

31. *Ibid.*, p. 558.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 596, Statement of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland issued at their meeting, held in Maynooth, on 6 Oct. 1925.
33. *Church of Ireland Gazette*.
34. *Ibid.*, 7 Mar. 1924 (in response to the Bishops' Lenten Pastorals of 1923 and 24).
25. G.B.S., "On throwing out dirty water", in *Irish Statesman*, 15 Sept. 1933.
36. *C.D. 1925* Report of distribution of prizes at Maynooth, 23 June 1924. Cardinal Logue warned young priests that they would have to "meet a divided people who had lost much of their reverence for religion and the Church and endeavour to bring men back to a sense of their religious duties — they should keep out of politics until they had more experience".
37. *C.D. 1924*, 28 Nov. 1924.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 605.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 605 — "first official communication from the National Synod, held at Maynooth two months ago". Read at all masses on 2 October 1927. Cardinal O'Donnell died three weeks later. Mulhern of Dunmore said that "His Eminence had died a martyr to duty for the glory of God. Those who had been with him at the recent Maynooth Synod observed that from the opening to the close he had not one moment of rest, or, he (his Lordship— might say, of comfort. The strenuous time he had at the Synod told ost severely on His Eminence. At its close it was remarked that he was a broken down man.

Nationalism, Religion and the Education Question Dermot Moran

"Religion's never mentioned here," of course. "You know them by their eyes," and hold your tongue. "One side's as bad as the other," never worse.

— Seamus Heaney from *North* (1975)

Writing in *An Claidheamh Soluis* in April 1903 Padraig Pearse declared: "take up the Irish problem at what point you may, you inevitably find yourself in the end back at the education question. The prostitution of education in this land has led to many other prostitutions. Poisoned at its source, the whole stream of national life has stagnated and grown foul."¹

For Pearse, revolution begins with educational reform: "our education was designed by our masters in order to make us smooth and willing slaves. It has succeeded; succeeded so well that we no longer realise that we are slaves."² Against this slavery, Pearse proposed that we develop a "national consciousness" and struggle for the "intellectual independence of Ireland".³ Education was to play a primary role in the distillation of a new, liberated national consciousness. How far has Ireland progressed towards this ideal of intellectual freedom since Pearse wrote?

Many would object to the linking of intellectual freedom with national identity, they would argue that intellectual freedom is an international idea which transcends local national factors. How the ideal of independence may be interpreted is however a matter which varies a great deal from one nation to another. To a great extent we are all caught up in an educational practice moulded by the demands of an international technological culture, but the manner in which this culture is understood at the centre of the industrial world varies considerably from how it is received in the periphery. Ireland belongs to the periphery.

There is therefore an urgent need to evaluate the kind of intellectual freedom that prevails in an Ireland seeking to survive in the international technological world. Are we simply receivers and processors of ideas? Or do we play an active role in their generation and interpretation? Given the connection between ideas and education, what is the prevailing philosophy of education in this country? Can a definite philosophy or ideology of education be sifted out from under the pre-

vailing pragmatisms? Given that there is so much talk in Ireland about the need to impart values through the educational process, it is imperative that we question what those values are. In this essay I have looked briefly at the history and traditions of the Irish university system in order to get a provisional picture of the Irish intellectual landscape, as a first step towards trying to tease out the values implicit in our educational system, values which are all the more vague and elusive, the more universal and unquestioned they are. It seems clear to me that much of the ambiguity and confusion, which surrounds the area of values in our education, stems from our lack of understanding about the meaning of the Irish nation. The twin problems of nationhood and intellectual independence are as allied now as they were in Pearse's time. Indeed the terms of the debate on education have changed hardly at all since Pearse wrote: the role of the Churches, the participation of women, student representation, the involvement of the people in educational planning, and the overall ends of education, are all issues Pearse wrote on clearly and incisively. Indeed much of what Pearse was legitimately demanding has not been implemented today almost sixty years after his death. Educational goals cannot be divorced from societal goals, if we are serious about the kind of society we would like to build, we must make serious and far-reaching revisions in our educational practice. To that extent this essay is a catalogue of the failures of the university structure, a critique of the ethos of the institutions rather than a criticism of the endeavour of individuals within the system.

The Irish university system in its present form is essentially an English solution to an Irish problem. The Irish Universities Act of 1908, which established the N.U.I. and the Queen's University of Belfast, was the brain child of that "honest Englishman" (as Pearse called him) Augustine Birrell. The Act was an admitted compromise, which aimed to satisfy the century-old demand of Irish Catholics for an acceptable educational system by setting up the N.U.I., while at the same time it left intact the institution of the establishment, Trinity College. Birrell aimed to provide education which was, in his phrase, "cheap, popular and good",⁴ his efforts were part of the last phase of the Liberal policy of killing Home Rule with kindness.

