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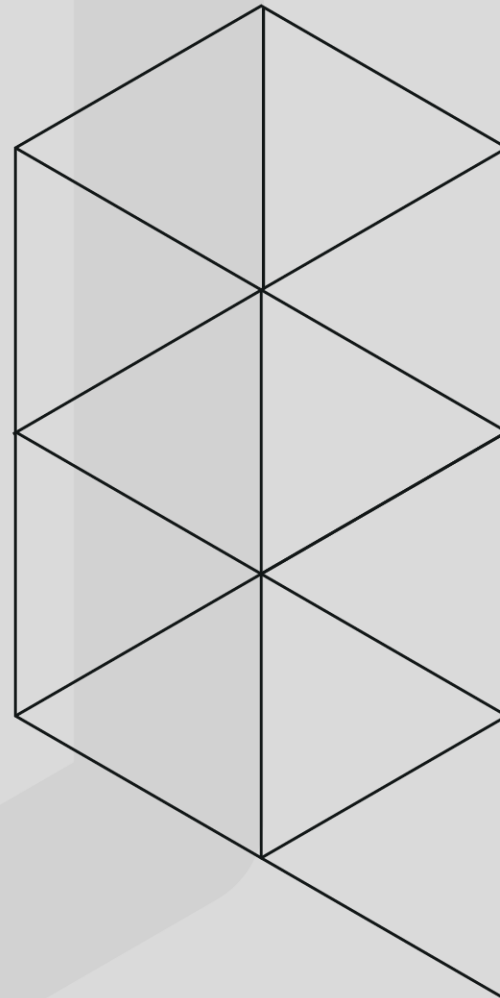
# **Brian O'Doherty / Patrick Ireland's Map Works: A Modest Proposal to Decolonize Ireland**

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## Brian O'Doherty / Patrick Ireland's Map Works: A Modest Proposal to Decolonize Ireland

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The wish to reach an “art without space”, as expressed by Seth Siegelaub and quoted in the introduction to this volume, appeared as a privilege to another New York-based art practitioner and key contributor to conceptual art; a privilege that he did not wish to afford and also politically could not afford: Brian O'Doherty's medical training made him realize more than most artists of his generation (born in 1928) that the physical domain, the body and the space that it inhabits, are needed (even) for conceptual artists to think and develop their works. This is one brief reading that one could give to what is arguably O'Doherty's best-known intervention in conceptual art's history: *the Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1966), consisting of an ECG registration of the heartbeat of the supposedly not practicing colleague. O'Doherty's thinking about privileges that are tied up with space (and time) one can estimate when adding to the professions of the artist and doctor the art critic and theoretician (author of *Inside the White Cube*, editor of *Art in America* and *Aspen 5+6*, 1967) and programme director of the National Endowment for the Arts. He programmatically charts space, art spaces and others, both literally and metaphorically. O'Doherty takes a systemic approach, a multi-disciplinary one, amounting to a social practice that is aiming to change the nature of at least certain spaces.<sup>1</sup> That he would turn to maps is then nearly predictable. He has done so on two occasions and these works this chapter sets out to scrutinize.

These two maps used and modified are of Ireland and its main city, Dublin, respectively. The two works are: *Ireland: A Modest Proposal* (1980) and *Studies on O.S. maps for The Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicher Humunculus Rope Drawing #73*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin (1985). In the 1980s, O'Doherty was, for his visual art practice, working under the pseudonym Patrick Ireland, adopted following the Bloody Sunday shootings by the British Army of 13 Civil Rights marchers in the Northern Irish city of Derry (also called Londonderry) in 1972. In 2008, the artist chose to “bury” this pseudonym, to mark (and maybe even further) a stage in the

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“peace process” that he felt conformed to the condition he had established of adopting the name: until such a time as “British military presence” was removed from the island, as the work states. The name change was a gesture highlighting O'Doherty's Irish origins, politics and continuing affective connections, following his emigration to the US (with a grant to research sensory perception) in 1957: an expatriate's gesture.<sup>2</sup> For a medical doctor it is not likely to forfeit the body for conceptual ends – or to consider one to be in opposition to the other. For Patrick Ireland to forfeit space is also unlikely. As an artist with an Irish background in the rural Midlands (Co. Roscommon), the attachment to “the sod” that one was not allowed to own under colonial rule is vivid. And one does not need to resort to films like *The Field* (Jim Sheridan, Ireland 1990) for illustration. When he was 90, I asked O'Doherty if he knew anyone of his current age when he was a child – and if so, whether they had reported memories of the Irish Famine. In the year of European revolutions, 1848, and subsequent years, the potato crop had failed in Ireland and Britain still insisted on receiving grain exports. Half of the population of the island either starved to death or emigrated on so-called “coffin ships”. The artist responded that his elderly aunt told him about her recollections: she remembered seeing people with green mouths from eating grass.

The early 1980s were a violent time on the island of Ireland, marked by bombs and hunger strikes, directly to be linked to the incomplete decolonization of Ireland, letting the four Northern counties, part of the province of Ulster, remain with the United Kingdom of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, when the Republic was established in 1921, following civil war.

