

## Seeing the image of one's culture through the image of another: translating images of national identity

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Résumé de l'article

Dans cet article, nous combinons les cadres fournis par l'imagologie et les études de traduction afin d'analyser comment la traduction peut fonctionner comme un outil de formation et de manipulation d'images. Notre article se concentre sur les principales caractéristiques de l'image de l'identité nationale irlandaise telle qu'elle est représentée dans la pièce de théâtre *Translations* de Brian Friel et sur la manière dont ces caractéristiques ont été traduites en catalan. Par une analyse contrastive du texte source et du texte cible, nous examinons les changements survenus dans ces caractéristiques au cours du processus de traduction et l'impact qu'ils ont eu sur la constitution de l'image de la culture irlandaise dans la culture catalane. Nous considérons ensuite la relation qui s'établit dans la culture cible entre l'auto-image de l'identité nationale catalane et l'hétéro-image de l'identité nationale irlandaise. Enfin, nous proposons un affinement de la taxonomie communément utilisée pour décrire les images des identités nationales et leur relation de réciprocité ou d'opposition.

# Seeing the image of one's culture through the image of another: translating images of national identity

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## RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, nous combinons les cadres fournis par l'imagologie et les études de traduction afin d'analyser comment la traduction peut fonctionner comme un outil de formation et de manipulation d'images. Notre article se concentre sur les principales caractéristiques de l'image de l'identité nationale irlandaise telle qu'elle est représentée dans la pièce de théâtre *Translations* de Brian Friel et sur la manière dont ces caractéristiques ont été traduites en catalan. Par une analyse contrastive du texte source et du texte cible, nous examinons les changements survenus dans ces caractéristiques au cours du processus de traduction et l'impact qu'ils ont eu sur la constitution de l'image de la culture irlandaise dans la culture catalane. Nous considérons ensuite la relation qui s'établit dans la culture cible entre l'auto-image de l'identité nationale catalane et l'hétéro-image de l'identité nationale irlandaise. Enfin, nous proposons un affinement de la taxonomie communément utilisée pour décrire les images des identités nationales et leur relation de réciprocité ou d'opposition.

## ABSTRACT

In this article we combine the frameworks provided by Imagology and Translation Studies in order to analyze how translation can work as a tool of image formation and manipulation. Our paper focuses on the main features of the image of Irish national identity as it is represented in Brian Friel's play *Translations* and on the way these features have been translated into Catalan. Through a contrastive analysis of the source text and the target text, we examine the changes to these features that occurred during the translation process and the impact they have had on the constitution of the image of Irishness in the Catalan culture. We then consider the relationship established in the target culture between the self-image of Catalan national identity and the hetero-image of the Irish one. Finally, we propose a refinement of the taxonomy commonly used to describe images of national identities and their relationship of reciprocity or opposition.

## RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se combinan los marcos teóricos de la Imagología y de los Estudios de Traducción para analizar la función que puede tener la traducción como instrumento manipulador y formador de imágenes. Nuestro estudio se centra en los principales rasgos de la imagen de la identidad nacional irlandesa tal como es representada en la obra *Translations* del dramaturgo Brian Friel, y en la manera como estos rasgos han sido traducidos al catalán. Mediante un análisis contrastivo de los textos de partida y meta analizamos los cambios que han sufrido dichos rasgos durante el proceso de traducción y el impacto que han tenido sobre la construcción de la imagen de lo irlandés en la cul-

tura catalana. A continuació reflexionamos sobre la relació que se estableix en la cultura meta entre la auto-imagen de la identitat nacional catalana i la hetero-imagen de la identitat nacional irlandesa, para, finalmente, proposar un ajust en la taxonomia utilitzada normalment per descriure les imatges de identitat nacional i les relacions de reciprocitat o de oposició que entablen.

#### MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS/PALABRAS CLAVE

imagologie, traduction de théâtre, identité nationale, culture catalane, Brian Friel  
 imagology, theatre translation, national identity, Catalan culture, Brian Friel  
 imatologia, traducció teatral, identitat nacional, cultura catalana, Brian Friel

## 1. Introduction

Within the field of imagology, translation has often been described as one of the channels through which a national image is defined, disseminated or questioned. Usually, the image is developed oppositionally, by comparing a culture's hetero-image (the way a culture is perceived by others or the way it perceives others outside its group) with its auto- or self-image (the way the same culture perceives itself), even though this comparison may sometimes not be explicit. Dyserinck (1977/1991: 137) mentioned in the 1970s that the contribution of translation studies (henceforth TS) could be relevant to the development of scientific research within comparative literature. He also stressed the interconnection of imagology with TS and comparative literature. Yet, only recently has attention been paid to the TS perspective.<sup>1</sup> The present study wishes to contribute to this trend.

We base our analysis on Brian Friel's play *Translations* (1981)<sup>2</sup> and its two Catalan translations, by Josep Maria Balanyà (1984) and Joan Sellent (2013) respectively. We shall reflect on how translation may contribute to the development of an image and the narrative behind it.

## 2. Objectives

Our first objective is to describe how translation can work as a tool of image formation and manipulation (as understood in Hermans 1985: 11) within a culture. Our second objective is to test to what extent research interconnecting TS and imagology can contribute to the development of theoretical discourse in both disciplines.

In order to achieve our objectives, we first focus on textual elements, and analyze the main features that seem to characterize Irishness in the source text (henceforth ST) and in the target texts (henceforth TT). By comparing the ST and TT, we seek to know whether the images of Irish national identity inferred from the ST have experienced any changes in the TT and, if so, how they have been transformed. The first change undergone by these images relies on the fact that Irish self-images in the ST (and in the source culture) inevitably become hetero-images in the TT, since they are perceived from a different perspective, that of Catalan culture. This observation has prompted reflections on the nature of this change in the TT. The textual approach cannot be separated from cultural considerations that both determined a certain image and were affected by it. In this part of the study, we shall be focusing on the description of images of Irish national identity inferred from the play in the Catalan cultural context in order to understand the role that various elements outside the text

(such as the staging of the play, its reception and critical reviews) play in the successful diffusion of hetero-images of Irish national identity in the target culture.

The great popularity of Brian Friel's plays in Catalonia and the affinity perceived by Catalan audiences between the Irish and the Catalan narratives of national identity (see Section 7) are an example of the dynamics at work in defining a certain image. More specifically, we may ask what relationship is established between the hetero- and auto-images implicit in Friel's plays and the same images in the translated texts. Moreover, the potential ideological affinities between Catalan and Irish identities (as they are perceived, at least, by production companies, translators, and audiences) raise the question of how translations, through the illusion of such affinities, actually create or modify Catalan auto-images. Finally, we shall raise a number of questions regarding the nature of the Other, the hetero-image produced in and through the translated text.

With these objectives we aim to define a research structure that may help systematize our own and future studies on translation and imagology.

### 3. Theoretical framework: imagology and translation

Imagology is a discipline that analyzes recognized mental images of social identities and the way these images are created, consolidated, and widely disseminated in literature and in other cultural representations (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xiii). It emerged as an established sub-discipline within the field of comparative literature. However, the analysis of images created by cultures to define the Other in order to achieve a usually reassuring definition of themselves does not belong exclusively to Comparative Literature, even though it started to develop, with varying fortune, within this field.

#### 3.1. Images and identities

As a starting point, we may use and adapt a working definition of the notion of *image* given by Blažević, according to whom an image can be seen as "an interferential configuration of the mental images, textual and non-textual representations and practice patterns which are constituted within a certain socio-historical context" (Blažević 2012: 105). The advantage of this definition is its resemblance, as the author stresses, to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*,<sup>3</sup> as an image's "subtle dialectics of structure and agency or objectification and embodiment" (Blažević 2012: 105). According to this definition, an image would be described as a "constitutive part both of collectively disposed cultural imagery and individual experience of the world" (Blažević 2012: 105). The collective and individual dimensions are interdependent and mutually affect each other. This interdependence becomes apparent in our study. In fact, we first focus on the individual representation of a cultural image, as carried out by an author and the translation's initiators (such as the translator, theatre company or director). Then, we consider possible collective interpretations of the image of Irishness in the play by taking into account both the audience and the play's critical reception in Catalonia.

