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## AUTHORIAL VOICE(S): THE WRITING STYLES OF FRANCIS X. CARTY

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The paper aims to analyse the published work of Ireland’s pre-eminent PR educator, across a number of literary genres in which he has written. More broadly, it considers the writing life of academics.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper examines Carty’s writings about his own history, Irish history, the development of church-state relations in Ireland, and public relations. It seeks to make connections between Carty’s subjects and his writing styles.

**Findings** – Through detailed analysis of a number of key texts, the paper explores the writing styles used by Carty, to discern the nature of his distinctive ‘voice(s)’.

**Research limitations/implications** – There is considerable research into a handful of (mostly American) ‘great men’ in public relations’ history and development. But every nation has its own PR pioneers about whom little is known outside that country, and who deserve to be more widely recognised.

**Originality/value** – This paper hopes to stimulate future work by other colleagues in other nations reflecting on the contribution of their own public relations educators and practitioners.

**Keywords** Francis X. Carty, Public relations, Ireland, PR textbooks, Issue management, Relationship management, Academic writing

**Paper type** Viewpoint

### Introduction

We know a great deal about a handful of (mostly American) ‘great men’ in the history and development of public relations (PR). It is understandable that scholars interested in PR historiography would begin by looking at those who were early innovators and who certainly left their imprint on the industry (and often left behind their own writings or archived material about their accomplishments). So, in the United States a great deal of attention has been paid to men such as Ivy Ledbetter Lee (Hiebert, 1966), Edward Bernays (Tye, 1998), Arthur Page (Griese, 2001), while useful studies exist of notable UK practitioners such as Stephen Tallents (Anthony, 2013) and Basil Clarke (Evans, 2013). In additional scores of conference papers and journal articles examine particular aspects of the work of these men, and we get further insight into their careers in more general histories of PR (Cutlip, 1994; Ewen, 1996; L’Etang, 2004). This biographical approach in public relations can be fairly criticised for largely overlooking women (Lamme, 2015) or for unduly focusing on individuals rather than institutional or structural power (L’Etang, 2013). And yet it is one strand of research which can contribute to our overall knowledge about the industry. In this article, I urge scholars not to abandon the biographical approach, but to

broaden it out beyond those figures who have now been extensively researched. Every nation has its own PR pioneers who should be more widely recognised.

The pre-eminent PR educator in the Republic of Ireland is Francis Xavier Carty. Francis Carty's greatest contribution to public relations lies in the careers of the students he taught over 25 years; he is "one of the great pioneers in education in public relations in Ireland" (Deegan, 2001, p. viii). They, above all, appreciate the full extent of his commitment to genuine communication in our society. However, another facet of his role is also important and more amenable to analysis: his published work. On the printed page F.X. Carty speaks to untold numbers of PR practitioners, students, scholars and citizens. (I use the convenient abbreviation 'PR', but acknowledge Carty's (1995a, p. xii) view: "I am not one who wants to get rid of the term 'public relations' because it has become 'user-unfriendly'.... I abhor the nickname 'PR' which is so commonly used".)

Carty's first appearance in print was a letter to *The Lion*, a popular boys' magazine, in 1955, for which he won a prize of five shillings:

Hobbies occupy a lot of time with most boys, and this week's news is about some of them. FRANCIS CARTY, a member from Dublin, writes: "I spend a lot of my spare time writing biographies. I started off by writing about cricketers, but now musical composers have taken their place. My mother, anxious that I should learn something about the lives of great men of music, offered to give me sixpence for each completed biography of a composer. Instead of collecting my money after each story, I am waiting until fifty of them have been prepared." It sounds as though you may blossom forth into an author when you grow up, Francis, with an eye to the cash value of your work, too (Anon, 1955).

While *The Lion's* editor noted the somewhat mercenary nature of Carty's endeavours, it is the prolific output of the 13-year-old which is most uncommon.