### **A Modest Proposal**

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The title of the first work to be discussed here, *Ireland: A Modest Proposal* (1980), may be thought of as a proposal directed at both the island and the artist, sharing the same name. The matter is personal. Ireland has often been anthropomorphized: Kathleen Ní Houlihan is the traditional, female personification. Republicans who sought to reclaim the North put it in animal-related terms: “Give the teddy back his head” goes a song. In art history, Joseph Beuys, following extensive travels all around Ireland in 1974, wrote “The Brain of Europe” alongside the Northern part of an outline of the

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island on a blackboard that was to become part of an installation, *Hearth* (1968-74), Kunstmuseum Basel. Patrick Ireland's map, rather than suggesting that the head or brain was cut off, intervenes into the geography of the island more subtly. The territory of Northern Ireland is not cut off as such. While its site is covered by blue space that signifies water, its map section has been cut up and distributed into the centre of the landmass of the island, i.e. broadly into the artist's region of origin. Belfast ends up being located just west of Dublin. The accompanying text reads:

A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE SIX NORTHERN COUNTIES OF IRELAND, WHILE CREATING SOME DIFFICULTIES FOR THE INHABITANTS OF MULLINGAR AND ENVIRONS, AFFORDS INCREASED FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE DONEGAL PENINSULA AS WELL AS ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC –

The continuing "brain drain", i.e. emigration of the young and ambitious from (rural) Ireland in the 1980s is one possible explanation for this "solution" to the "Troubles" so close by, yet – mentally – far away across an international border with menacing checkpoints. Only slowly did the European Economic Community entry of both jurisdictions in 1973 create the conditions for communication, which the map work proposes: it sets out to "encourag[e] dialogue". This was then against all the odds: the Thatcher government in Britain made clear that it did not wish to communicate with "terrorists", which was especially painfully visible during the Hunger Strikes in 1982, where 10 Republicans, IRA members, died in a Northern Irish prison. Their bid to be recognized as political prisoners had been refused. While Patrick Ireland's focus was on (presumably good) communication, politicians turned the other way: from 1988-94, Republicans did not have a voice in the British media. What their IRA-affiliated spokespeople said was "dubbed over" by actors in all British media coverage.<sup>3</sup> The intermingling of both Protestant and Catholic newcomers from the North with the Southern, since 1921 land-owning locals in a not very fertile Southern region that Patrick Ireland's work suggests, is not an easy thing to imagine. What the work proposes is as dark as the realities: involuntary replacement and disappearance. Northern

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Ireland is an “other” space, but not a heterotopia. It is a dystopia of a specific kind: an issue to which I will return.

The title, *Ireland: A Modest Proposal*, adds further layers to the work's meaning. Patrick Ireland quotes Jonathan Swift's 1729 text entitled “A Modest Proposal”, or in its entirety: “A Modest Proposal For preventing the Children of Poor People From being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and For making them Beneficial to the Publick”. The Dean of Dublin's Protestant Cathedral, who published the text anonymously, was a high-ranking member of the ruling, Colonial elite. Led by his concerns for the numerous and starving indigenous, Catholic population of Ireland, he made the proposal for the impoverished Irish to sell their children as meat, to be turned to use as fricassee or ragout (and specified potential modes of preparation in detail). What is worse: the modest Christian's call for anthropophagy was not immediately understood by his peers and readers as the satire that it was intended to be, thus proving the state of dehumanization in which human beings had to live in Colonial Ireland in his day.

The reference to Swift in Patrick Ireland's map work exceed the title's formulation: Swift had been inspired by the topography of the area around Belfast (Northern Ireland) for his *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726, a giant appears to be lying in the landscape (and satirical comments on English politics are also to be found here). In this context, Patrick Ireland's comments on “increased fishing opportunities” and “encouraging dialogue” can be understood as taking on Swift's tone of straight-faced satire: fishing and polite conversation conform with a jovial British self-image that belies the violent realities in Northern Ireland in 1980 – as it did in the 1720s. The visual suggestion to amputate the island's “head” for the sake of pleasure pursuits corresponds clearly to both Swift's culinary proposal and the realities of death and destruction during the euphemistically (or satirically) called “Troubles”.<sup>4</sup>

But those wishing to adhere to a jovial and sophisticated (self-)identity of the British or Protestant Northern Irish are not the only ones potentially scandalized by Patrick Ireland's work: seeing the map of the island of Ireland without the North is deeply unfamiliar and disturbing to inhabitants of the Republic of Ireland to this day: while UK-based news media would show both the UK “mainland” and Northern Ireland in detail, with the Irish Republic uniformly colored (in

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grey/brown, like France or Belgium if pictured), RTÉ (the Irish Republic's) news would always show the island detailed in its entirety.<sup>5</sup> This of course owes to the political claim the Republic has since partition (at least pro forma) been laying to the island as a whole. This mapping practice corresponds e.g. to how East German maps used to blank-out West Berlin (and its own military complexes) and how West German maps would show East Germany in as much detail as the West – with the deadly, impenetrable border a barely visible line. Or a more recent example: controversially blank sections appeared in maps of Paris, revealing that the *banlieue* districts were as alien to the map-makers as Africa to those in the early modern era. Early map-makers loved to fill undifferentiated, “undiscovered” sections with dragons and other scary animals in a *horror vacui* that otherwise spelled a lack of both knowledge and (colonial) power, implicitly inviting both.<sup>6</sup> Patrick Ireland seems to say to citizens of the Irish Republic: “Get used to it: the North barely exists for you”, belying all lip-service paid as to how much one claimed to feel for the suffering brethren in the North.

