Nationalism and Gender

Nationalism is a core issue in Ireland. The Troubles, which took place in 1969 and brought about many deaths in Northern Ireland in the following ten years or so, can be viewed as one of the results of the sustained conflicts between two modern forms of nationalism in Ireland – Catholicism (or Catholic/Republican nationalism) and Protestantism (or Protestant unionism). Since the emergence of post-colonial studies, scholars have explored the problems of British colonization and anti-colonizing nationalism in modern Ireland, but gender issues and sexual politics, among other topics in Irish studies, are developed rather belatedly. They do not thrive until the 1990s, when some scholars begin to note the relationship between gender, sexuality, and modern nationalism in an Irish and post-colonial context (most of the articles reviewed in the following sections are written in the 1990s and the early 21st century). Following the current results of some scholars’ research developed mainly since the 1990s, this study aims to explore the multifarious relationships between modern nationalism and sexuality in Ireland, and moreover, it would also assess the changing relationship between nationalism and sexuality after the coming of

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1 Irish people who espouse anti-colonizing nationalism and desire the unification of Ireland are usually said to be Irish nationalists, Catholic nationalists, or Catholic Republicans, while Irish people, especially people living in Northern Ireland, who do not want to be politically separated from Britain, are usually referred to as Irish unionists or Protestant unionists. The conflicts between Catholics and Protestants taking place in Northern Ireland are usually viewed as the conflicts between nationalism and unionism; however, as Elisabeth Porter points out, “to see Irish unification as the only representation of nationalism fails to recognize that unionism is also a form of nationalism” (38). That is, the conflicts between Irish Catholicism and Irish Protestantism are also conflicts between nationalisms, between “Irish nationalism” and “Unionist nationalism” (38). However, it is also important to note that Porter uses “Unionist nationalism” rather than “British nationalism” to describe Protestant unionism in Northern Ireland. Although Irish unionists desire to remain as a part of Britain, unionist nationalism in Ireland is not necessarily the same thing as British nationalism, since “British national identity does not perform the same functions as for Ulster Unionism Irish national identity does for Ulster’s nationalists” (Farrington 5) and “constructive unionists were unionists for whom Ireland was the first love” (Gailey 227). In this thesis, as a result, the word “nationalism” is threefold: Irish Catholics give one sort of nationalism, Irish Protestants give another, and the British give still another.
globalization and the rise of multiculturalism.

In this regard, Frank McGuinness’s plays serve well to my purpose. As a child reared in a Catholic family, growing up near the borders, learning dramaturgy and staging his plays during the Troubles, having homosexual relationships in his adulthood, and frequently dealing with gender and sexual issues through queer characters in his early political plays, Frank McGuinness, to borrow the very words in the title of Riana O’Dwyer’s article, often “dance[s] in the borderlands” between nations as well as genders. Most of McGuinness’s early plays have blatant political overtones, and moreover, most of his plays are concerned about gender issues and featured by homosexual or queer characters. McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, for example, describes Ulster Protestant’s identity problems during the First World War, featuring a closeted gay named Pyper and seven heterosexual soldiers who develop implicit homosexual affections with one another in the frontline, a place where different forms of modern nationalism confront each other. For another example, McGuinness’s *Carthaginians*, a play that is often viewed as a companion piece to *Observe the Sons*, describes Catholic people’s life in Derry after Bloody Sunday, the most remembered military conflict during the Troubles, also featuring a drag queen named Dido, two implicitly feminized Irishmen, and three dissident females with political ambitions. While the two plays tackle the political problems in Northern Ireland, the presence of homosexual and queer characters provides significant access for my exploration of the relationship between nationalism and sexuality in Ireland. As a result, the two aforementioned plays will be the main texts to be discussed in this study.

As an Irish playwright from a younger generation, McGuinness’s description about nationalism in Ireland is different from his early nationalistic predecessors (such as W. B. Yeats), and at the same time McGuinness also shows some cultural inheritance from his elder generation (such as Brian Friel, who enjoys great popularity when McGuinness begins to learn play-writing). Actually, from Yeats’s nationalistic
theater to Friel’s Field Day, essentialist nationalism in Ireland has undergone many transformations and is met with severe criticism as the world becomes more and more globalized. This is because, as some scholars argue, with the advent of globalization, the antagonistic relationship between colonizers and the colonized inevitably begins to change. In a globalized age, modern nationalism is transformed, and the nexus between nationalism and sexuality is renewed and updated too. In McGuinness’s early political plays, we can see such a transformation in the Irish culture.

This introductory chapter offers a theoretical framework about the nexus between gender, sexuality and modern nationalism in an Irish context, followed by a brief introduction of McGuinness’s plays and a summary of following chapters. The four parts of this introductory chapter mainly consider the following questions respectively: How are nation and modern nationalism often heterosexually gendered? How can such a phenomenon be observed in Ireland? How will Irish queers and homosexuals be politically involved in post-colonial Ireland, if modern nation and nationalism are heterosexually gendered? And what is the significance of McGuinness’s plays if examined in this context?

**Sexing Nation and Nationalism**

Nation is a concept more complicated than, say, state or nation-state. When it comes to the definition of a nation, scholars so far do not have any binding resolution. A nation-state can be generally defined by the range of its territory where its citizens occupy and its governmental sovereignty reaches, but the concept of a nation can move far beyond this sovereign definition. A nation-state can be one type of nation, but a nation is not always a nation-state. Not all nations are independent or enjoy independent sovereignty; besides, a state can emerge “without the help of a nation” and a nation can emerge “without the blessings of their own state” (Gellner 6). As a result, to define a nation with “objective factors” such as sovereignty and
governmental practices may “nearly always exclude some widely accepted cases of nations” (Anthony D. Smith 11). Turning away from territorial and sovereign definitions, Benedict Anderson then defines nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). Nation, according to Anderson, could be defined as an “imagined community” invented through “cultural artefacts of a particular kind” (4).²

Anthony D. Smith accepts Anderson’s notion of “community” but not quite his notion of “imagined.” For Smith, to emphasize the imagination of a nation is to define nation with “subjective factors,” which “makes it difficult to separate our nations from other kinds of collectivity such as regions, tribes, city-states and empires” (11). Smith defines nation as “a named human community occupying a homeland and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members” (13). Smith emphasizes the ethnic origin of culture by proposing ethnies, or ethnic communities, as the cultural core of a nation. Nationalism, as a derivative of nation, is viewed by Smith as an “ideology” that “constitute[s] an actual or potential ‘nation’” (9).³ Despite the minor diversities in their definitions, however, Anderson and Smith jointly point out that, apart from territory, population, and government, the identity of a collective culture is indispensable. Since the identity of a nation is a learned collective consciousness acquired, nation and nationalism are not something that exists naturally but something invented and constructed. Nation, be it a “community” “imagined” through “cultural artefacts” or “constituted” by ethnies, is a product of cultural construction.

Most of the aforementioned scholars, when trying to define nation and nationalism, are criticized by feminists to be gender-blind,⁴ but actually in his

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² Examples for Anderson’s “cultural artefacts” may include religion, language, myth, literature, printing press, mass media, map, museum, etc.