We should bear in mind that the definition of image overlaps with notions such as those of *cliché*, *stereotype*, *imagotype*, and *prejudice*. Moreover, images of a nation

or culture are not uniform and may be formed by contradictory elements, even though, as Pageaux observes:

Au grand scandale des littéraires, l'image culturelle n'est pas poly- ou pansémique: à un moment historique donné il n'est pas possible (nous disons bien possible) de dire n'importe quoi sur l'étranger. [...] Il ne s'agit pas, dans ces cas-là, de percevoir, de démontrer et de remonter la signification d'énonciations nouvelles (cas de la poésie, du texte créateur) mais bien de reconnaître d'identifier ce qu'on savait déjà). (Pageaux 1995: 147)

Pageaux warns against interpretative subjectivism and highlights how the image of the Other is above all a hermeneutic instrument that allows us to better understand the culture that produces it.

The notion of image defined above has been applied to different social groups of different sizes. To give just a few examples, one could focus on the image of an ethnic group (the image of Afro-Americans in nineteenth century North American fiction), on a professional category (the image of sailors in French travel literature from a given period), on gender (the image of women in tabloids) or even on a single person (the image of Che Guevara in contemporary literature). Often, however, imagological studies focus on the representation of a given national character, aiming to describe its characteristic features (that is, its representation) in literary texts and in other text types, and to identify the ideological discourses that support these images. Our article shares this focus since it is concerned with the dynamics at play in the representation of Irishness in a translated play. Having provided a working definition for the notion of image, we must clarify the complex, elusive, and at times controversial theoretical notions of identity and national identity as well as their relationship with their images.<sup>4</sup>

Firstly, we are mainly concerned with the sociological dimension of the term *identity*, its public face, rather than its psychological dimension, that is, its private face, which involves considerations on the internal development of the individual personality. The distinction is necessary since, as Mandler (2006: 271, 279), following Gleason (1983), points out, the application of fragments of psychoanalytical theory to investigate the social dimension of identity may lead to a methodological and theoretical fallacy.

Secondly, identity is a dynamic concept. As Jenkins (1996/2008: 17) points out, "[i]dentifying ourselves, or others, is a matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation." Identity is, therefore, negotiable, flexible, variable in time and place, and socioculturally determined. As a consequence, as Jenkins stresses, "all human identities are, by definition, *social*" (1996/2008: 17; emphasis in original). National identity, as a form of social identity, refers to the way people relate to other social groups in a broad context whose scope is often defined by ethnical and geopolitical factors as well as myths of common traditions and ideals.

The elusiveness of the notion of identity, and even more of national identity, is heightened by the process of banalization that it underwent through what Gleason (1983: 912) calls its vernacular use, which also contributed to the reification of the term as a *something* that is always there. Because of the ambiguity of the term, Mandler (2006: 276) proposes using the term *identity* "for the more opaque or fluid internal processes" through which it is formed (the private face of group identification)

and “to talk about forms of national consciousness” for the external process, which may or may not include identity and may include ideologies like patriotism, nationalism, and the idea of national character.

In our article we alternatively use the terms *national identity*, *national consciousness*, and *national character* to refer to the same phenomenon of social identification and in order to evoke its proteiform, dynamic, and negotiable nature. Though the stress is on the national dimension, we neither imply that this form of identity is above other forms of identity, nor that it excludes the possibility of a coexistence of more national identities in the individual consciousness.

Finally, this article is concerned with *images* of national identities and not with national identities per se. More specifically, it is about certain representations of Irishness as they can be found in the play, in its Catalan translations, and in the staging of the play. These are assumed to be in part a reflection of Friel’s, the translators’, the actors’, the director’s, and the spectators’ interpretations. It goes without saying that the images presented here are the result of an act of interpretation of the authors of the article.

The distinction between national identities and images of national identities is important since it defines the scope of the research. While identities can be the object of empirical studies observing, from a psychological, sociological or historical approach, what identities are *in the real world* (for example, in the consciousness of individuals),<sup>5</sup> our concern with images as discursive constructs developed in literary texts confines the scope of our research to the textual level, without disregarding, however, the important link with the context. Images of national identities in literary texts are, in fact, narratives that, despite their complexity, often imply a process of simplification.

In their short history of imagology, both Beller and Leerssen (2007: 17-32) and Pageaux (1995) highlight the semiotic and epistemological dimensions of imagology, according to which images should not be studied as fictitious representations of an objective external reality assumed to be true (for example, the image of Spain in German literature and the actual characteristics of Spanish culture). Imagology does not aim to evaluate an image on a true or false basis by comparing it with the reality that it allegedly represents. Images should be an object of study in their own right and find justification within the area in which they are studied.

The reference to the constructed character of national identity has often been stressed in the critical literature on the subject. Bhabha (1990: 1) claimed that “Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye.” The discourse on national identity, then, is developed around certain general prototypical narratives. Friel’s play *Translations*, for example, could be regarded as an example of sacrificial narrative, as we will show later on, that also combines other narrative themes, such as romantic and heroic themes. By applying the theoretical framework of imagology to translation, we are able to investigate how and why the Catalan versions of *Translations* contribute to the definition of self-images of the target culture. This observation raises the question as to the nature of the connection between images in literary texts and the construction of national identities. Leerssen (2012: 58) provides a concise answer to the question when he claims “that the roots of national movements lie with writers and intellectuals, the ideological pathfinders of the later political activists” and “that their

nationalist construction of nations involves, not an inventio or fabrication *ex nihilo*, but a selection and redistribution of ethnic categories from a reservoir of historical names and groups.”

### 3.2. Image formation and translation

Within imagology, the concept of image is often described as a dichotomic opposition between auto-image and hetero-image (Beller 2012: 43).<sup>6</sup> There is a tendency to highlight the contrasting – often negative – features that distinguish an auto-image from a hetero-image. This reflects a tendency, based on folk wisdom, to construct identities “by means of binary oppositions” (Mandler 2006: 272), that is, by defining ourselves against another. However, the notion of *difference* can only make sense in association with that of *similarity*. As Mandler (2006: 273), among other observers, notes, “social scientists have since placed as much emphasis on ‘similarity’ as on ‘difference’ and indeed complicated the whole process of group identification so that distinctions of these kinds are not so central.” The same considerations can be applied to images and, in fact, recent studies (Beller and Leerssen 2007: 343; Leerssen 2016: 9-10; several case studies in van Doorslaer, Flynn, *et al.* 2016) use the dichotomy in a more neutral way.

The widespread simplified reading of the two concepts neglects the possibility of an affinity between these two images. The form *hetero-* derives from Greek *héteros* and means ‘different’ both in the neutral sense of ‘other’ and in the negative sense of ‘anomalous’ or ‘deviant.’ The label *hetero-image* suggests images of a culture that is different from ours, but also mostly of a culture that is perceived oppositionally from ours and has negatively connoted features. As we have said above, the dichotomy, though oppositional, does not have to be *negatively* oppositional. We believe, in fact, that the perception of a hetero-image as similar to one’s own auto-image is particularly important in translation. It may play an important role during the translation process since it may be one of the reasons behind the choice to translate a certain text, or behind certain translation strategies, as we will show later on. In our study we will refer to the notion of *homo-image*, as developed by Sorge (1998: 23), for whom this category describes the relationship of the subject (the author of a literary work) to objects outside the author that are perceived as similar to him/her. We will also propose our own taxonomy for the description of images, which, in our opinion, is less ambiguous than the term *hetero-image*. Since the new taxonomy is one of the results of our study, and is a consequence of our reflections on our analysis, we will present it in our discussion in Section 7.

As mentioned in the introduction, despite the early acknowledgement of the interconnection between TS and imagology, there have been few systematic approaches, in our opinion, to the range of methodologies that can be applied to this research area (see Leerssen 2016 for an overview). Recently, van Doorslaer, Flynn, *et al.* (2016) presented a collection of a great variety of heterogeneous case studies on translation and imagology. As the editors write in their introduction, and as a number of reviews of the book have pointed out, the book can be considered a starting point for a trend that aims at interconnecting TS and imagology. The great value of this book, we think, lies in the fact that it opens up the debate on the connection between TS and imagology. The editors also maintain that imagology can offer TS



a methodological apparatus, including a number of concepts and insights, that can dispel such isolationism and reinforce its multidisciplinary character, while at the same time helping it benefit from the extension of the field of enquiry provided by TS. (Flynn, Leerssen, *et al.* 2016: 3)

They add that the main aim of the volume is

to show TS scholars how imagology and its conceptual apparatus can help broaden and deepen our understanding of the discursive construction of cultural phenomena in translation and further frame and explicate such notions in TS as culture-specific items and even the notion of culture itself. (Flynn, Leerssen, *et al.* 2016: 8)

Finally, the book is presented as “an initial attempt at an ‘archeology’” (Flynn, Leerssen, *et al.* 2016: 9). However, there is no attempt at a systematization of the methods and theoretical reflections of the interconnection between TS and imagology. In our article, we try to go beyond the case study and contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of both disciplines.

