The Drama of Naming Ireland: Brian Friel's *Translations* and *The Communication Cord*

Glenn Hutchinson
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Irish playwright Brian Friel explores the complexity of names as they relate to Gaelic culture and British imperialism. In *Translations,* Friel dramatizes the 19th century British Ordance Survey which attempted to standardize and Anglicize the names of geographic features of Ireland. I suggest a paradox of naming: reacting to the British Empire's naming as colonization, Irish nostalgia for national origins fictionalizes around the names of the past. Because of the British "misnaming," the Irish must create a new past through an impossible search for "authentic" names.

OWEN: Eden's right! We name a thing and-bang!-it leaps into existence!
YOLLAND: Each name is a perfect equation with its roots.

The dialogue in the epigraph is from Brian Friel's *Translations,*[1] a drama about the British Ordnance Survey in the 19th century and the Anglicizing of Gaelic geographic names in Ireland. Friel's play tells the story of a culture attempting to resist imperialism by replacing colonial names with authentic or "native" names, a decolonization process that, as Edward Said describes, takes place in similar ways throughout the colonized world.[2] However, Friel's drama shows that this search for the authentic is doomed.

Translations (1981) was a turning point in Friel's career. The play, the first production of the Field Day Theatre Company at Derry's Guildhall, explores the loss of the Irish language under the pressure of British imperialism. Friel, following in the footsteps of Yeats and the Irish National Theatre, founded the Field Day Theatre Company. As F. C. McGrath explains, "Field Day's broad cultural goals extend . . . to an ambitious critique of the competing discourses, myths, and histories that have contributed to the current crisis in Northern Ireland" (242). Field Day's first play, *Translations,* is born out of the social conditions

Names 4.2 (June 2000):121-134
ISSN:0027-7738
© 2001 by The American Name Society

of contemporary Ireland. Although the play is a continuation of Friel's earlier works, such as *Philadelphia Here I Come*! (1965), and their exploration of cultural identity, *Translations* is a pivotal prelude to his language/historical plays of the 1980's, such as *The Communication Cord* (1982) and *Making History* (1987). The languages in Ireland play an important role in Friel's dramas. In addition, Friel edited an autobiography of Irish weaver Charles McGlinchey (1861-1954), *The Last of the Name* (1999), a book with themes of language and names similar to those in his dramas, stories about a man who was last of the name of his family in a small town in northwest County Donegal.

In this same County Donegal, *Translations* is set in a hedge school in 1833, where local students are learning the Gaelic language and Gaelic names as the forces of British imperialism attempt to re-name and re-map Ireland with Anglicized names.[3] Because of the Penal Laws, which banned the teaching of Catholicism and Gaelic culture in Irish schools, local teachers set up "hedge schools" in the countryside. These local schools were often conducted under the shelter of a hedge or grassy bank; thus they were called "hedge schools," and also "pay schools," for the parents paid for their children's instruction. In opposition to the hedge schools, a state-funded, non-Catholic, non-Gaelic national system of schools began in the 1830's, the time period of *Translations*.[4]

Friel uses the setting of the hedge school to portray the struggle for survival of Irish identity, culture, and language. Although there are some historical inaccuracies in *Translations,* such as dates and the changing of officers' names, Friel's play examines this hedge school as the British army makes a map of Ireland and changes the names of towns, landmarks, and other geographic features of the Irish countryside. In Friel's work in general and in this play in particular, names play an important role. The play revolves around Owen, the son of an Irish schoolmaster, who works with the British officer Yolland in renaming Ireland. However, the idea that each name can be a "perfect equation with its roots," as Yolland concludes, is under scrutiny. By choosing one Anglican name for each geographic feature in Ireland, the British Ordnance Survey attempts to create standard, fixed names, and this imperialist act strips away the Gaelic culture. Consequently, some of Friel's Irish characters, such as the teachers and students at the local hedge school, respond by trying to preserve their names, language, and native culture. Names in Friel's dramas are further complicated because

of the impossibility of discovering the "original" names. I will suggest that in response to the British empire's acts of naming as colonization, Irish nostalgia for national origins fictionalizes around the names of the past. In other words, because of the British "misnaming," the Irish must create a new past through an impossible search for "authentic" names. These are the competing forces which Friel explores in *Translations* and what he calls its companion piece, *The Communication Cord.*