³ Smith further defines “nationalist ideology” as a set of beliefs with “well-defined goals of collective self-rule, territorial unification and cultural identity, and often a clear political and cultural programme for achieving these ends” (21).

⁴ See, for example, Nira Yuval-Davies’s Gender and Nation and Charlotte A. Davies’s “Nationalism: Discourse and Practice.”
Imagined Communities, Anderson has provided many theoretical threads about the relationship between gender and nation. When defining nationality, for example, Anderson draws on an interesting analogy: “in the modern world, everyone can, should, will ‘have’ a nationality, as he or she ‘has’ a gender” (5). Anderson’s analogy is based on the hypothesis that cultural construction is what gender and nation have in common. Besides such awareness, Anderson also adopts many terms suggestive of gender associations. According to Anderson, a modern nation is often strengthened by “comradeship,” and it is “fraternity” that makes comradeship possible (7). Nation demands voluntary sacrifice and immortalizes a soldier’s life in “the manner of a man’s dying,” setting up tombs of unknown soldiers as nationalist models (9-10). Words such as “comradeship,” “fraternity,” “soldiers” and “man’s dying” are referential to masculinity. Anderson also notes that patriotism, or love for a nation, when expressed in cultural practices, is often associated with the “vocabulary of kinship” (such as mother-land) and assimilated to “skin-color, gender, parentage and birth-era” (133). Family, as a domain of “disinterested love,” gives nation a reason to ask for men’s sacrifices (144). Anderson apparently notices how the love for a nation is associated with the love for parents in the familial “vocabulary of kinship,” even if he does not politicize the role that gender and sexuality play in the interactions between family ideology and nationalism. Charlotte A. Davies criticizes Anderson for treating the “male composition” and the “andro-centric perspective” of a nation as unproblematic in Imagined Communities (Davies 170-171), but actually, Anderson has already paved the way for later critics who would argue that nationalism is male-centric.

Ann McClintock and Nira Yuval-Davies are two feminist scholars frequently quoted for their criticism on the sexism of modern nationalism. “All nationalisms are gendered …. All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender,” Anne McClintock argues in her essay entitled “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family” (61). Borrowing Anderson’s definition of nation as “imagined community,”
McClintock explores how national political institutions and national systems of cultural representation help sanction the “institutionalization of gender difference” (61). Noting that the word “nation” derives from the root “natio-,” which means “to be born,” McClintock argues that nations are figured through the iconography of family space (63). McClintock views family as the epitome of nation and describes nation as “the national family of man,” which constitutes a “social hierarchy” where the subordination of women and children to men is naturalized (64). As a result of man’s superiority in nation and family, women are often excluded from citizenship (women in most countries do not have the right to vote until the early decades of the 20th century), and subordinated to the nation as “its boundary and metaphoric limit,” namely, as the passive symbol of nation, native land and earth, in such words as “mother-land” and “mother-earth” (62). Therefore, it is because modern nationalism is often andro-centric and male-dominated that the image of a nation becomes feminine.

In her *Gender and Nation*, Yuval-Davies also criticizes women’s subjugated role and domestic duty in a nation. According to Yuval-Davies, in addition to being “symbolic border guards,” women are supposed to be the “cultural reproducers” in a nation as well (23). That is to say, women are responsible for the reproduction of young men and for the domestic education of a decent national culture. To ensure the production of a nation’s next generation, a nationalist agenda includes “the control of marriage, procreation and therefore sexuality,” termed by Yuval-Davies as “the ‘genetic pool’ of the nation” (22).

To criticize the andro-centric construction of a nation, however, is to examine how women and homosexuals are implicated into such construction rather than to suggest the absence of them. A nation constituted to be andro-centric would become what Allan G. Johnson defines as “patriarchy.” The ideals of manliness are illuminated by Johnson’s exemplification of masculine qualities in a patriarchal society: “control, strength, competitiveness, toughness, coolness under pressure, logic, forcefulness, decisiveness, rationality, autonomy, self-sufficiency, and control over any emotion
that interferes with other core values" (7). In his The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy, Johnson defines patriarchy as a “male dominated, male identified and male-centered” system (5, emphasis original), and nation is a system of this kind. In comparison with those critics who focus on ‘man’ in their discussions, Johnson’s definition of patriarchy as a “system: an it, not a he, a them, or an us” (27) is prominent in that such a view is able to explain why there exist some women who do not find patriarchy a nuisance – some women even participate in it actively and identify with its values.5

Although McClintock and Yuval-Davies mainly talk about the nexus of gender and nation, they also give us some starting points about the nexus of sexuality and nation. In McClintock’s familial simile, we recall, a nation is constructed like a family under heterosexual monogamous marriage, in which man/father is privileged and woman/mother is supposed to perform her assigned domestic duties to support the patriarchal nation/family. Nation is dominated by men, or more precisely, by heterosexual men, since a “national family of man” is hardly composed by homosexual couples, who cannot give birth to children. The procreation of a nation must be completed in marriage, so the “genetic pool of the nation” will favor heterosexuality and prohibit homosexuality. The criticism on gender, actually, has implied the criticism on sexuality.

A thorough and specifically-focused discussion about the nexus of nation and sexuality is George L. Mosse’s pioneering book, Nationalism and Sexuality. Mosse proposes that nationalism establishes “respectability,” or a set of sexual norms and “correct” sexual behaviors referred to as something respectable by the national ideology, to regulate sexuality. In Mosse’s view, the rise of “respectability” in nationalism is closely related with the fact that the national ideology is based on “the ideals of manliness” (1-4). Citing Michel Foucault’s History of Sexuality, Mosse maintains that, in Middle Ages, the ideals of manliness are best exemplified by

5 In Ireland, Lady Gregory and Maud Gonne are examples.
chivalry, and in the 17th century, the ideals of manliness are shaped after Catholic/Protestant theology, which further gives its place to medical science after the 19th century (4-9). From Middle Ages to the modern period, respectability invariably “advocate[s] a stereotype of supposedly passionless beauty for both men and women,” for example, condemning masturbation as “an antisocial act” or encouraging “the sublimation of sensuality into leadership of society and nation” (10-13). Mosse uses the German word Männerbund (meaning male-bonding in English) to explain that nation promotes “a cult of male friendship,” which is patriotic but should be by no means passionate and sexual (30). In other words, male-bonding encourages brotherhood without sexual desires, so the logic of Männerbund is basically homophobic. Though there will be “potential danger of homoeroticism” (Mosse 31), the proper and respectable affection of male nationalists is that “the love between male friends should not be projected upon each other but upon the nation; in this way, homoerotic temptation would be overcome” (Mosse 80).

