Anglo-Irish present. With this way, Friel keeps Irish history and culture reserved through in Steiner words “the poetic recreation or translation of a given language world.”* (McGrath, 1995). McGrath continues giving examples and emphasizes that for Bhabha such an “insurgent act of cultural translation” becomes a “mode of performative agency”** which makes people free in a state of rewriting their own narratives of identity.

McGrath gives emphasis on the play’s linguistic concerns and claims that they turn the play into a more sophisticated one. He adds that they are signaled by a dramatic tradition that shows when an actor, when speaking English, is understood to be speaking Gaelic. To McGrath, this occasion works without any mistake and he adds that it forms a part of the structure and metaphoric logic of the play. Friel does not accept a bilingual production of the play for Gaelic speaking audiences. As McGrath states, Friel could allow the play to be done completely in Gaelic, but he thought that a bilingual play would destroy the metaphorical wholeness of the linguistic device. McGrath uses Friel’s words “I think you’d have to invent a different theatrical conceit if you did away with it. Otherwise, it does not make sense in a way; the conceit is part of the strange logic of the play.” According to McGrath, the device underlines the language concept as both culturally and politically, and this leads to a structure with different kinds of translation.

Since the play represents Irish as English, it has a metaphorical stage convention. This situation renews the image of Irish history when the old Gaelic culture was being translated into another language. As McGrath claims, the past is not able to keep its essence and meaning if it is translated into a new context of the present. He states that, Friel’s Gaelic past becomes

* George Steiner, *op. cit.*, 1975, p.76

** Homi Bhabha, *Location of Cultures*, 1994, p. 219

a kind of historical blasphemy after being translated. McGrath continues “ While this blasphemy may violate some original meaning, as a hybrid performative enunciation the selectively remembered, refigured and restraged past opens up the present to what Bhabha calls “ an interstitial future, that emerges in between the claims of the past and the needs of the present.”*, a future in which the rewriting of colonial narratives and subjectivities becomes possible.(McGrath, 190)

The language issue is the heart of the play. Richard Pine gives place to Robert Hogan`s views on `Translations`. Hogan says “ the language device also underlines the broad theme of the play, about the gulf between cultures... So Friel may also more broadly be saying that the failure of symphaty.”** Pine emphasizes that Hogan`s this statement creates a kind of confusion between what the playwright tries to say and what the play is really about. He also adds that his words causes the devices in the play, to come between the critic and the meaning.

Richard Pine also thinks that the difference between Irish and English creates a basis for a distinction between `efficient and `inefficient` ways of expressing the world. For Pine, English is destroyed by its Irish users. He adds “ Irish nomenclature is “bulled” by the Englishman because the ambiguity of sense and meaning is resolved by anglicisation.” (Pine, 164-5). As Pine states, communication is made of shared meaning and there must be a common code between languages. Pine mentions that in `Translations`, there is not that kind of a commonalty and the reason is that the symbolic points of contact represent different cultures and world views. Richard Pine continues with giving examples from the play. For instance Owen calls Irish `archaic` and English `good` (SP,404). When Hugh talks about the difference between Irish and English, he identifies the languages as plebian and aristocratic. Pine also talks about English Yolland and Irish Maire`s coming together. He says they adopt the signals although they are meaningless.

* Homi Bhabha, *op. cit.*, p. 219

** Robert Hogan, *Since O`Casey and Other Essays* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1983, p. 131

McGrath emphasizes the conflict between Irish and English not only from his point of view, but also from George Steiner's view. He points out that Steiner also studies this issue and gives Steiner's quote as "Time and again, linguistic differences and the profoundly exasperating inability of human beings to understand each other have bred hatred and reciprocal contempt.....languages have been , throughout human history, zones of silence to other man and razor edges of division."*

McGrath also adds that linguistic differences do not solely refer to verbal misunderstandings and gives another quote from Steiner. He says " It may be that cultural traditions are more firmly anchored in our syntax than we realize and that we shall continue to translate from the past of our individual and social being whether we would or not."** McGrath makes a comment on Steiner's words and says that this has been the case in Ireland for ages and it still exists as the case in Northern Ireland today.

While talking about the eradication of the Gaelic language, McGrath claims that the play does not only talks about the erosion of one language and culture by another one on the surface. According to him, there is something more complex and confused about the language problem. For him, Brian Friel is not naive while attributing the eradication of Ireland by the Anglicizing process. As McGrath states, not only the language but also the connection between the names and the importance of places became to erode. He gives Tobair Vree as an example, the Gaelic name for a crossroad. It is the corruption of " Brian's Well" (Tobair Bhriarin) but it is dried already and it no longer is at the crossroads and in addition to this, Brian's story related to it has been already forgotten.

Language is a kind of central metaphor in the play. Peacock believes that `Translations` has a system based on signs and symbols. As he claims, although the play has political insights, it should not to be named as a complete political play. In Peacock's point of view, `Translations` is firstly about culture and adds that it is not ideological but humanistic.

* George Steiner, *op. cit.* , p. 56

** *Ibid*, p. 467

Kerwin gives place to W. B. Worthen's article in his book. Worthen mentions Brian Friel's consideration on the origins and performance and his consideration guides at the interface between play's three language areas. The first one is the classical language; Greek and Latin, second one is the colonized that is Irish, and the third one is the imperial; English. At the beginning of the play, all of them are connected to each other. Manus tries to make Sarah speak, and this is performed in Irish English. The scene continues with Jimmy's reading from Homer and according to Worthen, this implies a parallel between two lost cultures of Athens and Ireland.

The irony is that the play is written in English. Friel says in an interview with Ciaran Carty that "I'm just talking about the language we have now and what use we make of it and about the problems that having it gives us.... The sad irony, of course, is that the whole play is written in English. It ought to be written in Irish." (Murray, 80)

The actors are speaking in English while performing, and it represents Irish when the Irish characters are speaking among themselves, and it only stays as it is while translating or the English characters are speaking among themselves. Greek and Latin are spoken suitably according to the classical pronunciation and are translated between the characters. Owen, as Roland for the English, introduces Lancey and for Worthen, Friel successfully puts the politics of translation. Like Owen's deception, many small episodes occur and they enlarge the relation between language and performance that Friel mentions in his plays.

On May 1979 Friel writes down his hesitations about the play of being in English. He says "The people from Urris/Ballybeg would have been Irish speaking in 1833. So a theatrical conceit will have to be devised by which eventhough the actors speak English- the audience will assume or accept that they're speaking Irish. Could that work?" (Murray, 74)

If Yolland did not say "Sorry, sorry" while Manus was talking, the audience would not understand that Manus' speech in English actually is representing Irish. While Worthen questions this situation, he also adds the question mark about whether Owen is using English or Irish while talking to Manus. According to Worthen, this question mark would disappear with the stage performance, but he also adds that it would disappear by situating the verbal statement within the nonverbal performance with gesture, movement, expression and so on.

Worthen mentions that Irish English is the performative language and because of this it is privileged. Therefore Brian Friel uses the performance to create a kind of peace between its authority and its representation of other languages and cultures.

Towards the end of his article, Worthen says “ Friel’s use of Irish English in ‘Translations’ seems to suggest a more tentative agenda. Not only is Irish English shown to produce both Irish language and Irish history as an absence, but the radical instability operating between languages seems finally to undermine translation between them and between their competing versions of culture, agency and identity.” (Kerwin, 149). Worthen keeps expressing his ideas and for him, Friel suggests that if translation could not achieve to communicate, it is instrumental in enacting relations of both political and cultural authority. By keeping the Irish English in the front, ‘Translations’ presents a nostalgia for a kind of union of both language and cultural origin and this kind of a language performs a rhetorical work and it proceeds in creating the myth of nations.

