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Mimesis and *Diegesis*: A Narratology of (Re-Mythologizing) Ireland

Abstract: Inherent in the narrative of Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* is the challenge of story telling itself. Moriarty's invokes the reader to sing into being a new Ireland. This is a space that is not fully articulated by Ricoeur's "threefold *mimesis*" account of narrative. This is the space of the diegetic (the telling of narrative) and provides us with supplementary insights that, although not ruled out, are at best relegated in Ricoeur's hermeneutics. In an attempt to account for the role of the diegetic as seen in Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* I focus on Kearney's "diacritical hermeneutics". While indebted to Ricoeur, Kearney's approach can be seen to incorporate the key features of the diegetic. Furthermore, *Invoking Ireland* can be seen to realise (in relation to Ireland) the normative goals of Kearney's proposed "diacritical hermeneutics".

Keywords: Hermeneutics, *Mimesis*, *Diegesis*, Narratology, Ireland, Plato, Moriarty, Ricoeur, Kearney.

Introduction

If one were to compare the following two accounts of Ireland, Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* and Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*, where would one start? It seems likely that one would first say that the first is an epic myth; or rather the fragment of an epic myth and the second is an anthology of sorts. In fact it would appear that Kiberd's text is an anthology of the narrative treatment of Ireland (be it mythic or not). What is clear is that the narrative of each is different to the other in a vital way; one is a recreation and telling of Ireland (Moriarty) and the other is an imitative demonstration of the narratives of Ireland (Kiberd). These two different hermeneutical approaches (to Ireland) present us with a challenge; what narratology are we to provide that will not only account for this difference but also maintain vitality in both anthology (fact) and myth (fiction) allowing for the narrative of Ireland to continue to flourish?

The distinction between narrative telling and narrative showing can be seen as early as Plato's contrasting of the diegetic (telling) with the mimetic (showing). Narrative retelling (*mimesis*) holds little value for Plato as

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he regards it as distant from truth. *Mimesis* is characterised as imitative. For Plato this imitation is a narrative mirroring of nature. It is from this point that we find the Platonic distinction between the philosopher and the poet/playwright. Plato regards the philosopher as solely engaged in mimetic narration and thus truth while the poet is “by nature at a third remove from the throne of truth” (1995, 579e). Instead the (mythic) poet is seen to occupy a different seat; the seat of *diegesis*. This follows Plato’s position that imitation (as opposed to creative imagination) is the superior form of creation. Ricoeur, for example, has advanced this concept of the mimetic. Ricoeur develops the idea that a threefold mimetic emplotment is central to narrative. Likewise Kearney extends the concept of the mimetic in his “diacritical hermeneutics” as a base for bearing witness to evil.

I shall argue, however, that a hermeneutics of narrative will better operate when it promotes the diegetic throne in addition to the mimetic one. This need not in anyway entail a discarding of these writings. As such Ricoeur’s account of the necessary ontology of narrative time is not being attacked but rather supplemented. Equally Kearney’s focus on the ethical import of what is to be done (in the face of the problem of evil) is not dismissed but developed. In short, where the mimetic is made explicit the aim is to also acknowledge the role of the diegetic to enable a fuller narratology.

Prince identifies the two common features of the diegetic; *diégèse* and *diégésis*. *Diégèse* is “the (fictional) world in which the situations and events narrated occur[s]” (1987, s.v. *diegetic*). *Diégésis* however is the act of “telling, recounting, as opposed to showing, enacting” etc. Given the hierarchy between *mimesis* and *diegesis* in Plato it is interesting that narrative telling/showing (*diégésis*) plays a central role in Platonic social and political theory. For example both senses of the diegetic can be seen in Plato’s “magnificent myth”. In his proposal for the idea state Plato proposes the following:

Socrates: *Now, I wonder if we could contrive one of those convenient stories...some magnificent myth that would carry conviction to our whole community...*

Glaucon: *What sort of story?*

Socrates: *Nothing new- a fairy story like those the poets tell and have persuaded people to believe...* (1995, 414c)

Likewise *Invoking Ireland* constitutes a diegetic myth. However Moriarty traces a different myth than Plato:

To Plato I say:

An Énflaith not a republic, a thing too unentomologically and exclusively human to bring out the best in us. It doesn't suit us. Worse, it doesn't suit the Earth. And that, in the end, must mean Hell-upon-Earth. (2005, 62)

The significance of this response to Plato cannot be underestimated. The Platonic “magnificent myth” although diegetic (in both senses; *diégèse* and *diégésis*) easily can be described as pathological. Moriarty’s invocation avoids Plato’s determinism and aim of mass deception. Perhaps Plato’s argument for a blatant enforcing of pathology explains what can be seen as the contemporary wariness regarding the diegetic; hence the appeal of mimesis. The advantage of the mimetic approach, *quod vide* Kiberd’s *Inventing Ireland*, is the reduced possibility of pathology. There is of course a possibility of an historical narrative becoming pathological, for example when such a narrative claims to imitate or retell history exactly “as” it occurred. When this occurs no longer is the narrative operating in the realm of the mimetic, the realm of “as if”/imitation. However a work such as Kiberd’s avoids this problem for the most part as by its very nature it is pointing to the fictive elements of narratives. In short Kiberd’s awareness of the creative construction of Ireland ensures an awareness of mimetic nature of his work. The benefit of Moriarty’s *Invoking Ireland* lies in its combination of the diegetic and the mimetic making it devoid of the pathological tendencies seen in Plato.

Diegesis

What we notice about both Moriarty’s and Kiberd’s texts, and this is made explicit in the titles of each, is that for both writers Ireland is, in the terms of Benedict Anderson, essentially an “imagined community”. This is in keeping with the concept of the “fifth province” which acts as a gateway to narrating about Ireland. Kearney describes the concept like so: “The fifth province can be imagined and re-imagined; but it cannot be occupied. In the fifth province it is always a question of thinking *otherwise*.” (1997, 100) The disposition to refigure Ireland in a sense is the essence of “fifth province” thinking. As such it is “where attachments to the local and the global find reciprocal articulation.” (1997, 99) While themes of island, migration, language, religion etc. all play significant roles in the narrative of Ireland the concept of the “fifth province” is central to the narratology of Ireland. This is because these dialectics can only be accessed through an active engagement and understanding of the “fifth province”. Kiberd approaches the “fifth province” as something to be understood, whereas Moriarty takes a more creative and reformative view. “The Fifth Province more a deed than a place.”(2005, 116)

In keeping with this tradition Moriarty regards Ireland not as a “final destination” but rather as a song (*diégèse*) to be invoked (*diégésis*). Working from within Irish storytelling and mythic tradition Moriarty seeks to “reconstitute ourselves as a people.”(2005, 7) This is done via an active regeneration of the “Fifth Province”. Here it is maintained that Ireland, as a

story, has to be engaged with. The logic follows that by engaging with the fifth province we invoke a new Ireland (“Énflaith”). In fact the idea of an invocation seems particularly suited to the Irish tradition where the experience has been that creative movements tend to precede political movements. Kiberd, for example, points to the Irish case of autonomy where cultural and literary independence preceded political autonomy. This is unlike France and the U.S. yet, akin to the experiences of developing world. *Invoking Ireland* is best seen as an imaginative approach to mythology employed as the first step to a better Ireland.

Invoking Ireland offers a choice of “two different ways of being in the world” (2005, 7) (or visions of the “fifth province”). Specifically the Fomorian way, exemplified by “Balor’s evil eye”, seeks to shape the nature to suit itself (an extreme *mimesis* perhaps). The Tuatha Dé Danann however let nature suit them. Moriarty characterises this way as the way of the “silver branch of perception”, that is the ability to re-figure myth with an “Ever-new Tounge” (2005, 10). It is not accidental that the exemplifications of each way are vision based, for it is a movement from blindness to praxis-based vision that Moriarty is attempting to invoke.

Regarding Ireland as engulfed by the Formorian way Moriarty invokes us, whoever is engaged with the narrative of Ireland, to travel the nine waves (*diégèse*) toward the way of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Significantly this journey is described in terms of an Orphic engagement (*diégésis*) with border areas (not just in the political sense). For Moriarty this metanoesis will herald an “Énflaith” (bird reign), not a restricted republic but a borderless myth where all live ecumenically with all.

