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Études irlandaises

48-1 | 2023
Nationalisme, culture et conflits en Irlande

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OpenEdition Journals

Electronic version
URL: https://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/15061
DOI: 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.15061
ISSN: 2259-8863

Publisher
Presses universitaires de Caen

Printed version
Date of publication: 25 May 2023
Number of pages: 113-126
ISBN: 978-2-38185-200-3
ISSN: 0183-973X

Brought to you by Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne

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Electronic reference
Sylvie Mikowski, "Francis Stuart's *Black List, Section H* (1971): An Irishman in Berlin, 1939-1945", *Études irlandaises* [Online], 48-1 | 2023, Online since 20 April 2023, connection on 17 May 2023. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/15061 ; DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesirlandaises.15061

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Abstract: This paper summarises the fate of novelist Francis Stuart, who was initially close to the Celtic Revival, married Iseult Gonne and enrolled in the IRA in the Irish Civil War. After he reached some literary fame in the 1930s, in 1939 he was invited to give lectures in Germany and then to record radio programs meant to broadcast Nazi propaganda to neutral Ireland. Stuart related all these personal experiences in *Black List, Section H*, published in 1971. His activities in Germany during World War II were brought to broad daylight again in the 1980s and 1990s, causing fierce controversy in Ireland. This paper examines the reasons which may explain why a whole generation of Irish writers took sides with Stuart at the time, despite the evidence of his past involvement in the service of Nazi Germany, a commitment which transpires in *Black List, Section H*.

Keywords: Francis Stuart, *Black List, Section H*, World War II, antisemitism, Nazi Germany, Aosdána, Colm Tóibín, Fintan O'Toole, Kevin Myers.

Résumé : *Cet article rappelle le destin du romancier Francis Stuart, d'abord proche du mouvement du renouveau celtique et époux de Iseult Gonne, puis engagé dans l'IRA pendant la guerre civile irlandaise de 1923. Ayant atteint la reconnaissance littéraire dans les années 1930, il est invité en 1939 à donner des conférences en Allemagne, puis à participer à la propagande nazie en direction de l'Irlande à travers des enregistrements pour la radio allemande. C'est ce que Stuart raconte bien plus tard dans son roman* Black List, Section H *paru en 1971. Dans les années 1980-1990, le passé allemand de Stuart ressurgit et provoque de vives controverses en Irlande. Cet article examine les raisons qui purent pourtant amener toute une génération d'écrivains irlandais à soutenir Stuart malgré ses engagements passés au service du régime nazi, qui transparaissent à la lecture de* Black List, Section H.

Mots clés : Francis Stuart, Black List, Section H*, Deuxième Guerre mondiale, antisémitisme, Allemagne nazie, Aosdána, Colm Tóibín, Fintan O'Toole, Kevin Myers.*

This text derives from a paper I delivered at a SOFEIR (Société française d'études irlandaises) conference at Sorbonne Nouvelle University in 2007. Maurice Goldring commented on it saying that he liked scholars who took a polemical stance. The topic chosen for that conference: "Going East", had prompted me to investigate the literary and personal reputation of Francis Stuart, with a special focus on his twentieth novel, *Black List, Section H*, published in 1971.[1]

1. Francis Stuart, *Black List, Section H*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1971.

As an Irish studies scholar working on the contemporary Irish novel, I had come across multiple references to and commendations of Stuart, on the part of such writers and intellectuals as Dermot Bolger, Colm Tóibín, Hugo Hamilton, Paul Durcan, Nuala O'Faolain, Fintan O'Toole, etc. Yet I also discovered that Francis Stuart was a very controversial figure in Irish life until his death in 2000 at the age of ninety-seven. A staunch nationalist and an admirer of the traditional Irish Republican Army (IRA), Stuart's reputation was forever tarnished by his decision to remain in Nazi Germany during World War II, recording propaganda broadcasts from Berlin at the bequest of Hitler's government. He and his partner were imprisoned by the Allies after the war on account of this act of collaboration. It is that period of his life and the consequences of that commitment that Stuart retraces in *Black List, Section H*, a kind of fictionalised autobiography which attempted to explain Stuart's state of mind before, during and immediately after the war.

