

JAMES PLUNKETT

A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION
TO THE WORK OF
JAMES PLUNKETT

By

SHEILA CATHERINE LANTHIER, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

September, 1980

MASTER OF ARTS

English

McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: A Critical Introduction to the Work of
James Plunkett

AUTHOR: Sheila Catherine Lanthier, B.A.,
Concordia University

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Brian John

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 87.

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a basic, critical introduction to the work of the contemporary Irish writer, James Plunkett. As there is virtually no criticism of the writer, the work itself is examined in some depth. Strumpet City and Farewell Companions are discussed as novels which can be read in sequence, thus providing a unique view of Irish life between 1907 and 1947, and as individual works which stand on their own merit. Plunkett's growth as a writer is observed through his Collected Short Stories. The Gems She Wore: A Book of Irish Places is used as background material. In conclusion, a basic philosophy of brotherhood is seen as the uniting theme of all Plunkett's work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Brian John, who has always been encouraging, and unfailingly kind and patient. I am grateful to Linda Willmott who has managed to remain a good friend while typing this thesis. I would also like to mention my parents who have always surrounded me with books; they introduced me to the novels of James Plunkett and I am deeply indebted to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
I <u>Strumpet City</u>	12
II <u>Farewell Companions</u>	37
III <u>Short Stories</u>	60
Conclusion	75

INTRODUCTION

James Plunkett is a contemporary Irish writer of enormous strength and intelligence, yet he is virtually unknown outside Ireland. Plunkett is ignored by the major critics, and his work is left to the minor reviewers in various journals. To be sure, he is not a prolific writer: he has published only two novels, Strumpet City (1969) and Farewell Companions (1977); Collected Short Stories (1977), which includes an earlier volume The Trusting and The Maimed (1955); and The Gems She Wore: A Book of Irish Places (1972). However, the work is important and satisfying. James Plunkett writes of a new Ireland, and while his novels are historical, they do not romanticize the subject beyond recognition.

In The Gems She Wore, Plunkett refers to the children of his generation as "the children of promise."¹ Yet when James Plunkett Kelly was born on May 21, 1920, the Easter Rising of 1916 was history, the Irish Free State was still two years away, and the Civil War was a fact of daily life. When he reached school age in the thirties, Plunkett discovered that his teachers "were all Irish speakers, some of them native speakers, and many of them had carried guns themselves during the guerrilla years" (GSW, p.17). His teachers were men who had fought for Irish independence, and, as he observes, "although by and large they were good men, they were intoxicated with patriotism and

intensely concerned to eradicate any remnants of servility or British influence from the young minds of the new State committed to their charge" (GSW, p.17). The children of the twenties were the first generation of "free" Ireland, and, as such, great efforts were made to instill in them a sense of their Irish heritage. But Ireland did not exist in a vacuum and the children of promise were not to be fooled. Plunkett writes: "the image of Ireland they were giving us bore no relationship to the world most of us were doing our best to grow up in" (GSW, p.17). Furthermore, Plunkett was a realist "enough to know that this was all bloody nonsense" (GSW, p.18). But while he dismissed the "bloody nonsense" of extreme patriotism, Plunkett retained a love and understanding of basic Irish life.

When the middle class lie of my youth was nailed at last, it was the turn of the writers and the poets. They had better things by far to say. They understood that a country is its people and that landscape which has soaked in the sweat and blood of the living acquires a natural sanctity. Its monuments too, and its carved stones, are endowed with life and speak with tongues. (GSW, p.28)

James Plunkett grew up in Dublin, but he was born outside the city, halfway between the respectable suburbs of Sandymount and the poverty of Ringsend. When he was six years old, his family moved to Upper Pembroke Street, and he grew up "in the shadow of those tall houses" (GSW, p.38). St. Stephen's Green was close by, and to the east "stretched the long and gracious streets Joyce was to remember all his life: the haunt of W.B. Yeats, George Moore, Oliver St. John

Gogarty, that brilliant company of writers and wits who walked and talked their uninterrupted way through the streets of my childhood - all, may I say, quite unknown to me" (GSW, p.39). The brilliant company may have been unknown to the child, but he grew up in a tradition which they helped to form. Yet Dublin was not all tall houses and St. Stephen's Green: Plunkett remembers that "the streets still bore the grey look of suffering" (GSW, p.31). The Troubles were coming to a conclusion in the south of Ireland - at least to the extent that extreme violence ceased; it is impossible to say if the Troubles ever ended in Ireland - but the wounds which had been inflicted on the people and the landscape were still fresh. Plunkett left the Christian Brothers School when he was seventeen, and began to work as a clerk in the Gas Company. He found it a "great shock" when he realized that he was "on the side of the Godless" (GSW, p.26), and he listened to the public speakers with great interest. Plunkett believes:

It is a truth of literature that nothing much happens to a writer after the age of twenty or so that will affect his work; the small store of material which informs the imagination for the rest of life is made up of the remembered experiences of childhood and youth. (GSW, pp.96-97)

This may well be true, but it seems very important that in April 1946 Plunkett became a branch-and-staff secretary of the Workers Union of Ireland, and he worked for James Larkin until the labour leader's death in 1947. Larkin plays an important role in Plunkett's first novel Strumpet City. During the early forties and fifties, James

Plunkett contributed short stories to The Bell, and in 1955 The Trusting and The Maimed, a collection of stories, was published. In January of the same year he went to the Soviet Union as a member of a delegation of writers, and when he returned to Ireland he was attacked by the Press. His resignation was demanded, but the Union held firm, and, when he did resign in August 1955, it was to begin work as Drama Assistant at Radio Eireann. In 1960 he became a producer at Telefis Eireann, and he has been involved with radio and television production since that time.

Strumpet City and Farewell Companions offer a unique view of Dublin life between 1907 and 1947. While the two novels need not be read in sequence, certain characters are common to both. The link is slight but effective: in one of the final scenes of Strumpet City Bob Fitzpatrick leaves Ireland to fight in the First World War; in Farewell Companions the scene is repeated, but it is a beginning rather than an end, as it is revealed that Bob Fitzpatrick and Paddy McDonagh, the man at his side, become friends. Aloysius Hennessy, Bob and Mary Fitzpatrick, Willie Mulhall and his mother, all reappear briefly in Farewell Companions, but the bitter, angry world of the first novel has degenerated into civil war, and later, uneasy peace. The men and women who fought so hard for the labour movement in Strumpet City have no place in the "new" Ireland of Farewell Companions. Moreover, there is a considerable difference in the tone of each novel, and the placement of major characters in the first novel as minor

ones in the second, clearly reveals this change.

Various characters in both novels are based more or less directly on real people. In Strumpet City, indeed, historical figures play a major role: both James Larkin and William Martin Murphy were the real protagonists in the Dublin 1913 lockout. In the Dictionary of Irish Literature James M. Cahalan observes: "Rashers was based on a fellow Plunkett knew about called 'Johnny Forty Coats', and Mulhall on the figure of Barney Conway, a hard-fisted, highly respected right-hand man to Jim Larkin."² Moreover, Cahalan refers to Farewell Companions as "a semi-autobiographical novel,"³ a view which seems to be true. For example, Tim McDonagh, the central character in the novel, is approximately Plunkett's age: he makes his First Communion in 1927, the same year Plunkett would have done so. The McDonaghs live on Pembroke Street; James Plunkett grew up on Upper Pembroke Street. The description of the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins in Farewell Companions is repeated in the later, autobiographical The Gems She Wore as a personal memory:

I was standing one Sunday evening with my grandfather at the door of his house looking at a magnificent sunset which filled the sky above the spire of Ringsend Church, when the street was galvanised with cries of 'Stop Press'. Doors opened and the news was shouted from one neighbour to another. Kevin O'Higgins, the Minister for Justice, had been shot dead that morning on his way to Mass. (GSW, pp.31-32)

In Farewell Companions the scene is described:

As the July day neared its end long bars of red streaked the sky behind the spire of Ringsend Church... Tim McDonagh was standing with his grandfather at the open hall door, where a neighbour delayed to remark on the weather...

'Stop Press ... Stop Press.'

Doors opened and people began to gather about him. The neighbour joined them. After a delay he returned with the paper and its unbelievable news.

'What is it?' his grandfather asked.

'Kevin O'Higgins,' the neighbour said, 'shot dead this morning on his way to mass.'

(FC, pp.134-36)

Tim McDonagh's father likewise is a veteran of World War One, as was James Plunkett's father. As James Callaghan points out,

There is much of Jim Plunkett Kelly in Tim McDonagh, yet nothing of the young Plunkett's lengthy involvement in the Worker's Union, and Tim's final decision to enter the religious life was obviously not shared by the author. This ending, which might prove disappointing to many readers, may perhaps be taken as indicative of the direction that Plunkett's own life might have taken had things gone differently, or it may be symbolic of his real-life retreat into the Joycean priesthood of art.⁴

Of course, Plunkett may well have used this conclusion deliberately in order to make the novel less autobiographical in nature.

Similarly, personal experiences become part of the short stories. The experiences of the old man who discovers that "Instead of God and Heaven, there was only absence and a void" (GSW, p.135), an experience which is told as an autobiographical episode in The Gems She Wore, becomes part of the experience of Denis, the main

character in "The Trout." Further, the early short stories seem to be a kind of exercise before the novels, at least to the extent that characters and episodes from the short stories occasionally reappear in novel form. Ellis, in Farewell Companions, is also a character in the short stories in The Trusting and The Maimed, and the Municipal Insurance Office is a prototype of the Metropolitan Services Limited in Farewell Companions. Various themes, characters and episodes reappear in short stories, novels and autobiographical material. To this extent, the work, when seen as a whole, is a progression or journey toward fulfillment. The later short stories show a certain change in style, and it is not yet known if this change will be reflected in future novels. However, given the rather incestuous nature of the work already published, it would seem probable that a change in style is to be expected in any future work.

In the May 2, 1969 issue of The New Statesman, T.G. Rosenthal refers to Strumpet City's "well managed pre-publication campaign". The campaign was certainly successful in Ireland, where the novel was well received by the public, although critics were restrained in their enthusiasm. Rosenthal notes that "the highest claims are made for the book and it manifestly fails to live up to them." Yet he also finds it "immensely readable," "faultlessly constructed" and "in the end a good, wholly commercial novel." He compares the author to Liam O'Flaherty who, he writes, has "greater strength and accuracy." He also mentions Michael Farrell's Thy Tears Might Cease which received

a great deal of critical attention when it was published in 1963, some of it no doubt because it was published posthumously. Yet Rosenthal's comments tend to be misplaced. He credits Plunkett with "a keen anti-clerical sense" which is certainly not the case: Father O'Connor is clearly mistaken in some of his actions, but one unfortunate priest does not prove an "anti-clerical sense." Further, the final words of truth are given to Father Giffley, the drunken, shattered but noble parish priest. Rosenthal finds Strumpet City an optimistic novel, when surely it is not. Rather, as James Cahalan suggests, it offers a "bleak vision"⁵ in its conclusion. One is left with the feeling that Rosenthal has misread the novel in its most fundamental sense. Still, the advertisement in a May, 1969 issue of The Times Literary Supplement does quote some of Rosenthal's more enthusiastic comments. No mention is made of John Cronin's review in Eire (v.14, number 4) in which the novel is damned with extremely faint praise: "decent and endearing old fashioned novel, a 'good read' rather than a great work of fiction." Cronin also feels that it is "sentimental and melodramatic," the dialogue being "painfully prim" and the pace "pedestrian." In the last resort, he finds "little real verve" in the novel. In America, The New Yorker (October 25, 1969) discusses the book in its "Briefly Noted" column, and observes that events are "traced with humanity and care, Dublin inspires great love and fine writing." In general, the novel is highly recommended as "readable" or "a good read," but none of the critics chooses to go beyond a brief plot summation and a polite nod of the head.

Farewell Companions received even less comment. There does not seem to have been any pre-publication campaign and the reviews tend to be short and unenthusiastic. Frequently the criticism says more about the critic's personal prejudice than it does about modern Irish fiction. The most obvious example is a review by Jeffrey Burke in Harper's (May, 1978). Burke writes that Tim McDonagh is "the Stephen Dedalus of a lesser writer," yet he acknowledges Plunkett as "a graceful writer with an impeccable sense of structure and narrative." While he feels that Farewell Companions is "by commercial standards ... a good novel," he nevertheless concludes with the following outrageous observation:

But one has to question the wisdom of putting so much talent and effort into such an intolerably dreary period in Irish history; unless - dread possibility - it, too, goes by the name of 'the good old days'.

Once again the reviewer shows a complete misunderstanding of the literature and the time. Nigel Williams, writing in The New Statesman (September 16, 1977), calls Farewell Companions a "long, well written and often moving book." It is "a splendid book" and the writing is "accurate without being cold, and tender without being sentimental." Yet he finds Tim McDonagh, whom he refers to as "the son of a chauffeur," to be "depressingly probable." Clearly there is a problem here: Tim McDonagh is not simply the son of a chauffeur, and to refer to him as such shows an alarming lack of sensitivity. Ferdinand Mount, in The Times Literary Supplement (December 9, 1977), discovers various touches of Joyce, O'Casey,

Flann O'Brien and Edna O'Brien. Yet he does not find Plunkett "derivative"; rather, Mount sees "how little he owes to his heritage." Apparently there is not enough "going on and on, in which the great Irish writers of this century have gloried" to suit him. But surely this is the point: James Plunkett is presenting a modern view of Ireland and Irish life; "going on and on" is not only outdated, but unnecessary in the context of his writing. At any rate, there is a slim line between "going on and on" and sheer hysteria - something which Edna O'Brien has proved on more than one occasion.