Richard Pine gives a quote from Tom Paulin, a member of the Field Day. He says “ The history of language is often a story of possession and dispossession, territorial struggle and the establishment or imposition of a culture....spoken Irish English.... lives freely and spontaneously as speech but it lacks any institutional existence... a language without a lexicon, a language without form..... A language that lives lithely on the tongue ought to be capable of becoming the idea.”* According to Richard Pine, Tom Paulin’s statement is Brian Friel’s intention that is to dislodge politically which provides an environment to become free. This situation is about to be parallel to the narrative of a threatened culture by a strange and more powerful one or an invasion. However as Pine claims, Brian Friel wanted the political implications emerge with the characters’ own expressions, not with an imposed structure. For Pine, this is a process of mapmaking with changing the identity of the region.

* Tom Paulin, ‘ A New Look at the Language Question Derry: Field Day Theatre Company’, 1983 Field Day Pamphlets, no. 1

Passing from a Hedge School based education into a National School based one, caused linguistic problems apart from other ones for the people of Ballybeg. In the Hedge School, lessons are thought in Irish, however National Schools give education in English. In 1831 a new act passed and it established the system of National Schools in Britain. That means in Ireland, students were not going to be educated in Irish and moreover all the official place names were becoming changed into English. Obviously there were political advantages of this situation for the British. While the Hedge Schools were educating in Irish, students were taught the Gaelic version of Irish history and therefore conventional historical prejudices were existing. However, after the National Schools were opened, the students would learn the Irish history in English and in English point of view. On the other hand, the Hedge Schools were protecting the Irish culture alive and were protecting the Irish language. Although there was a huge pressure, some of them even gave a classical education. Hugh also mentions this in the play saying "Our own culture and the classical tongues made a happy conjugation." (SP,399) With the National Schools, the Gaelic culture was started to be destroyed and disappear, and they were very much effective in the eradication of Gaelic language.

National Schools were given as a thread in `Translations`. The second thread for Ireland was the Ordnance Survey. The Royal Engineers came to remap Ireland and to Anglicize towns and villages with giving new names. This was also a kind of cultural shock for the Irish Engineers in his book and as he states, the climax of the play includes these soldiers. When Yolland is lost, the whole community faces with a threat. As Peacock mentions, decline of Irish language is related completely to the British state and the military force.

At first, when the Royal Engineers arrive, it seems that this military mission is nothing but an innocent geographical event. The purpose was to find the English equivalents for the Irish placenames. However this act of Anglicization was not as benign as it seemed. Also, one should remember that Brian Friel relies on John Andrews' `A Paper Landscape`, on the memoirs of Colonel Colby, who took part in the survey for standardizing the placenames and their spellings.

The Ordnance Survey began to process in 1824. The maps, which the survey worked on formed today's Ireland face. It both Anglicized and standardized the placenames and their spellings. In McGrath's point of view, Brian Friel studied the Ordnance Survey's Anglicization attempts and he did not destroy any experience of O'Donovan as translated in his letters. Consequently, the setting of the play symbolizes the big and inevitable changes in Ireland. Both the National Schools and the Ordnance Survey play a very important role in eradicating the Gaelic Culture and language, and the play analyzes the influences of the process on the people of Ballybeg.

McGrath finds a common point in the Ordnance Survey concept in 'Translations' and George Steiner's 'After Babel'. Ordnance Survey is a metaphor in the play. As McGrath mentions, Steiner creates a relationship between metaphor and mapmaking, and Friel uses Steiner's insights. Steiner says in After Babel that "Metaphors are new mappings of the world, they recognize our habitation in reality." (McGrath, 189) McGrath adds that the remapping process is a kind reorganization of reality for the Irish people. While Yolland and Owen are translating the placenames, a very significant issue comes to the surface. That is placenames can be rendered, however to convey the meaning during translation is impossible. During the renaming process, Yolland and Owen are often in a disagreement. They try to convey the meaning as well, however it becomes impossible. For McGrath, Friel's characterization of the renaming process is very much like the letters of John O'Donovan. As a background, Brian Friel uses George Steiner's 'After Babel', the first chapter, dealing with the art of translation, then John Andrews' 'A Paper Landscape', an account of the first Ordnance Survey in Ireland, which began in Derry and Donegal in 1828-35. In addition to them, he used John O'Donovan's Letters, Dowling's 'The Hedge Schools of Ireland' and Colby's Memoir of the survey as materials.*

* P.J Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, Cork: Mercier Press, 196

John O'Donovan, *Letters Containing Information relative to the Antiquities collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey* (1927)

T. Colby, *Ordnance Survey of the County of Londonderry*, 1837

Pine mentions that in one sense Friel provides a dramatization of `After Babel`. Brian Friel insistently says that the play is only about language and `After Babel` underlines the difficulty of translation between privacies, between the deep core of meaning in two cultures and that it emphasizes the difficulty of apprehending the nature of individual truth.

According to Peacock, the theme of `Translations` is cultural dispossession with linguistic dispossession as the symbolic focus. Translating speech or literature in one language into another can also refer to other forms of transfer, transport or transformation out of one state or condition into another. Peacock continues with stating that the play`s time is the one when the Irish language was general in Ireland and although there were a kind of depressed circumstances of 1830`s, some popular vestiges existed to make Ireland the land of both scholars and saints. In `Translations`, it is seen that there are scholars.

Peacock also emphasizes the importance of translation. According to him, translation is such a difficult process since languages have different systems of awareness, unlike people. He gives Maire and Yolland as an example and states that they wave at each other across the fields, but the fields that lie between them are the fields of language and discourse, and that it takes a long time and work to make the translation.

When Pine talks about translation, how a translation could be made and he claims that “ In translation, we are looking for meaning, the ability to carry over, to translate, to metaphorise, the integrity of sense, the wholeness of the signal by which perception is expressed and community is established” (Pine, 157). William Kerwin also mentions the function and the importance of making translation.

Like performance, translation is engaged in a complex project of identification, an elaborate encoding of personal and cultural identity and history through the negotiation of alterity. To claim translation as a theatrical politics is to keep that alterity visible, to prevent translation from gathering the other uncritically into the authorizing narrative of the self, to see translation perform the difference between languages, cultures, agents, histories, mythologies. Whether hope and history can rhyme or indeed, whether they should rhyme- may well depend on how they come to speak in the same language. (Kerwin, 150)

Rituals are playing a significant role in `Translations`. George O'Brien emphasizes the importance of rituals in his book. According to O'Brien, Brian Friel's theatre is full of ritualistic elements and his characters are ritualized as well. Rituals lead to a continuity not only in terms of culture, but also in individualism. O'Brien claims that rituals make the individual enter into a cultural event which includes both the individual and the collective needs, because the difference between the individual and the collective can easily be presented in the theatre.

Ritual is a kind of identification with customs and norms. There are some outer powers and because of them fate becomes a turning point of ritualists' passivity. As George O'Brien suggests, `Translations` illustrates this truth. For instance, in Act One, a baby is christened by Hugh, dies in Act Three. O'Brien claims that one can observe both events ritualistically. He adds that the second one is a part of an alien, even a hostile farce. According to O'Brien, its reality dwells in its own incomprehensible situation. It is a different, foreign language. He adds that ritual makes the fate recognizable.

The themes of `Translations` are also very significant issues. Theme of naming is the first one. As Elmer Andrews mentions, theme of naming shows itself in many different forms. Firstly, he gives Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland as an example. They have titles and their titles identify their place in the militaristic hierarchy. Secondly, Andrews points out the family based society with the order of the Irish names. Jimmy Jack Cassie, Sarah John Sally and Doalty Don Doalty have three generations in themselves and Andrews adds that Maire Chatach and Nellie Rudh are so called because of their family's hair. He also states that if language is threatened, this causes a threatening of history, culture and identity.