The opening of Friel's *Translations* itself is one of naming: a hedge school where the teaching of names is taking place. At the beginning of the first scene, Manus, the head teacher's son, tries to teach Sarah, a student with a speech defect, her name:

> We're doing very well. And we're going to try it once more–just once more. Now–relax and breathe . . . Come on, Sarah. This is our secret . . . Get your tongue and your lips working. 'My name–' Come on. One more try. 'My name is–' Good Girl. After further coaxing, Sarah finally responds: "My name is Sarah" (384).

Manus is delighted with this response: "Soon you'll be telling me all the secrets that have been in that head of yours all these years" (385). Sarah is learning her name, and Manus tells us that she soon will be able to reveal secrets that she has been unable to express. This first scene at the hedge school shows not only a teacher helping a student with a speech defect say her name and express herself through language, it also initiates the drama's arguments about names. Manus, along with several other characters in Friel's dramas, believes in a presence created by names; they believe these names to be unique, special. As Manus says, there are "secrets" to discover within Sarah's name and language. Other characters, including Owen, Manus' brother, question the authenticity and importance of names. These different views of language seen in Friel's play may connect with what Mashey Bernstein calls the "Janus nature" of Ireland's relationship with English. Until 1800, Gaelic was the language of Ireland, but when the Irish were forced to use English, they combined English words with Irish syntax and grammar. And the way they continue to use this hybrid language reflects the Irish hatred of British imperialism; they both "desecrate" and "sanctify" language (1994, 269). Because of British imperialism and its effects on the Irish language, the hedge school has the task of attempting to preserve the names of the past. Of course, there are further complica-

tions onstage: Friel's play is mostly in English–except for some Gaelic, Greek, and Latin–but the actors portraying the students and teachers at the hedge school pretend that they are speaking Gaelic. Besides the opening scene of Manus teaching Sarah her name, there is Jimmy: "known as the Infant Prodigy–sits by himself contentedly reading Homer in Greek and smiling to himself. He is a bachelor in his sixties, lives alone . . . . For Jimmy the world of the gods and the ancient myths is as real and as immediate as everyday life in the townland of Baile Beag" (11). In other words, Jimmy, perhaps an allusion to James Joyce, loses himself in a mythical past. His reality is one of goddesses' names that become as real to him as Gaelic ones. Jimmy may represent how one can both gain meaning from the names and images of the past and also lose oneself in that fiction as well. The authenticity of names, then, is complicated in Friel's dramas, because names are often tied to myths that can be unstable.

Through his changing attitude toward names, Owen shows the complexity of naming in *Translations*. Some critics view Owen as the villain, because he is helping the British Anglicize the Gaelic names. Ronald Rollins, for instance, compares Owen to Judas for cooperating with the British and calls Manus "the clear-eyed brother," because he is teaching his students Gaelic (1985, 42). However, it seems difficult to be "clear-eyed," as Rollins suggests, in this issue of naming, for the problems of naming make it difficult to see Owen as the villain and Manus, his brother who teaches at the hedge school, as the hero. In a conversation at the end of the first act, Manus calls the British Ordnance survey "a bloody military operation," and he questions his brother's cooperation with the British, "What's 'incorrect' about the place-names we have here?" (408). Owen responds, "They're just going to be standardised . . . Where there's ambiguity, they'll be Anglicised" (408). From this moment Owen learns how the ambiguity of names makes it difficult to find the authentic "lost" ones. Owen discovers this difficulty as he writes in the official name book at the beginning of act two; he and Yolland attempt to standardize or give one stable name to "the point where the stream enters the sea–that tiny little beach" (409). The Irish name (or the name that Owen knows) is *Bun na hAbhann* (410). However, Owen reads the church registry and discovers that they call it *Banowen*:

> OWEN: That's wrong. (*Consults text*). The list of freeholders calls it Owenmore–that's completely wrong: Owenmore's the big river at the west end of the parish. (*Another text*). And in the grand jury lists it's called–God!–Binhone!–wherever they got that. (410)