This dubious past is hard to reconcile with the admiration given to Stuart by certain writers who raised him to the level of a sort of cult hero, especially as they were the same artists and writers who, from the late 1970s onwards, had been most prominent in expressing dire criticism of post-independence Ireland, denouncing through their writings the contradictions of the dominant nationalist discourse and the failure of successive governments to meet the citizens' expectations, ranging from economic opportunities to social equality and justice, freedom of conscience, and cultural diversity. From an outsider's position, the commitment of those writers to greater moral, sexual and intellectual freedom, to social and gender justice and equality in contemporary Ireland, seems in contradiction with Stuart's evident leanings for the authoritarian, overtly antisemitic, racist, homophobic type of regime which he seemingly admired in Nazi Germany. The only likely explanation for the devotion that Stuart enjoyed among this class of intellectuals in Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s is his claimed anti-conformism, which must have sounded attractive to those who felt constrained by the then-conservative atmosphere prevailing in Ireland, which stemmed from the alliance of the ruling nationalists with the Catholic Church. However, a close examination of the incidents in Stuart's life, followed by the controversies that surrounded the later part of it, and then of some of their fictional representation or rendering in *Black List, Section H*, casts light on the deep, unsettling paradoxes underlying the reception Stuart enjoyed in the later stage of his existence back in Ireland, in the view of the reprehensible ideology Stuart seemed to share, which is partly reflected in *Black List, Section H.*

Francis Stuart was born in 1902 in Australia, the son of Ulster-Scots parents. After his father's death by suicide, his mother returned to Ireland. Stuart was educated in England, attending public schools, including two years at Rugby School, after which he went back to Dublin; there, he was soon introduced to some of the most illustrious members of the Celtic Revival, such as A.E. Russell and Maud Gonne, William Butler Yeats's long-time muse. At the age of eighteen, Stuart married Iseult Gonne, the daughter Maud Gonne had conceived with her French lover, the right-wing antisemitic journalist Lucien Millevoye. During the same period, Stuart

became involved in the Irish Civil War on the Republican side and was interned in 1923. In 1939, after his reputation as a writer had grown, especially after the release of *Pigeon Irish* and *The Coloured Dome*, both published in 1932, he abandoned his wife Iseult and their two children, to answer an invitation to go to Germany for lecturing purposes. He went there again in 1940 and was employed to broadcast in English to Irish audiences from the studios of the Irland-Redaktion, broadcasting German propaganda in favour of continuing Irish neutrality. He also began to write radio scripts for William Joyce, "Lord Haw-Haw", who broadcast English-language propaganda for the Nazis. As a consequence of this collaborationist involvement, Stuart was arrested after the war by the French, along with his companion Gertrud Meissner, later re-named Madeleine, who became his second wife after the death of Iseult Gonne. Stuart married for a third time after Madeleine died in 1986 – his last wife was Finola Graham. After being released from prison, Stuart and Gertrud lived in England for a while before settling back in Ireland in 1958. Even though Stuart faced some difficulties getting it published, *Black List, Section H* (1971) was critically acclaimed, and was followed by other publications, among which *A Hole in the Head* (1977) is probably the most often mentioned. Despite the fact that for several decades Stuart enjoyed a favourable critical reception of his literary production, in the 1980s and 1990s his dubious past started to re-emerge, causing much controversy.

Stuart's involvement in World War II on the side of Nazi Germany was first examined by Robert Fisk in a book entitled *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45* published in 1983, which examined the transcripts of Stuart's broadcasts and reproduced the content of a long interview with the writer, casting light on his ambiguities.[2] Stuart's past was exposed to a wider public in the broadcast of a television documentary on Channel 4 and RTÉ in October 1987, called *Two Lives: A Portrait of Francis Stuart*, directed by Carlo Gébler, which recorded the main episodes of Stuart's life and especially his years spent in Berlin during World War II. In the course of the film, Stuart was quoted as saying that "the Jew was always the worm that got into the rose and sickened it". As Andreas Roth reports it,

> […] it triggered off a long-running controversy in the letters pages of *The Irish Times*. Some prominent intellectuals rushed to Stuart's defence, arguing, for example, that the worm metaphor was indeed a positive one, representing the "hidden, unheroic and critical".[3]

In 1999 Stuart won a libel action against *The Irish Times* and the journalist Kevin Myers over an article which argued that Stuart was antisemitic, and as Roth points it out, several highly regarded writers and journalists took side with Stuart. Anthony Cronin for instance wrote against Stuart's accusers:

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2. Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45*, London, A. Deutsch, 1983.
3. Andreas Roth, "Francis Stuart's Broadcasts from Germany, 1942-4: Some New Evidence", *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 127, May 2001, p. 408.