Apart from Elmer Andrews, Richard Pine also gives emphasis on the significance of naming, in "Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama". As he claims, naming is the central theme in the play and he adds that naming is very much related to identity. In brief, naming is the key to language. Pine explains naming, 'carerimonia nominationis' (SP,397) as a "figure of speech whereby a thing which has no name, or an unsuitable one, receives an appropriate name." (

Pine, 27). Apart from its interrelation with identity, naming is related to place and time in Richard Pine's views. For him, places are named through time and "it is a sensual as well as a temporal process" (Pine, 27). Pine explains the duration of naming and states that firstly a thing, a place or a person has no name. At first, we perceive it, then we compare its properties with other similar objects and afterwards we identify its points of suitability and difference, and name it.

Secondly, the theme of alienation draws attention. There are characters who live the alienation. The first one is Lancey. He is such a typical English officer. It can be said that he has no emotion at all and he is not close to Ireland. In fact, he is unfamiliar to everything. Yolland also has an alienation but this is not because he can not speak the language. Owen is also unfamiliar to his homeland. Since he spends so much time in Dublin, he feels strange and a little bit alien when he returns. Jimmy Jack tries to escape, and he does this with speaking ancient Greek and Latin, and he shows his alienation. Maire does not seem to be unfamiliar indeed, however she wants to escape to America. Hugh puts his alienation with drinking. English people also have a kind of alienation. Because of it, they Anglicize almost everything in order to feel at home.

Peacock studies the theme of alienation and according to him, the play's first concern is alienation from "the modes of social existence." (Peacock, 196). He adds that the theme of language explores here with its disjunctions. Friel presents the disfunction between an Irish language awareness and a social reality, made of English language moulds as a reason to indicate the impossibility of creating a relationship between private and public experience in Ireland. Therefore emigration, cultural nostalgia, complacent accommodation and internal exile are insufficient social contexts which face with the truth of a colonized Ireland. In Peacock's point of view, such an Ireland does not allow any place for its Owens, Manus and Maires. At the end one could choose three ways: Acquiescence, emigration or making contact with the mountain men.

Thirdly, translation comes as a theme of the play. We see translations throughout the play. For instance, Hugh wants his students to translate from Latin into Gaelic. Jimmy is always translating from Latin. Owen translates what Lancey says, and in order to prevent from being provocative, he changes some of them. Yolland translates during the rearrangement of

the map and he tries to make it more clear. He also calls Owen Roland. He either does not hear or misspells. When we talk about translations, we mean making the unfamiliar the familiar. If you do not speak that language, you are not able to belong to that society. Since English soldiers can not understand Irish people, they do bad translations.

Fourthly and lastly, lack of communication is another theme of the play. Simply we may say that this play is such a pessimistic one. It proves that how it is difficult for people to understand each other who come from different cultures. They can only reduce this lack of communication through finding out the similarities they share. This can easily be perceived with the speech between Maire and Yolland.

`The Communication Cord` is the third production of Field Day, which was premiered in Derry`s Guildhall in 1983. It is an answer for the ones who accused Brian Friel of idealising the conventional Ireland, recalling the readers to a sacred Gaelic Golden Time before the English colonialism in *Translations*. The Hedge School is replaced by an Irish cottage.

`The Communication Cord` is a parody of `*Translations*` and begins with the stage directions which indicate that the brain of the Hedge School has been turned into a country cottage, a travesty of history, a mythological present which makes the environment suitable for absurd things happen. As Pine claims, it turns on its head the connection between thinking and experience. He uses George Steiner`s words as “ analogies, metaphors and emblems are the threads by which the mind holds on to the world even when it has lost direct contact with it and they guarantee the unity of human experience.” * (Pine, 180). According to Pine, the characters fail in using the metaphors in order to unite experience and thought , and this leads them to be drowned with communicational difficulties.

As George Brien emphasizes, `*Translations*` deals with complex events as a result of the British attack and many questions are asked which include the relations between cultures, the necessity of minorities and the connections between place and personality. However, the

* George Steiner, *Language and Silence*, p. 109

things honored in `Translations` are satirized in `The Communication Cord`, where “responsibility for linguistic duplicity and cultural misprison is located within individuals rather than in social, political or historical agencies.” (O`Brien, 96)

In `The Communication Cord`, as in `Translations`, Brian Friel structures some of Steiner`s views into its dramatic form. According to Kerwin, `The Communication Cord` is a farce of mistaken identities and fabricated images which are invented on purpose to satisfy the needs of characters.

Kerwin also adds that `The Communication Cord` has George Steiner`s suggestion “possibly we have got hold of the wrong end of the stick altogether when ascribing to the development of speech a primarily informational, a straightforwardly communicative motive.”* (Kerwin, 10). Steiner goes on “ It is not perhaps a `theory of information` that will serve us best in trying to clarify the nature of language, but ` a theory of misinformation`”** Kerwin adds that Oscar Wilde and Derrida also gives us the same, and as he mentions, `The Communication Cord` is a theory of misinformation in dramatic form in spite of its farcical nonsense.

Brian Friel states that he wrote `The Communication Cord` as a farcical antidote to `Translations` because he felt uncomfortably criticized by the critics of `Translations` and if he was consciously attempting an antidote to `Translations` while writing `The Communication Cord`. Brian Friel answers:

Oh yes, well, consciously at two levels. Firstly, for Field Day, because i felt it would be appropriate for Field Day to have something like that at this point but also from my point of view, because i was being categorized in some sort of a way that i did not feel easy about and it seemed

* George Steiner, *op. cit.* , p. 229

** *Ibid.* , p. 218

to me that a farce would disrupt that land of categorizing. There is risks involved in doing that sort of thing. I think it is a risky enterprise doing a farce. But I think it is worth it. (Murray, 107)

O`Toole continues with asking if Friel was aware of trying to use the mechanisms of classical farce. Friel answers “ Yes, it is something like a Meccano set. You get on with various pieces of it and you put them all together. Maybe it is different from the usual farce in that play itself was to some extent an attempt to illustrate a linguistic thesis. But apart from that, it is just a regular farce, isn`t it?” (Murray,107)

Brian Friel`s another interview was with Ray Comiskey, and he asks “ How does this farce, your first venture into the form for which, you have said, you had no models, fit into this picture?” (Murray, 102). Friel answers as follow:

Well, a farce is very serious enterprise. It is supposed to entertain and be very funny and if it is not it has failed as a farce....(laughs). You say that and get it out of the way. But then, i think that it is a perfectly valid way of looking at people in Ireland today, that our situation has become so absurd and so.. crass that it seems to me it might be a valid way to talk and write about it. (Murray, 102)

For Andrews, the subject of farce is the drama of ancestral piety. The traditions of farce make Brian Friel give a total expression to the meaninglessness, gullibility and foolishness of those who seduce themselves by the imagery past. Seamus Deane writes down among his notes:

The Communication Cord is an antidote to Translations. It reminds us that farce repeats itself as history that the bogus, the fixed, and the chaotic are features of our daily lives in the social and political world. Tragedy gives us perspective and ennobles our feelings by rendering them subject to forces we can recognise but never define. Farce

shows everything in close up, it is concerned to reduce, to expose, to humiliate and at the same time, to rescue us via laughter, from the heroics of failure. *(Andrews, 193)

According to Andrews, farce is “ a closed and changeless world governed by rules which embody a mechanical, deterministic view of life.”

