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Santo Daime in Ireland: A 'Work' in Process

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ABSTRACT

The title for this paper draws on Santo Daime ritual activity being referred to as a 'Work' (*Trabalho* in Portuguese). Santo Daime is a new religious movement that continues to expand globally (Dawson 2013). In the 21st century it emerged in Ireland within a transforming and increasingly varied religious landscape. In 2007 a leader of a Santo Daime group in Ireland was charged with unlawful possession of DMT which is contained within 'Daime', or ayahuasca, the substance used in the religion's central sacrament, under the Misuse of Drugs Act of 1977. This case is under appeal on grounds of the right to religious freedom under the Irish Constitution. I present here questions and discussion arising from interfaces between a new religious activity and the law, set against an increasingly 'post-catholic' Republic. I argue that experiences of Santo Daime in Ireland reflect a number of conflicting responses to new religious spaces in a post-colonial nation with a history of Catholic cultural and social hegemony.

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Introduction

New religious movements in general are extremely understudied in Ireland (Cosgrove et al. p. 15). There have been no scholarly studies on Santo Daime in Ireland produced to date. The research outlined in this paper is presented as a pioneering step towards full academic engagement with this contentious area of study. Ayahuasca religions are complex and controversial largely because of the central importance of the ingestion of ayahuasca. The ayahuasca plant decoction is a mixture of Amazonian plants (*Banisterio caapi* and *Psycho triaviridis*) that releases small levels of DMT or dimethyltryptamine. This substance can cause 'visions' or 'altered states of consciousness' that are perceived as having religious or spiritual meaning both in indigenous settings and elsewhere. However, outside of Brazil and the Amazon region this substance is classified as a controlled Schedule 1 Drug under U.S. and E.U. Drug Laws.

As a result of the arrest of a Santo Daime practitioner, a court case is pending in the Republic of Ireland which challenges the Irish Constitution on grounds of the freedom to practise one's religion. The interface between the law and the religious landscape has historically been an important feature of life in the Republic. However, the religious milieu has been transformed in the last twenty years. Where Ireland was, for most of the twentieth century, dominated by a hugely influential Catholic Church,

Catholicism's decline, alongside increased migration and economic changes, has resulted in the emergence of new cultural spaces for many new religious movements, the rise of interest in other major religions, and also individualised conceptions of the spiritual. Nevertheless, the relationship between state and religious activity continues to be contested (see Daly 2012).

Against the backdrop of the above legal situation, this paper argues that Santo Daime in Ireland reflects a desire for a 're-enchantment' of a 'disenchanted' world (Partridge 2004). This rhetoric derives from the counter-arguments to Max Weber's 'disenchantment' thesis associated with the Reformation, desecralisation, and modernity. These counter-arguments are based on empirical evidence of the increase in religious activity despite widespread apparent secularisation/modernity, and pose an increasing 'disenchantment' with the secular worldview. This re-enchantment of a disenchanted world is illustrated in this paper through an analysis of two different forms of Santo Daime practice in Ireland. I also wish to suggest here that the active presence of Santo Daime in Ireland reflects a reclamation and revitalisation of the 'enchantedness' of an 'Enchanted Isle' (Kuhling 2011, p.205) cultural trope, and a wish to reinvigorate a particularly 'Irish' religiosity that does not necessarily adhere to a Catholic religious identity. This 'Irish' religiosity is demonstrated through a partial disavowal of Catholic /Christian content in Santo Daime in one group and through a renewal of faith in the foundational principles of Christianity and the Catholic pantheon (yet not the Roman Catholic Church) in another.