> They based their claims on the Channel 4 programme, which set out to substantiate the charge but could only come up with one half-sentence which does not exist in Stuart's work, and on the fact that he was in Germany during the war and made broadcasts from there[4]

proceeding to explain Stuart's presence in Germany by his desire to escape from his marriage, arguing that Stuart never expressed any antisemitic opinion in any of the broadcasts from Germany. But Stuart's problematic past was placed under the limelight most evidently on the occasion of his being proposed for a nomination as a Saoi in Aosdána in 1996, along such prestigious Irish writers as Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney. This prompted a fierce debate among members of Aosdána and in the larger public, about the legitimacy of attributing such a national honour to Stuart; among the most vocal opponents of the title were journalist Kevin Myers and Conor Cruise O'Brien's wife, the poet Máire Mhac an tSaoi, also a member of Aosdána. She put in place a motion to remove him from the institution. But again, a number of writers and intellectuals came to his rescue. Hugo Hamilton, the son of a German mother and an Irish father, identified with Stuart's position and felt that he understood his stance:

> As intellectual anarchist or a writer-as-rogue, positioning himself at a distance from society and from the righteous ideological clamour, Stuart examines the intensity of human relationships during his time. […] His achievement is to place himself and his characters in a world of desire and longing, an emotional chaos that reflects the upheaval and mindlessness of this century. His writing emerges from that chaos of Europe with a unique clarity and truth that I found remarkable when I first read it […].[5]

Nuala O'Faolain, for her part, asked whether other people would not have also agreed to do the broadcasts had they been placed in the same position as Stuart; Fintan O'Toole was perhaps one of Stuart's most circuitous, even devious advocates when he argued:

> Stuart was undeniably a Nazi collaborator. And he did, in his broadcasts to Ireland from Hitler's Germany, use coded antisemitic phrases. […] None of that was, is, or ever will be excusable. […] But Stuart was, in the overall scheme of things, a very minor figure[6]

suggesting that the wrongfulness of collaborationism was a matter of degree and not a crime by essence.

The task of rehabilitating Stuart and presenting him as a romantic non-conformist who was only trying to escape from the dullness of a bourgeois lifestyle had begun as early as 1972 when William J. McCormack edited *A Festschrift for*

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4. Anthony Cronin, "Healing the Wounds of Francis Stuart", *The Independent*, 27 June 1999, online: https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/healing-the-wounds-of-francis-stuart-26259885.html.
5. Hugo Hamilton, "Understanding Francis Stuart", *Writing Ulster*, no. 4, 1996, *Francis Stuart: Special Issue*, p. 71.
6. Fintan O'Toole, "Stuart Has Confronted Outcome of His Actions", *The Irish Times*, 5 December 1997.

Francis Stuart on His Seventieth Birthday, published by Dolmen Press.[7] As Colm Tóibín underlines, McCormack wrote that

> Despite the outbreak of war, Stuart decided that he should be where Europe was then focused, that somebody should bear witness. In addition, he felt that in wartime Germany he would at last be cut off from conventional demands on his feelings and that in isolation he might begin to find himself.[8]

The same portrayal of Stuart as an instinctual dissident was painted by Maurice Harmon, professor of Anglo-Irish literature at University College Dublin, in an article entitled "The Achievement of Francis Stuart", in which he discussed the persona Stuart constructed for himself in *Black List, Section H*, arguing that:

> He is instinctively against authority and has a preference for poets who have suffered calumny and derision, for people who have been despised and threatened. His radical, nihilistic philosophy is contemptuous of established orders and values.[9]

Like McCormack, Harmon presented Stuart's commitments as the act of an apolitical romantic rebel at war with all social norms and conventions. The word "calumny" implies that all accusations of collaborationism levelled at Stuart were deliberately harmful inventions. Besides McCormack and Hamon, a biography written by Geoffrey Elborn in 1990 and published by the Raven Arts Press also helped enhance Stuart's role on the Irish literary stage.[10] The Raven Arts Press created by Dermot Bolger published eleven of Stuart's books in support of the writer's career. Stuart's pre-war novels had been published by Jewish, leftist Victor Gollancz, a fact that Stuart's supporters often upheld to prove his absence of any antisemitic feelings.[11] Raven Arts also published many early works by poet Paul Durcan, who was so admiring of Stuart that he dedicated his book-long poem, *Ark of the North*, to the older writer, depicting Stuart as the figure of the arch-rebel. As Kathleen McCracken argues in an article discussing the relationship between Durcan and Stuart:

> Underpinning this alliance is the common conviction that the writer must challenge the oppressive orthodoxies of church, state, gender and class in favour of all that is