James Plunkett has said "Joyce wrote about the moderately middle class, and O'Casey about the slums of the period. I was concerned with finding a form in which all the elements could fit."⁶ He was speaking most specifically of Strumpet City, but it holds true of all his work. Surely it is of great importance that James Plunkett is not James Joyce, Sean O'Casey, Michael Farrell or W.B. Yeats. Rather, he is a writer writing from the perspective of his own time and place. The great Irish writers before him certainly had their effect, as did the patriotism of his early teachers, but James Plunkett is a child of promise grown to fulfillment. Endless comparisons to other writers are interesting but not completely valid; one must deal with Plunkett on his own merit first - something which has not yet been done. One must judge James Plunkett in terms of his own imagination and achievement in order to prove that he is indeed one

of the major Irish writers, and it is the purpose of this thesis to make plain this achievement.

CHAPTER ONE: STRUMPET CITY

When the Workers Union of Ireland decided to publish a book to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1913 Dublin lock-out, they had an enormous amount of material from which to choose. The index of contributors to 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out shows that the plight of Dublin's working men and magnetism of their leader inspired many contemporary writers, artists, poets and rebels. The list includes A.E. (George Russell), Constance Markiewicz, Maud Gonne McBride, Sean O'Casey, Padraig Pearse, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, James Stephens and W.B. Yeats. The drama and tension of the labour problems, combined with the truly disgraceful living conditions of the people and the popular appeal of James Larkin, produced energetic, if occasionally overblown, writing. In his book, The Story of The Irish Citizen Army, published under his Irish name P.O. Cathasaigh, Sean O'Casey wrote:

Hope's ruddy flame was leaping in their hearts:
this day would be an historic one in the unhappy
annals of the Irish Labour Movement.
Perhaps this lovely autumn sunset would be
followed by the dawn of their social emancipation..¹

In his "Open Letter to the Masters of Dublin," published in the Irish Times of October 7, 1913, an outraged A.E. wrote:

You may succeed in your policy and ensure
your own damnation by your victory. The
men whose manhood you have broken will
loathe you, and will always be brooding and

scheming to strike a fresh blow. The children will be taught to curse you. The infant being moulded in the womb will have breathed into its starved body the vitality of hate. It is not they - it is you who are blind Samsons pulling down the pillars of the social order.²

These are certainly strong words. But it must be remembered that the main opponent of the strikers and their followers was William Martin Murphy, who blithely announced:

You must recollect when dealing with a company of this kind that every one of the shareholders, to the number of five, six, or seven thousands, will have three meals a day whether the men succeed or not. I don't know if the men who go out [on strike] can count on this.³

Such a cruel and insensitive remark was certain to produce anger and strong language. If modern readers find O'Casey and A.E. somewhat extravagant in their hyperbole and propaganda, it should be remembered that the reader does not live in Dublin in 1913. At the time of the strike and lock-out Dublin was a tenement-ridden city of poverty and disease. Andrew Boyd, in The Rise of Irish Trade Unions 1729-1970, observes:

The conditions under which the poorer people lived in the city of Dublin were worse than the conditions in most other cities, not only in the United Kingdom but in Europe. Nearly one-third of Dublin's 300,000 citizens lived in tumbledown tenements and slums, many of which had been condemned not merely as being unfit for human habitation but of being incapable of ever being made fit. Most of the slum-dwelling families lived in one room; their average income, if they were the families of unskilled labourers, was rarely more than 20 shillings a week.⁴

R.J.P. Mortished, who later became the first chairman of the Labour Court, wrote in the Irish Worker: "The baby born in a Dublin slum has not got the liberty to live. Of every 1,000 born, 140 or more on the average will die while still infants."⁵ Dublin was certainly ready for social change, and James Larkin provided both the impetus and the leadership.

James Larkin was born in Liverpool in 1876, the child of Irish immigrants who had left Ulster shortly after the Great Famine of 1847. He worked as a docker and a foreman on the Liverpool docks, and when he was seventeen he joined the Liverpool branch of the Independent Labour Party; in 1901 he became a member of the National Union of Dock Labourers. Larkin began his active union career when he was thirty-one, working first in Belfast and later in Cork and Dublin. He became internationally known during the Dublin 1913 lock-out.⁶ In his biography of the leader, Emmet Larkin observes that "he claimed to be at one and the same time a Socialist, a Nationalist, and a Roman Catholic."⁷ He certainly seems to have been a man of great strength, capable of uniting three apparently contradictory beliefs. This ability to see the world, men and the labour movement from three such disparate views must have made him all the more charismatic to his followers and confusing to his opposition.

James Connolly, Larkin's co-worker in the Union, felt that the story of the workers' lock-out should be told.

Told by a labour writer, or even told by one of those literary men who, although not of the manual labour ranks, stood so grandly by the workers during that titanic struggle, the story would indeed read like an epic, but it would be an epic of which the heroes and heroines were the humble men and women who went out in the streets to suffer and starve rather than surrender their right to combine as they chose for the uplifting of their class. Some day that story will be written from that standpoint ... When that story is written by a man or woman with an honest heart, and with a sympathetic insight into the travail of the poor, it will be a record of which Ireland may well be proud.⁸

The literary men of the time did not write the entire story. Perhaps when the struggle was over and the men were back at work, they simply did not have the energy or the heart. At any rate, the Easter 1916 Rising - which took place only three years later - took all their time and attention. The 1916 Rising was heavily influenced by the events of 1913. Men who had become involved in the labour crisis finally took their anger to the streets and rose against British domination in the General Post Office, which was seized and used as a fortress against the English. The Irish Citizen Army, which was formed as an army of working men during the strike and lock-out, later played an active role in the Easter fighting. When James Plunkett finally published Strumpet City in 1969, it was the first real reply to Connolly's request.

James Plunkett's radio play Big Jim was first performed in 1955; a stage play, The Risen People, followed in 1958. James

Cahalan feels that since both "were essentially earlier drafts of what was to become Strumpet City, it can be said that the book was actually fifteen years in the making."⁹ Big Jim has never been published, and The Risen People, while it was due to be published in Spring 1980, is still unavailable. However, James Cahalan, in his useful article "The Making of Strumpet City: James Plunkett's Historical Vision," does point out that "the texts of Big Jim, The Risen People, and Strumpet City provide us with a remarkably clear and extremely interesting record of a literary transformation in the works."¹⁰ The same characters are apparently worked and reworked before their final appearance in the novel. According to Cahalan, Fitz and Mary (called Annie in The Risen People) change dramatically in the final version of the story: "Their tension over the issue of union commitments versus family commitments is at the dramatic center of The Risen People."¹¹ There is no such tension in Strumpet City; rather, Mary is so supportive of her husband that she becomes almost colourless. In fact, if there is a fault in the novel, it lies in the fact that the various characters take second place to the main presence of James Larkin. It is almost impossible to find a flesh-and-blood hero when the central focus is on a man who so rarely appears. As Cahalan observes, "Larkin is more a symbol than a flesh-and-blood character."¹² In his approach to Larkin, Plunkett apparently realized that "you either write a biography or else you don't write about the person, but you write about their influence."¹³

It is also tremendously difficult to fictionalize an historical character, and to do so might well have harmed the work. But because we are never given a clear picture of the man - we are given only an idea - the focus is necessarily vague. Unfortunately, this means that the secondary characters in the novel tend to be subservient to the idea. In Strumpet City we are given a cast of characters whom many critics find stereotyped. For example, there is so little tension between the Fitzpatricks that we never even know the names of their children. But this may be explained by the fact that Plunkett sees Fitz as "a Larkin prototype, that he serves as a fictional representative of Larkin as a young man... Fitz mirrors Larkin's leadership qualities and his unflagging dedication to the cause."¹⁴ If James Larkin is more a symbol than a character, then it is fitting that his prototype follow the same pattern. This does not detract from the overall effect of the work, however, because in the long run the reader has such a vivid picture of Dublin life and the circumstances of the time that minor character problems do not seem important.

Strumpet City is concerned with Dublin in the year 1913 when James Larkin and William Martin Murphy fought an epic battle over the right of working men and women to combine as they chose. As we have seen, working and living conditions were dreadful. But the people of Dublin, once aroused, were willing to fight for their rights, and after many strikes and a confusing number of walk-outs,

William Martin Murphy, the chairman of the Dublin United Tramway Company, united the employers and instigated the lock-out. Murphy demanded that all workers sign a form promising to resign from Larkin's union. Further, he demanded that the workers "not join or in any way support this Union." (SC, p.402). A long and painful lock-out ensued during which many families suffered hunger and deprivation, especially in the winter months. Eventually the workers went back to their jobs and the form was almost forgotten. To this extent, the struggle was a failure for the workers and a victory for the employers. But a sense of unity and strength grew among the workers, and Dublin life was never the same again. Plunkett tells the story of this battle, presenting historical figures and fictional characters on both sides with understanding and compassion.

James Cahalan observes that "Plunkett's sympathies are obviously with the cause of labour,"¹⁵ and it is certainly difficult to see how, in the social situation in Dublin, it could be otherwise. Yet the novel does not present one side only; rather, various sides and opinions are expressed. The reader is introduced to the wealthy and pleasant world of Kingstown with its musical evenings and fine whiskey. Mr. and Mrs. Bradshaw and Yearling inhabit this golden place, and Father O'Connor goes back and forth, struggling and unhappy, between Kingstown and the poverty-stricken parish of St. Brigid's in Dublin. The Church of St. Brigid is the home of the drunken but admirable Father Giffley, and the solid, loving

and methodical Father O'Sullivan. The parishioners live in tenements and slums, one of which is Chandlers Court, the home of the Fitzpatricks, the Mulhalls, the Hennessys, Rashers Tierney and his dog, Rusty. There is also the world of Pat, the angry socialist, who seems homeless most of the time, wandering the streets, betting on horses, and looking for his beloved Lily. The horrors of the workhouse are also introduced, as the former servant, Miss Gilchrist, is sent from her position in the Bradshaw house to die in poverty.

The novel begins with the approach of the royal yacht to Kingstown harbour. The workmen "looked with some pride on the result of their labours" (SC, p.13) and there is little intimation of the crisis to come. This is the world of the Bradshaws, and, while it seems serene, there is a threatening undercurrent of unhappiness. In the kitchen, the Fenian cook, Miss Gilchrist, bitterly hopes that rain will fall on the royal party. Another servant, Mary, is deceiving her employers so that she can continue to see her young man, Robert Fitzpatrick. Mrs. Bradshaw herself knows "what it was to suffer and it had given her patience and understanding in her dealings with others" (SC, p.15). Nevertheless, the Bradshaws are insulated, their lives continue on a superficially smooth path, and they have no desire to know about the city life around them.

And, although neither he [Mr. Bradshaw] nor Mrs. Bradshaw would, for the life of them,

venture that day into the crowded and confused streets, they had arranged to watch the procession from a window on the second floor, from which he had already hung a large banner with the words 'God Save Our King' picked out in gold letters. The evening would be marked by a special meal followed by an intimate musical party. (SC, p.17)

The Bradshaws are observers of life who have no inclination for confusion and crowds; they watch, they do not participate. Mrs. Bradshaw is a sympathetic woman and, as the novel progresses, the reader begins to admire her. She does, after all, provide Sara Gilchrist with a proper funeral, and she helps Mary Fitzpatrick. But her actions, while basically good, are too little too late. Mrs. Bradshaw seems to be an example of a good Christian woman: while we applaud her very real effort, we wonder why she ever allowed Miss Gilchrist to be sent away, or Mary dismissed. She is a woman with a certain strength of character which she displays from time to time, but she never fulfills her potential. Rather, she pulls away, and remains firmly a woman of her own upper class.

Mr. Bradshaw, on the other hand, is despicable. He is a slum landlord who is only too aware that his houses are in a state of disrepair:

he was the owner of five houses in an alley very close to the harbour. A family occupied each room. What would happen to these five infirm shells of tottering brick and their swarms of poverty-stricken humanity when His Majesty's Navy blasted off a battery of heavy

guns Mr. Bradshaw trembled to think. The nearby railway line had already caused damage enough. (SC, p.17)

Mr. Bradshaw is a difficult, humourless man who constantly thinks in terms of money. He covers his concern about the houses by telling his wife that the salute to the king is a waste of ammunition, and "It is vulgar, apart from anything else" (SC, p.17). It is Mr. Bradshaw who decides to send Miss Gilchrist away:

'It's not that I mind her growing old; Bradshaw continued, 'provided she can potter around and get her work done. But what if she is incapable? We can't employ a servant to dance attendance on a servant. The thing would be absurd.' (SC, p.67)

Mr. Bradshaw, indeed, has not the slightest moral sense: servants are mere chattel who, by chance, grow old. While he cannot stand in the way of nature, he certainly does not have to put up with its moral consequences and the responsibilities which may ensue. Bradshaw is also unwilling to allow Mary to remain, once her deception is discovered.