As a religious movement, despite relatively small numbers of people and the controversial use of ayahuasca, Santo Daime continues its international expansion. Dawson (2013) estimates that there may be as many as 20,000 individuals worldwide although accurate numbers remain obscured due to social and organisational factors of marginalisation and fear of criminalisation (Dawson 2013, p. 5). Santo Daime first emerged in the early twentieth century in Brazil. The name Santo Daime translates as 'Holy Daime' – the word '*Daime*' being a Portuguese derivative meaning 'give me' This is understood by those who follow Santo Daime as a way to petition certain states as, for example, '*dai me luz*', give me light (Dawson 2013, p.4). *Daime* is also the word used for ayahuasca produced under ritual conditions within the Santo Daime worldview. Raimundo Irineu Serra the founder of Santo Daime was a Catholic rubber tapper of Afro-Brazilian parentage from the north-east of Brazil who originally came to the Amazon for work. On participation in Amazonian indigenous ayahuasca ritual, he received a vision of a female figure understood by him to be Our Lady the Queen of the Forest. She told him to establish a healing ministry in Brazil. With the decline of the rubber economy in Amazonia, and the movement of migrant rubber workers to urban areas, Santo Daime amalgamated several different influences; a migration of Afro- Brazilian cosmology from the urban north-east combined with Amazonian indigenous paradigms and popular Catholicism to create the early Santo Daime movement's world view. The religion was formally established in the city of Rio Branco in the Brazilian state of Acre, north-west Brazil in 1930 (Dawson 2013). Further incorporation of European esotericism combined to create a rich body of influences in the Santo Daime tradition and in other similar religious groups. This amalgamation of influences and hybridisation continues as Santo Daime spreads out of Amazonia and moves through Europe, North America, and Australasia (Labate & Jungaberle (eds) 2011; Dawson 2013).

Santo Daime rituals are called Works (or '*Trabalhos*' in Portuguese), hence the title of this paper. With this title I aim to hint at the fact that the religious validation of Santo Daime activity in Ireland is still in process due to the current legal challenges,

that the challenges of its early history in the nation are also being processed in current presentations, and that the 'work' of research into Santo Daime in Ireland has only just started.

Context and methodology

My research was confined to the Republic of Ireland (Éire). The Republic of Ireland in recent decades has been subject to a period of intense social and religious transformation. This transformation has as much to do with the decline in the hegemony of the Catholic Church as it has with the phenomenon known as the Celtic Tiger. The Celtic Tiger was a period of intensive and rapid economic growth, between approximately 1996 – 2008, that led to a remarkably intense consumerism at its height, an increasingly diverse society as significant economic migration into the Republic emerged for the first time in modern history, and a cultural re-identification away from the 'quaint' Emerald 'enchanted isle' trope with its leprechauns, fairies and Celtic imaginaries. Ireland was seen as a land of entrepreneurial opportunity and talent, populated by the 'new Irish' who had left past characterisations behind and who were now the new leaders of the global economy. The crash of the Celtic Tiger alongside several governmental enquiries into, and subsequent reports of, the institutional failures of the Irish Catholic church have resulted in an uncertain period where Irish social and religious identities are in a state of intense renegotiation.

Éire is a peripheral country in Europe with a small population (4.58 million) and yet, not only does Santo Daime have a significant presence here, but also an important legal constitutional challenge has been instigated by a member of an Irish Santo Daime church. Briefly, the current legal situation stems from an incident in 2006 when a package of ayahuasca or *Daime* posted from Brazil was intercepted by an Irish Customs official. Subsequently, on receipt of this package from an undercover member of the Irish police (*An Garda Síochána* – Irish Gaelic) posing as a postman, a Santo Daime leader (known as a 'Commander' in the Santo Daime worldview) was found to be in possession of a controlled drug (DMT). During the proceedings of a court case in 2007, it was brought to the judge's attention, that the *Daime/ayahuasca* was being used for religious purposes. Despite this information the Judge remained "hostile to the defence" (O'Dea 2010, p. 2). However at a later judicial review in 2008, extraordinarily, the same Judge seemed to have completely changed his attitude. He had researched Santo Daime and concluded that "it was a Christian sect with Catholic influences" (O'Dea 2010, p.3). The arrested Commander told me that the Judge then confirmed the basic constitutional rights of worship in the Republic of Ireland and stated: "[...] we do have freedom of religion in this country he says, and this is enshrined in our Constitution" (22/5/2013). A reduced fine of 300 euros (from 5000 euros) was the only sentence given and any decision on the destruction of the sacrament was postponed until after a Constitutional Case would be held. The Commander was also, significantly, no longer held over to keep the peace. At present (2014) the constitutional case on grounds of religious freedom is still pending. The ongoing question regarding Santo Daime's legal status in Ireland is whether the issue of religious freedom will outweigh public order legislation.