Several attempts had been made during the 19th century to redress the grievances of Irish Catholics in regard to education. Robert Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, Balfour had all initiated legislation, all had failed. In 1845 Peel set up the Queen's Colleges of Belfast, Cork and Galway only to have them denounced by Daniel O'Connell as "godless colleges". In 1873 Fawcett's Tests Act opened up all fellowships and posts in Trinity College to non-Anglicans but in the same year Gladstone's Government fell on the Irish University question. Balfour made another attempt in 1894. In 1879 the Queen's University was dissolved and replaced by the Royal University, a purely examining body set up by Disraeli.

At the opening of the 20th century, Irish Catholics were in the main educated by private institutions like Blackrock College and the Jesuit-run University College and entered for examinations at the Royal Maynooth College had been in receipt of state funds from its foundation, particularly under the 1845 Bill, but this ended in 1869 with the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Nevertheless, Maynooth in the early 20th century had more students than Trinity, and more than all the Queen's Colleges combined. It entered students for the Royal examination and viewed itself as the second-oldest third level college in Ireland after Trinity and thus the rightful contender for the position of Ireland's Catholic University. The general state of Irish education was, clearly, highly unsatisfactory.

In the first decade of the 20th century, two important Royal Commissions were held to inquire into the state of third level education in Ireland. The first, known as the Robertson Commission reported in 1903 on the state of the Royal University and the Queen's Colleges. The second, the Fry Commission reported in 1906 on the situation of Trinity and the University of Dublin (of which Trinity is the only constituent College) "as organs of the higher education in Ireland, and the steps proper to be taken to increase their usefulness to the country."⁵

Neither Commission was successful in recommending a clearcut course of action, and in 1907 the then Chief Secretary, Bryce, attempted to introduce his own scheme, based on a proposal that Lord Dunraven had aired in the press in 1904. This scheme, the Bryce scheme, suggested that University of Dublin should be broadened to include another college which would be mainly for Catholics. The old Queen's Colleges of Galway, Cork and Belfast founded in 1845 (but now failing badly) would be united with the University of Dublin.⁶

The Bryce scheme drew sharp reaction and criticism from nearly every quarter. Trinity

College, whose Vice-Provost of the time saw his college as "the only successful British institution in Ireland", objected strongly to the age-old and proven institution of Trinity being shackled to new institutions, thereby losing its authority and its tradition. A "Hands Off Trinity" campaign was organised which enlisted the help of the Dublin and Ulster Unionists. On the other hand the Catholic Defence Society organised by Fr. Delaney S.J., president of University College, objected to any form of "mixed education" with Protestants, as did the Catholic Bishops in their reiteration of the ban on mixed education in 1906.⁷ The attempts by younger liberal fellows at Trinity to liberalise the Trinity regime to make it acceptable to their Catholic fellowcountrymen were strongly condemned by the Trinity governing body, and the efforts by Catholic professional people to persuade their bishops to allow them to send their sons to Trinity met with scorn from Delaney who classified them as "certain Catholics from Dublin" who did not speak for the majority.⁸ The pamphlets produced by the Dublin Unionists and the submissions of the Catholic Laymen's association make fascinating reading, many phrases and arguments heard in the recent Amendment Campaign can be found stated 80 years ago, notably on the question of who speaks for Irish Catholics.

Bryce failed, and was replaced by Augustine Birrell who stated that were it not for the challenge of providing education acceptable to the Irish people "nothing else would induce me to make myself responsible for a single week for the government of Ireland".⁹ To mollify the Trinity faction (an amalgam of Dublin Establishment figures, Northern Presbyterian Unionists and British Non-Conformists).¹⁰

Birrell began by leaving Trinity untouched as a "great, proud and historical Protestant institution."¹¹ He abolished the Royal University and the Queen's Colleges and proposed instead two new universities — the National University of Ireland with three constituent colleges at Cork, Galway and a new college in Dublin, and a new Queen's University of Belfast. The Northern Unionists were not impressed. Although Trinity was untouched, they did not want a new university in Belfast, and they were extremely suspicious that the new N.U.I. would be a predominantly Catholic institution while still qualifying for state funds. However, without the support of the Trinity representatives in the House of Commons they were lost. In fact, the Trinity M.P.s supported Birrell in order to retain their own privileged position. We have the unique situation of an alliance between the Catholic Bishops on the one hand and Trinity Members like Edward Carson on

the other!