Because of the many different Gaelic names for the tiny little beach–the lack of an "authentic" name–Owen ends up Anglicizing the name to *Burnfoot*. As this scene shows, there is not one fixed name for the beach. It is difficult (if not impossible) to find a source for names in *Translations*. Such difficulty includes even Owen's own name as Yolland keeps referring to him as *Roland*. In the first scene of act two, Owen finally corrects him and tells that his name is "Owen. O-w-e-n." Yolland responds:

> YOLLAND: It was never Roland?
>
> OWEN: Never.
>
> YOLLAND: O my God!
>
> *Pause. They stare at one another. Then the absurdity of the situation strikes them suddenly. They explode with laughter . . . .* (421-22)

Owen and Yolland laugh about misunderstood names. Owen comforts Yolland in his error and adds, "I was getting fond of Roland." Indeed, Owen justifies the entire British Ordnance Survey by pointing out how local people are unaware of the history of their names. Even though there are stories behind the Gaelic names, Owen knows that most people are unaware of these stories and the origins of the names. When discussing what names to give the local landmarks, Yolland, who has fallen in love with the "native" culture, demands that Owen keep the name of the crossroads as *Tobair Vree* after Owen tells him the story about an old man named Brian "whose face was disfigured by an enormous growth." Brian believed that the well, *tobair* in Irish, could cure him of his deformity, so he "bathed his face in it," every day for seven months. But as Owen explains, "the growth didn't go away; and one morning Brian was found drowned in that well. And ever since that crossroads is known as *Tobair Vree*–even though that well has long since dried up" (420). Yolland responds to Owen's story by demanding that the name of the crossroads continue to be *Tobair Vree*. (According to the story, *Vree*, the name of the well, evolved from the Gaelic pronunciation of the first syllable of *Bhriain* 'Brian'.) Yolland has a romantic view of names as sources for creating identity; he wants language and names to connect with "roots," a center, an essence of being.[5] However,

nobody currently knows this story about the cross-roads' name except for Owen: "I know the story because my grandfather told it to me. But ask Doalty-or Maire-or Bridget-even my father-even Manus-why it's called *Tobair Vree*; and do you think they'll know? I know they don't know" (420). One approach to the name "Tobair Vree" is discussed by Marc Silverstein, who makes connections with Fredric Jameson's emphasis on narrative in history and naming: the narrative connects the object and the name. In addition, Silverstein notes that names are not stable, for they are places for "ideological and hegemonic struggle" (1992, 140). Few people in *Baile Beag* (or Ballybeg), then, know the same names or use names in a same, stable way.

Because of this instability, characters must fictionalize around names and create their origins, and this process helps form community in *Translations* by referring to what is absent.[6] Thus, in the first act, we learn of a baptism; several characters wonder about the name given to the baby by the single mother, Nellie Ruadh:

> BRIDGET: Our Seamus says she was threatening she was going to call it after its father.
>
> DOALTY: Who's the father?
>
> BRIDGET: That's the point, you donkey you!
>
> DOALTY: Ah.
>
> BRIDGET: So there's a lot of uneasy bucks about Baile Beag this day. (391)

Because the identity of the father is not generally known, the name to be given (or received) will have consequences-the men of the town are a bit "uneasy" if the baby's name matches theirs. In this scene, Doalty decides to have some fun with this postponement of naming and jokes with Jimmy, one of the students at the hedge school: "She told me last Sunday she was going to call it Jimmy" (392). Later in the scene, this "ritual of naming" gives the baby the name "Eamon," after Eamon Donal from Tor (397). Hence, naming is a process of referring to that which is not present, the father. And like the naming of Nellie's child, Owen and Yolland are trying to deal with what is not present-one authentic name. What becomes so contentious in the British linguistic imperialism of Anglicizing names is the standardization of names-trying to impose one fixed name, or one meaning of an inherited name on an object or place. The Anglicizing of names points, then, to the presence of what is absent and erased in the process of British re-naming: the Gaelic name-whose one true name never existed.