That his inserting of Northerners (and their issues) into the Republic is a deliberate and more than satirical feature of Brian O'Doherty's convictions is further illustrated by the artist's pseudonym and where he chose to “bury” it: on the one hand, he signals that amputating the island's head hurts him (as he shares its name). On the other, he has also more recently shown that the North belongs into the consciousness of the South: Patrick Ireland's burial took place at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, in 2008, rather than in Belfast, as had been suggested to him.<sup>7</sup>

Ireland's Modest Proposal also implies that the “fish” one may be able to catch in the newly “watery” regions on the North coast may not be ordinary fare. Spinning Swift's story a little bit further, the water world here may contain altogether more “human” species. The Irish imagination is populated with many creatures that may find their way onto land, from selkies to mermaids and the inhabitants of Atlantis or the Land of the Young, *tír na-nóg*, in Irish mythology. An under-water world is conjured that contrasts with the deceptively matter-of-fact map medium and introduces altogether more sinister, spectral aspects – in keeping arguably with the political landscape above ground: the in many respects mute and oxygen-less Northern Ireland of the “Troubles”. Under-water worlds or aquatopias were

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more recently imagined in Afro-futurist music and visual culture by the band Drexciya and further elaborations on the Drexciyan myth.<sup>8</sup>

That association may seem a little far-fetched, but whom should one trust to find the many implications of undifferentiated or “blank” space more acutely than the author of *Inside the White Cube*? Brian O'Doherty had by 1980 already written the series of *Artforum* essays that in 1986 he published as a book under that title.<sup>9</sup> How the white walls of art spaces carry with them the real estate and aspirational commodity value of what is displayed in it, how the body negotiates the supposedly neutral gallery space: all these questions for the first time appear in O'Doherty's writings. It is safe to assume that also in the watery parts of Patrick Ireland's Modest Proposal, the multiple intertwined interests of politics and global capital enter. In the map work it is as if the indistinct surface of the sea were to inundate and fill the “real world”. But from *Inside the White Cube*, we know that – certainly for this author / artist – areas of blankness or “whiteness” themselves are at least as forcefully inundated by all the powers of the “real world”. His attentiveness to the unmarked, white walls is arguably derived from his experience of poverty in an Irish rural setting, where white-washed walls were associated with everything but the riches and cultural capital that white-painted spaces then exuded in the artist's new home, New York. Looking thus from both inside and out with this map work: a little bit of “dialogue” between the Northerners fleeing the rising tides and Brian O'Doherty's old neighbours from County Roscommon may just be preferable. It might also yet be on the cards in the twenty-first century, when coercive economic and political forces have literally raised the tides. Finding similarities between atrocities from the 18th and 20th centuries and relating these to water, subject to incessant flows and cycles, makes this a relevant work for the 21st century.

### Studies on O.S. Maps

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Underground forces, a gallery space, Irish (political / colonial) history and literature: there is much that joins the close reading above to the second work that this essay studies: *Studies on O.S. Maps for The Purgatory of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker Humunculus Rope Drawing #73*, 1985. Its critique is possibly more complex, but not less pointed than the work from 1980. Brian O'Doherty grew up in Dublin and studied Medicine at the Catholic university (UCD). Being invited

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by Trinity College Dublin (TCD) to exhibit presented certain difficulties for him: He may have liked to study there, but his family felt that this would put its collective spiritual wellbeing in danger.<sup>10</sup> TCD only began to admit Catholics on an equal basis in 1979. He responds with a work called "Studies", as studying is what the institution and this artist-researcher share, albeit so far in different spaces. "O.S." in the title refers to Ordnance Survey, the British colonial enterprise of mapping Ireland – and thus, by extension, owning the land, e.g. through naming and marking "its" property. Through this title, Patrick Ireland presents TCD as "purgatory", i.e. as a space that is not mappable, and in which Protestants have abandoned belief. The artist thus "smuggles" Catholicism into this Protestant institution – implying that it is a place of "sinners", who need to expiate their sins before they can go to heaven. The work is also remembering that the Queen of England, who founded the university, just like the present one, is the head of both the Church of England and the British State (which is thus lacking in a division of powers to which most democratic nations aspire).