The truth is this: those nine waves that surround Ireland and its islands are nine initiations into nine wholly unexpected dimensions of reality. To properly come ashore into Ireland therefore we need to sail, not over them, but into them, and through them. (2005, 37)

Thus, for Moriarty we can already see that Ireland is no mere physical island but rather a way of being that is part fantasy/part reality (*diégèse*). As such failing to poetically (*diégésis*) come ashore in Ireland entails a failure to engage with the fictional element (both mimetic and diegetic) of the narrative that is Ireland. To come ashore as the Formorians did (by the sword) is to succumb to pathologies of violence and disaster. Whereas to come ashore as the Tuatha Dé Danann have done, and as Moriarty is invoking us to do, is to come ashore in song (Orphically).

Mimesis

Ricoeurian reciprocity between time and narrative introduces a somewhat counter-intuitive dependency. That narrative would require an

account of time is clear, but that simultaneously time (and by extension human life, notions of being etc.) would be only intelligible insofar as it is narrated seems to be an insight limited for the most part to those who study hermeneutics. Here the Ricoeurian position is that time or for that matter a space, say Ireland, only becomes comprehensible (in fact only exists) through narration or as a song that one may sing. This insight elevates what is called the threefold mimetic emplotment of a story above an account of time based on a threefold present. Accordingly this threefold *mimesis* Ricoeur outlines like so:

*Mimesis*₁ is the prefiguring descriptive and poetic composition of the story. In effect it is an anticipatory understanding of the action involved.

*Mimesis*₂ develops this understanding by grafting the action of *mimesis*₁ onto an account of fiction. Here the followability/plausibility of the action is measured. For example Kiberd speaks of Yeats before he speaks of Joyce, and in turn speaks of Joyce before he speaks of Beckett.

*Mimesis*₃ explicitly *invokes* the reader to situate the narrative in time—in effect to render the story meaningful, for example by locating the narrative in the past, present, future, eternal etc.

The invocation required in *mimesis*₃ and the central role of the concept of emplotment in this approach position Ricoeur closer to the diegetic than one might first assume. *Diègèse* certainly resonates with the creative emplotting of *mimesis*₃ and here can be seen an openness to an account of narrative beyond the mimetic.

While the time setting invoked by Moriarty is not quite of the past, present, future variety the action here is similar. That is to say that the time of the fifth province (mythic time) as employed by Moriarty is resultant from a comparable choice to that found in *mimesis*₃. The difference that we find here is that the diegetic is more likely to invoke mythic time, whereas the mimetic will invoke a more standard form of time. Likewise the role of emplotment, in a mitigated form, carries over to mythic work. For example, we notice that Moriarty even employs headings such as “Ireland: A Prophecy” and “Ireland: Ultimately”. Finally it might be mentioned that the normative nature of *Invoking Ireland* ensures a certain future orientation in Moriarty that might not be present in all mythic writings but will be central to those engaged with the fifth province.

It will be useful to consider what might count as a mimetic example of Ireland *à la* Ricoeur. Here *Inventing Ireland* is informative. Kiberd focuses on the tracing of “the links between high art and popular expression...and [looks] to situate revered masterpieces in the wider social context out of which they came.” (1996, 3) In short this is to *show* us Ireland by explaining it as having an invented origin and perhaps more importantly to identify the origin of the concept of Ireland. Moriarty we noted *tells* us about Ireland, his invocation no doubt building on Kiberd’s analysis. (After realising Ireland

to be an invention, we progress to the issue of recreating it. We may say that highlighting the construction to be so is Kiberd's *forte* whereas Moriarty excels in the imaginative act of reconstruction.) In terms of our initial understanding of *mimesis* as simply imitative it is clear that Kiberd excels in the mimetic execution of the thesis that Ireland is an invention. For example Kiberd avoids mediation of his subject in his narrative by primarily focusing on the retelling of the invention of Ireland as opposed to reinventing Ireland. Kiberd outlines the narrative of the invention of Ireland as something to be shown and this is achieved through imitation. Hence the narrative traces the role of Ireland as a figure of imagination from "Anglo-Ireland" through "Revolution and War", "Protestant Revivals" to current reinventions of Ireland. It is as such that the difference between the Kiberd and Moriarty texts is clearest. Here we find Kiberd chronicling various reinventions of Ireland, Moriarty on the other hand performs his own reinvention.