**Gender, Sexuality, and the Irish Nation**

Gender stereotypes and sexual “respectability” generally found in the discourse of modern nationalism can also be found in Ireland. Before the discussion of Irish examples, however, it is noteworthy that, due to British colonization, the various forms of modern nationalism in Ireland have their cultural root or ideological inheritance from British nationalism, and thus discussions of Irish nationalisms cannot go without a brief review about the national consciousness in Victorian Britain and its interactions with the Irish nation. The Irish nation was subjugated to the British Empire before it became a free state in 1921 and gained complete independence in 1949, and this historical background inevitably complicates the nexus of nation, gender and sexuality in Ireland. The relationship between Ireland and Britain can be defined as “a relationship of the colonized and the colonizer” (Cairns and Richards 1),
and the Irish nation as a gendered concept should be analyzed with regards to colonial British nationalism and anti-colonial Irish nationalism simultaneously. Patriarchal and hetero-nomative construction of gender and sexuality in modern Irish culture is not so purely a local Irish product as most revisionists, who do not view modern Ireland as a post-colonial nation and reject the interpretation of modern Irish culture after independence with reference to British colonialism, believe. Instead, it is a construction conjoined by the legacy of British colonialism and the presence of Irish nationalism even if Ireland has been independent from Britain since 1921. Because gender stereotypes concerning the modern Irish nation are related at the same time with Irish anti-colonial nationalism and British imperial nationalism, it is necessary for the following discussions to begin by tracing the Irish nation as a gendered concept to Britain’s imperial period.

As the literature reviewed above shows, modern nationalism is an andro-centric construction, and it is not an exception in Britain. According to Robert Johnson, British imperialism, as a kind of national consciousness about Britain, is based on “paternalism” (83). Robert Johnson uses the term “paternalism” to mean that British Empire envisages itself as the father of its colonies, whose responsibility is to take

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Revisionism is first proposed by some Irish historians, with an obvious disapproval of post-colonial perspectives when it comes to modern Irish-British relationship. One of the historical revisionists, Stephen Howe, for example, states that he “come[s] to largely negative judgments” about colonial and post-colonial analysis of contemporary Ireland and “attempt[s] instead to place such analysis in a more appropriate European context” (4). Historical revisionism, however, is criticized by feminists for its neglect of gender issues. According to Linda Connolly, “the vociferous arena of [Irish] nationalism and revisionism” are both problematic in their approaches to gender issues, the former treating Irish feminism solely as “Catholic feminism” and the latter focusing on the “restricted sphere of nation-building and politics” without consciousness about the private sphere invisible in the gendered his/story (4-5). Because of the methodological dilemma that gender is often ignored by “revisionism” while gender study is always an attempt to “revise” history, Connolly then proposes to view Irish gender study as a “post-revisionist” perspective in order to maintain “a critical distance” from the mainstream revisionism/post-colonialism historiography (6). By taking the construction of gender and sexuality as a legacy conjoined by British colonialism and local Irish culture, the position of this study in terms of the debate between post-colonialism and revisionism would be similar to that of Elizabeth B. Cullingford, who in the introduction to her Ireland’s Others states that, while acknowledging the kind of modern Irish localizing culture observed by revisionists, she will “nevertheless continue to use the words ‘colonial’ and ‘post-colonial’ in the full awareness that they are open to semantic challenge” (2). That is, Ireland will be treated in this study as a locale wherein the political tug-of-war of nationalisms (inclusive of Catholic nationalism and Protestant unionism) is a result of colonial legacies even though its development after British colonization has localizing tendencies.
good care of the colonies as his women and children, and in so doing, being paternal and masculine becomes an honored value in the process of colonization (83). Under this imperial logic, Joseph Valente further proposes that the British Empire is “celebrated as masculine,” while its colonies, Ireland included, are “discounted as female” (189). Early in the 16th century, Edmund Spencer, in his *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, locates the origin of the Irish people in the Scythians, a race that denotes cannibalism under Spencer’s description and comes to be associated with the image of madwomen in the 19th century (Jones and Stallybrass 158-162). British nationalism’s feminization of other countries gradually becomes one of its colonial rhetoric. During the Victorian period, for example, when British imperialism reaches its apogee, Ireland was nicknamed as “the Sister Isle” by British people and “imagined in wifely terms” (Valente 190). Matthew Arnold, who sees the moral deficiency of “the Philistines” in the British nation and suggests the Teutonic bourgeois in England to borrow positive aspects from cultures in Wales or Ireland, describes Ireland with “the feminine idiosyncrasy” in his *On the Study of Celtic Literature*:

> No doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret (82).

Despite the fact that Arnold does not “celebrate” Britain, he still presupposes England as the aggressive masculine and Ireland as the submissive feminine. Ireland, as a colony to the British Empire, is reduced to “an essentially feminine race” by British imperial nationalism (Cairns and Richards 42).

British imperial nationalism influences the gendered making of colonized Ireland, and such Victorian heritage persists into modern Ireland. Though some Irish people, such as a journalist named D. P. Moran living in the early 19th century, notice the negative connotation of a feminine Ireland, most anti-colonial nationalists such as
Douglas Hyde, W. B. Yeats and Patrick Pearse tend to treat the feminine image of the Irish nation positively (Cairns and Richards 49). Cultural nationalists turn to ancient sovereignty goddesses in Gaelic myth and the cult of Virgin Mary in Catholicism, positively reinforcing the image of the Irish nation as a woman (Cullingford, “Gender, Sexuality, and Englishness” 159). Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, for example, provides Ireland a nationalistic myth, in which the Irish nation is symbolized by an old woman, played by Maud Gonne when premiered in Abbey Theatre in 1902, whose “four beautiful green fields” are taken away by “strangers” (Yeats 107). The old woman calls for men who can die for the love of her, and then one of the male characters in the play, Michael, forsakes his fiancée and hurries to fight for the old woman. Yeats offers a myth of Mother Ireland, in which “the warriors have masculinized faces but the nation is feminized” and “men act as agents and women as symbols” (Porter 42-43). Drawing more examples from male Irish writers such as James Joyce and Seamus Heaney to explain how the Irish nation is symbolized by women, C. L. Innes also criticizes that the myth of Mother Ireland “create[s] males as national subjects, women as the site of contestation” (3). In other words, in Irish anti-colonizing nationalism, Irish women are portrayed as docile figures without agency. The myth of Mother Ireland tellingly supports McClintock’s and Yuval-Davies’s argument that women often passively serve as symbols in a nation, and such a feminine iconography of the Irish nation comes from andro-centric construction of British and Irish nationalism.

The image of Mother Ireland infiltrates the Irish society and Irish politics, complicitly working with the family ideology of modern nationalism. Despite its inclusion of some women activists, the Gaelic League, an Irish nationalist

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7 According to Innes, the protagonist in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young man*, Stephen Dedalus, views a female character named Emma Cleary as an “embodiment of the Irish soul” (Innes 2). Patrick J. Keane further notices that a chapter entitled “A Mother” in Joyce’s *Dubliners* parodies the myth of Cathleen ni Houlihan. The ‘Kathleen’ in Joyce’s “A Mother” is “an allegorical depiction of Ireland” (Keane 2). Seamus Heaney, in an article entitled “Belfast” collected in his *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-78*, continues “the tradition gender distinction between England as male and Ireland as female” when talking about how his poems are composed (Innes 10).
organization founded in 1893, adopts “the prevalent Victorian middle-class family ideology” (Quinn 40). According to Antoinette Quinn, in the pamphlet published by the Gaelic League, mother and home are viewed as “the repository of spiritual, moral, and affective values” and “bearers and cultural reproducers of the future nation” (40-41). The gender agenda in the Gaelic League’s pamphlet reminds us of Yuval-Davies's observation of women’s assigned duty as “cultural reproducers” by male-centered nationalism. Besides, Irish women do not have the right to vote until 1918, and more strikingly, Article 41 in 1937 Irish Constitution, to which Eamon de Valera made a significant contribution, maintains that “mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home” (Mahon 187). The confinement of women at home and the exclusion of women from national citizenship or political activism are results of the family ideology of modern nationalism, or to use McClintock’s words again, results of the “national family of man.”