When two of his houses finally collapse, Bradshaw goes to the scene but leaves quickly. Yearling, who has known of the possibility of such a disaster, acknowledges the fault as Bradshaw's: "It was neglect and old age, ... They were condemned long ago - and then reprieved because Ralph knew the right people" (SC, p.447). The Bradshaws leave Ireland for an indefinite period abroad, finally settling in England. Ralph Bradshaw has briefly entered the world

of crowds and confusion and he is too shocked to remain. To this extent he is unlike his wife, who at least handles the situations which arise. Bradshaw cannot cope with the world outside his own isolated, upper-class existence; he leaves Ireland because he cannot possibly deal with the tensions caused by his own class-conscious society. It is interesting to note that an incident such as this did in fact take place in Dublin, and Plunkett uses the real name, Eugene Salmon, of the boy who died trying to save his sister from a crumbling tenement.

Yearling's social consciousness develops with the story. He is a man of independent means, and a member of the Board of Directors of Morgan and Co. Yearling certainly has the capacity to be saved - or to save himself. His sympathies are often with the strikers, and he has few delusions about Dublin life. When Father O'Connor comments, "Men bungle and make mistakes. But you must at least agree that the city is beautiful," Yearling replies: "It depends on where you live and how much you earn, doesn't it?" (SC, p.189) He is aware of the spiritual dichotomy which exists in Dublin. While the Bradshaws are at the theatre, watching Yeats' play Kathleen ni Houlihan, the people of Dublin are rioting. As he observes the street scene below him, Yearling acknowledges: "There's the real Kathleen ni Houlihan for you" (SC, p.291). But, like Bradshaw, Yearling cannot pull himself away from his own social class, and he observes, "For me, memories and alcohol are necessary defences. This is a dunghill of

a world" (SC, p.298). Yet this is the man who learns street songs from the children for whom he buys sweets. Yearling is a contradiction, rather like Mrs. Bradshaw; his intentions are good but he does not have a strong enough spirit. He realizes this himself: "It was too late for revolutionary changes. Procrastination had undone him" (SC, p.470). Yearling is a member of the upper class, he has money and a certain amount of imagination. Plunkett does not damn this group directly, but he does present them as a dispassionate and apathetic class:

He [Yearling] began to follow events with considerable interest, but without passion. He had no special feeling about the social order. It bored him. But he could understand the hatred it inspired in the many who suffered the brunt of its inequalities. Hunger was a great irritant. (SC, p.379)

Hunger is certainly more than a "great irritant," but Yearling, in his comfortable world, cannot possibly be expected to know this. When he discovers that a poet and friend is a Larkinite, Yearling asks "do you intend to renounce riches?" "Never," Matthews said, "Riches and I will remain inseparable." "Good," Yearling said. "Now I know I am in the company of a true poet" (SC, p.475). Like the Bradshaws, Yearling starts as an observer, but he becomes directly involved in the scheme to remove the strikers' children to England. The violence of the incident, when he is attacked by Catholic laymen and clergy, is too much for him. Once again, like the Bradshaws, he leaves Ireland.

Nothing would ever happen in Ireland again. Not to him anyway. Nothing ever had. But in London, for a little while and impossibly long ago, life had revealed briefly its dangerous dimensions. Perhaps in London it would do so again. In some other way, of course. And without the heartbreak.

(SC, p.578)

Yearling is afraid. He has been a part of the dangerous dimensions of life in Ireland, but he chooses instead to run back to his memories. He is also utterly wrong about Ireland. The turmoil of 1913 was a prelude to the Rising; Ireland would never be the same again.

Yearling and Bradshaw lack the sense of kinship which would take them beyond their own class structure. Mulhall, Fitz, Pat and even Rashers, on the other hand, express such a kinship at various points in the novel.

Fitz, the young idealist, remembers

the sharp morning wind and, far off, the shouts of the men. Isolated in the top gallery of the house, just before the water pipes rattled into life, he had felt the inward drag of compassion and responsibility, linking him with the others below. Some part of him had become theirs.

(SC, p.122)

Fitz is a true child of Dublin, "growing up in the noise and bustle of the city" yet somehow remaining "gentle and kind through all that" (SC, p.34). It is Fitz who stays with the injured man during one of the first police charges, thus saving his life. And it is Fitz who

protects Hennessy from Pat, when Hennessy takes a scab job during the lock-out. Fitz is a true hero, a foreman who stands by the Union, putting the welfare of his family at stake. He is an acknowledged leader, whose quiet determination rallies those around him. The result of his idealism and determination is that he is blacklisted by the employers, and he is forced to find work with the British Army. We discover him again in Farewell Companions, blinded by the war which provided him with work.

Mulhall is "a big man with iron-grey hair and a sure way of walking that inspired confidence in those who worked with him" (SC, p.257). He enjoys Larkin's movement because, like him, it is "direct and simple" (SC, p.257). To this extent Mr. Dogget is correct when he sees that "he was not confronted by a man. He was face to face with a movement" (SC, p.280). When Mulhall goes into the night to fight with Kever, whom he considers a traitor, he feels a rush of excitement and a fellowship with other workers.

He felt warm inside him, in spite of the chill of the rain. It was the battle glow. It showed in the line of his jaw and the set of his shoulders. He was the father of the old women who passed him with shawls drawn tight over their heads. He was brother to the old men who sheltered against public house fronts and waited, hopefully, for someone who would bring them in for a drink and maybe a smoke. He was God, and the small boy who passed pushing a battered pram was his creature. Rain had plastered the boy's hair about his face and the pram was piled with rain-soaked firewood. It was his creature

and all his creatures were wet, cold, hungry, barefooted.

(SC, pp. 259-60)

Bernard Mulhall needs the Union movement as surely as it needs him. He is an angry, energetic man who lives for the cause: he is the only character who ever argues with Father O'Connor about the treatment of the workers. His death, the result of an industrial accident, is fitting, if unjust. He dies heroically from injuries suffered when his feet are severed, shortly after he saves the life of another man. Without the use of his legs, he "would march in no more processions and battle no more through cordons of police" (SC, p.365). As Fitz understands only too well at this point, "Mulhall, whether he died or lived, was finished" (SC, p.364). Unable to fight any longer, he becomes a prisoner in his own body and dies slowly and painfully.

Rashers Tierney, on the other hand, feels little kinship with the workers. He tends to think of himself in terms of the lowest creatures on the social scale.

He had been of their company for long enough to sympathise with them all - the child rooting in the ashbin, the cat slinking along the gutter, the cockroach delicately questing along the wooden joints of the floor, its grey-blue body corrugated with anxiety. These were sometimes his competitors, but more often his brothers. He could never watch a dog nosing in a bin without a feeling of sympathy and fellowship.

(SC, pp.342-25)

Rashers Tierney has nothing, not even a Christian name. Larkinism means little to him, because he has nothing either to gain or lose. He claims to be a Socialist - "In times of crisis," Rashers said, "I'm a stalwart" (SC, p.205) - but political theory is basically unimportant to him. He is realistic enough to know that no one cares about him one way or another. He acknowledges that he belongs "to nothing in particular. He saw the light of hope in thousands of eyes. But he was not one of them" (SC, pp.418-19). Rashers is the only character without a social class: his struggle is one of basic survival. Because he is not a member of any group, he is the most individual character. He is a musician at a time when "music is out of fashion" (SC, p.419). He is a theologian who knows that

God and His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph
and St. Anthony and anyone else he cared
to address a prayer to would listen to him
without asking Father O'Connor's permission.
That was one good thing about religion. No
one owned it.

(SC, p.275)

In the long run, all working-class Dublin is reduced to the status of Rashers Tierney. There is nothing he can do, and no place he can go, so he dies slowly, from starvation. The fellowship of Larkin's men destroys Rashers, he can go no lower on the scale; he dies and his body is attacked by rats. Rashers is a victim of the Dublin 1913 lock-out as surely as those who died in the riots and police charges. Ironically, he is also the means of Father O'Connor's salvation.

As previously mentioned, at least one critic has credited James Plunkett with an anti-clerical sense. But the priests presented in Strumpet City, Father O'Sullivan, Father O'Connor and Father Giffley, are all individuals with different ideas about the place of the Church in the labour difficulties. Father O'Sullivan goes about his work, and does what little he can, making no judgement about his parishioners' political actions. Father O'Connor suffers acutely; he wishes to be a humble priest working for the poor, but he finds the reality of poverty disgusting. While his actions tend to be reactionary, the reader never really despises him because he is following his own moral code. Father O'Connor really believes that "the Christian workman must at all times acknowledge certain principles to be above the claims of man-made organizations" (SC, p.141). He is horrified by what he understands to be the chaos of socialism, and desperately tries to preserve the status quo of a highly structured society.

'If Larkin and his colleagues win their fight it will be a victory for socialism. And socialism, as a very eminent Jesuit has clearly shown, is the worst enemy of the working man. It uproots his confidence in the hierarchical order. It preaches discontent. It makes him covetous of the property of his social superiors, and impatient with the trials and obligations of his own station in life.'

(SC, p.444)

As Father Giffley observes, the young priest is "full of polite catch-phrases" (SC, p.86). But if Father O'Connor is unpleasant and unsympathetic at times, he is also heartbreaking. He sees in

his future, caught between the contentment of wealthy Kingstown and the spiritual agony of the Church of St. Brigid, a great, widening gap.

It was loneliness, then. And for ever. No company in the Bradshaws, whom he admired only for good taste and smooth manners, none in Father Giffley, whom he tried hard not to despise or Father O'Sullivan who had a dull mind, none in the ragtag and bobtail of his parish, for whom he had a dutiful love which shrank at every physical contact. And in Yearling, below a now more clearly understood level, no companionship. No real understanding between himself and the poor, or between the world of poverty and the world of comfort.

(SC, p.204)

Like the Bradshaws, Father O'Connor is an observer at heart. During the violent clash, as the strikers' children attempt to leave for England, Father O'Connor "stood clear of the fighting himself but kept up a flow of encouragement for his followers" (SC, pp.502-03). Yearling, meanwhile, enters the battle with the Larkinites and is actively fighting. The intriguing, intellectual relationship between the two men ends at this point; ideological differences, finally seen in action, prove too much for them.

Father O'Connor's final scene is a difficult one. He is called to pray over the body of Rashers, a man with whom he has had an emotional and angry relationship. In the basement of Chandlers Court, where "the smell of corruption was overpowering," (SC, p.570), lies the decaying body of the former boilerman of St. Brigid's Church.

Rashers, the lowest form of existence in troubled, hungry Dublin, becomes Vincent O'Connor's salvation. He realizes that "This was the true reality of his world. He was here of his own free choice. He had demanded to be allowed to serve them" (SC, p.570). Father O'Connor faces the reality of the situation for the first time.

He looked down at the ravaged body without fear and without revulsion. Age and the rot of death were brothers for rich and poor alike. Neither intellect nor ignorance could triumph over them. What was spread on the straw before him was no more than the common mystery, the everyday fate, the cruel heart of the world.

(SC, p.572)

He has discovered the ultimate kinship, the kinship of life and death, the human condition. If he is only slightly closer to his parishioners, it is still an enormous step in his spiritual development. James Cahalan finds it ironic that Father O'Connor "feels close to the poor only when he goes to minister to the decaying corpse of Rashers."¹⁶ Certainly, like Mrs. Bradshaw, he is rather late in his concern for this particular man, but some change has taken place and for the moment it is more than enough.

The one man who knows the truth is Father Giffley, and in the end it destroys him. Father Giffley openly dislikes Father O'Connor.

He hated the humble manner and the bowed head, the zeal for good works which he was convinced was an outlet for a strange form of snobbery. Father Giffley, while his junior waited patiently for a decision, let his mind

wander through the parish he has spent so many lonely years in. He hated it too, and made no effort to do otherwise. In his own way he pitied the people. He had no contempt for them. It was not their fault that they were born into poverty or that the rooms they inhabited were overcrowded. The filth they lived in was unavoidable.

(SC, p.106)

Father Giffley knows. He acknowledges the crucial fact which escapes Father O'Connor: that the physical welfare of human beings is at least as important as their souls, and at any rate, the two are inseparable. But for all his words, the parish priest does little himself. He is not strong enough to triumph over his surroundings, so while he is compassionate and aware, he hides himself in whiskey. He is a broken man, and when he seeks James Larkin to offer his aid, the labour leader recognizes the problem. His condition makes the priest a risk to the movement. Father Giffley is going mad. He is a victim, not of any one movement but of the society which demands that such movements exist. Intelligent and talkative, he has spent the greater part of his life ministering to the most poverty-stricken people of Dublin. There is no place in St. Brigid's Parish for good talk and intellectual stimulation; rather, the people must fight for survival. Father Giffley understands this, but his sharp mind withers from lack of activity. Father O'Connor's escape is the genteel world of Kingstown; Father O'Sullivan works on his religious tracts; Father Giffley drinks.