When one reads the Commons and Lords debates on the 1908 Bill one quickly realises that educational principles are hardly ever mentioned, let alone discussed. Aside from some remarks about the benefit to be gained from exposing Irish minds to the liberalising atmosphere of university life, the main focus of the debates was not educational, but political and religious. The problem was simple — how to provide education for the Irish without being seen to be subsidising specifically Catholic education. The answer Birrell hit upon was clever, but it had been suggested to him by the Catholic Bishops, and he did little more than implement their suggestions.

In line with Fawcett's 1873 Tests Act which had opened up Trinity to non-Anglicans, Birrell proposed that the new universities were to have no religious tests of any kind on staff or students. Theology as a subject was to be excluded. Thus the new N.U.I. was a non-denominational institution as was Queen's, though Birrell conceded that one would flourish "on Catholic soil" while the other would do so "on Protestant soil." The Commissions set up to found N.U.I. and Queen's were carefully balanced on religious lines — N.U.I. was mainly Catholic with 7 Protestant members, Queen's Commission was Protestant with 1 Catholic member. Ostensibly non-denominational the new universities would cater for their respective denominations.¹²

But the new Universities had a further method for handling denominational claims in education, Birrell proposed that the new universities be given the power to "recognise" or affiliate denominational colleges which provided education of a university standard in a limited number of areas. He had in mind Maynooth College and Magee College in Derry.¹³ Maynooth College was recognised by the Senate of the N.U.I. in 1910. Magee College, the Presbyterian College, was generally mentioned alongside Maynooth and Birrell hoped that it would enter the N.U.I. system. However, he gave it the choice of affiliation with either Belfast or Trinity, and for many years Magee sent students to Trinity after completing courses in Magee. In the present restructuring of Coleraine (the New University of Ulster) the fortunes of Magee are again in the balance.

It was this "recognition" clause in the 1908 Act which gave Birrell most trouble in Parliament. The Northern Unionists like Captain James Craig (MP for Down East) were adamant that it was a device to bring a Catholic college into the new state system. On the other hand a significant section of Catholic opinion felt that Maynooth should be the new Catholic University because of its numbers and the quality of its education.¹⁴

The compromise was one which the Bishops and Delaney had themselves proposed. Trinity, through Carson, supported it also. Thus we have the spectacle of Edward Carson supporting the education of his "Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen" provided that it left the non-denominational (but Protestant!) atmosphere of Trinity intact. In his response to the second reading of the Bill in the Commons (11th May 1908) he stated that he sympathised with the Catholic demand for Catholic education, as he himself would not send his son to Trinity if it lost its "Protestant atmosphere".¹⁵

It was not lost on the Irish observers that the 1908 Act would provide an education which, while being superficially non-denominational, actually gave the N.U.I. to the Catholics, Queen's to the Presbyterians and Trinity to the Anglicans. Pearse himself noted this in his essays in *An Claidheamh Soluis* and observed that this is the price we must pay if we let English people solve Irish problems. The National University of Ireland was of course not by any means a "national" institution, and by the requirements of Pearse, Hyde and the Gaelic League it failed to be an Irish (i.e. Gaelic) institution as well.¹⁶

No special provision for the bilingual situation Pearse envisaged was set out, and Pearse went to war with the manner in which Irish was to be taught in the new university. He recognised also that though the Catholic Church would do their best for Ireland, in the last analysis it was Church interests rather than national interests which would prevail, and he was strongly in favour of the Irish nation as a whole having representation in the new university. He criticised the fact that the new N.U.I. Senate had only 1 woman on it, to represent "the more important half of the Irish nation."

But if Pearse was putting forward the vision of an Irish nation where Catholic and Protestant would come together to further their common Irish heritage, the Provost of Trinity College, Anthony Traill, was laying the foundations for the two-nations theory now associated with the name of Conor Cruise O'Brien. In his evidence before the Royal Commission, the Provost argued that there were two distinct nations in Ireland whose needs were so disparate that they could not be brought together under the roof of the one university. This drew the riposte from Dr Hyde that if there were two nations in Ireland, Trinity believed in educating only one of them. Hyde had other criticisms of Trinity College. It was essentially a British colonial outpost refusing to acknowledge the history and culture of the country in which it was located. Thus he stated that in 1905

although Ireland is so large an agricultural

country, there is no professor of agriculture, although there was a Professor of Hindustani, a Reader in Tamil, and Telugu, a Reader in Hindi, a Reader in Indian Law, several Indian class lecturers, and a lecturer in Dutch.¹⁸