As a result of this legal situation it quickly became clear that finding people to interview for my research was not going to be straightforward. Santo Daime in Ireland had, to a certain extent, 'gone underground' since the Commander's arrest. Unfavourable and sensationalist national media coverage of an anti-cult nature did not help. There was, understandably, a level of reticence about talking to anyone asking questions about Santo Daime, and difficulty in sourcing interviews via the worldwide web. The networking occurred mainly through word of mouth and once I

was 'screened', as it were, there was willingness and enthusiasm to pass on information for the research project. I conducted my research through interviews and several casual encounters. Numbers were small but they are significant, as Ireland is a country with a small population and sourcing interviewees was persistently problematic because of their 'low profile'. It is noteworthy though, that in casual encounters whilst trying to source interviews, several people readily associated my enquiries about Santo Daime with ayahuasca which would indicate that there is general knowledge in the public domain of Santo Daime's religious use of *Daime/ayahuasca*.

Another issue that reduced my access to interviewees was that of my positionality. It was not possible for me to participate in a Santo Daime Work without drinking the *Daime/ayahuasca*. As Dawson says "there can be no ritual bystanders" in Santo Daime (Dawson 2010, p.176). Therefore, the question emerged as to whether I would actually 'participate' in the sacrament of the *Daime/ayahuasca*. Due to the uncertainty of the legalities of drinking *Daime/ayahuasca* in Ireland, and my own reservations, I decided to remain 'outsider' and this decision surely influenced the numbers of people that were available to me for my fieldwork interviews. As it happens, I have already experienced the intense effects of ayahuasca as a young anthropologist in the Peruvian amazon amongst the indigenous Ashaninka people. This worked in my favour as a researcher, as I was then perceived to be a 'semi-insider'. I interviewed practitioners or *daimistas* (Port.), in their own homes. All *daimistas* I interviewed were Irish nationals. I conducted a long interview with the Irish person involved in the current legal case. He was happy to be interviewed and named: "I'm already in the public eye. I've already been criminalised" he said (22/5/2013). However, I decided, in view of his tenuous position, to preserve his anonymity in my study.

Santo Daime was brought to Ireland in the Brazilian format outlined below. To a large extent it continues along these lines however various mutations and adaptations have occurred in its migration to Ireland. A Santo Daime work is attended by both men and women in the same space, usually a room or hall, but genders are segregated carefully. There are dress restrictions for both men and women. In what might be called strict Santo Daime, uniforms are worn. These are codified depending on the particular kind of Work. Works follow the *daimista* calendar (that is, if Daime is available, for it must always come from Brazil to comply with ritual production). The 15th and the 30th of the month are reserved for Concentration and Healing Works. Festival Works will also take place on occasion. Each Work will have its own hymnal and structure, but all Works involve the consumption of *Daime/ayahuasca*. Another important type of work in Ireland is the Mass Work (*Santa Missa*) which takes place for the deceased. All Works are long, may involve extended periods of standing or dancing, and can last for 12 hours or more, often throughout the night. Breaks and rest periods are allowed but once a Work has started, departing from the sacred space of the Work is strongly discouraged. Throughout the Work prayers set to music and hymns are sung and played. In a Concentration and Mass Work there may also be periods of quiet and the opportunity to sit and contemplate the insights received. The central sacrament of *Daime /ayahuasca* is distributed as soon as a Work is comfortably underway. It is distributed by Commanders who stand at a, (usually), central, table where vessels of the brown bitter-tasting *Daime* liquid are handed to the participants in hierarchical order. On the table might be flowers, the double Cross of Caravacca, candles, crystals, and holy pictures. Ritual positioning and gender segregation are, wherever possible, firmly maintained throughout. Hierarchy is carefully regulated, with those more experienced and of higher status placed nearest to the central table. Experienced male and female members of the group will be assigned roles of caring for participants and providing assistance should the effects