More literally, the map work is the study for a rope drawing (rope drawing #73 to be precise), which was, indeed, realized as a one-person show in "purgatory": the TCD's art space, the Douglas Hyde Gallery (DHG) in 1985. The rope drawing that the "Study" anticipates was the focal point of this installation. Patrick Ireland's rope drawings (carried out since 1973) have as a defining feature thin ropes that are spanned in such a way that they disorient the perambulating viewer, but also provide order: from a specific viewpoint, the ropes "frame" fields of color in which the gallery is painted. This has the advantage for the alter ego of Brian O'Doherty that he can work in art spaces and museums, while not exhibiting in a white cube-as-white cube. In this instance, the disorientation was not just the viewer's: the architecture of the DHG is Brutalist and pushes itself in the foreground to such an extent that the white cube-undermining artist had another force to reckon with. He found it a difficult if not "purgatorial" place to work in.<sup>11</sup>

"*Studies on O.S. Maps*" implies that the (Catholic) artist is investigating the cultural origins and purposes of these maps, not taking them for granted as a means of orientation whose shape and politics may be a given. Indeed, the map of Dublin, where TCD is located centrally, is doubled: in one part (left) overlaid with the zig-zag lines – here drawn as a text in very small letters – that are to



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become the ropes. A coloured field that takes the shape of the letters "HCE" is overlaid over the city centre: yellow in the map work, turquoise in the exhibited rope drawing. The diptych's right-hand side presents the same image on the same map, including text-lines, but cut up into a grid of 12 squares, shuffled as if a puzzle and re-distributed: a "before and after", relating to the viewer's experience in the rope drawing: first, one is disoriented in its spiderweb-like space, then, sitting at a table, the lines quite neatly frame the letters HCE. The text in front of the viewer on the table explains the HCE initials: the text is from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, a literary experience that is not characterized by utter clarity, where HCE is the male protagonist. The right-hand page on the table even re-jigs Joyce's words like the map: a scrambling of the phrases by the artist-cum-novel-writer Ireland / O'Doherty.

The map work does not affirm TCD's literal and figurative centrality in the city, as "normal" maps (and people) inevitably do with this central, walled-in institution. The lines / ropes remind one of ropes used in tying ships to docks in Dublin harbor. They also crisscross the sections of map as if the streets were Dedalus' labyrinth, where the minotaur was captured on Crete and where Ariadne oriented herself using ropes or string. Such a labyrinth is precisely what James Joyce understood his home city to be, when he gave himself the *alter ego* Stephen Dedalus in his early works (*Dubliners* and *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*). For Patrick Ireland in this work, Dublin becomes a constellation of co-ordinates, similar to the maps that aid Joyce-readers by identifying the whereabouts of Joyce's characters in *Ulysses* (published 1922). The main Joycean reference here is, however, to *Finnegans Wake*: in the initials of the main male protagonist in Joyce's late, "night book", published 1939. Like Joyce's other works, it is set in Dublin, but transcends this frame by also constituting a world history and using many languages: an emigrant's work. Joyce named HCE as Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (from Ireland's title), Here Comes Everybody, or other variants, in order not to fix identities: something that clearly attracts an emigrant like Ireland / O'Doherty. In *Finnegans Wake*, HCE is also Tim Finnegan, who had fallen off a ladder and lies in the Dublin landscape: very much as a reference to Swift's Gulliver. Patrick Ireland explains:

A single continuous thread (slender rope) would lead me and you (in a kind of literal metaphor) through the labyrinth of the 'Wake'. [...] This pleased me mightily. All you had to do [when

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sitting at the table] was reach out (in imagination), and touch, holding the string, -- all your thoughts flowing back through the string, through the labyrinth – the purgatorial labyrinth – to the H.C.E. now perfectly framed (Alleluia) from where you sat.<sup>12</sup>

This dual orienting and disorienting experience is accommodated in the map work's two parts: the right hand side's squares resemble coordinates, i.e. a logical way of ordering space on the map, but by being re-arranged, it also breaks the typical linearity of literature: this is entirely appropriate to *Finnegans Wake*, which has struck many readers as a hypertext avant la lettre. *The Wake* undermines linearity as much as possible also in its overall structure: the last sentence continues in the book's first, closing the cycle of the Dublin river Liffey's water – and the cycle of life and death.<sup>13</sup>

In the context of Dublin, re-arranging the square elements of a map has other implications than art-historical ones, however: the medians as overlaid across this second city in the British Empire are oriented towards London, more precisely the Greenwich Observatory, and thus, like the clock, to British colonial power, manifested in both space and time. Although the work's right-hand side looks like a cut and folded map (nearly like one in the system that Falk map publishers patented), the artist is not aiming at a practical way of presenting the city to visitors for orientation in pre-digital times. What he is representing is the disorderly, difficult text space of *the Wake*, which stereotypically remains one of world literature's most difficult books. The literary canon is of course studied by scholars in this eminent institution (Beckett, who studied and taught at TCD, was until recently more in the foreground than the poor Catholic from the neighborhood, Joyce). The Catholic artist Ireland aims in TCD at – and re-writes in ways that are critical of colonial centering – the height of the Irish literary canon.<sup>14</sup>

Patrick Ireland has in many artworks, like the current map one, used an arrangement of squares, in order to let lines, like the sections of the envisaged rope drawing here, traverse the grid. These works are, more often than not, based on the ancient Celtic Ogham alphabet. In 1967, Brian O'Doherty began to use it as an ingenious way of combining in his art a minimal formal vocabulary with conceptualist ideas or meaning, which only language could insert. Ogham operates on the basis of horizontal and diagonal lines, which were originally (in

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the second half of the first millennium in Ireland and Scotland) grouped as incisions on either side of the edge of a standing stone. Within a grid arrangement, the vowels, between one and four parallel lines in Ogham, were "liberated" from their parallel arrangement and zig-zag each square, reminiscent of rope drawings: nearly ricocheting in (and thus spatializing) the individual frames, while remaining readable for viewers who wish to invest the time to read.

