British Romans and Irish Carthaginians: Anticolonial Metaphor in Heaney, Friel, and McGuinness

FRANK McGUIINNESS’S PLAY Carthaginians (1988) uses the historical relation between Rome and Carthage as a metaphor for the contemporary struggles between Britain and the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. “I am Carthaginian. This earth is mine, not Britain’s, nor Rome’s,” says one of the characters (17). The play, an elegy for thirteen Irish civilians murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday (30 Jan. 1972) in Derry, draws subversive power from an identification between Ireland and Carthage that since the eighteenth century has focused imaginative Irish resistance to British colonial rule and that intensified when British troops came to the North in 1969. To isolate the trope is not to assert its unique importance or to exhaust the subtleties of the works in which it appears but to demonstrate the evolving political and literary significance of the Irish choice of oriental origins. The myth of Carthaginian descent was originally invoked to counteract the degrading English insistence that Irish ethnic characteristics derived from the savage Scythians.

Once a great civilization, Carthage was so effaced after the Third Punic War that evidence about it comes mostly from Rome, its conqueror. Feminized by defeat, the Carthaginians were “the Others of ancient history, the vanquished rather than the victors” (Moscati 11). In contemporary Irish literature the Rome-Carthage motif functions in complex and variable ways: as origin myth, colonial parable, and site of intersection between nationalism and sexuality. It passes between writers in interchanges enabled by the intimacy of the northern literary scene and by the cultural dominance of the Field Day Theatre Company of Derry. McGuinness’s play revises representations of Rome and Carthage that appear in Seamus Heaney’s North (1975) and in Brian Friel’s Field Day play Translations (1980). Heaney and Friel draw on a historical tradition in which medieval genealogy, antiquarian philology, and literary texts construct an oppositional identity for the colonized Irish.
One term of the framing metaphor in Carthaginians, the substitution of the Roman for the British Empire, has wide currency. Long before Britain had an empire, medieval historians forged a genealogical parallel between Rome and London through a common ancestor, Troy (see Andrew; MacDougall 7–27). In Histories of the Kings of Britain (c. 1136), Geoffrey of Monmouth asserts that Albion was first settled by Brutus, grandson of the Trojan prince Aeneas, ancestor of the Romans. To sustain the memory of his origins, Brutus named his capital city New Troy (22). The Trojan myth is repeated at the opening of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (1) and at the close of The Alliterative Morte Arthure (157), but the inherited rhetorical figure was later modified by changing historical circumstances. Once Britain acquired a colonial empire, descent from defeated Troy became less relevant than the analogy with imperial Rome. The introduction to a 1948 edition of Tacitus’s Agricola and Germania illuminates the British political unconscious at work:

It was the destiny of Rome to rule the world, the destiny of the high-born Roman to share in that great task. . . . We may think of Tacitus as something like an officer of the Indian army and an Indian Civil Servant rolled into one. (Mattingly 8–9)

The rhetoric that locates Tacitus in Cawnpore implies that Britain was also destined to rule the world. For Irish writers, however, the triumphalist Troy-Rome-London sequence had negative associations. Carthaginians begins with the dying lament of Dido, the legendary founder and queen of Carthage, from Henry Purcell’s opera Dido and Aeneas. Revising Vergil’s imperial foundation narrative, Purcell depicts the Trojan ancestor of the Romans as a sexual betrayer whose quest for “Italian ground” cost his lover her life. Dido, not her faithless suitor, is Purcell’s central figure. “When I am laid in earth,” Dido sings, “[r]emember me” (176–77).

Remembering the abandoned Dido rather than the equally famous warrior Hannibal, stands out more clearly when it is seen to revise and complement an earlier myth of origin that derives the Irish from a less agreeable oriental people, the warlike and masculine Scythians. In the program for his production of Carthaginians, McGuinness included an abridged passage from Spenser’s A View of the Present State of Ireland (1596) describing the Scythian origin of the Irish mantle (McGuinness, Program; Spenser 50–52). For Spenser, Scythian ancestry explained Irish depravity; but this explanation had not always prevailed. At the beginning of the twelfth century, while Geoffrey of Monmouth was celebrating the Trojan roots of British history, Irish scribes were copying down the Lebor Gabála Erenn (“Book of the Taking of Ireland”), a largely mythological account of Irish prehistory that reaches back to the Flood. According to this native genealogy, Ireland, after many invasions, was settled by the Milesians, who originated in Scythia. The ancestors of the Milesians wandered through Greece and Egypt and moved to Spain before finally arriving in Ireland. Carthage is not mentioned, and Scythia appears ethnically neutral as a point of origin. The Scythians
are neither heroic nor despicable, merely ancient. They are not represented as skeletons in Ireland's genealogical closet.

Renaissance ethnographers, however, used the Scythians, a nomadic oriental people who inhabited the steppes north of the Black Sea between 600 BC and AD 300, as a metaphor for barbarism. According to the fourth book of Herodotus's History, the Scythians drank the blood of their enemies, whom they scalped and whose skulls they used as goblets, and engaged in macabre burial customs (303-07), but they were also wealthy connoisseurs, sagacious warriors, skilled riders, and successful pastoralists (see Rice 21–23). Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Scythian shepherd is both brutal and magnificent, but in Lear's rejection of Cordelia, Shakespeare perpetuates only the negative stereotype:

The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighboured, pitied, and relieved
As thou my sometime daughter. (1.1.116–20)

To eat one's family ("generation" may mean parents or children) is to break the ultimate Western taboo, as the story of the house of Atreus reveals. Herodotus explicitly denied that the Scythians were cannibals: the Man-Eaters, a neighboring clan, were "the only one of these people who eat human flesh" (319). Shakespeare may have drawn on the legend of Saint Andrew, who, finding Scythians eating their enemies, gave them the Eucharist instead. In "On Cannibals" Montaigne repeats as common knowledge the idea that the ancient Scythians ate their prisoners "for nourishment" (113). Since the Scythians had no alphabet, they left no writing to disturb the prejudices of later commentators. Largely forgotten except for rhetorical purposes, they lived on as English cultural shorthand for otherwise war-loving, bloodthirsty, and masculine eaters of human flesh.