Kathleen Ferris sees the play as a pure farce, including all the humor with slapsticks, disguised and mistaken characters, misunderstandings and deceptions.

As a brief summary of the play, Jack uses his father`s house as a love nest, and lends the cottage to his friend Tim, in order to impress Tim`s girlfriend Susan`s father, Senator Donovan. Tim will be pretending as if he owns the cottage and Senator Donovan will be impressed since he is very much interested in ancient times. The play about communication begins with a failure of communication. Tim is saying that the door of the cottage is open, however Jack misunderstands Tim and thinks that it is locked. Tim is supposed to stay for a limited period of time in the cottage, because Jack is going to meet with his girlfriend Evette. However, Tim goes beyond the time and absurd events start occurring. Nothing goes as planned. Characters are mistaken and each of them becomes another one. Meanwhile, Claire Harkin comes to the cottage as guest, an instructor at the university where Tim teaches also. Since she is interested in Tim, she plays jokes on Tim with leaving her underwears around and Tim has to lie about her identity to Susan and Senator Donovan.

The first important element is the cottage in the play. Richard Pine mentions the existence of it in `The Communication Cord` and according to him, the cottage does not belong to anyone as a home. Since it is no one`s `true centre`, no one`s culture is being humiliated. To him, the cottage is farcically like a French hotel. The audience is persuaded

* Seamus Deane ` In Search of a Story`, programme note for The Communication Cord (Field Day Theatre Company, 1982)

“ by encapsulating the extra-marital misdemeanours of the bourgeoisie, that mutual deception by husbands and wives is justified because it bestows its own rewards and penalties and thus polices its own morality.” (Pine, 184)

The cottage is the central image of the play. It is an authentic Irish country cottage, rebuilt to look like the real thing. As Peacock claims, the cottage has a wealth of historical rootedness, and in Senator Donovan`s words “ the apotheosis” (CC, 32). It is the umbilical cord which connects us to the past. However Peacock believes that since everyone uses it for his/her own benefits, there occurs a trouble.

Apart from Peacock, McGrath also comments on the cottage. He puts his ideas forward on the cottage. At first, the traditional cottage is described in detail, afterwards Brian Friel`s stage directions tell that there is something wrong about the place and that it is too authentic. As he claims, there is a farcical humor in the play and that Senator Donovan`s literal attachment to the set is clear. McGrath declares “ Traditional nationalism is an anachronistic reproduction that chains the Irish unproductively to their past.” (McGrath, 199) In addition to these, he also emphasizes the will and power of the cottage and its place almost as a character in the play.

McGrath approaches to the existence of the cottage with using Tim and his feelings about the cottage. Tim does not like the cottage at all and says “ Did you ever have a sense that a place hates you?- that it actually feels malevolent towards you? I think this house hates me. I am convinced that the genii of the house detest me... Maybe it is because i feel no affinity at all with it and it knows that. In fact i think i hate it and all it represents.... it is the willing, the conniving instrument of a malign presence.” (CC, 43). Symbolically, at the end of the play, the cottage collapses on Tim and Claire. According to McGrath, the suggestion is very clear. “ Both chaining oneself to the past and antipathy to that past are equally risky approaches to one`s heritage.” (McGrath, 200)

All the characters of the play are so important and most of them have similarities with the characters of `Translations`. The first character is a kind of protagonist. The scholar and linguist Hugh of `Translations` is now Tim Gallagher in `The Communication Cord`. He is in his early thirties. He lectures at a university without tenure. Tim is searching `Discourse Analysis with Particular Reference to Response Cries`. Andrews claims that Tim`s ideas on

language changes. At first, he was supporting in his thesis that language was “ a ritualized act between people... The exchange of units of communication through an agreed code.”(CC,91)

At the end, he thinks that he may rewrite his thesis as a result of his new experiences. According to Andrews, he becomes to understand that the words may not be that much important. There is no reliable correspondence between the words and the subject uses and what the subject intends. He adds that it would be better to rely on `reverberations` and `implicit` messages rather than explicit messages. He gives example from a dialogue between Tim and Claire.

Tim : We`re conversing now but we`re not exchanging units, are we?

Claire: I don`t think so, are we?

Tim : I don`t think we can because i`m not too sure what i`m saying

Claire: I don`t know what you`re saying either but i think i know what`s
in it

Jack : Tim, i think i`m in a bit of trouble

Tim : Even if what i`m saying is rubbish?

Claire: Yes

Tim : Like ` this is our first cathedral`?

Claire: Like that

Tim : Like` this is the true centre`?

Claire: I think i know what`s implicit in that

Tim : Maybe the message doesn`t matter at all then

Jack : Tim!

Claire: It`s the occasion that matters

Tim : And the reverberations that the occasion generates (CC, 92)

As Pine states, it should be noted that Tim`s thesis, especially the way he presents the Steinerian problem of inter personal and cultural translation, is related to Denis Donoghue. Donoghue explains “ The addresser wants to send a message to the addressee. This message needs a context which both parties can share, a code common to them in encoding and decoding the message.... The source selects there sub-acts: reception, decoding and development.” * (Pine, 247)

As it is mentioned before, Tim wants to impress Senator Donovan because he may decide to change Tim`s status at the University. That will place Tim in a secure position and he would be able to get marry Susan, which is what Susan wants.

Tim is writing a thesis on discourse analysis based on the popular assumption that people converse by exchanging units of information that constitute a message according to an agreed code. “The lies, charades and wild fictions that follow completely refute this naive, positivist model of discourse. In the end, Tim realizes he may have to rethink his thesis as he arrives at some of the the same conclusions suggested by the plays of Pinter, conclusions such as “ maybe the message does not matter at all” and “ it is the occasion that matters” or “ reverberations that the occasion generates” ; or perhaps what matters is “ the desire to sustain the occasion going”. He even suspects as Beckett and Heidegger have claimed, that “ maybe even saying nothing..... maybe silence is the perfect discourse.”” (CC, 92) (Kerwin, 10)

Richard Kearney points out that Tim studies language from two perspectives. First one is informational. It is the inferior level. Words transmit information from a speaker to a listener. Therefore language becomes a process of encoding and decoding messages. Kearney says “ Where a common code exists messages can be exchanges, where not there is misunderstanding.” (Kerwin, 106). According to him, Tim`s words also remind the terms of Levi Strauss while saying “ all social behaviour, the entire social order, depends on communicational structures, on words mutually agreed on and mutually understood. Without

*Denis Donoghue `Communication, Communion, Conversation`, *Ferocious Alphabets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981) p. 42-3

that agreement, without the shared code, you have chaos.” (CC, 19). Kearney adds that the example Tim gives presents the idea of the lack of a common code of translation when one person speaks only English and the other only German.

The second perspective is conversational. This is rather a fundamental level than the first one. Here, language goes beyond the limits of its pragmatic function as a formal transmission of information and looks for a more personal sharing of one`s ontological experience. Kearney gives example from the play “ You desire to share my experience and because of that desire our exchange is immediately lifted out of the realm of mere exchange of basic messages and aspires to something higher, something much more important conversation.....a Response Cry!” (CC,91). Kearney goes on:

Response Cries bespeak to the existential identity of the heart`s space. They are by definition “ involuntary”, Tim observes, in that they forgo all linguistic strategies of willful manipulation of commerce. But the difficulty is how to discriminate between genuine response cries which speak straight from the heart and the mere pretense at such speech. How is language to escape from the insincerity of role playing?” (Kerwin, 106-7)

According to Kearney, Tim is not able to solve this conflict and this is not only the reason why he can not finish his thesis or decide whom he loves, as Kearney mentions “ it is the very raison d`etre for the play itself!” (Kerwin, 107). He also adds that `it is the important of being earnest` again. To him, Brian Friel`s debt to Wilde`s comic genius is so obvious in `The Communication Cord`.