In reply to this kind of criticism, the Very Rev. J.H. Bernard Dean of St. Patrick's stated to the Fry Commission, that in his opinion, a university acceptable to Roman Catholics might have a "Chair of Brewing" but certainly no chair of Arabic!¹⁹

The recently founded Chair of Irish (set up in 1896) was itself a good example of the Trinity Establishment attitude. Mahaffy, a well-known Trinity man had stated that he could well see the usefulness of knowledge of a few words of Irish for a gentleman out grouse shooting in the west of Ireland, but otherwise the language had little to recommend itself philologically. The Chair of Irish was set up with money from a Protestant trust fund in order to proselytise Catholic students, and the first holder was a Church of Ireland clergyman. Dr. Hyde was extremely critical of the courses offered by this gentleman, the main texts on the course were readings from the gospels and epistles!

Mathematics and classics were the core of the curriculum at Trinity. Irish history and archaeology were totally ignored, the Irish manuscript collections in its library were neglected, and in general Irish was treated as a dead language, as the Irish scholar MacNeill testified to the Fry Commission. Modern history was not taught at all, and science was barely recognised.²⁰

Trinity seemed willing to make some concessions but overall it remained sternly locked within its own vision of Irish society, and its own role of educating one of the two nations. Irish nationalists had good reasons to reject Trinity as the keystone of their new National University system. However, this Irish nationalist sentiment was utilised also by the defenders of denominational separatist education. Pearse shows himself clearly able to distinguish the two strands, but the general tenor of the submissions to the Fry Commission of Fr. Delaney S.J., President of the Jesuit-run University College in Dublin, Fr Finlay, President of Milton Park and the writings of a Professor at Maynooth, Dr Daniel Coghlan, tended to conflate Irish and Catholic, the issues of nationalist independence and religious separatism.

The Catholic Bishops had condemned Trinity as dangerous to the faith and morals of Catholics, and in 1906 reiterated their opposition to any form of "mixed education". As far as the Catholic Church was concerned no amount of concessions at Trinity, be it in the form of the provisions of a chapel and college chaplains, or even special lec-

tureships in Catholic philosophy, would entice them. Fr Finlay S.J. stated to the Fry Commission that the Catholic hierarchy were afraid that if Catholics were to attend Trinity, certain subjects like "history, philosophy, biology" might be "made a means of attack on Catholic doctrines". Fr Daniel Coghlan stated in a very revealing article entitled "The Two Ideals in Education" that he found it "incomprehensible" that Trinity could employ an atheist.²¹ He regarded this as "an apotheosis of pagan principles" in contrast with the ideals of Catholic education.

In the evidence before the Fry Commission, the Provost of Trinity College, when asked about employing atheists and freethinkers, put forward the view that one never asked a lecturer about his religious beliefs. The matter simply did not arise. This gentlemanly disregard for the religious convictions of one's associates did not however spill over into political concerns. When asked by the Commission whether Trinity would display indifference towards a lecturer who taught "that boycotting was lawful, for example", the Provost replied, "I cannot imagine such a thing".

The discussions of the time display a predictable pattern. Trinity, paternalistic, regarded itself as a home of liberalism, equality of opportunity, non-denominationalism, non-sectarianism. Professors it was claimed, were appointed on merit and not on their religious convictions. Even though the majority of students were Anglicans, the official position was that Catholics were more than welcome. On the other hand, Trinity was totally against all outside interference in its affairs, and particularly opposed to allowing their faculties to fall under the control or scrutiny of the Catholic Hierarchy. The Trinity Defence committee pamphlets argue the difference between a genuine university with freedom of thought and expression, and the Catholic ideal of education which they call explicitly "medieval", based on authority and faith rather than free rational inquiry, teaching only what the bishops allowed to be taught.²² A great deal is made of the Catholic position that it is the Hierarchy who in the last analysis determine what the faithful must believe, and of course the laity are not consulted. Trinity authorities all expressed the belief that the Catholic minds and professional classes wanted to sent their song to Trinity if only they were allowed.

The arguments put forward by the Catholic educationalists on the other hand are vehement in their attack upon freethinking, secularism, liberalism, and neutral education. The Queen's Colleges and Trinity were "godless" and "dangerous to faith and morals". They enshrine pagan principles. The Hierarchy had a god-appointed

right to supervise the education of Catholics, and they had the right to ensure that nothing in the area of science or morals was taught which contradicted or offended Church teaching.