British and Irish national consciousness are often regarded as two opposing ideologies, but when we take gender into consideration, we find something in common between them. Analyzing the family ideology of Christianity and British colonialism’s legacy in Ireland, Kathryn A. Conrad in her book title implies that women are “locked in the family cell” by the discourse of modern nationalism. Jayne Steel criticizes that the Irish iconography of women are archetypes created by “the Irish psyche, especially the male Irish psyche” (97). For Steel, the allegory of Ireland as a woman, be it a discounted image in British imperial nationalism or the passive image of women as a domestic symbol in Irish anti-colonial nationalism, shows that “the British and Irish male unconscious have much in common” (97). If this is the case, we can further make it clear that the commonality between British nationalism and Irish Republicanism observed by Steel is actually andro-centricity. Catherine Nash then generalizes the cause of the problem and maintains that the fixity of gender differences in Ireland may be attributed to the “dualistic opposites” in Western
epistemology, which nurtures andro-centric nationalism of all kinds (110). Under such a Western epistemology, British imperial nationalism, Irish Catholic nationalism and Protestant unionism, despite their diversities in political positions, could have a lot in common when it comes to gender and sexuality.

With the emphasis on male-dominance and hetero-nomativity, modern nationalism in Ireland is unexceptionally homophobic. The most striking evidence for the symbiosis of nationalism and homophobia in Ireland is salient in a symbolic figure, Edward Carson. Born in 1854, living in Dublin for most of his life but highly honored in Belfast, Carson is the leader of Protestant unionism, who campaigned against the third Home Rule and established the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1913 in order to show Ulster people’s loyal patriotism for Britain. Carson works as a lawyer for the English court in Ireland, and he is appointed as “Crown Prosecutor” to assist the Irish Attorney-General under the newly-enacted Criminal Law and Procedure Act of 1887.\(^8\) Carson conducted the first prosecution under the 1887 Procedure Act, in which William O’Brian, an Irish nationalist from the National League, was sentenced to imprisonment (Stanley 223). Apart from being a symbolic figure for Ulster unionism, more interestingly, Carson is also an attorney on the trial of Oscar Wilde.\(^9\) In 1895, Wilde was accused of his association of male prostitute, cross-dressing and homosexuality, and Carson was the leading lawyer in the first trial, whose job is to enact the persecution of Wilde. During his interrogation of Wilde, Carson frequently tries to draw the jury’s attention to the disparity in the ages of Wilde, who was about forty years old at that time, and the young men seduced by Wilde (Stanley 195-196). For Carson, Wilde is guilty in that Wilde’s homosexual intercourse corrupts and deteriorates the young men. After Carson’s interrogation of Wilde, the judge of the

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\(^8\) Death penalty for homosexuals is not abolished in England until 1861 and in Scotland until 1889. The abolition of death penalty, however, is replaced in 1885 by the Criminal Law Amendment, which recognizes homosexuality as “gross indecencies” and still “punish[es] all homosexual acts whether committed in public or private” with imprisonment (Mosse 28).

\(^9\) Edward Carson and Oscar Wilde know each other before the trial. Carson and Wilde are in fact classmates in Trinity College, but they do not befriend each other probably because their personalities and interests are very different. Carson looks serious, but Wilde appears witty. Carson is a unionist, but Wilde is prone to Irish nationalism (Stanley 231).
first trial said: “Are these the kind of young men with whom you yourselves would care to sit down to dine? Are they the sort of persons you would expect to find in the company of men of education?” (Stanley 203). Homosexuality is linked with national degradation, as a commentator named Edward Carpenter said shortly after Wilde’s trial: “a few more cases like Oscar Wilde’s and we should find the freedom of comradeship now possible seriously impaired to the permanent detriment of the race” (Mosse 88).

If Wilde’s trial exemplifies homophobia in Protestant unionism, the case of Roger Casement is a telling index for homophobia in Catholic nationalism. On the eve of 1916 Easter Rising, Casement attempted to import munitions from Germany in order to support the revolt, but unfortunately Casement’s smuggling of weapons was held up by the British government. When Casement was charged with treason in an English court, Casement’s diaries, where many details of his homosexual life were documented, were made public. Admitting his homosexuality in the court, Casement soon lost the support even from Catholic nationalists, and finally he was sentenced to death. After Casement is hanged, according to Conrad, the prerequisite for Irish nationalists to accept Casement as a martyr is “that his homosexuality [should] be pushed back into the closet or denied” (Locked in the Family Cell 27). Even though Yeats is one of the few nationalists who firmly stand up for Casement from the beginning to the end, Yeats still believes that the diaries about Casement’s homosexuality are “forged” (Conrad, Locked in the Family Cell 27-28). Yeats refuses to accept the validity of Casement’s homosexuality, and thus his defense of Casement is also homophobic.

Homosexuality becomes a crime in the discourse of modern nationalism. Homosexuals are not de-criminalized until the Sexual Offences Act in 1967 England, and not in Northern Ireland until 1982 (Binnie 12). Even more belatedly, and probably due to the more conservative morals in Catholic theology, homosexuality is not de-criminalized in Republic Ireland until 1993 (Conrad, Locked in the Family Cell 23).
Besides, in 1929, Catholic moral legislation also gives birth to the Irish censorship law, which aimed to control erotic literature and “defined as obscene any literature which provided information on or advocated ‘unnatural’ birth control methods” (Fahey 61). What comes after the andro-centric construction of nation and nationalism is not merely the subordination of women but also the hetero-nomative regulation of sexuality, homophobia, and the punishment over homosexuality. If women’s space in modern nationalism is confined to the domestic sphere of home or Conrad’s so-called “family cells,” homosexuals are imprisoned in real cells, a room-like space that could be smaller than home or family. Living under the patriarchy of nation and nationalism, women and homosexuals are both minorities.