In addition to the content of Tim`s thesis, Richard Kearney studies the character of Tim as well. According to him, Tim is not only alike Hugh, but also Manus. Manus was opposed to Owen`s translation project, and Tim criticizes Jack`s misuse of language as a transmission of financial and erotic messages and calls “damned perfidious.” (CC, 20)

As it is mentioned above, Tim is the central character of the play and serves as an inverted mirror image of his anastral prototype, Hugh. Both are displaced scholars without

tenure; both teach that the transmission of communal wisdom can not be divorced from the ontological power of language. According to Kearney:

Tim's thesis is attempting to prove what was still self evident for Hugh: that words which function as positivistic units or linguistic maps, based on agreed codes, are at root, derived and often distorted forms of ontological "response cries". To put it in Heidegger's terms Tim is resolved to return from the language of objects and representation to the ultimate origin of words in the interiority of the hearts space. (Kerwin, 105)

As Andrews states, Owen in `Translations` is reincarnated as Jack McNeilis in `The Communication Cord`. Like Owen, Jack is a dealer in identities, mediating between the cunning locals such as Nora Dan and the outsiders such as Barney the Banks. He is at the same age with Tim. Jack is a self confident lawyer, and he considers himself to be a man of huge experience. He has everything that Tim lacks. He lends the cottage to Tim, which he uses as a love nest. Jack persuades Tim of the advantages of duping the Senator Donovan. Andrews also adds that Jack is a descendant of earlier playboys of Brian Friel's plays, however " his playfulness betrays an exaggerated cynical and predatory instinct. As mentioned before, Jack is a lawyer, and Friel's lawyers are usually such a manipulating and controlling characters. Jack draws attention with his interest in timing. He is always making plans according to his time schedule. Of course Friel's this character is related to language. As Richard Kearney claims, Jack `employs naming according to the empiristic model of utilitarian representation in order to classify each thing as a use-item. For Jack, language is not a house of being but a filing cabinet of objects.` (Kerwin, 5-6)

Susan Donovan is Tim's girlfriend. She comes from a noble family, and her father is a Senator. She wants Tim and his father get along with each other well and as a result she wishes to see Tim at a more secure and elit status.

Claire is a guest at the cottage but has an affection for Tim. She teaches at the same university with him. Since she arrives on a wrong time, Tim had to introduce her as Evette, the French woman whom a friend of Jack and an old friend of Senator Donovan. She plays her

role, however she plays some erratic games such as leaving her underwear around. That kind of scenes are example for theatrical tradition of farce. At the end of the play, Tim and Claire has an intimacy and the play ends with their silence kiss.

Evette, as claimed above, is a French woman, having a relationship with Jack. She comes to the cottage and sees Senator Donovan. It is understood that she and Senator Donovan had a sexual relationship before and that Evette was calling him "Teddy" as a nick name. Nora Dan is another female character in the play. She explains her double name to Tim as follows: "I get the Dan from my father-that's the queer way we have of naming people around here." Nora Dan is a peasant who, Brian Friel tells us, "likes to present herself as a peasant." She is a stage Irishwoman who has perfected her stagecraft.(Kerwin,107) She is one of the misidentified characters. She is mistaken of a local scrambling champion.

As McGrath claims, Nora Dan is an anachronism in the play. Her name and speech suggests that she is a character out of a Synge play. According to the stage directions, she is "A country woman who likes to present herself as a peasant" and Jack calls her "the quintessential noble peasant-obsessed with curiosity and greed and envy." (CC, 21). As McGrath states," she represents a tourist board nationalism that usually pastes for the real thing in Ireland, like the cottage. He also adds that both Nora Dan and the cottage represent the Irish Ireland nostalgia that dominated nationalism from the first several decades of independence." (McGrath, 200)

Lastly, Senator Donovan, Susan's father, is another significant male character in the play. George O'Brien states that Senator is a spokesman for sentimentalizing attitudes to rural Ireland. For instance, he says "This is the touchstone. That landscape, that sea, this house-the apotheosis" (CC,32)

According to Kearney, Senator Donovan is presented as a kind of modern antitype of Jimmy Jack in `Translations` just like other characters of the play. He is a caricature of everything sentimental in the modern bourgeois Republic. Kearney claims that "His speeches are reeled of like farcical travesties of Hugh's and Jimmy's desiderium nostorum- their sacramental longing for older, quieter things." (Kerwin, 107-8)

As Kearney claims, Donovan, while exploiting to the full the commercial conveniences of the modern multi national society, still clings to the craven illusion that

nothing has changed, that Romantic Ireland is alive and well in a restored Donegal cottage waiting to be purchased by the highest bidder. According to him, in other words, Donovan would have it both ways. As he claims, “ He is hypocrisy incarnate, a symbol of the very discontinuity in Irish cultural history which he refuses to acknowledge.”(Kerwin, 108). He goes on:

But Donovan`s charade of assumed pietas is finally scotched when, invoking the mythic shibboleth of Ireland as the “ woman with two cows”, he actually chains himself to a restored cow harness in the cottage and is unable to extricate himself. The myth becomes literal. As his rantings become more desperate, the entire stage is plunged into darkness. All the characters lose their bearings and stagger about in farcical mimicry of the cultural lin-guistic disorientation which has befallen them. (Kerwin, 109)

Senator Donovan admires each detail of the cottage, especially the stocks for keeping the cow indoors. As Kerwin mentions, “ he is confined in these stocks and reduced to bestial absurdity.” (Kerwin, 129). He is rescued from this bad situation by a `stage German`, known as Barney the Banks, who like the `stage Irishman` of English comedies, provides laughs because of his misunderstanding of English.

Senator Donovan feels he has entered a new order: “ This is what i need –this silence, this peace, the restorative power of that landscape.” (CC, 32). As a result, since he knows the language of the tribe, unlike Yolland in `Translations`, he is able to get into the private core.

Richard Pine criticizes the character issue and he points out that Brian Friel creates a chaos in which his characters indulge, and the reason of this chaos is the lack of communicational structure. As he adds, although `The Communication Cord` is a language play, the audience is encouraged to be suspicious of the concerns for etymologies and the condition of madness; travestied with “ I understand perfectly” (CC, 35). Furthermore, according to Pine, some points are more clear in `The Communication Cord` than `Translations`. He gives the idea of omphalos; the center of cultural gravity as an example. He

gives Donovan's words " You are right Tim, absolutely right. This is the true centre." (CC, 50) and Tim says:

An interesting discourse phenomenon that called statement transference. I never used the phrase " This is the true centre" but by imputing the phrase to me, as the Doctor has just done, he both seeks confirmation for his own sentiments and suggests to listeners outside the duologue that he and i are unanimous in that sentiment...which not at all...O my God...where's my bowl of vodka? (CC, 50)

As Pine emphasizes, ` statement transference` is such a " form of wishful thinking." (Pine, 183). According to him, it creates currency for an idea which was worthless and " implicates members of the community in a common bond of cultural affiliation to **that idea** which in itself validates it; one can thus repossess that which in fact one never possessed, whether it be called `dignity` or `freedom` or `control of the means of production.` (Pine, 183) Richard Pine concludes with saying that Brian Friel exposes the audience to the dangers of subverting both culture and the means of culture-perception, thinking and willing.

