

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

Brian Friel's *Translations* explores the condition in imperial era, when Ireland must face the British Empire. The condition of Irish community is uncertain because of the control from the British on them. This play represents the condition of the Irish community, including its social condition, political life, culture, and language. The analysis of this play will be focused on the condition of Irish community and its language, the process of mapping Ireland and standardization the Irish language into English, and the impact of British imperialism through standardized language of Ireland.

#### **A. The Condition Of Irish Community In Baile Beag And Its Language As Represented In the Play**

##### **1. Social Condition**

*Translations* deals with the condition of the Irish community in 1833 when Britain tries to dominate Ireland. Britain dominates Ireland through an Ordnance Survey that is lead by the British Royal Engineers (Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland). The setting of *Translations* is a small village of Baile Beag, an Irish-speaking community in County Donegal, Ireland. The Irish community of Baile Beag also builds a hedge school in their village.



The hedge school is held in a disused barn or hay-shed or byre. Along the back wall are the remains of five or six stalls—wooden posts and chains—where cows were once milked and bedded. A double door left, large, enough to allow a cart to enter. A window right. A wooden stairway without a banister leads to the upstairs living-quarters (off) of the schoolmaster and his son. Around the room are broken and forgotten implements: a cart-wheel, some lobster-pots, farming tools, a battle of hay, a churn, etc. There are also the stools and bench-seats which the pupils use and a table and chair for the master. At the door a pail of water and a soiled towel. The room is comfortless and dusty and functional—there is no trace of a woman's hand. (11)

From these descriptions, it can be seen that the condition of hedge school is very miserable. The Irish community only uses a small room for their activities. The room is full of agricultural implements, and it is very comfortless. Actually, the room is not suitable for study. But on the other side, this hedge school is very helpful in giving education about Irish language and culture.

The characters of this play speak in different language; Greek, Latin, and English. They have their own ability, especially in literature and culture. Sarah is unable to speak to another person. She has difficulties in saying a word. Jimmy Jack Cassie is fluent in speaking Latin and Greek. He lives in the world of gods and ancient mythology. Maire always wants to learn English. Doalty is a friendly and open-minded person. The last is Bridget, who is a cunning woman and always talks friendly to others. The headmaster is Hugh, a Gaelic poet who is always proud of Irish literature. He has two sons, Manus and Owen. Manus lives with him and sometimes he helps to teach the pupils in the hedge school. Owen has left Baile Beag and works in Dublin. All of these characters will build the play wholly.

Besides that, Baile Beag is an agricultural village in which most of the people work as a farmer. They plant potatoes to fulfill their daily needs, and for several years, the harvest is always success. But at that time, potato harvest is fail. Potato famine happens in Baile Beag. The harvest is fail, and many people will starve. The condition of potato famine can be seen from Maire's statement below.

**MAIRE:** Sweet smell! Sweet smell! Every year at this time somebody comes back with stories of the sweet smell. Sweet God, did the potatoes ever failed in Baile Beag? Well, did they ever—ever? Never! There was never blight here. Never. Never. But we're always sniffing about for it, aren't we?—looking for disaster. The rents are going to go up again—the harvest's going to be lost—the herring have gone away for ever—there's going to be evictions. Honest to God, some of you people aren't happy unless you're miserable and you'll not be right content until you're dead! (21)

Potato is the main food for the Irish community of Baile Beag, and they always depend on potato harvest. But at that time, the Irish community is very worried about potato blight. The condition gives a sign that the potato harvest will fail, and it can cause potato famine. The condition will give bad effects for them, disaster for its community, and they will live in a miserable condition.

The condition of potato famine in *Translations* represents the condition of Ireland in 1845. During 1800's, potato became the main food for the Irish community because it was suitable with the climate in Ireland, could be grown easily even in poor soils. The Irish community always depends on potatoes. In 1841, the population growth rapidly because people married early in life and they tended to have large families. On the other side, Ireland also lacked of major industrial centers. In 1845-1851, three-quarters of the Irish potato crop were destroyed by blight.

All of these conditions had caused the Irish community suffered. Landlords evicted hundreds of thousands the Irish peasants, then placed them into disease-infected workhouses. The condition in the workhouses was miserable. Disease and violence were common problems among the member of the Irish peasants. Before the potato famine, more than 8 million people had lived in Ireland. Between 1845 and 1851, over a million people died, either from starvation, cholera, and other famine diseases.

On the other side, the British Empire will build a new national school in Baile Beag. The new national school will be built in Baile Beag for the Irish community, especially their children.