If we apply the advanced (Ricoeurian) understanding of threefold mimesis as imitative as a result of emplotment we too find that *Inventing Ireland* provides a good example. As we have seen Kiberd employs his own historical time structure on his narrative. This imposition on the text, although necessary, is in keeping with the Ricoeurian claim regarding emplotment and is also visible in Moriarty. Despite the similarity of *diégèse* to *mimesis*³ there is a diegetic shaped lacuna in Ricoeur's hermeneutics.

Here Ricoeur's approach to the diegetic is revealing. Ricoeur rightly regards the diegetic as operating at a level of "presentification" where "the fact of 'narrating' and the thing 'narrated' are distinguished" (1984-8, Vol.2, 78). This awareness however is just that; an awareness. When it comes to the problem of pathological narratives Ricoeur's concern regarding the time of narrative takes precedence. For example, when approaching the work of Gérard Genette, among others, Ricoeur asks; "What is the time of narrative, if it is neither that of the utterance nor that of the *diegesis*?" (1984-8, Vol. 2, 83). While the connection between the Ricoeurian idea of emplotment and the creative form of *diegesis* (*diégèse*) is evident this question highlights the limit of Ricoeur's narratology. Specifically *diégésis* is overlooked and by extension the social and normative role of the diegetic is missed.

Nonetheless Ricoeurian hermeneutics offers us a useful means to understand mimetic narratives and other narratives insofar as they are mimetic. However beyond mimetic writings there remains the need to bare witness to narrative, be it narratives of Ireland or not. It is interesting to note that this need is identified in the example of mimetic narrative I have been using; Kiberd

The need now is to understand the inner experience of those caught up in the process [of an ever and rapidly changing Ireland]; and my belief is that

literature...can help us to recover many voices drowned out by official regimes or by their appointed chroniclers. (1996, 646)

Kiberd is here pointing to the need to account for the telling, that is the new and perhaps minority account of Ireland. For a hermeneutics of narrative the mimetic account of representation is useful but still somewhat incomplete, a missing feature in this account is the role played by *diegesis*. This does not mean that *diegesis* contradicts emplotment. Kearney's "diacritical hermeneutics" helps furnish us with the supplementary theory required to bridge the diegetic gap². Hitherto Ricoeurian threefold *mimesis* provides us with a narratology for understanding works such as *Inventing Ireland*, but what of *Invoking Ireland*?

"Diacritical Hermeneutics"

In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* Kearney advances the threefold *mimesis* of Ricoeur, outlining what he calls a "diacritical hermeneutics". "Hermeneutics addresses the need for critical practical judgements" (2003, 100) for example, how to deal with the problem of evil. The logic here being that if that human time (or space, say Ireland) is so through narration one can best institute (invoke being the first step) social improvement through narration. Kearney's approach is also threefold:

In the first stage practical understanding entails a movement from wisdom/*phronesis* to praxis. Evil here is grasped in a singular event (best in narrative understanding) thus enabling us to confront the ethical issues involved. Basically this entails making hermeneutic sense of evil.

The second critical stage is a working through of that narrative. In a sense these three stages can be regarded as analogous to the threefold *mimesis* of Ricoeur. This is in essence the necessity for mourning and cathartic regeneration. In this stage it can be said that we are working through the narrative of evil to get to a possible future. What then would that future look like?

In the final stage the confession of the second stage is met with forgiveness and pardon. This will be the only way of moving beyond a narrative of evil where there is the risk that we may succumb to pathologies of evil whereby we fail to accord the appropriate degree of care to the evil

² In relation to this diegetic gap it is worthwhile considering Plato. While the "magnificent myth" certainly is subject to this gap the text of the Republic is not. The reason for this is that to the reader of the Republic it is clear that myth outlined is a fabrication and thus not imitative of reality. This point I do not believe to be redeeming of the Platonic position as for most (of society) the "magnificent myth" is to be considered realistic. In terms of Plato's position this point is best understood as a reinforcing of the strict hierarchical society advocated in the Republic and revealing of that structure as pathological.

experienced. For example, where an event like the holocaust is explained in terms of “some kind of Master Narrative which explains it all away” (2002, 67) or in terms of “a medley of relativistic micro-narratives” etc. only narrative forgiveness ensures that we avoid pathologies of evil. The temporal shift is to ensure that we can give a future to the past.