Did the Scythians' reputation among Elizabethan writers derive from their alleged ancestral relation to the Irish? The Greek geographer Strabo "says in his fourth book that the Irish are a man-eating people" (Keating 9), and Giraldus Cambrensis repeats the accusation. The Irish were certainly demonized by reference to their supposed forebears. In Spenser's A View of the Present State of Ireland Irish mantles, hairstyles, battle cries, and keens are all identified—and deplored—as Scythian (50–59; see Coughlan, "'Scourge'" 52, 63–65; Jones and Stallybrass 158–61). What most offends the English poet about both the nomads of the steppes and the wild Irish, however, is their practice of moving their cattle around according to the season (49–50). Nomads make good guerrillas. Whereas Herodotus admired the way the Scythians frustrated the invasion of Darius the Persian by retreating rapidly, destroying food supplies, and filling in the wells behind them (323–26), Spenser's connection of nomadic habits with savagery and lack of culture reflects the prejudices of men with fixed addresses and expansionist ambitions.

When the Irish realized that, as Lady Morgan wrote, "it ha[d] been the fashion to throw an odium on the modern Irish, by undermining the basis of their ancient history, and vilifying their ancient national character," they sought to reinflect their pedigree (3: 14n). In the 1630s Geoffrey Keating observed indignantly that English commentators on Ireland were like dung beetles, ignoring the flowers in their eagerness to roll in the shit (5). He defended Ireland against the ultimate "barbarian" slur, the allegation of cannibalism: according to Keating, there was only one cannibal in Ireland, and since she was known as Eithne the Loathsome, the habit was not sanctioned (9–11). On Scythian origins, Keating repeated Herodotus's story of the defeat of Darius and praised the gallantry of the nomads. If a likeness existed between the Scythians and the Irish, it lay in their fortunate escape from the tyranny of Rome.

In 1788 the French scholar Jean-Jacques Barthélemy reversed the civilian-barbarian equation in his influential description of the imaginary travels of Anacharsis, a virtuous Scythian anthropologist who observes the peculiar customs of his decadent Greek neighbors (Bernal 185–86). Maria Edgeworth, whose letters reveal that she had read Anacharsis (McCormack, Introduction xx), also revalued the Irish origin myth in The Absentee (1812). The hero, Lord Colambre, discovers an eagle, a white mouse, and a bowl of goldfish at the home of the Irish antiquarian Count O'Halloran.
The count, who connects his menagerie with certain mysterious gifts that the Scythians sent to Darius, tells the obnoxious Englishwoman Lady Dashfort, "[A] mouse, a bird, and a fish, are, you know, tribute from earth, air, and water, to a conqueror" (116). With conscious irony, he modifies Herodotus's account. To accompany the animals, the Scythians also sent five arrows, and Darius fled Scythia because he was persuaded that the gifts were not tributes to a conqueror but a warning that, unless the Persians could fly like birds, swim like fish, or burrow like mice, they would soon find themselves full of holes (Herodotus 327-28). The reference to Herodotus is lost on Lady Dashfort, who, Darius-like, retreats from Ireland in discomfiture. Lord Colambre, however, caps Count O'Halloran's Greek allusion with the Shakespearian exclamation "But from no barbarous Scythian!" (116). The educated and courtly count, "Scythian" because he is Irish, is nevertheless no barbarian. Resisting the idea of the Irish as virile savages, Edgeworth figures Ireland in her gentle and cultivated heroine, the patriotically named Grace Nugent.

While Keating and Edgeworth rehabilitated the Scythians, Irish antiquarians constructed an alternative history, in which the Scythian influence was mediated through a better-known and reputedly less obnoxious oriental people, the Semitic Phoenicians. In the eighteenth century, philology served national pride as scholars argued that the Irish language originated with Noah's son Japhet in Scythia, spread to the Phoenician cities on the east coast of the Mediterranean (modern Lebanon), and from there reached Carthage, the great Phoenician colony on the north coast of Africa. Carthaginian merchants brought the language to Spain, and then, according to Vallancey, to Ireland (fig. 1). This lineage provided the Irish tongue, and indeed the Irish people, with an oriental pedigree distinct from the genealogy of the Anglo-Saxons, whose language had Teutonic origins (Leeson, "Edge" 95–102; Vallancey iii–x). Moreover, the cultured Phoenicians,
who were credited with the invention of the alphabet, were preferable to barbarous and illiterate Scythians. This originary claim on writing resonates in Morgan’s *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), where the nationalist Father John argues that “Ireland, owing to its being colonized from Phoenicia, and consequent early introduction of letters there, was . . . esteemed the most enlightened country in Europe” (2: 69).

Although the “Phoenician Scytho-Celtists” included many figures who belonged to the Ascendancy (the Anglo-Irish ruling class), like the English-born Charles Vallancey (Leerson, “Edge” 99–101; Vance 226–27), their theory of the separate origins of the Irish language had nationalist implications. This theory, which declared Ireland’s linguistic independence, dominated Irish philology until the end of the eighteenth century, when the crushing of the nationalist rising against English colonial rule in 1798 and the subsequent Act of Union that annexed Ireland to Great Britain (1800) led to its demise (Leerson, “Edge” 102–03). Among European philologists, however, Phoenicia was of interest less because it might have spawned Irish than because of its contested relation to Greece. Martin Bernal attributes the late-nineteenth-century decline of “Phoenicianism” to anti-Semitic German classical scholars, who wanted to keep Greece purely Aryan and therefore denied that Semitic Phoenicians and black Egyptians had been its original colonizers (337–66). Attempting to counteract hostile stereotyping with exoticism, the Irish aligned themselves with the Phoenicians—who despite their reputation as intrepid explorers and merchants also belonged to the category of “feminine” Orientals or “effeminate” Semites—only to be drawn into yet another negative discourse of ethnicity.  