The title of the play is an important issue in the play. As George O'Brien points out, the play's title should not be taken literally. He claims " communication as a cord, out of which ` the net ` of inference, implication and mutuality may be woven – a whole fabric of social interaction, linguistically conceived – is one of the play's particularly potent conceits all the more incisive in view of the plot's basic orientation around the matter of mutually significant and mutually advantageous personal relationships." (O'Brien, 109) He also adds that, `The Communication Cord` is a mechanism used when a train is out of control or **when** there is an emergency and certainty the play's farcical inventive meaning -of the title. According to him, " The characters in the play who take their language literally and **who tend** to overlook the contributions made to discourse by the nuance of context and the **quirk** of personality, are those who practice a preemptive rather than an interactive way with the **world**, with unfortunate consequences for themselves." (O'Brien, 109)

In Andrew's point of view, " `The Communication Cord` demonstrates what it **would** be like if no break with present reality, no lyrical moment, no subjective fantasia was **possible**

within the existing frame of history, and the dark and private places of the individual soul remained forever repressed.” (Andrews,193). The play has a male world and in this world, both women and words are manipulated commodities. Andrews also emphasizes the place of language in the play. As he states, Brian Friel expresses Bakhtin`s ideas about the dialogic nature of language. Andrews differentiates words from signals that while signals are fixed units, words are components of speech and transformed in their meaning by the several tones which they obtain in specific social conditions. He goes on “ The slipperiness of the units of communication that Tim talks about is emphasized by the way lines keep recurring in the play: lifted from their original occasion, they are re-emploies, often verbatim, to quite different purpose or effect, in another context.” (Andrews, 196-7). Language exists in many social relations and these relations are in turn part of broader political, economic and ideological systems. Friel takes the phenomenological notion as the origin of the meaning, and he frees himself with it. Andrews gives emphasis on the opposition of the public with private. He adds that the authenticity takes place in the private feeling. He claims “ The private self now struggles towards an alternative, non-rational, non-verbal expression, moving from reverberations to a newly discovered language of the body.” (Andrews, 196-7). Finally Tim says “ Maybe silence is the perfect discourse.” (CC, 92). Tim and Claire have a communication with a word. They reach a communication through a kiss and it is the first authentic human contact in the play for Andrews. Moreover, this kiss is also a kind of destructive realism that makes the cottage collapse.

Many of the critics and writes put their own assumptions forward about `The Communication Cord`. For Andrews, first of all, the play is the collapse of a false myth. It dramatizes the eradication of Irish culture and indicates the possible farcical absurdity because of being stuck on past. According to Andrews, Friel puts in the play an assertion of free will and a kind of human dignity.

When Richard Pine studies `The Communication Cord`, he draws attention to the set, the same one in `Translations`, which becomes such a travesty of a cathedral but one with “ a host of side chapels in which a feydeautype of bedroom farce, including distorted morals, is enacted.” (Pine, 161). He goes on “ By showing us how very nearly serious our misdemeanours can be, Friel persuades us of the proximity of tragedy to comedy and the ease with which one

can be translated from one `diocese` to the other.” (Pine, 161). He also thinks that, with all the mistaken identities and misunderstandings in his farce, Brian Friel becomes able to underline the absurdities of the action. To him, `The Communication Cord` is the mirror image of `Translations`, therefore it becomes a very effective application of farce. Moreover, one should never forget that in `The Communication Cord`, there is not any summary of `Translations`. On the other hand as Peacock mentions, “ The Communication Cord is the farcical re-enactment of these concerns, as if Friel had felt the need to emphasize them by repetition, variation and modulation into an outrageously comic mode. “ (Peacock, 145)

Peacock also emphasizes the plot and its function in the play. According to him, the plot has the complexity of farce totally. Everyone is confused and literally, they all end up in the dark, when the light is blown out. The Senator is very interested in the ancient times and old implements. He locks a cow halter around his neck and as Peacock calls, he ties himself back into the umbilical cord. The confusion arises, as a result of the possibility for exploitation the languages of tradition provide. At the end of the play, when Tim is making love with Claire, the Senator is freed. Jack also gets the cow halter around his neck. In Peacock`s words, at the end of the play, the whole cottage, the prison of language falls down in the dark. As Richard Kearney points out, “ The entire action of the play may be seen as an experimental testine of Tim`s linguistic hypothesis of restoring the modern positivist model of language to its ontological origins. The plot unfolds accordingly as a farcical rewind of Translations.” (Kerwin, 107)

While talking about language and its usage in the play, Peacock states that the process of transmitting messages becomes the halter of victimage. According to him, Brian Friel is aware of its power. Language and the cottage is also interrelated. As O`Brien claims:

Like the cottage, the language is a matter of pastiche rather than a matter of authenticity. As the play develops, however, it becomes clear that material phenomena, not to mention other people, resist the arbitrary control language presumes to impose on them. Thus, not only does the cottage fire afflict Tim with clouds of befogging smoke, but the cottage itself turns out to be already occupied by his colleague, and former

girlfriend Claire Harkin. (O'Brien, 108-9)

O'Brien also studies the importance of the kiss and according to him, it is a sign of a naturalness. The kiss is so powerful that it is not only crucial to Brian Friel's work, but also more authentic than the cottage. To O'Brien, there is a relationship between language and culture. In the play, there are many outsiders such as the German Barney the Banks, the French Evette and Nora Dan, who embody the cliches of their cultural origins.

Another point which is paid attention is the concerns of Tim and Jack. Without any doubt, words play a very significant role in both men's lives. Secondly, their concern is with women. Both of them are at the cottage for their love affairs. Tim is there for Susan, and Jack for Evette Giroux. Jack thinks that Tim's and Susan's relationship is a perfect match. As Richard Kearney points out, Jack means here a perfect commercial match and he gives place to Jack's words as " You are ugly and penniless, she is pretty and rich" (CC, 18). Kearney states " One of the central themes of the play is thus discreetly announced. The conflict between Tim's view of communication as an ontological response cry expressing true feeling and Jack's view of communication as a commercial contract or conquest." (Kerwin, 106)

Mistaken characters are also an important part of the play. Claire becomes Evette, Senator Donovan becomes Dr. Bullocks, Jack is Barney the Banks and a wife beater, and Nora Dan becomes a scrambling champion. Richard Kearney states " Friel seems to be suggesting that this confusion of each character with the other is a logical consequence of the historical translation, documented in 'Translations', of the native Irish language and culture into the contemporary Babel of the International European Community." (Kerwin, 108). He goes on that the union of different culture and linguistic identities, as Irish, English, German and French, summarizes the lack of a shared code which characterizes life in Ballybeg a hundred and fifty years after its translation from Bailebeag.

While thinking on the language problem, Richard Kearney claims:

What do Friel's plays say about language? More specifically, what do they tell us about their author's attitude or contribution to the native, Irish tradition of verbal theatre? As Friel's plays Trojan horses in the citadel of this tradition contesting its constraints of story telling from within and pointing towards the possibility of more immediate, non-verbal modes of expression? Are the apocalyptic endings to his language plays symptoms of a crisis of faith in the power of words? More simply, does Friel subscribe in the final analysis to a theatre of the Word or to theatre of the Senses? (Kerwin, 109-10)

Kathleen Ferris is another important name with her thoughts on language in 'The Communication Cord'. According to her, Brian Friel's satire's purpose is the uses and abuses of language. Tim's words are clever but empty for her, and he also uses phrases which are Jack's indeed, uttered just before Tim uses them. She points out that Tim, as an academic expert, is the type Brian Friel loves to use as the object satire. In spite of Tim's academic education, his speech is not efficient. His friend Jack also thinks the same way and he says "for one who professes the English language, your vocabulary is damned limp." (CC, 15). Ferris also adds " Tim's speech is a sad commentary on the course of the last century and a half." (Kerwin, 128)

To Ferris, 'The Communication Cord' presents a satire of the world's decline, not only in terms of language, but also of love and faith. The relationships are based on lies. Jack exchanges Evette for Susan, Tim exchanges Susan for Claire and Evette leaves Jack for Senator Donovan. It seems as if everyone finally found his/her mate and that the plot has a happy ending. When Tim and Claire passionately embrace and kiss each other, the upper floor collapses, the light blows and the play ends in total darkness.