**BRIDGET:** And every child from every house has to go all day, every day, summer or winter. That's the law. (22)

**BRIDGET:** And from the very first day you go, you'll not hear one word of Irish spoken. You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught through English and everyone'll end up as cute as the Buncrana people. (22)

From the statement above, it seems that the British build a new national school to obliterate the hedge school there. The hedge school will be forbidden in Baile Beag. The national school will be the only place for the Irish community in getting education. English will become the main language in this national school. Through this new national school, the British will forbid the Irish community to speak Irish language and maintain Irish culture.

Social condition in Baile Beag is getting worse along with the coming of the British. The Irish community suffers because of potato famine, and they must get education through the hedge school. Now they must face the coming of the

British along with Ordnance Survey and a new national school in Baile Beag. This condition will influence their existence, because the British will dominate their life.

## 2. Political Life

Political life in Baile Beag is uncertain. The hedge school in Baile Beag is a choice for the Irish community in getting education. The hedge school in *Translations* is a representation of the condition in Ireland. This condition is started in 1600's, after the Battle of the Boyne, when the Protestant Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was firmly established as the ruling class of Ireland.

In 1688, Britain is lead by King James 2<sup>nd</sup>. James was a Catholic and introduced laws for religious toleration. The British Parliament became suspicious that James was trying to make Britain as a Catholic country. The situation was complicated when James' daughter, Mary, married William, a Dutch Protestant. Then William became heir of the throne. At the same time, James made his brother-in-law his viceroy in Ireland. Because James was a Catholic, it was easy to find support in Ireland. But the Protestant in Ireland opposed this condition. The condition changed worse when James had another son, and regarded his Catholic son as his heir. On the other side, the British Parliament regarded William as heir. Then the Parliament invited William to take over the monarchy. In 1689, James fled to France and William became a king of Britain. The Protestant in Ireland joined the revolution and declared their support for William. After a while, James landed in Ireland to get support from the Catholics to start

his fight back. Then, William came to Ireland, and commanded the Irish Protestants to against James' army. The battle between William and James took place at the River Boyne on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1690. The southern Irish supported James, and the northern Irish, mostly Protestants, backed William. In the battle, William won and James fled to France. The Battle of the Boyne is a representation of James' attempt to regain the throne of Britain. This condition made the Protestants has power over Ireland. To secure the position of the Protestants from the Catholics, a set of anti Catholic laws were made (Online).

The Treaty of Limerick permitted Catholics to practice their religion, but still forfeited their land. After the Treaty of Limerick, a series of Penal Laws were passed to rid Ireland of Catholicism, by forcing Catholics to become Protestants. The Penal Laws (1695) prohibited Catholics to send their children abroad to receive a Catholic education, excluded Catholics from teaching in Ireland, banned the Catholics from having a gun, being professionals, being involved in politics, and owning land (Online). Then, the Catholics became a discriminated community in Ireland. Because of discrimination from the Protestants in getting education, the hedge school was the answer for the Irish peasants. The hedge school was held behind hedges, illegal, and the students were taught through Gaelic language. The students were taught the language and literature.

Political life in Baile Beag also represents the 1798 rebellion. It can be seen from Hugh's statement when he speaks to Owen and Jimmy.

HUGH: Take care, Owen. To remember everything is a form of madness.  
*(He looks around the room, carefully, as if he were about to leave it forever. Then he looks at Jimmy, asleep again.)*

The road to Sligo. A spring morning. 1798. Going into battle. Do you remember, James? Two young gallants with pikes across their shoulders and the *Aeneid* in their pockets. Everything seemed to find definition that spring—a congruence, a miraculous matching of hope and past and present and possibility. Striding across the fresh, green land. The rhythms of perception heightened. The whole enterprise of consciousness accelerated. We were gods that morning, James; and I had recently married *my* goddess, Caitlin Dubh Nic Reactainn, may she rest in peace. And to leave her and my infant son in his cradle—that was heroic, too. By God, sir, we were magnificent. We marched as far as—where was it?—Glenties! All of twenty-three miles in one day. And it was there, in Phelan's pub, that we got homesick for Athens, just like Ulysses. The *desiderium nostrorum*—the need for our own. Our *pietas*, James, was for older, quieter things. And that was the longest twenty-three miles back I ever made. (*Toasts Jimmy.*) My friend, confusion is not an ignoble condition. (67)

Through the 1798 rebellion, the Irish community has a hope for their future. They hope for a better life without getting political interference from the British. The spirit of 1798 rebellion is still alive in each person of the Irish community. This rebellion is a proof that the Irish community also has a hope to decide their own future. They have awareness to change their life, defend their rights, and plan their future. Situation of the battle represents the condition in 1798, when the United Irishmen against the British.

In 1799, a new organization was formed in Ireland. This organization (The United Irishmen) was lead by Wolfe Tone, and consisted of Protestants and Catholics. They wanted a peaceful future for Ireland in which Protestants and Catholics can live together in peace and equality. On the other side, the British saw the United Irishmen as a national threat for them. In 1798, the British began to attack and murder the members of the United Irishmen. As a leader of the United Irishmen, Wolfe Tone ordered his members to have their rebellion before

the British destroyed them. But the British could defeat the United Irishmen after several hundreds of its members were slaughtered (Online).