Both authors display a similar reformative attitude. Moriarty; “If we, the Irish, are to become a great people there are some last things that we must undergo,” (2005, 79) namely a narrative invocation. Likewise for Kearney “hermeneutics addresses the need for critical practical judgements” (2003, 100). The difference here is that for Moriarty the ethical import of what is to be done is addressed by a diegetic narrative. That is to say that creatively through myth it is to be told.

Moriarty identifies those things that we must undergo as “the big questions”. It is clear what the big question is for Kearney: the question of evil, specifically how to deal with the alterity and humanity of evil. Taking the example of the holocaust Kearney advocates an ethical response to evil in terms of narrative. This case can be equated with Moriarty’s narrative response to the killing of Ireland’s last wolf.

Here, for example, is a big question: the shot that rang out one night in the Maam Valley in Connemara? What, compared to it, is the sailing of away of the Irish chieftains from Ireland? (2005, 97)

To which comes the explanation that:

*Lights gone out in Ireland’s last wolf are lights coming on
in a not inconsiderably larger wolf,
are lights coming on
in*

The Wolf of Vacancy. (2005, 110)

The Wolf of Vacancy is Moriarty’s term for the evil that “apocalyptic” that he seeks to tackle. It is fed by such horrible actions as the killing of Ireland’s last wolf and it is manifest by our blindness to this. Like the evil of the holocaust the Wolf of Vacancy has to be challenged by narrative otherwise we may fall in to pathologies of scapegoating. The forgiveness spoken of by Kearney in the final stage of his “diacritical hermeneutics” finds a voice here in the work of Moriarty. Interestingly it does so in not in wolf terms but in goat terms.

We can see *Invoking Ireland* mature through these three stages. In the first stage narrative understanding is required. The context for Moriarty’s singular event of praxis is provided by Kearney. Kearney points to the history of otherness where that which is evil is dealt with by scapegoating. This tendency can be seen in the identification of evil (for example the devil) with goat. “...[M]any myths seek to account for [evil] in terms of the sacrifice of some scapegoat.”(2003, 84) However as other, as scapegoat, evil

can never be overcome. This is because as such evil is avoided in the sense that the narrative of evil is not worked through to attain a possible future. Instead evil requires as “diacritical hermeneutics” claims that we avoid such alienating practices. Moriarty achieves this diacritical goal at the Puck Fair:

As I came out of a shop [...] the sun came out from behind a thunder cloud and the shadow of the goat fell full upon me, so that for a dreadful instant his beard was my beard, his horns my horns, his hoofs my hoofs. (2005, 112)

In this single “dreadful instant” Moriarty parachutes into the diacritical hermeneutic process. Here we get ethical response to evil in terms of diegetic narrative. Moriarty has become one with the Wolf of Vacancy, with the evil eye of Balor, the Formorians. And it is only after doing so that silver branch perception will be possible. Only by expanding these tales does Moriarty find the practical understanding described by Kearney. While such myths will at first appear anything but practical Moriarty is directly engaged with the contemporary role of these tales. The evil eye of Balor, for example, “is the modern economic eye.” (2005, 229) Amidst the dreamlike or mythic narrative such a concise realisation is startling. Here Moriarty is wholly engaged with what is required in the narrative of Ireland, of the Ireland that he is seeking to invoke. It would seem that (certainly in terms of the Fifth Province) that the benefit of myth is that it makes such realisations possible.

Here we can see that the type of myth that Moriarty produces does not correspond to the alterity forms of myth described in Kearney’s “genealogy of evil”. *Invoking Ireland* does not enable us to alienate ourselves from the problem of evil. As such *Invoking Ireland* fits better with the anthropological accounts described by Kearney. Anthropological accounts regard evil as something that ought to be fought against. For Moriarty this is the deed of the fifth province.

The Puck Fair is not an insignificant example for Moriarty to find inspiration from. Occurring as it does in his native Kerry it holds particular personal resonance for Moriarty, however, in it we too can find an interesting threefold format. This annual event takes place over a three-day period each August. The first day is known as the “gathering” day, the second the “middling” day and the third the “scattering” day. This structure in itself suggests a resonance with Ricoeur and Kearney. For the problem of evil to be faced, for Ireland to be improved such cathartic employment is required.