of the *Daime* /ayahuasca become overwhelming. Physical contact is strongly discouraged. 'Firmness' in the face of the effects of *Daime* /ayahuasca is key as is the concept of the group and the 'group-mind' as they travel on an intense and sometimes frightening spiritual journey by virtue of the effects of the sacrament. The input from the spiritually received hymns and music help to guide the journey or 'current' of the group. Spiritual purification and cleanliness are highly valued and the experience of Santo Daime and *Daime*/ayahuasca serve to purify and clean one's mind of 'bad habits' and misunderstandings of life's true nature. Works are a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant experiences and insights, often including long periods of vomiting which are valued and seen as part of a 'cleansing' process. This experience of ayahuasca or Daime can lead to changes in the way people perceive the 'ordinary' world. Participants receive visions and insights that can lead them to re-evaluate life choices, proposed actions, or personal history. (For further description and history of Santo Daime ritual practice see Macrae 1992, 1999, Polari de Alverga 2010 [1999], Labate and Pacheco 2011, Dawson 2013).

Findings

I found two groups of Santo Daime in the Republic of Ireland. One was described as 'traditional' by one of my interviewees and I also use this word to describe the group. In using the word 'traditional' I do not mean to imply that this is a more authentic form. I categorise the other group 'hybrid' Santo Daime following Andrew Dawson's description in his observation of the continuing hybridisation of Santo Daime practice (Dawson 2013). Here, I use the term 'hybrid' to mean something that is mixed or combined. I do not intend any meaning that may be associated with race or miscegenation, nor do I intend a meaning associated with post-colonial discourse on 'hybridity'. However, by using the term 'hybrid' it is not beyond my intention to present hybridity as being linked to the cultural effects of globalisation (Kraidy 2005).

During the first phase of Santo Daime in Ireland there was no such division in Santo Daime practice. The early history was described to me as the "crazy heyday" of the early 2000's, "Really the Daime had a lot of problems in its teething phases at the beginning because there was a very rowdy nature coming in, you can imagine, the party, the céilí and 'the lads on the back line with the bodhráns.'" (Inner quotes from interviewee 27/7/2013). Early Works were often disordered and loosely structured, "messy" (27/7/2013) as one of my interviewees described, compared to the formal structures of Brazilian forms. There was no screening of individuals' mental or physical state and there was a sense that one could "drop in" (27/7/2013) for a Santo Daime Work after a night in the pub. "There were Works everywhere and they were wild, there was loads of young people and there was loads of smoking and loads of God knows what else, you know" (27/7/2013). These high energy Works were described to me as "not safe" and "dangerous" and sadly there were two people who suffered what were described to me as "breakdowns" and another person who was hospitalised (27/7/13). However, current Santo Daime practice in Ireland has very much moved away from these early presentations and as a result, no drug use (including alcohol and cannabis) is allowed in Santo Daime practice (or two or three days before a Work) and careful screening of participants occurs. Since these early days, Santo Daime has mutated into two related forms that take somewhat different approaches and offer different types of Works.

'Traditional' Santo Daime was described to me as "[...] absolutely traditional, down to the core, socks pulled up" (27/7/2013) following closely the guidelines from Brazil and guidance from visiting groups and representatives. The 22 regular attending *daimistas* were described as older, highly educated, urban professionals and they included several musicians, a university lecturer, schoolteachers, an ecologist, and an acupuncturist. There was also a *daimista* who attended in a wheelchair. The

youngest in this group was in her late thirties. Uniforms were worn and the *daimista* calendar was adhered to wherever possible. Sexual activity before and after a Work was restricted and Catholic elements of the Santo Daime worldview were celebrated and enjoyed alongside Afro-Brazilian cosmologies and deities as would be the case in Brazil.