Political life in Baile Beag is not different with its social condition. They do not have any right in political life. Several political laws are made to forbid them in political activities. Eventhough they try to get their freedom, the British is still has power over Baile Beag. They still have unstable political life because of control from the British.

### 3. Culture and Language

The Irish culture is very worthy for its community. The community is very proud of their heritage, culture, and literature. The pride to their culture has caused sympathy from Lieutenant Yolland. He is very interested to the Irish community, even though he is one of the British Royal Engineers. It can be seen from his statement to Hugh.

**YOLLAND:** I mean—I feel; so cut off from the people here. And I was trying to explain a few minutes ago how remarkable a community this is. To meet people like yourself and Jimmy Jack who actually converse in Greek and Latin. And your place names—what was the one we came across this morning?—Termon, from Terminus, the god of boundaries. It—it—it's really astonishing. (42)

Culture is related to all of people in an area. It can be used to show their identity because it is concerned with how people see themselves. A community has its own characteristics in its culture. Culture reflects the way they live and survive in its community. It can also be seen in the Irish community of Baile Beag.



Lieutenant Yolland feels that it is very hard for him to live in Irish community with its special characteristics.

In responding to Yolland's statement, Hugh also agrees about its special language and literature.

**HUGH:** Indeed, Lieutenant. A rich language. A rich literature. You'll find, sir, that certain cultures expend on their vocabularies and syntax acquisitive energies and ostentations entirely lacking in their material lives. I suppose you could call us a spiritual people. (42)

From Hugh's statement, it can be seen that the Irish community is proud of their language and literature. Irish is a rich language and literature. Words should not only have good pronunciation and spelling, but also full of meaning. Irish language can give spirit in their life. The Irish' pride shows their allegiance to Irish heritage and history.

As a British, Lieutenant Yolland also feels as a stranger within the Irish community. Their heritage, culture, and history influence the way the Irish face an outsider like Lieutenant Yolland. It can be seen from his lament to Owen about his desire in learning the Irish language.

**YOLLAND:** Poteen—poteen—poteen. Even if I did speak Irish I'd always be an outsider here, wouldn't I? I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won't it? The private core will always be ... hermetic, won't it? (40)

Each community has its own language and culture. It will be difficult for an outsider, with its different social background, to adjust its language and culture. It will be difficult for an outsider to live in Baile Beag, because there will be differences between the Irish person and the British. The outsider can learn the language and culture, but they are still cannot be a part of its community. It is

difficult to live in different places, along with its different culture. A person should adjust the culture of the community that has different characteristics, including their ideas and thoughts about an outsider.

The names of the Irish person also show their identity. It can be seen from the conversation between Owen and Sarah.

OWEN: That's a new face. Who are you?

*(A very brief hesitation. Then.)*

SARAH: My name is Sarah.

OWEN: Sarah who?

SARAH: Sarah Johnny Sally.

OWEN: Of course! From Bun na hAbhann! I'm Owen—Owen Hugh Mor. From Baile Beag. Good to see you.

*(During this OWEN-SARAH exchange) (28-29)*

The name of Sarah and Owen carry not only identity, but also as an origin and a lineage. Sarah Johnny Sally from Bun na hAbhann is crucial in defining her identity. From her name, another person will know that her family's name is Johnny Sally and she comes from Bun na hAbhann. The same thing also can be seen from Owen Hugh Mor from Baile Beag. Another person will understand that his family name is Hugh Mor and he comes from Baile Beag. Both of those names show their origin and lineage as Irish people. This condition shows that naming is a way of identifying, knowing, and understanding. Through naming, the other people can identify, know and understand the origin and lineage of another person.

As stated previously, the Irish community speaks different languages; Greek, Latin, and English. In Baile Beag, the Irish language is very important, and each word has deep meaning for its community. The Irish language is derived from such conditions and experiences that happen in its community, such as a

crossroad called Tobair Vree, which is identified as Brian's well. But the well is not exactly in that location, and has been dried up since a few years ago. The story of this place is about an old man called Brian, whose face is disfigured by an enormous growth, and he goes to the well to wash his face every day for seven months. But the growth does not go away, and one morning, Brian is found drown in that well. Then, the crossroads is called Tobair Vree. This is one example of the experience and social condition of the Irish community in using a name for a crossroad.

