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If migration alters the concept of home, return migration is equally disruptive of established patterns, complicating any holistic sense of home and homeland, as two recent novels by Irish writers evince. In Colm Tóibín’s novel, *Brooklyn* (2009), the process of migration and return migration leads to a crisis of the heart as Eilis Lacey is caught between her American husband and the ignition of an Irish love story upon her return to Enniscorthy. As her sojourn in America develops, indeed, the concept of home transmutes. Alienated and dislocated she initially senses that ‘She was nobody here. It was not just that she had no friends and family; it was rather that she was a ghost in this room, in the streets on the way to work, on the shop floor. Nothing meant anything … Nothing here was part of her. It was false, empty, she thought.’¹ This perception, however, slowly gives way, as she finds new things to engage her energies. Faced with the prospect of meeting with Tony, her new beau, ‘She thought it was strange that the mere sensation of savouring the prospect of something could make her think for a while that it must be the prospect of home’.² And so it becomes for she falls in love and eventually marries him on the eve of her departure to Ireland, to deal with the fallout of the sudden death of her sister. There she finds her old home altered, itself now a shade of its presence in sepia-tinted memory: ‘she had longed so much for the familiarity of these rooms that she had presumed she would be happy and relieved to step back into them, but instead, on this first morning, all she could do was count the days before she went back.’³ As she settles back in however, America increasingly becomes itself ‘a sort of fantasy, something she could not match with the time she was spending at home. It made her feel strangely as though she were two people.’⁴ Ultimately news of her marriage percolates back to Enniscorthy, and Eilis is forced to admit she has indeed migrated, and that, as her mother plainly states ‘Eily, if you are married, you should be with

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² Ibid., 131.
³ Ibid., 204–5.
⁴ Ibid., 217.
your husband.”

Migration has relocated her homeland, and when she finally departs she notices how ‘it would be pointless to now ask for her [mother’s] blessing or whatever it was she wanted from her before she left this house.’

Returning to Ireland was no longer a homecoming; going back to Brooklyn now was.

Similar in its concern with the effect of return migration is Eoin Macnamee’s *Orchid Blue* (2010). A fictionalised account of the last murder case in Northern Ireland to result in a judicial hanging, of Robert McGladdery for the murder of Pearl Gamble in 1961, his reimagining hinges around the effect McGladdery’s time in London has on those investigating the incident. Repeatedly reference is made to the gap in his locally-known biography consequent on a brief removal to London, where his appetite for flashy clothing and, more sinisterly, for sex is located by those who remained. While his mother ‘wished with all her might that when he went to London he had stayed there and not come back to a town of decay’, in fact the locals were corroded with the jealousy the police projected onto his suspected accomplice, Copeland:

Brown cross-examined Copeland. He asked him again whether he had borrowed any clothes from Robert. He asked him if it was true that he often borrowed clothes from Robert. The King’s Road shirts and crêpe-soled shows, the fancy London duds. Robert strutting about Merchants Quay with that out-of-town look to him. Suggested that Will was jealous of Robert, the big-city mannerisms and the fancy talk he came out with, the West End patois picked up in Dean Street and Berwick Street.

This toxic parochialism culminates in McGladdery’s identification by the police as the central suspect in the case. And throughout the story parallels that of the central character the returning detective Eddie McCrink, who ‘could not escape the feeling that the murder of Pearl Gamble shared a quality with the Nude Murders he had investigated in London’.

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5 Ibid., 248. 
6 Ibid., 250. 
8 Ibid., 128.
in common, you know that?” Johnston said, “You come back here in your
fancy London duds and act the big shot. We took McGladdery down and we’ll
take you down too.”9

* 

What these novels make plain is how return migration is deceptive. It seems on
face value to re-establish pre-existing norms. It restarts the story, revives old
connections and rejects the novel relations that the expediency of movement
had necessitated. However, far from always leading to a renaissance of the
old status quo, the decision of the migrant to resurface strains the patience of
those who never left, disrupts the web of connections they had woven when
the migrant left, and raises new questions about the nature of the location
to which the migrant has been drawn back. This issue of the *Journal of Irish
and Scottish Studies* is concerned with the concept of home and the impact of
migration on homelands—new and old.

2009 was designated by the Scottish government to be the Year of Homecoming. While this was certainly an attempt to woo the Scottish diaspora into spending tourist money in the country, it equally prompted reflection on the intricate nature of homelands, old and adoptive. This issue of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* inflects this meditation by asking further what occurs after the homecoming has occurred—either after the migrant has settled in the new location and the gloss of novelty has worn thin, or when the celebrations surrounding the return of a loved one become memories and the mundane chores of daily life have to be re-established, albeit with someone whose episode away from home shapes both themselves and the understanding of them entertained by others. The process of migration in other words does not end with homecomings, in a sense it is only after the homecoming that the meaning of migration becomes apparent.

Home designates a place of course, so this issue is rightly bookended by two examinations of how the land itself is understood, in Finola O’Kane’s exploration of the role of Irish and Scottish vistas in the eighteenth-century creation of the category of the picturesque, and in Jennifer Way study of the imaginative re-workings of twentieth-century tourist images of Ireland in the work of Sean Hillen. There is also three essays, by Benjamin Bankhurst,

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9 Ibid., 256.
Jonathan O’Neill and Elizabeth Winkler concerned with the repercussions of migration for the imagination: examining such contested dominions as the racial imagery pushed forward by arguments along uncertain frontiers, and with the double narratives of history enunciated by ex-patriots who are anxious to romanticise or debunk their original homeland in encountering their new one. The construction of a new home and the contribution to maintaining the old one provides the subject of the twinned essays by Sandra Barney—with her concern for the cultural enclave of Nova Scotia—and Sarah Roddy in her analysis of the role of remittances in financing the devotional revolution in nineteenth-century Ireland. Contemporary contributions to both the economy and politics concern the essay by Nina Ray and Gary McCain and that of David Valone. Identifying the prominent part played by migration in the tourism strategies of modern Scotland complements the concern to articulate the experience of diaspora as a political gesture in the adoptive state.

Yet migration is at its heart an intensely personal experience: destabilising, exciting, isolating and empowering. This is then the subject of the essays by Christina Morin and Mayy Elhayawi, who in examining the differing responses of Regina Maria Roche and Tom Paulin, bring to the fore how the processes of migration and resettlement can be at once imaginatively enriching and psychologically traumatic. In engaging with individual creative responses to mass migrations, these essays anchor our understandings in the consequences for people and places: the reimagining of possibilities and the renovation of the old practices. The story is never entirely without cost or consequence, but understanding the character, form and content of the Irish and Scottish diasporas remains an integral part of any attempt to comprehend these mobile, transitory, migratory societies.

This number of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* brings to a close a sequence of issues which are the product of an AHRC funded project on Irish and Scottish Diasporas since 1600. In this, it stands alongside previous collections concerned with ‘Gallic Connections: Irish and Scottish Encounters with France’; ‘Exceptional Peoples? Irish and Scots on the Frontier’; and ‘Migrating Minds’. I wish on this occasion to thank all those who have contributed to the conferences, seminars and colloquia that constituted much of the working life of the project. So too, I wish to acknowledge the extensive assistance I have received from Drs Rosalyn Trigger and Paul Shanks, without whose cheer and imaginative commitment to the cycle of events it would have been substantially poorer in content and less efficient in completion. Similarly, I want to note the energy and enthusiasm of Dr Jonathan Cameron and
Professor Cairns Craig, whose hard work and skill have made the Research Institute a focal point for critical debate across the disciplinary and geographic divides.

Michael Brown

University of Aberdeen
Peripheral Landscapes?
Ireland, Scotland and the Picturesque

Finola O’Kane

In the first half of the eighteenth century the Anglo-Irish ascendancy advocated improvement as a means of civilizing the landscape and inhabitants of Ireland. What defined Ireland, and in particular justified her colonisation, was her evident lack of application in improving herself. Charles Smith, writing from the English point of view in 1756, described ‘the Irish nation’ as ‘universally acknowledged to be of great antiquity’ with her inhabitants wanting ‘neither wit, nor valour’ and (unlike other heathen countries) having ‘received the Christian faith as early as most countries of this western world’. Although the Irish were ‘great lovers of music, poetry, and many kinds of polite literature’ and in possession of ‘a country abounding with all things necessary for the civil life of man’, Smith also found it ‘surprising’ that the Irish had ‘never erected any houses of brick or stone, before the reign of Henry II … or at least a very few’. Smith also claimed that ‘neither did any of them [the Irish] … plant either gardens or orchards, inclose or improve their lands, live together in settled villages or towns, or make any provision for posterity’. This situation, notwithstanding any love of the arts, was evidently ‘contrary to all common sense and reason’, and skimming over any contentious religious issues, Smith concluded that a general native ignorance of the value of improvement and some strange inheritance traditions involving gavelkind, rather than primogeniture, had therefore required the improvement (and colonisation) of Ireland by those who knew best how to go about it.

William Gilpin, the author of the key tour books which established the vogue for touring eighteenth-century Britain, wrote of crossing the border

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1 I am grateful to Dr. Michael Brown for allowing me to develop this paper for the Irish and Scottish Migration and Settlement: Environmental Frontiers Conference, AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, 21 June, 2008. The themes addressed are also discussed in my forthcoming publication with Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art: Ireland and the Picturesque; Design, Landscape Painting and Tourism in Ireland, 1700-1830.


3 Charles Smith, The Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry (Dublin, 1756), xiii – xiv.
into Scotland: ‘On entering Scotland, what makes the first impression on the picturesque eye, are those vast tracts of land, which we meet with entirely in a state of nature’. These areas of land were ‘totally untouched by art’. In contrast the ‘wild’ English scenes were ‘generally intersected by the boundaries of property (consisting chiefly of loose stone walls) which run along the wastes, and sides of mountains; and ascend often to their summits.’ The stone walls did ‘not only injure the idea of wildness, but introduce a great deformity. Their rectilinear figures break the great flowing lines of nature, and injure her features, like those whimsical scratches, and pricked lines, which we sometimes see on the faces of Indians.’ Scotland had hardly ‘any of these intersections’ and Gilpin concluded that wherever ‘man appears with his tolls, deformity follows in his steps. His spade and his plough, his hedge and his furrow; make shocking encroachments on the simplicity, and elegance of landscape’.