'Hybrid' Santo Daime on the other hand offered a variety of approaches. As well as 'classic' Santo Daime Works, therapeutic/'shamanic' type Works incorporating elements of the 'shamanic ayahuasca circle' were also available. The 'ayahuasca circle' is an increasing trend within the 'new age' religious milieu, often situated within contemporary or neo-shamanism where a visiting shaman or ayahuasca specialist (*ayahuasquero*-Castillano), often from Peru, will offer an ayahuasca experience within an 'indigenous' shamanic paradigm. However, within Santo Daime, it was unclear what form these therapeutic/'shamanic' Works took. The 'hybrid' group also offered Works with the incorporation of Vedic themes. This may have been because the leaders of this group were involved in a Vedanta-based religious group before coming to Santo Daime. I was told that hundreds of people "come through" for 'hybrid' Works and that 'hybrid' Works are more popular with a "younger crowd" (30/6/2013). I was not told of a 'regular' group as such. Uniforms were not encouraged although some dress code was, in particular skirts or dresses for women. Gender segregation seemed more relaxed as were rules regarding sexual activity three days before and after a Work. "I think our opinion has changed, it happens sex is good, and there's nothing wrong with it and to give that three day thing, to impose that... [...] you're putting guilt out..." (Communication from a couple in 'hybrid' Santo Daime 30/6/2013)

Both groups appeared to put an 'Irish stamp' on Santo Daime practice. As one of my interviewees said: "Even though we follow traditional Santo Daime there's going to be a diddley-aye stamp on it in Ireland, no matter what we do, because it's our energy" (27/7/2013). She also told me how she had a Festival uniform that would not be allowed by stricter Santo Daime groups in Europe because it had an uneven hem that she referred to as a "fairy" hem. This was celebrated in Brazil when she visited and was seen as a typically Irish interpretation of uniform, "because they know that the Irish are connected to the fairies and the leprechauns" (27/7/2013). It also happens that the Portuguese word for fairy and uniform are similar - *fada* (fairy) *farda* (uniform) - causing further interest. In the 'hybrid' group there is evidence of a self-conscious Irish modification with the addition of Irish mythological deities such as Brigid and Crom Dubh (see Ó hÓgáin 2006) and motifs such as the 'Sheela-Na-Gig' (see Kelly 1996) into the worldview. In this way 'hybrid' Santo Daime shows an interest in, and active incorporation of, a contemporary pagan spirituality, in that understandings of spirits of the land and ancient mythological figures might be given importance over Catholic and Christian themes. 'Spirit of the land' also features in 'traditional' Santo Daime. "I think in Ireland, you know, when we go out to the countryside [...] the energy from the land! And everyone comments on it, everyone we invite, they can really feel it. It's alive" (27/7/2013). Here I suggest that there is a desire to return to the 'enchantedness' of an 'Enchanted isle' trope with animistic interpretations of spirits of the land, and their deified representatives such as Brigid, seen as both goddess and saint in the folklore vernacular in Ireland (Brigid was also attributed significance at least in terms of 'energy' from an interviewee from 'traditional' Santo Daime.). The interest and reality of 'energies' in the form of pre-Celtic, Celtic, Afro-Brazilian and Catholic saints might be interpreted as a strong counter-response to the predominance of the "cathedrals of consumption" (Kuhling 2011.p.207) that characterised the Celtic Tiger years in the Republic.