Brown (2005, p. 2) reminds us that academics "write for a living. They publish or perish. They put words on the page, occasionally in the right order.... their professional standing is predicated on the written word". Some PR scholars build a formidable reputation on their research articles, while others produce textbooks so successfully as to constitute a cottage industry. No PR academic, however, has experimented with such a variety of writing genres as Francis X. Carty: his work ranges over the scholarly, textbooks, autobiography and historical narrative. Indeed, he has also drafted an unpublished historical novel, and did publish a fictional short story in the July 1968 issue of the UK dog-lovers' *Tail-Wagger and Family Magazine* (contrarily, his story was about a cat not a dog).

This essay cannot cover all Carty's published work: aside from his journalistic output, he wrote nine religious pamphlets from 1968 to 1972 (most of them published by the Catholic press, Veritas), and two booklets on media coverage of the 1981 and 1982 Irish general elections (Carty, 1981, 1983). Instead, we consider here what might be regarded as his most substantial works:

- *In Bloody Protest: The Tragedy of Patrick Pearse* – a radical evaluation of one of Irish nationalism's iconic figures;
- *Why I Said No to God* – a startlingly frank account of Carty's years preparing for the Catholic priesthood;
- *Farewell to Hype: The Emergence of Real Public Relations* – Carty's manifesto for PR as a senior management function;
- *From John Paul to Saint Jack: Public Relations in Ireland* – case studies written by his students and edited by Carty, illustrating a wide range of Irish PR campaigns;
- *Hold Firm: John Charles McQuaid and The Second Vatican Council* – an unusually balanced assessment of the legacy of Ireland's most controversial cleric;
- *The Impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Archdiocese of Dublin: Issue and Relationship Management in Turbulent Times* – essentially Carty's PhD thesis, which examines McQuaid explicitly through the prism of PR theories; and
- *Bruises, Baws and Bastards: Glimpses into a Long Life Passing* – a collection of 46 vignettes from his personal and professional history.

This article analyses the extent to which Carty's publications conform to writing genre orthodoxies; considers his varied approaches to writing; identifies how Carty is present in his texts; and contextualises his contributions to our understanding of Irish society and public relations.

### **Historical narrative**

More than a simple biography of the life of its subject, the wider scope of Francis Carty's first book is evident from its subtitle. *In Bloody Protest: The Tragedy of Patrick Pearse*, is an assured historical narrative (see White, 1984). Wertsch (1997, p. 11) suggests that narrative: "has a central subject; an identifiable narrative voice; it makes connections between events; it achieves closure, a conclusion, a resolution". Stone (1979, p. 3) defines narrative as, "the organization of material

in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story.... its central focus is on man not circumstances”. The purpose of historical narrative is not to tell a story about the past, but rather by doing so to shed light upon wider society and culture. This act of interpretation, of drawing out the story’s meaning, underpins Carty’s provocative perspective on the life of a national icon who led an armed rebellion against British rule.

Eschewing the conventions of chronological biography, Carty (1978, p. 14) structures his book thematically around four paths which led to Pearse’s execution: Home (“his republican family”); Cú Chulainn (“his adulation of Irish mythology”); Christ (“his mystic identity with Jesus Christ the Messiah”); and Wolfe Tone (“his immersion in the rebellious side of Irish history”). Exploring Pearse’s intellectual and emotional development through these key components in his psychology is in itself a profound insight, enabling Carty to offer a cogent reading of Pearse’s meaning. The elegance of Carty’s sentence construction is evident throughout. For instance: Pearse “seemed to put a higher value on dying for Ireland and being remembered than on living for it and being forgotten” (Carty, 1978, p. 13). The fundamental truth which Carty (1978, p. 54) captures better than other biographers is the extent to which Pearse lived within “the Irish paradox” and “the Christian paradox”, and the deadly consequences of Pearse’s response to this burden. Despite the apparent inevitability of Pearse’s victory in hindsight, Carty (1978, p. 132) astutely realises that Pearse had no popular mandate for his rebellion, that his reputation was secured only by British over-reaction: “Pearse and the men of 1916 would probably have been forgotten ... had it not been for the executions”.