Two years later in 1778 Thomas Campbell wrote of an anonymous improved landscape park in County Tipperary in Ireland that ‘levelling hills and raising mounds, at a vast expence of money, is like the custom of the Indians, who, at the expence of their blood, slit their ears and gash their faces, to improve their beauty.’ The park was situated ‘between Cashel and Tipperary’ and ‘the largest and best planted’ in the kingdom with the Galtee mountains ‘set at such a due distance, that they are the finest termination for the prospect a painter could desire’. Yet ‘behind the house’ lay ‘a square parterre of flowers, with terraces thickly studded with busts and statues’ and ‘on the acclivity of the hill’ were ‘little fish ponds, pond above pond.’ The whole park had been ‘thrown into squares and parallelograms … where if a hillock dared to interpose its little head, it was cut off as an excrescence, or at least cut through’. Images of cruelty to landscape persisted, and Campbell could ‘not help wishing, that instead of torturing the place to the plan, they had accommodated the plan to the place’.

Campbell’s anonymous park was Thomastown Castle, Co. Tipperary, whose ruins still gaze at the Galtee mountains [Insert new Fig. 1]. In 1790 it was described more positively by Joseph Cooper Walker in his 1790 Essay on the Rise and Progress of Gardening in Ireland:

Nor should I omit the pensile gardens of Thomastown in the County of Tipperary, which were laid out in the reign of Charles II. They lie

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principally on the gentle declivity of a hill, resting on terraces, and filled with ‘statues thick as trees’. A long fish pond, sleeping under ‘a green mantle’ between two rectilineous banks, appears in the midst. And in another corner stands a verdant theatre (once the scene of several dramatic exhibitions) displaying all the absurdity of the architecture of gardening.

Despite the softer language Walker comes to much the same conclusion as Campbell, summing up Thomastown as a place where ‘our [the Irish] ancestors, governed by the false taste which they imbibed from the English, disfigure, with unsuitable ornaments, the simple garb of nature’.

Fig. 1: John Preston Neale, Neale’s Views of Seats, Vol. 2/2, London, 1819: ‘Thomastown House, Tipperary, Ireland’

Many commentators in seventeenth-century Ireland and Scotland wrote of the savage character of the inhabitants, a characteristic that seemed to stem naturally from the unimproved character of the landscape in which they lived. Theories of improvement then tended to project uncouth character onto

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the landscape itself, with the natives acknowledged as being influenced and disadvantaged by their environment, but more separate from their setting. Gilpin and Campbell subvert this enlightened progression by equating polite improvement with such violent practices as beheading, torture and facial disfigurement. When such accepted indications of savage behaviour became one with the polite tradition of landscaping, much of the accepted logic of improvement began to unravel. If the once wild landscape of the edge was more civilized than that of the centre, why should it be improved and colonised?

Gilpin made ‘a distinction among countries in a state of nature’:

Vast, extensive, flat countries, tho covered with wood, like many of the maritime parts of America, cannot possess much beauty … The only countries, which are picturesque in a state of nature, are such as consist of variety both of soil, and ground… Rivers also, and lakes belong to a state of nature. In this way the face of England is varied; and was certainly on the whole, more beautiful in a state of nature, than it can be now in a state of cultivation. Scotland, and Ireland are both countries of this kind. Such also are Switzerland, Italy, many parts of Germany; and I suppose, in general, most of northern, and eastern parts of Europe.7

Gilpin links Ireland and Scotland in this extract, as clear examples of countries in ‘a state of nature’ and with greater conviction than the rather vague ‘northern and eastern parts of Europe’. They were certainly considered to belong to the same drama. In his first significant publication, Observations on the River Wye from 1782, he had acknowledged that people travelled ‘for various purposes, to explore the culture of soils, to view the curiosities of art, to survey the beauties of nature, and to learn the manners of men, their politics and modes of life.’8 This book became highly influential by proposing a ‘new object of pursuit; that of examining the face of a country by the rules of picturesque beauty’, thereby ‘opening up the sources of pleasure which are derived from the comparison.’9 Gilpin was the key landscape theorist

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8 William Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty: Made in the Summer of the Year 1770 (1782; London, 1800), 1.
9 Ibid., 1.
in promoting the experience of the countryside as a novel leisure pursuit. In Linda Colley’s words ‘to appreciate “the remotest parts of Britain”, as the guidebooks called them, in the proper manner, as to appreciate Rome, or Florence, or Paris, one needed to have acquired a fashionable aesthetic education: a knowledge of Edmund Burke’s theory of the sublime, a properly developed understanding of the picturesque and the ability to read key texts like William Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye* (1782).” Hannah More, the writer and philanthropist, became ‘an arrant stroller amusing myself by sailing down the beautiful river Wye, looking at abbeys and castle, with Mr Gilpin in my hand to teach me to criticize, and talk of foregrounds, and distances, and perspectives, and prominences, with all the cant of connoisseurship, and then to subdue my imagination, which had been not a little disordered with this enchanted scenery’. As More reveals, Gilpin structured the experience of the natural landscape, bringing a prescribed pattern to a way of seeing the world and its creation. Real landscape became an image of reality, a picture of itself.

William Gilpin’s characterisation of ‘picturesque beauty’ as ‘a phrase but little understood’ also applies today. He associated it ‘precisely’ with ‘that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture’, writing that ‘neither grounds laid out by art, nor improved by agriculture, are of this kind. However, the picturesque is a slippery subject, and Gilpin could not avoid diversions leading beyond the structuring of painted views. A more detailed synopsis of the picturesque is contained in his 1792 publication *Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, with its seminal ‘Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape’. Significantly, Gilpin used Irish picturesque sites in this publication to define picturesque beauty as a whole:

Sublimity alone cannot make an object picturesque… The spiry pinnacles of the mountain, and the castle-like arrangement of the

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rock, give no peculiar pleasure to the picturesque eye. It is fond of the simplicity of nature; and sees most beauty in her most usual forms. The Giant’s Causeway in Ireland may strike it as a novelty; but the lake of Killarney attracts its attention. It would range with supreme delight among the sweet vales of Switzerland; but would view only with a transient glance, the Glaciers of Savoy.\textsuperscript{14}

Gilpin never wrote a tour guide to any Irish landscape but he considered it to be the ideal picturesque landscape, its status untarnished by the analysis demanded by close encounter. The dilemma for the landscape theorist and travel writer lay in the irreconcilable perspectives of tourist and native and also those of ordered improvement and wild, unimproved and natural character. In Scotland, if never in Ireland, he demonstrated this inherent instability, where his initial assessment of improved landscape as a form of savage behavior, was soon subsumed by his identity as a civilised English visitor: ‘Tho the union of the two kingdoms put an end to the ravages on the borders; yet the manners of the inhabitants, in some respects suffered little change. Their native laziness, and inattention to all the arts of husbandry, remained’. Writing of Mr Graham of Netherby Hall in Cumbria, Gilpin approved of how he had set ‘these indolent inhabitants of the borders’ to work like other [English] labourers. ‘To bring about this great change, Mr Graham’ had found it ‘necessary to rule his subjects with a rod of iron’, concluding that while Graham ‘makes them labourers, he keeps them slaves.’\textsuperscript{15} In Scotland improvements could again be praised independent of their aesthetic or picturesque appeal and he reported that ‘contrary to the usual practice of the Scotch nobility, the duke of Queensbury’ granted ‘leases of his farms’, building ‘comfortable houses for his tenants … within sight of his castle’. While this was ‘not picturesque’ the houses had ‘much higher species of beauty’ by ‘adorn[ing] a country much more than the most admired monuments of taste.’\textsuperscript{16}

However, much like Thomas Campbell in Tipperary, when Gilpin described the environs of Queensbury House, social justice had little sway, and the image of the deformed face reappeared:

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{15} William Gilpin, \textit{Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty made in the year 1772} (3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., 2 vols, London, 1808), II, 128.
\textsuperscript{16} Gilpin, \textit{Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain particularly The Highlands of Scotland}, II, 94.
It is amazing what contrivance hath been used to deform all this beauty… The descent from the house has a substratum of solid rock, which has been cut into three or four terraces at immense expence… How much less expensive is it, in general, to improve the face of nature, than to deform it! In improving we gently follow: in deforming, we violently oppose.17

The contorted routes by which landscape aesthetics advanced over the long eighteenth century were compounded by the artificial construction of picturesque routes and tours where the view or image became more important than the reality it depicted. The writer’s dislocation from the reality of living in the landscape can be easily appreciated:

Marks of the inhabitants must not be carried to the length of cultivation,

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which is too mild for the ruggedness of the place and has besides an 
air of cheerfulness inconsistent with the character of terror…yews 
and shabby firs should be scattered about it; and sometimes, to show 
a withering or a dead tree, it may for a space be cleared entirely away.\textsuperscript{18}

This problematic situation was masked by casting the landscape as a stage 
set with buildings, plants and people as its dramatic characters. The theorist 
Thomas Whateley wrote that ‘the terrors of a scene in nature are like those of 
a dramatic representation’.\textsuperscript{19} The ‘small single building’ was a valuable addition 
to a landscape scene because it ‘divert[ed] the attention at once from the 
sameness of the extent’, although ‘the design must not be apparent; the merit 
of a cottage applied to this purpose consists in its being free from suspicion’.\textsuperscript{20}

Continuing with the theme of buildings as characters, Whateley advised that 
‘the interior of buildings should not be disregarded, it is by their exterior that 
they become objects; and sometimes by the one, and sometimes by the other 
and sometimes by both, they are entitled to be considered as characters’.\textsuperscript{21}

Conscious of the growing overlay between real landscape and its representation 
Whateley sought to maintain some hierarchy between them: ‘Gardening is 
etitled to a place of considerable rank among the liberal arts. It is superior 
to landscape painting as a reality to a representation.’\textsuperscript{22} Improvement engaged 
with reality, the picturesque with its representation. Where the gap between 
the two became too great (as in the more poverty-stricken peripheries), both 
became unstable.