Birrell's solution was simply to separate these two ideals of education in a kind of educational apartheid which would survive for the following half-century. Indeed his solution which carved up the educational map of Ireland into three segments — Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian, began the process which resulted in the Partition of Ireland by physical means in 1921.²³

Birrell's compromise solution to the problems of intellectual traditions and their independence was workable. The officially non-denominational Queen's University became a Protestant Institution, toasting the Queen, and flying the Union Jack, typifying the equation of British with Protestant. But as early as 1908 after considerable pressure, they allowed the development of two lectureships — Scholastic Philosophy and Celtic — which would make the University more acceptable to Catholics. Queen's University Belfast as a matter of fact was never under ecclesiastical censure unlike Trinity College, and today includes a high proportion of Catholics.

On the other hand, UCD was looked upon for a long time as a University which was safe for Catholics. One of the best exponents of this view was the late Rev Dr Charles McQuaid. In 1961 he published a pamphlet entitled "Higher Education for Catholics" which encapsulates the very attitudes which the Dublin Unionists had so strenuously objected to in 1907, and which they predicted would be the result of the Irish Universities' Act. He expressed the Hierarchy's confidence in the N.U.I. and in U.C.D. in particular:

Happily in this city, Catholic parents can find an institution of higher learning that gives them the guarantees of academic excellence and of Catholic inspiration.²⁴

For John Charles UCD is "the lawful heir of the Catholic University founded by the Catholic Bishops, with the approval of the Holy See." This is a confusion. As a matter of fact the Catholic University was never disbanded and still exists on paper, it is entirely separate from the N.U.I. structures, the only overlap being that the University College run by the Jesuits was absorbed by the "new" UCD at Earlsfort Terrace. But for John Charles, UCD is "marked by a respect for religion, that is explained only by its convinced and consistent reverence for the Catholic faith." John Charles is obviously worried by the threat of communism and points out that the area of social philosophy will be one of concern to the Catholic

student. "Only sane philosophy and the Catholic faith" can answer the questions of the serious student and save him from "the all-pervading influence of Marxism". One meets dangers everywhere — in newspapers, radio, "and especially in students from other lands".²⁵ Presumably John Charles is thinking about the large numbers of English students at Trinity in the fifties, due to the shortage of places for them in the English universities, prior to the educational expansion of the sixties. But John Charles McQuaid is not only satisfied with the saneness of the social philosophy courses at UCD, he is convinced that the philosophy courses are Catholic as well:

In particular, the specialised courses of Catholic philosophy, aimed at solving the particular problems of the various sciences, assure us that here (i.e. UCD), as nowhere else that we know, our youth are afforded an opportunity for a mental formation that will issue in the higher culture and disciplined activity of Catholic professional scholars.²⁶

He obviously takes it for granted that the non-denominational UCD, which was set up in 1908 explicitly without religious tests, does in fact teach Catholic philosophy. In contrast, for John Charles, Trinity was a place of liberalism "unconcerned with the truths of Revelation" and must not be attended under pain of mortal sin by Catholics. Graciously, John Charles acknowledges that he recognises the rights of Protestants to send their children there! In applying the ban to Trinity, he dismisses all protests that English Catholics were allowed attend Oxford and Cambridge, with the remark that the English Bishops knew what was best for their flock.

John Charles McQuaid was not an isolated voice, Bishop Philbin's statements to the Irish Commission on Higher Education which met between 1960 and 1966 also condemn Trinity for its "neutral and secularist" character.²⁷ The debate over the merits of neutral or secular education continue at present, particularly in regard to the Teacher Training Colleges in Northern Ireland where Bishop Philbin as recently as 1980 defended the values of separatism over against "mixed education". The terms of the argument were unchanged from the 1900s including the clash of nationalist and British (State) interests.²⁸

Even the greatest single education activist in Ireland, Donough O'Malley, was unable to bring himself to assert the value of a "neutral" education. In his proposals for a merger of UCD and Trinity he states

the new university of Dublin will not be "neut-

ral" denominationally but multi-denominational.²⁹

Indeed his scheme for the merger of UCD and Trinity into a single University of Dublin was little more than a modern version of the Bryce proposals of 1907, and it too met with considerable opposition and was dropped. In 1970 the Bishops removed the ban on Trinity for Catholic students, and by the 1980s about 70% of the students were Catholics of the middle and professional classes, the same classes who had been sending their sons to Trinity in 1907. Although vast changes have taken place, some Trinity lecturers like Tommy Murtagh believe that Trinity has retained its Ascendancy ethos even if it has switched its support from the Protestant to the Catholic Ascendancy, and support for the two nations theory of the Trinity Provost of 1907 still is readily found among Trinity senators.³⁰

Meanwhile, the equation of liberalism, secularism, atheism and immorality is still to be met with in the writing of some Catholic Bishops and the emergent of sexual politics of the past year in Ireland should leave no one in doubt that the old equation of Protestant with liberal, Catholic with authoritarian is still very deeply embedded even among intellectuals.³¹ The two sides are still identifiable and fight the same battle in the same language.