At TCD, Patrick Ireland thus presents himself as someone bound to the country's ancient learning and history, to be found in fields and hedge schools (when learning was prohibited under colonial, i.e. Penal, law, but where Classical text nevertheless survived). This tradition predates the establishment of TCD in 1592 by Elisabeth I. The artist presents in this diptych two different ways of becoming both oriented and disoriented in Dublin and in Joyce's literature. He works as a "map artist [to] push cartography to theorise and transcend itself".<sup>15</sup> He arguably achieves this through on the one hand by using the normative map perspective from above, applying markers that one might associate with precise locations (of a prostrate body), but at the same time crisscrossing the city like a labyrinth, cutting it up, turning it (via the title) into hell or purgatory – and associating it, the real, historical city and its central university with a literary i.e. fictional site. The colonizer's gaze from above, "studying" its subject is from a current perspective to be associated with the State's gaze from a satellite or drone, i.e. it is a menacing one. It is in recent art explored by Hito Steyerl and Hiwa K. But their works are not the first that were critical of the map as colonial tool of power. In Northern Ireland – i.e. very much on Patrick Ireland's radar – helicopters policed Republican / Nationalist areas and viewed the landscape from above, where travelling on the roads would not have been safe. Also, while far from the North in many respects, Dublin's topography was not unaffected: the Loyalist Dublin (and Monaghan) bombings, on 17 May 1974 scarred the Republic's capital, as did the 1966 demolition by the IRA of the central monument of the city's main artery, Nelson's Pillar in O'Donnell Street (an expansive street, predating Hausman's street-widening in Paris, but similarly delivering easy army access).

Dublin adds the unusual distinction of being the city of James Joyce's literature, therefore arguably to a great extent than other cities enmeshed in the mutual and performative interrelations of fiction and non-fiction. In investigating symbolic streetscapes and using the

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case-study of Dublin, Yvonne Whelan was able to conclude “that cities are indeed constructed landscapes, shaped by sets of agents that are caught up in a web of social, cultural and political circumstances.<sup>16</sup> This construction has in Dublin particularly strongly been literary, and it manifests itself as the city already being perceived as something like a museum: as multi-layered and overdetermined, both simple and confusing space that does not, in those respects, differ that much from A Modest Proposal's Northern Ireland. O'Doherty / Ireland, resident in the US since 1957, was drawn to Joyce's literature as an annoyance and sparring partner for the novel-writing artist, but also as a “surrogate Ireland”, as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Maps and novels are among the tools – as compromised as their “truth” is in both cases – of emigrants and the home-sick. The two works by Patrick Ireland certainly do not use their maps as straight-forward, factual givens. So how do they exceed that medium or source and how can we conceptualize what they do?

### Maps, Literature and Politics

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Both works are to a such an extent infused with both literature and (Republican / Nationalist / decolonial) politics that I feel compelled to turn to both Eric Bulson's *Novels, Maps, Modernity: The spatial imagination 1850-2000* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. To turn to Bulson's argument first:

Joyce made the urban experience a subjective, psychological affair. The interior monologue made this possible. As readers, we experience Dublin vicariously through the minds and bodies of characters. [...] the urban dweller protects herself from the ‘shock’ of the metropolis by retreating inward. [...]

O'Doherty / Ireland responds with his works – the current map works among them – to his subjective experience: this includes the experience of the emigrant, but also Brian O'Doherty's professional knowledge as a medical doctor and researcher into sensory perception (including its failings and deceptions). To this, we can add the emigrant's interest in his home country's history and current issues: the knowledge that familiar cities will appear strange to someone who can only visit occasionally and does not see change happening incrementally:

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That, in effect, is what the space of the modern novel does: it makes readers confuse orientation with disorientation and feel like they are at home in the world when they are not. Georg Lukács had this idea in mind [...] when he argued that the novel's fractured form is an expression of 'transcendental homelessness,' a symptom of the modern condition [...] Joyce's *Ulysses* is more than a cultural barometer. It made the modern urban experience intelligible for so many other novelists during this period. The disorientation effect on readers was one of Joyce's best inventions. [...] remarkable is the fact that unlike his contemporary Franz Kafka, he managed to do it by creating a hyper-rationalized space. [...] A decade after *Ulysses* was published, Walter Benjamin argued that getting lost was the only way one could get to know a city. [...] The Situationists understood that cartographic abstraction, which they identified with the alienation caused by capitalist abstraction, could be resisted.