\textbf{I: Plants and Planter}s

In eighteenth-century Ireland, there was no consensus about who was 
responsible for planting trees and who for cutting them down. Irish poems 
by Gaelic poets laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of the coloniser and 
not the colonised:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{18} Thomas Whately, \textit{Observations on Modern Gardening} (Dublin, 1770), 87.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 94.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{22} Interestingly this quotation attributed to ‘Wheatley’ was used as the forward to the 
following: Joseph Walker Cooper, ‘Essay on the Rise and Progress of Gardening 
in Ireland’ in Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Vo. IV ‘Antiquities’, Dublin 1787 – 1800
\end{flushright}
Ach anois tá an choill dá gearradh, triallfaimid thar caladh,
is a Sheáin Uí Dhuibhir an Gheanna, tá tú gan géim [game]23

But now the wood is being cut down, we will go abroad,
and Seán Ó Duibhir of the Glen, you are now without game24

The coloniser laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of the ignorant natives. Writing on the barren quality of the Highlands in 1775, Samuel Johnson found one island ‘generally naked of shade, but it is naked by neglect; for the laird has an orchard, and very large forest trees grow about his house.’25 This publication, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, lacks the picturesque sensibility William Gilpin later tried to foster. ‘It is natural’ wrote Johnson,

in traversing this gloom of desolation, to inquire, whether something may not be done to give nature a more cheerful face, and whether those hills and moors that afford heath cannot with a little care and labour bear something better. The first thought that occurs is to cover them with trees, for that in many of these naked regions trees will grow, is evident, because stumps and roots are yet remaining; and the speculatist hastily proceeds to censure that negligence and laziness that has omitted for so long a time so easy an improvement.26

Any consensus on plants and planters was also absent in Scotland. A Mr Dalrymple wrote to James Boswell to correct Boswell’s account of Scotland’s woodlands published in his 1785 *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, with Samuel Johnson*. Dalrymple’s comments were published in a later edition, and reveal how planting was political:

For example, the friends of the old family say that the aera of planting is placed too late, at the Union of the two kingdoms. I am known to be no friend of the old family; yet I would place the aera of planting at the Restoration; after the murder of Charles I had been expiated in the anarchy which succeeded it.

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24 The translation is my own.
26 Ibid., II, 324.
Before the Restoration, few trees were planted, unless by the monastick drones: their successors (and worthy patriots they were,) the barons, first cut down the trees, and then sold the estates. The gentleman at St Andrews, who said that there were but two trees in Fife, ought to have added, that the elms of Balmorino were sold within these twenty years, to make pumps for fire engines.27

Johnson and Boswell do exhibit some of visitor’s shifting ambivalence to improvement, so evident in William Gilpin’s writings:

Mr Robertson sent a servant with us, to shew us through Lord Findlater’s wood, by which our way was shortened, and we saw some part of his domain, which is indeed admirably laid out. Dr Johnson did not choose to walk through it. He always said, that he was not come to Scotland to see fine places, of which there were enough in England; but wild objects, mountains, waterfalls, peculiar manners; in short, things which he had not seen before. I have a notion that he at no time has had much taste for rural beauties. I have myself very little.28

Such opinions do not accord with the earlier criticism of the ‘negligence and laziness that has omitted for so long a time so easy an improvement [as tree-planting].’29 Boswell also appears to have been attempting to temper Johnson’s comments and reputation:

As we travelled onwards from Montrose, we had the Grampion hills in our view; and some good land around us, but void of trees and hedges. Dr Johnson has said ludicrously, in his *Journey*, that the hedges were of stone; for instead of the verdant thorn to refresh the eye, we found the bare wall or dike intersecting the prospect. He observed, that it was wonderful to see a country so divested, so denuded of trees.30

Johnson and Boswell did not escape Irish censure either, probably because Irish readers could appreciate that such criticism had long been applied to their

28 Ibid., 92–3.
29 Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, II, 324.
30 Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 57.
own landscapes and themselves. Thomas Conolly, Ireland’s richest commoner, criticized ‘old Johnson & Boswell travelling like fools in the Autumnal Months of the Year when the Climate is Bad & the Sea tempestuous.’ Direct and competitive comparisons were also made between Irish and Scottish sites, particularly between Fingal’s Cave and the Giant’s Causeway. In his 1776 *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides* the pedantic Thomas Pennant followed his measurements of the basalt columns in Fingal’s Cave with a comparison of its attributes with those of the Giant’s Causeway:

The stone of which the pillars are formed, is a coarse kind of Basaltes, very much resembling the Giant’s Causeway in Ireland, though none of them are near so neat as specimens of the latter, which I have seen at the British Museum; owing chiefly to the color, which in ours is a dirty brown, in the Irish a fine black: indeed the whole production seems very much to resemble the Giant’s Causeway; with which I should willingly compare it, had I any account of the former before me.

Scotland was also present physically in the design of some Irish landscapes. Downhill, the seat of Lord Bristol in County Derry was ‘an extraordinary Mansion, upon a high cliff near the Sea, without Trees, open to the Atlantick, but with Distant Views, of the Giants Causeway, some parts of Scotland & the Islands of Isla & Jura, part of the Hebrides’.

II: The Landscape of the Periphery

William Gilpin awarded particular significance to coastline and edge in the hierarchy of landscape beauty:

On the whole, therefore, the coasts of this island perhaps, especially its northern parts, are equal to any other in that species of grandeur which is most suited to picturesque use. I have heard indeed that the coasts of the Mediterranean, of the Egean, and other seas, which are less

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31 Thomas Conolly to anon. uncle, 19 November 1786, Trinity College Dublin, Mss. 3974–3984a, no. 912.
33 Thomas Conolly to anon. uncle, 19 November 1786.
buffeted by raging storms than ours, have more beauty … But I should suppose the coasts of Britain, especially if we add those of Ireland, are not behind them in beauty and picturesque grandeur.34

Both Scotland and Ireland were peripheries of the British Isles. Contemporary theorists and tourists connected the two areas due both to the overt consequences of this geographical position and the perceived similarities between both landscapes and inhabitants. Travel writers incorporating lengthy histories into their publications could not avoid the historical links between the two regions:

Now, though it is true, that the Scots came originally from Ireland, yet it is to be observed, that these Soldiers were most of them Scots Highlanders; who, on all Occasions, go over to France, and list among the Irish Troops; nay in the late Wars, it has been observed, that whole Regiments of Highlanders have been raised for the Service; who, when they were got Abroad, would take the first Opportunity to desert, and go over to the French, and to list in the Irish Battalions, their original Countrymen and who still speak the same Language. But in the present War, our Administration have had the Address to employ whole Regiments of these brave People, to much better and more loyal and truly British Purposes.35

Most of the travel literature, both visual and literary, and that which includes both, documents Ireland separately from ‘The Island of Great Britain’ establishing another peripheral layer projected outwards from the central core. Charles Smith described Kerry in his 1756 publication *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Kerry* as ‘a kind of terra Incognita to the greater part of Europe’, and this perception continued long past this date.36 Another example is William Fordyce Mavor’s *The British Tourist’s or Traveller’s Pocket Companion, through England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*, first published in 1800.37

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A compendium of synopses of the principal tours, Mavor’s stated aim was to ‘collect into one focus, the scattered rays of information … form[ing] a galaxy of the blended lights, which distinguished Modern Tourists have thrown on the British Isles’. According to all inhabitants of the British Isles the title of ‘natives’ he considered all to be now ‘happily united [by the Act of Union of Britain and Ireland 1800]’. He also awarded some significance to travel writers in having brought this union about, writing that the countries ‘have been linked more closely in the social tie, by the intercourse which has thus taken place; and the judicious and liberal sentiments promulgated, through the medium of the press, by a Pennant, a Newte, and a Sullivan’ which had ‘manifestly tended to lessen prejudices, to obviate error, and to extend knowledge’.

Tourist literature was also credited with advancing ‘improvements, also, in arts, agriculture, and domestic economy’ having been ‘freely imparted by ingenious tourists, to such as, without such aids, might long have been ignorant of their existence’. Johnson’s remarks on Scotland still grated however; ‘The great, but bigotted, Johnson, “who was born the child of Prejudice, nor weaned at the hour of his death”, by his petulant remarks on Scotland, roused the pride of the natives into exertion … and, perhaps, without intending it, proved himself one of their best friends.’