There are also other examples of Irish language, such as, Bun na hAbhan, literally means the mouth of the river, Druimb Dubh means the black ridge, Lis na Muc means the fort of the pigs, etc. The history of the Irish community is embodied in the Irish language along with the meaning itself. This condition is related to what is stated by Ashcroft et al., "Language is a material practice and as such is determined by a complex weave of social conditions and experience" (41). The Irish place names are determined by social conditions and experience of the community itself. The Irish language shows the experience of its civilization as a unity of the Irish people.

The Irish language is related to the past; the history they have, and it is very worthy for community. Hugh also shows his pride to the Irish language. Then Hugh says that Lieutenant Yolland will learn how to understand the life of its community.

**HUGH:** ... I understand your sense of exclusion, of being cut off from a life here; and I trust you will find access to us with my son's help. But remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen—to use an image you'll

understand—it can happen that a civilisation can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of...fact. (43)

Language is a part of human life. By words, people can express their thoughts, ideas, and even their experiences to the others. Word is a signal for the people itself and it can be a flexible matter related to the social condition of an area. It will be difficult if the people cannot adjust the social condition in their place. Hugh refers that there is not only Yolland's inability to express himself in Irish community, but also Ireland's inability to sustain its history under Britain's rule. It can also make the Irish community difficult to accept English as a new language. This condition is related to the statement from Ashcroft et al. that "Language possesses power over truth and reality" (81). A language has power in defining reality of a civilization. The Irish community may be defined through its language.

## **B. The Process Of Mapping Baile Beag And Standardizing The Irish Language Into English As Represented In The Play**

### **1. The Process of Mapping Baile Beag**

*Translations* shows British imperialism through an Ordnance Survey of Ireland to control its land. This survey has a task in mapping Baile Beag and standardizing the Irish place names into English. The British Royal Engineers (Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland) are ordered to do the mapping of Baile Beag and standardization the Irish language into English. Captain Lancey is a cartographer who will map the whole area of Baile Beag, and Lieutenant Yolland

comes from the toponymic department who will give name to all places in Baile Beag.

Ordnance Survey in Baile Beag represents the condition of Ireland in 1824. In 1824, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Colby ordered An Ordnance Survey of Ireland. The British government authorized the survey because the local taxes in Ireland were inequitable. The confusion of the area division made the valuations also very doubtful. Along with potato famine, the Ordnance Survey of Ireland displayed the Irish landscape with its population and recorded every cottage and cabin, road and field, also town and village accurately (Online).

*Translations* describes the condition when the British Empire authorizes its army in mapping Baile Beag. The British superiority can be seen from the character of Captain Lancey.

LANCEY: I see. (*He clears his throat. He speaks as if he were addressing children—a shade too loudly and enunciating excessively.*) You may have seen me—seen me—working in this section—section?—working. We are here—here—in this place—you understand?—to make a map—a map—a map and— (30)

Through his language, Captain Lancey disrespects the Irish community because he speaks rudely. Captain Lancey speaks in front of the Irish community as if they are small children who do not know anything, especially English language. The condition is getting worse because the British use a big machine to dig the ground in getting an accurate scale of its land.

DOALTY: Up in the bog with Bridget and her aul fella, and the Red Coats were just across at the foot of Cnoc na Mona, dragging them aul chains and peeping through that big machine they lug about everywhere with them—you know the name of it, Manus?

This process shows that the British does not think about the Irish community, but only think about their own benefit. The British uses this machine to destroy Baile Beag. The British Empire will survey the land to make the detail map of Ireland, as said by Captain Lancey to Owen and all member of the hedge school.

LANCEY: I see. Yes. Very well. Perhaps you're right. Well. What we are doing is this. (*He looks at OWEN. OWEN nods reassuringly.*) His Majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey of this entire country – a general triangulation which will embrace detailed hydrographic and topographic information and which will be executed to a scale of six inches to the English mile. (31)

The sapper will make an accurate map, including detail hydrographic and topographic information. Every stream, river, rock, hill, and rural place will be mapped in a new form. This condition is related to statement from Said, that “Imperialism is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control” (225). Every space of Baile Beag will be explored and charted in a new map. Through the new map of Baile Beag, the British will control its land and community.

The new map will be useful for the Irish because they will get the accurate information about the boundaries between Ireland and other places in Britain.

LANCEY: This enormous task has been embarked on so that the military authorities will be equipped with up-to-date and accurate information on every corner of this part of the Empire. (31)

It seems that the British will use its army to force the Irish community to cooperate with the survey. The military is ordered to do the task because the British thinks that the authority is very helpful in doing the survey of Baile Beag.

On the other words, the British Army is skillful to force the Irish community accept their condition.