When he is finally removed from his parish, Father Giffley attempts to send a message out to sea. The message reads: "Time takes all away. This was written by a madman on the shores of a mad island" (SC, p.576). There may be a slight allusion to W.B. Yeats' poem "I am of Ireland":

'I am of Ireland,
And the holy land of Ireland
And time runs on' cried she.
'Come out of charity,
Come dance with me in Ireland.'

One man, one man alone
In that outlandish gear,
One solitary man
Of all that rambled there
Had turned his stately head.
' That is a long way off,
and time runs on,' he said,
And the night grows rough.'

17

Certainly, Father Giffley feels that he is a solitary man, alone with his truth, and there is a certain similarity in tone in the phrases "time takes all away" and "time runs on." The message does not reach the sea: the bottle returns, and Father Giffley smashes it against the rocks. But the message tells the truth of the Irish situation in 1913, and further, perhaps, the truth of twentieth-century life. If Strumpet City is involved with one labour dispute in one city, it is also involved with the business of life. James Plunkett is discussing not simply the Dublin 1913 lock-out, but the human condition. Time does take all away: the lock-out, the starvation and the bitterness led directly to the 1916 Rising, and in the chaos

which followed, Larkin and his men were almost forgotten. Labour problems receded to the background, as nationalism became the passion of writers, poets and rebels. But if Father Giffley's message and James Plunkett's novel are to be seen as more than narrow Irish history and story-telling, then the words take on far greater significance. To a great extent, we are all madmen on the shores of a mad world. Not only Ireland, but all the world is in a state of chaos. The reader must ask whether time will take this away, and if so, when and how.

The labour problem is the major theme in Strumpet City, but others are more quietly introduced. Both Father O'Connor and Rashers Tierney are musicians. Each finds a release in music and an escape from loneliness. Rashers tells a neighbour about his lost whistle: "I used to play to the two of us [Rashers and his dog] and we were never lonely" (SC, p.22). The neighbour replies: "The best music you ever had is the bit you make yourself. It's great consolation" (SC, p.22). Rashers is a true artist, who plays sorrowful airs which he composes himself. Father O'Connor, on the other hand, plays the best classical and popular composers. He does not have either the artistry or the imagination to experiment with sound and composition. Music is not simply a release for Rashers, it is an integral part of his personality; it is also occasionally his livelihood. Father O'Connor uses music as a kind of drug to shut out the world around him. When he plays the organ in the church, it is for his own

enjoyment and he is oblivious to the coffin below him. The uses of music are quietly explored in the novel and James Plunkett, a musician himself, is obviously aware of its power.

Kathleen O'Flaherty, discussing Strumpet City, points out that Plunkett is

not oppressed as was Joyce - or Peadar O'Donnell, or Liam O'Flaherty, or Frank O'Connor, or Séan O'Faolain, by the claustrophobic atmosphere in which exacerbated nationalism was so closely associated as to appear identical with a very inward looking Catholicism.

18

Certainly Catholicism plays an important role in the lives of the various characters. As we have seen, even the lowly Rashers is something of a 'theologian' - at least to the extent that he recognizes the humanity of Father O'Connor as opposed to the universality of Christ - because nothing will stop him from hearing Mass. When Father O'Sullivan brings communion to Mulhall, Mrs. Mulhall finds:

It was in no way remarkable to her that Jesus Christ Son of God the Father Creator of Heaven and Earth and of All Things should be one of the three people in the adjoining room or that He should come in person to the two pair back Three Chandlers Court. She had known Him a lifetime now and He was not by all accounts greatly taken with the Rich and He had been born in a humble house Himself. She was only sorry that He could not have seen her two china dogs. They were no longer on the mantlepiece. She had had to pawn them.

(SC, p.435)

As O'Flaherty says, James Plunkett has realized "a fundamental truth: Catholicism, in Ireland, is essentially a popular religion."¹⁹ None of the Catholic characters ever doubts Christ's existence or the value of the Church. They listen to their priests on spiritual matters, and go about their own business in the temporal world. Even Pat, an agnostic, uses religious invocations. When he is about to fight the scab labour, there is almost a biblical sense to his mission: "It was time to be about his business" (SC, p.511). To this extent, the beliefs of James Larkin come together: the characters, like him, are socialists who will fight for their right to combine; they are budding nationalists who have taken the first step toward freedom from the British; they are Roman Catholics who believe in Christ and His Church on earth.

Strumpet City may seem to be a rather bleak novel. In the end, the upper-class characters have left Ireland: the Bradshaws and Yearling, unable to cope with the growing anger of the poor, have gone to England, Fitz has been forced into the British Army, blacklisted by the employers, Mulhall and Rashers are dead, Father Giffley is insane. The survivors are a curious group. Father O'Connor is, at least momentarily, saved. Hennessy, "the greatest oddity in Dublin," (SC, p.121) continues unaffected by all events, save Rashers' death. Pat and Lily have the only happy ending, finally together after years of unhappiness.

The Larkinites seem to lose: "In December defeat became a

certainty" (SC, p.534). The city changes, and the spirit of kinship and challenge seems to disappear. But, as Pat reflects,

There was no defeat in the faces he passed...
They had spirits that recovered easily from
adversity. A few weeks work and everything
was as it had always been. More or less.
There was little to be lost that was worth
pining about.

(SC, p.543)

If the novel is pessimistic, it is because "time takes all away" and the moment of excitement is over. In any case, Plunkett can hardly rewrite history to provide his novel with an optimistic conclusion. But the spirit of change and the influence of James Larkin lived briefly and brilliantly in the city of Dublin, and in the long run it led to overwhelming change. If the change was not as revolutionary as it could have been - the Irish won their freedom from the British at great cost, but they did not instigate any great social change - then at least it was a step forward. It might not have been altogether comparable with Yeats' "terrible beauty", but at least it was freedom.

James Connolly was correct when he saw that the story of the 1913 lock-out would be "a record of which Ireland may well be proud".²⁰ James Larkin and William Martín Murphy fought a great and determined battle, but the true heroes were the men and women who demanded their dignity while suffering unbearable humiliation. James Plunkett has written an understanding and compassionate novel about these difficult times in Ireland, and it is surely right to imagine that James Connolly would approve.

CHAPTER TWO: FAREWELL COMPANIONS

Farewell Companions (1977) can be read as a sequel to Strumpet City: some characters from the first novel appear in the second, but as relatively minor figures. Bob Fitzpatrick, the heroic Larkin prototype in Strumpet City, is the war-blinded proprietor of a workingmen's eating establishment in Farewell Companions. Hennessy, the ultimate survivor of all the troubles, is a night watchman in a chocolate factory. Willie Mulhall, on the other hand, plays a larger role in the second novel. A socialist Republican who still idolizes his trade unionist father, he is executed by the government. The main characters of Farewell Companions are the children and descendants of the men and women who fought for their right to fair wages and reasonable working conditions in Strumpet City. When read in sequence, the two novels offer an important view of Irish life and society during a particularly unhappy time in Irish history. That society suffered an enormous national trauma during the early part of the twentieth century. Acute labour unrest led to open rebellion against the British which in turn led to bloody civil war. The Troubles took place over a long period, and few Irishmen took part in the entire upheaval. Rather, each generation had its own concern and its own place in the scheme of the times. To this extent, the fact that Fitz is blind in Farewell Companions underlines the notion that his particular time is over. Ireland, as presented in Farewell Companions, has indeed

changed. It is no longer a land caught in trade unionist and socialist idealism; rather, it is a country involved in ugly civil war. The idealists, like Willie Mulhall, die or retreat while the extremists on both sides take to the streets. Ireland is now a land for Cornelius Moloney and his middle-class, businessmen friends. It is interesting to observe that in Plunkett's continuing story of Irish life, the actual 1916 Rising is not directly presented. The reader experiences the social unrest which preceded it (Strumpet City) and the upheaval which followed (Farewell Companions), but none of the characters in either novel is shown to be involved in the Easter crisis. There is indeed a vast amount of literature dealing with this particular time, and to a great extent it has become a powerful myth in the Irish consciousness. It is extremely difficult to write about the General Post Office with any degree of objectivity. Still, the omission is notable. In Easter week, 1916, nationalist rebels took control of the General Post Office in Dublin, and various other buildings. They issued a proclamation which began:

Irishmen and Irishwomen:

In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

1

The British Army was called out in force, and eventually the rebels were forced to surrender. The British executed the rebel leaders with little delay, and among the fifteen men who were shot were the poets

Patrick Pearse, Thomas McDonagh and Joseph Plunkett. The bloodiness of the executions struck the hearts of all Irishmen, and the Irish rebellion began in earnest. The General Post Office became the rallying point, and the men who died there became martyrs. The myth of the Easter Rising had been born.

Farewell Companions begins in 1927, as Tim McDonagh makes his First Communion. Unlike Strumpet City, there is a central character in the novel, around whom the other characters revolve. This means that the work as a whole is structurally tighter, though the broad sense of an unfolding epic is missing. In Strumpet City there was an almost panoramic view of Dublin, as Plunkett cut from one character and episode to another. There was a sense of an unfolding drama, in which common men and women displayed nobility and dignity; they rose above their actual place on the social scale and became tragic heroes. However, Farewell Companions is a far more personal and intimate novel and the sense of bitterness and anger, which are so much a part of the first novel, disappear, and are replaced by a softer tone of melancholy and enchantment. To be sure, there is a common style to both: Plunkett will describe various characters and their actions during one particular time span, thereby giving an overall view rather than a specific one. But in general, the style of Farewell Companions is far different from that of Strumpet City. Plunkett's use of language, for example, changes. In some ways he seems far more at ease with the words themselves; language is less

formal and punctuation is less obvious. The novel is divided into five books, and in Book One ("The Standing Circle"), Plunkett uses a third person stream of consciousness:

World, he knew already, is not sudden. World is very slow. Creak, creak. Rock, rock. A little and a little. Long hours of nothing at all. Eat up din-din to make you grow big. Bless yourself. Go to sleepies. Peep, I see you. Warm olive oil on a cotton cloth for an earache. For a cold or a toothache an eggcup of punch. How to tie laces. How to comb hair. How to say a song; clap hands till Daddy comes home or ding-dong bell.

(FC, p.11)

This is a far more intimate approach to characterization than anything written in Strumpet City. Moreover, the major concern is not political but personal, and the structure, language and tone of Farewell Companions all lend themselves to this more intimate, and perhaps more introverted work. The second book ("The Isle of the Blest") begins in the second person:

There was the smell of pine and a grassy smell near your pillow and a canvas smell from the drying fabric of the tent. Canvas shoes became so soaked with dew it was no longer cold when you stood in the lake to wash and saw the image of sleepy face and tousled hair disappear in ripples when your hands broke the water.

(FC, p.139)

The following three books: "The Young May Moon", "The Minstrel Boy" and "Farewell Companions" are all in third person narrative. The first two books are about childhood, and this may account for their more personal style.

Farewell Companions tells the story of Tim McDonagh and his growth from childhood to his entering the priesthood. The novel begins when Tim is seven, but it goes back in time to the day of his birth, and the events which took place at that time. In this manner the reader is introduced to Freddy, the cold and vicious Republican gunman, and to his friend Willie. Both die during the Civil War. This retreat in time allows us to understand more completely the world in which Tim must grow up. Tim and his friends, Brian and Des, are the first generation born in a free Ireland. But they live surrounded by memories - none of their own making - and it is this struggle to escape the past and form a new society which is the main focus of the novel. The problems of this new generation are compounded by the fact that in the struggle to lead their own lives, they necessarily form memories of their own. To this extent they are burdened with a double past: their fathers' and their own. Time, change and the memories which they produce provide the melancholy theme of Farewell Companions. To a certain degree this is a continuation of Father Giffley's observation in Strumpet City that "time takes all away" (SC, p.576). This second novel deals with the consequences of that statement: how does the individual deal with the inevitable loss of dear companions, and the daily changes which are the result of Time? And equally important, how does a nation survive the troubles which are now an historical fact of Irish life?

Tim McDonagh is the son of Paddy McDonagh, the man who

stands beside Bob Fitzpatrick as the troopship leaves Dublin for England in Strumpet City. In the course of the second novel Tim's father dies, and the boy must grow to manhood without him. But he is surrounded by companions: his family and friends. The reader observes Tim as he learns how to deal with the loss of these companions through death, parting and individual retreat. Family and friends break apart as each individual follows his own particular ambition and desire.

Brian Moloney is in an especially difficult situation. He is a young man who "dared the world to surprise him" (FC, p.205) as he works in his father's pub. The gulf between Brian and his father is immense. Cornelius Moloney is a publican who "never fired a shot in anger in his life" (FC, p.475), yet he develops his own personal myth about his place in the War of Independence. Cornelius plays the political game to perfection, eventually rising to the chairmanship of the local branch of Fianna Fail. This is a source of great pride to him, but he does not realize that political games hold no importance for his son. Brian has been fed a diet of other men's memories and hopes, all of which he sees as invalid in the world in which he must live. His own life is so far removed from it all that he rebels against his father. Cornelius cannot begin to understand Brian's scepticism, and Brian cannot understand his father's enthusiasm for "The Organization" (Fianna Fail).