It is within this overall heritage that the person seeking to assess the intellectual independence of the Irish university system must construct his or her analysis. In my view, the inability to go beyond these two ideals of Irish education (to use Prof. Coghlan's terms) has impeded the development of a true national university system. The proposal that Queen's and Coleraine should be brought into closer contact with the NUI made in the 1967 Commission on Higher Education Report has not been acted on. The subject is mentioned frequently in the Forum for a New Ireland discussions, but it seems to me little will come of it until the true interrelation of educational with political and religious attitudes is better understood.

We would do better to pay closer attention to the writings of Padraig Pearse who tried to steer his educational policies towards a truly integrated national system which was both intellectually independent (and also independent of the Catholic Church whom he regarded as in the last analysis putting their own concerns first, Pearse was very quick to note that the persons who purported to speak for Irish education were a self-appointed group not rooted in the needs of the people. Pearse wrote:

When we say the people we do not mean the benevolent fogies — medical man with expansive waistcoats and aggressive watch chains, elderly lawyers whose brains have become obfuscated in the dust of the Four Courts, clerics who for thirty years have not come into vital contact with the practical problems of Irish life at any one point — who pose . . . as the leaders of "educated opinion" in Ireland.³²

He criticised the lack of consultation between the Catholic leaders and the Irish people, and argued strongly for more popular say in education. Commenting on the dispute about the teaching of Irish in the new universities, Pearse and others were of the opinion that the people of Ireland were in favour of a strong Irish component. A certain Colonel Moore had made such a statement but was rebuked by Dr Healy, the Archbishop of Tuam with the words:

The people of Ireland indeed! What do they know about it? . . . I would not give a pinch of snuff for their opinion, what do they know about it.³³

To which Pearse replied in *An Claidheamh Soluis*: "the people will remember."³⁴

Let us hope that the people will be remembered in the restructuring of the universities and that they will not be forced to find themselves drawing the conclusion that Pearse drew:

The new education system in Ireland has to do more than restore a national culture . . . Along with its inspiration it must therefore bring a certain hardening. I would bring back some of the starkness of the antique world. No dream is more foolish than the dream of some sentimentalists that the reign of force is past, or passing; that the world's ancient battle laws have been repealed; that henceforth the first duty of every man is to be dapper.³⁵

The question of the intellectual freedom of Ireland must be asked again. If the history of the educational institutions is to be taken as a pointer then the answer is not encouraging, indeed there are signs that despite the radical changes in our technological life, our cultural and intellectual life remains defined within very narrow boundaries. Given that involvement in education is seen by many as a bulwark against the increasing alienation and violence brought about by unemployment it is imperative that the educational structures be guiding lights of tolerance, freedom and enlightenment. It is difficult how they can be seen as such so long as they cling tenaciously to

traditions which are separatist and divisive.³⁶ Only within a united national structure of the whole island can the Irish university system provide such guidance.

Of course it may well be argued that the considerable changes since the sixties have completely transformed Irish universities and that the separatist ethos I have been describing has largely vanished. These values may however only be dormant and without explicit criticism may reappear. I believe that the goal of intellectual independence in Ireland will be advanced by careful scrutiny of the traditions and values of Irish educational practice, and that consciousness of history is an essential part of any such scrutiny. The lack of explicit statement of values in the universities today may indeed provoke the very difficulties it seeks to avoid.

