

History as a Nightmare (Irish Nationalism during WWI in Ulysses by James Joyce and Observing the Sons of Ulster marching towards Somme by Frank McGuinness)

Dr. Tamar Gelashvili, Prof. Manana Gelashvili
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Abstract

James Joyce in Tom Stoppard's play *Travesties* declared that "As an artist, naturally I attach no importance to the swings and roundabout of political history". By setting *Ulysses* in 1904 he somehow aimed at detaching the novel from the events of the war. In May 1915, when Italy joined the war, Joyce moved with his family from Trieste to Switzerland, but could neither detach himself from Irish Nationalism nor WWI. The fictional character of The Citizen encountered by Leopold Bloom in the Pub (Cyclopes), is used by Joyce to satirize Irish nationalists in general. "The problem of nationalism is discussed in *Observing the Sons of Ulster marching towards Somme* by Frank McGuinness, one of the prominent contemporary Irish playwrights (b.1953). Like Joyce, McGuinness did not experience either the great war or the direct effects of Irish Nationalism. However, the aftermath of all the events indirectly had an impact on creating him as a writer. The present paper explores the treatment of WWI and Irish Nationalism by two Irishmen of different times and from divergent perspectives (*Ulysses* -1922, *Ulster* – 1985). While Joyce tends to be ironic in his accounts of Irish nationalism, McGuinness gives a more personal outlook at the inner thoughts of Ulster Nationalists.

Keywords: Joyce; McGuinness; nationalism; Ireland; WWI