7. *A Festschrift for Francis Stuart on His Seventieth Birthday*, William J. McCormack (ed.), Dublin, Dolmen Press, 1972.
8. Colm Tóibín, "Issues of Truth and Invention", *London Review of Books*, vol. 23, no. 1, January 2001, online: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v23/n01/colm-toibin/issues-of-truth-and-invention.
9. Maurice Harmon, "The Achievement of Francis Stuart", *Writing Ulster*, no. 4, 1996, p. 29.
10. Geoffrey Elborn, *Francis Stuart: A Life*, Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1990.
11. "Mention of Stuart and Victor Gollancz requires emphasis since Victor Gollancz was Jewish and ceased to be his publisher on literary and artistic grounds because he disliked one of his earlier novels *Glory* (1933). Yet it was Gollancz who rescued his career after the war and published his trilogy *Redemption*, *Pillar of Cloud*, and *The Flowering Cross*" (Kevin Kiely, "The Francis Stuart Affair", *The Independent*, 17 October 1999, online: https://www.independent.ie/opinion/letters/the-francis-stuart-affair-26261341.html).

> ordinary, sensual, vulnerable, human, that as a social visionary it is his duty to attack conformity and materialism, to be original, non-establishment, dissident.[12]

Colm Tóibín, who wrote the introduction to the 1995 Penguin edition of *Black List, Section H*, made an effort in 2001 to assess the older man with objectivity and clarity, in view of fresher evidence about Stuart's past; in an article published in the *London Review of Books*, he tried to account for the attraction his generation felt towards the older Stuart:

> He made himself available to younger writers and journalists and was kind and oddly wise and encouraging. […] For me and many others who visited the Stuarts in these years, there was a special aura around both of them, Madeleine as much as Francis.[13]

As is made obvious here, the writers and intellectuals who signified their admiration for Stuart throughout the 1990s belonged to that generation which contested and sought to revise and reframe the nationalist narrative underpinning post-independence Ireland, sustained by an alliance between church and state with a view to concealing the economic, social and moral failures of the new republic. These include Dermot Bolger, who spoke of the "children of limbo" in his dystopian evocation of contemporary Dublin in *The Journey Home* (1990);[14] Colm Tóibín, who also explored the traps of Irish nationalism in *The Heather Blazing* (1992); Nuala O'Faolain, who described the plight of Irish women in her autobiography *Are You Somebody?* (1996). Their work was aimed at exposing the contradictions and flaws of a state born out of a fight for freedom, but based on the containment and control of its citizens, especially through the control of their sexualities – of which women were the first victims. Yet these bearers of a radical criticism of what they perceived to be the oppressive regime of nationalist Ireland offered support to a man who had first sided with the radical branch of republicanism during the Civil War, and went on later to become involved with one of the worst dictatorships the Western world had produced in modern times, allegedly to defend the prospect of obtaining the reunification of the island of Ireland.

The publication by Brendan Barrington in 2000 of *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart, 1942-1944*, preceded by a most illuminating introduction, cast new light on Stuart's background. As a result, it became difficult to ignore or by-pass Stuart's political stance and the exact degree of his collaboration with the German authorities during his years in Berlin. Seen from a country like France which, ever since the end of the war has been engaged in a continuing re-examination of some of its writers and intellectuals' attitudes during World War II, "the enormous personal affection the elderly Stuart inspired"[15] among Irish writers and critics, to

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12. Kathleen McCracken, "'Talking to One of the Old Masters': Paul Durcan's Response to Francis Stuart in *Ark of the North*", *Writing Ulster*, no. 4, 1996, p. 96.
13. Colm Tóibín, "Issues of Truth and Invention".
14. Dermot Bolger, *The Journey Home* (1990), London, Penguin, 1991, p. 7.
15. *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart, 1942-1944*, Brendan Barrington (ed.), Dublin, Lilliput Press, 2000, p. 53.

quote Barrington, is more than intriguing, if only because *Black List*, *Section H*, published in 1971, is on several levels a most disturbing novel.

The first ambiguity regarding *Black List* is to decide whether it is a work of fiction or an autobiography. Kathryn Riley calls it "a blending of autobiography and fiction";[16] Francis C. Molloy calls it his "most autobiographical novel",[17] while Richard T. Murphy, in a very convincing essay, speaks of "the canonical *Bildungsroman* form that this autobiographical novel assumes".[18] Stuart, who "in blurring the distinction between art and life, [was] continually disturbing the reader's expectation", according to critic Anne McCartney,[19] composed his first autobiography, *Things to Live For*, as early as 1934, a fact which highlights the writer's tendency to expose himself, or stage himself, in his writings.

