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Comparative Drama, Volume 51, Number 1, Spring 2017, pp. 43-69 (Article)

Published by Western Michigan University
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2017.0002*

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If we look at a possibly speculative dystopic world in which all that remains is a single family invested in self-destruction through violence and incest, can we see a critique of the patriarchal narratives that have perpetuated discrimination and abuse in turn of the current century society? Maybe, maybe not. Maybe what we've got is just a story of one dysfunctional family at the end of time. But take two such contemporaneous plays from the dawn of the millennium that each recreate that same horrifying premise, one from Ireland, one from Argentina, and the viability of such a premise deepens.

In the final sentiment of Lola Arias's play *La escuálida familia* (2001), Luba says,

> They say that sibling-love engenders idiot-children. Then we'll start a family of idiots and we'll live happily ever after at the end of the snow. We'll have one, two, a thousand idiot children and we'll let them run, love, die. They'll get together, they'll have more idiots, and so on and so forth…[1]

Similarly, in Marina Carr's play *On Raftery's Hill* (2000), Dinah tells her father, "Granny was talkin about gorillas earlier. Thah's whah we are, gorillas in clothes pretendin to be human."[2] Each of these statements suggests a society in which humanity has all but vanished, largely—but not entirely—because of incest and the savage behavior of the families. In one case, the idiots will take over the future; in the other, humans have regressed into gorillas, walking backwards from civilization into the wilderness. The plays examine how, in the absence of moral behavior, violence leads to havoc, rendering individuals powerless to own their destinies since their lives are marked by physical, spiritual, and emotional deprivation. Both plays are largely preoccupied with how to create

communities that are moral and satisfying to all their members. Thus, in spite of an exhibited postmodern aesthetic, both writers seem to be operating from a deep ethical concern, reflecting on the conditions that might lead to the bleak scenarios portrayed in *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill*.

In the face of drastic social change taking place in Argentina and Ireland at the time of these plays' staging, Arias and Carr seem to seek a path toward re/consideration and resistance, and to examine how patriarchal social structures contribute to the disenfranchising of many. Carr's and Arias's plays offer, in due concordance with postmodern aesthetics, not solutions but rather openings from which to rethink the failures of their respective nation-states: the failure to provide fundamental human rights (the right to safety, work, adequate food, health, housing provisions). The political stance of both plays is delivered, then, through a postmodern aesthetic. This postmodern aesthetic, which Lola Proaño-Gómez defines as "an aesthetic of uncertainty" and which others like Jorge Dubatti and Osvaldo Pelletieri have respectively described as "el canón de la multiplicidad" or "teatro de la desintegración," takes into account the fragmentation of master narratives in the postmodern era.[3] Nevertheless, Proaño-Gómez finds in the postmodern plays of her study a "modern ethic."[4] This modern ethic is implicated in questions of human solidarity, the difficulty of creating community under the pressures of globalization, and the role history and language play in creating individuals' perceptions of themselves within a given time.

The same structure of "modern" ethical content and postmodern form infuse the plays of my study. Both *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill* fall under what Richard Kearney has postulated as a postmodern imagination that is both ethical and poetical.[5] According to Kearney, the collapse of the ethical via deconstruction has resulted in a dilemma for postmodernism, one in which the other has become just an image without substance. His solution is to allow the postmodern imagination to play and deconstruct, to critique, but not to become nihilistic in the process. The postmodern imagination must remain ethical to allow the reinvention of a new social project that overcomes postmodern paralysis. Carr and Arias choose to formulate *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill* without specific contextual coordinates, but their focus on morality, isolation, violence, and humanity speaks to their ethical and social concerns.

Both writers emphasize the contemporary disenfranchisement of their audience in light of patriarchal mores. The patriarchal narratives reconsidered in both these plays are divided into two categories: public and private. The public narratives encompass Greek mythology and Bible teachings primarily, but they also include the stories generated outside the plays' households. The private narratives scrutinize the origins of the members of the household in an attempt to understand the present. The fragmented private narratives often contradict each other, exhibiting the impossibility of creating a transparent, communal history of the households.

In his definition of narrative, Michael Bamberg highlights the dichotomy of master narratives and counter-narratives by taking into account the speaker who can be both complicit with and resistant to master narratives. In his rethinking of the interaction between both narratives, and the role of the speaker, Bamberg suggests the following line of inquiry:

> …how speakers employ narratives to juggle claims as to who they are that are hearable *both* as complicit with and as countering. In other words, the question has shifted to *how* they create a sense of self and identity that maneuvers simultaneously in between being complicit and countering established narratives that give guidance to one's actions but at the same time constrain and delineate one's agency.[6]

When applied to both *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill*, Bamberg's definition of narrative permits a close examination of how master narratives, in this case patriarchal master narratives, are contested by even apparently complicit characters. The number of contradicting private narratives about the past in each family makes vivid the difficulty of establishing any narrative not aligned with the dominant one. Nevertheless, by offering paths of resistance and agency to their characters, Carr and Arias have shown their audiences how modes of opposition to patriarchal and neoliberal economic policies can be negotiated and contested.

If we look first at the purpose and function of tragedy within both plays, it will be easier to place them within the economic moment in which they were created—because in spite of a purportedly apolitical postmodern aesthetic, they are nevertheless each very much embedded in the historical moment in which they were created. With the plays thus contextualized, we will be able to see that the ethical concern they

share can be linked—in the Irish case to the sexual scandals, and in the Argentine case to the outrage over the pardons issued by president Menem of those who had perpetrated crimes under the 1976–83 military dictatorship. The plays constitute acts of intervention that seek to foster a dialogue—an opening—allowing audiences to re/consider and resist the new socioeconomic policies of each country.

In spite of the vast cultural and geographical distance between Argentina and Ireland, very similar neoliberal economic models were implemented in both countries in the 1990s. This model, as summarized by Peter J. Clinch et al., transferred power from the nation state and its politicians to international institutions, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in Washington. Clinch et al. also note how strong critics of the model, among them Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, have openly suggested "that a free-market economic model was being uncritically applied in situations around the world where the preconditions for its successful operation simply do not exist."[7] Their analysis is particularly pertinent since at the time of the publication of their book, the Irish economy had not yet collapsed. In an overview of the dangers inherent in allowing international agencies to be responsible for Argentina's economy, the authors state,

> The phenomenon we are describing has been labeled the "Argentinisiation" of economic policy because that country prior to January 2002 was a prime example of one that had virtually handed over all economic policy making to outside agencies; the Argentinian currency board made the Federal Reserve (the US Central Bank) the real Central Bank of Argentina, and the need to reassure international financial markets obliged the government to comply with a long list of conditions from the IMF. Meanwhile, interest rates have soared, the economy stagnated and political and social unrest mounts.… The Irish economy is in a much stronger situation than Argentina's, of course. We have clearly gained enormously through the move from protectionism to free trade.[8]

On Raftery's Hill was staged in 2000, but to best trace the impact of the neoliberal economic model, and the reverberations of the disclosure of endemic and outrageous sexual abuse cases, a useful historical analysis of its context begins a decade earlier. As R. F. Foster examines in his book *Luck and the Irish*, 1990s Ireland was an incredibly wealthy, multicultural country where the economy grew far beyond expectations. As described

by Foster, "output in the decade from 1995 increased by 350 per cent, outpacing the per capita averages in the UK and the USA, personal disposable income doubled, exports increased fivefold, trade surpluses accumulated into billions, employment boomed, immigrants poured into the country."[9] Under the economic policies of Bertie Ahern's Government, Ireland became a fiscal paradise for foreign investors, particularly American companies, which promptly took advantage of both the low taxes and the educated, English-speaking workforce. Ireland, a nation with a long history of emigration, became host to large communities of immigrant populations, and by 2001, it had become one of the most globalized countries in the world.

