

Gender, Unhomely Home and Irish Nation-Building in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*

韓震緯
台灣大學外文系博士生

Abstract

Exploring the spatial politics of home in post-independence Ireland, the Irish playwright Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) represents the naturalized relationships between women, home and nation in the 1930s, contending how the idealized national womanhood practiced in the domestic sphere of home is always a socio-spatial disempowerment of women. Moreover, the homely, socially appropriate and ideal, home is also in a perpetual process of being transfigured by other socio-spatial dynamics beyond home in addition to Irish nationalism and Catholicism. This play unravels the contested ways in which the social imaginary, materiality, identity and power relations of the Mundy home are constituted and negotiated within and without home. The unhomely condition generated in the Mundy household refers to not only certain socially problematic attributes, which are supposed to be unrelated to an ideal Irish home in the nationalist vision, but also peculiar dread and repulsion elaborated in the works of Sigmund Freud and Homi Bhabha respectively. Constituted by diverse social processes in the context of nation formation, home is never private and enclosed but in fact an open and porous public sphere.

Key words: Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, gender, nation-building, home, the unhomely/uncanny