**Queer and Nation**

Queer is a term as difficult to be defined as the concept of nation, and sometimes more trickily, queer even refuses to be defined.\(^{10}\) The term “queer theory” first appears in the title of a 1990 conference at the University of California, proposed by Teresa de Lauretis.\(^{11}\) In her “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities,” an article published one year after the conference, de Lauretis clarifies that she coins the term “queer theory” with “a certain critical distance” away from so-called “lesbian and gay studies” (iv). A homosexual is a queer, but a queer is not always homosexual. Queer refers to people who counter the norms of gender and sexuality, the hetero-centric emphasis on procreation, and the family ideology of monogamy. Cherry Smith thus views “queer” as “a strategy, an attitude … a radical questioning of social and cultural norms, notions of gender, reproductive sexuality, and the family” (280). Eve K. Sedgwick defines queer as “the open mesh of possibilities” and “something different,”

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\(^{10}\) In her book *Queer Theory: An Introduction*, for example, Annamarie Jagose maintains that “[q]ueer itself can have neither a fundamental logic nor a consistent set of characteristics” (96). Queer, by Jagose’s definition, paradoxically seems indefinable.

\(^{11}\) Teresa de Lauretis rejects to use this term several years later because it comes to be a mainstream jargon in academics.
such as people whose sexualities “are not made to signify monolithically” and who are fond of crossing borders of all kinds (*Tendencies* 8). Making full use of the synonymous meanings between queer, strange, odd, peculiar and eccentric, David Halperin then proposes to define queers as “whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant” and “there is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers” (62). The merit of such a definition of queer is that it allows the term to encompass more possibilities than non-straight sexuality, and therefore, a heterosexual person may be a queer whenever he or she questions “the normal, the legitimate, the dominant” norms of sexuality, procreation, monogamy, or any other fixated regulations. Homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals and transvestites, who do not conform to the heterosexual norm of gender and sexuality, are certainly a kind of queer, and it is equally important to note that heterosexuals, if taking a distrustful and interrogative attitude toward or refusing to practice the conventional norms of gender and sexuality, may also be queers at these transgressive moments.

Queer theory modifies traditional views on identity, which assumes a monolithic essence of one’s self. For queer theorists, identity is in line with postmodern conception of fluidity. Judith Butler, for example, contends that gender identity is “performative” and “theatrical,” arguing that gender is an “act” that is “both intentional and performative, where ‘performative’ itself carries the double-meaning of dramatic and non-referential” (*Gender Trouble* 273-273). For Butler, identity is not fixated; instead, it changes frequently and can have multifarious formations. One’s identity is provisional, always under “revision” and “rearticulation” (Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” 19), and therefore, norms that presume an essence for identity will be faced with autogenous resistance produced within itself. Viewed from such a postmodern and constructionist perspective, identity no longer distinguishes Self/inside from Other/outside, and therefore “most of us are both inside and outside at the same time” (Fuss 5).

Queer, as defined above, has ambivalent relation with nation and nationalism. On
the one hand, patriarchy, hetero-nomativity, unclear family ideology, the obligation of reproduction, the “respectability” of sexuality, and homophobic nationalism are beliefs that will be problematized and interrogated by queers. The essentialist constitution of national identities in the discourse of modern nationalism is what queers are opposed to. Under gender and sexual norms in modern nationalism, however, the strategy that queers resort to is different from that of gays/lesbians. According to Michael Warner, those who embark on “negotiation with state agencies as a normal kind of activism” typically “describe themselves as lesbian and gay rather than queer – even though many such activists call themselves queer in other contexts” (212). For Warner, “queer politics” does not negotiate with the state in the pose of activism as “gay and lesbian politics” does; rather, “queer politics” simply “open[s] up new possibilities and problems whose relation to more familiar problems is not always clear” (213). That is to say, while gays and lesbians may launch direct negotiation with the fixated regulations, queers tend to problematize and ridicule them. This “queer politics” observed by Warner is perhaps best fulfilled by the sensibility known as “camp,” or queer parody. Camping means to take an outlandish, ironic, exaggerative and flamboyant attitude, together with a blatantly joyful celebration of aberrant behaviors. When using stereotypical gender divides as the performative medium, camping can problematize rigid boundaries such as masculine/feminine or heterosexual/homosexual binarism. When camp aesthetics is exercised in response to a nation’s respectability, it will be linked with the de-territorization of not only gender/sexual boundaries but also national borders (Binnie 25). In other words, when a queer gets involved in politics, he or she will cruise in the gap between the two ends of gender/sexual binarism and to undercut the distinctions constructed culturally by modern nationalism. By camping in a nation, queers bring in new possibilities and expose problems in a humorous and outlandish way instead of resorting to direct negotiations with state agencies.

On the other hand, male-bonding occasions within a nation also provide many
chances for the homoeroticism between men to get initiated, which will give rise to homosexual queers. Nationalism, despite its homophobia, provides plenty of occasions for male homosexuality to bourgeon. The gathering of men in nationalist societies gives rise to what Sedgwick calls “homo-social desire” in her *Between Men: English Literature and the Homosocial Desire*. According to Sedgwick, the adjective “homo-social” is originally meant to mark a salient difference from “homo-sexual,” because “homo-social” refers to the social relationship between individuals of the same sex without sexual intercourse or desire (1-3). However, by modifying the noun “desire” with the adjective “homo-social” in her book, Sedgwick aims to rouse our attention to the continuum from “homo-social” relationship to “homosexual” relationship between men (1-3). That is, male homo-social relationship often results in male homosexual relationship. The cult of *Männerbund*, notably in an army, is originally meant to be patriotic passions without homosexual emotions. However, living day by day, marching side by side and fighting arm in arm, some nationalist soldiers would find it hard to distinguish intimate male-male friendship from homoeroticism. Sometimes, in order to enhance loyalty and camaraderie, nationalism paradoxically invokes the power of male eros because “homosexuality is regarded by some – a very few – as the logical culmination of friendship” (Mosse 87). In this way, respectability and homo-social desires become two sides of a coin in modern nationalism.

In practice, Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory*, a book that documents the mentality of two world wars, provides many actual examples about how spaces of high nationalism, such as front lines, military camps, battlefields, or sports fields for war-time soldiers, inflame homosexuality. Taking as examples many British literary worthies in late nineteenth and early twentieth century such as Gerald Hopkins, E. M. Foster, and J. R. Ackerley, Fussell in a chapter entitled “Soldier Boys” states that “given the association between war and sex … we will not be surprised to find both the actuality and the recall of front-line experience replete with what we can
call the homoerotic” (272). While Fussell’s book is mainly about British soldiers in the two world wars, Adrian Frazier’s interesting and historical-revising essay “Queering the Irish Renaissance: The Masculinities of Moore, Martyn and Yeats” directs our attention to the compatible nexus of intimate male-male relationship and nationalism in an Irish context. From the incompatibility of homosexuality and nationalism found in Edward Carson’s interrogation of Oscar Wilde or Roger Casement’s case, to the compatibility of homosexuality and nationalism found in frontline soldiers of two world wars, we come to a conclusion: the relationship between homosexuality and nationalism in Ireland is ambivalent. Sometimes homosexuality and nationalism are antithesis, but sometimes they also seem to be synthesis.