In Argentina, the 1990s were also a time in which aggressive neoliberal policies were pursued under Menem's government. According to David Rock, under these policies Argentina's economy expanded, the *Peso* became pegged to the dollar, and the once powerful trade unions came under attack. As in the case of Ireland, massive outside investment created a mirage of wealth and growth that led

> to higher consumption rather than increased production. Investment was targeted towards the large-scale, capital-intensive industries that featured in Menem's privatization programme. The so called PYMES, the small and medium-size firms, failed to surge; still lacking access to credit, technology, markets and skills, they could do little to mop up the rising surplus of labour. Productivity gains lagged behind international standards.[10]

Although Arias does not write on the Menemist period, the changes implemented by Menem during his presidency shaped both the economy and by extension the social landscape of those who became adults in the 1990s. As Brenda Werth puts it, "Menem's particularly authoritarian brand of neoliberalism generated unprecedented social exclusion, reflected in the emergence of the newly poor, the disenfranchised middle class, and growing popular opposition during the nineties."[11] Werth's description could as well fit Ireland during the Celtic Tiger period (mid-1990s to mid-2000s) when, despite its rapid growth, Ireland led Europe in people living in relative poverty. Said Foster of the era, "The Tiger does not devote much care to its more puny cubs: even some noted Boosters admit the recent decline in social services. The picture here may suggest a two-tier society, of a kind recognizable to analysts of boom countries elsewhere

in the world but new for Ireland."[12] Thus, in spite of the vast geographical and cultural distance between Argentina and Ireland, the period studied in this project exhibits similar social and economic patterns.

That there are similar socioeconomic patterns at work in the Ireland and Argentina of this era, even despite the cultural and geographical chasm between them, seems clear enough. However, given that both works were written under a postmodern rubric, any further discussion of them must of course face the dilemma of how much, if any, context was relevant to the creation of either *La escuálida familia* or *On Raftery's Hill*. In his analysis of Irish theatre, Eamonn Jordan argues that, in fact, there is very little relation between the reality of the Celtic Tiger period and the theatre produced at that time, save noted exceptions. In his opinion, the plays cannot be restricted to a national interpretation since other forces, like international reception and varied influences ranging from the local to the global, came into play.[13]

While I agree that national boundaries might prove limiting in the interpretation of *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill*, I disagree that the context in which the plays were created is of no consequence to their interpretation. The context is not *only* national, since globalization allows playwrights to consider, participate in, and be influenced by factors beyond their national identities, but, however challenged, nationhood still remains. In the case of Ireland, the sexual scandals of the 1990s, which involved both the government and the Catholic Church, cannot be ignored. In Argentina, President Menem issued two sets of pardons in 1989 and 1990 to people responsible for crimes under the Junta Regime that defined and created a culture of impunity. The impact of the pardons on civil society has been long lasting and damaging, even after their reversal fifteen years later, since they allowed criminals of the Junta regime to remain free. As documented by Francesca Lessa, drawing from a study conducted by Humphrey and Valverde,

> *Impunidad*…captures the sense of personal vulnerability and thinness of citizenship in contemporary democratic Argentina,… [that results from] the failure of the state to protect rights, provide access to justice, ensure legal accountability of public officials, tackle police corruption, reverse the rising incidence of violent crime, and make businesses and individuals accountable for criminal negligence.[14]

Both Irish and Argentine citizens of the 1990s questioned the capacity of their official institutions—Church or state—to protect the country's citizens. Carr and Arias each propose in their work new visions and alternate routes to recreate committed citizenship, in spite of the apparent lack of political statement. Given that neither *La escuálida familia* nor *On Raftery's Hill* possesses a single overt reference to a national, political, social, or historical moment, the claim that the plays are indeed political—and concerned with their immediate national communities—might seem far-fetched; but in formulating what constitutes the political in these plays, I concur with Proaño-Gómez. Her definition is as follows:

> Propongo entonces entender las politica como la lucha o el enfrentamiento de intereses, el accionar de los individuos en la polis, dentro de un sistema de normas intituidas…es lucha por el poder interno de la polis o la lucha entre dos órdenes diversos y contrapuestos.
> (Let us understand politics as a fight or a confrontation of interests, as the actions of individuals within the polis, within a system of imposed rules… it is the struggle for internal power within a polis, or the struggle between two different, and opposing, orders.) [15]

This definition views conflict between world views as political, but distances itself from the explicitly political theatre of the 1970s, which had, for the most part, a radically different aesthetic from the plays of both my study and Proaño-Gómez's. Even if the authorial intent in both cases is postmodern, I think it is fair to view the plays as political through this lens.

The plays have striking structural similarities. In *On Raftery's Hill* the family is composed of a father, his deranged elderly mother, two daughters, and a retarded son. In *La escuálida familia* the family is made up of a father and a mother (who will commit suicide half way through the play), two daughters, and also a handicapped son. In Carr's play, Red Raftery, the patriarch of the family, rapes both of his daughters, Dinah and Sorrel. Dinah is the mother and sister of Sorrel. The whole family structure is distorted by Red's brutal acts. The only other male in the family, Raftery's son, Ded, is an emotionally disturbed man unable to care for himself and more at ease with the stable animals than with any of his family members. As in *On Raftery's Hill*, the father in *La escuálida familia* has an incestuous relationship with one of his daughters, Lisa. The other daughter, Luba, engages in a sexual relationship with her brother, Reo, who was abandoned at birth. Due to his unusual upbringing, Reo

is socially awkward and uneasy around people. Reo will accidentally kill Lisa, who is pregnant with her father's baby. He will then kill the father himself, this time intentionally. At the end of the play Luba and Reo are the only surviving characters in the deserted, snowy landscape. Their unborn child will be the seed of the future, the product of an incestuous relationship that nevertheless carries the hope of a new order.