NOTES

1. *An Claidheamh Soluis* (18.4.1903) reprinted in Scamas O'Buachalla, (ed.) *A Significant Irish Educationalist*. The Educational Writings of P.H. Pearse. (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1980) p. 4.
2. *Ibid.* p. 355.
3. *Ibid.* p. 1. The Irish language as a repository of civilisational values played a key role in this nation. In fact nationhood is defined linguistically.
4. First Reading of the Irish Universities Bill, 31 March 1908. Birrell argued that education was being provided in the "murky towns" of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield but not yet in Ireland. p. 1401.
5. Irish University Commission Reports. Dublin. Warrant appointing the Commission.
6. The Dunraven scheme proposed that all the Colleges, including Maynooth be brought under the mantle of the University of Dublin. Maynooth would have "affiliation". See the statement submitted by The Earl of Dunraven Oct 21, 1906 in the Documents submitted to the Commission p. 422-423.
7. The Catholic position is complicated. On the one hand, as is evidenced by Rev Daniel Coghlan D.D. of Maynooth College to the Commission, the bishops have "episcopal jurisdiction over universities" (Documents to the Commission p. 414) and have the right to demand the dismissal of a lecturer who endangered faith or morals, as well as an absolute say in the appointments in Catholic Theology. On the other hand, as is witnessed by Most Rev Dr Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, the hierarchy accepted that there need be no religious tests applied to university appointments, or even representation on the governing body. While being against mixed education, Prof. Coghlan was prepared to admit the presence of "a few Protestants" in the new university. The explanation lies in the difference between a formal Church condemnation of a college and its toleration of a college which "though legally open to all denominations would be likely to remain exclusively, or nearly so, Catholic." (p. 419).
8. The Committee of Irish Catholic laymen supported the Dunraven scheme while the Catholic Defence Society objected to the Trinity authorities seizing on the Catholic Laymen as representative of Catholic thinking as a whole. See the Documents to the

Commission pp. 434-439. Catholics for and against the Amendment raise the question of who speaks for Catholics in Ireland in the contemporary context.

9. Irish Universities Bill. First Reading. p. 1400.
10. It is noteworthy that at that time there were more Catholics than Presbyterians attending Trinity, and Trinity was apparently more concerned with wooing Catholics than Presbyterians.
11. Irish Universities Bill 1908.
12. In his speech concluding the second reading of the Bill (11.5.1908) Birrell washed his hands of the denominational issue, pleading that he has proposed non-denominational legislation, it is up to the Irish to make what they will of it.
13. Strictly speaking Magee College claimed it was not denominational as it admitted laypersons to study theology. However the term "denominational" was taken to mean "supported by a majority of one denomination" by some MPS in the House of Commons — for example Hutton, who opposed the Bill.
14. The Catholic ideal was for a new Catholic university to be built in Dublin or for Maynooth to be recognised as the new Catholic university.
15. Carson's speech, Second Reading pp. 1907-1908.
16. See Pearse's articles on the place of Irish in the new universities in O'Buachalla (ed) op cit pp. 185ff. The president of University College, Fr Delaney S.J. did not wish to make Irish compulsory in the new university. Pearse wrote: "We cannot forget that Dr Delaney belongs to a religious order whose activities and interests are not confined to Ireland, and his position represents that of many others whose minds seem obsessed by the time-worn fallacy that the mission of our race is to keep English-speaking people straight in their morals." (p. 208)
17. *An Claidheamh Soluis*, in O'Buachalla (ed) op cit p. 186.
18. Statement appended to the Fry Commission signed by Hyde, Coffey and Lord Baron Palles.
19. Minutes of evidence before the Fry Commission p. 25.
20. Delaney was critical of Trinity's academic standards, and alleged that students who failed the Royal Examinations were awarded degrees by Trinity.
21. Rev. Daniel Coghlan, "The Two Ideals", in Trinity College and the Trinity Commission (Dublin: Gill & Son, 1908) p. 10. Atheist teachers are still out of favour with some Catholic Bishops. See The Sunday Independent 16 Oct. 1983. Letters column.
22. See the pamphlet, *Dublin University Defence. Meeting of the Senate*. (Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co, 1907) p. 27 where Prof Dowden of Trinity argues that the Catholic ideal in education is "medieval" and based on authority.
23. F.S.L. Lyons in *Ireland Since the Famine* believed that it was an accident that the 1908 Act defined the national situation in a manner which the 1921 Treaty canonised. I believed, on the other hand, that the 1908 provided a first model for the partition of Ireland.
24. Ver. Rev. Dr. Charles McQuaid, *Higher Education for Catholics* (Dublin: Gill, 1961) p. 14.
25. *Ibid.* p. 12.