In Ireland, especially during the time when Irish Catholic nationalism and Ulster loyalist nationalism compete with each other under a post-colonial backdrop, queers have ambivalent relations with their nations. The ambivalent relation makes it difficult to pin down the political stance of Irish queers in the Irish question by using traditional Irish political categories like Catholicism/nationalism and Protestantism/unionism. The ambiguous political position of Irish queers, in a way, reflects a queer’s rejection to be defined and fixated. In the plays by Frank McGuinness, we can see many textual evidences about such a complicated relationship between homosexuals, queers, and the Irish nation. Before going into textual details, in the next section I will give an introduction to Frank McGuinness’s plays and explain how his plays can be validly incorporated into the aforementioned theoretical framework.

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12 Edward Martyn is an Irish playwright, the first president of Sinn Féin, and a friend to W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory. George Moore is an Irish dramatist and uncle to Edward Martyn. In 1899, W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn founded the Irish Literary Theatre under the help of George Moore. Frazier tries to explore the not-so-easy-to-define intimate male-male relationship, or “un-categorical masculinities” in Frazier’s very own words, between W. B. Yeats, George Moore and Edward Martyn, speculating that “[t]here is no evidence that Moore, Martyn, or Yeats kissed one another, on the lips or elsewhere; there are no dirty sheets like those displayed in the trial of Oscar Wilde, but that does not mean that there is no story here” (33).
Frank McGuinness and his Northern Ireland Political Drama

Frank McGuinness was born in Buncrana, County Donegal, one of the three Ulster counties divided from Northern Ireland into the Republic Ireland in the 1920 partition agreement. Donegal’s geographical connection with its vicinities is quite embarrassing, because a very limited amount of its borderline is connected with the Republic, while it shares a large amount of border with Northern Ireland. As Eamonn Jordan further states, “it is this borderland consciousness, this remote zone into which McGuinness leads his audience and his characters that gives his plays their poetic and confrontational quality” (viii). This geographical position makes it easier for Donegal inhabitants to trade with Northern people or to commute across the border for work, hence resulting in ambivalent emotions when vehement conflicts between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists occur in Northern Ireland. Politically, Donegal citizens are identified with Catholic nationalism, but in everyday life, they are frequently interactive with the Protestants on the other side of the border. Instead of being troubled by Donegal’s geographical and political in-between-ness, however, McGuinness takes delight in such a queer and strange position. In a 1987 interview, McGuinness says that “I was born in the North, which is politically classified as the South, so I’ve got that lovely confusion – I like confusion a lot” (Mikami 3). Taking pleasure in confusion or border-crossing is a typical feature of queer temperance. As my following chapters would show, McGuinness’s plays, in a way, can be as queer as Donegal’s geopolitical position.

Donegal’s geopolitical in-between-ness nurtures a local theater that is very much concerned about Irish identity politics and Northern conflicts. Actually, since the Celtic Renaissance, large numbers of Irish dramatists have been concerned about identity politics on their native land, and Irish drama almost becomes the genre that

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13 The term “Northern Ireland political drama” is borrowed from the title of D. E. S. Maxwell’s 1990 essay published in *Modern Drama*. 
best articulates political problems. The Irish question,\textsuperscript{14} such as the problems of Irish-British politics, Catholic-Protestant ethnicity and Southern-Northern identity, is frequently represented and reflected in Irish literature, which becomes what Brian Graham calls “an arena of political discourse and action” (4). In Donegal, when it comes to political theatres dealing with the Irish question, McGuinness is one of the representatives. Like other Irish playwrights in the “arena of political discourse,” in his early plays McGuinness deals with issues of Irishness, the philosophy of national identity, sectarian conflicts, and Ireland’s experience as a colony to Britain.\textsuperscript{15} When being questioned in an interview whether or not the politics of Ireland is deliberately examined in his plays, McGuinness concedes that he “would no more shy away from it” than he “would embrace it” (qtd. in Lojek 98).

McGuinness’s plays could be as “queer” as Donegal’s geographical position is. McGuinness’s artistic uniqueness among Irish playwrights, as Helen H. Lojek notes, lies in the fact that McGuinness “has brought to the Irish stage characters who are openly gay” (159). David Cregan also offers that no other Irish playwrights “deal with gender diversity and sexual defiance as consistently as McGuinness” (“Irish Theatrical Celebrity” 671). Christopher Murray uses the word “chameleon” to describe McGuinness, praising McGuinness for he often “switch[es] points of view in gender and in politics” (Twentieth-Century Irish Drama 204). In reality as well as in plays, McGuinness often travels across borders of all kinds, or to borrow the very words in the title of Riana O’Dwyer’s article, McGuinness often “dance[s] in the borderlands.” As a homosexual, McGuinness transgresses hetero-nomativity not only in reality but also in his drama.\textsuperscript{16} In most of McGuinness’s early plays, gender and

\textsuperscript{14} According to Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture, the term “the Irish question” is first used in the later part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to “refer to the long, difficult and often violent relationship between Ireland and Britain” (276).

\textsuperscript{15} Jordan summarizes the topics of McGuinness’s plays as the follows: “the constitution of the male mind, the role of women in Irish society, the homosexual imagination, the function of art in society, the legacy of religion, the centrality of memory to the Irish psyche, the importance of fiction in the lives of individuals and the possibility of people accepting, freeing or forgiving themselves” (v).

\textsuperscript{16} It is an open secret that McGuinness is a homosexual. When Joe Jackson interviewed Frank McGuinness in1990, they “had to rely on subtextual hints when it came to the subject of his
sexuality often highlight the national and ethnic problems. Because McGuinness often depends on gender and sexual issues in his exploration of Irish identity politics, the political themes in McGuinness’s plays can be best approached through an examination of gender divides and sexual politics.

When analyzing “Northern Ireland political plays,” D. E. S. Maxwell proposes “a list of plays in which ‘the Troubles’ are directly the subject,” and McGuinness’s Carthaginians is included in the list (1). Carthaginians is premiered for Dublin Theatre Festival in Peacock Theatre, 1988, and it is often regarded as the companion piece to Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching toward the Somme (shortened as Observe the Sons henceforth), a play premiered also in Peacock Theatre, 1986, two years before Carthaginians.17 The two plays deal with the national identities of Catholics and Protestants respectively, and both can be “Northern Ireland political drama” if we do not confine the term to the period of the Troubles. Apart from the political concerns, the central characters in the two plays, Pyper and Dido, are both homosexuals. Apart from their homosexuality, they both have the characteristics of queers – ridiculing gender and sexual norms, or having campy qualities. Observe the Sons and Carthaginians are two representative plays of McGuinness’s early works that deal with Irish politics and modern nationalism with gender and sexual issues, and thus Chapter Two and Chapter Three will focus on the political implications lurking behind the intersections of gender, sexuality and nationalism in the two plays.