Additionally, the landscape envisioned in both plays is barren, cold, and virtually isolated from any social interaction outside the close-knit family. In *La escuálida familia*, the cold weather, brought on by a fading sun that no longer provides sufficient warmth or light, and the subsequent lack of food are constant worries. Luba and Lisa hunt, but their only prey is Reo, found nearly frozen when the play commences. In *On Raftery's Hill*, there is still food (in fact, the Rafterys are quite wealthy), but Red Raftery is engaged in what appears to be animal mayhem, hunting and slaughtering prey on his property and leaving it just rotting outside, not bothering to use it for any purpose except to fulfill his desire to kill. The abundant carcasses populate the hill on which the family lives, creating a foul smell and further isolating the family. The savage behavior Red exhibits toward animals is indicative of his abusive nature and categorizes him, and his family, as socially crippled.

La escuálida familia and *On Raftery's Hill* each reconsiders classical tragedies, rejecting some of their elements and preserving others. The unity of place and action remain, but time is abandoned. There are marked downfalls in the plays, but it is hard to establish the hero/ine. The plays present hybrid reconsiderations of the tragic, drawing inspiration from similar sources: Shakespeare and Greek myths. However, and in spite of the many similarities between the two works, there are also marked departures. Although both plays break the three-act classical form, they do so differently.

Tragedy is not an alien form to Carr; it plays an important role in *By the Bog of Cats…*, and it is a genre that she has explored extensively in her Midlands plays. As critics have noted, it is in tragedy that Carr finds her voice; tragedy is the medium that has solidified her reputation as a notable Irish playwright.[16] As described by Clare Wallace, in each of the Midlands plays (*The Mai*, *Portia Coughlan*, and *By the Bog of Cats…*) a female heroine, the tragic figure, is bound by the following characteristics:

"Each is a mother and yet for each their offspring are not focal points of their desires or identities. Each is driven by an obsessional hunger which can, it seems, neither be controlled nor sated. Each struggles with a man in her life who is either absent or uncommitted. Each is bound by a legacy of the past."[17] However, in *On Raftery's Hill*, this is not the case, since it is hard to establish who in fact is the hero or heroine of the play. Although Sorrel is the latest victim of Red's brutality, she is by no means the heroine of the play. Sorrel has less time on stage than Dinah or Red; her love for Dara seems conventional and unremarkable. She is not a mother and lacks any obsession, or in classical terms, hubris, that might cause her downfall. Similar objections could be raised to casting Dinah as the heroine. The relationship between her and Red, although incestuous, lacks the poignancy and obsessive quality Portia has for her deceased twin brother in *Portia Coughlan*. Nor is Red absent from her life as the men are in the Midlands plays. Red and Dinah behave like an old married couple, alternating among bickering, resignation, and at times, caring for each other. Their sexual relationship, at this point consensual, is driven by habit rather than passion. When Dinah tries to provide an explanation for it to Sorrel, she describes it in the following terms:

> So we do ud from time to time, allas in the pitch dark, never a word, ud's nowan's bleddy business. Who's ud interferin wud? Nowan only us. And we want ud to stop. You don't believe thah. You don't believe anythin good abouh me and Daddy. We don't aither, but we want ud to stop. Ud's just like children playin in a field ah some awful game, before rules was made.[18]

Carr keeps the structural apparatus of tragedy but divests it of its mythological resonance. The pieces are there, but when they are brought together they do not fit, and as a result *On Raftery's Hill* becomes a tragedy manqué. To what end? Carr's deconstruction of the elements of her own personal tragic form denotes a further exploration of postmodern aesthetics, in which the pieces stand up by themselves, leaving to the audience the task of rethinking how wholeness can once again be achieved or reconsidered. In her analysis of the Midlands plays Margaret Maxwell establishes the following Greek/Shakepearean reconsiderations in Carr's plays: *The Mai* draws on Penelope and Odysseus's myth, *Portia Coughlan* on *The Merchant of Venice*, and, in the most transparent of the correlations, *By the Bog of Cats…* retells Medea's myth. In comparing *By*

the Bog of Cats… to *On Raftery's Hill*, however, Eammon Carr notes that the pain of incest cannot be elided through a mythological dimension. If Marina Carr succeeds in reconsidering and providing through ritual and other techniques a mythological resonance in the Midlands plays, in *On Raftery's Hill*, according to Eamonn Carr,

> because there are so few dramatic mythic/precedents, Carr's attempts to draw on the Greek myth of incest, between Zeus and Hera, fails. There is a difference between a Greek myth of origins and of populating the world and reality of the pain of incest, so that the play never has the comfort of a mythological dimension…. Carr re-invigorates the Medea myth in *By the Bog of Cats* as murder is ritualised through distancing and dancing, whereas in *On Raftery's Hill* myth becomes unsanctioned and unviable.[19]

Marina Carr's failure to make myth "viable" in *On Raftery's Hill* speaks to her embrace of a postmodern aesthetic, one of pieces, which nevertheless carries a deeply ethical commitment.

In 1990s Ireland both the Irish state and the Catholic Church were undermined by revelations of sexual child abuse. In a thoroughly documented sexual history of Ireland, Diarmaid Ferriter discusses many of the most publicized cases—the Killkeny incest, Father Brendan Smyth, the anonymous X girl, and Anne Lovett, among others—and examines the conditions that facilitated the abuse. While the particular children Ferriter identified were abused within public and Catholic institutions, child abuse certainly occurred within individual families as well. The endemic nature of the problem was reflected in the sheer number of cases, as Ferriter remarks:

> *The Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland Report (SAVI)*, initiated by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, funded by Atlantic Philantropies with additional funding from the Irish government and published in March 2002, revealed a huge volume of child abuse in Ireland. Over 1 in 20 women (5.6 per cent, representing nearly 80,000 women) reported being raped in childhood; over 1 in 50 men (2.7 per cent, representing nearly 47,000 thousand men) reported being raped in childhood, while 30.4 per cent of women reported some form of sexual abuse in childhood, as did 23.6 per cent of the men.[20]

The SAVI report also noted that women remain as vulnerable to abuse as adults as they had been as children. The results of the report, taken in conjunction with notions of patriarchy and the status of women in Ireland, can shed light on the persistent abuse of women during the Celtic Tiger period. Harry Ferguson is careful to point out that the media attention

given to the abuses conducted by priests clouded the fact that most of the cases did not happen at the hand of priests but in the private sphere of the home. In his analysis, he points out that, in fact, the most common occupation for child abusers is farming, yet as sharply noted by Ferguson, "the paedophile farmer" label had not drawn any attention.[21]

Carr's choice to examine sexual abuse in the context of a family, rather than at the hand of priests, would appear, then, to be a deliberate act, acknowledging this endemic problem within Irish society. By placing the abuse within the private sphere, she requires the audience to consider how power is established in a family—and also how abuse is sustained by public narratives of gender roles in Irish society. The master narrative of a good family man, hard-working and heterosexual, who nevertheless commits sexual abuse is harder to accept, even in profoundly Catholic Ireland, than the narratives of abuse committed by members of the clergy.