Carty recognises that history is not a neutral statement of facts about the past. Rather, how it is told powerfully shapes our individual and national identity (Wertsch, 1997). Carty’s account was written for ordinary citizens rather than for historians:

I have written this book to expose the myth of 1916 and the false interpretation of Irish history which created it and keeps it alive today in the Provisionals.... I have written this book as a contribution towards peace in Ireland in my time. Patrick Pearse did nothing to bring about that peace.... His was not the triumph of failure, but a terrible mistake, a tragedy ... the like of which must never be allowed to happen again (1978, pp. 139-40).

Such outright revisionism of Pearse’s meaning was not popular – either at the time or now – and demonstrates Carty’s intellectual courage, particularly given that his father had been the editor of newspapers owned by Eamon de Valera who fought with Pearse in the Easter Rising. This is,

naturally, Pearse as seen through Carty's eyes, coloured by Carty's politics and emotions: as Denzin (1994, p. 503) argues, "representation ... is always self-presentation... the Other's presence is directly connected to the writer's self-presence in the text". It is an unsettling work which confronts and demythologises Pearse's story utterly.

### **Autobiography**

In his candid 1986 autobiography, *Why I Said No to God*, Carty moves from collective to individual history, appreciating that history is the articulation of lived experience. Crane notes (disapprovingly) that, "The increasingly professionalized role of historians as those publicly entrusted with the duty of memory ... apparently made it incumbent upon practicing historians to retract almost all vestiges of personal memories or personal involvement in the production of history" (1997, p. 1375). This is not how Francis X. Carty approaches history: in both *In Bloody Protest* and – to a much greater extent – *Why I Said No to God*, Carty is present in his text and reveals his personal responses to Irish history. His autobiography frames a turning point for the Catholic Church in Ireland in terms of his own history.

In these memoirs, Carty covers the period from 1958 to 1965, from the ages of 17 to 24. The book opens with a glimpse of Carty as a boy, quite different from most boys even of his own time: "For several years I had had an interest in religious things with recurring spells of immature piety. This led me to set up an altar in my bedroom and to cover the whole bedroom with purple paper during Lent (1986, p. 8). Fr Pearse Moloney (the Novice Master at the Holy Ghost Noviate in Kilshane, Tipperary, who became Carty's immediate superior) interviewed Carty about his sense of vocation:

He quizzed me on why I wanted to be a priest. I couldn't give him any reason except that I wanted to be one. I surprised him by not even being able to name the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.... At the end I was surprised that the interview had not been more searching. It was certainly not a test of suitability (Carty, 1986, p. 13).

Nonetheless, Carty was accepted by the Holy Ghost Congregation, and entered Kilshane on 1 September 1958. It was an uncongenial and Spartan environment, designed to crush any traces of individuality. The use of Christian names among novices was forbidden, to discourage any form

of close friendship. Casual conversation was discouraged: “Religious life did not have any room for ‘Good Night’ or ‘Good Morning’” (Carty, 1986, p. 17).

How many of today’s recruits in the Catholic Church could find themselves in the same position as Carty was in 1958? He was then “preparing to take a vow of chastity but had not the slightest idea what it meant.... Far from having lost my virginity by the age of seventeen, I did not even know that there was such a thing as virginity. The Blessed Virgin Mary was merely a name to me” (Carty, 1986, pp. 37-38). One wonders why the Catholic Church would even want someone so uninformed as a priest. Yet it is clear from Carty’s account that the regime at Kilshane was geared towards absolute indoctrination of the novices and the dismantling of their capacity to think rationally. To a modern reader, the following passage may seem akin to life in a cult or in North Korea. Discussing Easter weekend in 1959, Carty records (1986, p. 39) that, “Saturday was a day of meaningless emptiness for we were being trained to rely so completely on Christ rather than on human friendship that we could really do nothing that day with Christ gone from us”.