Cornelius sees his son's determination to go to university as an excuse for idleness and a betrayal of his own hard work. Brian's quick mind, however, sees university as an opportunity to grow. In his father's terms, the son is an extension of the father, while, in Brian's terms, the father is a relic of the past and has little right to interfere with the son. But it is not only the political situation which pulls the two men apart; it is also religion. In throwing away the memories and myths of an earlier generation, Brian also throws away his Catholicism. He is horrified by what he sees as the clichés of the Church, and, unable to believe in a religion which he understands to be tyrannical, he argues fiercely with his parents. For Cornelius it is a blow - another example of the foolishness of a new generation - but it is a far more serious matter in the eyes of his wife. The Church is everything to Brian's mother:

She would regard neglecting Sunday mass as the straightest route to hell, an accumulation of mortal sin upon mortal sin Sunday after Sunday from which there could be no redemption. Which was what it certainly would be, if you accepted the Church's teaching, though there were the possibilities of Divine Mercy and the mysterious workings of Actual Grace. But her generation set little store on such refinements. They were hardliners. A Catholic could only mean a practising one. Otherwise he was a renegade and almost certainly doomed.

(FC, p.321)

Mrs. Moloney's attitude toward the Catholic Church is very similar to her husband's attitude toward Ireland. Because Brian is not a practising Catholic his mother's heart is broken; because Brian is

not a practising Irishman - to the extent that he refuses to become involved in political activities - his father's heart is broken. Neither Cornelius nor his wife recognizes that times have changed and Brian is living in a new and confusing world. When he joins the RAF he commits the ultimate sin. Cornelius sees the RAF - in fact anything British - as the enemy. He feels that he has played his role in the fight for Irish freedom, and the fact that his son would join the enemy, for whatever reason, horrifies him. In Brian's desire to leave "this happy homeland of hypocrisy" (FC, p.403) he hurts his father deeply. Cornelius can cope with his son's abuse, but he finds this particular action beyond any understanding: it is nothing short of treason. It destroys every myth Cornelius has so painfully built; his son no longer believes in any of his father's treasured past. Cornelius tells his wife:

'I've done nothing to turn him against me.
What I taught him were the true things; to
respect his religion and his country, to
love her language and cherish his inheritance.
Is that too much to expect?'

(FC, pp.413-14)

Mrs. Moloney, now more aware of the situation, asks: "Have the children always to think the same thoughts as their father?" (FC, p.414). Cornelius, true to the now mythological importance of the Rising and his part in the independence movement, replies: "He doesn't have to join the army that shot his own countrymen" (FC, p.414). Yet in the long run, as old age takes charge of him and death is imminent, Cornelius relents and tells O'Sheehan:

'I myself am one of the old stock. We let the heart rule the head. That was ever our weakness. Mind you, we were blest in our priests and our teachers. They taught us the true things. What was missing was opportunity.' He became pensive. 'I sit here and spend a lot of time going back over those young days, the sport we had then and the good companions. A summer's day was never long enough for all the things we had in mind to do.'

(FC, pp.470-471)

Time and change finally catch up with Cornelius Moloney, and he recognizes that his time is over. A reconciliation takes place between Cornelius and his son, but it is tragically late: Cornelius Moloney dies before Brian reaches home. It is not hypocritical of Brian to allow his father a veteran's funeral, for, like his father, he finally acknowledges the reality of life. Brian stops fighting the ghosts, myths and memories of his father's past, saying:

'Why not? Father would have liked it. Himself and O'Sheehan spent a large part of their lives re-living old glories. Besides, he gave service all those years as chairman of the party branch, which is probably a lot more than most of the others. No, I wouldn't worry.'

(FC, p.475)

Brian softens to the extent that he recognizes that each individual must live his own life in his own manner. Each is allowed his own time and place and each should be respected.

Des Cunningham does not have the intellectual problems of

Brian and Tim. He is content going to school and eventually working in a men's clothing shop. He seems to desire a certain anonymity, and he hides his natural singing talent, as he skims along the surface enjoying what life has to offer. But when his friend Gwen discovers that she is pregnant, Des becomes a rather honourable young man. It is an odd episode, as the young men gather to help their friend out of his difficulties. All sense of morality is set aside as Brian, Ellis and Tim conspire to finance an abortion for Gwen. Only Tim worries about the moral consequences of their actions, and, while he is concerned about the ramifications of the act, his sense of friendship stops him from making a moral judgement. Still, the episode remains a rather unhappy one, as the other characters involved do not seem to understand the enormity of the situation.

In general, sexuality is dealt with in a tender and unassuming manner. Tim and Anne are in love but, because of their Catholic upbringing and the pressures of society, they are wary of their relationship. Each considers the other's feelings, and, while love and emotional commitment are discussed, sex seems to be a relatively minor issue. To be sure, there is desire and the occasional attempts at discovery, but the spiritual aspect of love seems much more important to these characters. When Tim and Anne finally consummate their friendship, it is an entirely natural experience.

On the way back to the hut it was too much for both of them and though she said No you mustn't you really mustn't. Tim they lay close in the darkness and he did. He had not meant to because there were all sorts of grave reasons and she had not meant to for even graver ones but she too found it harder and harder and so they both did. When it was over they lay in mutual tenderness and told each other they thought it would be all right.

(FC, p.316)

The tone is quiet, restrained and gentle: there is no hysteria and none is called for. When Tim confesses to Father Purcell, he cannot feel anything more than "an intellectual sorrow" (FC, p.433), while he confesses with the knowledge that Anne is in America. Later, as he gazes at the sunset,

he sent in the wake of the sunset a token of himself, a spiritual particle which would reach her [Anne] unerringly and mysteriously through the homing multiplicities of their love.

(FC, p.435)

Their love is lyrical but difficult: from a purely practical point of view it would have been very simple for Anne to become pregnant. Irish society disapproved of youthful sexuality and contraceptives. Tim and Anne take a great risk in their love for one another, but they do so because they feel tenderness and real feeling. The episode is understandable and fitting; it does not have the slightly jarring tone of the episode concerning Gwen and Des. Tim and Anne love one another while Des and Gwen seem only to find comfort and

release in each other's company.

Tim McDonagh is the central and most complex of the characters in the novel. When his father dies when Tim is only fourteen he leaves "a great hole in the world" (FC, p.353). Tim, like James Plunkett, is a child of promise born into a changing world. He has vague memories of gunfire in the night, and he understands that Ireland is still a rather violent country, but he is also an heir to the Irish literary movement. His friend, Mr. Curtis, describes the neighbourhood in which Tim spends his early life:

The family of Bernard Shaw, he said, had occupied the house at the corner of Hatch Street, a distance of some fifty yards. The writer George Moore and the poet and surgeon Oliver St. John Gogarty lived the space of a few gardens away in Ely Place, which had connections also with John Millington Synge, whose prose was beyond praise though his plays were in questionable taste. Senator W.B. Yeats, the poet, lived near at hand also. Almost next door there was a Miss Hone, whose work in stained glass was very highly regarded. She herself, he thought, was somewhat overbearing.

(FC, pp.14-15)

Tim is a product of his environment, a serious intellectual with musical talent who worries about time and what it will do to his life. He discovers death and its consequences when his father dies.

There was a murderer somewhere in the heart of creation waiting to ambush. There was an invisible thief, unpredictable, but capable

to some extent perhaps of being understood. The world was no longer to be taken on trust. It required vigilance. It demanded constant scrutiny. It proffered love to break the heart; the more abundantly so, the more certainly.

(FC, p.201)

Tim sees that life is fragile, and spends much of his time "miles and miles away" (FC, p.256) lost in thought. Time becomes his great enemy, and the cause of much musing. At age seven he wondered why, if he came from God in Heaven, he could not remember either the Being or the place. Memories and time seem to conspire against him. The photograph album which both introduces and concludes the novel, becomes a source of wonder.

'I was thinking just then about something which often puzzles me. It's not easy to explain. Have you ever looked at a photograph of yourself as a baby, let's say. And then at the age of seven or thereabouts. Then at fourteen perhaps. Which of them is you? They can't all be.'

(FC, p.256)

Tim is puzzled by the very nature of human existence; in a world in which time takes all away, the only certainty is his own existence. But even this is uncertain. Tim changes, and he can no longer be sure of his own identity. He is facing the universal problem of mutability. To this extent, Farewell Companions, like Strumpet City, ceases to be simply an Irish novel and becomes instead a novel about the basic and universal problems of growth and change.

James Cahalan feels that Tim's decision to enter a religious order may "prove disappointing to many readers."² But it seems to be an inevitable and correct decision. Tim desperately wishes to find an unchanging reality in his life and the Church offers such a reality. If the modern reader sees it as an escape from the difficulties and sorrows of the world, then he has a profound misunderstanding of the religious life. Tim enters the monastery aware that the wistfulness and ache of his past will always be with him. He is surprised at "the new and unexpected unease" (FC, p.479), and it is obvious that the path he has chosen will not be an easy one. He is only beginning his intellectual and spiritual life; his work at the Metropolitan and his excursions into the beauty of the Wicklow Mountains were merely exercises. To be sure, the monastery cannot stop the inevitable changes brought about by time, but it can offer, in Christian terms, a firm and unchanging truth. In The Gems She Wore, Plunkett writes:

it [the Catholic Church] had condemned practically everything I later came to regard as worthwhile, yet for mature men of my childhood, even those who had suffered grievously from its intolerance, it guarded a Truth which was better than the sum of all its wrongheadedness.

(p.23)

This seems to be as true for the character as it is for the author. In the long run Tim is searching for truth, and he learns that each individual finds it in his own time and place. Brian finds truth

in his career, his love for Barbara and his eventual reconciliation with his father. Cornelius Moloney finds his truth in "the "little, wordless poems" (FC, p.472) which he describes to O'Sheehan:

'Here's a strange thing for you - a thing from old God's time that keeps coming into my head. It's a little picture, nothing more. I see these two hoops of griddle bread on a window ledge in the sun that the mother must have baked and left there to cool'

(FC, p.472)

Cornelius' truth lies in the past.

O'Sheehan also searches for the answers to the continuing problems of life. O'Sheehan believes himself to be Oisín, a character from Irish mythology who went to Tir na nÓg, the Land of the Ever Young, with his immortal love, Niamh. But Oisín was lonely for his friends in Ireland, and wished to talk to Fionn and his companions, so he left Tir na nÓg and returned to Ireland. He was warned by Niamh that he must not set foot on the soil of Ireland, but must stay on his horse. While he was searching for Fionn and his beloved companions, he came to some men struggling to move a large rock. Oisín stooped from his horse to help them - perhaps also to show them his great strength - and the girth on his horse broke. Oisín fell to the ground. He discovered that all his dear friends had gone, and times had changed: his time in Tir na nÓg, which had seemed so brief, had been over one hundred years.

"Suddenly the years he had spent in the Land of the Very Young descended on him like an avalanche and Ossian, [Oisín] the poet hero, became a feeble old man" (GSW, p.62-63). O'Sheehan gives the novel a sense of enchantment and, because we never discover his true identity, the enchantment becomes tantalizingly real. Like the mad Father Giffley in Strumpet City, O'Sheehan knows the truth.

Why then had he wished to re-visit the old ways? An old answer; the human heart and its inescapable yearnings. Love of homeland drew him and the cherishing of dear companions who, as it turned out, were dead long centuries and in their clay. Gone too the white-walled dwellings from the Hill of Allen and the ramparts all crumbled and nothing but grassgrown mounds and grazing cattle. No Finn, no Oscar, Caoilte, no Diarmuid; he himself an airy horseman forbidden under pain of instant age to set foot on the green sod of home, yet fated to do so because, as he stooped from his saddle, the bellyband broke and he tumbled to the ground. He watched his youth bounding away from him with the freed steed as it bolted.

(FC, p.420)

Tim McDonagh and O'Sheehan share the same sensitivity and unhappiness. Tim watches as time deprives him of his father, his friends and his youth. O'Sheehan believes that his youth has bolted away, and he is unhappy because his mythological friends have gone. O'Sheehan represents the old, enchanted world of Ireland, and Tim is a child of the new and changing Ireland. But they are united in a common concern: their homeland and their place in it. O'Sheehan tells the Prior of Tibbradden: "In a way, I am Ireland" (FC, p.87). He is probably right: he is after all, the Oisín myth personified.

But Tim McDonagh is also Ireland; he is a new, confused and changing Ireland. The old and the new merge in a common, universal and timeless tragedy: the tragedy of time and place.

Tim and O'Sheehan are concerned with the nature of man. In The Gems She Wore, James Plunkett expresses a similar concern:

A man, I thought, does not make himself -
he is made. A man does not motivate his own
impulses, nor does he condition his own
responses, or forge his own truth. If
there is individual uniqueness, it is the
uniqueness of a link in a chain.