In 1759 Emily Fitzgerald, the young English-born countess of Kildare, found her new home county very ‘like the country of England’ having ‘no stone walls, no miserable looking cabins near it - in short … vastly pretty’. By the late eighteenth century the landscape theorists William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price had together undermined such enthusiasm for designing all landscapes to resemble the landscape of England. In his book *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* Stephen Daniels states that ‘relationships between Herefordshire and Siluria, England and Albion, modern and ancient Britain, were not settled; consciously English and Welsh interests framed them in various ways’. At the further reaches of Great Britain’s borders, Ireland and Scotland were even more unsettled, and the process of framing views, whether physical, pictorial

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38 Ibid., I, iv.
39 Ibid., I, ix.
40 Ibid., I, x. Mavor inserted a footnote at this point to remark: ‘Why had not the reflections of Twiss the same effect on the Irish?’
41 Emily Kildare to James Kildare, 9 May 1759 in Brian Fitzgerald, (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster* (3 vols, Dublin, 1953–7), I, 76.
or philosophical, more contorted. It was also in these regions that the tension between the aestheticized landscape and its inhabitants was at its most acute. Thus the earl of Shelbourne, touring Killarney, County Kerry in 1772, found the local inhabitants to be ‘Highlanders in manner and character’ but ‘without the only virtue in Highlanders – attachment to a chief’, referring to himself. Daniels also maintains that ‘an understated latent source of picturesque power in Price’s and Knight’s writings is located in the history of Herefordshire as a border country between England and Wales’. This ensured that ‘the county continued to be a zone of transition between English and Welsh culture’. The need to define the three sister kingdoms of Great Britain towards the end of the eighteenth century saw an increase of interest in the border zones, where such questions of identity could be explored and teased out and Gilpin’s writings reveal that the landscapes of the periphery were not peripheral to the development of picturesque thought. Picturesque theory helped to separate, define and reinforce the three kingdoms by questioning the precepts upon which improvement (and sometime colonisation) was founded. The pre-eminent nineteenth-century landscape designer J.H. Loudon ‘revived the picturesque controversy at the turn of the century to launch his career, declaring himself for Price against Repton, and a British, as opposed to English view of landscape improvement.’ Loudon then made a virtue of his own peripheral identity by ‘transplanting a so-called Scotch style of husbandry (along with staff, “North Britons” he called them) into English estates.’ By promoting an aesthetic of separate yet constituent British landscapes and by connecting the peripheral landscapes to offset the pull of the centre, landscape design became harnessed to the project of union. The constituent kingdoms had to be represented as distinct landscapes before they could be

44 Daniels, _Humphry Repton_, 105.
45 Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, the Knight of Glin, _Ireland’s Painters_ (London, 2002), 135: ‘[George] Barret’s understanding of North Wales must be due to his early appreciation of similar Irish landscape and he is therefore in the forefront of the discovery of the Welsh picturesque view. For instance, Paul Sandby only visited the area for the first time in 1770 and, apart from Richard Wilson, a Welshman, who was painting Wales with an Italianate eye, Irish painters such as Barret painted it much earlier than Sandby (who is sometimes regarded as a pioneer in this romantic genre), because it was where they landed on their way to London.’ Note 40 in this publication also cites Peter Hughes, ‘Paul Sandby and Sir William Watkins Wynne’, _Burlington Magazine_, 115 (1972), 459–66.
46 Daniels, _Humphry Repton_, 143.
47 Ibid., 143.
united. Regional and border landscapes may also have been given distinct or harmonising identities not only to effect changes to their own visages, but to place into heightened profile that of the centre. Landscape design and theory played a part in developing these constituent identities, and also in subverting them. Taste, fashion and the history of ideas however, do not always conform to the dominant viewpoint. Subverting the pattern, the peripheral viewpoint at times indicates where society would like to stand in order to admire the view.

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The formation of an independent United States in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the attendant development of a new republican nationalism greatly transformed the character and identity of Irish America. Like all ethnic groups in the new nation, the Irish had to recalibrate their preconceptions and ideas on government, social hierarchy and culture in light of the American Revolution. Not only were the years between 1760 and 1820 a time of cultural and political redefinition across the country, they also marked a period of transition between the largely Protestant Irish America of the eighteenth century and the Catholic/Gaelic model that superceded it by the 1840s. The last major study of the Irish in America during this period, published nearly thirty years ago, was David Noel Doyle’s *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*. In it, Doyle challenged the over-simplistic division between the two Irish Americas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Doyle, the Irish Diaspora of the revolutionary decades was a distinct entity defined by the fractured social and cultural environment of the era. By abandoning the neat periodisation and accompanying ethno-religious categories established by previous scholars, Doyle reinvigorated the question of what it meant to be Irish in late eighteenth-century America. He noted that the study of ethnic identity during this period was complicated by the social changes brought about by the Revolution itself. ‘The revolution’ Doyle observed ‘was pre-eminently American: in a sense the first collective and decisive definition of American nationality’.¹ Building on Doyle’s work this article explores how Irish ethnicity functions during this period of transformation.

The Irish presence in late eighteenth-century America was large. From 1700 to 1820 nearly 30 per cent of all European migrants (estimated between 250,000 to 500,000) to the British North American colonies were Irish.²

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vast majority of these men and women were Ulster Presbyterians (known in American historiography and referred to throughout this essay as the Scots Irish). The Revolution positively redefined many of the negative characteristics commonly associated with Irish Presbyterians, particularly their supposed historical republicanism. The positive reclamation of the word ‘republican’ had profound consequences for both how the Scots Irish viewed themselves and how they were viewed by society at large. Demographic change also fundamentally altered the makeup of Irish America and, consequently, its relationship with mainstream American society. The closing decade of the eighteenth century, for example, brought a new disproportionately visible type of Irish immigrant to the streets of Philadelphia and New York—the radical republican exile. The early nineteenth century also marked a shift in the religious and geographic character of Irish immigration to the United States. From the 1810s onwards the Ulster Presbyterian majority among Irish migrants became a plurality in the face of increasing numbers of Catholics from both the north and southwest.

Scholars increasingly see the late eighteenth century as a period of relatively strong inter-denominational cohesion within the national Irish community compared to the sectarian tensions that would divide it along religious lines from the late 1820s onward. Recently, Kerby Miller claimed that the Revolution ‘accelerated Ulster Presbyterian immigrants’ tendency to embrace—and of Anglo-Americans to perceive—a generic and positive “Irish” identity.’ Following in the path laid out by Doyle and Miller, this article examines the rise and fall of this positive Irish identity, or sense of belonging between people of Irish ancestry, in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America. It begins in the closing years of the Seven Years War when Irish-Americans in Pennsylvania increasingly expressed their Irish ethnicity positively in the face of widespread anti-Scottish sentiment. From there the article turns to the revolutionary decades to trace both the rising popular recognition of this inclusive identity (one that could briefly embrace Catholics) within Irish-

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3 Ibid., 151.
4 Kerby Miller, “‘Scotch-Irish’ Ethnicity in Early America: Its Regional and Political Origins’ in Kerby A. Miller, Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration (Dublin, 2008), 134. For differing meanings of ‘Irishness’ to immigrants to America see chapter 8 in the same volume: “Scotch-Irish”, “Black Irish”, and “Real Irish”: Emigrants and Identities in the Old South’, 142–5. For a discussion on the usefulness of the term ‘Scotch-Irish’ see Miller’s ‘Ulster Presbyterians and the “Two Traditions” in Ireland and America’ in Lee and Casey (eds), Making the Irish American, 255–60.
America as well as a persistent ambivalence, if not hostility, to it from outside observers. Finally, this study examines how the arrival of radical refugees from the failed 1798 Irish rising and popular discomfort with increasing Catholic immigration began to dissolve the broad consensus that united Irish America in the revolutionary decades.

Moreover, it is important to remember that Irish-American self-perception was influenced by outside views and opinions. Collective identity construction is not an insular phenomenon negotiated wholly within the communities undergoing the process. Groups define themselves against the supposed cultural and social traits of others while simultaneously reacting to how they believe they are perceived by wider society. Imagined ethnic cohesion in pluralistic societies is often arrived at partially through a community’s confrontation with the stereotypes employed by other, usually socially dominant, groups. This article examines both positive expressions of Irish ethnicity as well as anti-Irish prejudice in America from 1760 to 1820 in order to sketch broad trends in Irish-American self-imagining. It argues that periods of social tension forced Irish-Americans to redefine the boundaries of their community. Confrontation with other groups competing to define the boundaries of the national community forced migrants and their progeny to think about what it meant to be Irish in the early national America.

I: Irish-American Ethnicity in the late Colonial Period

Upon arrival in North America during the early stages of Ulster immigration many migrants found it socially beneficial to jettison their Irishness. Shortly after leading a group of Irish Presbyterians across the Atlantic to found the township of Londonderry New Hampshire in 1718, the Rev. James MacGregor wrote to Governor Samuel Shute of Massachusetts. He complained, ‘We are surprised to hear ourselves termed *Irish* people, when we so frequently ventured our all, for the British crown and liberties, against the Irish Papists’.

On the crest of the 1728 famine migrations an Anglican minister in Delaware observes the arrival of ‘great numbers of Irish (who usually call themselves Scotch-Irish) have translated themselves and their families from the north of Ireland into the Province of Pennsylvania.’ After 1750, however, the strategy

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5 Quoted in Edward L. Parker, *History of Londonderry, Comprising the Towns of Derry and Londonderry, N.H.* (Boston, 1851), 68.

6 Reverend William Becket, quoted in Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial*
of playing-up one’s Scottish ancestry at the expense of an Irish background as a way of gaining social currency within wider society lost much of its appeal to Scots Irish migrants and their progeny. Throughout the Anglophone colonies, Scotland and Scots became associated with disloyalty, rebellion and naked opportunism following the failed Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745/6. Later events confirmed these common prejudices. The popularity of John Wilkes and the widely accepted belief that the Tory Prime Minster and Scotsman, John Stuart, 3\textsuperscript{rd} earl of Bute, exercised undue influence over George III only intensified anti-Scottish feeling in America.\footnote{Pauline Maier, ‘John Wilkes and American Disillusionment with Britain’, \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Ser., 20 (1973), 376, 382. For more on Wilkes and anti-Scottish feeling see Linda Colley, \textit{Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 – 1837} (New Haven, 1992), 105 – 17.} In light of these developments, older stereotypes regarding Scottish religious fanaticism and supposed republican sympathies re-emerged in contemporary politics and culture.