While the theories of the Phoenician Scytho-Celtists lost scholarly ground, they retained popular currency. In *Don Juan* Byron jokingly describes the stage Irish phrase “a broth of a boy” as “Punic,” because

> Behold me, then, buried amidst the monuments of past ages!—deep in the study of language, history, and antiquities of this ancient nation—talking of the invasion of Henry II. as a recent circumstance—of the Phoenician migration hither from Spain, as though my grandfather had been delegated by the Firbalgs to receive the Milesians on their landing. (2: 8–9)

In a footnote to this passage Byron refers to Vallancey and to Lawrence Parsons: his information probably came from his friend the Irish poet Tom Moore or from his reading of Morgan, whose novel *The Wild Irish Girl* bristles with antiquarian allusions to the Phoenicians. The moral education of the hero, Horatio, consists in shedding preconceptions about gender and ethnicity: “Whenever the Irish were mentioned in my presence, an Esquimaux group circling round the fire blazing to dress a dinner or broil an enemy, was the image which presented itself to my mind” (1: 36). Broiling one’s enemy for dinner is standard Scythian stuff, and the analogy between the Irish and the Native Americans had been used since Elizabethan times to suggest that both participated in a state of nature that was ripe for colonial conquest (Gibbons 97–101). Instead of manly, natural savages, however, Horatio discovers in the West a beautiful young girl who knows Latin and plays the harp. His conversion by Glorvina, the paradoxically civilized wild Irish girl, consists of a seminar on Phoenician Scytho-Celtism:

> References to “Phoenician progenitors” (2: 183) and footnotes on Vallancey (1: 61–62n) punctuate Morgan’s text (see Lew 51–53, 59). The origin of the Irish keen is retrieved from Spenser’s brutish Scythians and reassigned to the Semites and the Phoenicians: “for the pathetic lamentations of David for the friend of his soul, and the *conclamatio* breathed over the Phoenician Dido, has no faint coincidence to the *Caione* or funeral song of the Irish” (3: 46n). The shift from Scythian barbarity to Phoenician lamentation signals a change in gender coding. Warlike Scythian cannibals represent masculinity, but Morgan, following the eighteenth-century ailing poets, portrays Ireland as a *spéirbhan*, a beautiful maiden.  

In nineteenth-century British hands, this fusion of Ireland with the feminine had dubious conse-
quences. Claiming that the “sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them” (347), Matthew Arnold illustrates what he calls “the sheer, inimitable Celtic note” in poetry by quoting from *The Merchant of Venice*:

> [I]n such a night  
> Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,  
> Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love  
> To come again to Carthage.  
> (5.1.9–12; qtd. in Arnold 379; emphasis Arnold’s)

For Arnold, these lines epitomize the feminine sensibility of the Celts: they are “drenched and intoxicated with the fairy-dew of . . . natural magic” (380; see also Cairns and Richards, *Writing Ireland* 43–50). It suits his argument that Shakespeare’s Lorenzo deprives Dido of her fury, softening her into a pathetic figure waving the willow that emblematizes deserted love. Vergil’s Dido curses Aeneas and prophesies eternal enmity between the Romans and the Carthaginians, enacted in the three Punic Wars; Shakespeare’s Dido begs Aeneas to return. Arnold, who wanted to send “a message of peace to Ireland” (386), may have been unaware of the local political implications of the Dido story, but he used it to stereotype the Celts as feminine victims and romantic failures.

For Irish writers, however, the Phoenician metaphor retained imaginative currency as a figure of difference and resistance as long as the British occupied Ireland. In 1907 James Joyce reaffirmed Vallancey’s outdated theory of the origin of the Irish language:

> This language is oriental in origin, and has been identified by many philologists with the ancient language of the Phoenicians, the originators of trade and navigation, according to historians. This adventurous people, who had a monopoly of the sea, established in Ireland a civilization that had decayed and almost disappeared before the first Greek historian took his pen in hand. . . . The language that the Latin writer of comedy, Plautus, put in the mouth of Phoenicians in his comedy *Poenulus* is almost the same language that the Irish peasants speak today, according to the critic Vallancey. The religion and civilization of this ancient people, later known by the name of Druidism, were Egyptian.  
> (Critical Writings 156; see also Vance 227; Tymoczko 36–43)

In *Ulysses*, Joyce adopted the theories of the Homeric scholar Victor Béard, who argued in *Les Phéniciens et l’Odyssée* that, although the epic poet was Greek, his mariner Ulysses was a Semitic Phoenician and that the Egyptians were the teachers of the Semites (Seidel 4–8). In claiming a many-layered oriental and Greek ancestry for his modern Dublin Jew, Joyce eschewed the racial exclusivity of Celticism Ireland (Cheng 41–57) while steering clear of the imperialist pretensions of Rome and her modern representative, “Old Troy of the D.M.P. [Dublin Metropolitan Police]” (*Ulysses* 240).

When the British withdrew from the South of Ireland in 1922, they partitioned the island and established an overwhelmingly Protestant parliament in the North, which remained a part of the United Kingdom. The metaphorical narrative of British Romans and Irish Carthaginians then lost some of its political valence. During the 1960s Catholics in the North began to agitate for the civil rights they had been denied under the rule of the Protestant majority; and they originally opposed not so much the British government as the Irish unionists, who wished to retain both dominance in the province and the link with Britain that secured it. This third force complicated the binary structure of the metaphor. After the explosion of violence between Catholic and Protestant communities in 1969, however, British soldiers returned to the streets of Northern Ireland, and in 1972 direct rule from Westminster replaced the parliament at Stormont (see Bell). Many northern nationalists argued that the Troubles—the violence between Catholics, Protestants, and the British army that continued in the North until the cease-fire that began in August 1994—derive from British colonialism and the legacy of partition rather than from Irish sectarianism. The polarity between native oppressed and foreign oppressor thus reemerged. For example, Seamus Heaney, a northern Catholic poet who originally saw the conflict as “an internal Northern Ireland division,” a struggle between the Catholic minority and its Protestant rulers, decided during the writing of *North* (1975) that “the genuine political confrontation is between Ireland and Britain.” Although Heaney “never had any strong feelings . . . about the British army,” he represented the soldiers in his verse as Roman
Anticolonial Metaphor in Heaney, Friel, and McGuinness

In 1980 the Catholic dramatist Brian Friel joined Stephen Rea, a Protestant actor, to found the Field Day Theatre Company, a northern group whose stated aims were to promote the cultural unity of Ireland and to mediate between nationalism and unionism (Richtarik 7). Nevertheless, Field Day’s opening production was Friel’s play *Translations*, which avoids mention of the Protestant tradition and evokes the binaries of Carthage and Rome to indict the British destruction of Gaelic culture. Many commentators now associate Field Day with the “green,” or nationalist, positions it has always tried to complicate through social and economic analysis. No matter how nuanced the company’s productions, pamphlets, and public statements, the anticolonial positions of its directors (Heaney joined the board in 1981) logically require a politically united Ireland: a desirable ideal, but not one to which a unionist could subscribe (Field Day Theatre Company; Richtarik 90–91, 110, 135–37, 145). In 1985, for reasons that have never been fully explained, Field Day rejected Frank McGuinness’s play *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme*, a critical but sympathetic exploration of the historical roots of unionist antipathy toward Irish reunification (Richards 142–43). McGuinness, a northern Catholic, suggested that the company “associates itself very strongly with the colour green” and asked, “Don’t you think art is more colours than green?” (“Arts” 62–63). In *Carthaginians*, which he withdrew from production by Field Day (Roche 277), McGuinness uses the Dido story to “reflect the rainbow,” to engage Irish problematic of gender and sexual orientation that, in his view, Field Day has elided (“Arts” 63, 65).