The disconnect between Carty’s inner confusion and outward commitment substantially increased once he completed his year at Kilshane and moved to the Holy Ghost Missionary College at Kimmage. Even so, Carty (1986, p. 57) did not question his choice: “Christ had called me. I had no right to refuse him. Not for a moment did I consider that human friendship might be a human answer to any of my problems”. It was now decided by his superiors – with no consultation – that Carty would be taking a science degree, although he had no interest in science. Conscious of his vow of obedience, Carty accepted his fate. Matters came to a head in March 1962 when Carty suffered a nervous collapse on the day of a physics exam: “The depression was overpowering.... My former self was a mirage that grew dimmer” (1986, p. 89). At the time, Carty was preparing to take his religious vows for life. Only now did he begin to seriously consider what they meant, in particular the concept of chastity. He asked one priest to explain sexual intercourse, and was told that “in humans it normally took place as in monkeys. I nodded assent although I had not the slightest idea how the monkeys did it” (Carty, 1986, p. 94). Despite all his doubts, Carty did take religious vows for life in September 1962, because he could not imagine how to avoid them: “I knew in the instant of taking the vows that I had made a mistake.... I had put a noose around my neck, intending to leave it there for life” (Carty, 1986, p. 98). One is left with a sense of astonishment that the Catholic Church would be so willing to bind to itself any young man so patently unhappy and unsuitable.

In the midst of Carty's deepening depression – so unbearable that “for me, prayer no longer meant anything” (1986, p. 109) – it was decided that following completion of his degree, he would teach botany and science at Rockwell College in Tipperary. This despite the fact that he literally begged his superior not to send him there. Again, Carty bowed to the demands of religious obedience, and again the consequences were disastrous. On the night of 9/10 December 1964, he lay awake contemplating his future existence as a priest when for the first time, “the obvious answer to my problems floated surely to the front of mind. I would leave. I would abandon the idea of being a priest.... Peace came over me. My battle of six-and-a-half years was over” (Carty, 1986, p. 121). The process of extricating himself from the vows he had already taken was a difficult one, but he received formal dispensation from the Vatican which he accepted on 18 July 1965. Carty re-entered the world as a free man, though one who would forever be profoundly marked by the experiences recounted in these memoirs. The book is an exemplar for the notion that “the interpretation of data is a reflexive exercise through which meanings are made rather than found” (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p. 414).

An observation Carty recorded in his diary is particularly revealing in light of the path he subsequently took. On 23 October 1964, after being at Rockwell for a few weeks, he writes that, “Teaching could be quite enjoyable if one were teaching an attractive subject” (Carty, 1986, p. 120). While Carty had to wait another 15 years before the ideal teaching subject emerged – in the form of a public relations certificate at Rathmines College of Commerce – once it did, he and PR education were a perfect fit.

In his second memoir, *Bruises, Baws and Bastards*, Carty revisits important scenes from his personal and professional lives – often, highly personal. In the first chapter alone, we learn that his face was bruised at birth and that he was circumcised at 2 days of age, hear of his experiences on the baw (his mother's euphemism for a chamber pot), and are told of his childhood outrage on discovering that some children are born to unmarried parents! Several chapters recount his experiences training for the priesthood and his ultimate decision to abandon his religious vows and return to secular life in 1965. He updates the story by describing how he returned to the Catholic Church in 2002: “I was physically pushed out the door by a force which I can only describe as supernatural. It could not be resisted. I went to Queen of Peace Church.... God asked me to come back to him and I have said Yes” (Carty, 2017, pp. 236-237). And there are intensely moving passages describing the depression with which Francis Carty has struggled for close to 60 years,



including 3 occasions when he endured suicidal thoughts and more frequent periods of real distress: “I realised that for the rest of my life my ‘dark place’ will be just on the touch-line of the field where I am playing out my life and coping with it shall be forever my problem” (Carty, 2017, p. 243).

Of particular interest to public relations scholars will be those chapters in which Carty discusses his career in PR. It began in a somewhat roundabout fashion when he entered a competition in 1966 to rewrite in a less formal style a government report on the economy. Carty won a prize for his treatment of agricultural policy, which led to an invitation to help write a report for the Irish young farmers’ association, under the chairmanship of PR practitioner Larry Sheehy. And that eventually led Carty – following four years as publications officer at a public body – to join Sheehy’s Farmlink Public Relations, where he met a new colleague, Michael Connolly, with whom he established Able Public Relations in 1978.