**LANCEY:** In conclusion I wish to quote two brief extracts from the white paper which is our governing charter: *(Reads)* 'All former surveys Ireland originated in forfeiture and violent transfer of property; the present survey has for its object the relief which can be afforded to the proprietors and occupiers of land from unequal taxation.' (31)

Through a military force, the British will expand its power in Baile Beag. The British will make Baile Beag as a part of its Empire. The British government will control the Irish community and its land through this new map. Captain Lancey also adds that the mapping of Baile Beag is made for the benefit of Irish community itself. The detail map of Baile Beag can help the Irish community from unequal taxation.

**LANCEY:** 'Ireland is privileged. No such survey is being undertaken in England. So this survey cannot but be received as proof of the disposition of this government to advance the interests of Ireland. ' My sentiments, too. (31)

The survey is undertaken in Baile Beag for the progress of its community. Captain Lancey hopes that the Irish people will cooperate with the sappers. The survey becomes a proof of government's interests in Baile Beag to reduce their taxes. But actually, it is only a reason for the British to get attention from the Irish community. The British tries to influence the Irish community in purposing to get sympathy for the survey itself. By mapping the land, the British will possess power over the Irish community of Baile Beag.

## 2. The Process of Standardizing the Irish Language into English

Instead of mapping Baile Beag, the British will also standardize all place names of the land. This task is used to translate the Irish place names into English and Lieutenant Yolland will lead this task. Owen will also help in translating these words. Lieutenant Yolland and Owen work either to change Irish name into approximate English sound or translate it into English.

... Yolland's official task, which is now doing, is to take each of the Gaelic names—every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name—and Anglicise it, either by changing it into its approximate English sound or by translating it into English words... (34)

In the process of standardization the Irish place names into English, the Irish language will not be used anymore. The British will dominate Baile Beag and its community through its language. The Irish place names will be anglicized in different ways. Every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground in Irish language must be changed into English. These new names will be entered in the Name-Book, and used in the new map of Baile Beag. Standardization the Irish language into English is a part of imperialism. As what is stated by Ashcroft et al. about control over language in imperial era, the Irish community must face this condition. The British will control the Irish language, and expand its power in Baile Beag.

In standardizing the Irish place names into English, the British Royal Engineers may change it into approximate English sound or translate it into English words. The Irish place names will be anglicized. Anglicization is a process of making something English (Online). Language is said to be anglicized



as it becomes more like the English language. Non-English words may be anglicized into English by changing their forms and pronunciations to something more familiar for English speakers. Since the Irish community has different languages; Greek, Latin, and English, the process of standardizing the Irish language into English uses transliteration process. Sabrony Rachmadie et al. state that “Transliteration is the process, which is done by rendering the letters of one alphabet into the letters of another with different alphabetical system” (1.35). Transliteration is used to render Greek alphabets into English. In *Translations*, the source languages are Greek and Latin, and the target language is English. The Irish place names will be changed based on the context of the words itself. The Latin also should be translated into English. And for the English itself, the British Royal Engineers may use the original words, or change it into the new English words.

In standardizing the Irish place names into English, a translator has important role. In *Translations*, Owen will become a translator for the British. Owen will help to pronounce each name in Irish and then translate it into English.

OWEN: ... my job is to translate the quaint, archaic tongue you people persist in speaking into the King's good English. (29)

This shows that his loyalty to Britain is more prominent than his loyalty to his father and Irish community. Owen shows his pride as a British translator without knowing that he is only an object for the British. It seems that Owen disrespects the Irish language because he works as a translator for the British Empire, even though he is an Irish. Owen has been divided from his Irish community through

language and identity. He does not care with the Irish community who lives in miserable condition after the coming of the British Army in Baile Beag.

The example of transliteration process can be seen when Lieutenant Yoland and Owen standardize the Irish place names into English. Lieutenant Yolland and Owen use the jury list or church registry to translate the Irish language into English. If there is no English equivalent for a sound of a word, they will change it in a new English word that has the closest meaning in it, such as the word Bunn na hAbhann.

OWEN: That's better. Bun is the Irish word for bottom. And Abha means river. So it's literally the mouth of the river.

YOLLAND: Let's leave it alone. There's no English equivalent for a sound like that.

OWEN: What is it called in the church registry?

*(Only now does YOLLAND open his eyes)*

YOLLAND: Let's see... Banowen.

OWEN: That's wrong. *(Consult texts.)* The list of freeholders calls it Owenmore—that's completely wrong.: Owenmore's the big river at the west end of the parish. *(Another text.)* And in the grand jury lists it's called—God!—Binhoe!—wherever they got that. I suppose we could Anglicize it to Banowen; but somehow that's neither fish nor flesh.

*(YOLLAND closes his eyes again)*

YOLLAND: I give up.

OWEN: *(At map)* Back to first principles. What are we trying to do?

YOLLAND: Good questions.

OWEN: We are trying to denominate and at the same time describe that tiny area of soggy, rocky, sandy ground where that little stream enters the sea, an area known locally a Bun na hAbhan... Burnfoot! What about Burnfoot?