Names are not fossils: they are in continuous flow. Owen is, in fact, learning that names change, and perhaps he himself is changing in his approach to naming. In act two, scene one, Yolland and Owen discuss whether language in general and names in particular possess a specific "consciousness" (416). Yolland says that he wants to learn the Gaelic language, but he fears that it is a private language and that he will never be able to fully understand the language or the community that speaks it. Hugh, the head teacher and Owen's father, tells Yolland that the Gaelic language, and names, possess "truths immemorially posited" (418). Before Hugh leaves the scene, he clarifies his thoughts about language: "I understand your sense of exclusion, of being cut off from a life here . . . but remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen . . . that a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of . . . fact" (419). Hugh's lines, echoing a passage from Steiner's *After Babel* (1998, 21), further complicate this discussion about language and names. Thus, Hugh tells Yolland that even though language possesses some sort of eternal truths, because of the British Ordnance Survey, Hugh's culture and his community's culture will be forced to change. New names and naming are necessary: "images of the past embodied in language" and fiction make us who we are, not fixed facts of history (445). In other words, in order for the people of Ballybeg ~ Baile Beag to survive, they must change and their names must change: "we must never cease renewing those images; because once we do, we fossilize" (445). Recognizing that names change, Owen returns to choosing origins for names at the beginning of the third act when he tells us how Con Connie Tim's pub got the name "The Murren":

> I've only just discovered: it's a corruption of Saint Muranus. It seems Saint Muranus had a monastery somewhere there at the beginning of the seventh century. And over the years the name became shortened to the *Murren*. Very unattractive name, isn't it? I think we should go back to the original-Saint Muranus . . . . The original's Saint Muranus . . . . (431)

Owen attempts to change the tavern's name to the one that best connects with Irish history; however, this "authentic name" poses some complications, for there is some irony in the fact that a past Saint would inspire the name of a bar. Authentic names are difficult to find.

Although Hugh says that change is necessary for the health of a community and Owen wants to choose names that connect with national

identity, the end of the play produces a community in chaos because of the process of standardizing names. In the third act, Owen picks up the name book in which he has been writing down the new Anglicized names, looks at it, drops it on the floor, and leaves it there (442). He tells his father that this "catalogue of names" was "a mistake–my mistake" (444). Owen, then, is frustrated with this quest to stabilize names and the effects of the Ordnance Survey's standardization of names, which tries to make names stable and fixed. Owen's frustration may stem from the violence and chaos that erupts in his community after Maire, who falls in love with Yolland, tries to learn new names. She wants to learn the names of places in England, so she will know the names of Yolland's homeland. Yolland soon disappears–most likely murdered–because the locals dislike his courtship of Maire and his desire to become part of the Irish language and culture. More turmoil erupts and the British army tents are set on fire.

This unfortunate tragedy of fixed naming brings the opening image of *Translations* full circle. In the first scene, Sarah is learning her name in the Gaelic hedge school–trying to voice the "secrets" within her (385). Now, at the end of the play, Manus deserts the school (for he is suspected in the disappearance of Yolland), but before he leaves, Manus asks Sarah her name again (433). The stage directions complicate this example of naming: Manus no longer has the same "warmth or concern for her," and when he kisses her, it is almost like a remission of sins: "He stoops over her and kisses the top of her head–as if in absolution" (433-34). Manus may regret his actions against Yolland and his own teaching; after he leaves, the next naming moment for Sarah is quite different. Lancey, the senior British officer, enters, angered by the kidnapping/murder of Yolland, and yells to Sarah, "Who are you? Name!" (440). However, Sarah is unable to respond and bows her head, and Owen must answer for her. After Lancey leaves, Owen tries to comfort Sarah and tells her that her name will return: "Don't worry. It will come back to you again . . . . It will. You're upset now. He frightened you. That's all's wrong" (441). Although Lancey's frustration stems from the fact that his subordinate is missing and may be dead, Sarah's inability to say her name mirrors the loss of Gaelic culture, autonomy, and names. After Sarah becomes speechless at the end of the play, Owen admits that his cooperation with the British was a "mistake" as his father continues to tell him that language and names change and that they must learn those new names even as this violence erupts.