Carty joined Dublin Institute of Technology as lecturer in journalism and public relations in 1981. He served as president of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland in 1995 and 1996, became a life fellow in 1999, and was the Institute’s external examiner for its diploma course in public relations from 1997 to 2016. In these roles he has had a profound impact on the teaching and practice of PR in Ireland for decades. Carty’s own memoirs – alongside his textbooks – are, in part, the first draft of an Irish public relations history (Culbertson, 2006), though the comprehensive treatment of that history is yet to be written.

### **PR textbooks**

Carty (1992, p. v) sets out his manifesto for PR on the opening page of *Farewell to Hype*: “Public relations is now of age and has to say farewell to hype.... Public relations [is] concerned with the effect of company behaviour upon reputation”. The book is divided into four sections – what PR is; its tools and techniques; the audiences at which it is directed; and the sectors in which PR is employed in Ireland. This conceptual framework enables Carty to structure a coherent pathway by which the reader is guided logically through PR practice. Written more discursively than most PR textbooks – thus, more readable and engaging than most – *Farewell to Hype* is the product of Carty’s experience at that time of more than 20 years of professional know-how and of over a decade of teaching. It is idiosyncratic in the best sense: Carty’s personality and individual style are ever-present. Carty largely shares the conventional view of PR – a management function

concerned with strategic communication and relationships; focused on long-term credibility and reputation; combining technical competence and counselling expertise – but conveys this view in a more realistic manner than many US textbooks deliver. His perspective is positive, but not wholly uncritical.

*Farewell to Hype* is atypical of PR textbooks – it is short with relatively few citations to other books, and contains no diagrams. However, the usefulness of its content and the clarity of its prose make this a rewarding read. That Francis X. Carty produced *From John Paul to Saint Jack* to showcase their work reveals his dedication to his students. As editor, contributing only one chapter himself (1995b), Carty assembles here (1995a) a rich variety of case studies illustrating the challenges and opportunities for Irish PR.

Carty makes a significant contribution by being the first to offer a distinctive account of PR as it is practised in Ireland. PR students around the world must still rely too heavily on US textbooks, even though these say little about the socio-economic and political systems in which the students will make their careers (Vercic, 2000; Vercic *et al*, 2001). Recognition of how national culture impacts on PR in any given country has been slow in developing, though there is by now a steady stream of such work. An article comparing PR scholarship in Australia/New Zealand and the US lamented the paucity of textbooks and research from the former countries (McKie and Munshi, 2004) – and the position in Ireland was then in a comparable state. Since then, however, there has been an outpouring of substantial and significant PR research from Down Under. Although as Carty (2004, p. 207) notes, “Public relations research in Ireland is still in its infancy”, the potential for the discipline to mature certainly exists among the Irish academic community (Madigan, 2017). Not only were Carty’s two works the first Irish PR textbooks, they were early contributions to the emerging body of literature exploring PR’s development worldwide. Carty’s role in highlighting the distinctive nature of Irish public relations has been immense, as his textbooks add greatly to our collective knowledge of the role of national culture in public relations practice.

There is a value to PR practitioners, scholars and students everywhere in having a more diverse range of examples to draw on than those which appear in US textbooks. One recent book series has taken a substantial step forward in our awareness of the important of the national context to PR (Watson, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2015). In the Irish case, for instance, public relations emerged in the public sector, with the appointment in 1928 of a public relations officer to the