Multiple examples of Scots Irish willingness to emphasise their Irish heritage emerged following the Paxton Boy disturbances in western Pennsylvania.\footnote{For a closer analysis of anti-Irish rhetoric during the Paxton debate see Benjamin Bankhurst, ‘A Looking-Glass for Presbyterians: Recasting a Prejudice in Late Colonial Pennsylvania’, \textit{The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography}, 133 (2009), 317 – 48.} In the winter of 1763/4 a mob of predominately Scots Irish settlers viciously murdered two groups of unarmed Conestoga Indians who they accused of participating in Pontiac’s rising the previous summer. When the government seemed to favour the rights of the few remaining Conestogas over the interests of white Settlers, the Paxton Boys and their supporters marched on the provincial capital. They were persuaded to disband shortly before reaching their destination by a government delegation headed by Benjamin Franklin, who promised that their grievances would be aired before the legislature. Because these events occurred during an Assembly election year, the issues regarding colonial governance that they brought to the surface resulted in the largest pamphlet debate held in the province since its founding.\footnote{For a more detailed narrative and analysis of the social ramifications of the Conestoga Massacres and the Paxton Boys’ march on Philadelphia see Kevin Kenny, \textit{Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment} (Oxford, 2009); and Brooke Hindle, ‘The March of the Paxton Boys’, \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Ser., 3 (1946), 461 – 86.}

Some celebrated Paxton boys as frontier patriots protecting their British liberties from the encroachments of a corrupt Quaker oligarchy in Philadelphia. Emissaries of the Paxton Boys were quick to capitalise on this
image by calling for greater representation for the western counties in the colonial legislature.10 Patrick Griffin has convincingly shown that the Paxton Boys justified the Conestoga Massacres and the march on Philadelphia by appealing to a unifying discourse of Britishness. In particular, they claimed they had acted to protect their right to life and property. The experience of Irish settlers in Pennsylvania during periods of frontier conflict, Griffin suggests, ‘revealed both the liberating and frightening implications of rights discourse.’11 In order to demonstrate that they were indeed freeborn Britons acting in the best interest of the colony, the Paxton Boys and their supporters first had to establish their loyal credentials as Protestant Irishmen.

Pro-Paxton partisans alluded to Irish Presbyterian support for William of Orange in his struggle to secure the throne from James II during the Williamite wars of 1689—91. This allowed them to get around accusations of disloyalty directed at the Paxton Boys on the basis of their Scottish ancestry. Unlike the Scots whose Tory loyalties continually manifested in rebellion throughout the eighteenth century, Paxton pamphleteers spun Irish Protestant support for William as true commitment to the core principles of the Glorious Revolution—namely the Protestant succession and a balanced constitution. Two anti-Quaker pamphlets published in 1764, for example, made specific reference to the Paxton Boys’ forbearers serving at the Williamite garrison of Enniskillen in 1689.12 By linking the Paxton Boys to Williamite loyalty, these authors located the march on Philadelphia within the larger Whig narrative of progressive British history. These pamphleteers cast Irish Protestants—whether at home or in America—as contentious activists striving to protect their liberties as freeborn British subjects from tyrannical encroachment.

The link between Irishness and Whiggish activism did not only apply to Presbyterians, nor were they the only ones to endorse such an association. In at least one instance the adoption of Irish identity temporarily obfuscated deep resentment between Irish Protestant ethnic groups. Rev. Thomas Barton, the Ulster-born Anglican minister in Lancaster Pennsylvania—the site of the second Conestoga massacre—wrote an early defense of the Paxton Boys in which he claimed that they had acted reasonably given the Quakers mismanagement

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10 Matthew Smith, et al., A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1764), 10–11.
12 An Historical Account, of the late Disturbance, between the Inhabitants of the Back Settlements; of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphians, &c. (Philadelphia, 1764), 5; A Battle! A Battle! A Battle of Squirt; Where no Man is kill’d, And no Man is Hurt! (Philadelphia, 1764), 8.
of western affairs. Barton’s private correspondence, however, reveals that he abhorred the murder of the Conestogas and disliked his Presbyterian neighbours. Given these reservations, the reasons for his taking up his pen in defense of his Presbyterian countrymen and women remain a mystery. Perhaps he was persuaded to do so by the Anglican leadership in Philadelphia who at that time were aligned with the Presbyterians in a political coalition against the Quaker-dominated Assembly. Or he might have done it out of sincere concern for his flock who, like their Presbyterian neighbours, bore the brunt of recent Indian attacks and blamed the Quaker leadership for their suffering. Regardless of why he wrote the document, Barton made it clear that he did so as an Irishman. He concluded the pamphlet with the remark, ‘Dated from my Farm-House, March 17, 1764. A Day Dedicated to LIBERTY and St Patrick’.

The positive Irish image propagated in pro-Paxton pamphlets was further developed in one of the most detailed caricatures printed in Philadelphia at the height of the debate. *The German Bleeds & Bears the Furs*, created by Henry Dawkins, was a striking piece of propaganda illustrating the consequences of supposed Quaker indifference towards, and exploitation of, western whites (see Image 1). In the print, Dawkins depicts a nightmarish landscape in the aftermath of an Indian raid on a frontier settlement. The foreground is strewn with corpses, including a woman with her eyes gauged from their sockets and a scalped child, while in the background the viewer can make out a burning farmhouse. The print depicts two men riding upon the back and shoulders of western settlers identified by their ethnic background as a ‘German’ and ‘Hibernian’ in the script below the image. The second figure—the German—appears to be carrying his burden, a smiling Indian, with great difficulty. He is pictured blindfolded and bloodied, with a rope tied around his neck that is held at the other end by the rider in front of

15 This is the view expressed in ibid., 496–7.
16 [Barton], *The Conduct of the Paxton-Men*, 34.
him. Fatigued, he has accepted his situation and walks groaning with his arms dangling limply in front of him. Dawkins’ intent here, as observed by Peter Silver, was to help cement a western anti-Assembly coalition, and sunder the German community from their previous alliance with the Quakers. The German’s blindfold, therefore, not only further reinforces his helplessness, but also suggests that his current suffering is the result of his past ‘blindness’ to Quaker mismanagement of the province.

In contrast to the German, the other oppressed figure, identified as a ‘Hibernian’, is shown actively attempting to throw his Quaker master from his shoulders. His posture and deportment could not be more contrary to those exhibited by his German comrade. Perhaps the most important distinction between the two figures is that the Hibernian is armed. The musket he clutches suggests a willingness to protect his liberty and property from the unified Quaker and Indian threat. He is also pictured rearing his body forward and

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kicking his left leg defiantly behind him in an attempt to buck his rider. The script below the image reads, ‘The Hibernian frets with new Disaster/ And kicks to fling his broad brim’d Master.’ Here, as in the pro-Paxton pamphlet literature, the Irishman is a vigilant protector of liberty and property. This positive stereotype would find increasing acceptance as the imperial crisis with Great Britain intensified in the late 1760s. In Pennsylvania at least, the figure of the Irish patriot that emerged during the Paxton debates presaged later Scots Irish willingness to self-identify with their Irish heritage during the Revolution.

Those who opposed the Paxton Boys had their own preconceptions about the Irish, and nothing seemed to confirm their suspicions more succinctly than the march on Philadelphia. Studies of American nativism often begin in the 1830s with the rise of anti-foreign/immigrant political parties in New York and Philadelphia. Yet examples of xenophobic reaction to immigration in America certainly have a long history predating the creation of the American Republic. To get at the early history of the phenomenon we must first ascertain what is meant by ‘nativism’ when applied to nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts. Pre-eminent immigration historian, John Higham, defined it as ‘intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e. “un-American”) connections.” Higham goes on to say that while specific nativist antagonisms vary dramatically across time and in reaction to different minority irritants, yet they are united by one common thread because ‘through each separate hostility runs the connecting, energising force of modern nationalism.” Can we apply this understanding of nativism to pre-national outpourings of anti-immigrant sentiment in colonial America? In his introduction, Higham briefly outlined precedents, or ‘patterns’, crucial to the development of nineteenth-century nativism, namely post-Reformation anti-Catholicism, mythologised Anglo-Saxon tradition, and 1790s anti-radicalism. Work done on national identity by recent British historians suggests that the defining characteristics of the concept as laid out by Higham preexisted the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century. In the colonial period nativist attitudes arose in reaction to immigration from groups deemed to threaten the ‘British’ values of American society: specifically, its representative institutions and Protestant religion. In practice, nativist religious ideology was

20 Ibid., 4.
more complicated than simple anti-Catholicism. Irish migrants of all religious backgrounds, even the Ulster Presbyterian majority, suffered at the hands of nativist antagonists representing different denominations within the spectrum of British Protestantism. Historical prejudice and the close knit framework of trans-Atlantic Presbyterianism led many in the colonies to conclude that Ulster arrivals were the emissaries of a dangerously subversive faith. Scots Irish migrants to New England in the 1720s and Philadelphia in the early 1760s found a cold reception from many quarters partially because they were the ‘wrong’ kind of Protestant.

While the pro-Paxton pamphleteers attempted to build a credible case for Scots Irish ‘Britishness’ their opponents diligently strove to tear it down. Scots Irish participation in the Paxton disturbances allowed many authors to vent their fears that the colony was being ‘swarmed’ by Presbyterian migrants.22 Like many nativist drives before and since, the anti-Paxton campaign was based partially upon the fear that immigrants did not share the social values of their host society, that they held native institutions in disregard, and that they were intent on recreating their home country in America. Isaac Hunt, the principal ‘American-born’ anti-Paxton/Irish pamphleteer, scoured the annals of recent British history to prove that Presbyterians, wherever country or region they hailed from, were inherently disloyal, intolerant and republican.23 Referencing the politico-religious Covenanter movement that arose in opposition to the religious policies of Charles I and Charles II in Scotland, Hunt stated: ‘not only Covenanters, but the whole Body of Presbyterians are actuated by the same Principles since the Revolution, they were before; and that not even the Establishment of their Profession in Scotland can make them in Love with Monarchy.’24 Drawing on the same historical antagonisms as Hunt, anti-Paxton authors often levied the charge of religious fanaticism at the feet of Pennsylvanian Presbyterians. Benjamin Franklin claimed that the Paxton Boys attacked the Conestogas ‘with the Scripture in their hands and mouths.’ He further decried their actions, exclaiming: ‘Horrid Perversion of Scripture and of Religion! to father the worst of Crimes on the God of Peace and Love!’25

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22 [Anonymous] Remarks on The Quaker Unmask’d; Or Plain Truth found to be Plain Falshood [sic.] (Philadelphia, 1764), 5–6.
25 Benjamin Franklin, A Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County, of a Number of
Other authors countered their opponents’ positive references to Ulster Protestant history by attacking the Paxton Boys’ Irish heritage. Two pamphlets written in demeaning mock-Irish dialects—one between two Pennsylvanian Jacobites attempted to deflate positive connotations of Irish ethnicity by resurrecting the popular stereotype of the slovenly Paddy. Both pamphlets suggested the presence of Catholics among the Paxton Boys—a nightmare scenario for many Philadelphians. Such insinuations allowed the city’s Anglicans and Quakers to imagine that they had barely escaped destruction at the hands of an unholy alliance between levelling Presbyterian republicans and popish Irishmen. Anti-Paxton criticism shows that the Scots Irish men and women were prisoners of their dual ancestry. If they projected their Scottish cultural heritage they were attacked as republican zealots, while if they championed their Irishness their opponents cast them as crypto-Catholic savages.