Similar issues of naming are present in *The Communication Cord,* a farce which Friel refers to as the companion piece to *Translations*. In *The Communication Cord,* Friel examines and questions the desire to create an "authentic" image of the Irish past with this modern-day farce of mistaken identities and fictitious, continually changing names, which leaves characters literally performing in the dark throughout much of the play as the light goes out in the cottage and the audience watches actors pretending to be in the dark, using wrong names. The main plot concerns Tim Gallagher, an aspiring professor of linguistics, who manipulates names and attempts to create an "authentic" image of the past for his own personal gain. Tim borrows a restored cottage for an afternoon to impress Senator Doctor Donovan in hopes that he might get help in moving up from his adjunct position and obtaining tenure at the university. As Tim, aided by his friend Jack, who owns the cottage, attempts this scheme, he must learn to use the "authentic" names of the past. Jack shows him around the cottage in the first scene and teaches him how to use names to impress the Senator. Jack warns Tim to use the historically "authentic" names for objects, so he can fool the Senator: "A glass! The gaff's blown already. Bowls, professor, bowls! Never glasses! Have you no sense of the authentic?" (17). Tim learns the names of objects, such as the "room down" for bedroom (34). Jack tries to teach Tim, then, how to use these made-up "authentic" names for objects and people. For Tim's scheme Jack suggests that he pretend to be Barney the Banks, a German gentleman who desperately wants to buy the cottage. Tim's refusal to sell the cottage he is pretending to own, Jack argues, will show a deep respect for the Irish past and greatly impress Senator Donovan (24-25). Names, then, become a tool to recreate the past for gain in the present.

The Communication Cord connects with *Translations* in an exploration of names and the Irish past with its setting: "a restored thatched cottage close to the sea in the remote townland of Ballybeg, County Donegal" (9). Both of these plays, then, are set in the town of Ballybeg and the scenery is similar. Both plays have wooden posts and chains on stage where an Irish farmer would house and milk his cows, and in *The Communication Cord*, Senator Doctor Donovan is greatly impressed by this "authentic" replica of the past and claims that this is the center: "Restoration. Fulfillment. Back to the true centre" (46). Tim also believes in a center in language; he is writing his dissertation on "Discourse Analysis with Particular Reference to Response Cries" (18). He explains his research in the first scene:

> Language. An agreed code. I encode my message; I transmit it to you; you receive the message and decode it. All social behavior, the entire social order, depends on our communicational structures, on words mutually agreed on and mutually understood. Without that agreement, without that shared code, you have chaos. (18-19)

Tim believes in response cries, "natural" outbursts of language that occur when "communication collapses," "an involuntary reaction to what you've just heard" (19).[7] At the beginning of the play, Tim thinks this use of language is "authentic" and meaningful.

Like Owen's changing approach to names, Tim's view of language and names evolves in this farce. The restored Irish cottage, as Friel describes in the stage directions, is "too pat, too 'authentic'" (11); thus, there is something false about this nostalgia for the Irish past, the Gaelic language, and names. Moreover, craziness follows with mistaken identities, misunderstandings based on people using different (and false) names, all in an attempt to sustain the authenticity of this restored cottage and reverence for a lost past. Near the end of the first act, the real German neighbor, Barney, shows up before Jack's Barney, and Tim, without his glasses, mistakenly gives the "real" Barney the instructions for the scheme:

> You're a German thug called Barney Munich and you're married to Claire Harkin whose real name is Evette Giroux . . . . Yes, yes, this is indeed the true centre. In real life you're Jack the Cod, a local fisherman, an eejit–he spotted you out swimming. And I let your wife, Evette Giroux–in real life, Claire–I let her do her washing here because you have no running water . . . . (52-53).