### 3.3. *Theatre translation*

In recent years, several studies have been carried out that investigate the complexities of theatre translation<sup>7</sup> by placing emphasis on its semiotic and sociocultural dimensions and by shifting the attention from translation as representation of a meaning to translation as a performative act that may transform existing signification structures. This mirrors the shift seen in theatre studies and in the humanities in general (Marinetti 2013: 309-312). The focus on performativity in theatre translation (and translation in general) is particularly important. Firstly, it relates to the performative dimension of identity itself, as described by Butler (1990/2010) in relation to gender. Secondly, it allows us to focus on “the effects that the reconfigured text (as performance) has on the receiving culture and its networks of transmission and reception” (Marinetti 2013: 311). In our study, we concentrate on specific aspects of these networks. On the one hand, we consider the playtext (a text meant to be played, according to Bassnett 1985) and its translations. The attention devoted to the textual dimension is justified here, as we will discuss later, by the importance accorded by Friel to stage directions, which become the place where the authorial voice (or rather the voice that in a novel would correspond to the narrator’s) can be heard. We can hypothesize that stage directions contain elements that make it easier to identify Friel’s agency in the creation of images of Irishness. Nonetheless, stage directions are also the place where manipulation can most easily take place during the performance, since the spectators are not aware of their existence. On the other hand, we consider the spectators’ reception of the play, that is, the spectators’ role as translation agents and participants in the creation of given images of a national consciousness.

In our study, we refer to the semiotic dimension of the staging of the translated text only in passing since, although we attended one of its performances, no video recording of the play was available at the time our research started that would allow us to thoroughly analyze it.



#### 4. Methodology

Soenen (1992) was one of the first scholars to develop a methodology that explicitly addresses the role of translations in the process of image creation, even though he focuses mainly on the dangerous repercussions that stereotyped images may have on the translation process and product. He does not take into account that translations may also have the opposite function, that is, they may contribute to the renewal of a given image.<sup>8</sup> For this reason, in order to systematize our approach in this phase of our research, we opted to combine the three-dimensional methodological frame proposed by Ditzé (2006: 52-102) with Newmark's (1988: 95-101) classification of cultural terms. Newmark proposes five categories of cultural terms (ecology; material culture; social culture; organizations, customs, activities, procedures, and concepts; gestures and habits). These categories have been included in Ditzé's three levels or dimensions as follows:

1. The personal dimension, corresponding to the exteriority of the characters within the literary work (that is, their physicality), their interiority (their psyche), and their social relations. This dimension may include gestures and habits;
2. The transpersonal dimension, corresponding to the civilization and its mentality. Material culture, social culture, organizations, and customs are taken into account here;
3. The non-personal dimension, corresponding to the landscape, the fauna, and the climate. This includes ecology.

Ditzé's proposal has the advantage of providing clear guidelines on the features that we can look for in a literary text for an imagological analysis. The main dimension for the image description is usually the first of the three. We should bear in mind, however, that certain features of an image may belong to more than one dimension at a time. Allusions to paralinguistic features of the characters' voices, for example, certainly belong to their physicality (such as, in *Translations*, Sarah's speech impediment or Jimmy's drawling when he is drunk). The register they use may suggest their social background and the relationship between them as well as their cognitive capabilities.

We will first identify elements belonging to these three levels in the ST and describe the image of the Irish national character that can be inferred from them. Secondly, we will apply the same analysis to the TT and, by comparing the source and target texts, we will identify potential changes in the representation of the image.

As Aaltonen (2013: 385), among others, has pointed out, the "translated playtexts on stage can very rarely be attributed to an individual translator." Several participants collaborate in the translation process, such as the director, translator, music composer, and the audience. They create a translation-network, may leave traces of their agency in the text, and contribute to the perception of certain images created in the translation.

In the case of the first Catalan translation, *Traduccions*, carried out by Josep Maria Balanyà in 1984, the translator is the main actor of the translation process, since the text was neither staged nor published. As for the second translation, titled *Traduccions/Translations*, carried out by Joan Sellent in 2013, however, we took into account not only the text but also other data that helped us identify, at least in part, the translation participants and describe the resulting images of national identities in the play. These data can be summarized as follows:

1. Our personal experience as part of the audience.
2. Short video documents of the performance available on the web. There is no available recording of the whole play.
3. Our conversation with Sellent.
4. Theatre reviews.
5. Metacomments by the director of the play, Ferran Utzet, and by LaPerla29 theatre company.

### 5. An image of Irish national identity through the lens of Friel's *Translations*

The complexity of describing Irish identity – or Irishness – as a category is stressed (among others) by Howe (2002), who reflects on the various narratives that have described Irish history, identity, and present situation, often through an appropriation of a “manichean image of colonial relations” (Howe 2002: 132). This he sees as based on concepts of colonialism, colonization, and neo-colonialism, with the effect of effacing “the complex historical ambiguities of identity-formation on the island, and especially in the north” (Howe 2002: 10). Irish identity, with all its complexity and conflicts, is one of the themes in Brian Friel's *Translations*, first staged in 1980 in Derry by the Field Day Theatre Company, which had been founded by Friel and actor Stephen Rea that very same year with the goal of creating a space of reconciliation, a “fifth province,” in Northern Ireland (Szabo 2007: 7).<sup>9</sup>

#### 5.1. *Translations: the plot*

The action of the play, which takes place mainly in a hedge-school in the fictional town of Baile Beag (Ballybeg), in county Donegal, unfolds over several days in August 1833. It is based on two historical events: the first is the drawing of a new map of the Irish territory, carried out by British sappers, and the related anglicising of Irish place-names with the ultimate objectives of a new land valuation for taxation and military planning. The anglicising of the Irish place-names is assigned to an English lieutenant, George Yolland, and to Owen, the army's translator-interpreter, who is the son of the local hedge-school master returning after six years in Dublin. The second historical event is the institution of National Schools and of compulsory education in the English language in Ireland, which eventually led to the closing of Irish hedge-schools all over the country. Friel's treatment of these events in the play is not historiographic. On the one hand, by the time National Schools were introduced in Ireland, the Irish language had already started its decline. On the other, the Ordnance Survey ordered in the 1830s to draw a cartography of Ireland had, among its aims, the regularization and preservation of Irish place-names rather than their anglicization (Leerssen 2018: 257). As we will show later, the licences that Friel takes concerning these historical events, as well as his use of stereotypes, contribute to an anti-imperialist, political reading of the play and to the representation of a certain image of Irishness partly in opposition to images of Englishness.<sup>10</sup>

As Giugliano and Alsina (2018: 179) have said, defeat and loss hover over the story and are symbolically represented by the sense of failure that characterize all Irish characters in the play. They are also present in ominous references to the potato blight, which, as Irish audiences will know, would lead Ireland, a decade later (from

1845 to 1848) to the Great Famine and to drastic and tragic changes in the Irish socio-cultural and political situation. Finally, defeat and hopelessness are underscored by the disappearance and inferred murder of Yolland, the sensitive soldier who, from the very beginning, had acknowledged the hegemonic nature and evicting consequences of his task, and had still believed in the possibility of communication and understanding between the two cultures. In the play, this possibility is symbolically represented by his love affair with Maire, a young Irish woman, despite the communication difficulties. Yolland's kidnapping and possible murder, probably carried out by the Donnelly twins, two characters who are only mentioned, but never appear on stage, represents violent Irish reaction to British oppression and may be read as an allusion to IRA violence. British military oppression, conversely, becomes explicit in the threat of retaliation uttered by Captain Lancey, following Yolland's disappearance, in the last dramatic scene of the play.