In a disturbing analysis by Ferguson of the language employed by Justice O'Flatherty when reducing from fourteen to four years the sentence of the rapist responsible for the pregnancy of a fourteen-year-old girl commonly known as X, he notes that

> part of the Judge's rationale for reducing the sentence in the X case was that the abuse was not "out and out rape." This clouds issues of consent and implicitly draws attention to the behaviour of the child as somehow being complicit in her victimisation. At its worst, responsibility for the problem of sex crimes is shifted to the victims: the idea that somehow the *desexualized* man was "led on" by the *sexualized* child.[22]

Justice O'Flatherty had previously referred to the accused as a "hard working, good family man" as if those qualities served to ameliorate his crime. His employment as a businessman also contradicted the commonly held view that sexual abuse is more prevalent in lower economic classes. In fact, as Susan Janko remarks, although child abuse and neglect are present in all ethnic groups and across socioeconomic levels, reports of abuse and neglect occur predominantly in families of low socioeconomic status.[23]

Child protection programs were established in Ireland in response to the findings of the 1990s. However, in order for the programs to run effectively, continued support and investment were indispensable. Niall McElwee points out that "the government admitted in January 1998 that the Irish childcare system requires £100 million spread out over three years to be truly effective in implementing childcare services."[24] Nevertheless,

the investment failed to materialize, and the resources were allocated to other areas. As McElwee put it, "despite the constant rhetoric accorded to children in this country, when it actually comes to putting significant cash in prevention focused services, politicians cannot seem to deliver the goods."[25]

The new neoliberal economic model diminished services for individuals and families, weakening the welfare system that could prevent further abuses. During the Celtic Tiger period, the overall wealth of the country increased, but so did social inequalities. As Carmen Kuhling remarks,

> Although social policy analysts have pointed out that the Irish welfare state was never particularly strong, it would appear that the opportunities produced by the Celtic Tiger economic boom could have been used to develop…public services…and to begin the process of developing a strong version of the welfare state.… however, it [Ireland] exhibited an extraordinarily low level of state spending on basic social programmes…. O'Hearn demonstrates that Ireland had the lowest levels in the EU of government expenditure.[26]

Within this context, Carr's play is an urgent reminder that measures must be taken to prevent further child abuse and that the Rafterys' situation is one of many—not an exceptional case.

The play was given two different endings, one in the performance and the other in the textual version published two years after the staging of the play. Eammon Carr has considered both endings and their relevance in interpreting the play.[27] In the staged version Sorrel has the last word. Red asks her if she has resolved her disagreements with Dara, to which Sorrel replies: "Oh I sourted him ouh, Daddy, don't you worry. I sourted him ouh for evermore."[28] As Eammon Carr reflects, however ambivalent the performance ending might be, the focus and the last words belong to Sorrel. The textual ending is far bleaker. In it Red begins to clean his gun with a strip of material from Sorrel's wedding dress, now soiled, after Shalome wandered away wearing it. As Eammon Carr notes,

> This is a more harrowing, if negatively symbolic ending with the patriarchal figure, wiping the gun (phallic object) clean with a strip of material from a wedding dress that has been put beyond use (decommissioned), by being soiled beyond any dry-cleaning intervention, and by being torn by him. With this gesture, Red is allowed to consolidate his power, but also he is given the final words of the play.[29]

Carr's decision to modify the ending two years after the performance places the emphasis on the lingering power of patriarchal mores. Red's brutality has managed to engulf each member of his family and forfeit any chance of an alternative order. At the time of publication and as McElwee's research indicates, children's services, in spite of the public awareness of abuse in the recent years, had failed to come through.[30] Perhaps Carr's new, darker ending is an attempt to call attention to the cost being paid by those left unprotected, uncared for, and ignored by the State.

There is a profound lack of communication in the play between those who reside outside the house, namely Isaac (the Raftery's neighbor) and Dara (Sorrel's suitor), and those who are inside. Dara and Isaac can pointedly comment with disgust and shame on the incestuous case of a neighbor. Their views exhibit those commonly held by society that the actions of the abusive father are both despicable and inexcusable. Their sentiments are aligned with the victim, in this case a daughter. In contrast, Red's response to Brophy's abuse is to label the news as "gossip" and explicitly claim, "Sarah Brophy goh whah was comin to her."[31] Given Red's own brutal abuse of all his children, his promptness to blame the victim is not surprising, but when both victims of his sexual abuse—Dinah and Sorrel—hold Red's point of view, the insidiousness, isolation, and pervasive effects of incest are glaringly evident. In one of the cases, when Sorrel blames Dinah for failing to protect her from her father's assault, Dinah replies: "Ud's noh the end a the world just because hands was laid on ya thah shouldn't a. Why couldn't ya a just been more careful?"[32] After her rape, Sorrel will turn against Dara, whom she cared for and toward whom she'd been very loving: "No!" she says, "Go way from me! There's natin wrong a Daddy. Ud's you! Think ya know everythin abouh everywan! Well ya know natin, Dara Mood."[33]

As these two examples have indicated, both of his victims internalize Red's point of view, which ensures their silence—and their complicity. The inability of either Dara or Isaac to perceive the abuse taking place in this house is equally disturbing given how clear the signs are. Both Dara and Isaac see how Red mistreats Dinah and see the terrible fear Ded has of him—a fear so great that has secluded himself in the cowshed rather than live under the same roof as his father.

It is as if these two universes, the valley and the hill, existed in separate parallel planes, with no chance of ever meeting; no chance, even, of having a significant impact on one another. In the context of the 1990s sexual scandals, Carr's choice to drop historical specifics universalizes the terrible isolation the victims endure while simultaneously calling attention to the failure of the local communities to perceive the abuse. In the most publicized cases of sexual abuse in Ireland, in the time preceding the publication of the play, the extent of the problem (both in frequency and length of years) along with the failure of public institutions (both governmental and religious) to protect the victims enraged the public. Carr's examination of the sexual abuse taking place in the Rafterys' house, as well as in the more tragic case of the Brophys, underlines the prevalence and extent of incest in this community, pointing to an endemic problem rather than an isolated case.

As Wallace has shown, both narrative and fable are strong components of Carr's tragedy, and *On Raftery's Hill* is no exception. There are two types of narrative present in the play, and each serves a different function, although these functions at times collide, exacerbating in the narrative the tension between the private and the public. On one hand, there are a number of narratives and stories related to the Rafterys' private mythology: where they came from, who their ancestors were, and how much property they may own. These narratives are largely the result of the private memories of different characters, and often they are contradictory, which highlights the dubious the nature of memory. On the other hand, there are a number of narratives that might be designated as public, describing the outside community and the social order. Within the public narratives, Greek mythology and the Bible are counterpoised, each offering a different type of society and moral order. To these two forms of narrative one might add the "gossip" coming from the valley, which as the negative label used to categorize it implies, is viewed as a source of unreliable narration.