Thus, Tim frantically makes up new names for Claire and others, so he can make Senator Donovan believe that he owns this restored cottage. He tells Donovan that his former girlfriend Claire is a French woman named Evette, who is married to an abusive German husband (35). Jack becomes "Jack the Cod," and Senator Donovan loves it:

> Jack the Cod! I love that. Call a man Jack the Cod and you tell me his name and his profession and that he's not very good at his profession. Concise, accurate and nicely malicious. Beautiful! (46)

Donovan believes that the name *Jack the Cod* has a special meaning, a presence; he does not realize, though, that the name is completely made up. Donovan also meets Nora Dan, who becomes "Nora the

Scrambler;" however, this name creates further confusion. Donovan misunderstands the origin of this name too; Nora scrambling via a motorbike on the sand dunes becomes Nora scrambling eggs (47). This silliness of false names culminates at the end of act one when Senator Donovan explains to the others that in the good, old days the farmer would bring the cow inside the cottage, place a chain around her neck, milk her, and then she would fall asleep. As Donovan demonstrates this process by placing the chain around his neck, he becomes so entangled in the past and in his language that the chain's clasp will not unsnap. Thus, as the act concludes and he is on stage confined by a cow's chain, the Senator is unable to untie himself from this cottage, this fake replica of the past. The use of false names also has negative consequences for Tim when Susan, the Senator's daughter, realizes that Tim is a liar in the second act, and Jack, originally an accomplice, explains to the senator, who is still caught in the cow chain: "I'm afraid Tim has been telling you all a lot of fibs. Doctor . . . . Tim's a very sick man" (74-75). As the light dies out toward the end of the play with flickering, old-fashioned lamps, characters frantically yell out names as they are lost in confusion as to which name should go with which person.

Like Owen in *Translations*, when he attempts to throw away the name book, Tim tries to escape this nostalgia for false names and language, but again like Owen, Tim fails as well. *The Communication Cord* concludes with Tim giving up on these false names, scrapping his thesis about response cries, and trying with Claire (his love interest returned) to believe in something beyond language:

> Maybe the message doesn't matter at all then . . . . It's the occasion that matters. And the reverberations that the occasion generates. I feel the reverberations . . . And the desire to sustain the occasion. And saying anything, anything at all that keeps the occasion going . . . . Maybe even saying nothing. Maybe. Maybe silence is the perfect discourse. (92)

However, the ending does not promise the perfect discourse, the perfect way of naming things and people, by abandoning language. In the final moments, Claire and Tim stop talking and kiss as they lean against one of the uprights. But the upright starts to move, the upstairs floor shakes, and the restored house begins to collapse. Tim and Claire abandon language and names, and the reconstructed past is desecrated. Without language and names, no matter how fictional they are, community will collapse into chaos.

Both *Translations* and *The Communication Cord* create a paradox of naming as a result of imperialism. The British takeover has changed the Gaelic names and culture, but this change is a complicated one. On the one hand, with the 19th century Ordnance Survey, the British impose the Anglicization of Irish names and attempt to standardize them, a violent process of imperialistic domination. This imperialism attempts to erase the Gaelic culture and names. On the other hand, the plays point out how names change naturally, and the origins of names are difficult to find. Owen and Tim both search for original names. Owen tries to find the original names for local landmarks such as the Murren pub, and Tim manipulates the names of the Irish past to help his scholarly search for a center to language. Both characters are unable to successfully use the "authentic" names of the past, but they are also equally unsuccessful in abandoning language and a fictionalized past: *Translations* ends in violence; *The Communication Cord* ends in chaos. Because of British imperialism, then, Friel's dramas point out how a culture must fictionalize the past and try to create their own stable origins for names. However, there is a double erasure of the origins of names: one is violent, artificial and imperialistic, and the other is community-based, seeking an authentic origin, but one that never existed. Friel's writings challenge us with the complexities of names, origins, and culture, showing the human need for stories, how those stories must change, and the tragic consequences of imposing and standardizing those stories. The drama of naming Ireland is a human story fusing the authentic and the fictional.

Notes

1. George Steiner's *After Babel* is an important influence on *Translations*. The title of the play comes from the "Understanding and Translation" chapter in *After Babel*, where Steiner explains translation: "When we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate. Reader, actor, editor are translators of language out of time" (1998, 28).