Observe the Sons impresses the Irish audience and brings the playwright overnight fame because, as a playwright born in and educated with Catholic background, McGuinness depicts in his subject matter the mentality of Protestants in Northern Ireland. The play tells the story of eight Ulstermen volunteering to serve in the British army in the First World War under the leadership of Edward Carson, seven

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17 According to Mikami, Observe the Sons and Carthaginians are “often thought of as a diptych” (9).
of whom are dead after the battle of Somme in France. The only surviving character is Pyper, who is not conforming to the military rituals in the beginning of the play and mocks patriarchal military culture by taking advantage of other soldiers’ homophobia. When deriding the gender, sexual, and Protestant stereotypes in the barrack, Pyper’s initial inconformity as well as his homosexuality renders him the characteristics of a queer. After Pyper is rescued by one of his fellow soldiers, however, Pyper is assimilated into the patriotic military camp. At the same time, Pyper’s initial distrust of Protestantism strikes a chord with the other soldiers, which leads to intimate male-male friendship in the barrack. The patriarchal construction of the military camp exemplifies the “respectability” found in modern nationalism, and meanwhile the burgeoning of very intimate male-male friendship and implicit homosexuality is what Sedgwick calls “homo-social desire.” Hetero-nomativity of nationalism is challenged by Pyper in the first half of the play, and in the second half, the ambivalent relationship between homosexuality and nationalism is displayed. From the soldiers’ emotional transformation, the play presents the horrors of modern nationalism, which calls for the transgression over such fixated ideologies as modern nationalism.

In *Observe the Sons*, McGuinness assesses the dark side of nationalism without making a narrow criticism on Ulster unionism, and he explores various forms of male friendship and male eros inflamed by chivalry, patriotism, heroism and unconditioned sacrifice. The characters in *Observe the Sons* join the army in a sense to fulfill the “ideal of manliness” demanded by modern nationalism, but with the war going on and death impending, manliness and masculinity become a promise of something fatal rather than something glorious and heroic. McGuinness, by elegizing the death and memorizing the deeds of loyalists with humanistic compassions, reminds his audience that modern nationalism not simply privileges men by subordinating women but also victimizes men as well. In patriarchy, both men and women are victims, which resonates with Allan G. Johnson’s definition of patriarchy as “a system: an it, not a he, a them, or an us” (27).
Probably because of the contrast between McGuinness’s Catholic background and the play’s Protestant topic, most critics and drama commentators evaluating *Observe the Sons* often focus on how unionist psyche can be fairly tackled in depths by a Catholic writer. Christopher Murray says that “*Observe* is neither condescending towards unionism nor a covert attack on its possibly jingoist elements. It is about transformation and change” (*Twentieth-Century Irish Drama* 205). Nicholas Grene also states that *Observe the Sons* “seeks an understanding of the psychological, spiritual and political ethos of Protestant unionism” (247). Moreover, the drama commentator of *The Irish Times*, Victoria White, cites eight critics to explain how *Observe the Sons* stands brilliantly as an exploration of “Northern Protestantism’s central folk memories” (12). Critics noticing gender and sexual issues in the play are relatively few. Being one of the exceptions, Jordan mentions that *Observe the Sons* is “as much a reflection of a destructive masculinity as a celebration of comradeship, community, strength and defiance” (25). More significantly, David Cregan accentuates the importance of sexuality in this play, proffering that *Observe the Sons* “exploits the historic ‘defiance’ of homosexuality, using it as a dramaturgical device to puncture pressure points in Irish history and disseminate ideologies that have become congested and stagnant in the politics of both gender and sexuality” ("Irish Theatrical Celebrity" 672). Because national politics is interwoven with sexual politics in *Observe the Sons*, it is possible to unearth some more unnoticed dimensions of the play by focusing on the nexus of modern nationalism and sexuality.

*Carthaginians* presents seven Derry characters haunted by their memory of Bloody Sunday, the most remembered militant incident during the Troubles, in which thirteen Catholic protesters in Derry were shot dead by troops sent by the British government in 1972. Different from the exclusively male barrack in *Observe the Sons*, *Carthaginians* offers a more particular characterization of Irish women. McGuinness

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18 Victoria White published this article before the 1994 revival of McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons* in Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Quoting and summarizing earlier critical reviews about the play, White’s article on *The Irish Times* is to promote the revival.
associates the three graveyard girls with the female activists of an anti-nuclear campaign in Greenham Common, England, characterizing the women with political ambitions. In contrast to women, men in Carthaginians bear a resemblance to frustrated escapists. Such a presentation of Irish men and women is very different from the male-dominated Ireland observed by the aforementioned feminist critics. When depicting how Catholics react to their ethnic crisis, McGuinness reverses the stereotypical images of aggressive men and tamed women in the discourse of modern nationalism.

The central character in Carthaginians, Dido, is a camp character. While the other six Catholic-identified characters are troubled by the threats of violence as a result of being an ethnic minority in Northern Ireland, Dido’s queer performance, such as his performance of transvestism as a drag queen on streets, deconstructs the binarism of gender, sexuality as well as sectarian national ideologies in Ireland. While Hark gets furious and desperate about British soldiers’ feminization of him, for instance, Dido flamboyantly threatens the British soldiers by brandishing his homosexuality (Carthaginians 301). As James Hurt states, “McGuinness’s representation of homosexual desire … operates realistically while at the same time taking on the contours of allegory” (281). In Carthaginians the relationship between Ireland and Britain is furnished with binary gender and sexual analogies in the first place, and thus Dido’s deconstruction of binarism is not simply a deconstruction of patriarchy but also a challenge to the binary ideology deeply rooted in modern nationalism. In other words, through campy qualities in a nationalist locale such as the graveyard setting in Carthaginians, Dido problematizes many binary assumptions of nationalism, which is more often than not the reason why the longing for peace in Northern Ireland is overshadowed by ethnic conflicts. Despite the fact that Carthaginians is an elegy to the Catholic victims in Bloody Sunday, McGuinness does not mean to promote a Catholic and patriotic version of Irish nationalism in this play. On an occasion talking about Carthaginians, when being asked the Yeatsian
question “Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?,” McGuinness humorously replies that “Not in the slightest. You don’t think I’m as stupid as Yeats, do you?” (“The Tomes of Donegal” 13). *Carthaginians* is a play that memorizes the Catholics in Bloody Sunday, but what Dido does through his homosexuality and campy qualities is to problematize the kind of Irish nationalism at Yeats’s time.

The flexibility and mutability of Dido’s sexual and national identity demonstrate a more tactful way to deal with the Irish question than the other characters. Queer aesthetics becomes a very important medium through which binary and essentialist nationalism is deconstructed. David Cregan views Dido’s campy qualities as “a type of cultural resistance that challenges meaning and reality” and as “a queer prism through which the inconsistencies and untruths of Bloody Sunday are revealed” (“Camping in Utopia” 27). Dido “queers the gendered binary that constructs colonizers as male and colonized as female” (Cullingford, *Ireland’s Others* 120), and thus “homosexuality is privileged in a confrontational way” (Jordan 77). By deconstructing the violence-provoking binarism in Catholic nationalism through sexual analogies, the queer character Dido, according to Hiroko Mikami’s conclusion, “exhorts us always to strive for life, efforts and hope” rather than for conflicts and death (50).