The provision of everyday detail and hyper-rationalized space, orientation paired with disorientation and personal links: all this is to be found in Patrick Ireland's map work. He lets maps do what literature also does and vice versa: What is so distinctive about the novel is,

not that readers can be lost and then found, but that they can be both lost and found at the same time [...] Maps and novels have had such a long and prosperous relationship in large part because readers have treated fictional spaces like real ones. [...] the novel has contributed to the formation of a spatial imagination for centuries.<sup>19</sup>

O'Doherty/Ireland would not have been satisfied with only letting the deceptively orienting map turn out to be disorienting, too. Literature and maps combine in his work to reach socio-political realities, historical and present inhuman behavior, war and neglect. In his map works, we can appreciate the capacity of the map's spatial imagination, together with a literary one, to be taken as an intervention in the real world.

But what about art's potential socio-political efficacies, given Patrick Ireland's difficult place as an Irish artist in the US, a declared Irish

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Republican (through his pseudonym), aiming at a critique and disappearance of colonialism? In relation to Northern Ireland, the term “Catholic” is used synonymously with “Republican” and “Nationalist”. Nationalism and maps do not have an uncomplicated one-to-one relationship, despite the overt purpose of many maps, to show the “nation”, would lead one to believe. Benedict Anderson, in studying the – often through literature – imagined emergence of nationalism, has relevant things to say about the uses of the map and the museum in the colonial project and nationalism thereafter.

The “assumption [...] that official nationalism in the colonized worlds [...] was modelled directly on that of the dynastic states of nineteenth-century Europe. [...] would be] hasty and superficial [...] the immediate genealogy should be traced to the imaginings of the colonial state. [...] if one looks to the grammar in which [...] ideologies and policies] were deployed, the lineage becomes decidedly more clear. Few things bring this grammar into more visible relief than three institutions of power [...] the census, the map, and the museum: together, they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.<sup>20</sup>

The movement towards disorientation and scrambling map parts or “messaging with” the “objectively” drawn geography in Patrick Ireland's work at the times of “Troubles” thus goes deeper and aims at the colonial technologies used to bolster the violence: census and maps in Northern Ireland show a nearly fully segregated population, learning separately and aspiring to studying in the walled-off TCD, like Dublin Castle, as two-centred colonial power-base, separated from what used to be “Irishtown”, spaces outside of cities, where the poor Catholics would live. To cite Anderson further:

[...] the colonial state did not merely aspire to create, [...]under its control, a human landscape of perfect visibility; the condition of this ‘visibility’ was that everyone, everything, had [...] a serial number. This style of imagining [...] was the product of the technologies of navigation [...] photography and print, to say nothing of the deep driving power of capitalism. [...] The final logical outcome was the logo – of ‘Pagan’ or ‘The Philippines,’ [or ‘Ireland’] it made little

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difference – which by its emptiness, contextlessness, visual memorableness, and infinite reproducibility in every direction brought census and map [and museum], warp and woof, into an inerasable embrace.<sup>21</sup>

The familiar images of maps that Patrick Ireland is complicating is thus particularly aiming at these frozen “logos” and the power structures and assumptions they carry.

Maybe we can take these thoughts on power and space one last step further. This step has to do with the fact that the water-filled area of Northern Ireland and Trinity College's “purgatory” both appear to be heterotopic spaces in Michel Foucault's (1967) somewhat imprecise ways. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter have investigated and updated notions of this “other” space.<sup>22</sup> They begin their explorations with a map: Giambattista Noli, in 1748, showed Rome with solid, black buildings, but Borromini's churches around Piazza Navona as cavities, in white. Patrick Ireland has responded to Borromini's architecture by means of rope drawings.<sup>23</sup>

[...] the churches – are not public or private, but heterotopian. What this map so eloquently shows is the necessary connection and partial overlap between public space and heterotopian space. Heterotopian spaces are necessarily collective or shared spaces. [...] The Piazza Navona was built on the vestiges of [the] circus of Emperor Domitian, which demonstrates that heterotopias can over time develop into public spaces.<sup>24</sup>

The changeability of functions of (map) space, as well as grey zones in terms of both public / private use and meanings I find remarkable here in the context of Patrick Ireland's work's social implications. The authors further

venture to say that today Foucault's analysis reaches its obvious conclusion [w]ithin network space, heterotopia has to a large extent changed its function. Rather than interrupting normality, heterotopias now realize or simulate a common experience of place. [...] Today heterotopia, from theme park to festival market, realizes ‘places to be’ in the non-place

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urban realm [...] embodies the tension between place and non-place that today reshapes the nature of public space. [And they conclude:] Besides the proliferation of heterotopias that provided normality in the (atopic) network space, we now see a proliferation of camp-like situations. The camp properly speaking is, according to Giorgio Agamben, not an extension of the law like the prison, but rather a space that is extraterritorial to the law [...] where the city is annihilated and the citizen reduced to 'bare life'. [...] Heterotopia, so we argue, is the opposite of the camp and could be a counterstrategy to the proliferation of camps and the spread of the exposure to the conditions of bare life.

This is clearly relevant to Patrick Ireland's Modest Proposal, where Northern Ireland is treated as a camp, a dystopian space, where inhabitants' bare lives are at stake, being moved, drowning; a space to whose existence and needs many preferred to close their eyes. Internment took individuals "away" without trial. In this work, the entire province is an unseen, underwater space, vanished, a "black site".<sup>25</sup> At a time when Brexit is re-drawing the maps of the islands, considering these two works, I would like to argue, should be recommended for any decision-makers.