Electricity Supply Board (Colley, 1993) – Ned Lawler, a former journalist who would go on to become the first Chairman of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland in 1953. And PR in Ireland has developed over the last 90+ years in particular ways, operating with a particular media industry and within a particular socio-political environment. Carty’s PR textbooks (1992, 1995a) deal with very specifically Irish producers of public relations (such as the Gaelic Athletic Association) and Irish PR campaigns. Scholarship on lobbying often notes the paradox that while we know more about interest groups in the United States than in any other political system, America is an exceptional rather than a typical case. Lobbying *is* different in the US for reasons of historical constitutionalism, scope and scale, political culture, and institutional design. A point made much less frequently, however, is that lobbying is different everywhere, for similar reasons. Each nation has an exceptional interest group system. That is not to say that lobbying techniques and tactics are not similar in most locations, for they are – and increasingly so. In every interest group community – to greater or lesser extents and to greater or lesser degrees of effectiveness – lobbyists talk directly to policy-makers, join coalitions, stimulate grassroots efforts, undertake policy research and frame policy issues, use the media to advance issues, and so on. These activities, if not entirely universal, are quite common. What is exceptional about every lobbying environment is the political, cultural and institutional framework within which those ubiquitous activities occur. Each political nation has its own legal and informal “rules” which determine how lobbyists can operate most effectively. Exactly the same is true of public relations. It emerged in each nation as a professional activity, it developed and professionalized, it employed tactics to greater or lesser effect, all within a very specific national, cultural, context. Although PR researchers have begun to recognize this, much more work is needed in almost every country to describe and explain that nation’s history and narrative of PR. Every nation has an individual (and in some respects, an idiosyncratic) approach to public relations. Well before most academics had realized this, Carty was charting the specific nature of PR in his nation.

In his preface to *Farewell to Hype*, Carty wrote (1992, p. vi): “These are first words but definitely not last words. Many issues are merely raised, leaving deeper analysis to a later day”. Since Carty’s two textbooks were published, the media landscape has changed almost unrecognisably; PR practice has moved into new specialisms and developed new tools; we have vastly more academic articles on which to draw; and the examples included in Carty’s texts are inevitably dated. Carty’s ‘later day’ is here now: while Irish PR students and practitioners have

been well served for 20 years by Carty's textbooks, the next generation needs a new edition of *Farewell to Hype*.

### **Scholarly monographs**

Carty's work has turned towards explicitly research-based monographs, and towards the area of church-state relations. *Hold Firm* examines Archbishop John Charles McQuaid's involvement with the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council. As Ireland's most controversial cleric in the last century, McQuaid aroused feelings of either veneration or hostility, but is drawn by Carty in shades of grey rather than in black or white, revealing a man quite different from his public image. Carty highlights McQuaid's attention to PR issues – his creation of a Public Image Committee in 1963 to improve the church's reputation, and of a Dublin Diocesan Press Office two years later. There were tensions inherent in his relationship with the media, with the press office's director complaining that he did not always receive from McQuaid the full information necessary to do the job. Similarly, McQuaid was frequently concerned that he should be able to exert more influence over the national broadcaster's personnel, policies and programming.

Carty's deft use of archival and interview material layers into a nuanced portrayal of McQuaid's handling of the Council and its repercussions, concluding that he “managed efficiently his diocese's responses to it” (2007, p. 160). He perceives McQuaid's flaws – his “communication was traditionally one-way, allowing little or no room for discussion” and “his style of rule was autocratic” (Carty, 2007, p. 161) – but does so within the context of a balanced assessment. Indeed, this book offers the best researched and least biased portrait of McQuaid to date. Girvin (2008, p. 460) cites *Hold Firm* as offering evidence of the paradox that “a change in Rome had such a significant impact on individuals and institutions in Ireland”.

While *Hold Firm* was written for a commercial audience, Carty's next monograph was emphatically scholarly in tone. Derived from his PhD thesis, his 2010 book on *The Impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Archdiocese of Dublin* considers that Council from an explicit and theoretical public relations perspective. The book is unlikely to receive as much attention from PR academics as it deserves, because its ostensible subject is apparently far removed from their field. But in fact, Carty develops a detailed argument regarding relationship and issue management which has applicability well beyond this particular case. Specifically, McQuaid's attitudes and

behaviour are analysed by Carty in terms of his relationships with others. He finds (2010, p. 255) that:

between archbishop and priests, there was an emphasis on trust, as shown in loyalty and obedience, mixed with fear and awe.... Other indicators were formality, remoteness and McQuaid's certitude and his difficulties with consultation and dialogue. The strongest indicators in the archbishop-laity relationships were his remoteness and invisibility.