In Ferris' point of view, if comedy is directed at people's minds rather than their emotions, then Friel is very successful in making the audience to ponder that " is a society built upon false values, false words and false authority doomed to collapse?" (Kerwin, 129)

McGrath points out his attitude towards 'The Communication Cord', just as he did for 'Translations' before. To him, the play notices the artificiality of conventional nationalism's construction of the Irish past and the necessity of that construction, according to a postcolonial

view. “ The play recognizes the postcolonial necessity for moving away from traditional nationalism toward a new sense of nation that acknowledges its international hybridity.” (McGrath, 201)

Since ‘The Communication Cord’ is written as a farce to ‘Translations’, the critics always analyze both of the plays together in order to compare and contrast them.

Richard Pine sees both ‘Translations’ and ‘The Communication Cord’ as twins. Although ‘Translations’ has a traditional appearance, the form of Brian Friel’s intentions goes further than his previous plays in promoting its own obsolescence. As Pine adds, on the other hand, in ‘The Communication Cord’ the content is smothered in a riot of action. Therefore, it can be perceived that in ‘Translations’ there is a tendency towards farce. Pine emphasizes the difference between ‘Translations’ and ‘The Communication Cord’ in terms of the function of the words. According to him, in ‘Translations’ words control life and conversely in ‘The Communication Cord’ life controls words. Then he asks as if language has a life of its own. Richard Pine believes that with the use of words and the way words use us, it can easily be noticed that why Brian Friel makes us see ‘Translations’ and ‘The Communication Cord’ as twins. Both the plays feed each other with their dramatic forms in order to impress the audience with the cruel dangers of communication of any kind. Another point that Richard Pine emphasizes is that in ‘Translations’ it is seen how a culture may undergo the dark places of the soul, with a combination of human betrayal and obsolescence, and how it begins to flourish again. In ‘The Communication Cord’, Brian Friel indicates that chaos can not only be resolved by language but also by silence.

Richard Kearney also compares ‘Translations’ and ‘The Communication Cord’ and he states that:

Translations deals with the ways in which the consciousness of an entire culture is fractured by the transcription of one linguistic landscape (Gaelic and Classical) into another (Anglo-Saxon and positivist) of language coincides significantly with the historical demise of the old Gaelic society in the famines of 1830’s and 40’s. The Communication Cord features the futile and sentimental efforts of the modern Irish bourgeoisie to purify the dialect of the tribe and reinstate the antique pieties of a lost culture. (Kerwin, 82)

Richard Kearney claims, 'Translations' draws a picture of the transition of a language from its positivist present. On the contrary, 'The Communication Cord' does something opposite. According to Kearney, it indicates the attempt to go to the source of the language from its uprootedness back into its previous ancestry. He adds that both plays present a genealogy of the process of human speech, as the ways in which we use words to progress, to communicate. To him, 'Translations' has tragic tones and 'The Communication Cord' is an indicator of Brian Friel's tragicomic realization that there is no going back in history. Both the plays present the conflict of language models in the context of Irish Culture. As Kearney points out, 'Translations' takes the story to a century later. It shows the modern Ireland, attempting, to recover the ancient pieties of its prefamine heritage. In Kearney's point of view, 'Translations' is about the old language looking forward to its threatening future. On the other side, 'The Communication Cord' is about the new language looking back to its dispossessed origins.

Moreover, Richard Kearney believes that if 'Translations' mythologizes language, 'The Communication Cord' demythologizes language. 'Translations' attempts to indicate how language operates in terms of a cultural rootedness and 'The Communication' decenters the assumptions about getting back the cultural origins. Kearney goes on that "one sponsors the original fidelity of language to a timeless, ontological piety of nature, the other affirms the irreversibility of history as an alienation from the natural pre-history of words" (Kerwin, 110). As Kearney adds, Brian Friel insists on that 'Translations' and 'The Communication Cord' should be considered in tandem. His insistence suggests that the play's claims of nature and history, mythologization and demythologization, silence and speech are valid in serving as two arches of a mutually sustaining dialectic. By their reverse approaches to language, a tension occurs, which is creative in itself. However the implications of this dialectic extend brings a question of what culture means in terms of traditional notions. According to Kearney, Brian Friel does not see the cultural and the socio historical spheres of discourse as separate. As Kearney states, Brian Friel's language plays suggest an evocation of cultural use of words which determine the society. Richard Kearney uses Brian Friel's note about 'The Communication Cord' and Friel says:

If a congealed idea of theatre can be broken then the audience which experiences this break would be the more open to the modification of other established forms. Almost everything which we believe to be nature or native is in fact historical; more precisely, is an historical fiction. If Field Day can breed a new fiction of theatre, or of any other area, which is sufficiently successful to be believed in as though it were natural and an outgrowth of the past, then it will have succeeded. At the moment, in it is six characters in search of a story that can be believed. (Kerwin, 126)

Kearney's ideas and examples are not only these. He continues stating his opinions on both of the plays and he compares them. As he points out, 'Translations' is a tragedy about language. He sees languages from several different aspects. Firstly he sees language as a tool in imperialistic conquest of one culture by another and in exploring various ideas. Secondly language is effective in understanding other individuals and cultures. Thirdly Kearney adds that language is a source of aesthetic pleasure. According to Kearney, Brian Friel searches the limits of language. He studies the negative aspects of language in 'The Communication Cord' as well, but in a comic mode.

Apart from Richard Kearney, F. C. McGrath puts his ideas forward on comparing and contrasting 'Translations' and 'The Communication Cord'. McGrath firstly emphasizes the brief essence of the plays. As he claims, if 'Translations' was about how Ireland found a certain shape, then for Friel 'The Communication Cord' is telling to look at the situation that Ireland is in now. For Friel the situation is absurd. As McGrath adds " Also , if Translations suffered from having its linguistic issues obscured to some extent by its political content, Friel compensated with a vengeance in The Communication Cord, which he quite accurately calls ' an attempt to illustrate a linguistic thesis.'" (McGrath, 197-8)

Lastly, Elmer Andrews presents his ideas on both 'Translations' and 'The Communication Cord'. To him, the language of 'Translations' is " lean and spare." (Andrews, 178), and furthermore Brian Friel uses each word to advantage. As Andrews adds, Friel does the same in 'The Communication Cord' in which he examines the world through a perspective of farce. According to Andrews, Brian Friel takes this step for two reasons. The first one is to

make himself free in speaking openly and to free his work, with using many words, **from** the tightness of `Translations` and the danger of being treated as a sacred testament.

As McGrath mentions, some of the critics believe that Brian Friel **destroys** the understanding of history and language in `Translations` and `The Communication Cord`. Richard Kearney is one of them and as it is stated before, with saying that `The Communication Cord` demythologizes language, while in `Translations` there is a mythologizing of language. Seamus Deane also thinks in the same way and he **claims** that `The Communication Cord` undermines the pieties sponsored by the earlier play. **However** on the other hand, some of the critics are suspicious of Brian Friel`s skepticism. McGrath gives Edna Longley and Brian McAvera as examples. For instance, Longley says “The Communication Cord comfortably fails in its intention to subvert the pieties of **Translations**.” * (McGrath, 201).