As far as the TCD "purgatory" is concerned, the walled-in university with its colonial origins loses its privileged, heterotopian position in the city space of Dublin - especially in the right-hand map, but also through the ricocheting text of the left hand side of the diptych.

The academic community with its historically less than diverse constituency is in effect dispersed into the mix of Dublin's conurbation: "others", like the artist, are taking the right to engage within the walls with their and Ireland's diachronic manifestations of culture. Thus, the artist's gesture is similar to the previously studied map work: Patrick Ireland provides the academics with (much needed, one could say, for the university of the 1980s) opportunities for engagement: "encouraging dialogue", as the *Modest Proposal* put it.

In his two works using maps, O'Doherty / Ireland has found two formulations that share a number of features and combine to spell his vision clearly: he has recourse to familiar images that are being altered to provide both orientation and disorientation as two elements



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that – by implication – inevitably coincide, maybe (differently) succeed one another in our perception, but will not vanish or be neatly distinguished as order and chaos. This is an epistemological conviction, one pertaining specifically to colonial history in Ireland, as well as to efforts at decolonialization, to which Patrick Ireland added his name and these works. The literary references that the pieces make, enforce this message, extending the works' remit from “merely” spatial imaginaries into the realms of (Irish) history, culture and politics. These realms are all seen as socially constructed and always (especially also when viewed in and through art) subject to real world forces. Given the works' fraught context in the prolonged “Troubles” on the island, Ireland's – and any polarized society's – future is, these works tell us, only to be found through understanding and accepting these messy complexities, through believing that the nature of space can change – and through “dialogue”. Through propositionally mapping otherwise, creating other spaces (heterotopias where citizens mingle, as opposed to camps), Patrick Ireland's works play their part in shaping this future.

### Notes:

- 1) This I argued in: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, “Introduction, or the Crossdresser's Secret”, in: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (ed), *Brian O'Doherty / Patrick Ireland: Word, Image and Institutional Critique*, Amsterdam: Valiz 2017, 9-25.
- 2) Thomas McEvilley, “A Dance in the Excluded Middle”, in: *ibid.* p. 27.
- 3) See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988%E2%80%939394\\_British\\_broadcasting\\_voice\\_restrictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988%E2%80%939394_British_broadcasting_voice_restrictions)
- 4) I thank Eve Kalyva for the information that Juan Carlos Romero created a work, *Swift en Swift*, with reference to Jonathan Swift's literature in Buenos Aires in 1970, i.e. in a context where the canonicity of (in that case) *Gulliver's Travels* was necessary to render the critical political message of the work as “safe” as possible. Removing the spaces between words in all caps also and removing punctuation made the reading require more effort.

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- 5) A random image of this for RTE is: <https://www.rte.ie/weather/22259-dublin/>  
For British media e.g.: <https://weather.com/en-GB/unitedkingdom/weather/video/how-hot-is-it-going-to-be-in-the-uk-this-week-heatwave-england-london>. This practice has in recent years changed with the advent of satellite footage and less nation-specific weather-mapping.
- 6) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, New York: Verso 1983, 2016 (revised edition), 173, 175: "European style maps worked on the basis of a totalizing classification, [...] the entire planet's curved surface had been subjected to a geometrical grid which squared off empty seas and unexplored regions in measured boxes. The task of [...] 'filling in' the boxes was to be accomplished by explorers, surveyors, and military forces. [...] the practice of the imperial states of colouring their colonies on maps with an imperial dye. [...] As this 'jigsaw' effect became normal, each 'piece' could be wholly detached from its geographic context [... and became a] Pure sign."
- 7) See: Lerm Hayes, "Introduction, or the Crossdresser's Secret", 20, 21.
- 8) Laura Kneebone, "Black Sea: The Drexciyan Mythical Ocean as a Radical Ecology", unpublished paper submitted to the Art Studies Research MA, University of Amsterdam, December 2019.
- 9) Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1986.
- 10) See: "Extracts from a letter sent by Patrick Ireland to Mia Lerm-Hayes, March 27, 1999". This letter was transcribed and placed beside the work at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, mounted on a foamboard. At the opening of *On Shifting Ground*, Brian O'Doherty noticed a considerable number of spelling mistakes in the transcription, which he immediately corrected and signed. He also suggested that I ask the museum for what was now a work, which I did.
- 11) "The space was quite curious, designed by an architect who hadn't a notion about what immediate context art needs to be seen, to see us, and engage in mutual meditation. Nothing new in that [...] that was a self-satisfied space. It gave me a lot of problems." Ibid. – O'Doherty also elaborates in this letter about Thomas McGreevy, his mentor in New York, who had been a friend of Joyce's in Paris and whose "Catholic" theory was

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that *Finnegans Wake* was "Purgatory".