In the second stage “diacritical hermeneutics” further strives to push narrative beyond pathologies of violence. Similarly we find that the mythic narrative of *Invoking Ireland* strives to push Ireland beyond the Formorian way of being. In doing so the pathologies of martyrdom, motherland, and blood sacrifice are no longer available. Such myth is not redeeming but is progressive. This certainly is the case for Moriarty; instead

of offering a justification for Ireland he is daring all that we know and take to be true of Ireland. And as such Invoking Ireland offers us a perfect example of “myth [that] can serve as an ideological strategy for inventing symbolic solutions...”³ (Kearney, 1997, 109) For Kearney it is only the working through of the narrative that makes a future possible. The same imperative exists for Moriarty, only when we work through the narrative of Irish mythology will a new narrative be possible, one in effect has to understand (or at very least narrate) the Formorian way before reaching *Ind Énflaith*.

In short “by transforming the discourse of sublime disorientation, alienation and victimization into practices of just struggle and forgiveness, might not a hermeneutics of action offer some kind of (if by no means a solution) to the challenge of evil?” (1997, 106) asks Kearney. This could equally be put in Moriarty’s terms; would not an Orphic invoking of Silverbranch perception be the best remedy to Balor’s evil eye?

...[W]e will do well if...we Orphically sing...*Am Énflaith* (2005, 129)

What we learn is that a mimetic approach to a problem like evil will certainly help but a hermeneutics of narrative will also call for a diegetic approach. The benefit of a work like Moriarty’s is that it makes explicit the necessity of the diegetic for diacritical narratives. By invoking Ireland he is not only performing the mimetic acts of showing and enacting, he is also engaging in a process of telling us about, prophesying and daring us to create a better Ireland. It is useful to note that this better Ireland is not only in the narrative sense, hence the political, social, religious and cultural import of the work. For Moriarty these spheres are normatively approached in the fifth province. After all the question of “Ogma”, that is the question of existence and how one is to be is “the first and the only philosophical question that bothered and intrigued the Tutha Dé Danann.”(2005, 28)

Kearney’s “diacritical hermeneutic” further provides us with the tools to comprehend the operation of Moriarty’s text. For example, silver branch perception sees Moriarty achieve the final stage of practical understanding. In myth grounded in practice Moriarty avoids presenting a form of pathological narrative. This borderland position between fiction and reality places Moriarty firmly within the classic description of Irish philosophers (as argued by Kearney in *Postmodern Ireland*) as “transgressors

³ This quote from Kearney continues “...to problems of sovereignty which remain irresolvable at a socio-political level.” Here an interesting comparison can be made with the joint proposal of Kearney and Cullen presented to the New Ireland Fourm, Dublin Castle, 5th December, 1983 (available in chapter 5 of PNI pp 70-74). Kearney and Cullen offer a political rethinking of Ireland focused on the issue of national identity whereas Moriarty offers a mythic rethinking of Ireland likewise founded on national identity.

of boundaries". Where Berkeley contravened the distinction between appearance and reality, Toland transgressed the distinction between Irish and not Irish and Tyndall mixed science and philosophy we now find Moriarty.

Like these writers Moriarty proposes a borderless place. As we have seen in Moriarty's response to Plato *Ind Énflaith* is a narrative that is "universally ecumenical". (2005, 63) The pathology of the Platonic "magnificent myth" is clearly at odds with the goal of "diacritical hermeneutics". Plato's "magnificent myth" is unsurprisingly close to the classical conception of myth (*mythos*) whereby the task of the narrative is to present events "as" they occurred. *Invoking Ireland* avoids this aim and outcome for as we have seen Moriarty's *Énflaith* invokes the animal and the human, the contemporary and the ancient. This is best seen in Moriarty use of myth where both the real and the fictional are invoked. Kearney realises that it is only via such compounds that the scope for social progression can be provided, hence the third stage of "diacritical hermeneutics". Specifically it can be said that avoidance of pathological sentiment in Moriarty, as opposed to Plato, is resultant from the diegetic nature of *Invoking Ireland*. The reason for this is that with the diegetic there is no ambiguity between the story and the subject, but rather a complex of diegetic levels as we have seen. *Mimesis* on the other hand presents the story "as if" it were real.