In *Observe the Sons* and *Carthaginians*, McGuinness proposes a new post-colonial relation between Catholics and Protestants through allegories of sexuality. To put it more specifically, McGuinness’s Ireland is not based on binary essentialism of gender, sexuality or nation but based on multiculturalism. The replacement of modern nationalism with multiculturalism is the result of “post-colonial globalization,” as some historians call it. In Donegal, earlier dramatic

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19 Yeats asked himself this question when Easter Rising broke out shortly after the staging of his *Cathleen ni Houlihan*.

20 A. G. Hopkins distinguishes four phases of globalization in his edited *Globalization in World History*: archaic, proto, modern and post-colonial. Hopkins’s “post-colonial globalization” refers to the period of cultural and political development after imperialism, generally dated from the 1950s, when
attempts by Brian Friel and his Field Day have shown the signs of multiculturalism, and though McGuinness is not always a patron to Field Day, his plays reflect the multicultural tendency in Ireland as well – in a way McGuinness takes up Field Day’s goal of “the Fifth province” or “a pluralist Ireland.” In his Northern Ireland political plays, McGuinness brings to the front stage the horrors of militancy and violence to such an extent that Catholics and Protestants in Ireland are equally vulnerable minorities and victimized by their own nationalism. In *Observe the Sons* and *Carthaginians*, the two religious communities in Ireland, which for many years are antagonistic to each other, are actually on the same boat in the war against death, and thus the conventional boundaries between nations and ethnicities no longer tell much difference. McGuinness’s plays suggest that there is no need to continue the sectarian conflicts in Ireland and that it is time to think beyond essentialist nationalism, also mirroring the result of the referendum for the Belfast Agreement in 1998, in which Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland agree to decommission paramilitary arms and to solve their disputes without violence.

To see the full significance of McGuinness’s plays, we must situate him in the changing milieu in Ireland during the 1990s. The discussion of the nexus between modern nationalism and sexuality in McGuinness’s plays, therefore, should be extended to a broader concern about the cultural turns brought about by globalization in contemporary Ireland. If we put McGuinness’s plays in the history of Irish literature, McGuinness’s deconstruction of modern nationalism through sexual

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McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons* was actually rejected by Field Day for reasons unknown to the public and then re-scheduled for performance in Peacock Theatre. McGuinness’s *Carthaginians* is originally accepted and scheduled to be produced by Field Day, but McGuinness withdraws his play two weeks before the rehearsal. McGuinness’s reason for his withdrawal of *Carthaginians* is that Field Day then is preparing for the staging of *Carthaginians* and Stewart Parker’s *Pentecost* at the same time and therefore the resources given to *Carthaginians* are insufficient – there is neither a director nor a cast two weeks before the rehearsal (Lojek 115). Despite these mishaps, however, McGuinness is friend to Brian Friel. In the February of 1999, McGuinness as a friend and a fellow Donegal man presents the Special Tribute Award to Friel, describing Friel as the playwright who had “tormented and challenged me [McGuinness]” (McGarry 7). McGuinness’s adaptation of Anton Chekov’s *Uncle Vanya* is staged by Field Day in 1995.
allegories can be one of the instances for the rise of multiculturalism in the age of globalization. This argument will be specifically focused in Chapter Four, which begins with a general account of the rise of multiculturalism in Ireland and then explains how modern nationalism can be transformed by globalization through sexual allegories in a post-colonial context.

In view of the violence taking place in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, scholars such as Richard Kearney have been trying to propose multi-cultural versions of Ireland. Published in 1997, Kearney’s *Postnationalist Ireland* advocates “the fifth province: between the local and the global” and urges people to “think otherwise” (100, emphasis original). To think otherwise in the Irish question means to transcend modern nationalism and to find non-dualistic choices. Published three years after the Agreement, Edna Longley and Declan Kiberd’s co-authored *Multi-Culturalism: The View from the Two Irelands* offers local observation of Ireland’s trajectory from “mono-culturalism” toward multiculturalism, albeit there still exist some definitional controversies and practical obstacles in the move toward a heterogeneous Ireland. The recent multi-cultural disposition in Ireland is one of the consequences of globalism, which is exemplified in the formation of European Union, wherein Britain and Republic Ireland are both members. This mode of Anglo-Irish relationship in EU is also what Kearney resorts to as his model for “the Fifth Province” (Kearney 104-105). Just as queers often challenge and transgress fixed boundaries, the claims for a multicultural Ireland encourage the transgressions of essentialist national, ethnic, and religious boundaries as well. We have seen how homosexuality in *Observe the Sons and Carthaginians* achieve this end, and in two of McGuinness’s recent plays, *Someone Who Will Watch Over Me* and *Dolly West’s Kitchen*, we can further see how global influences and homosexuality conjoin in the making of a multicultural Ireland. In Chapter Four, textual evidences from the four plays will be discussed to show how the phenomenon of postcolonial globalization can be observed in the interactions of nationalism and sexuality.
Conclusion

Nationalism plays an important role in Ireland, while gender and sexuality play an important role in nationalism. Many established gender stereotypes in Ireland, especially stereotypes about women, can be traced back to the colonial legacy passed down from Britain to Ireland. Under gendered and hetero-nomative national ideologies, Irish queers have ambivalent relationship with the Irish nation. On the one hand, queers problematize the binary norms of sexuality within nationalist agenda. On the other hand, the emphasis on masculinity in modern nationalism provides one of the best cradles for male homosexual eroticism. Frank McGuinness’s plays give us many textual evidences to examine gender and sexual politics in post-colonial Ireland. While dealing with identity politics in Northern Ireland, McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons* and *Carthaginians* explore the complicated nexus of gender, sexuality and nationalism in Ireland as well. McGuinness and many of his characters can be identified as queers because, in addition to being homosexuals, they take delight in crossing the fixed borders of gender, sexuality, nation, and religion, therefore bringing forth a multi-cultural blueprint of Ireland and a new relation between Catholics and Protestants.

While feminists begin to revise the gender history of Ireland, discussions about sexuality are still rare and not yet fully explored even till now. There are many plays dealing with the Irish question in the 20th century, but few of them are concerned about the importance of homosexuality. As McGuinness points out, there are only two Irish plays in the 20th century dealing with homosexuality before

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22 The presidency of Mary Robinson (from 1990 to 1997) is the time when feminism and gender studies in Ireland begin to thrive. When analyzing gender in modern Irish culture, many critics tend to draw examples from the 1992 court case of Miss X followed by the 1992 Dublin campaign against legal abortion, the 1995 divorce referendum, the discrimination of gays in the Republic parliament, Mary Robinson’s self-avowed feminism, women’s participation in elections, or governmental reports about birth rate, as many of the contributors do in the essay collection *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* edited by Anthony Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis.
McGuinness himself begins to put gay characters onto the Irish stage (Curtis 35). Rethinking the Irish question from the perspective of sexuality indeed provides a chance to think otherwise and to imagine a new relationship between the two communities in Northern Ireland, and with the coming of globalization, it is time to assess their interactions to date. “The play within a play in Ireland is Ulster. […] Writing a play is the opposite of throwing a bomb,” an anonymous art commentator puts in an article published in The Economist (“Repairing Ireland” 83), and Frank McGuinness’s plays can be a good gloss to this witty saying.
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