- 12) "I was surrounded by the labyrinth idea as a kid in Ireland, where you never get straight answers, you always get bent answers [...] I wanted to make labyrinths very easy, to diminish the urgency of a solution and to emphasize a rather lax process [...] Mine weren't authoritarian or concerned with 'ingenuity'. What was there was there, including you." Dorothy Walker quoting the artist: in: *Patrick Ireland*, Douglas Hyde Gallery catalogue, Dublin: Trinity College 1985, n.p.
- 13) The grid is of course a main feature of the art of O'Doherty/Ireland's generation, as identified by Rosalind Krauss. She considers it to be anti-literary, which would (for the reason just given) exclude Joyce's late work (and also does not account for the approximately grid-like arrangement of text in most books). Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press 1985. See: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, *Joyce in Art: Visual Art Inspired by James Joyce*, foreword Fritz Senn, envoi James Elkins, design Ecke Bonk, Dublin: Lilliput 2004, 167.
- 14) This is arguably a minor canon, following: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (transl. Dana Polan). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986, chapter 3. – Another element to be taken into account here is that Brian O'Doherty writes novels and has earned a place on the *Booker Prize shortlist*. A tension then ensues concerning the choice of the name Patrick (Paddy) Ireland: this constitutes a gesture of identification with all things that are stereotypically Irish, particularly as seen from an English perspective (and possibly transferred to US culture). There is a moment of defiance in assuming a name that connotes being dumb and backwards demands artworks that are all the more multi-layered and (academically) knowledgeable – even if they share a deceptively straight-forward and simple conceptual aesthetic. – Behind the Iron Curtain and in other marginalized spaces, a minor canon arguably was / is of great importance. See: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, "Notes on Activist Practices Behind the Iron Curtain: Liberation Theologies, Experimental Institutionalism, Expanded Art and Minor Literature", Nick Aikens, Susan Pui San Lok, Sophie Orlando (eds), *Conceptualism - Intersectional Readings, International Framings: Situating 'Black Artists & Modernism' in Europe*, Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, l'Internationale, pp.332-351; <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/research/resources/articles/conceptualism-intersectional-readings-international-framings/>

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- 15) Simon Ferdinand, *I Map Therefore I Am Modern: Cartography and Global Modernity in the Visual Arts*, PhD Dissertation, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam 2017, p. 10. Ferdinand remarks on critical cartography on pp. 19-21.
  
- 16) Yvonne Whelan, "Symbolic Streetscapes: Interrogating Monumental Spaces of Dublin", Jim Hourihane (ed), *Engaging Spaces: People, Place and Space from an Irish Perspective*, Dublin: Lilliput 2003, 90-105, here 105. In 2012, part of celebrating Joyce's work under the aegis of the UNESCO City of Literature, Dublin, I curated a small exhibition entitled *Joyce in the City* in Dublin.
  
- 17) Lerm Hayes, *Joyce in Art*, 131.
  
- 18) Eric Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity: The spatial imagination 1850-2000*, New York, Abingdon: Routledge 2007, 13: "Without *Ulysses*, [...] Woolf's London and Döblin's Berlin would have lacked the narrative techniques [...]. [In Döblin,] Franz Biberkopf's disorientation in the city is determined as much by his four-year stint in prison as it is by the fact that the physiognomy of Berlin was literally changing right before his eyes."
  
- 19) Ibid. 18, 1.
  
- 20) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, New York: Verso 1983, 2016 (revised edition), 163/64.
  
- 21) Ibid. 184, 85. Ibid. 182: "[...] a characteristic feature of the instrumentalities of the profane state was infinite reproducibility [...] made technically possible by print and photography [...] the disbelief of the rulers themselves in the real sacredness of local sites. [...] massive [...] archaeological reports [...] illustrated books [...] A general logoization, made possible by the profaning process." Ibid. 183, 84: "It is probably not too surprising that post-independence states, which exhibited marked continuities with their colonial predecessors, inherited this form of political museumizing. [...] Interlinked with one another, then, the census, the map and the museum illuminate the late colonial state's style of thinking about its domain. The 'warp' of this thinking was a totalizing classificatory grid [...]. It was bounded, determinate, and therefore – in principle – countable. [...] The 'weft' was what one could call serialization: the assumption that the world was made up of replicable plurals. The particular always stood as a provisional representative of a series [...] This is why the colonial state imagined [...] a nationalist series before the

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appearance of any nationalists.”.

- 22) Michiel Dehaene, Lieven De Cauter, “Heterotopia in a Postcivil Society”, in: Michiel Dehaene, Lieven De Cauter (eds), *Heterotopia and the City : Public Space in a Postcivil Society*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2008, 3-9.
- 23) See Christina Kennedy's essay in: Lerm Hayes (ed), *Brian O'Doherty 2017*.
- 24) Dehaene, De Cauter, 6, 2.
- 25) Ireland, as a tiny island and the Republic as a neutral country is not as far away as one may think from the notion of black sites: In the late 1990s, it became known that the USA used the West of Ireland Shannon airport for so-called rendition flights, effectively flying torture chambers and other activities of disputed legality. See e.g.:  
<https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/ireland-should-never-have-given-us-permission-to-use-shannon-says-veterans-spokesman-704922.html>

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