There was a sense that post-colonial Ireland needed to be 'healed' and that 'healing' could take place through the practice of Santo Daime. "I think that it is for healing our wounds. It's all about healing the ancestors. I see a lot of really cultured Irish men coming to the Works and I can see that they're being healed. [.....] I'm talking about ancestry and what's in your blood and that is healed in the Daime" (interviewee from 'traditional' Santo Daime 27/7/2013). One interviewee from 'hybrid' Santo Daime also told me that he felt that Santo Daime might help with healing the bad feeling from historical Protestant/Catholic conflicts. Post-colonial awareness was also found in language choices. The historical colonial suppression of Irish Gaelic, its historical nationalistic associations and its current endangered position, despite being the official language of the state, makes language choice a contested and significant area in Ireland. I was told that prayers wherever possible are spoken in Irish Gaelic and that speaking and singing in Portuguese was seen as preferable to using the English language. An informant from 'traditional' Santo Daime interpreted the use of Irish Gaelic within Santo Daime as follows: "I see the pain from the language (Gaelic) not being spoken, it's agony [...] I see Irish people, men in particular with, really, roots of culture and poetry and music and I have seen them healed in the Daime. You can get healing there, I've seen it, I've felt it. Singing in Portuguese is expressive and away from the English into this language [...] there's been Irish *hinos* (hymns – Port.) received. And bits of music. It definitely allows for forgiveness." ('traditional' Santo Daime 27/7/2013).

Generally speaking the response to Catholic /Christian content within Santo Daime was different between the groups. One informant from 'hybrid' Santo Daime was angry with the Catholic content "All that Holy Joe stuff – makes me gag to be honest with you. I didn't understand -who Mary? What are you talking about? I just don't get it" (30/6/2013) However, this same informant illustrated an ambivalence that might be characteristic of current opinion found in the Republic of Ireland at this time, when she went on to say: "I also love Mary, I think she's great but it's not that sort of virginal Mary" (30/6/2013) On the other hand, an interviewee from the 'traditional' group found an unequivocal revitalisation and renewal of her faith in her encounter with Santo Daime. She told me, "[...] I first started drinking Santo Daime when I was 23; I was just going to explode, I told everyone; 'Oh my God, just wait to see. You don't have to hate Jesus! [...]"(27/7/2013) This informant also described a strikingly compassionate approach to the revelations of abuse in the Catholic Church, "The Catholic Church absolutely occupied this country and abused, but if you as a person now hold onto that abuse and then passing on that hatred and blame onto the children, it's not going to help anything. And that's where the Daime helped me. That's my experience. I can completely look a priest in the eye and say, I understand, that you're a spiritual being like I am and it doesn't matter what you choose to call Jesus or the energy, it's really (that) we're all the same" (27/7/2013) Thus, in this case, despite the apparent decline of Catholic hegemony, there is evidence of a sincere and authentic personal return to the Catholic/Christian pantheon. There is also a revitalised understanding of the meaning of 'church' in 'traditional' Santo Daime practise. However, this revitalisation of faith was pointedly aligned with a dedicated refusal to relinquish Santo Daime worldview and ritual practice and did not suggest a return to the Catholic Church of Rome. It appears that the differing and apparently contradictory responses to the Catholic content of Santo Daime reflect a milieu of ambivalence to the decline in Catholicism in the Republic generally and the complex disentangling of close-knit cultural understandings of Irish Catholic identity. These responses could be said to show what Inglis (2004) called a "lingering Catholic habitus" (see also Shanneik 2011). Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' may be understood as the collection of influences, histories, and social placement that is physically, mentally, and emotionally embodied in an individual (Bourdieu 1977). However if we are to accept this particular 'lingering Catholic habitus' (Inglis 2004) in

Santo Daime in Ireland, it may be the case that this 'habitus' is more flexible in Ireland than Bourdieu's definition might allow.