YOLLAND: *(Indifferently)* Good, Roland. Burnfoot's good. (35)

The difficulty between Owen and Lieutenant Yolland in translating the Irish place names into English shows that another language fails to embody words, which contain cultural memory within it. At last, both of them decide to call it Burnfoot, which has the closest meaning with the word Bunn na hAbhan. For the place

name called The Murren, Owen has his own opinion. It can be seen from his conversation with Manus.

OWEN: You know that old limekiln beyond Con Connie Tim's pub, the place we call The Murren?—do you know whay it's called The Murren?

*(MANUS does not answer.)*

I've only just discovered: it's a corruption of Saint Muranus. It seems Saint Muranus had a monastery somewhere about there at the beginning of the seventh century. And over the years the name became shortened to the Murren. Very unattractive name, isn't it? I think we should go back to the original—Saint Muranus. What do you think? The original's Saint Muranus. Don't you think we should go back to that?

*(No response. OWEN begins writing the name into the Name-Book. MANUS is now rooting about among the forgotten implements for a piece of rope. He finds a piece. He begins to tie the mouth of the flimsy, overloaded bag—and it bursts, the contents spilling out on the floor.)*

MANUS: Bloody, bloody, bloody hell!

*(His voice breaks in exasperation; he is about to cry. OWEN leaps to his feet.) (54)*

In standardizing the Irish place names into English, Owen does not only change the words into a new one. If the word has no appropriate meaning, the Irish place names will not be changed into English. It happens because the Irish language is rich in meaning which cannot be found in English equivalent. There are also several examples of standardizing the Irish place names into English, such as, Druimb Dubh becomes Dromduff, Lis na Muc becomes Swinefort, Machaire Ban becomes Whiteplains, Cnoc na Ri becomes Kings Head, etc.

On the other side, Lieutenant Yolland shows his sympathy towards Ireland by choosing to keep the name of Tobair Vree. It can be understood because from the beginning, he always shows that he is interested to Ireland culture and language. He does not change the word Tobair Vree. He wants to rectify the moral

dilemma because it seems that Tobair Vree affects him more than the others because of the story of the name itself. The difficulties in standardizing the word Tobair Vree into English shows that it is not easy to change a language into another language because it is related to the social condition in an area. Douglas Robinson states that "Translation is more about people than about a words" (35). In translating the Irish language into English, a translator does not only translate the language, but also the culture and identity of the Irish community itself.

As stated by Maureen S.G Hawkins that "Translating the local place names into English by British Army metaphorically 'translate' the ownership of the landmarks and communities" (Online). The British will 'translate' the ownership of Baile Beag and its community. It shows that by translating the Irish place names into English, the British will own Baile Beag and its community. Standardization the Irish place names into English will give a chance for British to dominate and get power in controlling Baile Beag and its community.

The British Empire will use language as a tool to establish its power and dominate all life aspects of Ireland. "The dominant imperial language and culture were privileged over the people's tradition" (Ashcroft et al. 26). English and its culture is dominant over the Irish tradition. The Irish community and its culture will be dominated and controlled by British Empire. English will become the dominant language for them, because the British is privileged over the Irish community. British imperialism is a process of expanding its power for the business for the British itself. Here, Britain will extend its culture in Ireland by controlling Irish language. The British dominate the Irish community for the

benefit of the Empire itself. If the British has dominated the Irish community with its language and culture, Baile Beag will become a part of the British Empire.

### **C. The Impact Of British Imperialism Through Standardized Language Of Ireland As Represented In The Play**

The British expands its power in Baile Beag by mapping the land and standardizing the Irish language into English. This condition is getting worse because it also causes bad impact for the Irish community. It causes conflict and destruction within its community.

#### **1. Conflict**

The conflict is started within the Irish community itself. This internal conflict is happened between Owen and Manus. Manus disagrees with the standardization of the Irish place names, moreover with the name of Rolland, which is given by the Royal Engineers to Owen.

**MANUS:** There was nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation, Owen! And what's Yolland function? What's 'incorrect' about the place-names we have here?

**OWEN :** Nothing at all. They are going to be standardised.

**MANUS:** You mean changed into English?

**OWEN :** Where there's ambiguity, they'll be Anglicised.

**MANUS:** And they call you Rolland! They both call you Rolland!

**OWEN :** Shhhhh. Isn't it ridiculous? They seemed to get it wrong from the very beginning—or else they can't pronounce Owen. I was afraid of some of you bastards would laugh.