PR scholars will be interested in what Carty (2010, p. 391) describes as "an interesting diversion along the way", not fully addressed in the main text but included as an Appendix (see 2010, pp. 391-92 and 525-42). Carty believes that the academic literature understates the complexity of the interplay between issues and relationships, "neglecting the fact that in every instance there were many issues, many actors, many relationships, many episodes interacting at the same time" (2010, p. 391). He suggests an intriguing hypothesis: "The more dominant an issue and the more significant it is for the partners in a public relationship, the more possible it is to identify some, but never all, of its influence and impact upon the relationship" (Carty, 2010, p. 526). Carty theorises that an issue's life cycle – emergence, dissemination, establishment, erosion, re-emergence – should be thought of in circular rather than linear form, to better reflect its cyclical nature. Within this circle, the organisation's experience of the issue, and the experiences of its relevant publics, are imagined as coil-like as the issue extends over time. When the organisation and a public interact, their coils are depicted as crossing paths: "The contacts can be likened to wires touching – sometimes there is no reaction, sometimes a spark, sometimes an explosion" (Carty, 2010, p. 530). This pattern of an organisation's relationships with its publics over an issue's life cycle builds up diagrammatically into a complex, even chaotic, cluster of separate and overlapping coils of various sizes and directions which Carty (2010, p. 532) thinks of as a "whirlpool".

How Carty makes sense of such frenetic activity is by emphasising the importance of an individual in the midst of this collective behaviour, suggesting a path along which the organisation can "return to simplicity" (2010, p. 536). Public relations ought to proceed from the individual and private out to the collective and public:

Managers should be advised not to let generalisations and stereotypes get in the way.... They should think of the juggler with all those balls in the air. He does not attempt a

strategy to catch all of them at the same time, but he catches each one individually and then the next – very rapidly but watching carefully and never taking his eye off the next one to come (Carty, 2010, pp. 537-38).

His attempt to resolve the question of how to place the individual back at the centre of issue and relationship management is thought-provoking and potentially fruitful. The original conference paper outlining his thinking (Carty, 2003) attracted some attention: Carty's idea of a circular life cycle was noted by Alison Theaker (2004); and an influential issue management practitioner included Carty's paper among several theories proposing a cyclical framework, although he opined that "none of these constructs has gained broad acceptance" (Jaques, 2009, p. 38).

Carty has extended his work on McQuaid into a wide-ranging discussion of twentieth century Ireland. One conference paper compares Eamon de Valera and John Charles McQuaid – the towering figures of Irish society in the 50 years after independence – and charts the course of church-state relations: "All members of the early governments were Christians and almost all were Catholic. They agreed with the teachings of their Church and were happy to apply them (Carty, 2011, p. 89)". This happy coincidence of self-interests has somewhat eroded over the past two decades as politics becomes relatively secularised and as the Catholic Church has lost considerable moral authority through scandals involving child sex abuse by priests. In a book chapter, Carty (2014) expands his theme of changing patterns of church-state interplay and highlights instances of ineffective PR and relationship management on both sides.

## **Conclusion**

Typically, scholars are placed under immense pressure to 'publish or perish', to write journal articles which are consumed only by a few other scholars, and to conform to arbitrary dictates imposed by research quality assessment boards (Antoniou and Moriarty, 2008; Blaxter *et al*, 1998; Lee and Boud, 2003). Pelias (2004, p. 10) describes vividly the dissatisfaction which such a regime can produce in many academics:

They were teaching students who seemed more interested in grades than learning. They were working for administrators who seemed more concerned with the bottom line than quality education.... Productivity was the motto of the day, so they published article after article that no one seemed to read, particularly those who were the focus of the study.... They researched topics that got them promotion and tenure but seemed removed from who they were. They felt empty, despondent, disillusioned.