A striking example of religious field negotiation and compromise was described to me as follows. A recent (2012) Work took place (with the family's knowledge and permission) in the daytime in a room at a city hospice where a *daimista* was terminally ill and expected to die within days or weeks. Ten people attended this work around the bed of the *daimista*. Uniforms and all ritual formalities were adhered to. The pastoral care priest who was in the hospice at the time became aware of the Work when he looked into the room and saw the uniforms. On enquiry, he was told that the group were doing a prayer service for the person concerned and that the religion was called Santo Daime. When he returned from an internet search he asked whether the group were "drinking the tea" (as recounted by interviewee 27/7/2013), that is *Daime/ayahuasca*. He said he would prefer that they "didn't drink the tea" (27/7/2013). However the patient told him that she was going to and that she had already taken a spoonful of the *Daime/ayahuasca* the day before. He also consulted with two members of her family who affirmed that they were aware of her Santo Daime commitment and that they were happy that she should partake of the sacrament. Extraordinarily, in the light of the precarious legal status of *Daime/ayahuasca*, the current discourse on 'drugs' and anti-cult discourse, the priest did not interfere with the several hours long Work, nor did he notify any authorities, and the Work continued to its completion. This is a striking example of an interface of the Catholic Church with a new religious activity, and the priests tolerant and 'hands off' approach is in high contrast to the once pervasive control of Irish people's lives that the Roman Catholic Church had in the nation. This example is also a powerful indicator of the fluid and shifting religious field in Ireland at this time.

Santo Daime is viewed as an authentic religious/spiritual world view by *daimistas* in Ireland and I was struck by the sincerity of the practitioners. There was no evidence to support the 'drugs' discourse that describes ayahuasca religions popularly in sensationalist press coverage. The complex legal questions of whether Santo Daime is a religion and whether ayahuasca or *Daime* is a sacrament will be decided in the courts of law in the Republic of Ireland. If it is recognised as a religion then Irish *daimistas*, like those in Brazil, Holland, Italy, Peru and Spain, will be able to practise their religion freely. If not, as the Commander who was arrested said, "even if everything was going to go wrong with the legal situation, it doesn't change my right. It's just unfortunate that it will end up living under a tyranny. Which I hope is not the case" (22/5/2013).

Concluding remarks

This research took place within a socio-religious landscape in the Republic of Ireland that has experienced, and continues to experience, a far-reaching transformation. The decline of Catholic hegemony and an increasingly pluralistic religious milieu are important influences on the religious field. Re-enchantment and re-invigoration of religiosity and 'Irishness' are illuminated through the study of Santo Daime in Ireland. 'Enchanted Isle' tropes appear to be regenerated, couched within neo-pagan views of spirituality and the 'land'. Responses to the new religious movement of Santo Daime could be said to show ambivalence towards the decline of the Catholic Church but also an understanding of the close-knit association of 'Irishness' and being Catholic or what might be called Irish 'cultural Catholicism'. There appears to be a need to remove past understandings and experiences of Catholicism but, at the same time, there is a revitalisation of religious and spiritual experience through the use of ayahuasca and the Santo Daime worldview. Despite disappointments with the Catholic Church, a tolerant and bricoleur trend is evident, albeit sometimes indicating ambivalence towards Christian/ Catholic Santo Daime content. There is also

evidence of a positive resurgence of personal relationship, if not with Catholic worldviews, then with figures such as Jesus, Mary, and the Saints. Generally speaking, responses to the Catholic content of Santo Daime in both groups in Ireland might be understood by Dawson's definition of Santo Daime as a 'palimpsest' meaning that previous influences might be 'rubbed out' but are still visible underneath the overlay of new ones. However Santo Daime in Ireland might better be understood by Kuhling's (2011) suggestion, with reference to the contemporary religious field in Ireland, that it "is best grasped by taking what Saler (2006) calls an antinomial approach, an approach characterised by a 'both/and' logic rather than binary or dialectical" (Kuhling 2011, p.205).

Dawson (2013) says that a new religious movement can be a 'practical symbolic barometer' of a contemporary religious field and my research into Santo Daime in Ireland would support this statement. Regarding the Republic of Ireland, the study of new religious movements like Santo Daime can provide a lens through which to explore changing socio-religious identities in a nation where state, religion, and identity have been historically closely imbricated, and where these continue to demonstrate significant interplay.

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