Heaney, who is proud that “[m]y passport’s green” (“Open Letter” 25) and who in 1977 described his poetry as “a slow, obstinate papish burn” (“Unhappy” 62), rediscovered the Romans as a metaphor for the British after Bloody Sunday. In Heaney’s “Kinship” (1975), Tacitus, the Roman ethnographer of the British and the Germans, is called to witness what seems to be an internal religious conflict. Heaney establishes a detached position on the “ramparts” of Derry, so that Tacitus can “observe” and the soldiers can “stare” at the sectarian slaughter:

And you, Tacitus, observe how I make my grove on an old crannog piled by the fearful dead:

a desolate peace.

Our mother ground is sour with the blood of her faithful,

they lie gargling in her sacred heart as the legions stare from the ramparts.

Come back to this “island of the ocean” where nothing will suffice. (North 45)

In the *Germania* Tacitus describes a sacred grove where “the sacrifice in public of a human victim” marks the moment when “the nation had its birth.” The German tribes worshiped Nerthus, Mother Earth, “in an island of Ocean,” afterward drowning the slaves who had participated in the ritual (132–33). Heaney self-consciously uses these primitive rites as analogues for killings committed by contemporary republican devotees of the Irish goddess Cathleen ni Houlihan, which themselves derive, or so the Yeatsian echo “suffice” suggests, from the nation-founding sacrifice of the patriots who died for Ireland in the 1916 Easter Rising. This atavistic violence has been, according to Heaney, “observed with amazement and a kind of civilised tut-tut by Tacitus in the first century AD and by leader-writers in the *Daily Telegraph* [a right-wing British newspaper] in the 20th century” (“Mother Ireland” 790).

Ironically positioning the “Romans” as “civilised” observers points to their complicity in producing a colonial situation where the Irish “tribes” murder each other in the name of religion. With the line “a desolate peace,” Heaney expands his condemnation to include the legions, just as in Tacitus’s *Agricola* the British chief Calgacus assails the Roman invaders of his country: “Robbery, butchery, rape, the liars call Empire; they create a desolation and call it peace” (80). The formerly colonized Celtic Britons are now the colonizers, an irony originally emphasized in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.
Heaney describes the Troubles as a gendered struggle between Cathleen ni Houlihan and a "male cult whose founding fathers were Cromwell, William of Orange, and Edward Carson" and whose godhead is figuratively Roman, "incarnate in a rex or caesar resident in a palace in London" (Preoccupations 57). The "legions" who "stare from the ramparts" as Catholics and Protestants kill each other have been sent to Derry to keep the warring natives apart, but imperialists have created the desolation that conservative editorialists now deplore.

Heaney's defense of his "barbarian" nationalist community in the face of Tacitus's "civilised tut-tut" is not an unequivocal endorsement of sacrificial violence. Heaney's use of the strikingly unpoetic word "gargling" alludes to the English war poet Wilfred Owen's assault on Horace's "civilised" Roman platitude: "Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori." Blood comes "gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs" of Owen's dying soldier, gassed in the trenches of the First World War (55). Writing of his own local war, Heaney, who also quotes Owen's lines in an essay (Government xiii-xvi), argues in "Kinship" that blood spilt on the "mother ground" is not sweet ("dulce") but "sour." Heaney's essentialist gendering of the "mother ground" intersects with the Irish origin myth in "Bog Queen" (1972), a poem that literalizes the familiar topos of the land as a woman's body by producing a corpse. According to P. V. Glob, "[t]he first properly documented account of a bog body comes from County Down in Ireland" (103). The woman found in 1781 on the Anglo-Irish Lord Moira's estate had

a sort of cape worn on one shoulder and passing under the opposite arm. This cape was worked in different materials and colours and had a border into which motifs were woven in a fine technique. It was supposed to have come from the East, and to have been brought in by the Phoenicians. (103-04)

Juxtaposing the Phoenician cape with the woman's breasts, Heaney gives erotic nationalist resonance to Glob's neutral account:

My sash was a black glacier
wrinkling, dyed weaves

and phoenician stitchwork
retted on my breasts'
soft moraines. (North 33)

Although Glob says that the woman was Danish, Heaney shows her becoming one with the aboriginal landscape. The breasts into which the Phoenician stitchwork has soaked are "moraines": mounds of earth left behind by glacial action. While dreaming of her native Baltic amber, she is "digested" by local "roots" into a version of Cathleen ni Houlihan, the embodiment of rebel Ireland (32-33). Heaney uses the Phoenician origin myth to establish Irish national claims to county Down, now a part of the United Kingdom. He translates Glob's statement that Lady Moira "paid well" to obtain the woman's Phoenician garments (Glob 103) into the rhetorically loaded phrase "a peer's wife bribed him," which suggests Anglo-Irish appropriation of the land. Heaney also gives the woman a black sash (in contrast to the orange sash worn by Protestant settlers) and fuses it with the glacier to symbolize her ancient right to the earth. The queen's resurrection is violent and macabre, but the poem's concluding image rises into hope:

... I rose from the dark,
hacked bone, skull-ware,
frayed stitches, tufts,
small gleams on the bank. (North 34)

The woman's Phoenician stitchwork may be frayed, but the "small gleam" of national identity that it embodies is reborn out of the bog.

The first section of North combines Arnold's vision of Ireland as feminine with Yeats's emphasis on the mythical sacrificial mother for whom men die (see Cullingford, Gender 55-72). Roman men and women wearing Phoenician stitchwork sustain the gendered pattern of the metaphor. Yet in "Freedman," from the second section of North, the male speaker is feminized by his subordinate subject position within the colony, and the Romans are Irish unionists kept in power by and therefore metaphorically indistinguishable from the British. Heaney's ironic epigraph is taken from R. H. Barrow's celebratory text The Romans (1949), which argues that
slavery comes nearest to its justification in the early Roman Empire: for a man from a “backward” race might be brought within the pale of civilisation, educated and trained in a craft or profession, and turned into a useful member of society.