A major feature of the play is that, though all actors speak English, and occasionally Latin and Greek, the audience assumes, through a suspension of disbelief, that Irish characters only speak Irish and English characters only English, and that they are unable to understand each other. The virtual presence of two languages is suggested on stage by the fact that Irish characters speak an Irish variety of the English language characterized by lexical, syntactical, and phraseological traits. The only bilingual speakers are Owen, the translator, his brother Manus, and their father Hugh, the hedge-school master. Through this theatrical device Friel introduces an implicit metacomment that makes audiences aware of the centrality of language as a repository of culture and identity, and the impossibility of communication, or the possibility of communication only through translation, even on an individual level, which is inspired by the first chapter of George Steiner's *After Babel* (1975). Steiner observes that interlingual translation is only "a special case of the arc of communication which every successful speech-act closes within a given language [...]. In short; *inside or between languages, human communication equals translation*" (Steiner 1975/1992: 49; emphasis in original). Friel's theatrical re-elaboration of Steiner's thought on language has been extensively studied by MacGrath (1989), who observes how Friel paraphrases not only Steiner's central thesis but also a number of its corollaries, such as "lying and concealment as central to language, the relation of language to eros, the nature and difficulty of translating between cultures, and History as translation from the past to the present" (MacGrath 1989: 33). Although these positions are voiced by different characters in the play, they are especially present in Hugh's speech.

The language conflict in the play is also relevant to the much-debated question of the relationship between "major" and "minor" languages (Cronin 1998, 2003; Casanova 1999: 254-302) and the ambiguous role of translation in the oppression of minor languages. As Cronin (2003: 143) points out:

Translation is both predator and deliverer, enemy and friend. [...] Language speakers can either be assimilated through self-translation to a dominant language or they can retain and develop their language through the good offices of translation and thus resist incorporation.

In the case in point, it is interesting and significant that while the language used in the ST, English, is the language of oppression in the context of the play, it is at the same time being used as a strategy of resistance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, *et al.* 1989) while

in the TT, it is Catalan, a minor language, which is used throughout, both to represent the oppressor and the oppressed. This use suggests a different balance of power between the minor language Catalan and the major language Spanish, which stands in opposition to that seen between Irish and English.

## 5.2. *An image of Ireland's national identity in Translations*

We shall now provide a description of an image of Irish national identity that can be inferred from the textual elements of the play following Ditzé's three-dimensional model described above.

### 5.2.1. *The personal dimension*

Depictions of the characters' physical appearance abound. A common exterior feature of three of the Irish characters (Manus, Hugh, and Jimmy Jack) is their shabbiness, which we mainly find in stage directions and occasionally in characters' speech: Manus's clothes "are shabby" (Friel 1981: 1), Hugh, the hedge-school master, is "a large man, with residual dignity, shabbily dressed, carrying a stick" (Friel 1981: 20), Jimmy Jack Cassie "never washes. His clothes – heavy top coat, hat, mittens, which he wears now – are filthy and he lives in them summer and winter, day and night" (Friel 1981: 2). All other Irish characters are described with positively connoted attributes: Maire is a "strong-minded, strong-bodied woman in her twenties with a head of curly hair" (Friel 1981: 7); Doalty is "an open-minded, open-hearted, generous and slightly thick young man" (Friel 1981: 10), Bridget is "a plump, fresh, young girl, ready to laugh, vain, and with a countrywoman's instinctive cunning" (Friel 1981: 10). Sarah's description is vaguer: "she has a waiflike appearance and could be any age from seventeen to thirty-five" (Friel 1981: 1). This vagueness, together with her dumbness, facilitates the attribution of symbolic meaning to the character. Shabbiness as an exterior feature, in combination with other stylistic and thematic elements, influences audiences' and readers' interpretation of the characters' psychological and moral features. Thus, shabbiness, for Manus, may be an index of his disinterestedness for exterior worldly matters, a quality also suggested by his other traits: his pale face and light build, his being an unpaid assistant at his father's school, etc.

Owen is the mediator between cultures. His appearance contrasts with that of his fellow villagers and suggests the opposition between urban and country manners: he is "a handsome, attractive young man in his twenties. He is dressed smartly – a city man. His manner is easy and charming: everything he does is invested with consideration and enthusiasm" (Friel 1981: 26). His attire suggests his worldliness.

As for the intellectual features of the characters, we observe that only Hugh, Manus, and Owen are bilingual Irish-English. However, all Irish characters have some knowledge (even a solid knowledge in the case of Jimmy) of Latin and Greek. This intellectual trait sometimes triggers humorous effects, as when Captain Lancey appears not to have recognized that Jimmy is speaking Latin and confuses it with Irish. Incidentally, this scene has also been mentioned by critics like Longley (1985, 1994) and Connelly (1987) as an example of the fact that Friel's play was, in their view, politically biased and historically deformed. We do not share this criticism. In our opinion, even though the reference to Lancey's ignorance (as well as Hugh's reference to the superiority of Irish literature over British literature) suggests a certain

political positioning, it still leaves enough room for a plurality of interpretations and gives the characters a certain psychological depth.

Further elements that define the personal dimension of the characters are allusions to their cognitive capacities (for example, Doalty's difficulty with mathematics and Latin, versus Maire's wish to learn English or Sarah's efforts to overcome her speech impediment) and a tendency to daydream.

Finally, we observe that the personal dimension of the image of the Irish is not characterized by particularly relevant cultural elements (Newmark's gestures and habits). It is rather defined oppositionally, that is, by opposing it to the hetero-image of the English, which is also multifaceted. The latter's complexity is achieved through the character of Yolland, who reflects, throughout the play, on the potential and the limitations of communication between different languages and cultures. His troubled awareness of the fact that the anglicising of Irish place-names that he is carrying out is an act of dispossession, as well as his reference to the colonial empire, which his father served with zeal, hint at the subaltern position of Ireland as a colony, but at the same time make it possible to avoid a black-and-white interpretation of the hetero-image of Englishness as a category.

### 5.2.2. *The transpersonal dimension*

In this section we consider, first of all, two emblematic elements that refer to the cultural category "organizations" (such as educational): the hedge-school and the national school. The former is also the physical space where the action of the play occurs.<sup>11</sup> The national school is only present in the characters' conversations and is often mentioned in opposition to the hedge-school. The notes that accompany an edition of the play stress the symbolic value of both institutions, pointing out that

[the] new system of national education made the hedge-schools [where instruction tended to be in Irish] redundant, and had a devastating effect on the use of the Gaelic language and indeed on the tradition of classical and historical learning in Ireland. (Brannigan 2000: 66-67)

Other elements of material culture, such as soda bread, poteen or the milk delivered by Maire, define a rural setting easily recognizable as Irish. We will analyse the function of these elements for the evocation of certain images of national identity in more detail in the contrastive analysis of the ST and the TT.

### 5.2.3. *The impersonal dimension: landscape, climate, and fauna*

In the play we find several references to the cultural category labelled "ecology." More specifically, we observe two different groups of references to the Irish landscape. The first group includes a mention of the harvest: "Oooh. The best harvest in living memory, they say" (Maire, in Friel 1981: 8). This contributes to characterizing the rural environment and allows the audience to locate the action in an approximate time of the year. A characterization of the rural Irish landscape is also achieved through reference to the potato crop and the potato blight, which is an allusion to the Great Famine. This tragic moment of contemporary Irish history has turned into an important cultural element and part of Irish social imaginary. It can be easily grasped by Irish audiences as well as by foreign audiences who are slightly acquainted with Irish history. In the play, it suggests the tragic destiny of the Irish people.

The second group of references to the Irish landscape consists in the numerous allusions to the geography of the land through its place-names. These allusions outline one of the main themes of the play: the anglicisation of Irish place-names. From an imagological viewpoint, place-names have a number of interrelated functions: they help to contextualize the story; they may be seen as guardians of traditions and stories of the people of the past (which would point to the transpersonal level of analysis), even after these people's names have been "eroded" beyond recognition" (Friel 1981: 53) and cannot be remembered by the members of the community. The reference to the annihilation of the Irish language carried out by the English becomes explicit. Place-names have, therefore, a symbolic function. Significantly enough, one of the central moments of the play is when Yolland and Maire express their mutual love by exchanging place-names as if they were love tokens. We can see the exchange in example 1:

- 1) YOLLAND: Maire.  
*(She still moves away.)*  
 Bun na hAbhann? *(He says the name softly, almost privately, very tentatively, as if he were searching for a sound she might respond to. He tries again.)* Druim Dubh?  
 Poll na gCaorach. Lis Maol.  
*(Maire turns towards him.)*  
 Lis na nGall.  
 MAIRE: Lis na nGradh  
*(they are now facing each other and begin moving – almost imperceptibly – towards one another)*  
 Carraig an Phoill.  
 YOLLAND: Carraig na Ri. Loch na nEan.  
 MAIRE: Loch an Iubhair. Machaire Buidhe.  
 YOLLAND: Machaire Mor. Cnoc na Mona.  
 MAIRE: Cnoc na nGabhar.  
 YOLLAND: Mullach.  
 MAIRE: Port.  
 YOLLAND: Tor.  
 MAIRE: Lag.  
*(She holds out her hands to Yolland. He takes them. Each now speaks almost to himself/herself)*  

(Friel 1981: 65-66)

These place-names are used, thus, by the two characters to communicate feelings beyond words.<sup>12</sup>

#### 5.2.4. An image of Irish national identity

On the basis of the features isolated during the analysis of each dimension, we can now attempt a description of the various features that may constitute an image of Irish national identity in the play. We should stress that our use of the singular (*image*, instead of *images*) does not imply a monolithic, static representation of the term, but refers rather to the macro-category "image" within which different (and at times contradictory) features are intertwined and may be perceived differently by different audiences, actors, directors, and readers, thus producing variations of an image of a national identity.