Black List is also a third-person narrative featuring a protagonist sometimes called Luke Ruark, sometimes Harry, sometimes just H, whereas all the people who played a major role in Stuart's life, such as Iseult Gonne, her mother Maud Gonne, their friend William Butler Yeats, and Stuart's friend Liam O'Flaherty, appear under their real names, with the notable exception of Gertrud / Madeleine who features as Halka. One might wish to regard this play on identity as a form of distance the older Stuart writing in 1971 was willing to establish with his younger self, while referring to a past so obviously objectionable to most readers' eyes. But distance is precisely what creates so much confusion and unease when reading the book, for the narrator or author relating the facts years later markedly abstains from offering any judgment, or from justifying the young protagonist's dubious choices of fighting against the Irish Free State in 1922 and working for German radio in 1939. Neither do we find any implicit condemnation of H's abandoning his wife and children, or leaving Iseult to cope alone with the tragic death of an infant daughter, all facts taken from Stuart's real life. *Black List* is thus openly unapologetic, and not meant to obtain redemption for its author: on the contrary, it forcefully expands on the implicit claim of its title, begging for condemnation, seeking our reprobation as the ultimate proof of the irreconcilable nature of the link between authentic art and morality.

Part of the trouble with the book is that it mixes and confuses the amorality of art with the effective, real-life involvements of the artist, trying to make political choices pass off as the demands of the artistic vocation. According to a narrator who never places himself at any ironic distance from the character, everything that H does is dictated by his need to situate himself above and beyond the common realm of ordinary mankind ruled by the consensual, and to his eyes

16. Kathryn Riley, "Autobiography and Fiction: Francis Stuart's *Black List, Section H*", *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1984, p. 115.
17. Francis C. Molloy, "A Life Reshaped: Francis Stuart's *Black List, Section H*", *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, January 1989, p. 37.
18. Richard T. Murphy, "A Minority of One: Francis Stuart's *Black List, Section H* and the End of the Irish *Bildungsroman*", *Irish University Review*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2004, p. 261.
19. Anne McCartney, *Francis Stuart, Face-to-Face: A Critical Study*, Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, 2000, p. 132.

despicable, duality between right and wrong. The narrator's voice mingles with the protagonist's thoughts in the most indistinguishable manner. As a result, what is generally regarded as right to ordinary people necessarily becomes only righteous as far as artists are concerned and what is held as wrong by a majority, becomes for him a force for attraction. In this regard, it matters little what ideology the artist embraces as long as it will take him away from and beyond the confines of received opinions. To the true artist, the world, whatever its actual state, is in constant need of an apocalypse, and whoever may appear to be the next Messiah and seems capable of bringing about chaos is welcomed by the poet his prophet. H's life-story narrates how he discovers at a very early age the biological and psychological signs – stigmata – of his pre-destination as an angel of apocalypse. Writing a letter to a newspaper in support of the independence of the country, although he belongs to a Northern unionist family, H reflects that "what was behind it was an instinct, far from conscious, to cut himself off from the world of his cousins once for all".[20] H is said to remain generally insensitive to the actual events going on around him but to be at all times deeply in touch with what the narrator almost obsessively alludes to as his "psyche". The author's emphasis on "perceptions", "impressions", "sensations", "omens", "instincts", and self-absorption in general, is meant to deflect the role of the intellect in H's development, suggesting that the true artist places himself beyond the demands of rationality and can thus ignore the issue of free choice and moral conscience, abandoning himself to the overbearing power of the "instinct" and of the "psyche". There are repeated references to H's "sleepy lassitude",[21] his "slow-wittedness",[22] his "life of omissions and non-participations".[23] Whatever he does can therefore be assigned not to a mistaken or wrong judgment, but to an inborn drive to be governed by instincts. These are bound to lead H to engage in actions which the rest of humanity will judge as criminal. Typical of this attitude of alleged passivity and submission to a preordained destiny is the way the narrator describes how H is led to marry Iseult Gonne out of a compulsion to yield to the pressure of social conformism. Thus, on the wedding day H says:

> [the ceremony] seemed put on for the sake of the relatives who would now recognize the relationship, whether they privately approved or not, as legitimized and one of those things which were to be accepted because established by custom and common consent.[24]

H's callous behaviour towards his wife, his insensitivity at the death of their infant daughter, the way he squanders the little money the family has on cars and horses; his departure first to Paris, London and then Berlin (in complete refutation