"In the face of resurgent nationalism fired by rhetoric's of purity and purification, we must cling to the recognition that we are all happily mongrelised, interdependent, impure, mixed up." (Kearney, 1997, 188) The merit of *Invoking Ireland* is that it *tells* us about; it *creates* such a narrative compound- *Ind Énflaith*. In effect Silver Branch perception is the recognition that Kearney speaks of. In the words of Moriarty "the Silver Branch is a universal ontology" (2005, 152) but crucially this ontology is not pathological as "its singing [is] the singing of everything" (2005, 152): fact and fiction, "as" and "as if". In the words of Paul Durcan:

Invoking Ireland is a book to be read in silence on street corners wherever people gather on Easter Monday, 2006. For, what lies behind the almost hysterical anxiety to mark the 90th anniversary of 1916? The 90th anniversary is the grandmother of all identity crises. (2006)

At this stage it is clear that "diacritical hermeneutics" does permit the diegetic as it is fighting the "teratology of the sublime" that Kearney identifies in certain postmodern writings. It is after all a guide to what is to be done; it does not simply rest in showing us what has occurred. Diacritical hermeneutics calls us to actively engage with the narrative. It is, in short, an ethical challenge. Likewise, in not just showing us Ireland invoked, Moriarty is invoking us to not just see it he is daring us to invoke it. *Diegesis* is that which tells us "if only we had eyes to see, we would see that the silver

branch being itself is no more wonderful than any ordinary ash branch or oak branch being itself.”(2005, 137)

For our purposes the following line is one of the most significant in Moriarty’s work. “The Fifth Province more a deed than a place.”(2005, 116) The significance is twofold. In addition to emphasising the normative role of his work it is the most diegetically challenging. This line is delivered not by Moriarty but by the figure of Yeats. Yeats, that great inventor of Ireland, is here employed, in the words of Genette, on a metadiegetic, intradiegetic and homodiegetic level. This point is metadiegetic in the sense that it is made within a greater diegetic-namely Moriarty’s *Invoking Ireland*, intradiegetic insofar as this point is part of Moriarty’s greater diegetic narrative yet is not made by Moriarty, and finally is homodiegetic as Yeats is a character, and a significant one at that, in the narrative recounted-namely the fifth province. This complexity of diegetic levels emphasises the diacritical importance of *Invoking Ireland*. Here we find that when a figure such as Yeats achieves such praxis cathartic regeneration is possible. Genette claims that this complex diegetic “narrative is a form that goes back to the very origins of epic narrating...” (1980, 231) Here Genette points to “the narrative Ulysses makes to the assembled Phaeacians.”(1980, 231) That Homeric myth displays these diegetic levels only serves to emphasise the value of mythic narrative for diacritical hermeneutics.

In being a deed as opposed to a final place the Ireland invoked by Moriarty is devoid of pathological sentiment. It is this fresh understanding of Ireland that Kiberd too understands. If the notion of “Ireland” seemed to some to have become problematic, that was only because the seamless garment once wrapped like a green flag around Cathleen ní Houlihan had given way to a quilt of many patches and colours, all beautiful, all distinct, yet all connected too. (1996, 651)

Conclusion

Thinking back to the earlier comparison between Kiberd and Moriarty we now find that each present a different approach to what is called the Fifth Province. Both writers launch from the same premise that Ireland is an “imagined community”. However from here Kiberd and Moriarty diverge. Kiberd shows the history of the imagining of Ireland, Moriarty re-imagines Ireland. While normativity is central to Kearney’s “diacritical hermeneutics” it is not clear that *diegesis* is Kearney’s vision for its achievement. Given this point what can be said is that *diegesis* as found in mythic works such as *Invoking Ireland* provides a worthy example, if not exclusive, of “diacritical hermeneutics”. Such mythic writing achieves much of the aims of Kearney. In short *Invoking Ireland* is not a myth *vis-à-vis* Plato’s

pathological “magnificent myth”, rather it is infused with diacritical significance revealed diegetically.

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