Following Bamberg's definitions of master and counter-narratives, the public narratives previously described in *On Raftery's Hill* function as master narratives within the text. Bamberg divides master narratives into two categories, "one claiming…the existence of master narratives that delineate how narrators position themselves with their story; the other arguing in a much broader sense that speakers are principally subjected to grand rècits and metanarratives from which there seems to be no escape."[34]

Bamberg's second category, the broader of the two, corresponds to the use of the Bible and Greek mythology in the play, since the characters consider their actions in light of both those narratives. The other public narrative that Carr depicts—the "gossip"—functions as a master narrative *and* as a counter-narrative, depending on which character considers the news.

The private narratives, such as the memories of the children, are, in their preponderance, counter-narratives that seek to redefine the characters' sense of self. Within the Raftery household, Red holds the master narrative of his family, and his progeny attempt, with little success, to alter, counter, and to resist Red's version of events. For Bamberg, even in the act of countering a master narrative, the narrator juggles both the master and the counter-narrative, and agency is located in the moment of interaction. As he states, "I am proposing considering counter narratives as brought off and carefully managed in the social realm of interaction rather than as stories that have a previous existence in the mind or the life of speakers."[35]

Within Carr's play, the dual focus of being both complicit and subversive is indeed pertinent, since the characters are unable to configure themselves outside Red's master narrative. The metanarrative role Greek mythology and the Bible play in the Raftery household—yet another layer of master narrative against which the characters must kick—serves to highlight how patriarchal public narratives can impact the microcosm of the household.

Thus, despite assertions to the contrary by the author, Carr's play is indeed a political intervention, one that seeks to reconsider those patriarchal narratives that lead to abuse and perpetuate inequality, both between women and men and between fathers and their children. The Rafterys might be grotesque and their violence extreme, but their excesses serve to highlight the profound, endemic, and systemic problem of sexual molestation within Irish communities. The patriarchal socioeconomic narratives sustained in Ireland at the time the play was written helped shaped a culture of silence and disenfranchisement for women, one that cannot be divorced from the sexual scandals under the Celtic Tiger era. By dramatizing the ways in which patriarchal structures can be conducive to abuses of power and violence, Carr opens the door to alternative orders.

If Carr's title for her play highlights Raftery's name, and by extension the patronym itself, Arias's title, *La escuálida familia*, draws attention to the communal sense of deprivation a whole family experiences. A perfect English language translation of this title is difficult, and in fact, in Jean Graham-Jones's translation of the play, the title was modified to *A Kingdom, a Country or a Wasteland, in the Snow* since the English term "squalid" is not perfectly congruent with the Spanish word.[36] Arias's title calls attention to the bleak conditions experienced by the entire family; it effectively seizes power from the patriarchal figure and provides a more horizontal structure to this kingdom. Within the play, the parents are not given proper names, just the functional titles of Father and Mother, emphasizing their parental roles at the cost of their individuality. The children, though, *do* have names—Lisa, Luba, and Reo—an indication that it will be the youth who trample and ultimately replace the power structure in this narrative.

As a closer analysis of the contextual circumstances surrounding *La escuálida familia* in Argentina will show, a very public, communal response from different social classes to the catastrophic social and economic policies implemented by Menem and maintained by de la Rúa's government was part of the social landscape in which *La escuálida familia* was written and premiered. In Argentina, the process of democratization entailed recognizing the horrors of the 1976–83 military dictatorship. *La escuálida familia* was published and produced in 2001, almost twenty years after Argentina's return to democracy, but the process of coming to terms with a political past that was gruesome, hidden, violent, and had left tens of thousands "disappeared" is without a doubt part of the legacy inherited by those like Arias coming of age in the 1990s.

The military dictatorship operated with secrecy in abducting citizens not complicit with the regime, and it united itself with the conservative Catholic authorities, advocating a patriarchal, traditional family structure quite similar to the one sustained for many decades in Ireland. Once the crimes of the regime were confronted, some citizens had to negotiate their own roles in the horrors which took place—either by consenting to, participating in, or ignoring the signs of something gone terribly wrong. President Carlos Saúl Menem (1989–99) issued two sets of pardons, the first in 1989 and the second in 1990, the latter to Jorge Videla, Emilio Massera, Leopoldo Galtieri, and other men who had been responsible

for the political repression and disappearance of so-called "subversivos" under the Junta dictatorship. Beginning in 1995 with the public confession of Captain Adolfo Francisco Scilingo, a number of military leaders acknowledged the systematic abduction, torture, and dumping of hundreds of people into the ocean. By 1998, eight military members had confessed their involvement in the killings and disappearances.[37]

The complicit role the national community had played in the military regime came under scrutiny, and, in that regard, both Irish and Argentine playwrights served as voices allowing each playwright's respective audience to reflect on its past, but also to consider what sort of present was now available and what future to envision. The victims of sexual abuse in Ireland finally managed to come forward, demand legislation, and open a public discussion of the institutional failures that betrayed them. This is not unlike the process undergone by the victims of the Junta regime. It is not necessary to compare these transgressions. The process of comeuppance itself—the acknowledgment, confrontation, and demands for protection from the citizenry—was a part of the public discourse in both countries in the 1990s.

Like Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill*, Lola Arias's *La escuálida familia* reduces the community to its bare bones: a single family. Here, Argentina becomes the kingdom under analysis, and the questions become: What sort of community does Arias evoke? How is the power within this kingdom established or demolished? Arias's setting is perhaps even more desolate, brutal, and isolated than Carr's. In *La escuálida familia*, no one except the family members appears at all (although a past suitor is mentioned briefly and Reo speaks, however cryptically, about an older woman he once lived with). The world the family inhabits is reduced, a microcosm of an imploding society: barren, cold, meager in food and light—a deserted, snowy landscape filled with savage passion. As Graham-Jones puts it in her foreword to the English version of the play, "Despite its mythical roots and isolated location, the play resonates strongly with our current plagues of hunger, war, and globalized consumerism. Indeed, the original Buenos Aires production, directed by the author herself,… upset, and discomfited its audience members."[38]

At the time the play was written, the imminent economic crisis that would collapse de la Rúa's government was palpable, and the fragile situation of Argentina's middle class, not to mention those at the lower

levels, was starkly visible. The collapse of Argentina's middle class and the reduction of social services for all resulted in a community of increased fragmentation and disempowerment. All sectors were affected, and theatre makers were no exception. In an interview with Patricia V. Fischer, Arias speaks openly about the inability to earn a living from her theatrical career and the minimal resources she had to produce the play.[39] The artifacts that populate her staging of *La escuálida familia* were retrieved from flea markets since there were no available funds for anything else. The play was staged in October 2001 in El Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas, an official institution, and the scant budget it was allocated is an example of the dire circumstances Argentina experienced.