(Barrow 101; qtd. in North 61)

Barrow’s use of the metaphor beyond the pale, which commonly referred to the “backward” natives outside the Pale, the English settlement around Dublin,19 helps Heaney establish his parallel between Roman slaves and Irish Catholics.

Heaney’s speaker is “subjugated yearly under arches” erected in Protestant streets on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne. The Barrow passage connects these manifestations of Orange popular culture with triumphal arches built by slaves to celebrate Roman victories. This yearly reminder of the speaker’s emasculation and enslavement is balanced by his education and training: he is a “[f]reedman” who has been “manumitted by parchments and degrees.” The punning phrase “by . . . degrees,” however, emphasizes the grudging slowness of his manumission.

The status of a freedman in Rome, according to Barrow, was equivocal: he was neither enslaved nor free but “freed.” Augustus worried about the increasing numbers of freedmen:

In his opinion, manumission—and manumission turned the ex-slave into a Roman citizen eligible for any and every post—was doing harm: and he reorganised the methods of granting freedom, instituting a status of lesser rights as a kind of probation.

(Barrow 101)

The injustice of the “lesser rights” accorded to Catholics in Northern Ireland, the driving force behind the civil rights movement, is Heaney’s subject. The speaker’s Phoenician identity reflects his inferior status:

My murex was the purple dye of lents
On calendars all fast and abstinence.

(North 61)

The production of purple dye was crucial to the Phoenicians, whose name is cognate with the Greek word *phoinix* ‘purple-red’ (*OED*, s.v. “Phoenician”). The pigment came from a mollusk, the murex.20 Although in Roman times “Tyrian purple” symbolized the civil and religious power of emperors, senators, and priests (Mazza 554), Heaney’s purple, claimed by the possessive adjective in the phrase “my murex,” relates the speaker to Phoenician producers rather than to Roman consumers.

Doubling the metaphor, Heaney also uses the color purple to signify Catholicism.21 Unlike imperial purple, liturgical purple—the color of Lent—is the garb of second-class citizens, the mark of religious and civil deprivation. Heaney takes a Joycean view of his status as an Irish Catholic. Stephen Dedalus declares himself the servant of two masters, “[t]he imperial British state . . . and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17). Confirmed in his inferior political status, Heaney’s speaker is also “subjugated” by the mark of ashes “impressed” on his forehead by the priest on Ash Wednesday: “I was under that thumb too like all my caste.” The mark of the speaker’s service to holy Rome designates him a political untouchable in the eyes of the unionist establishment, the “groomed optimi” of imperial Rome:

One of the earth-starred denizens, indelibly,
I sought the mark in vain on the groomed optimi:
Their estimating, census-taking eyes
Fastened on my mouldy brow like lampreys.

(North 61)

The Protestants in Northern Ireland, who depend on demographic superiority for continued dominance, worry about the increasing numbers of Catholics just as Augustus worried about freedmen. Not until Heaney’s speaker rid himself of the Catholic caste mark by acquiring the transcultural status “poet” can he escape the bloodsucking gaze of the “groomed optimi”:

And poetry wiped my brow and sped me.
Now they will say I bite the hand that fed me.

(North 61)

To escape, the speaker must reject the visual identifiers of religion and ethnicity and refuse the cul-
tural performance of Ash Wednesday, an act that will be interpreted by his community as betrayal.

Although Heaney’s analogy between Britain and Rome is echoed by his Field Day colleague Brian Friel in *Translations* (1980), Friel’s “Romans” speak no Latin. The English officers Lancey and Yolland, who come to Donegal as part of a British ordnance survey team charged with anglicizing local Irish place-names, are ignorant of the classics.22 Friel’s Irish characters, who learn Latin and Greek in the hedge school that provides the setting for the conflict between new and old linguistic traditions, are astounded by the officers’ lack of culture. The study of classical tongues proves that the Irish are, as the interpreter Owen says, “‘civilised’ people” (28). Latin is not shunned as a vehicle of imperialism but revered as the language of Horace, Ovid, and Vergil. The negative metaphorical connection between England and Rome therefore unfolds only gradually, against the linguistic grain of the text. Yet the Latin spoken by Irish characters connects Friel’s British soldiers with Heaney’s “legions”: the colleen Maire says to Yolland, “*Tu es centurio in . . . exercitu Britannico*” ‘You are a centurion in the British army’ (50, 70); and after the brutal Lancey threatens to kill all the livestock and evict the villagers if Yolland, who has been abducted and presumably murdered, is not found, Hugh, the Irish schoolmaster, comments, “*Edictum imperatoris*” ‘The decree of the commander’ (66, 70).

Hugh then recalls how he and his old friend Jimmy set out for Sligo during the rebellion of 1798 “with pikes across their shoulders and the *Aeneid* in their pockets.” Pike and epic text are thus metonymically linked. The time and the town evoke Yeats and his play about patriotic sacrifice, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902),23 and Hugh emphasizes the connection: “I had recently married my goddess, Caitlin Dubh Nic Reactainn.” Leaving one Cathleen to follow the call of another, as Yeats’s sacrificial hero Michael Gillane left his betrothed Delia Cahel to join the rebels (*Plays* 87–88) and as Aeneas abandoned Dido, Hugh set out for the revolution under the sign of Vergilian *pietas*. “And to leave her and my infant son in his cradle—that was heroic too.” After a session in the pub, however, Hugh “got homesick for Athens, just like Ulysses,” and returned to his wife without using his pike. Friel thus associates foundational acts of self-sacrifice and epic heroism with Vergil (and Yeats) and credits the Ulysses of Homer (and Joyce) with love of hearth and home: “*Our pietas, James, was for older, quieter things*” (67).

The cost to others of *pius* Aeneas’s epic determination is established at the close of the play, when Hugh twice recites Vergil’s description of Juno’s fruitless hopes for Carthage:

*Urbs antiqua fuit*—there was an ancient city which, ‘*tis said, Juno loved above all the lands. And it was the goddess’s aim and cherished hope that here should be the capital of all nations—should the fates perchance allow that. Yet in truth she discovered that a race was springing from Trojan blood to overthrow some day these Tyrian towers—a people *late regem belloque superbam*—kings of broad realms and proud in war who would come forth for Libya’s downfall. (68)

Hugh stumbles in his translation as he realizes that the destruction of Carthaginian culture by the Romans prefigures the destruction of Gaelic culture by another people sprung “from Trojan blood”: the English descendants of Aeneas’s grandson Brutus. Overcome with emotion, Hugh cannot complete the reference to the destruction of Carthage, a reminder that after the Third Punic War the Romans razed the city and “a plough was drawn over the site and salt sown in the furrow, to signify that it was to remain uninhabited and barren for ever” (Warmington 208). Not content with material destruction, the Romans dispersed the Carthaginian libraries among neighboring African princes, and the Punic language gradually died out.