2. In a section devoted to "Yeats and Decolonization" in *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said refers to *Translations* as an example of the renaming and "search for authenticity" that takes place with decolonization:

> One of the first tasks of the culture of resistance was to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land. The search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes and (occasionally) heroines, myths, and religions–these too are made possible by a sense of the land reappropriated by its people. And

along with these nationalistic adumbrations of the decolonized identity, there always goes an almost magically inspired, quasi-alchemical re-development of the native language. (1994, 227)

3. One of Friel's major sources for historical background is J. H. Andrew's *A Paper Landscape* and its examination of the mapping and renaming of Ireland between 1833 and 1846; Friel's play begins in late August 1833.

4. For more information about Irish education and hedge schools, see Alex McEwen's *Public Policy in a Divided Society: Schooling, Culture, and Identity in Northern Ireland.* Also, see P. J. Dowling's *The Hedge School of Ireland,* Friel's source for the play.

5. Yolland is a young, romantic officer who falls in love with the "native culture," the other. He is somewhat of an outcast; he joined the army because of trouble with his father, and he acknowledges how he could have very well ended up somewhere else: "I was thinking . . . I might have been in Bombay instead of Ballybeg" (415). Perhaps Yolland is attaching meaning to the other and creating identity–wanting to preserve these exotic-sounding names–to compensate for what he finds lacking in his own culture and in his own name. It would not make any difference what that "other" was–Bombay or Ballybeg ~ Baile Beag.

6. In "Khora," an essay in *On the Name,* Derrida remarks that names say more than what they may at first seem to say:

> And when a name comes, it immediately says more than the name: the other of the name and quite simply the other, whose irruption the name announces . . . . [The name] still remains alien to the person, only naming imminence, even only an imminence that is alien to the myth, the time, and the history of every possible promise and threat. (1995, 89)

In other words, a name names something that is forever delayed, and through this postponement, the name points to the presence of what is absent. Christian Moraru explains Derrida's lesson: "The name is a dynamic reality, its history and structure calling for careful, insistent perusal as it always says more than it names" (1997, 72).

7. Such a response cry connects with Heidegger's theory of language:

> It is language that speaks. Man first speaks when, and only when, he responds to language by listening to its appeal. Among all the appeals that we human beings, on our part, may help to be voiced, language is the highest and everywhere the first. Language beckons us, at first and then again at the end, toward a thing's nature. (1975, 216)

Therefore, according to Heidegger, language can show us the "innermost" part of our nature (Kearney 1997, 85); in his dissertation, Tim wants to discover this innermost part.

References

Andrews, J. H. 1975. *A Paper Landscape: the Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bernstein, Mashey. 1994. "'What a Parrot Talks:' The Janus Nature of Anglo-Irish Writing." *The Text and Beyond.* Ed. Cynthia Goldin Bernstein. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1995. "Kora." *On the Name.* Ed. Thomas Dutroit. Trans. David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian McLeod. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.

Friel, Brian. 1983. *The Communication Cord.* London: Faber & Faber.

_____. 1988. *Translations. Selected Plays of Brain Friel.* Washington D. C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press. 377-451.

Heidegger, Martin. 1975. *Poetry, Language, Thought.* Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row.

Kearney, Richard. 1997. "Language Play: Brian Friel and Ireland's Verbal Theatre." *Brian Friel: A Casebook.* Ed. William Kerwin. New York: Garland Press. 77-116.

McEwen, Alex. 1999. *Public Policy in a Divided Society: Schooling, Culture, and Identity in Northern Ireland.* Brookfield: Ashgate.

McGlinchey, Charles. 1999. *The Last of the Name.* Ed. Brian Friel. Nashville: J. S. Sanders and Co.

McGrath, F. C. 1990. "Brian Friel and the Politics of the Anglo-Irish Language." *Colby Quarterly.* 26: 241-48.

Moraru, Christian. 1997. Rev. *On the Name. Names* 45: 67-72.

Rollins, Ronald. 1985. "Friel's *Translations:* the Ritual of Naming." *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies.* 11: 35-43.

Said, Edward W. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Vintage.

Silverstein, Marc. 1992. "'It's Only a Name:' Schemes of Identification and the National Community in *Translations.*" *Essays in Theatre.* 10: 133-42.

Steiner, George. 1998. *After Babel.* Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.