



**“Now, normally, I wouldn’t be telling you this and you, I’m sure, would be happier if I wasn’t.”
The modern-day storyteller in Roddy Doyle’s *Charlie Savage* (2019)**

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Irish literature developed from a strong oral tradition of storytelling. That tradition, which goes back to the pre-Christian era, is echoed in the structure of the short-story, a vibrant genre in Irish literature, and in the many rewritings of traditional tales, formerly told by *seanchaithe* (storytellers), by writers of the *Literary Revival* such as W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, and Lady Augusta Gregory. In the Doylian novel, the heritage of the Irish oral tradition is found on many levels, but mostly in linguistic and stylistic content rather than in terms of global structure, through the incredible predominance of an oral mode of communication, in a style that can be referred to as *orature* (a term coined by Hagège, 1985). But in the thirty years that separate his first novel, *The Commitments* (1989), from his latest one, *Charlie Savage* (2019), Doyle’s reappropriation of the oral tradition has evolved considerably. From a theatrical, almost cinematographic, novel with arguably no identifiable narrator, Doyle’s *orature* has shifted to narratorial modes that create clearly identifiable attempts at communicating with the reader. The shift to online publication, be it on Facebook or on the online version of *The Irish Independent*, arguably accelerated this evolution. Indeed, the process reaches a new stage in *Charlie Savage*, with the first occurrences of direct addresses to the reader. This serial novel, published in weekly columns in *The Irish Independent*, reads as the journal of a middle-aged man engaging a conversation with the reader in a very 19th-century like manner. After an overview of the evolution of Doyle’s narratorial style, this paper intends to show that, by addressing the reader directly, Charlie Savage might very well be the modern-day *seanchaithe* that Doyle’s previous novels lacked and who finishes to anchor the author in a 21st century reappropriation of that ancient Irish tradition.

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