In *La escuálida familia*, the eponymic characters barely survive. Frozen potatoes and two hares are the only food they can scrape together, far from enough for a family of five. Hunger is always present, from the very first lines, in which the mother describes how while butchering a hare she found a fetus inside. In spite of her hunger, the thought of eating the fetus makes her nauseated, and she has to throw it away.

In turn-of-the-century Argentina, "*cacerolazos*" (a middle-class protest practice consisting of banging pots and pans loudly in opposition to government measures) had achieved unprecedented popularity. The repeated reference to empty pots and to the lack of food in *La escuálida familia* offers a commentary on the dire circumstances of many contemporary Argentines.[40] As poignantly analyzed by sociologists Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler, the dismantling of an economy that they labeled as the "import-substitution" model in favor of a neoliberal economic model led to a dramatic impoverishment of that same middle class. According to their research, between 1980 and 1990 "the average income of salaried personnel and wage earners dropped 40 percent," and if in the beginning of the decade the working poor represented only 3.2 percent of the population, by the end of the decade that number had climbed to 26.7 percent.[41] The squalid Mother's struggle throughout the play to survive centered on the pawning of her daughters to wealthier, older men willing to support them in exchange, one imagines, for sexual favors and free labor—a scheme which was was sadly closer to the everyday reality of many Argentines than it might appear at first glance.

Like Marina Carr, Lola Arias examines the role of narratives—public and private. While the Rafterys are subject to the gaze of their neighbors, *La escuálida familia* remains isolated in an echo chamber. The brother Reo is the one exception, since he is positioned at the border between the outside and the inside world and between the past and the future, and only awkwardly placed in the present at all. Like Ded in Carr's play, Reo is socially crippled, his speech poor and at times bordering on the absurd, while his memory is also punctuated by half-remembered images and a patchwork of pieces lacking a linear structure. Nevertheless, small glimpses into his previous life slowly surface, providing a tiny vision of a landscape other than the one in which the family dwells. As such, the public narratives in *La escuálida familia* are mainly composed of the Bible stories the father tells Lisa at night, right before he attempts to have sexual intercourse with her. These function as the canonical text of moral behavior, and while Carr's play is more ambivalent about Christian theology, leaving undetermined how the Bible might or might not serve to perpetuate oppression, Arias's play forcefully links the biblical teachings to a patriarchal structure that serves to perpetuate power inequalities.

Two biblical parables in particular are reconsidered by Arias: Lot's story and Abraham's aborted sacrifice of Isaac. Both are told to Lisa by her father, so their telling functions as a distorted book-before-bedtime scenario. This bedtime, during which parents usually create intimacy, bonding, and nurturing with their children, turns, in the hands of Arias, into perverted foreplay. The stories chosen by the father from the Bible encourage filial submission. The recounted Lot parable is not the commonly known one about his wife turning into salt but a lesser-known story in which Lot's daughters, in order to repopulate the earth, rape Lot while he lies unconscious. Despite this perverse programming, Lisa attempts to rebel:

> *Lisa*: I don't understand, a woman would never force herself on a man.
> *Father*: The Bible says so, they took advantage of him while he was drunk.
> *Lisa*: But if he wasn't aware, he couldn't have…been with them.
> *Father*: That's the way it is, that's what the scriptures say.
> *Lisa*: They lie. Lot was also a sinner and God saved him, He killed Lot's wife, He set Lot up with his own daughters…God is a father too…[42]

Lisa quickly perceives the illogical underpinnings of the parable and the warped gender and intergenerational politics embedded in it. She explicitly accuses God of siding with Lot because they are both fathers. The parable itself has generated extensive scholarship, since even among religious believers it has been difficult to explain how God could sanction incest. Some early theologians, as documented by Robert Polhemus, cast doubt on Lot's unconsciousness. Polhemus comments that this line of inquiry is the origin of an extensive revisionist quest in family life in the twentieth century.[43]

Arias's reinterpretation of the parable sheds further light on this question. The original parable has Lot along with his two daughters having just escaped from Sodom and seeking refuge in a cave. God's wrath at the depravity of the Sodomites leads him to set the city on fire and exterminate this most unfaithful group. From the daughters' point of view, they and their father are the only surviving human beings on earth and thus are compelled to reproduce in order to perpetuate not just their species but the world of God. In *La escuálida familia,* it is unclear why the world is collapsing, but the lack of food, isolation, and a fading sun suggest a bleak and uncertain future. However, in the scene between Lisa and her father, it is made clear that Lisa could have married another man, a fat suitor supported by Lisa's mother but rejected by her father. This act is far from a protective, unselfish paternal gesture, but rather it is an attempt on the part of the father to keep Lisa for his own sexual gratification. By allowing both the father and Lisa to remain conscious and capable of having an argument, Arias demonstrates that foundational myths, in this case from the Bible, must be rethought in order to achieve liberation from patriarchal oppression.

The second parable Arias explores is when Abraham (Lot's brother) takes Isaac to the mountain to be sacrificed, following God's command. God tests Abraham's faith by requesting that he execute his most beloved son, but just before Abraham is about to kill Isaac, God intervenes to save him. Once again, the father uses this parable to initiate sexual intercourse with Lisa, except that Lisa is not in her bed and Reo has occupied her space. Once the father realizes his mistake, he becomes angry, accusing Reo of attempting to seduce both of his daughters and creating distress in his family. When the father calms down, he proceeds to share his collection

of liquors with his son Reo and gets him drunk, with the intention of killing him. A fight between Reo and the father ensues, but Luba breaks them apart by using a rifle.

The parable chosen by the father suggests filial submission, since Isaac complies with Abraham even after Isaac learns that he is going to become the sacrificial lamb. In Arias's variation, however, the father must get Reo drunk in order to overcome him, and even then he fails. Luba, arguably the future God/dess of this kingdom (since she will be the creator of new life through her relationship with Reo) is the hand that intervenes, at least this time, to prevent Reo from killing their father. Arias's scene reinscribes the original parable from the Bible on new ground, giving the children, not the fathers (God or Abraham), the power to reconceive the future of the community.