20. Francis Stuart, *Black List, Section H* [1971], London, Penguin Books, 1996, p. 4; I quote this edition.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

of his marital and paternal duties) are then naturally justified by the necessity of placing himself, as an artist, outside "common consent". Likewise, H's enrolment in the IRA, and his participation in a murderous attack on a convoy of Free Staters are said to proceed not from any deliberate, well thought-out political position, but from an instinct to take part in a venture promising to create havoc: "The civil war created doubt and confusion, and thus a climate in which the poet could breathe more easily".[25] As for the ominous decision to settle in Berlin, the plan first seems to arise by mere chance:

> Meanwhile a caller had come to Dineen, introduced himself as Herr Scheffer, and invited H to go to Germany to give readings from his novels under the auspices of a body called Die Deutsche Akademie.[26]

H's supposed indifference and passivity to the realities around him are offered as excuses used by Stuart to elude a clear explanation why a Third-Reich official should suddenly show such interest for a semi-obscure Irish writer whose reputation had not yet crossed the borders, contrary to other Irish writers like George Bernard Shaw, Yeats, or James Joyce. Any suggestion that a sympathy for the ideology of the Reich might underlie H's decision to move to Germany is carefully undercut by other seemingly more urging causes, such as H's growing estrangement from Iseult, the repeated defeats of his horse on the racing-tracks, and of course the lure of self-banishment:

> […] the only side to take was always the one considered most unpardonable by the circle in which he found himself, in this case that of most intellectuals with a sprinkling of enlightened politicians.[27]

The alleged reason for accepting the Nazi officials' invitation to work in Berlin is that of seeking the condemnation it was bound to entail, and becoming an outcast, an experience clearly depicted as a religious one. This view is reinforced by H's intense reading of the mystics, his attempts at making spiritual retreats, or when H explains to a monk that what he needs is a Christ "who bears not only the signs of the stigmata but of the most terrible traumata as well […]. I shall always need the possibility of the companionship of such a spirit".[28] In other words, H, as a poet, is a new Christ, the protagonist of a Second Coming. Those who dare to lash out at him are the new Pharisees, the new Pilate, as we are made to understand that the letter H may well stand for Hero, or for Homo as in *Ecce Homo*. The use of the third person and of the initial for the protagonist's name points to the intention of transforming the actual facts of Stuart's life into an allegory of the artist's spiritual journey, undertaken for the sake of the authenticity and sanctity of art.

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

However, this narrative construction is pernicious. By mixing the real facts of his life with the actual people he was involved with, and with the story of a fictional character called H, Stuart tries to make us believe that everything he did was done for art's sake; whereas what he actually does is to use art as an excuse to account for the facts of his life. The blending of autobiography and fiction in this case does not engender the rich ambiguity that is characteristic of all great literary works, which always challenge clear-cut polarities, but instead makes for a deep sense of duplicity. That is why O'Toole's proposition that "Stuart does not try to hide his face behind a Yeatsian mask"[29] is highly questionable, for we can argue that the wearing of a mask is precisely what *Black List* is about.

What is more, Stuart's mask of "non-participation" and "neutrality" shows many cracks and holes through which some disturbing political ideas are exposed, despite what his admirers have argued over the years. For instance, the actual reason for H's irrepressible attraction to the cities of Munich or Vienna in the 1930s – the setting of Hitler's political ascension, and of the Nazis' numerous acts of violence against the Jewish population, among which the infamous *Kristallnacht* – is never made quite clear. Prague on the other hand he dislikes as soon as he arrives there and sees "the miniature French flags and Stars and Stripes in the shop windows",[30] as if any sign of the Allies was repellent to him. In Vienna, H meets a man he describes as "a baldish middle-aged Englishman, or rather, Jew, for H soon saw that there was that further dimension to him that he'd discovered in the couple of members of that ethnic group […] he'd encountered".[31] The off-hand manner the author switches from the character's nationality to his religion, the insinuation that for Jews religion comes before nationality, making them all potential traitors, this tagging of Jews as an "ethnic group", are all in keeping with the sly antisemitism which in the novel accompanies every other allusion to the same character. Thus, Mr. Isaacs knows where to change pound notes to the best advantage, trades in diamonds on the black market, is described as "sensual" and having "shrewd eyes", a description which embraces the worst antisemitic stereotypes which were so common in 1930s Europe. H's idea of Jews, as expressed in the novel, is a striking anticipation of the statement Stuart pronounced decades later in the TV documentary and for which *The Irish Times* accused him of anti-semitism: "if there was a Jewish idea, which was surely a contradiction, it was a hidden, unheroic, and critical one, a worm that could get into a lot of fine-looking fruit".[32] The ambiguity of the sentence is symptomatic of Stuart's deviousness: why call Jewishness "an idea" if not to disparage it? Such a devout Christian as Stuart, who verged on mysticism in some of his writings, would certainly not regard his own faith as "an idea". What's more, calling this "Jewish idea" "unheroic" and "critical", or to call it "a worm [eating the] fine-looking fruit" is perhaps meant