Yet the lines of the *Aeneid* that describe by analogy the destruction of Irish culture and the Irish language are literary touchstones for Hugh, verses that he knows by heart. He cannot repudiate Latin without denying a portion of himself, for Latin is the only language in which he can compose poetry (42). Similarly, Friel cannot repudiate English without losing his audience. The symbolic connection between Vergil’s poetic Latin and Friel’s dramatic English is underlined by Hugh’s acceptance of loss and his tentative assertion of linguistic possibility, which also reflect current debates about the place of Irish in the modern world (see Toolan). Hugh
Anticolonial Metaphor in Heaney, Friel, and McGuinness recognizes the need for the Irish to appropriate the anglicized place-names, to "make them our own" (66), and he agrees to teach English to Maire, the would-be emigrant. Faced with the erosion of Irish, Friel and his Field Day colleagues have decided to follow Joyce, to affirm the compensatory command of the defeated over the tongue of the conquerors: "What did he come here for," Stephen asks of the English dean of studies, "to teach us his own language, or to learn it from us?" (Joyce, Portrait 274; see also Kearney, "Language Plays" 142; McGrath 247–48); and Heaney has argued that "English is by now not so much an imperial humiliation as a native weapon" (qtd. in Arkins 208–09). The final irony of Friel's quotation from Vergil is that it is presented in translation: Latin is as moribund as the British Empire (Kearney, "Language Plays" 134).

When the issue is language, appreciation of the Aeneid can accompany deprecation of Aeneas; thus Friel's play ends with Vergil's lines, not with Lancy's threatened razing of the village. In Carthaginians McGuinness memorializes a historical massacre, Bloody Sunday, but complicates the anti-British resonance of the Rome-Carthage trope. Like Joyce and Heaney, McGuinness exploits the Catholic dimension of the Roman metaphor. His Carthaginians, a group of deprived and damaged people who are awaiting the resurrection of the dead in a Derry graveyard, inhabit a city that was enslaved by the church long before it was invaded by British paratroopers. In a dialogue with Greta, one of the women who believes that the dead will rise, Paul, the ex-quizmaster, establishes that Derry is "part of a great empire":

GRETA. British Empire?
PAUL. That's dead. Roman Empire.
GRETA. Catholic?
PAUL. Roman. This city is not Rome, but it has been destroyed by Rome. What city did Rome destroy?
GRETA. Carthage.
PAUL. Correct. Two points. Carthage. (17)

The British Empire may be dead, but the Union is not, and Paul objects to the Union's territorial claims: "I am Carthaginian. This earth is mine, not Britain's, nor Rome's" (17). To be Carthaginian is to reject not only the Union but also the prospect of "Rome rule" offered by the Catholic South, a prospect that northern Protestants dread. McGuinness writes that Irish Catholics are shaped by the authority of Rome, which can be an exceptionally destructive force. Carthaginians looks at the acceptance of that authority in Ireland, at what happens to a people who move the center of authority away from their own country. . . . When you do that you are handing authority to an empire which will destroy you ultimately. (qtd. in Pine, "Frank McGuinness" 30)

McGuinness's hostility to Rome emerges in Paul's arcane remark "Do you know who I blame for the state of this town? . . . St. Malachy" (15). Saint Malachy, a twelfth-century archbishop of Armagh and the unofficial patron of Derry, brought early Celtic Christianity under the rule of the Vatican and imposed the Latin liturgy. However, refuses to perpetuate the idea of defeat conveyed by the story of Rome's triumph. His Dido, although rejected by Hark, a homophobic former member of the IRA, is not a suicidal victim but a resourceful and creative gay man who openly defies the Catholic proscription of homosexuality. The play's energy emanates primarily from Dido, who queers the gendered binary that constructs colonizers as male and colonized as female.

McGuinness supplements the Dido story with numerous allusions to high and popular culture, beginning with the death lament from Purcell's opera Dido and Aeneas. The opera, in which Aeneas plays an undistinguished role, has been read as a political commentary on the Glorious Revolution of 1688: a warning of disaster if William of Orange (Aeneas) continued to neglect his wife, Queen Mary (Dido) (Buttrey). The connection between Aeneas and William was current in the seventeenth century: the publisher Tonson retouched the illustrations to Dryden's translation of the Aeneid, hooking Aeneas's nose to make it resemble the King's (Zwicker 190). McGuinness's musical citation thus equates Aeneas with King Billy, hero of the northern Protestants.

The graveyard setting extends the Carthage reference by superimposing on contemporary Derry
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three alternative locations: neolithic Ireland, England in the 1980s, and Old Kingdom Egypt. The scenery is a palimpsest, its most striking feature “[a] large pyramid, made from disposed objects,” that is intended as a locus for resurrection: “Through here the dead will find their way back to this world. When I’ll finish, they’ll rise, the dead” (4, 24). McGuinness, like Joyce, connects Egypt with the Phoenicians: the pyramids and Carthage are aligned with Derry as places of death that may become places of rebirth. Paul wants to go to Carthage and would “like to see the pyramids.” “I’m building a pyramid,” he says. “But I’m no slave. I am Carthaginian” (17).

The superimposition of Egypt on Carthage also occurs in McGuinness’s source material. Vergil’s tale of Dido and Aeneas gestures toward the problems Vergil’s patron Augustus experienced with an Egyptian queen: Cleopatra, like Dido, lured a Roman from his historical destiny. The story of Carthage figures the struggle between Augustus and his lieutenant Antony, whose oriental mistress detained him in Alexandria when his imperial and sexual duty lay elsewhere (see Bono; Desmond 31–33). McGuinness draws the parallel not only through Paul’s pyramid but also through Paul’s line of questioning in the quiz game:

PAUL. . . . Dido’s team, in the 1963 film, Cleopatra, a well-known couple—
DIDO. I know this, Elizabeth—
PAUL. Taylor and Richard Burton were the leads. Cleopatra died by means of an asp bite. What was the name of the asp?

Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton provided a tabloid version of the stories of Antony-Aeneas and Cleopatra-Dido. Paul Monette, who describes his “Liz Taylor fetish” as something that “marked me as a budding queen” (65), records his fascination when “the Cleopatra scandal erupted. Liz and Eddie and Richard and Sybil, every day a new revelation” (67). Dido’s eagerness to answer the quiz question about Liz as Cleopatra suggests an identification with the star as gay icon, a female female impersonator whose exaggerated performance of womanliness exposes gender as masquerade. Pushing a pram while wearing pale blue Doc Martens and pink scarf or cross-dressing in “a long, flowing skirt, a loose blouse, thick-rimmed glasses, boots, and a beret” (33), Dido is a figure of high camp:

Paul. Easy one. Which queen of Carthage ruled there until deserted by Aeneas?
DIDO. Dido, Queen of Carthage.
HARK. Dido, queen of Derry.
DIDO. At least I admit it, sunshine.

Dido is both an “opera queen” and a queen from Purcell’s opera (see Koestenbaum 207, 229–30n).

Dido enjoys pressing flowers, a hobby he describes as “[v]ery butch” (15). He enters singing lines from “Danny Boy” about dying flowers; at the end of the play he scatters pressed flowers on his sleeping friends. He received his name from a man who gave him red roses, symbols of feminine sexual passion:

DIDO. . . . I met him when I was wandering the docks.
MAELA. Was he a sailor?
DIDO. Likely. I didn’t ask. He came up to me carrying red roses and he gave them to me. He said his name was John. He told me he was from Lebanon.

Modern Lebanon is ancient Phoenicia, whose people settled Carthage. John reincarnates the drowned Phoenician sailor from Eliot’s The Waste Land, in which “Death by Water” symbolizes resurrection (Eliot 65). In the name of the earth, he laments the violence of the Troubles and rejects blood sacrifice: “I am a peaceful earth, give me not your dead.” Then, Dido reports, “[h]e smiled and called me Dido” (29). Dido’s Carthaginian and queenly identity, appropriately conferred by a Phoenician sailor, involves the rejection of war and the replacement of homosocial masculinity (on which war depends) by a homoerotic carnival. Dido longs “to corrupt every member of Her Majesty’s forces serving in Northern Ireland. . . . It’s my bit for the cause of Ireland’s freedom” (11).

Dido’s “war effort,” seducing pretty blond soldiers from Newcastle, subverts conventional masculine and nationalist subject positions in the interests of peace. His camp identification with the feminine, however, involves a potentially essentializing vision
of women as peacemakers. Greta’s care for the dying bird at the beginning of the play is explained by the Irish name for Derry, Doire Colmcille ‘Columba’s oak grove,’ which is related through the saint’s name to the Latin for dove, columba ‘bird of peace’ (50). The “gentle” dead flowers Dido collects and scatters associate him with the women and with the dying bird (15). Hark tells him, “You’re a woman” (19), shortly after an antiphonal question-and-answer session that valorizes the feminine:

HARK. The women never leave.
PAUL. They’re women.
HARK. Better than men?
PAUL. Who?
HARK. Women?
PAUL. Women.
HARK. Women.

Hark’s observation that “the women never leave” connects the watchers in the graveyard with the women who in 1981 established a peace camp outside the American air force base at Greenham Common to protest the situating of cruise missiles in Britain: the protesters were still encamped when the play opened. The play’s setting includes “[t]hree plastic benders, of the type used by the women at Greenham Common” (4). These benders, tents made of plastic sheeting stretched over branches, are feminine symbols, since the Greenham women decided that men should not be allowed to live in the camp (Harford and Hopkins 5, 31–34). Never alluded to in the script, the benders visually signal women’s resistance to violence.

This gender coding is reinforced by reference to the megalithic passage graves in the Boyne valley at Knowth, Dowth, and Newgrange. The stage directions stipulate that “[t]he outline of a row of graves should be suggested . . . [which] should resemble in their shape and symbols those of the grave chambers found at Knowth” (4). In a 1770 description Thomas Pownall refers to Newgrange as “the great pyramid” and claims that the carvings he saw there were Phoenician (238, 259). Although their meaning is unknown, the circles and spirals that adorn the burial stones of Knowth, Dowth, and Newgrange are popularly interpreted as female symbols, vaginas or breasts, perhaps placed there in homage to “the death-goddess worshipped for so long in the Mediterranean world” (Mitchell 38; see also Herr 24–32).

McGuinness wishes to highlight “great areas of experience, female experience” (“Arts” 65) previously ignored in Irish theater. If he flirts with essentialism, he also complicates and challenges stereotypes of femininity, for example, through the figure of Juno, the patron of Carthage. Dido’s transvestite play The Burning Balaclava contains several parodies of Juno Boyle’s famous lament from Sean O’Casey’s Juno and the Paycock: “Little did I think that the pain I had bringing him into the house would be anything like the pain I have carrying him out of it”; “Son, son, where were you when my Sacred Heart was riddled with bullets”; “Take away these quick pints” (McGuinness 39, 41, 42; see also O’Casey 71–72). Through this mockery, McGuinness distances himself both from O’Casey’s sentimental overestimation of Irish motherhood and from the essentialist myth of Mother Ireland. McGuinness’s Juno figure, Mrs. Doherty, a Derry mother “tormented by the troubles” and fanatically devoted to the Sacred Heart (34), is revealed as a hidden source of violence. Like Yeats’s Cathleen ni Houlihan and Joyce’s Old Gummy Granny (Ulysses 486, 490), Mrs. Doherty demands bloodshed: “I depend on the dying. . . . I knit all the balaclavas” (42).

McGuinness also challenges conventional masculinity through the comic destruction of the phallus. As a cigar, it is smoked; as a banana, it is devoured; as a sausage, it is pulped; as a plastic water pistol, it is chewed up. Moreover, Hark confronts Dido in a mock military interrogation: “Is there anything between your legs? . . . Is the united Ireland between your legs? What happens when cocks unite? Disease, boy, disease. The united Ireland’s your disease” (20; fig. 2). Hark’s performance of British hostility to the IRA combines with his homophobia to produce a metaphor of the republican homosexual phallus as the carrier of political AIDS. Dido, however, refuses all phallic metaphors, negative or positive: “I know how to use what’s between my legs because it’s mine. . . . Some people here fuck with a bullet and the rest fuck with a Bible, but I belong to neither” (21). McGuinness mocks
the social construction of phallic masculinity. Neither woman nor man, as those categories are commonly understood, Dido is a biological male who performs the peacefulness traditionally associated with women and recodes femininity as the strength to survive.