At the same time, McAvera thinks that `The Communication Cord` is a **rerun** of **Translations** as farce.” ** (McGrath, 201). McGrath considers both Longley`s and McAvera`s ideas and states “For antinationalists like Longley and McAvera, the **presentation** of nationalist symbols, even for the purposes of subverting them, is not to be **countenanced**.” (McGrath, 201)

`The Communication Cord` ends up with Tim and Claire`s kiss, which **causes** the collapse of the cottage. The important point in the conclusion of the play is that it **ends** in silence. William Kerwin studies the conclusion and according to him, the conclusion is **such** a doubtful one in terms of meaning. He says “ The hint of some salvation through **silence** (recalling Heidegger`s notion of a mystical “ tolling of silence” at the heart of language) is

* Edna Longley, `Poetry and Politics in Northern Ireland`. Crane Bag 9, no. 1: 26-40

** Brian McAvera, `Brian Friel: Attuned to the Catholic Experience`. Fortnight Magazine 215: 19-20

counteracted by the literal unleashing of darkness and destruction.” (Kerwin, 110) The silence is representing the collapse of the community. As Kerwin mentions, silence has two sides and while it starts a love, on the other hand it ends the society. Kerwin continues “ So that Friel’s ontological optimism with regard to silence as the “ perfect language” or at least skeptical, appraisal of its socio-historical implications. The term “cord” itself conveys this double sense of a bond and an alarm signal.” (Kerwin, 110)

Kerwin continues with mentioning that with Tim`s and Claire`s love scene there occurs an enlightenment of consciousness. According to Kerwin, the lovers move towards the most authentic form of language; the response cry of silence. Kerwin gives quotations from Tim, saying “ Maybe the units don`t matter all that much.... We are conversing now but we`re not exchanging units.... I am not too sure what i`m saying.... Maybe silence is the perfect discourse” (CC, 92) Kerwin keeps on explaining that:

The structuralist model of communication as the circulation of word-units in the symbolic form of *woman* (Susan/ Ivette/ Claire) or *commodities* (Donovan, Barney, Jack and Nora Dan) (The structuralist model of communication as the circulation of word-units in the symbolic form of *woman* (Susan/ Ivette/ Claire) or *commodities* (Donovan, Barney, Jack and Nora Dan) are all engaged in mercenary negotiations for the purchase of the cottage) is shown to be hopelessly inadequate. The employment of language for the exchange of women and property between the different individuals or tribes in the play (Irish, German, and French) does not produce either communication or community as Levi Strauss` theory would have us believe. The ontological secrets of the hearts space can not, Tim and Claire discover, be disclosed through the `reverberations` occasioned by a genuine `response` of human feeling. (Kerwin, 108-9)

After Claire`s response cry “ Kiss me”, Tim embraces her and since they lean against the upright beam of the cottage, the cottage collapses. As Kerwin claims, even the wizard of word-play, Jack, utters a response cry as “ O my God”.

In Brian Friel`s plays, the Irishness concept and the influence of British on Irish people and Ireland are the main concerns. These two plays, under the title of `Language Plays`, have been researched and analyzed by many lecturers and critics. Both “Translations” and “The

Communication Cord” study the linguistic concerns. However, it is obvious that the plays are not only dealing with language solely.

When `Translations` is first read, language does not draw any attention in terms of linguistic concerns. It is only seen as a part in the process of eradicating the Gaelic Culture. In this process, the placenames are Anglicized and everything begins to become unfamiliar for the Irish people. The Hedge Schools are replaced by National Schools and language is important here. Because in the Hedge Schools, the education is in Gaelic, however, in the National Schools, students are taught in English. With that kind of an education system, the Irish people will start to forget their own language; the Gaelic. The play`s implication is that it criticizes the presence of British in Ireland with a nationalist perspective.

If you are knowledgeable of linguistic concerns, you are able to understand how the play is full of them. Without any suspect, Brian Friel is very much affected by George Steiner`s theories. Brian Friel uses Hugh in presenting both Steiner`s and his thoughts. It can be said that what Hugh says is Friel`s own words.

One should remember that Brian Friel uses language in order to study the issues such as identity and communication. He is aware of the difficulty of accepting a different culture, however as he claims, the Irish people should try to accept it. In 1980, in an interview with Ciaran Carty, he mentions this point and says:

The play found expression in the issue of actual place names, but i think in some way my concern is more with the whole problem that writers in this country experience: having to handle a language that is not native to them. There`s a line where the hedgeschool teacher says that they`ll have to learn these names and they`ll have to make them their new home. And in some way that`s what the play is about: having to use a language that isn`t our own. (Murray, 80)

In another interview with Paddy Agnew, he is asked about the presence of British in Ireland and demanded for the answer about removal of the British. With his answer, the relation between Hugh`s words and him is clearly seen:

We're not just talking about the present time and i'm no expert in matters political, but in the long run of course i think that, that is going to be true. There will be no solution until the British leave this island, but even when they've gone, the residue of their presence will still be with us. This is an area that we still have to resolve, and that brings us back to the question of language for this is one of the big inheritances which we have received from the British. In fact twenty miles from where we are sitting, you can hear very strong elements of Elizabethan English being spoken every day. The departure of the British army will have absolutely no bearing on the tongue that is spoken in that area. We must continually look at ourselves, recognize and identify ourselves. We must make English identifiably our own language. (Murray, 86-7)

In 1986, Brian Friel has interviewed with Laurence Finnegan and Finnegan asked him if `Translations` is a political play, which is too many asked to Friel. Friel answers "Well, it was the kind of founding play of this enterprise that we are involved in now-this Field Day enterprise. I don't know, is that to its credit or not? I suppose it is. I don't think Translations is a political play, i think it has to do more directly with almost blatant cultural enterprises. I do not really have much to say about it." (Murray, 124-5)

Although Friel is supporting the idea that the play is only about language, the ones who consider it as a political play, are so right in thinking this way. Because, as mentioned before, at first sight, the linguistic concerns could not be perceived easily. The British presence is so deeply and intensely studied that not everyone is able to understand the linguistic side of the play.

Brian Friel has never denied that he is a nationalist. But he complains about being involved in many arguments. In 1964, he speaks with Peter Lennon and states " I live in Derry now. I am a nationalist too, you know. I feel very emotionally about this country. I would not attempt to rationalize about my feelings, but i get myself involved in stupid controversies about the border.....I do not know why." (Murray, 1)

On the other hand, 'The Communication Cord' is much more surrounded with linguistic concerns and unlike 'Translations', it is easily noticed. Since it is a farce, the play is full of comic elements but the dialogues include linguistic speeches. Friel is trying to prove that his main concern is language. However, although he insistently claims that this is totally true, each reader is aware of the political side of the play.

In 'The Communication Cord', the protagonist Tim is preparing a thesis on language, and with his explanations, the readers are informed with linguistic facts. In 'Translations', it is seen that language is very important in our daily life, however not having a common one is not always an obstacle. The love between Yolland and Maire is the example for this situation. In a way, language is not necessary for all the circumstances. In 'The Communication Cord', the same conclusion exists with Tim's words "Maybe silence is the perfect discourse". (CC,92)

Having and creating a communication is such a complex thing. Brian Friel is trying to explain that occasion to the audience since his concern is the language. On the other hand, he can not prevent from being categorized as writing a political play with a nationalist appeal, since he uses language not as clearly as the colonial presence. Lastly, Brian Friel creates a brilliant work with 'Translations' that I do believe that he succeeds what he aims in the end; drawing attention to the language problem, with mentioning the negative effect of the British presence on it. With 'The Communication Cord' he tries to make people believe in his concern, with a mocking mood.

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