(p.168)

Tim and O'Sheehan are links in the same chain; old Ireland and new Ireland are really one and the same. In spite of all the problems between one generation and another, the chain remains intact. To this extent, Farewell Companions is not only about change, it is also about permanence. Tim's spiritual and intellectual problems are the problems of all men in all times and places. O'Sheehan, whoever he may be, copes with the same problems. The characters are worlds, perhaps centuries apart, yet their struggle is the same: it is the permanent struggle of all men to become more completely aware of their place in life. Each character must deal with change and permanence: the two extremes of life on earth. But this is how a country survives its troubles: its people are a link in a chain which cannot be broken. Ireland survives because of her people.

The political problems in Ireland play a large part in Farewell Companions. For example, the first year of Tim's life is described thus:

Law had broken down throughout the country. A general strike forced the government to free eighty political prisoners who were on hunger strike in Mountjoy. The Liverpool dockers secured the release of Irish hunger strikers in Wormwood Scrubs by threatening sympathetic action. Ships carrying munitions for the British forces in Ireland were blacked by Dublin dockers and the railmen refused to work the trains for the same reason.

(FC, p.51)

Tim's own family is divided: Aunt Emily is a fanatical Republican who mourns the death of her son, Freddy. Her flat is a shrine filled with ornaments, photographs and bad poetry ("In an English Prison"):

On the wall above it a picture of Patrick Pearse in profile complemented another of de Valera. On parchment near them a poem was set out under a title decorated on the left by the tricolour and the right by a Golden Harp on a green background.

(FC, p.22)

In a flashback to the Troubles, we learn that Emily's son is a cruel and cold blooded gunman who uses his cousin to further the cause of the Civil War. Freddy tells Paddy McDonagh:

'We have orders, Paddy, so we'd better understand each other. First of all, that gun isn't for ornament. You co-operate, or Willie uses it. If for any reason, now or later, it becomes necessary and he can't, I'll use my own. Second, don't entertain any doubts about it.'

(FC, p.47)

Freddy dies as he has lived, in a brutal and certainly unnecessary manner. Seeking revenge for the execution of Willie Mulhall, he decides to murder the men who arrested him. But his plan misfires and he is blown to pieces by government soldiers.

Willie is more an idealist than Freddy. He truly believes that he is fighting for the socialist revolution for which his father worked. He is a product of Chandlers Court, and the child of an avid trade unionist. He wants "Ownership of Ireland for the people of Ireland, from the sun down to the centre" (FC, p.71). The more pragmatic Freddy understands that

'In Ireland when the British have been rooted out you'll still have the native capitalists, and who's going to discommode them? Not Dev or Griffith. If Connolly hadn't been executed you might have had a chance, though I doubt it. The Irish people aren't interested.'

(FC, p.71)

Time has proved that Freddy is right, but of the two characters the idealistic Willie is by far the more attractive. When he is tragically taken by government forces - outside Chandlers Court - the cries of his stricken mother are real and terrifying. They echo through the novel, a reminder of the agony of the Irish Civil War. It is interesting to note that Willie's execution, like the 1916 Rising, is mentioned but not described. It, too, may be an emotional experience which defies definition and description.

It is equally interesting to observe that Hennessy, the survivor, plays a role in the historical section of the novel. Hennessy survives because he does not become involved in the main action. But it is he, surely, for whom the Troubles have been fought. Yet even Willie Mulhall senses that the fighting is out of hand when he observes of Hennessy's possible death: "Of all the deaths it would be the humblest and the least noticed. To Free Staters and Republicans alike, or most of them, Hennessy was entirely dispensable. Then what was the resolution about?" (FC, p.96). There is no resolution to this problem, and Plunkett wisely offers none. The entire series of events, now referred to as the Troubles, seems, on reflection, inevitable. But there is little that is glorious about broken families and smashed bodies. If it has taken on rather mythical proportions, it may well be because it is the only way to cope with the utter tragedy of Irish history.

James Larkin reappears as a very minor character, discussed by Cornelius Moloney and O'Sheehan. Larkin left Ireland in 1914 to go on a speaking tour of the United States of America. When the 1916 Rising took place, he was still there, and in fact he spent the years 1920 to 1923 in Sing Sing Prison, charged with "violating the statute on criminal anarchy by publishing the 'Left Wing Manifesto' in the Revolutionary Age."³ He returned to Ireland on April 30, 1923. Many problems ensued, and he started a new union, the Workers Union of Ireland, in 1924. In 1943, he won a parliamentary seat

in the Dail as a member of the Labour Party.⁴ He lost the following election. Neither Cornelius Moloney nor O'Sheehan supports Larkin's politics, but they are against the tactics used by their own party to discredit him as 'a Red.' Cornelius observes: "There are two things which distress me. The first is to see a good man slandered. Larkin is a good man, whatever they say about him being a Red, which I don't believe anyway" (FC, p.440). Larkin's time seems to be over, but he does not realize it, either in fiction or in fact.

Music is a theme in Farewell Companions, as it was in Strumpet City. Tim is introduced to its mysteries when he is seven years old. His grandfather explains that "Music is a succession of sounds, pleasing to the ear and in satisfying order" (FC, p.135), but it becomes far more to Tim McDonagh. Music is an integral part of his life, even the singing of 'Old Lang Syne' is an emotional moment:

How many times will you sing it in a lifetime.
 How many hands to be clasped, how many journeys
 to end, how many partings to endure. Where
 would all these singing companions be in ten
 or twenty or thirty years to come? In what
 circumstances? In what strange lands? How
 happy or how sad?

(FC, p.154)

Song and music produce thought, sorrow, happiness and curiosity. Like Rashers Tierney, in Strumpet City, Tim understands music to be a natural part of his life. But he also acknowledges the

possibility that it can take him away from the Metropolitan Services, and a life which he finds increasingly meaningless. Finally he is given a choice: the artistry of music, or the more difficult artistry of the priesthood. He cannot fulfill himself in music alone, for as he observes, "As a prop against loneliness it was not very effective" (FC, p.432). He chooses the priesthood, but he has enjoyed both his talent and the recognition which it brought. Cunningham, on the other hand, hides his musical talent. He seems embarrassed by his singing talent and he is unwilling to admit that it exists. He is not an artist by nature, and he prefers to dismiss his ability rather than simply enjoy it.

Farewell Companions is a beautifully written novel about the problems which face all mankind. It combines enchantment, in O'Sheehan, and pragmatism, in Brian. It offers a central character who is sympathetic, intriguing and admirable. It provides a sense of an emerging Ireland: a country pushing its way through mists and troubles to a new and confusing reality. Farewell Companions is vastly underestimated by the critics, perhaps because there is a tendency to dismiss Irish literature as somewhat provincial in its outlook. Certainly, there is an Irish theme in Farewell Companions, but the basic story is one which concerns us all: the human heart and its inescapable yearnings; growth; change; love; death. It is also concerned with permanence and the place of man in the

scheme of life. We are links in a chain, locked together for better or worse, in our common humanity.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SHORT STORIES

James Plunkett began to submit short stories to The Bell when that journal first appeared in 1940. "The Mother" was published in November, 1942: it was followed by "Working Class" in October, 1943. Neither story, however, is included in either The Trusting and The Maimed (1955) or Collected Short Stories (1977). The first edition of The Trusting and The Maimed contained ten stories and a later edition (1959) added two more. The most recent volume, Collected Short Stories, includes all twelve together with six slightly more recent stories. Many anthologies of Irish short stories have been published, and various stories by James Plunkett have been included. Irish Stories and Tales (1955), edited by Devin A. Garrity and published the same year as The Trusting and The Maimed, contains "Weep for Our Pride"; Frank O'Connor used "The Eagles and The Trumpets" in Modern Irish Short Stories (1957). David Marcus included "The Scoop" in Tears of the Shamrock (1972) and "The Eagles and The Trumpets" in his Modern Irish Love Stories (1974). As a result, Plunkett was a popular and well-known writer before either of his novels was published. In addition, he wrote plays for radio and television, and though none of them is available in print, they are still performed. The Risen People was first performed at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin 1958, and it was staged by Dublin's Project Arts Centre in London early in 1980.

Many of the early stories describe situations, characters and places which occur later in the novels. "The Trusting and The Maimed" is concerned, in part, with Ellis and the Municipal Insurance Office; he reappears in the final story of the first edition of The Trusting and The Maimed, "The Eagles and The Trumpets", and also in Farewell Companions. "The Trusting and The Maimed" is the story of the pregnancy of Rita Kilshaw, and it seems to be an earlier version of the Gwen and Des episode in Farewell Companions. The attitude toward abortion changes dramatically between the story and the novel. In the short story Rita is morally horrified by the very idea of abortion, while in Farewell Companions Gwen treats it with calm sophistication. The first treatment of the subject seems far more successful.

The early stories are highly structured and very concerned with plot development. Frank O'Connor, who through his friendship with Plunkett seems to have had a considerable influence on the writer, says that Plunkett "spoils some of his best stories with forced symbolic contrivances."¹ This certainly seems true of the early stories. For instance, in "The Wearin' of the Green", a story about a young, idealistic teacher in a small village who is trying to bring the young people some simple pleasure, a last minute mistake brings about tragedy. The teacher, Mr. Purcell, is forced to leave the village and this angers his friend, Joseph, a man of very limited intelligence.

Joseph decides to blow up those who are to blame, using a bomb left over from the Troubles. But he gives the bomb, hidden in a suitcase, to Purcell by mistake, and although it is not specifically stated, the idealist is presumably blown to pieces.

Frank O'Connor goes on to praise Plunkett as a "story-teller of high seriousness."² James Cahalan feels that "The Trusting and The Maimed", "The Eagles and The Trumpets" and "A Walk Through Summer" (which was included in the later edition of The Trusting and The Maimed) are

in many ways Plunkett's most interesting and his most lyrical stories. Here he found a complete individuality as a story writer. While reading these stories, one forgets all about the Joyces, the O'Connors, and the O'Faolains because these are quite unlike anything they wrote.³

It is, nevertheless, extremely difficult to forget about James Joyce. Cahalan himself admits that The Trusting and The Maimed is "in many ways an update and extension of Joyce's seedy, decadent Dublin."⁴ The extremely depressing tone of "Weep For Our Pride" and "Janey Mary" (both stories about children) is certainly reminiscent of Joyce, particularly "Araby" and "Counterparts".

"The Trusting and The Maimed" tells the story of Casey and his girlfriend, Rita Kilshaw. Plunkett uses an episodic approach in the story, moving quickly from one character to another. The reader is introduced to a wounded pigeon who is searching for home.

Like Casey, who is brought in much later, the pigeon "desired the city" and distrusts "the absence of life, the silence" (CSS, p.7) around him. The scene then shifts to Casey's rooming house and Florrie, the landlady's daughter. Casey's unused room is discovered:

A set of underwear and a soiled shirt, bundled roughly for Monday's laundry, lay in the corner. She [Florrie] looked enquiringly from the picture of St. Rita, patroness of hopeless cases, to a glossy photograph of a pin-up girl in a swim suit and then to a family group of Casey in a sailor's suit, sitting on a table between his mother and father. On the dressing-table, between a crushed tie and a sticky bottle of hair dressing, lay an envelope.

(CSS, p.8)

The combination of the wounded pigeon, the empty room and the letter, which Florrie reads, provides a sense of unease. When the scene suddenly shifts to Rita at work, the unease grows. Ellis is introduced, working in the Accident Department of the Municipal Insurance Office. He tries to help Rita, but he is caught in the middle of a confusing and emotional situation, and there is nothing he can do. Casey is finally brought into the story, lying on a moor and unable to move because he has broken his leg. Casey and the pigeon, which he has automatically grabbed, are maimed. The pigeon's leg is held on by a single tendon, just as Casey - "small and sick and maimed and mortal" (CSS, p.26) - holds on to life by a mere thread. The imagery is blatant and almost heavy handed. We are told that St. Rita is the patroness of hopeless cases, only

to discover that the pregnant girlfriend is named Rita. Ellis and Casey work in the Accident Department at the Municipal Insurance Office, and Ellis goes for help to his friend Connolly in the Whole Life Department. Both Casey and the pigeon are wounded in the leg.

However, the style and tone of the story are effective. As Cahalan suggests, the "episodic approach becomes panoramic and almost cinematic. Plunkett goes beyond O'Connor's single 'lonely voice' toward the use of multiple voices, achieving a film-like effect as he cuts from one character, situation and time to another."⁵ This approach is familiar to readers of Strumpet City, in which much the same technique is used. In the final paragraph of the short story we see the trusting - Ellis, walking home alone, and Florrie in Casey's room; we also see the maimed - Casey waiting for certain death, and the pigeon "confident once more of love" (CSS, p.33), yet unaware that death is imminent. Rita is not mentioned, though her presence is certainly felt. She is left alone to cope with her situation in what we feel will be a most unsympathetic world. She is both the trusting and the maimed. In fact, all the characters are maimed to a certain degree, at least to the extent that they are all affected by the oppressive nature of Irish society. Casey, Ellis and their friends are forced, by economic necessity, to work as clerks in boring, dismal offices where there is little chance of advancement. Because they earn very little money they

must live either at home or in rooming houses. Sexual experience is almost always doomed to failure because of the fear of pregnancy and the disapproval of the Catholic society in which they live.