After an elegiac litany of the names and addresses of the young men killed on Bloody Sunday has produced a transfiguring moment of light and birdsong, Dido rewrites the metaphor inscribed in his name, which defines him as a deserted victim of imperialism. Instead, he determines, like Aeneas, to move on: “It is time to leave Derry.” His decision does not imply betrayal:

While I walk the earth, I walk through you, the streets of Derry. If I meet one who knows you and they ask, “How’s Dido?” Surviving. How’s Derry? Surviving. Surviving. Carthage has not been destroyed. (70)

Against the Vergilian tragedy of Dido, queen of Carthage, and against Cato’s repeated declaration “Delenda est Carthago” ‘Carthage must be destroyed’ (“Cato”), Dido, queen of Derry, asserts both personal and communal survival. Carthage, he says, means “new city” (57), for in the pre-Vergilian tradition Dido was honored as the city’s founder, not pitied as Aeneas’s forsaken lover (Desmond 25–26). Quoting Purcell’s Dido, McGuinness’s Dido begs, “Remember me” (70).

Purcell’s librettist Nahum Tate was notorious for his dislike of unhappy endings: he even rewrote King Lear to save Cordelia. Although he could not rescue Dido, Tate refused to end with her prophecy of endless war between Rome and Carthage or with her violent suicide. Before stabbing herself, Vergil’s Dido prays, “[F]rom my dead bones may some Avenger arise to persecute with fire and sword those settlers from Troy” (116). Purcell’s Dido, dying of a broken heart, would interrupt the chain of revenge killings:

When I am laid, am laid in earth
May my wrongs create
No trouble, no trouble
In thy breast.
Remember me, remember me
But ah, forget my fate. (176–77)

McGuinness maintains that for the Troubles to end, the dead must be buried unavenged, though not forgotten. Elegy, the “feminine” keen, must be performed by both men and women. Altering both Vergil and Purcell, McGuinness outdoes Tate as Dido escapes the graveyard and his textually ordained fate. Purcell ends with a chorus commanding Cupid to “scatter roses on her tomb” (180), but McGuinness inverts this conclusion as Dido scatters flowers on his sleeping companions. Dido’s last word, “[p]lay” (70), appropriately emblematizes his playful manipulation of the historical meanings and gender positions assigned to the Carthaginians by Irish writers.

Heaney, Friel, and McGuinness have given the Rome-Carthage metaphor new literary and political life, mediating between its antiquarian origins and more popular expressions of Irish resistance. In Anne Devlin’s 1994 play After Easter, a hostile encounter between a northern nationalist and the British army encapsulates the process of denigration.
and intellectual compensation that originally produced the trope. The British soldiers call the Irishman “Paddy” and “thicko micko.” In response to these stereotypical ethnic insults, which imply stupidity and a lack of differentiation from other Irishmen, he shouts, “Down with Troy!” None of the Irish characters on the stage are mystified by this learned imprecation (52–53), which attributes street currency to a high cultural literary trope. Indeed, Sinéad O’Connor and the Cranberries, both of whom use Yeats’s poem “No Second Troy” as the basis for popular songs (O’Connor’s “Troy” and the Cranberries’ “Yeats’s Grave”), appear to be aware of the colonial significance of London as Troy for her to burn?” (Poems 91), will be answered in the affirmative.

Notes

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1Schneider discusses the analogy briefly (88–90).
2A fourteenth died later. On Bloody Sunday, see McCann 15–22, 91–129.
3On the Field Day Theatre Company, see Richtarik; Richards; McCormack, Battle 53–60.
4I am indebted throughout to Said, as well as to Deane and to Cairns and Richards, who have adapted Said’s theoretical model to Ireland.
5See Canny and Carpenter, who cite Olaus Magnus as a representative example (182n3).
6The Old English poem Andreas recounts how Saint Andrew rescued Saint Matthew from the anthropophagous Mermodians, whom Brooks identifies as Scythians (xvii–xxx).
7Strabo also says that the Irish eat their dead parents; in this practice his Irish resemble Shakespeare’s Scythians. On Strabo, see Leerson, Mere Irish 33.
8McCormack discusses Herodotus but not Edgeworth’s alteration of the story (Introduction xix–xxi).
9“Grace Nugent” was a popular tune by the Irish composer Turlough Carolan. McCormack demonstrates the Jacobite connections of many historical Nugents (Introduction xxi–xxiv).
11On ailing poetry, see Leerson, Mere Irish 246–50. On the long tradition of feminizing the land, see Dalton; MacCana; Kearney, “Myth” 74–78; Loftus 44–86; Crilly; Cairns and Richards, “Tropes” 128–32.
12See Heaney, Preoccupations 56–60. For commentary on Heaney’s deployment of these rites, see Corcoran 118–20; Cullingford, “‘Thinking’” 2–3. The line from Yeats’s “‘Easter 1916’” to which Heaney alludes is “O when may it [the sacrifice] suffice?” (Poems 181).
13Brenton’s The Romans in Britain (1980) and Rudkin’s The Saxon Shore (1986) also compare the Roman conquest of Britain to the British conquest of Ireland. On Field Day’s rejection of Rudkin’s play, see Richtarik 191–203.
14Lloyd examines Heaney’s use of gendered myths, asserting disparagingly that they elide social and historical conditions (26–27).
15Longley thinks it is (78–79), while Morrison argues that “kinship” affirms the idea of “slaughter for the common good” (67–68). Like Corcoran (118–20) and Coughlan (“‘Bog Queens’” 99–108; Cullingford, “‘Thinking’” 2–3. Without mentioning Heaney by name, Boland challenges the Irish practice of gendering the nation as feminine.
16See Corcoran (114) and Hart (90) for readings of the poem that ignore the Phoenicians.
17On the psychodynamics of colonialism, see Nandy 7–10. On the weakness of the Irish patriarchy, see Kibér 44–49.
18The OED gives 1547 as the first use of pale in the Irish context.
19Bartolini argues that the Phoenicians got their name from the color (81).
Buttrey, John. “[A Cautionary Tale].” *Percy* 228–35.
Coughlan, Patricia. “‘Boy Queens’: The Representation of Women in the Poetry of John Montague and Seamus Heaney.” Cairns and Johnson 88–111.
Deane, Seamus. “Civilians and Barbarians.” Field Day Theatre Company 33–42.