The exteriority of the Irish characters, especially when it is considered in opposition to the English ones, suggests an image of a vigorous and lively, but also poor



and fundamentally defeated, people. Their failure to succeed, the *quixotism* associated with Gaelic culture (Pilkington 1990), represented in the play by Jimmy's day-dreaming or Manus's willingness to join the Irish resistance in the last act of the play, even though his initiative is bound to fail, and other discordant factors add texture and complexity to the image.

The analysis of the transpersonal and impersonal dimensions has revealed elements that reinforce the image of defeat and trigger connections with extra-textual, socio-cultural, and historical facts, such as the centrality of hedge-schools (which the audience knows are doomed) for Irish culture, or the allusion to the Great Famine through the references to the potato crop.

To sum up, through the imagological analysis of *Translations*, we have obtained an image of Irish identity that is rural, rather than urban, and in which faults and virtues are co-present. These features point to the multidimensionality and dynamism of the image, within which contrasting features (for example, heroism but also violent reactions against a British soldier) cohabit and limit themselves mutually. However, the power imbalance described in the play leads to a reading of Irish identity as subaltern, since it is subject to British domination and stifled by it. Irishness as a category is neither completely passive, nor lacking in contradictions; it reacts violently to the oppression with actions, gestures "that indicate a presence" (Friel 1981: 12). These actions, however, acquire negative connotations when they lead to a possible murder. Finally, considering the results of these actions, at least in the time-frame of the story, the Irish people still strive to come out of a position of dumbness, which leads to the symbolic identification of Sarah with Ireland itself.<sup>13</sup>

Both Irish and English characters in the play present ambivalent features, which points to the multifacetedness of their image and to the author and the Field Day Theatre Company's intention to write and stage a play that could represent the complexity of this reality. Nevertheless, other considerations, such as the superior force of the British soldiers over the rural Irish community, which achieves dramatic protagonism in the last scene of the play, seem to justify, from an imagological point of view, an interpretation of an image of Irish national identity embedded in a sacrificial-heroic narrative. This narrative is suggested by the fight for liberation against an oppressor who clearly overpowers the oppressed (the heroic part of the narrative) and by the tragic succumbing of the subaltern identity, which is left voiceless (the sacrificial part). The narrative follows one of the traditions of representation of Irish self-image.<sup>14</sup>

## 6. Textual analysis of the translations

In this section, we focus on the Catalan translations of the play and will apply to them the methodological approach described in Section 4.

The first Catalan translation (also the first translation in Spain) was carried out by Josep Maria Balanyà in 1984 and titled *Traduccions*. It was never staged or published – but was important for the Basque production of the play by Pere Planella<sup>15</sup> –, and can be found at the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona (Gaviña Costero 2010: 58). Balanyà's untimely death may have been one of the reasons why his translation of the play was never staged.

The second Catalan version of the play, titled *Traduccions/Translations*, also never published, was translated by Joan Sellent in 2013 and was staged in Catalonia with



great success by the theatre company LaPerla29, under the direction of Ferran Utzet.<sup>16</sup>

Our focus in this section is mainly on the written texts because, in the case of Balanya's translation, it was never staged. As for Sellent's translation, we will take into account the context of the translation and its paratexts (such as the critical and audience reception of the play, as well as the director's comments) in Section 7. Furthermore, even though we focus here on the translated text, there is, in our opinion, a direct link between Sellent's text and the actual staging of the play, which allows us to draw partial conclusions on the features of the image of Irishness inferred from the TT. This link seems to be determined by the following facts:

1. The translator's confirmation that the text we are analysing was the version used for the play, which included suggestions by the director and other participants.
2. The ST is an example of realist drama and this feature is preserved in the translation. Realism was also the main feature of the performance of the play in Barcelona, which we witnessed as part of the audience. It can be seen in the short video fragments available on the web and it is described as such in several theatre reviews (mentioned in Section 7). Stage directions, which are fundamental for the characterization of realist drama, were scrupulously taken into account during the staging of the play.
3. The play appears in LaPerla29's program under the title *Traduccions/Translations*. Moreover, in the posters advertising the play, as well as in its video trailer, still available on YouTube, the Catalan title *Traduccions* is crossed out by a line. The bilingual title and the visual sign of the line crossing out part of the title can be interpreted, in our opinion, as an indication of the aim to recreate as closely as possible the multiple effects and associations of the ST, shared by some of the participants in the translation process, such as the translator, the director, and the theatre company.

### 6.1. The Catalan translations

In this section we carry out a contrastive analysis of Sellent's and Balanya's translations of the play.

The two versions present a number of stylistic similarities. Both translators avoid an openly political reading of the play. They both use only Catalan to translate the speech of the Irish and English characters. Sellent, however, solves the translation problem represented by the contrast, in the ST, between the Standard English variety spoken by the soldiers and the Irish-English variety spoken by the Irish characters by recreating a "català popular" (Sellent 2015: 230). The term describes a Catalan variety that is not geographically or historically identifiable, though it shares features of the "central" variety, that is the one spoken in the central part of Catalonia, and has popular overtones. This variety is recreated by a number of strategies:

- Phonetic features typical of a popular variety: *io* /jɔ/ instead of *jo* /ʒo/ for the first-person pronoun (*I*) or *vui* /bui/ instead of *vull* /buʎ/ to translate *want*;
- Pronominal redundancy: *Hi vaig anar-hi* [there I went there] in which the locative pronoun *hi* [there] is repeated;
- Popular periphrasis like *tenir de* instead of *haver de* (both mean *have to*).

Sellent prefers to avoid using calques from Spanish, which are a common mimetic device for the evocation of colloquial Catalan. His translation choice can be inter-

puted as a critical stance both against purist language positions, which he defines in an article, as “orthopedic” (Sellent 2015: 230), and the “impoverished” Spanish-Catalan hybrid spoken by the new generations.

Both Sellent's and Balanyà's versions seem to prioritize a translation that is easy to understand and sounds natural to the audience. Sellent's translation is more fluent stylistically. Fluency is one of Sellent's translation priorities for several reasons. First, he is translating for the stage and is aware, as he argues (Sellent 2015: 233), that the idiomatic credibility of the performance, regardless of the theatrical devices authors use in their play, is fundamental in order for the audience to activate a willing suspension of disbelief. Second, in the case of *Traduccions/Translations*, fluency is even more necessary, since the audience's suspension of disbelief must overcome a double artifice: one that can be found in the ST, in which all characters speak English, another introduced by the TT, for which both Irish and English characters speak Catalan yet do not understand each other.

In Balanyà's version the language is slightly less fluent, with some interferences from English and stylistic calques. The fact that the play was not written for the stage from the beginning, and was never staged afterwards, may have limited the number of changes introduced in the text by the translator. Despite the differences between the two translations, the imagological representation of Irish national identity in the Catalan versions does not seem to be particularly affected, or is affected only insofar as Sellent's translation was also conditioned by its actual representation on stage. Let us consider now the three levels that help us define the image of Irishness.

#### 6.1.1. *The personal dimension*

In the analysis of the ST, we have identified a number of negatively connoted exterior features, such as shabbiness, drunkenness, dumbness, and a tendency to daydream that symbolize, in our opinion, the Irish characters' moral faults, their sense of failure, and a certain quixotic attitude towards life. These features successfully convey a sense of the complexity of reality and the potential inner contradictions present in ethical systems. In both Catalan translations we do not find significant changes in these features. As an example, let us consider the part of the stage directions in which Jimmy Jack Cassie is described (in all examples the emphasis on the relevant words is ours):

- 2) JIMMY JACK CASSIE [...] is a **bachelor** in his sixties, lives alone, and comes to these evening classes partly for the company and partly for the intellectual stimulation [...]. He never washes. His clothes – heavy **top coat**, hat, mittens, which he wears now, are **filthy** and he lives in them summer and winter, day and night.