"Weep For Our Pride" and "Janey Mary" are both stories about children and the brutal system in which they must live. The agony of Peter Farrell, unhappily wearing his father's boots and enduring a day of sheer misery at school, is told with compassion and insight. Mr. O'Rourke, the sadistic English teacher who glories in speaking Irish and damning everything British, seems to be based on one of Plunkett's own teachers. In The Gems She Wore, Plunkett describes "a mountain of a man who used to bang the desk with great hairy fists as he recited the foul deeds of the Sassenach" (p.17). Plunkett refers to the "Lament for the Death of Eoghan Roe" as an example of his teacher's love for Ireland. In "Weep For Our Pride," Mr. O'Rourke "clenched his powerful fists and held them up rigidly before his chest" (CSS, p.86) as he recites the same lament. Plunkett understands the child's mind, and the fact that "It was better to walk without shoes and barefooted than to walk without dignity" (CSS, p.97). "Janey Mary" is an equally brutal story. Janey Mary is sent to beg for food from neighbours and strangers by her shrewish and unloving mother. When she stands in line to receive food from the priests, she is trampled in the rush. Her bare feet are wounded, and "you can see the print of the nails" (CSS, p.207) which were made by the boots

of a man in the line. Again, the imagery, which strongly suggests a Christ-like wound, is heavy-handed in its obviousness. But the style and tone once again rise above such difficulties. Plunkett is describing the abject poverty in which many Dublin children grew up. His attitude toward society is bitter, angry, and reminiscent of Strumpet City. Father Benedict, who has "more intuition than intellect" and a "more genuine affection for children than for learning" (CSS, p.200), is rather like Father Giffley in Strumpet City. Both are well-meaning and loving men who are virtually impotent in the face of the problems which confront them.

In "Weep For Our Pride" Peter is a battered yet dignified child. Like the boy in Joyce's "Araby", he "burns with anguish and anger."⁶ Janey Mary lives a sordid and brutal life, intimidated by her poverty-stricken mother. Like the unhappy child in Joyce's "Counterpoints" who is beaten by his frustrated father, Janey Mary is terrorized by her mother. The similarities may prove only that all Dubliners suffer from their oppressive society - and children more so, because of their lowly position on the social scale. James Joyce and James Plunkett are basically not the same kind of writer, but they do share a common concern for Dublin and Dubliners. It is interesting, if not wholly satisfactory, to observe their similarities.

The final story in the first collection is "The Eagles and

Trumpets." The story concerns a librarian in a small town, and Sweeney, her friend in Dublin. Sweeney works in an office - which could well be the Municipal Insurance Office - and once again there is a character named Ellis. Sweeney and the librarian meet during his Summer holidays, and he tries to return to see her. But Ellis borrows the money he has saved, and Sweeney does not make the trip to the village. Plunkett shifts the story between Dublin and the village, and between Sweeney and the girl. A great sense of hopelessness and futility grows. Sweeney ends the day drunk, while the nameless girl dances with a commercial traveller. There is a sense of tragedy about each character. As the girl observes to Sweeney when they first meet, "It's bad wanting anything too much ... Because you never get it" (CSS, pp.222-23). Sweeney cannot get away from his "good, safe, comfortable job, with a pension scheme and adequate indemnity against absences due to ill-health" (CSS, p.210). The girl is alone, searching perhaps for a certain dignity in her life. Ellis is part of a household which "had its complications" (CSS, p.212). The commercial traveller drinks, to forget his wife who died after fifteen years in a lunatic asylum, and to forget also the cheap hotels and strange rooms in which he has spent his life. In this world of unhappiness a few moments of romance seem tremendously important. The moon, which shines down on all the characters, "rode in brilliance through the August sky. It glinted on the pebbled terrace. It stole through curtain chinks into the bedrooms of the

sleeping Monsignors and Bishops, it lay in brilliant barrenness on the pillows of still elderly ladies who had no longer anything to dream about" (CSS, p.235). It shines also on Ellis, Sweeney, the commercial traveller and the librarian without a name. There is a sense that we are all characters in an on-going tragedy: the old ladies, the priests, Sweeney, the girl and all their friends are united in the sorrows of life. "The Eagles and The Trumpets" is a more balanced story than "The Trusting and The Maimed": the symbolic contrivances are missing, the blatant imagery is gone, and the story is moving.

"The Trout" is a more obviously modern story. The young couple, Denis and Helen, are sharing a summer house but they are not married. While conventional Irish Catholic morality is introduced by the character Robert Carew, the couple remain at ease with their relationship. The problems of Catholicism and changing morality are discussed at length by Denis and Carew. Carew, hiding from the sun under his huge umbrella, believes in the Catholic faith and follows the doctrine of the Church. He conforms to its teaching to the extent that he remains engaged to the same woman for eight years, and will not live with her until "we are ready to ask God to bless our union" (CSS, p.243). Denis, on the other hand, does not believe in God but rather in "what you see around you; in mountains and rocks and rivers" (CSS, p.246). When Carew leaves, Denis

becomes determined to catch the gigantic trout which he has seen in the river. He eventually catches it, but in doing so he seems to be a murderer: "On both hands his own blood mixed with the slime and blood of the fish. The fish still bled through gills and gaping mouth. It had a murdered look" (CSS, p.250). In the background of the action is the story of Denis' neighbour, Dan O'Sullivan. He tells the couple that at one time he lived with his parents and six brothers and sisters. But his family eventually broke up: his brothers and sisters went to America, and his parents died. He was lonely and prayed to God and his parents for comfort, but he received none. He discovered that "Instead of God and Heaven, there was only Absence and a Void" (CSS, p.249). Dan O'Sullivan lives with "silence and emptiness" (CSS, p.249). Denis also discovers this Absence and Void, and silence and emptiness. Lying beside Helen, after his battle with the trout, he finds that "there was nothing to hear. Was there no one, even, to blame?" (CSS, p.251). Helen is asleep and, like Dan O'Sullivan, Denis is alone. "The Trout" is a very moral story: Carew believes in a greater Being, and his faith supports him so that he will never be aware of an Absence or a Void in his life. Denis, despite his new morality, is alone. He may believe in what he sees around him, but mountains and rocks and rivers do not offer either comfort or love. It is a depressing story: there are no winners or losers. Denis has a loving, sexual relationship with Helen, but he is aware of a new absence

in his life. Carew is a careful conformist who must live without Maura's physical presence, but he is confident of God's existence and secure in his faith. In this story Plunkett seems to be at ease with himself and his characters, at least to the extent that he allows them more freedom. The story is less obviously structured than any of the earlier narratives. Plunkett is less concerned with an oppressive society, and more concerned with the individual and how he copes in a changing world. "The Trout" is the first of the six more recent stories published in Collected Short Stories, and there is a definite change in tone, style and subject matter. The stories are less about Ireland and her society (and therefore less "Irish") and more about humanity and the universal problems which face it. The story of Dan O'Sullivan is also told in The Gems She Wore, as a personal experience and it is obviously a story which affected the writer enormously. The use of Plunkett's own experiences in his stories and novels makes his work extremely personal: his writing is an extension of himself.

"The Plain People" can be read almost as a sequel to Strumpet City. It is about a modern union in modern Ireland and how the old order has changed. Mulligan is a Branch Secretary left behind "in the rickety little Hall near the quays" (CSS, p.252-53). When the trimmers go out on an illegal strike, Mulligan becomes involved in the political games which are played by his union and the government.

In despair, he takes to his bed, though he is eventually brought before the Executive Committee of his union to answer charges against him. He tells them:

But we used to be good at getting the dockers together and I was a good man at telling the employer what we wanted, and what we'd stand out solid for until it was got. I don't think I have anything else to say. Times is different.

(CSS, p.268)

Times are indeed different: union activity is no longer a matter of necessity. William Martin Murphy, who led the lock-out in 1913 and caused unbelievable misery to the people of Dublin, is dead. So too is Jim Larkin. This is a new world of smart young men and political manoeuvring. Yet in the long run, Mulligan's associate, Tonman, lures the union members to action. He uses Mulligan's own sentiments to stir them: "Trade Unionism is all a bureaucracy, nowadays... Like the Employers. They have the mode and outlook of the capitalist class" (CSS, p.270). The men force action from the union executive and the government; the bureaucracy is forced to give in, and Mulligan is back at his job. The old order wins a small battle in the ongoing war between old and new. Life continues, each side fighting the other, while the nameless politician observes, "my only interest in man is as a political animal" (CSS, p.272). Once again it is not so much society in general, as man in particular, which concerns Plunkett.

"Ferris Moore and The Earwig" is the final story in Collected Short Stories. The action is slight: the entire story revolves around one man, lying in a sunny field. As he watches an earwig clinging to a dry patch of ground surrounded by water, he ponders his existence and the problems of time. The concern of the story is very similar to that expressed by Tim McDonagh in Farewell Companions. Tim wonders, while looking at photographs of himself, which image is really him: Tim at seven, or fourteen or twenty-one. Ferris Moore has the same thought, but he provides a solution by declaring that Ferris Moore Twenty-eight is not Ferris Moore Eight or Ferris Moore Fifty. In a dialogue with himself, in which he divides himself into 'A' and 'B', he asks questions and supplies answers:

A. Who was Ferris Moore Eight?

B. Simply someone I once knew. He used to chase butterflies and kept a pet rabbit. He also climbed trees. I am Ferris Moore Fifty and quite incapable, as you can see, of climbing a tree or chasing a butterfly. This flesh is not the same flesh, this form is not the same form. This voice and the mind which directs it, they are not the same at all.

(CSS, p.296)

Like Tim, Ferris Moore contemplates the nature of man but unlike Tim, he supplies his own answer. In his dialogue with himself he is willing to concede the uniqueness of all the Ferris Moores, but, as a man, he is "not altogether convinced of it" (CSS, p.296).

When he presses himself on the subject, he admits that he does not believe in a personal God. He declares that in the process of conceding uniqueness he can "maintain that the Uniqueness which was my father has moved out of Time" (CSS, p.297), and therefore any promises he may have made to him are invalid. But while he contemplates these mysteries, he loses the earwig whom he has meant to save. As Denis, in "The Trout", saw an Absence, Ferris Moore now sees the "remote point of Infinity, without length or breadth or thickness" (CSS, p.299). As the moon shone down on all the characters in "The Eagles and The Trumpets", so Ferris Moore sees that in this "point of Infinity" abides

the mind of God, towards which all things
travelled at an unreckonable speed;
including Ferris Moore Sixty-two, his
unloved sister, the King, the little boy
with smiling eyes and the small, drowned
earwig on the brown bosom of the waters.

(CSS, p.299)

James Plunkett has said that "Ferris Moore and The Earwig" may be "indicative of his future direction as a writer."⁷ Certainly, the writing in the short story is far more sophisticated and mature than anything he included in his first collection of stories. His direction seems to have changed from an angry view of Irish society and life, to a more personal and intimate discussion of the individual.

It is tempting to compare Plunkett's short stories with those

of other Irish writers. Both Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain, who was the editor of The Bell when Plunkett began to submit stories, have influenced him. Plunkett has said that O'Faolain "would write back and say not to call a 'meal' a 'repast' and to cut it down and speak plainly and if you didn't have anything to say not to say it."⁸ It is almost impossible to read any Irish writer without finding some similarity, real or imagined, to James Joyce. But James Plunkett stands on his own merit in both his short stories and his novels. He is a creative writer who, though never prolific, has grown enormously in ability since his first story was published in 1940.

CONCLUSION

In The Gems She Wore, James Plunkett writes:

A man, I thought, does not make himself - he is made. A man does not motivate his own impulses, nor does he condition his own responses, or forge his own truth. If there is individual uniqueness, it is the uniqueness of a link in a chain. A Man is his own father and mother and his forebears. He is his own children and the generations that are yet to come. He is what his native earth makes of his body when it gives him to eat and what his native landscape offers to his spirit when it cries out for revelation. He responds, alike, to songs that were sung before his birth and to a music that is yet to be made. There is a sense in which there is neither past nor future - all is Present. So it is that all high places are the same high place and each tomb is every tomb.

(pp.168-69)

Plunkett is talking about the nature of man - the nature of human existence - and his philosophy can be traced through his novels and short stories. In the most fundamental sense, it is a philosophy of brotherhood, and it^{is} this which leads Plunkett's work to transcend the category of "Irish literature" and become universal in the very best sense. It also gives his work a certain unity, at least to the extent that the work is a perpetual process of growth and maturation. In "The Trout", Plunkett discusses the problem which faces Dan O'Sullivan and, later, Denis. It is the problem of disbelief and nothingness. Dan prays but hears no answers, and he feels that

"beyond the little span of years granted to each man and woman there was only silence and emptiness. Instead of God and Heaven, there was Absence and a Void" (CSS, p.249). Plunkett seems to offer a choice: belief, with its spiritual and temporal difficulties, or "Absence and a Void." It is not necessarily religious belief which is called for; rather, a belief in one's own place in the chain - belief that we are what was and what will be, faith in the notion that we are part of an intricate chain of being. A belief in one's place can be expressed through a sense of fellowship, as shown by the characters in Strumpet City, or it can be seen as a continuous struggle to grow, as Tim McDonagh realizes in Farewell Companions.