II: Irish Ethnicity and the American Revolution

Ironically, Scottish loyalty in the late 1760s and 1770s only intensified Scots Irish willingness to identify with their Irish roots. Thomas Jefferson attacked the British government in what is perhaps the most famous example of anti-Scottish hyperbole to emerge during the American Revolution, the first draft of the Declaration of Independence. He claimed that the British had sent, ‘not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us.’ Sharing Jefferson’s sentiment, Ulster migrant James Caldwell wrote to his brother John in Ballymoney, County Antrim, complaining about Scottish loyalists: ‘The Scotch with very few exceptions are advocates for and friendly to those principles [i.e. the divine right of kings] for which so many of them fought in 1715 & 1745’.

In contrast, many American observers noted the predisposition of the Irish to support the patriot agenda. Philadelphian Irish Protestants, it seems,
were also increasingly willing to identify with their Catholic brethren. Ethnocultural associations established throughout the period, including the Friendly Sons of St Patrick (1771) and the Hibernian Society (1792) flourished in the capital. Maurice Bric has recently demonstrated that these societies, especially the Hibernians, celebrated an inclusive ethnic identity that embraced Catholic and Protestant alike. Caldwell, a member of the Sons of St Patrick, noted the positive traits of his Catholic countrymen and women while commenting on the patriotism of the Scots Irish. He observed that, ‘among the Irish, nine tenths espouse the American Cause, and our Countrymen of the North add the sagacity and calmness of the calculating Scotch Lowlander, to the enthusiastic chivalry of the native of the Emerald Isle.’ Caldwell’s comment regarding the political loyalties of the Irish in Pennsylvania largely holds true—though his figure of 90 per cent Irish support for the American position was obviously conjectural. In 1775 and 1776 committees formed throughout the largely Presbyterian counties of western Pennsylvania in support of patriot agitation in New England. A month before the Battle of Lexington and Concord, a county committee meeting in Carlisle Pennsylvania ordered that subscriptions be taken for their ‘suffering Brethren in Boston’. The committee immediately forwarded their resolutions to a neighboring corresponding committee in the predominately Scots Irish township of Antrim. Units from these areas later heavily contributed to the Pennsylvania line, dubbed the ‘line of Ireland’ by Colonel Henry Lee, in the Continental Army.

Irish Americans also played a central role in the debate over whether or not to install an Anglican bishop in the colonies. Presbyterian ministers at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton) and the College and Academy of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) were thoroughly opposed to such a measure, arguing that it was the first step towards the establishment of the Church of England as the official church in America. Presbyterians feared that, as in Ireland, Anglican Establishment might lead to the introduction of tithes for the support of a church to which they did not belong. It might also lead to legislation akin to the Test Act, where Presbyterians and other

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30 Ibid., 544.
31 For Irish Presbyterian support for the Revolution in the middle colonies see, Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*, 119–33.
dissenters would be barred from government service unless they conformed to the established church. Donegal-born minister Francis Alison wrote his friend Ezra Stiles, then the President of Yale, bragging of the anti-episcopate stance of Irish students at the College of New Jersey: ‘Our Jersey College is now talking as if she was soon to be the bulwark against Episcopacy: I should rejoice to her Pistols, like honest Teagues, grown up into great Guns.’ Alison’s positive use of the term ‘Teague’—a derogatory insult for Irish Catholics—to describe Presbyterian ministerial candidates is striking and warrants closer examination. Significantly, professors at the University of Glasgow—an institution where Alison himself probably studied divinity—employed similar jibes to describe their rebellious Ulster students. Alison clearly appropriated this popular slur, and here deployed it in the context of a celebratory remark. This was a clear declaration of his positive ethnic identity. It also illustrates the hallmark of this positive self-identification seems to be a commitment to patriot activism.

Outside patriot circles, opinion on the Irish, while slightly more positive, remained at times apprehensive if not outright condemnatory. Ancient prejudices continued to thrive even while popular antipathy for Britain during the Revolution translated into a reexamination of popular attitudes toward Ireland. It might be assumed that the image of Hunt’s fiendish Presbyterian would fade from relevance in light of the social and cultural changes brought about by the Revolution. Seemingly, both widespread opposition to British Imperial policy from 1765 onward and the wholesale positive transformation of the term ‘republican’ following the publication of Thomas Paine’s Common Sense in 1776 should have taken some of the sting and relevance out of the popular stereotype of the ungovernable Irish fanatic. Yet anti-Irish feeling ran deep among many patriots unsettled by the more democratic impulses unleashed by revolutionary rhetoric and discomforted by the ‘new men’ invading the political arena as a result of mass politicisation. English-born Major General Charles Lee was shocked by the transformation of popular politics in Virginia. He complained to James Monroe that the ‘power of ev’ry State’ had fallen ‘into the very worst hands’ and that the state assemblies did

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34 Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles, 1 August 1769 in Franklin Bowditch Dexter (ed.) Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D (New Haven, 1916), 435.

not resemble any form of government with which he was familiar. It appeared that these new representatives had created a new system of rule:

it is neither a Monarchy, Aristocracy—nor Democracy, it has indeed some of the worst features of Theocracy, that is a few inspired Persons without the aid of human sense immediately by God from what they pretend dictate every measure—but it is rather a Mac-ocracy by which I mean that a banditti of low Scotch-Irish whose names generally begin with Mac—and who are either the sons of Imported Servants, or themselves imported Servants are the Lords Paramount, and in such wild beastly hands as these are republica diutius stare not potest [sic].

Lee’s comments reveal that many facets of Hunt’s Irish Presbyterian caricature—namely its unthinking religious zeal and self-interested political aspirations—still found social currency among some American patriots during the transformative year immediately following independence.

To British observers and Loyalists, widespread Scots Irish support for the Revolution seemed to confirm their long-held suspicions regarding both Presbyterian and Irish disloyalty. Various British officials, including the king himself, held that Presbyterianism and Calvinist teaching played an influential part in bringing about the rebellion. Writing in 1778, one Hessian officer jotted down his thoughts and experiences while on campaign with the British Army. One of his observations has since become a staple in the celebratory mythology of the Scots Irish. He wrote, ‘Call this war by whatever name you may, only call it not an American rebellion; it is nothing more or less than a Scotch Irish Presbyterian rebellion’.

This popular view of the Irish held by many pro-American partisans and British sympathisers alike, overshadows the reality of Irish loyalty, specifically in the south. Many first- and second-generation Irish immigrants

38 Quoted in Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish, 305.
in the South Carolinian piedmont and backcountry actively supported the
Crown throughout the war. There were several reasons for this. First, the
recent suppression of the Regulator movement, a western drive against higher
taxes imposed by coastal officials, and the hardship endured by many settlers
in its aftermath, left many Scots Irish settlers in northwestern South Carolina
hesitant to join in yet another popular rebellion. Second, the eastern gentry and
Charleston merchant class largely supported the patriot cause, a fact that may
have informed many western farmers’ decision to take up arms on the side
of the British. Alexander Chesney was one such loyalist. Chesney migrated
from Dunclog, near Ballymena, County Antrim, to South Carolina in 1772.
Like most Irish immigrants to arrive through the port of Charleston, Chesney
immediately headed inland, eventually establishing a farm with his father in the
vicinity of other kinfolk near the north-western settlement of Pacolet.40 He
sided with the British in 1775 and remained a committed loyalist—despite being
drafted into the patriot militia for a small period before deserting in 1776—until
he sailed to Ireland after the British evacuation of Charleston in 1782.41 It is
clear that by the time Chesney returned to Ireland, he identified himself as
‘British’ and not ‘Irish’ or, unsurprisingly given his experience, ‘American’. But
his journal from the period reveals that this may not always have been the case.
At the beginning of the conflict, it was still possible for Chesney to view the
two sides as opposing parties bound by a unifying sense of Britishness. At that
point, loyalism and attachment to his adopted homeland were not mutually
exclusive. Thus, Chesney employed the terms ‘loyalites’ and ‘Congress Party’
to describe each group in the opening stages of the war. By the time Chesney
evacuated Charleston, however, he was regularly using the words ‘American’ and
‘loyalites/loyalist’ in reference to the two opposing sides, thereby insinuating
that loyalty to Britain precluded personal identification with America.

Many Irish refugees from South Carolina gave statements and testimonials
to the Loyalist Claims Commission in London in which they appeared
to favour British, rather than Irish or American, self-identification. The
reasons for their doing so are rather straightforward and reveal an obvious
shortcoming in the Loyalist depositions as a source for the purpose of
uncovering ethnic or national identity. Each person that went before the

(hereafter PRONI) D.2260.
41 Chesney Journal, PRONI D.2260; ‘The Memorial of Alexander Chesney’, Loyalist
Claims Commission Papers for South Carolina, National Archives, London (hereafter
NA): Audit Office (hereafter AO)/12/46/p.96.
Claims Commission attempted to sell their story in order to receive financial compensation for financial losses resulting from their loyalty to the British government. Deponents, therefore, had to play-up their commitment to the British cause and the degree to which they suffered for it. As a result, most of the immigrant deponents buried any private attachments they may have had to South Carolina or Ireland underneath declarations of loyalty to Britain and, more commonly, their personal attachment to their sovereign. These memorials were also mediated through the pen of the claims commissioner, making it difficult to ascertain the exact voice and motive of the deponent. Despite all this, Irish ethnicity, and arguably Irish self-identification, can be gleaned from these short testimonials.