(Friel 1981: 2)

- a) Jimmy Jack Cassie [...] és un **fadrí** de seixanta anys que viu sol i ve a aquestes classes de la tarda en part per la companyia que hi troba i en part per l'estimulació intel·lectual. [...] Porta la mateixa roba **llardosa** hivern i estiu: un **abric** gruixut, barret i mitenes.

[Jimmy Jack Cassie [...] is a sixty-year-old **bachelor** who lives alone, and comes to these afternoon classes partly for the company he finds there and partly for the intellectual stimulation [...]. He wears the same **grimy** clothes winter and summer: a thick **coat**, hat and mittens.]

(Friel 1981/1984: 1, translated by Balanyà)

- b) Jimmy Jack Cassie [...] és **solter** i té més de seixanta anys; viu sol, i assisteix a aquestes classes de tarda en part per tenir companyia i en part per l'estímul intel·lectual. [...] No es renta mai. Tota la roba que porta –un **sobretot** molt pesant, barret, manyoples (que duu posades ara mateix)– és **bruta**, i va vestit igual, estiu i hivern, de dia i de nit.  
 [Jimmy Jack Cassie [...] is a **bachelor** and is over sixty; he lives alone, and comes to these afternoon classes partly to have company and partly for the intellectual stimulation [...]. He never washes. All the clothes he has on (he is wearing a very heavy **top coat**, hat and mittens) are **dirty**, and he dresses the same, summer and winter, day and night.]

(Friel 1981/2013: 4, translated by Sellent)

The main differences between the two Catalan translations, which on the whole are similar, are the following: for *bachelor* Balanyà uses *fadrí*, a traditional, even old-fashioned word while Sellent uses *solter*, a more neutral equivalent, both meaning 'bachelor'; for *filthy*, Balanyà uses *llardosa*, also a traditional term which actually means 'dirty with grease' while Sellent uses *bruta*, which means simply 'dirty'; and for *top coat* Balanyà uses *abric*, 'coat,' while Sellent uses *sobretot*, a more precise equivalent meaning 'top coat.' As we can see, neither of the two translations changes the image of this character in any significant way and the differences between them are mainly stylistic, thus not affecting the representation of the character on stage.

As for the positively connoted features (the young characters' sturdiness and liveliness), they are similarly reflected in the translations even though with different degrees of adaptation.

Finally, the intellectual features of the characters (the knowledge of languages and mathematics and their good-humoured nature) can all similarly be found in both translations. In the translations, all Latin and Greek quotations are preserved. Despite Catalan being closer to Latin than Irish, the impression of the foreignness of Latin, as well as the audience's willing suspension of disbelief, contribute to preserving the humorous effects described in the ST.

These first observations on the similarities between both translations seem to be justified by the fact that most of the textual references to the exteriority of the characters in *Translations* cannot be considered cultural references (Newmark's gestures and habits) and are mainly included in the stage directions, which are not stylistically marked and do not represent a translation problem. However, if we broaden the notion of translation process by including in it, not only the translator, but also the director of the play and the actors, we realize that stage directions can actually become a major locus of image manipulation, as can be observed in the unpublished Spanish/Basque translation<sup>17</sup> carried out in 1988 by Teresa Calo and by Iñaki Alberdi and Julia Marín, which underwent heavy transformations (required by the stage director Pere Planella), unlike the Catalan production. In this translation, Manus is no longer lame, Hugh, as a consequence, is no longer charged with the moral responsibility of his son's lameness, and Sarah, though still dumb, expresses her feelings with an accordion. The characters appear more morally whole. In addition to this, in this version, the Irish characters speak Basque and the English speak Spanish. These changes lead to a more markedly political reading of the play and a polarization of the Irish and English images. Moreover, they stress the connection between language policies and the construction of national identities.

### 6.1.2. *The transpersonal dimension*

In the ST analysis we have highlighted the role played by cultural organizations and institutions such as, above all, the hedge-school and the national school in the definition of the image of Irishness. The hedge-school works on different levels of image formation. On the one hand, it contributes to determining the rural setting of the play. The rural dimension may be interpreted as an allusion to a state of poverty, but also to a state of relative simplicity and naiveté.

In addition to this, both hedge-school and national school have a clear symbolic value, as already described. In both translations, the first time the term *hedge-school* appears, it is neutralized: Balanyà translates it with *escola de pagès* [peasants' school], which summarises its characteristics, while Sellent uses a superordinate, *escola* [school], without specific connotations. In the successive occurrences of the term, *hedge-school* appears in opposition to *national school*, which is literally rendered by both translators (*escola nacional*).

The average Catalan spectator would probably be unaware of the precise meaning of *hedge-school*. However, the fact that it appears most of the time in opposition to *national school* makes it possible to contextually characterize it as a traditional rural Irish institution that was widespread at the time when the story unfolds. Examples of the translators' strategy are the following:

- 3) The **hedge-school** is held in a disused barn or hay-shed or byre.  
(Friel 1981: 1)
  - a) L'**escola de pagès** té lloc en una estança que tant pot ser un estable, un graner o una pallissa en desús.  
[The **peasant school** takes place in a room which may be a disused barn or byre or hay-shed.]  
(Friel 1981/1984: 1, translated by Balanyà)
  - b) L'**escola** està ubicada en un graner o vaqueria en desús.  
[The **school** is situated in a disused barn or cow-shed.]  
(Friel 1981/2013: 4, translated by Sellent)
- 4) Did you apply for that job in the new **national school**? [...] When it opens, this is finished: nobody's going to pay to go to a **hedge-school**.  
(Friel 1981: 6)
  - a) Has demanat treball a la nova **escola nacional**? [...] Quan s'obri l'altra escola, aquesta ja pot plegar: ningú no pagarà per venir **aquí**.  
[Did you apply for a job in the new **national school**? [...] When **the other school** opens, **this one** may as well shut up: nobody's going to pay to come **here**.]  
(Friel 1981/1984: 10, translated by Balanyà)
  - b) Has demanat aquella feina a la nova **escola nacional**? [...] Quan obrin aquesta escola s'hurà acabat, això: dingú voldrà pagar per **venir a estudi en un graner abandonat**.  
[Did you apply for that job in the new **national school**? [...] When [they] open **this school** will be finished: nobody will want to pay to come **to school in an abandoned barn**.]  
(Friel 1981/2013: 16, translated by Sellent)

Another example of translation of a cultural reference (material culture in this case) is the word *poteen*. The reference to this traditional distilled alcoholic beverage

in a text may prompt the evocation of certain features of the category of Irishness in different ways. In the first place, *poteen* may be associated with remote rural areas and the lower class of Irish society, since the drink, in past centuries, was often prepared illegally by private individuals and was popular among poor people.<sup>18</sup>

Let us now consider one of the first occurrences of the translation of this cultural element in the play. The moment in which the term *poteen* occurs is particularly important, since it prompts Yolland's reflection on the extreme difficulty of getting in touch with the shared knowledge of a group as an outsider, even if one masters the group's language on a superficial level.

5) YOLLAND: [...] Where is the **pot-eeen**?

OWEN: **Poteen**.

YOLLAND: **Poteen – poteen – poteen**. Even if I did speak Irish I'd always be an outsider here, wouldn't I?

(Friel 1981: 48)

a) YOLLAND: [...] On és l'**aiguardent**?

OWEN: En diem "**poteen**."

YOLLAND: "**Poteen, poteen**." Encara que parlés l'irlandès sempre seria un estrany, no?

[YOLLAND: [...] Where is the **liquor**?

OWEN: We call it "**poteen**."

YOLLAND: "**Poteen, poteen**." Even if I spoke Irish I'd always be an outsider, wouldn't I?]

(Friel 1981/1984: 30, translated by Balanyà)

b) YOLLAND: [...] On és el **potin**?

OWEN: **Poteen**.

YOLLAND: **Poteen... poteen... poteen**. Encara que parlés irlandès sempre seria un foraster, oi?

[YOLLAND: [...] Where is the **potin**?

OWEN: **Poteen**.