29. Quoted by Anne McCartney, *Francis Stuart, Face-to-Face*…, p. 104.
30. Francis Stuart, *Black List*…, p. 57.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

to be admiring, but the terms are also derogatory and spiteful, insinuating in accordance with the most vicious antisemitic propaganda that Jews, always at odds with the society they live in, strive to occupy all kinds of high profile positions in order the better to destroy it.

Stuart only rarely directly addresses the issue of H's collaboration with the Nazis. On one occasion, as H catches sight of some Jewish businesses being "broken and barricaded" he wonders if his presence in Berlin might be considered a betrayal of his Jewish friends, among them Gollancz, Stuart's long-standing publisher, as hinted at before. The following sentence is again typical of Stuart's circuitous way of writing, which while pretending to be reluctant to justify H's choices, nevertheless conveys the most ambiguous feelings:

> The message that reached his conscience from his deepest nature, from what he felt were the genes on which his being was constructed, suggested that he had to experience, in his own probably small degree, some of what they suffered, and, on one level, even more, because he could not claim their innocence […]. He also realized that he would go to certain lengths in association with their persecutors, in violent reaction against the mores of home, thus ensuring that his condemnation would not, unlike theirs, arouse any sympathy.[33]

By drawing a comparison between H's peculiar form of masochism and the persecution of the Jews, Stuart belittles, if not completely denies, the scale of Shoah. H's egotistic existential qualms are equated with the systematic destruction of six million people all over Europe, the disappearance of whole communities and their language and culture. The comparison also slyly implies that, like H, the Jews brought their misfortune on themselves. What is more, the attempt to justify any degree of collaboration with one of the most heinous episodes of modern Western history by the mere desire to "react against the mores of home" – which from what we gather from the first part of H's story amounts to a stifling moral conformism, and a repressive atmosphere of sexual prudishness – is intellectually and morally outrageous. Finally, the alleged "sympathy" which the suffering of the Jews is bound to arouse in public opinion according to Stuart hints at another antisemitic cliché according to which Jews always treacherously seek to pass off as victims. Besides, Stuart devotes the last section of the book to the description of H's and Halka's sufferings during their flight from Berlin and their final imprisonment, suggesting that they were the real victims of the conflict, and not the millions of men, women and children who died in concentration camps or on the battlefield at Stalingrad.

As to H's attitude towards the war waged by the Nazis in general, his claimed neutrality and apolitical standpoint show many a fault. His broadcasts for the German radio are presented for example as nothing more than a response to what the narrator calls the Allies' "propaganda": "As for the talks, it wasn't difficult to

33. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

discredit the propaganda of the various combatants".[34] The war is presented as an ordinary conflict between two enemies using the same weapons and having the same goals, thus justifying H's lack of concern whether one side should win over the other, one being just as bad as the other. Not only does Stuart thus deny the singularity of the conflict, but again this is double-dealing as he does in fact make a difference between the two sides when he speaks for instance of the Allies' atrocities, a word he never uses to evoke Hitler's crimes: "He could condemn such Allied atrocities as he'd heard of – the indiscriminate bombing was only just beginning – but that would involve him in the same deception as the propagandists who presented the war as a moral conflict".[35] At one stage, the narrator comes close to confessing H's admiration for Hitler:

> When he recalled some of his semi-serious fantasies at the time of his first coming to Berlin, in one of which he'd tried to persuade Hitler to use his unique power to bring about a real revolution, he couldn't be certain he hadn't been infected by the plague, however unusual his symptoms.[36]

Of course fascism is called a plague but Hitler is simultaneously acknowledged as possessing a "unique" power, and the call for a "real revolution" echoes the typical fascist hatred of the established order and their yearning for a new world based on tyranny and dictatorship.

The truth about Stuart, as revealed by the transcripts of his broadcasts published by Barrington, is that he was a staunch Irish nationalist who, like people inside the IRA, believed that the Germans could help them bring about a united Ireland, and therefore hoped for a Nazi victory against their great enemies which were Britain and the United States.