This has emphatically not been Francis X. Carty's experience of academia. Carty worked in a time and place such that he could avoid the common trap whereby an academic's self-identity becomes defined through institutional politics rather than through ideals of service, scholarship and pedagogy (Sparkes, 2007). Crucially, Carty wrote what he chose, when he believed he had something to say. His writings are not separate from him but arise from his experiences, expertise and character. Other PR academics have greater output, but none project better than Carty the imprint of their personality onto the pages of their work. The words of Laurel Richardson (1997, p. 19) apply to Francis X. Carty more than to most academics: "What I choose to write about, how I choose to write it, and for whom I write it say more about me than sociodemographics, personality inventories or horoscopes".

Hyland (2005, pp. 175-76) argues that, "In claiming a right to be heard ... writers must display a competence as disciplinary insiders.... achieved through a writer-reader dialogue which situates both their research and themselves". The ways in which authors manage this textually (Hyland, 2005, p. 177) include: rhetorical devices such as attitude markers (indicating a sense of shared values with the reader), self-mention, personal asides (the author figuratively turning to the reader with a brief comment), appeals to shared knowledge (treating the author and reader as disciplinary peers), and direct questions (inviting an explicit response from the reader). In Carty's work, we see instances of all these types of author-reader interactions.

It has been said that, "Writing is among a professional communicator's most marketable skills and may be the most challenging to acquire" (Hardin and Pompper, 2004, p. 357). We cannot gauge from the books considered here in what manner Francis X. Carty acquired his writing skills, since he had been working as a print journalist for a decade before the first of these books was published. However, we see in the books discussed here a man comfortable with his writing technique and with his identity as "writer and academic with a legitimate voice and contribution" (Cameron *et al*, 2009, p. 270). One of Carty's qualities, in whatever genre he is writing, is the sense he projects on the printed page of being engaged in a conversation with his readers (Cameron *et al*, 2009, pp. 279-80). In formal terms, Carty's use of the first person pronoun in his writings tends to be more than merely pragmatic, instead positively revealing "authorial presence" (Harwood, 2005, p. 344); and it acknowledges that "social scientists, inevitably and correctly, have material ... emotions about the subject they study" (Davies, 2012, p. 750). One American

sociologist notes: “Academics are given the ‘story line’ that the ‘I’ should be suppressed in their writing, that they should accept homogenization and adopt the all-knowing, all-powerful voice of the academy. But ... [we] are always present in our texts, no matter how we try to suppress ourselves” (Richardson, 1997, p. 2). This artificial suppression of the self is commonplace in academia – the Author Guidelines for this journal, for instance, state that: “Authors should avoid the use of personal pronouns within the structured abstract and body of the paper (e.g. ‘this paper investigates ...’ is correct, ‘I investigate ...’ is incorrect)”. But why should this be so? What is the value to the reader of the author absenting him/herself from their text? Is the reader better informed by the phrase ‘The interviews were coded thematically’, than by ‘I coded the interviews thematically’? To some – including Francis Carty (and the present author) – this insistence on denying the individual scholar’s role and presence in their own work is not merely unnecessary but positively damaging. Carty rejects the pseudo-scientific approach to PR scholarship in favour of a more humanistic writing style, to the benefit of his readers.

Francis X. Carty is unquestionably the pre-eminent PR educator in Ireland, the father of Irish PR education. No academic has trained as many of the country’s future PR practitioners as he. His perspective on public relations is positive, but not wholly uncritical: the premise of *Farewell to Hype* (1992) is that Irish PR in the past was not always of the highest quality, but that it had by the 1990s begun to professionalise. We have some empirical evidence for this: O’Dwyer found that only two of seven components of PR being regarded as a senior management function were met by Irish companies in 1993, but that a decade later five of the seven conditions were being satisfied. While many factors were responsible for this progress, one not explored by O’Dwyer may well have been the growing influence of Carty’s teaching over time as his former students moved upwards through the industry and propagated within their organisations what they had learnt from him. What we can all, as PR researchers, learn from Francis Carty is the importance of connecting with our readers, and the cultural foundation of public relations practice.



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