**MANUS:** Aren't you going to tell them?

**OWEN :** Yes—yes—soon—soon.

**MANUS:** But they...

**OWEN :** Easy, man, easy. Owen—Roland—what the hell. It's only a name. It's the same me, isn't it? Well, isn't it? (33)

Manus always opposes Owen about the translation of Irish place names into English through a military operation. Manus insists that there are no incorrect place names in Baile Beag. Manus also does not like the name of Rolland that is given by the Royal Engineers. But Owen only says that it is only a name and it is not a big problem. For Owen, names seemed to be insignificant. He does not comprehend that the primary function of a word is not only its meaning, but also its implication. Names also create a sense of belonging and identity. So, if Owen says that it is not a big problem if the British call him Rolland, he has lost his identity.

On another event, Hugh says to his pupils that English is one of irrelevant language because it cannot really express the feeling of the Irish community.

HUGH: Indeed—English, I suggested, couldn't really express us. And again to his credit he acquiesced to my logic. Acquiesced—Maire? (*MAIRE turns away impatiently. HUGH is unaware of the gesture.*)  
Too slow. Bridget? (25)

Hugh's statement is related to the statement from D.E.S. Maxwell that "A language somehow may be inherently inappropriate for use in another place" (qtd. in Ashcroft et al. 27). Each place has its own language that is different with other places. The Irish language has its own form and meaning, and English is inappropriate if it is used to change the Irish language

But, Maire proposes English as a new language they should learn. She is a member of the Irish community who is always proud of English. She says that it is very important to learn English. For Maire, Irish language can make them imprisoned from the outside world. Daniel O'Connell, the Irish leader of the

Repeal (of Union) and Catholic Emancipation movements, has influenced her thoughts of using the English language. Maire tries to convince Hugh that they must learn to speak English instead.

**MAIRE:** I'm talking about the Liberator, Master, as you well know. And what he said was this: 'The old language is a barrier to modern progress'. He said that last month. And he's right. I don't want Greek. I don't want Latin. I want English. I want to be able to speak English because I'm going to America as soon as the harvest's all saved. (25-26)

A language can change along with modern progress through adjustment with the new situation and condition in a community. Maire believes that English is an appropriate language if they want progress. She is very proud of Daniel O'Connell, the liberator who said that the old language is a barrier to modern progress. Daniel O'Connell is the only real person in *Translations*. He founded the Catholic Association in Ireland. O'Connell campaigned for better civil rights and social conditions for the Irish people. He said that English is a necessary language to progress Ireland along with modern life. Maire thinks that Irish language is an old language, and it will be better if all of them do not use it anymore and start to learn to speak English.

The British and its superiority, tries to dominate the Irish community through the language they use. The Irish will be forced to use English as their daily language without knowing the real purpose of the British. The mapping of the land and standardization of the Irish place names into English are only a tool to dominate the Irish community. Actually, the British wants to maintain its power over the Irish community. It can be seen when Lieutenant Yolland talks to Owen

about the mapping of the land and standardization the Irish place names into English.

YOLLAND: I'm not sure. But I'm concerned about my part on it. It's an eviction of sorts.

YOLLAND: Something is being eroded. (43)

Here, Yolland shows his sympathy to the Irish community. He thinks that the mapping of the land and the standardization of the Irish place names into English mean an eviction of sorts and erosion in all life aspects of the Irish community. Then, the British will establish its authority over the Irish political society. The Irish community will become the marginalized people, who will live under control of the British. It can happen because "Marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged center" (Ashcroft et al. 104). The British put themselves as the privileged center, and the Irish community as the marginal people. The Irish community will be marginalized through standardization of the Irish place names into English.

## 2. Destruction

British imperialism also causes a different condition for the colonizer and colonized people. For the British, the purpose is some efforts to maintain its empire in Baile Beag. On the other side, the colonized, must face two choices; serve or be destroyed by the colonizer. The Irish community must face bad condition when the British Army decides to destroy its land.



**DOALTY:** You're missing the crack, boys! Cripes, you're missing the crack! Fifty more soldiers arrived an hour ago!

**BRIDGET:** And they're spread out in a big line from Sean Neal's over to Lag and they're moving straight across the fields towards Cnoc na nGabhar!

**DOALTY:** Prodding every inch of the ground in front of them with their bayonets and scattering animals and hens in all directions!

**BRIDGET:** And tumbling everything before them—fences, ditches, hay-stacks, turf-stacks!

**DOALTY:** They came to Barney Petey's field of corn—straight through it be God as if it was heather! (57)

The British Army destroys the land without thinking about the effect for the Irish community itself. The destruction is only caused by a suspicion when one of the British Engineers (Lieutenant Yolland) is missing. Captain Lancey thinks that the Irish community is the suspect. He will take some actions if the Irish community does not give some information about Yolland. He says in front of the Irish community, and asks Owen to translate all his words to them.