YOLLAND: **Poteen – poteen – poteen**. Even if I spoke Irish I'd always be a stranger, wouldn't I?]

(Friel 1981/2013: 39, translated by Sellent)

In Balanyà's translation, *poteen* is first translated as *aiguardent* [liquor], a cultural equivalent, and afterwards it is borrowed unchanged from the English, but a short explanation is added to Owen's answer: *en diem "poteen"* [we call it "poteen"]. The advantage of this translation solution is that the target readership becomes aware of the main features of the drink, since it is similar to *aiguardent*, and at the same time may grasp the fact that it is typically Irish. Sellent opts for a translation that focuses on an initial mispronunciation of the term (*potin*), which is then corrected by Owen using the English loan term *poteen*. The solution is formally closer to the ST, even though the features of the drink may not be immediately perceived. In both translations the cultural references to Irish tradition as well as its potential ideological value as a symbol of political opposition may only be recognized by audiences who are aware of Irish cultural history.

As for the use of another element of Irish material culture, soda bread, it appears in the original play a number of times, mainly in direct or indirect association with the characters of Manus and Hugh: Hugh "is very fond of soda bread" (Friel 1981: 71). Balanyà prefers to neutralize it in the first occurrence by translating it as *pa*

[bread] (Friel 1981/1984: 15) and to translate it with a descriptive made-up term afterwards: pa carbonat (Friel 1981/1984: 45). Sellent translates it literally as pa de soda (Friel 1981/2013: 21, 56).

Finally, references to the activity of turf collection and burning represent, in our opinion, both a cultural element and an element of the landscape. Balanyà neutralizes the reference by using the term carbó [coal] (Friel 1984: 3 and 15), while Sellent translates it with the equivalent torba [peat] (Friel 2013: 7 and 21).

### 6.1.3. *The non-personal dimension*

In the source text the main features of this dimension are the reference to elements of the landscape, such as the potato blight and the potato crop, together with the collection of turf or peat both as domestic and industrial fuel. From an imagological point of view, also in the TT, despite the neutralization of the term *turf* in Balanyà, these elements of the landscape contribute to defining an image of Irish identity as poor and rural.

As for the reference to the potato blight and, indirectly, to the Great Famine, this episode of Irish cultural history is possibly not so well-known abroad. By translating the general term *blight* with an equivalent in Catalan – malura, as in Balanyà's (Friel 1981/1984: 11) or Sellent's (Friel 1981/2013: 17) translations –, the preconditions for the allusion are preserved even though we can imagine that the repercussions on the Catalan audiences are different because they would probably be less familiar with the Great Famine. What are the consequences of this for the formation of the image of Irish national identity? We could hypothesize<sup>19</sup> that the hetero-image of Ireland does not undergo drastic changes, since the context of the play compensates for the lack of cultural information. However, it may suffer a simplification.

Finally, we have included in this dimension the reference to place-names. These elements are most of the times kept unchanged in the TT, as for example in the dialogue between Maire and Yolland, seen above in section 5.2.3.<sup>20</sup> The local colour is conveyed, and the target audience may – most of the time – distinguish the Irish place-names from their anglicised version from the context.

## 6.2. *An image of Irishness in the Catalan translations*

The analysis of Ditzé's three dimensions applied to Balanyà's and Sellent's translations shows that the elements identified during the study of the ST work in a similar way towards image construction in the TT, even though the neutralization or the weakening of a number of cultural references may also reduce the political and ideological implications that readers or the audience might perceive. This claim has hypothetical value, however, and needs to be verified by further studies. Since Catalan audiences are not necessarily acquainted with some of the Irish cultural elements, the cultural, political, and ideological implications may not be wholly understood, even when the elements carrying them are literally translated. These observations raise questions about the role of contextual elements in the image formation process in drama translation and lead to a number of reflections on the nature of images of a national identity, on how they can be built and transmitted through translation and on their role in the target culture.

### 6.3. *The contextual analysis of the translations*

Despite a weakening in the cultural elements' presence, the general outline and main features of the image of Irish national identity found in the ST still come across in the TT. What comes across, above all, is the narrative of oppression, colonization, sacrifice, and resistance that characterizes images of Irish national identity in opposition to hetero-images of English national identity. These images may be construed as similar to the narrative behind a widespread (though not the only) image of Catalan national identity. The sacrificial emplotment has been, in fact, a main feature of the narrative of Catalan national identity for a long time.<sup>21</sup> Several elements support our claim. First, the realist staging of the play, which we have mentioned earlier on and which alludes to a certain interpretation of the translated text carried out by translation actors, such as the stage director and the theatrical designer.

Second, evidence of this identification can be found in the numerous reviews of the play, which also attest its critical success: for example, in the critical reviews in *Time Out Teatre* (Gomila 2014), in *El Periódico* (Sorribes 2014), in *La Vanguardia* (Camps 2014), in *El Mundo* (Ragué-Arias 2014), and in *El Punt Avui* (Bordes 2014). In all these reviews we find explicit and implicit reference to this identification. Ragué-Arias (2014), for example, writes<sup>22</sup> that the play brilliantly and lightly deals with a subject that concerns all of Catalonia today, while Bordes (2014) comments<sup>23</sup> on the attack on language carried out by a not-at-all persuasive central government. The hypothesis of identification between Irish and Catalan images is also supported by the director's own comments in the on-line presentation for this LaPerla 29 theatre project, in which he mentions how difficult it was to understand why the play had not yet been staged in Catalonia, even though it directly addresses Catalans.

Finally, critical success does not always equal a successful reception of the play by audiences. In the case of *Traduccions/Translations*, the number of performances initially planned in the theatre program had to be increased later on, due to the successful sales of the tickets. This seems to be sufficient evidence of its popularity among Catalan audiences.

## 7. Discussion

Our study, thus, has made clear the type of identification that is achieved and how the features of the narrative of national identity, which contribute to characterizing certain images of national identities as discursive constructs, may function in translation. As for the way image-building features work in translation, we have observed that despite the weakening, in the TT, of a number of cultural elements that contribute to the definition of Irishness, the general outline of the image does not seem to be affected. This is mainly due, in our opinion, to two elements. On the one hand, images of a national identity as discursive constructs may be formed by a limited number of core features, which bear most of the weight in the process of image formation and consolidation. On the other hand, the cultural (especially political and ideological) context of a text, in our case Catalonia in a time of political unrest, contributes to determine where the accent falls in the choice of features that produce a given image of national character. If the translation of these core features is achieved without major shifts, then a similar general outline of an image of national identity

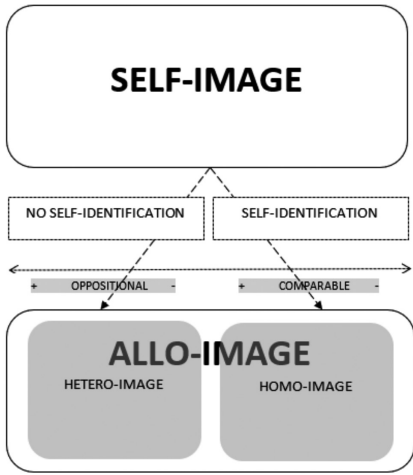


may be achieved in the target culture and may function in a similar way as in the source culture, irrespectively of the possible shifts in other features belonging to transpersonal and non-personal levels. Ditze (2006: 59) considers the personal dimension to be the most relevant for the creation of an image of a national identity. Most of the elements of this dimension in *Translations* do not represent a translation challenge, since they refer to general and not culture-specific categories (as would the category gestures and habits). Further elements of this dimension point to the Irish-English opposition, the lack of communication, and the subaltern position of the Irish characters, as represented by their exterior and social features.

The translation perspective applied to the imagological description prompts a reflection on the changes of the image status during and after the translation process and urges the refinement of the taxonomy available within imagology to describe them. The affinities between images of national identities, such as those perceived by Catalan spectators between Irish and Catalan identities, are a confirmation that self-images cannot be solely defined in terms of negative difference from the Other. As we mentioned in Section 3.1, the very notion of difference only makes sense if it is related to that of similarity (Mandler 2006). As a consequence, we define our self-images both in opposition and in relation to the Other. The affinity perceived between images of Catalan and Irish national identities is a clear example of what has already been observed in studies on identity. The complexity of the relationship between the self and the Other, as well as of the images that are produced, causes us to be unsatisfied with the general taxonomy of auto- and hetero-images, which may be ambiguously interpreted, and calls for a problematization of the theoretical apparatus of imagology. At the very beginning of this article we wrote that an auto-image is necessarily transformed into a hetero-image in translation. That is certainly true. Images of Irish national identity, despite being perceived as similar, or in some way comparable, are not auto-images of Catalan national identity. However, Irish hetero-images cannot be described as negative hetero-images, from the Catalan cultural point of view.