In Strumpet City we have seen that Yearling, the Bradshaws, and Father O'Connor all lack a sense of kinship or brotherhood with their neighbours. This lack, which Plunkett will call absence or a void in the short story, leads Yearling and the Bradshaws out of Ireland. Yearling, having flirted with the cause of the Irish working class, goes to London to live with his memories. He is afraid to face the heartbreak and sorrow which complete involvement in Irish society might bring, and he comforts himself with the false notion that "Nothing would ever happen in Ireland again" (SC, p.578). He tells himself that he is escaping boredom, but in fact he is running toward it. He is afraid of the kinship which his fellow

Irishmen may offer, yet in leaving Ireland he faces a far more difficult future. Yearling refuses to play his role in his own time and place, and one feels that if he cannot find fulfillment in Ireland he will surely not find it in the drawing-rooms of upper-class London. He is not simply running away from Ireland and its problems, he is running away from himself. His future offers nothing but emptiness, and it is all the more tragic because he has the capacity to be saved. Similarly, the Bradshaws are unwilling to be involved. Mr. Bradshaw dismisses his countrymen, while his wife is at least tempted by the idea of brotherhood. Like Yearling, they leave Ireland and one is aware that they too will find an enormous absence in their lives. Father O'Connor is saved - at least for the moment - when he recognizes that "Age and the rot of death were brothers, for rich and poor alike" (SC, p.572). Father O'Connor is now aware of the brotherhood of man, in more than a religious sense. None of these characters can understand or accept his place in the chain of life, and in his refusal to accept his responsibilities to his own time and place, none find happiness or comfort. Rather, like Dan O'Sullivan in "The Trout", all find only silence and emptiness.

Fitz, Mulhall and Pat, on the other hand, feel this sense of brotherhood, and it saves them from despair. Each supports the other through difficult times, so that while their lives are tragic

at times, they are nevertheless complete. Each is aware of his own place within the scheme of life, and personal sorrows diminish somewhat because of their shared faith in themselves and God.

Hennessey is a more difficult character because he is on the fringe of commitment. Like Yearling and Bradshaw, he is basically afraid, but, unlike them, he does not have the economic means of escape.

Hennessey skirts the subject of brotherhood: one moment he is aware of his kinship to other working men and the next he is not. He survives, not admirably but at least physically intact. Rashers Tierney does not really belong to any brotherhood, but he is totally himself, unafraid and dignified. He knows his place within society and he remains firmly his own man: arguing with Father O'Connor and quietly finding another Church in which to hear Mass. Father Giffley is driven mad by his knowledge of the truth. He recognizes that he is "his own father and mother and forebears" (GSW, p.168) and more important, he knows that "he is what his native landscape offers to his spirit when it cries out for revelation" (GSW, p.169).

Father Giffley's native landscape is the parish of St. Brigid, and it offers him a revelation which he cannot bear. He understands that a kinship exists between his parishioners, but he cannot cope with the poverty and misery of their lives. Further, he cannot be part of their special kinship because of his place within society: as a priest he should not even go into a pub. He cannot reach beyond the brutality of their existence, and to this extent his problem is our problem. Like Fitz, Mulhall, Pat and Rashers we

must reach beyond the brutality of life - beyond the madness of our mad world - and find some manner of solace and dignity. Rashers finds it because he knows that, while in human terms he is meaningless, in the more important spiritual sense he is a unique link in the human chain. He has less in material wealth than any other character in the novel, but he gains enormously because he is so totally aware of his own human dignity and worth.

In Farewell Companions, Brian, like Yearling, feels that "nothing ever happens here" (FC, p.376) and leaves for England. In his continuing argument with his father over education, he has failed to achieve anything. He works in the pub and occasionally steals money from his parents. Brian observes, "We're totally without dignity. After that there are no degrees" (FC, p.263). He is referring to himself: at this particular time in his life he is faced with absence and a void. He is no longer aware of who he is or why he exists. Locked in his lonely struggle, he does not recognize his place in life.

O'Sheehan, who is Ireland, brings the past, present and future together: his time is all time. O'Sheehan is the embodiment of Plunkett's philosophy. O'Sheehan is Oisín, he is his own father and mother, he is what his country has revealed to him, he is not one link; rather, he is the chain. If he is slightly mad,

in human terms, then perhaps madness is the price we must all pay for the knowledge of who we are. O'Sheehan and Father Giffley are the mad men who hold the truth of human existence within them. The universal problem which faces us is how to cope with this knowledge. If Plunkett offers any answer, it is perhaps in the example of Tim McDonagh: the yearnings of the human heart never diminish, the ache and unease will remain, but the struggle for truth must continue. When Tim enters the monastery, he is only beginning his search for his place within the scheme of life.

In the short stories Plunkett writes of the problems which beset all men. Peter Farrell ("Weep For Our Pride") and Janey Mary ("Janey Mary") are children searching for dignity in an ugly world. Though they are young, they already have a strong sense of themselves. The librarian and the commercial traveller in "The Eagles and The Trumpets" are also searching for dignity. It is the knowledge of who the individual really is: Rashers understands that if he is nothing else, he is a link in the long human chain of life, and there is dignity in that link. Ferris Moore ("Ferris Moore and The Earwig") does not believe in God:

For me God died some years ago, quite suddenly. I was gardening at the time. I thought of my father. He had planted and his work surrounded me. I looked up into the blue sky. It was deep. It was worse than deep. It was empty. The heavens were blue and beautiful and empty.

(CSS, p.297)

But Ferris Moore is beginning to feel a certain brotherhood, a vague sympathy for other creatures:

And now the plight of the earwig which he was about to rescue suggested once again the idea of inter-relationship or responsibility or, in so far as he could formulate the emotion, a sense of familyhood under an All-Fatherhood. Perhaps Love best expressed it, although it seemed extravagant to consider a trapped earwig and describe the resultant emotion as one of Love.

(CSS, p.298)

When Ferris Moore loses the earwig, he begins to see that familyhood does indeed exist; Ferris Moore Sixty-two learns the truth of life.

In a discussion of Ireland and her place in history in The Gems She Wore, James Plunkett writes:

Yet reflective and sensible men will acknowledge that to achieve a sense of Place and Past, to be at one (so to speak) with Before and After, is essential to man's contentment, his pursuit of wholeness. Ceremony and tradition are his meat and drink.

(p.15)

Both Plunkett's novels are historical: they tell the story of Ireland during the Troubles. On a large scale, the people of Ireland must understand their place and their past in order to become whole. On an individual level, we must all do the same. In "Under Saturn", W.B. Yeats wrote

Although my wits have gone
On a fantastic ride, my horse's flanks are spurred

By childish memories of an old cross Pollexfen,
 And of a Middleton, whose name you never heard,
 And of a red-haired Yeats whose looks, although he died
 Before my time, seem like a vivid memory.

1

Plunkett insists that in the pursuit of wholeness we must remember who we are, on an individual basis and on a national one. His work itself is a pursuit of wholeness. And it is not only Irish literature, it is more: it discusses and ponders the nature of human existence, the search for wholeness in a fragmented world.

Ireland has produced an impressive number of fine writers and poets. It is impossible either ^{to} ignore or dismiss Joyce and Yeats, or Plunkett's early influences, Sean O'Faolain and Frank O'Connor. And there are other writers who, while not prolific, have produced impressive work: Richard Power (The Hungry Grass); Michael Farrell (Thy Tears Might Cease); Christy Brown (Down All The Days). Quantity in itself is not important. James Plunkett has written two novels, a number of short stories, a book of Irish places, and various radio and television plays. He is an important writer whose concern goes beyond Ireland and the Irish, and he should be read and appreciated by those who love and enjoy literature. It is tempting to compare James Plunkett with the many Irish writers who preceded him - and with his contemporaries - but it is perhaps best to leave him as a unique and powerful link in the chain of Irish artistry.

NOTES

Introduction

1. James Plunkett, The Gems She Wore: A Book of Irish Places, p. 17. All quotations hereafter from the work of James Plunkett are from the following titles, Strumpet City, Farewell Companions, Collected Short Stories and The Gems She Wore, abbreviated thus - Strumpet City, SC; Farewell Companions, FC; Collected Short Stories, CSS; The Gems She Wore, GSW - followed by page references in the body of the text.
2. James M. Cahalan, "James Plunkett", Dictionary of Irish Literature (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), p.558.
3. Ibid., p.559.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p.558.
6. Ibid.

Chapter One: Strumpet City

1. P.O. Cathasaigh [Sean O'Casey], The Story of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Co. Ltd., 1919), p.3.
2. A.E. [George Russell], "Open Letter to the Masters of Dublin," Irish Times (October 7, 1913) rptd in 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out (Dublin: Workers Union of Ireland, 1964), p.57.
3. William Martin Murphy, "My Friends the Workers," an address given on July 19, 1913, rptd. in 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out, p.22.
4. Andrew Boyd, The Rise of Irish Trade Unions 1729-1970 (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1972), p.84.
5. R.J.P. Mortished, "Our Individual Liberty," rptd. in 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out, p.67.
6. Emmet Larkin, James Larkin, Irish Labour Leader, 1876-1947 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp.xii-xviii.
7. Ibid., p.xiii.

8. James Connolly, "A Drawn Battle", Irish Worker (November, 1914), rptd. in 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out, p.115.
9. James M. Cahalan, "The Making of Strumpet City: James Plunkett Historical Vision", Eire - Ireland, xiii (Winter 1978), p.81.
10. Ibid., p.83.
11. Ibid., p.85.
12. Ibid., p.92.
13. Ibid., p.94.
14. Ibid., p.92.
15. Ibid., p.97.
16. Ibid., p.91.
17. W.B. Yeats, "I am of Ireland, " Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp.303-304.
18. Kathleen O'Flaherty, "Catholicism and the Novel: A Comparative View," The Irish Novel in Our Time (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1975), p.80.
19. Ibid., p.81.
20. James Connolly, "A Drawn Battle," p.115.

Chapter Two: Farewell Companions

1. 1916: The Easter Proclamation of the Irish Republic.
2. Cahalan, "James Plunkett," p.559.
3. Emmet Larkin, James Larkin, Irish Labour Leader, 1876-1947, p.237.
4. John A. Murphy, Ireland in the Twentieth Century (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), p.114.

Chapter Three: The Short Stories

1. Frank O'Connor, Modern Irish Short Stories (London: Oxford, University Press, 1959), p.xv.

2. Ibid.
3. James Cahalan, "James Plunkett," p.556.
4. Ibid., p.556.
5. Ibid., p.556.
6. James Joyce, "Araby," Dubliners (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p.33.
7. James Cahalan, "James Plunkett," p.557.
8. Ibid., p.555.

Conclusion

1. W.B. Yeats, "Under Saturn," Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats, p.202.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Plunkett, James. Collected Short Stories. Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1977.
- . Farewell Companions. London: Hutchinson, 1977.
- . The Gems She Wore: A Book of Irish Places. London: Arrow Books, 1978.
- . Strumpet City. London: Arrow Books, 1978.
- . The Trusting and The Maimed. New York: Devin-Adair, 1955.
- . The Trusting and The Maimed. London, Arrow Books, 1970.

Secondary Materials

- Boyd, Andrew. The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions 1729-1970. Tralee: Anvil Books, 1972.
- Brown, Christy. Down All The Days. London: Morrison and Gibb, 1970.
- Cahalan, James M. "The Making of Strumpet City: James Plunkett's Historical Vision." Eire - Ireland, XIII (Winter 1978).
- Cathasaigh, P.O. [Sean O'Casey]. The Story of the Irish Citizen Army. orig. 1919, reprinted. New York: Iriole Chapbooks, n.d.
- Cleeve, Brian. Dictionary of Irish Writers. Cork: Mercier Press, 1967.
- Farrell, Michael. Thy Tears Might Cease. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
- Garrity, Devin A., ed. Irish Stories and Tales. New York: Pocket Library, 1959.
- Greaves, C. Desmond. The Life and Times of James Connolly. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1972.

- Hogan, Robert, ed. Dictionary of Irish Literature. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979.
- Inglis, Brian. The Story of Ireland. London: Faber and Faber, 1956.
- Joyce, James. Dubliners. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Larkin, Emmet. James Larkin Irish Labour Leader 1876-1947. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1965.
- Marcus, David, ed. Modern Irish Love Stories. London: Pan Books, 1974.
- . Tears of The Shamrock. Worcester and London: Trinity Press, 1972.
- Murphy, John A. Ireland in the Twentieth Century. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975.
- 1916: The Easter Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1975.
- 1913: Jim Larkin and the Dublin Lock-Out. Dublin: Workers Union of Ireland, 1964.
- O'Casey, Sean. Autobiographies I. London: Macmillan, 1963.
- O'Connor, Frank, ed. Modern Irish Short Stories. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Power, Richard. The Hungry Grass. London: Pan Books, 1969.
- Rafroidi, Patrick and Maurice Harmon, eds. The Irish Novel in Our Time. Université de Lille III, 1975-76.
- Yeats, W.B. The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats. London: Macmillan, 1967.