26. *Ibid.* p. 15.
27. See Norman Atkinson, *Irish Education. A History of Educational Institutions*, (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1969).
28. The proposal was to bring the Catholic teacher training colleges, St Mary's and St. Joseph's into unity with the Stranmillis College which is predominantly Protestant. All three receive state funds. The unity proposed involved all students relocating onto the Stranmillis site. Religious interests opposed the move as did nationalist and local interests who saw the status and employment situation of West Belfast being threatened.
29. Donough O'Malley, *Studies* (1967) p. 121.
30. Under the present system Trinity graduates elect three senators while the three Colleges of Cork, Galway and Dublin elect three between them. This balance, conceived with the Protestant/Catholic ratio in mind needs to be rethought as Trinity is now 70% Catholic.
31. Vide Conor Cruise O'Brien, Shane Ross et al.
32. Pearse *An Claidheamh Soluis*, p. 162. in O'Buachalla, *op. cit.*
33. Pearse in O'Buachalla, *op. cit.* p. 221.
34. *Ibid.* p. 221.
35. Pearse in O'Buachalla *op. cit.* p. 355.
36. Universities are places of tradition. Nevertheless, some traditions — like the playing of "the Queen" at graduation ceremonies at Queen's — are needlessly divisive and insensitive to the beliefs of a section of the university's staff and students.

Religious Art: The Exile and The Mainstream

Patrick Pye

There is good reason to think that the history of art should be taught backwards. No matter how sympathetic the young are to tradition no art will have quite the vitality of what is contemporary: it will be a long time before any old master has the vividness of what is new when you are new. But histories of art are invariably written the other way round, from the past towards the present. This has meant in Europe that they are histories of an almost inevitable stylistic and technical development marked out by a succession of great names from Giotto to Monet, to be enumerated for their 'discoveries'. It has been too tempting to interpret the arc made by these discoveries as a 'progress' and to ignore what could not be seen to subscribe to it. But artists are concerned with reality as it is GIVEN to them, whether spiritually or materially. They are seldom conscious of developing what the last man did towards some ghostly solution that will be given the world in the mist of time. What they do they do for themselves, reconciling their vision, their temperament and the science of their craft. If we learn our history of art backwards we discover, not an arc, but a web in which thousands of different threads appear and disappear, and reappear and are lost again, and then, by a contemporary and urgent need, are found yet again. To learn the history of art backwards is to follow the pattern of education itself commencing with our subjective moment in time and our need to secure its objectivity in conflict and brotherhood with all previous generations.

It was from such contemporary and urgent need in Spain at the end of the last century that the artists known as the 'Generation of '98' rediscovered the much maligned canvasses of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, a Toledan painter of the 16th century who had come to be known simply as 'El Greco' the Greek.¹ In the Toledo of the Spanish Renaissance he had been its most revered painter, and while most of the locals in the trade had been treated as craftsmen, he had been honoured as the 'learned artist' and treated as an equal by the poets and cognoscenti of the day. Then, from the day he died, his life and work were forgotten, and such brief references as were made to his work by historians spoke derisively of an eccentric who had lived too richly in his own overheated brain.

The Generation of '98 had good reason to dis-

cover El Greco. They were not very happy with the tendencies of the then 'modern' Europe and they were anxious to reestablish the cultural identity of Spain in its distinction from it. What drew them most immediately to El Greco was his mysticism for, even though he was a foreigner, the temper of this mysticism was seen to be Spanish, in keeping with the same movement that animated Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. And the ignominy with which his work had later been treated was due to the culpable Europeanisation of the Spanish soul, a fate that the 'Nineteen-tighters' set themselves to redress.

In 16th century Europe Crete must have been as remote from Venice as was Achill Island a short while ago from Dublin. It was in Crete that El Greco was trained in the traditional art of Icon painting. Some cultured person with Venetian ideas must have seen his work and, recognising his talent, advised or possibly even sponsored him to go and study in the most adventurous place of its time for art, Venice. There the immigrant saw and inwardly digested the most sophisticated ideas of his time and from that passed on to Rome where he digested the ideas of Venice's artistic rival, Florence, and from thence he exiled himself fairly resolutely to Spain where renaissance science was taken apart and put together again in the boldest and most original way the West has ever seen until our own times.

El Greco's life's work was the most conscious effort to make an artificial art where the soul, undistracted by phenomena, could contemplate the mysteries of God's dealings with men. He has been interpreted as an 'ecstatic' (one who pre-eminently renounces consciousness). By the Romantics he has been seen in terms of a frenzied subjectivity (Dionysian terms quite contrary to the deliberation of aesthetic artifice). Particularly stuffy medical men have tried to prove that he was the victim of abnormal vision, usually an astigmatism (as though the world he portrayed would have been 'normal' had that been corrected). And the heresy that has been sweetest to our immediate begetters found in him the father of 'pure painting' (suffering the provincial blindness of their own epoch). And yet El Greco was accepted, celebrated and sought after by the best men of his own time and place. Was Toledo then totally taken over by sitgmatics and astigmatics? And if not, with what has our incomprehension