There were moments when more concrete statements of Irish self-identification emerge in the depositions. Redmund Burke, an Irish immigrant briefly employed as a surgeon in Washington’s army, claimed that he abandoned his post ‘when the dispute changed from redress of Grievances to arrival of Independence and he perceived from the Interference of other European Powers that serious civil consequence was likely to ensue to his native Country and perhaps to America’. Burke’s statement reveals that, like many Irishmen and women—especially constitutional reformers within the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy—he supported the colonies’ position against British imperial policy, but could not fathom backing the dissolution of the Empire. Significantly, he shared the pervasive Irish Protestant concern that French ‘Interference’ in this British imperial squabble might lead to ‘civil consequences’—or Catholic insurrection—in Ireland. Despite their shortcomings, the Loyalist depositions reveal much useful information about the Irish-American revolutionary experience. The documents destroy the myth of unanimous Scots Irish support for revolutionary agitation and force us to confront the more nuanced reality that regional factors partially determined Irish-American positions regarding the issue of independence. But perhaps the most interesting revelation that emerges from depositions

such as Redmund Burke’s is that the domestic stability of Ireland remained a concern for Irish immigrants in America and may have even informed their political allegiance after 1776.

III: Irish-America in the Early Republican Period

Irish migration to the new United States reconvened as soon as peace with Britain was established. Largely, the immigrants that arrived in the 1780s resembled those who came before the Revolution. They were mostly Protestants from the north who moved through the large coastal cities in search of cheap land in the west. All of this changed in the 1790s, when a wave of republican refugees influenced by French revolutionary rhetoric fled government restrictions at home for a new life in the America. Upon arrival, many of these exiles became drawn into the partisan politics of the day on the side of the Jeffersonian republicans whom many saw as best representing their own radical political outlook. This tendency to support the Jeffersonian agenda earned them the scorn of the Federalists during Adams’ presidency, and led, in part, to the introduction of nativist legislation in the form of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

On 1 July 1798 Federalist Harrison Gray Otis made an infamous speech before Congress in which he outlined the necessity of restricting immigration. He targeted the ‘Wild Irish’ specifically, claiming that legislation was necessary to discourage ‘the mass of vicious and disorganizing characters who can not live peaceably at home, and who, after unfurling the standard of rebellion in their own countries, may come hither to revolutionise ours.’

The exiled Presbyterian Minister and United Irishman Thomas Ledlie Birch was shocked by his frosty reception upon arrival in New York. He dreamt that the situation would be different if the situation of the two countries were reversed: ‘When

45 Kerby Miller notes that the exiled United Irishmen’s preference for the United States over Europe positively affected Irish Catholics’ views regarding emigration to America. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 188.


God in his providence restores us back to our country, we hope he will dispose us to act to others as becomes freemen, we will not meet you upon our shores in hostile array, armed with an Alien Bill and a naturalization law’. Shortly after the Alien and Sedition Acts became law, Matthew Lyon, Republican congressman from Vermont and Revolutionary War colonel, was sentenced to four months imprisonment for slandering the Adams’ administration. Lyon was born in Dublin and became known in Federalist circles as ‘Wild’ or ‘Irish Mat’. Other Federalists, most famously Roger Griswold of Connecticut, publicly attacked his war record, thus illustrating that for many Federalists Lyon’s ethnicity trumped his past glories in service to the United States. In a way, his Irish birth barred him from being fully accepted as truly American in the tense political atmosphere preceding Jefferson’s election of 1800. This spike in anti-Irish sentiment, occurring during a period when the Catholic proportion of immigrants was increasing, shattered the inclusive, yet fragile, multicultural Irish identity established during the Revolution. Protestant flight from the revolutionary consensus, in turn, paved the way for the hegemonic Gaelic/Catholic model of Irish-America that rose to prominence in 1830s before the Famine migrations established its unquestionable dominance.

A half-century after the Paxton Mob electrified Pennsylvania politics, conservative elements within American society feared that local elections were again jeopardised by the self-interested ambition of swarming ‘Whiteboys’ ‘United Irishmen’ and ‘Irish convicts’. Federalists throughout the north unleashed a barrage of anti-Irish propaganda in the face of widespread Irish support for their rivals. Boston’s *Columbian Centinel* fumed: ‘These alien locusts not only have the impudence to busy themselves in elections; but are

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49 For one such example see, *The Medley, or the Newbedford Marine Journal*, 8 March 1799.


51 In 1799 governor of Pennsylvania Thomas McKean was also dubbed a Presbyterian ‘Paddy’ in the Federalist press. See Kevin Whelan, ‘The Green Atlantic: Radical Reciprocities between Ireland and America in the Long Eighteenth Century’ in Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge, 2004), 229. For more on rising anti-Irish sentiment in America following 1798 see Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-Invention of America*, 230–1.
permitted to erect presses all over the country; and to abuse every American they chuse! Like those Scots Irish Presbyterians in Pennsylvania fifty years earlier, they were the agents of ‘some foreign power, to effect some diabolical purposes’.

And like the unruly ‘Mac-ocracy’ Charles Lee despised, they were too wild and intemperate to be trusted with government. Federalists were enraged by the Jeffersonian activism of the exiled United Irishman Thomas Addis Emmet; particularly his personal attacks on the character of Rufus King during the 1807 New York state Assembly election. In retaliation, the same Boston paper took aim at Irish-American adulation for the memory of Thomas’s brother Robert Emmet, the martyr of the failed 1803 Irish rising:

They have the effrontery to set up the character of one of their Irish scape-gallows, as a counterpart of our immortal WASHINGTON; and that the Irish convict was no more a rebel than WASHINGTON was. Yes, they have had the folly as well as the impudence to assert that the murders, outrages, and treasons perpetrated in Ireland, were only such as the Americans committed in 1774, 5, &c. and that therefore they have a right to all the privileges of Americans!

By the turn of the century nativists had co-opted the memory of the Revolution, interpreting it as a distinctly American event in order to marginalise foreigners who might mistakenly assume that they too were entitled to the fruits of 1776.

By 1819, pervasive anti-Irish Catholic sentiment in America led Mathew Carey, a radical Dublin exile, Catholic and prominent printer in Philadelphia, to take up his pen in defense of the Catholics of his native country. On

52 The Columbian Centinel, Boston, Massachusetts, 6 May 1807.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Mathew Carey was a prominent figure in the political and literary worlds of Dublin and Philadelphia. Before establishing himself as a premier printer and economist in Philadelphia, Carey had been an editor of the short-lived radical Dublin newspaper, The Volunteer’s Journal, in 1783. He fled Ireland for the USA in 1784 in order to avoid prosecution for seditious libel. Throughout his life in America, Carey maintained an interest in the affairs of his native country. Throughout the 1790s, for example, he was the secretary of the Hibernian Society for the Relief of Emigrants from Ireland. For more on the life of Mathew Carey see Kenneth Wyer Rowe, Mathew Carey: A Study in American Economic Development (Baltimore, 1933); Earl L. Bradsher, Mathew Carey, Editor, Author and Publisher: A Study in American Literary Development (New York, 1912); and Edward C. Carter II, ‘The Political Activities of Mathew Carey, Nationalist, 1760–1814’, Ph.D. dissertation (Bryn Mawr College, 1962). For a comprehensive list of Carey’s publications see William Clarkin, Mathew Carey: A
this occasion he attempted to do so by deflating the Protestant mythology surrounding the Irish rebellion of 1641, a topic of great contemporary interest due to the publication of William Godwin's 1817 historical novel set in the period, *Mandeville*. Carey's primary targets were those authors and works, most notably John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion* (1646), that placed culpability for the rising and the subsequent massacre of Protestants squarely at the feet of Irish Catholics. Carey admitted that some observers might question the contemporary relevance of 1641. To this he claimed his investigation was both pertinent and timely because bigoted accounts written after the rebellion to justify the oppression of Catholics 'sowed, and still continue to sow, a copious seed of the most vulgar and rancorous prejudices in the mind of man against his fellow man.'56 While perhaps not immediately obvious, Americans continued to harbor the anti-Irish chauvinism instilled in their European ancestors by Temple and other pro-British authors. ‘Many of these prejudices’, he claimed, ‘have been transplanted from their native soil by emigrants, and have taken root in this country’.57 In this way then, misinformation regarding the rebellion continued to haunt Irish immigrants in the New World just as it had done in their native country. This was evident in reports about the Irish rising of 1798 printed in the Federalist press. The *Farmer’s Museum, or Lay Preacher’s Gazette* reported that ‘amongst the papers of the United Irish Directory, detected in Ireland, were minutes of the receipt of money from Societies in the United States, for the purpose of carrying on rebellion and massacre’.58 This report hinted that, in the context of Ireland, the words ‘rebellion’ and ‘massacre’ remained intertwined in popular American imagination even into the nineteenth century.

Carey attempted to reposition the rebellion beyond a parochial historical debate over the ethno-religious settlement and governance of Ireland. Instead, he claimed that the rising was a battle to preserve the liberties of the people of Ireland from foreign encroachment. The insurgents acted to defend their property from ‘rapacious individuals’ who at the time of the

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57 Carey, *Vindiciae Hibernicae*, xi.

58 *Farmer’s Museum, or Lay Preacher’s Gazette*, Walpole, New Hampshire, 29 April 1799.
rebellion had already plundered ‘nearly a million of acres of land’ from the
native population.59 Carey therefore concluded, ‘That if the Irish insurgents
of 1641 deserved to be stigmatised as traitors and rebels, then were the
English revolutionists of 1688, the American of 1776, and the French of
1789, traitors and rebels of the very worst possible kind’.60 By placing the
rising of 1641 in a timeline alongside such honored events as the American
and French Revolutions, Carey employed a similar tactic to one used by pro-
Paxton pamphleteers who claimed that the mob that marched on Philadelphia
in 1764 acted in the spirit of their Williamite forefathers. Like those earlier
authors, Carey was attempting to demonstrate that Irish patriots (whether in
1641, 1688 or 1798) and the thousands of migrants arriving annually in New
York and Philadelphia possessed qualities dear to freeborn Americans. Like
their hosts, the Irish detested tyranny and possessed the manly countenance
necessary to protect their liberties from those who would intrude upon them.