The return of Reo to the family must also be analyzed within Argentina's history. Reo was abandoned at birth by his mother and thrown into a lake by his father. He was mysteriously rescued by an older woman who raised him and possibly sexually abused him. It is unclear in the play how Reo's relationship with this unknown woman was severed. Under Argentina's military dictatorship, thirty thousand people disappeared—among them were children born to mothers who had been labeled terrorists. The children were born in jail, taken away from the birth mothers (who were executed shortly after giving birth), and placed with families complicit with the regime. It is estimated that five hundred children were abducted in this manner and given a new identity.[44] The circumstances of Reo's abandonment and reappearance in Arias's play haunt the repressive, patriarchal kingdom of the father and, in time, will lead to its destruction, giving rise to a new order. When Reo is found by Lisa and Luba, he is nearly frozen and speechless. That Reo is frozen can be interpreted as the inability of Argentine society to move forward into the future until a full account of the past has been achieved. The present remains *frozen*—held hostage by a past that has been obscured. Menem's pardons effectively denied the victims the opportunity to hold accountable the military responsible for the disappearances and other crimes committed under their dictatorship.

Reo becomes the material body representing all "the disappeared" that haunt the play. He has returned from the lake into which he was thrown to reclaim his space in a society that erased him. Under the

military dictatorship, many were disposed of by being thrown into the River Plate from planes, drawing a further link between Reo and the many, still missing, bodies. In 1994, a group called HIJOS was created to put the children of the disappeared in contact with each other. Initially, the group counted 350 members; by 1996, six hundred children had joined, organizing public demonstrations against the pardons and seeking to reunite the abducted children with their biological relatives. The organization, still active, continues to advocate for a rewriting of both the collective and individual history of the country, one that acknowledges the abuses committed under the military regime.[45]

The return of Reo, *el huérfano*, initiates the possibility of a new history which acknowledges past abuses and reconsiders them. Against all odds, Reo's survival and subsequent return mark a fresh beginning for the kingdom. The Mother's last words, in her suicide letter, state that she does not regret attempting to drown Reo. This solidifies the sense that, in spite of the depicted deaths—the Mother, the Father, and Lisa—the future can be a place of hope and of new birthings.[46]

Arias exposes narratives—in this case biblical—that allow for a societal structure that ensures the oppression of women and the eventual collapse of the community onto itself. In the context of Argentine politics, as incisively analyzed by Diana Taylor, the military regime operated in a similar manner, allocating to itself the role of the father in charge of the *patria*. As she explains, "according to this discourse (or incest narrative), the military man (who embodies the state) engenders and copulates with the feminine *Patria*, giving birth to civilization. In this scenario the military male embodies masculine subjectivity while the feminine is reduced to the material territory, the body to be penetrated and defended."[47] The body politic became the feminized—silent and oppressed—recipient of the actions of the Junta government. By attempting to move forward without considering the past, Menem's government comported itself like a "neoauthoritarian democracy." In this context, the voice of Lisa, raised against her father, is a subversive act.[48] It signals the onset of an alternative power structure—one in which women and children can regain autonomy.

Under Argentina's economic crisis, women and children especially were deprived of their voices by the neoliberal socioeconomic policies. Women experienced the double burden of having to work outside the

home, since one salary was not enough, and inside their homes, since traditional structures of women as mothers and homemakers remained in place. As Barbara Sutton states, "the economic troubles that low wages and unemployment brought to families, combined with the national government withdrawal from responsibilities in health, education, and other services, was often translated into heavier work loads for women."[49]

In *La escuálida familia* this double burden is openly depicted. The mother is responsible for cooking the potatoes that provide the family's sustenance, while the daughters are the hunters. In contrast, the father does not engage in any activity that provides any food or help to his family, even though he is the head of the household and decides important matters like whether—and who—his daughters should marry. While in the past the family owned a business trading pelts, their present situation has become so dire (like that of many Argentines) that the father appears not to hold any employment. Despite this, he is not responsible for procuring or preparing food since traditionally that labor, invisible and unpaid, falls under what is considered a woman's responsibility.

These notions are clearly evident in the play. When the mother complains that their businesses have disappeared and little is left, the father yells, "I don't want to hear anything more out of you. You have a big mouth, good for scarfing down food and talking nonsense."[50] He wants to silence both her hunger and her anger. At this point he has returned home, visibly drunk, and the mother is in the process of preparing food. In the absence of any income the mother has resorted to alternative practices that can, if not ensure, at least help with the feeding of the family. She is serving potatoes that had been thrown from a truck. Since during the crisis in Argentina people searching for food in the garbage had become a quotidian part of at least the urban landscape, the play's audience would not have viewed this degree of food deprivation as unusual.[51] Indeed, Arias's play acquired particular resonance with its Buenos Aires audience, as Graham-Jones noted.[52]

In *On Raftery's Hill*, Red is a hunter, but in this play it is Lisa and Luba who embody that traditionally male role. Arias's decision to give the daughters agency regarding their own survival, in contrast with Carr's play, could be seen as a demonstration of the possibility of change in gender and intergenerational roles. Given, however, that at the end of the play

Lisa is accidentally killed by Luba, and that Luba and Reo engage in an incestuous relationship, what has changed? What does the future hold for this community? Arias does not provide the audience with an answer.

As noted by Graham-Jones in her translation, *Reo* in Spanish means culprit, accused, fugitive, and bum.[53] However, she also proposes that Reo may be viewed as a variation of Remus, as in the myth of Romulus and Remus, since Luba claims that her name means she-wolf.[54] Lisa's death, if we view the play in this light, restores the mythical order, since Reo and Luba—the original twins—are reunited in the end. In his mostly vague remembrances, Reo mentions having been raised by an older woman who also kept wolves: a further datum should we wish to see Reo as a Remus figure. Reo's cryptic speech, as noted by William David Foster, is the voice of a reborn generation that seeks to teach a fallen patriarchy how to give birth to a new order.[55] In Carr's play, Ded, who also functions as the idiot, is the only member capable of voicing the truth about the Rafterys. However, his voice is brutally silenced, and at the end Red's patriarchal rule has been strengthened, rather than weakened, by the addition of Sorrel to the list of his victims.

Both Carr and Arias are invested in deconstructing the power of narratives to shape communities and to establish and maintain social orders that are repressive and damaging to its members. However, by the end of both plays more questions have been raised than answered, and the future might appear even bleaker than the past. Here, the notion of a poetics of failure in performance, as proposed by Sarah Bailes, seems fitting to both Arias's and Carr's projects, even if their techniques are radically different. Bailes claims that failure can function as a place from which to generate new meanings and visions. According to her analysis,

> Failure *works*. Which is to say that although ostensibly it signals the breakdown of an aspiration or an agreed demand, breakdown indexes an alternative route or way of doing or making. In its status as "wrongdoing," a failed objective establishes an aperture, an opening onto several (and often many) other ways of doing that counter the authority of a singular or "correct" outcome. Whilst an intended outcome imagines only one result, the ways in which it might *not* achieve that outcome are indeterminate.… In this sense, strategies of failure in the realm of performance can be understood as generative, prolific even; failure *produces*, and does so in a roguish manner.[56]