Stuart's antisemitism is evident in this 16-page IRA pamphlet Barrington discovered, written in March 1924 and called *Lecture on Nationality and Culture*, in which Stuart wrote that "At that time Vienna was full of Jews, who controlled the banks and factories and even a large part of the government; the Austrians themselves seemed about to be driven out of their own city".[37] This was the man who was acclaimed as the most rebellious, most heroic, most nonconformist Irish poet by a generation of artists who were generally themselves at war with the old pieties of Irish nationalism. For his part, Barrington explains this puzzling enthusiasm by a confusion between the real facts of Stuart's life and the mask he fabricated for himself as H in *Black List*. But one must be blind not to see the grimacing face lurking behind the mask of the "*artiste maudit*" Stuart moulded for himself.

The younger writers' attraction for such a persona as H could also lie in Irish people's slight interest in World War II and in the Holocaust, due to the country's

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34. Francis Stuart, *Black List*…, p. 299.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 354.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
37. Quoted in *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart, 1942-1944*, p. 7.

neutrality in the conflict and the complex reality underlying it, not to mention the relatively small number of Jews in Ireland. The fact that the IRA wanted a German victory, that in 1935, Dáil Éireann responded to the rise of Hitler by passing the Aliens Act, designed to keep Jews out of Ireland, or that Éamon de Valera was one of the first heads of state to send his condolences on the death of Hitler are some of the complex issues which surround the history of World War II seen from Ireland. As O'Toole reminds us in the same article where he defends Stuart:

> If we want to talk about Irish guilt regarding Nazism and the Holocaust, there are more obvious places to begin. […] The difference between Francis Stuart and all of these other collaborators is that he, at least, engaged with the consequences of his actions. Other writers who had been drawn to right-wing totalitarianism and then became disillusioned with it – W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot, for example – took refuge in an artistic flight from reality.[38]

The condoning of Stuart's conduct during the war years by Bolger, Tóibín, O'Toole and Durcan may also be accounted for by their focalisation on the nationalist versus revisionist debate which raged all through the 1990s, leading them to admire anyone who seemed to stand outside "common consent" as Stuart phrased it. Stuart's case, as he implied it himself, raises the issue of the morality of art and of the artist, and is in this instance comparable to the case of Louis-Ferdinand Céline in France – with the reservation that Stuart's accomplishments as a writer do not compete with Céline's. As recently as 2018, the *Figaro* journalist Pierre-André Taguieff accused Céline's admirers of sheer complacency and moral blindness, in words which strangely echo Kevin Myers' lament that "What's even more disturbing is to think about all those who defended this Jew hater [meaning Stuart] and how they exalted him for so long in Ireland":[39]

> The pious, unconditional admiration for Céline's "literary genius", accompanied by a stream of legends fabricated by the "great writer" himself, has long been part and parcel of political correctness. […] The[ir] worship of the alleged "visionary" went along with compassion for the "victim" he was supposed to have been. It is the heart of the legend of Céline, that of a hero and martyr for the sake of Literature who was wrongfully accused, and even persecuted.[40]

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38. Fintan O'Toole, "Stuart Has Confronted Outcome of His Actions".
39. As reported in Henry McDonald, "Novelist's Antisemitic Past Exposed", *The Guardian*, 7 January 2001, online: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/jan/07/books.booksnews.
40. "*L'admiration pieuse et inconditionnelle pour le 'génie littéraire' nommé Céline, avec son cortège de légendes fabriquées par le 'grand écrivain' lui-même, a longtemps fait partie du culturellement correct.* […] *La vénération pour le supposé 'visionnaire' se colorait de compassion pour la prétendue 'victime' qu'il aurait été. C'est là le cœur de la légende célinienne, celle d'un héros et d'un martyr de 'La Littérature', injustement accusé, voire persécuté*" (Pierre-André Taguieff, "Céline a été un collaborateur enthousiaste de l'Allemagne nazie", *Le Figaro*, 14 December 2018, online: https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2018/12/14/31001-20181214ARTFIG00352-pierre-andre-taguieff-celine-a-ete-un-collaborateur-enthousiaste-de-l-allemagne-nazie.php; translation mine).

Fortunately, in Ireland the Stuart controversy seems a thing of the past, and Irish writers and academics are today much more sensitive to the destinies of non-Irish, non-Catholic, non-White minorities, including Jews, about whom some novels and books have been published in the last decades, such as Dermot Keogh's *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust*[41] or Ruth Gilligan's novel *Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan*.[42]

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41. Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust*, Cork, Cork University Press, 1998.
42. Ruth Gilligan, *Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan*, London, Atlantic Books, 2016.