In order to overcome this binary, often negative, representation of an image, we prefer to adopt the additional term *homo-image*, as defined by Sorge (1998: 23), described in Section 3.1, which would serve to indicate similarities in difference. In the Catalan versions of the play, and especially in *Traduccions/Translations*, we find, thus, four different images of national identity: a) the homo-image of Irish national identity; b) the hetero-image of English national identity, opposed to Irish national identity; c) indirectly and never mentioned, the auto-image of Catalan national identity that is perceived as similar to Irish national identity; d) the hetero-image of Spanish national identity, which is also never mentioned, but is nevertheless present through the parallel, often drawn by Catalan audiences, between Spanish and English power positions in relation to Catalonia and Ireland, respectively. The use of the term *homo-image* leads to an additional difficulty, namely defining the relationship between auto-image, homo-image, and hetero-image. If hetero-image is defined as an image that is both different and/or opposed to an auto-image, then how is homo-image, which is still different from auto-image, to be defined? Our proposal is to introduce a further term, *allo-image*, that disambiguates the relationship by reducing the conceptual field of the term *hetero-image*, as can be seen in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1  
An image taxonomy



We propose using the term *allo-image* to indicate all images other than an auto-image. Within this category we would distinguish the hetero-image – a kind of allo-image opposed to an auto-image (for instance, the image of English national identity as opposed to the Irish auto-image) – from the homo-image – a kind of allo-image comparable to an auto-image (for example, the image of Irish national identity as interpreted by Catalan audiences in our case study). Our taxonomical proposal clearly disambiguates the kind of relationship existing between each image category. This proposal occurred to us only after having carried out the contrastive analysis of the ST and TT. We present it here as a result of our study, as our contribution to the development of the theoretical notions on image descriptions and as an example of the fruitfulness of the interconnection between TS and imagology.

8. Conclusions

By adopting the framework of imagology for the contrastive analysis of an Irish play and its two Catalan translations, we have described the features of the Irish auto-image and how this image has been transposed into Catalan for Catalan audiences. In this way we have achieved both our first objective, namely describing how translation can work as a tool of image formation in a target culture, as well as our second objective, showing how the combination of TS and imagology perspectives may contribute to theoretical developments in both disciplines. The translational perspective applied to this analysis has made us aware of the limitations of the binary opposition auto-image/hetero-image to describe the affinities between Catalan and Irish images of national identity which seem to have been perceived by the participants in the translation process. We have therefore proposed an adjustment to this terminology by introducing the term *allo-image*, which redefines the relationship between these concepts and provides a more fine-grained tool for imagological analysis.

## NOTES

1. See van Doorslaer, Flynn, *et al.* (2016) and Kuran-Burçoğlu (2000).
2. The play was first staged in 1980.
3. "[A] system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (Blažević 2012: 105).
4. The number of studies on the notion of identity and national identity is extensive and cannot be summarized here. Gleason (1983) draws a semantic history of the term. For a brief introduction see, among others, Mandler (2006), Jenkins (1996/2008: 16-27), and Deaux (2002).
5. Scientific approaches to the study of collective identities, rather than individual ones, are more recent. Mandler (2006: 274) remarks that "[s]ince the 1970s [...] at least three bodies of literature have sprung up to explain collective identity – Tajfel's 'social identity theory' (SIT), Turner's 'self-categorization theory' (SCT) and Stryker's 'identity theory' (IT)." He observes, however, that research on national identities in "real life" is more complex and is still at an initial stage of development (Mandler 2006: 274).
6. Other terminological proposals exist (see Ditze 2006: 30-42).
7. See, among others, Aaltonen (2000), Bassnett (1998), Brodie (2018), Curran (2007), Pavis (1992), the edited book by Upton (2000), and Volume 25, Issue 3 of *Target* (2013). A concise overview of the current bibliography on theatre translation can be found in Tarantini (2017: 20-24).
8. See also Kuran-Burçoğlu (2000).
9. See Howe (2002: 110-145) for detailed discussions on the various representations of Irish past and present by members of the group.
10. Friel's personal use of historical events and cultural stereotypes to achieve certain esthetical and dramaturgic effects and to prompt certain readings of the play elicited harsh criticism and sparked a debate that is still unresolved. Andrews (1992), from whose book *A Paper Landscape* (1975) Friel drew for the play, criticized historical "errors" in the play which cause biased readings of certain events. Longley (1994: 154-155) and Connolly (1987) similarly criticized Friel for the licenses he took and for reviving an old image of Ireland. Recently, Leersseen (2018: 257) wrote that "[i]n *Translations*, these historical events collapsed into a reductive anti-colonial master narrative that, above all, does great injustice to the actual Ordnance Survey mapping" and that "the continuing success of *Translations* still affirms and confirms a false view of this important episode in Irish cultural history, feeding anti-British moral outrage on factual errors" (Leersseen 2018: 258). Many other critics, however, preferred to stress the artistic function of this manipulation and denied a solely political reading of the play. Binnie (1991: 569), for example, acknowledges the relationship between the historic context and contemporary Irish problems (indirectly relayed to the audiences), but stresses "the gentle satire on Irish passivity" that is part of the complexity of the play. Both Boltwood (2007: 155) and Royo Grasa (2011: 213) observe that the treatment of the Ordnance Survey though suggesting a post-colonial reading of the play does not imply a lament for the loss of Irish culture, but suggests an ironic strategy highlighting how "language and cultures inevitably evolve" (Royo Grasa 2011: 213). For a summary of the debate until 2005, see also Richards (2005).
11. Except at the beginning of Scene II of the second act (Friel 1981: 61).
12. They do not seem to be randomly chosen by the author: their meaning may have veiled erotic connotations and may even be regarded as an ironic wink of the author to his Irish-speaking public. We are indebted to Dr. Patrick McCafferty, of the Research Centre for Minority Languages at the University of Leipzig, for making us aware of this fact.
13. For Heaney (1991: 559), Sarah stands for the Irish mythical figure of Cathleen-Ní-Houlihan, symbol of Ireland. Kelly (2008: 154), however, stresses the ambivalence of this character, who "was muted by her local community to begin with before the translation of that community into English." This interpretation alludes to the play's subtle challenge of fixed tropes of the Irish literary tradition.
14. On the existence of such a tradition, see Howe (2002: 236).
15. See below Section 6.1.1.
16. We would like to thank Joan Sellent for kindly sending us a manuscript of the translation.
17. The information on the text and its staging was retrieved from Gaviña Costero's doctoral thesis (2011: 358-370), in which the reception and translation in Spain of Friel's dramatic work are extensively analysed.
18. For a history of the development of the Poitín, see McGuffin (1978/1999). For the political meaning attributed to poteen in literature, see Sturgeon (2007).

19. A full verification of the hypothesis would imply some kind of empirical study focussed on audiences' reaction after seeing the play and their knowledge of the Irish cultural background, which is beyond the scope of the article.
20. There is one case in which Sellent has added a translation of the meaning of a place name into Catalan to the Irish and English one: "una zona que la gent del país anomena Bun na hAbhann... Burnfoot! **Peu Cremat!**" [a place that people here call Bun na hAbhann... Burnfoot! **Burned foot!**] (Friel 1981/2013: 33, translated by Sellent).
21. An example of this narrative is the celebration of the national Catalan holiday on September 11, which commemorates the sacrifice of the Catalan people during the siege of Barcelona in 1714 and their ultimate loss of independence.
22. "[...] nos habla con amenidad y cierta brillantez de un tema que hoy, en Cataluña, nos concierne a todos" [... it speaks to us in an agreeable and brilliant way of a subject that today, in Catalonia, concerns us all] (Ragué-Arias 2014).
23. "[...] perquè *Translations/Traduccions* té un aire èpic i dramàtic que, a més, coincideix prou amb l'atac a la llengua per part d'un govern central gens persuasiu" [... because *Translations/Traduccions* has an epic and dramatic air that also corresponds to an attack on the language by a central government that is not at all persuasive] (Bordes 2014).

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Plays under study and others

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## Appendix 2: Press reviews

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