**LANCEY:** Commencing twenty-four hours from now we will shoot all livestock in Ballybeg. (61)

The British will take some actions in Baile Beag and its community. There will be some evictions if Yolland cannot be found. The destruction of the British is a part of imperialism because the Irish community is not regarded as human. Starting for twenty-four hours the British Army will shoot all livestock in Baile Beag. The result will be waited for eight hours to take the next action.

**LANCEY:** If that doesn't bear results, commencing forty-eight hours from now we will embark on a series of evictions and levelling of every abode in the following selected areas— (61)

**LANCEY:** If by then the lieutenant hasn't been found, we will proceed until a complete clearance is made of this entire section. (62)

And starting for forty-eight hours, there is also eviction of sorts in each area of Baile Beag. Without giving a chance to the Irish community to defend themselves,

the British Army will do all of that destruction. Standardization the Irish language into English is continued with the destruction of the land. The British will destroy the Irish community by leveling the land only because one of the British Engineers is missing. There is seemed an unclear motive behind the destruction of the land. It seems that the missing of Lieutenant Yolland becomes a reason for the British Army to destroy the land. But actually, the real reason is to get the land and control its community. Destruction of the land and Irish community shows that the British regards the indigenous people as disposable, almost as if they are a species of exotic fauna (Ashcroft et al. 82). By destroying the land and the Irish community, the British will maintain its Empire in Baile Beag. The British will own the land and has the right to plan its future in Baile Beag. British imperialism has caused bad impact for the Irish community because they will lose the land.

In the destruction of Baile Beag, Owen becomes aware of his position for the British that he is not a part of it. He does not realize that he will never be English. Actually, he disagrees with the action ordered by Captain Lancey to destroy his Irish community. He is aware of the condition that the Irish community must face the destruction of their own land. But he cannot do anything because he is just a translator for the British as what is said by Captain Lancey.

**OWEN:** You're not--!

**LANCEY:** Do your job. Translate. (61)

Owen is an outsider on the inside, and he finally faces this reality when he must translate whatever Captain Lancey says. He is not aware that he is actually the colonized, not the colonizer. He becomes a subject to be colonized by the British. He is called colonized because he works hard to standardize the Irish language

into English without knowing that it is done only for the benefit of the British Empire itself. At last he knows that he is still the Irish person who also will be destroyed by the British Empire, along with his Irish community.

The destruction of the Irish community in Baile Beag also ever happened before. The Irish community will also defend their land and community against the British. It can be seen from the conversation between Owen and Doalty.

DOALTY: When my grandfather was a boy they did the same thing. (*Simply, altogether without irony*). And after all the trouble you went to, mapping the place and thinking up new names for it. (*OWEN busies himself. Pause. DOALTY almost dreamly.*) I've damned little to defend but he'll not put me out without a fight. And there will be others who think the same as me.

OWEN: That's a matter for you.

DOALTY: If we'd all stick together. If we knew how to defend ourselves.

OWEN: Against a trained army. (63-64)

The destruction of Baile Beag and the Irish community has supported their spirit to defend their rights. The conflict within the Irish community makes them aware of their condition as a colonized people. The condition of Baile Beag is getting worse, and it supports their thoughts about rebellion. The rebellion can be done if all of the Irish community united altogether. The rebellion in *Translations* reflects what has happened in 1798.

The ideas of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, fraternity, and democracy) supported the Irish to make Ireland as an independent nation. The Irish Catholics wanted religious equality, and the Irish Protestants wanted parliamentary reform. Both groups wanted economic reform in Ireland. Many peasants joined the rebellion because they wanted tithes to be abolished; some

educated men wanted independence. Then, the United Irishman (consists of Protestants and Catholics) was formed in Ireland. Under Wolfe Tone, that organization declared their belief in a peaceful future for Ireland in which Protestants and Catholics could live together in peace and equality. As a result, in 1798, there was a mass rebellion for democratic rights and against British rule. But the rebellion failed, and there were large executions of the Irish people.

In 1800, the Act of Union as made, and it was effective on January 1801. This rule brought Ireland under the direct rule of the British Empire. Ireland was to be joined to Great Britain into a single kingdom, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Anglican Church was to be recognized as the official church of Ireland. For the Irish Catholics, they still were not allowed to hold the public office. The Act of Union could not solve the problems in Ireland, neither the crisis over land, religion, or politics. The condition was getting worse because of the oppression from the British government to the Irish community (Online).

The destruction of Baile Beag and its community is a result of British imperialism that is started by translating the Irish language into English. Through standardized language of Ireland the British will maintain its power. The standardized language is created to establish hegemony that Britain is the metropolis country, and the Irish is a marginal community. The mapping of the land and translation of the Irish language into English represent the certainty of the landowner, and Ireland will become a marginal area. The marginality of Ireland means that the British will possess Baile Beag and its community, along with its language and culture.

## **CHAPTER IV**

## **CONCLUSION**