Applying Bailes's theory to *La escuálida familia* and *On Raftery's Hill*, the unresolved, bleak endings can be interpreted as new points of departure for alternative discourse. The deconstruction of tragedy and the inversion of patriarchal master narratives in both plays illuminate the alienation and impoverishment in each country. And just as theatrical failure can be seen as artistically liberating, social collapse too can be a jumping-off point. Barbara Sutton, analyzing the Argentine crisis, reflects that "this was also a time in which inequality was rendered more visible; when social relations that might have seemed opaque or hard to grasp became more exposed, potentially intelligible, and susceptible to social change efforts. *Crises can create openings, cracks through which we can see the structures of society more clearly*."[57]

In this hopeful light, *On Raftery's Hill* and *La escuálida familia* prompt their audiences to see what is hidden and to act upon their newly acquired knowledge, in spite of the darkness and suffering the plays portray. "*El reino de los idiotas*" becomes a landscape of renewal and openings, the aperture to a different model in which morality can be reclaimed. As Arias says in the interview that serves as the afterward to the original edition of the play, "*he aquí la mayor ironía: el reino de los idiotas es la única utopía posible, el lugar vacante para la libertad*." (The great irony is this: the reign of idiots is the only possible utopia, a vacant lot for liberty.)[58]

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Notes

[1] Jean Graham-Jones, ed. and trans., *BAiT*: *Buenos Aires in Translation* (New York: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center Publications, 2007), 113.

[2] Marina Carr, *On Raftery's Hill* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2002), 21.

[3] Lola Proaño-Gómez, *Poéticas de la globalización en el teatro latinoamericano* (Irvine, CA: Ediciones de Gestos, 2007), 13; translation mine; Jorge Dubatti, "El teatro argentino en la postdictadura (1983–2005): el canon de la multiplicidad," *Arrabal* 7–8 (2010): 17–26; and Osvaldo Pelletieri, "El teatro argentino del año 2000 y el teatro del futuro," *Latin American Theater Review* 34, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 5–23 (17).

[4] Proaño-Gómez, *Poéticas*, 13.

[5] Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1988), 396.

[6] Michael Bamberg, "Considering Counter Narratives," in *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, ed. Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 2004), 363.

[7] J. Peter Clinch, Frank J. Convery, and Brendan M. Walsh, *After the Celtic Tiger: Challenges Ahead* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2002), 63.

[8] Ibid.

[9] R. F. Foster, *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change from 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

[10] David Rock, "Racking Argentina," *New Left Review* 17 (October 2002): 55–86 (71).

[11] Brenda G. Werth, *Theatre, Performance, and Memory Politics in Argentina* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 8.

[12] Foster, *Luck and the Irish*, 15.

[13] Eamonn Jordan, *Dissident Dramaturgies: Contemporary Irish Theatre* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 10.

[14] Michael Humphrey and Estela Valverde, "Human Rights, Victimhood, and Impunity: An Anthropology of Democracy in Argentina," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 51, no. 1 (2007): 179–97 (182).

[15] Proaño-Gómez, *Poéticas*, 13; translation mine.

[16] See, for example, Maria Doyle, "Slouching towards Raftery's Hill: The Devolving Patriarch in Marina Carr's Midlands Plays," *Modern Drama* 53 (2010): 495–515; and Claudia W. Harris, "Rising Out of the Miasmal Mists: Marina Carr's Ireland," in *The Theatre of Marina Carr: "Before Rules Was Made,"* ed. Cathy Leeney and Anna McMullan (Dublin: Carysfort, 2003).

[17] Clare Wallace, "Tragic Destiny and Abjection in Marina Carr's 'The Mai, Portia Coughlan' and 'By the Bog of Cats…,'" *Irish University Review* 31 (2001): 431–49 (438).

[18] Carr, *On Raftery's Hill*, 41.

[19] Eamonn Carr, "The Theatrical Representation of Incest in Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill*," *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies* 2, no. 3 (2000–2001): 138–50 (143–44).

[20] Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 459.

[21] Harry Ferguson, "The Paedophile Priest: A Deconstruction," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 84, no. 335 (Autumn 1995): 247–256 (249).

[22] Ibid., 250.

[23] Susan Janko, *Vulnerable Children, Vulnerable Families: The Social Construction of Child Abuse* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994), 34.

[24] Niall McElwee, "The Search for the Holy Grail in Ireland: Social Care in Perspective," *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies* 1, no. 1 (1998): 79–105 (81).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Carmen Kuhling, and Kieran Keohane, *Cosmopolitan Ireland: Globalisation and Quality of Life* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 18.

[27] Carr, "The Theatrical Representation of Incest," 147.

[28] Carr, *On Raftery's Hill*, 42.

[29] Carr, "The Theatrical Representation of Incest," 147.

[30] McElwee, *The Search for the Holy Grail in Ireland*, 81.

[31] Carr, *On Raftery's Hill*, 15.

[32] Ibid., 40.

[33] Ibid., 38.

[34] Bamberg, "Considering Counter Narratives," 359–60.

[35] Ibid., 368.

[36] Graham-Jones, *BAiT*, 58.

[37] Elin Skaar, *Judicial Independence and Human Rights in Latin America: Violations, Politics, and Prosecution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 56.

[38] Graham-Jones, *BAiT*, 57–58.

[39] Patricia V. Fischer, "Teatro y crisis," in *Teatro argentino y crisis (2001–2003)*, ed. Osvaldo Pelletieri (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2004), 185.

[40] Humphrey and Valverde, *Human Rights, Victimhood, and Impunity*, 183.

[41] Ibid., 87.

[42] Graham-Jones, *BAIT*, 76.

[43] See Robert M. Polhemus, *Lot's Daughters: Sex, Redemption, and Women's Quest for Authority* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 63.

[44] Francesca Lessa, "Beyond Transitional Justice: Exploring Continuities in Human Rights Abuses in Argentina between 1976 and 2010," *Journal of Human Rights Practice* (2011): 38.

[45] See the HIJOS website, http://www.hijos-capital.org.ar/.

[46] Lola Arias, *La escuálida familia* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Rojas, 2001), 44.

[47] Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 78.

[48] Ibid., 15.

[49] Barbara Sutton, *Bodies in Crisis: Culture, Violence, and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 46.

[50] Graham-Jones, *BAIT*, 81.

[51] Sutton, *Bodies in Crisis*, 60.

[52] Graham-Jones, *BAiT*, 58.

[53] Ibid., 113.

[54] Ibid.

[55] David William Foster,"El lenguaje patriarcal, el lenguaje de los idiotas: *La escuálida familia* de Lola Arias," *ArtelertA*, no. 8 (2004): 19–22 (19).

[56] Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2–3.

[57] Sutton, *Bodies in Crisis*, 3; emphasis mine.

[58] Arias, *La escuálida familia*, 55; translation mine.