The fact that the *Vindiciae Hiberniae* struck a cord with many Irish
Americans is evident in the subscription registry included at the beginning of
the 1822 edition. Unsurprisingly, even a cursory glimpse at the names on the
list reveals an overwhelming Irish majority among the subscribers. Of the 472
people who paid for the work to be reprinted, a minimum of 340, or roughly
72 per cent, had Irish surnames. The subscribers did not, however, represent
an accurate cross section of Irish society.61 Protestants, Irish or otherwise,
were grossly underrepresented. Of the thirteen listed clergymen, for instance,
only one, the Swedish Lutheran minister, Nicholas Collin, can be definitively
identified as a Protestant. At least eight of the remaining twelve were
prominent Catholics, including three bishops, two of them Irish-born (Henry
Convill, second bishop of Philadelphia, and John Connolly, second bishop
of New York). Catholic immigrants clearly saw the utility of Carey’s mission
and proudly added their names to the document. In a way, the subscription
list attached to the *Vindiciae* served the same function as a petition or public
declaration. It testified, for all who cared to see, that those who paid for the
reprint supported the restoration of Catholic Ireland’s good reputation. For
the Irish among them, the presence of their name on the list also served as a
statement of national pride and a marker of their ethnic identity.

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60 Ibid., xvi.
61 Mathew Carey, *Vindiciae Hiberniae: or, Ireland Vindicated: An Attempt to Develop and
Expose a Few of the Multifarious Errors and Falsehoods Respecting Ireland* (2nd edition,
Irish Protestants, however, did not respond to Carey’s rallying cry with the same enthusiasm. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the *Vindiciae* struck at the heart of their own martyrlogical tradition that remembered the 1641 rebellion as the arch-example of Catholic treachery and fanaticism. More likely, it was because, as Maldwyn Jones has pointed out, the Scots Irish had undergone a ‘cultural synthesis’ with other dominant Anglo-American groups since the end of the Revolution. The adoption of an ‘Irish’ designation was therefore less appealing to recent Scots Irish migrants looking to establish themselves in a new country now largely suspicious of the Irish. Second or third generation Presbyterian immigrants, many of whom had been directly involved in the contest to create the nation and had since been swept-up in the tide of American nationalism, also saw little practical benefit in the Irish moniker.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, Irish-American ethnicity—or what it meant to be Irish and who could define themselves as such positively and why—was perhaps more fluid and unstable than at any point since. Irishness in this period was both exclusionary and inclusive. The Presbyterian Paxton Boys relied on Irish Protestant history to gain popular favour at the expense of Irish Catholics, while the coming of the Revolution made pan-Irish ethnicity acceptable, even fashionable, to both Catholic and Protestant alike. Yet as varied as Irish-American experiences in these decades were, the tropes employed by nativists to discredit and marginalise recent migrants were remarkably similar. A closer examination of early Irish identity formation as a struggle between both internal and external forces suggest further commonality between the Scots Irish and later Irish Catholic experience in America.

*King’s College London*

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Nicholas Michael O’Donnell (1862–1920) was an Irish Nationalist and founding member of the Gaelic League in Victoria. Australian born, of Irish parents, he maintained an interest in his Irish heritage and genealogy, contributing to ‘Our Gaelic column’ in local Melbourne paper, The Advocate. In his lifetime he amassed a library of over 600 books along with pamphlets and manuscripts (donated posthumously to Newman College, University of Melbourne). The majority of the collection is of Irish interest and much is in the Irish language. O’Donnell even annotated some in his self-taught Irish. He corresponded with Douglas Hyde and Patrick Dineen proficiently in the language. He is all the more interesting for his activities in the language at a time when it was seen by the majority of Irish migrants and the Catholic Church as a hindrance to integration. His autobiography and the annotations he left in his book collection are clear indications that he had an eye to his place in history.

O’Donnell clearly identified as an Australian: ‘Now, being an Australian by birth myself, I have not and cannot have any objection to a genuine spirit of Australian patriotism so long as the scope and object of that sentiment is bounded by the ocean that breaks upon our shores. Let us all love Australia our motherland, think for her, plan for her, work for her and let us according as we are of English Irish or Scottish descent, revere and cherish the history and fame of the land we sprang from.’ Though he identified as such he had an intense awareness of his Irishness. His dedication to his heritage, Irish history

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1 I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Angela Gehrig at the Academic Centre, St Mary’s College and Newman College, University of Melbourne, for granting me, under the auspices of the O’Donnell Fellowship in Irish Studies, the opportunity to complete this work. I wish also to acknowledge Dr Val Noone and Mary Doyle who transcribed much of Nicholas Michael O’Donnell’s autobiography and shared their research with me.


and nationalism along with the Irish language shows an equal identification with what we now interpret as a diasporic consciousness. The purpose of this essay is to analyse O’Donnell’s collection, activities and writing from a diasporic and postcolonial perspective. How and why did he construct a particular image of Ireland? How are notions of heritage, deterritorialized identity and temporality deployed symbolically amongst the diaspora? Is this emblematic of a greater diasporic occurrence and how does it compare with contemporary diasporic engagement with the language?

The notion of Irish diaspora is often contested, sometimes controversially. What is thus to be understood by the term Irish diaspora, given that migrants dispersed to various different lands and encountered a plethora of alternate experiences? The popular usage of the term is relatively recent with regard to the Irish. It was brought to the fore during the presidency of Mary Robinson who used it as one of the themes of her presidency in the 1990s in Ireland. It must be noted that terms such as the sea-divided Gael had been in use much earlier. Patrick O’Farrell makes note of the various cultural, religious and class traditions of those that left. The Catholic strain of nationalism, of which Nicholas O’Donnell was representative, became the dominant discourse however. O’Donnell, in studying his genealogy, traced distant family members to England, Australia, America and New Zealand, indicative of the expanse of the Irish diaspora even within one family. O’Donnell knew that settling in a new land meant a certain rupture with the traditions of the old world:

> We in Australia are now in the condition of human plantation and settlement that America was in during the 16th and 17th centuries. The breakaway from old world connections and associations is already complete. ‘The exile shall not return more’. In most instances he is dead and buried in the land of his adoption. But his children still live and remember his rehearsal of his boyhood days in the cradle land of his race; and so it is still easy to trace the blood back to the ancestral cot before oppressive laws or perhaps the spirit of adventure drove the early colonists from the motherland to the Eldorado or the Tír na n-Óg that they pictured Australia to be.

Importantly O’Donnell uses the word exile here. This has been noted by

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Kerby A. Miller in *Ireland and Irish America* as one of the motifs of emigration. The narrative of imposed exile became key to the Irish diaspora. Miller has suggested that some explanation for this may be drawn from the lack of a word for emigrant in Irish Gaelic. The language uses, instead, the word *deoráid* which literally means exile. ‘Thus’ he states, ‘the Irish language, when combined with the poets’ interpretation of post-conquest Irish history, provided both patterns and heroic models to predispose the “native Irish” to regard all those who left Ireland as unwilling and tragic political exiles.’

O’Donnell similarly recognised the significance of remembering his forebears and invoked Irish mythology in doing so. Contemporaneously, successive Irish politicians have also recognised the significance of the Irish emigrant population and indeed it is recognised in article two of the constitution under the section entitled ‘The Nation’: ‘the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage.’ The constitution crucially does not afford the extended diaspora any of the rights associated with citizenship but it does seem to fall within the concept of the Irish nation. In *Postnationalist Ireland*, Richard Kearney defines a number of the expanding and varied understandings of the concept of nation. He includes, or perhaps extends this to include, the concept of diaspora. ‘A … more generous, understanding of the nation comes under the rubric of the “migrant nation” – or the nation as “extended family”.’ Here the definition of the nation remains partially ethnic, but is enlarged to embrace all those emigrants and exiles who live beyond the territory of the nation-state *per se*.

The significance of the size of the Irish diaspora in comparison with the current Irish population is not lost on Kearney. ‘If over 70 million people in the world today claim to be of Irish descent, it is evident that this definition of nationality, or at least of national genealogy, extends far beyond the borders of a state or territory.’ Kearney further notes the sense of allegiance or affiliation felt by people of Irish origin even when they have not been born in the country or perhaps culture in which they place an allegiance. ‘Irish-Americans, Irish-Australians or Irish-Britons, for example, can affirm a strong sense of national allegiance to their “land of origin” even though they may be three or four generations from that land and

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6 Kerby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class and Transatlantic Migration* (Dublin, 2008), 16.
9 Ibid.
frequently of mixed ethnicity’. Patrick O’Farrell has noted, on the other hand, that the Irish in New Zealand had integrated well into local society and did not maintain the same separate sense of Irish identity as Irish Catholics in Australia or America. Edmundo Murray has hypothesised in an Argentine context that the majority of Irish emigrants to Argentina considered themselves British. Often images of the diaspora and home are deployed romantically as with Mary Robinson’s candle at Áras an Uachtaráin, which was heavily imbued with symbolism and invoking the old Irish custom of livery. The Irish ‘ethnicity’ of the diaspora is often drawn on for tourism and marketing reasons. And indeed, the figure of 70 million has recently been used by The Irish Times in an advertising campaign to people of Irish origin. The story of migration has, as such, become part of contemporary narrativised Irish identity. The Irish diaspora, as this group has become known, seems to hold a special place in the Irish ‘national consciousness’. It forms a part of the narrativised identity, used as a tool in depicting the ‘Irish story’. The cultural significance, and popular size of this group assumes a role of far greater significance in this storytelling than does the Irish language, but the language was, nevertheless, a constituent part of this emigration and seems to be assuming a role in a contemporary diasporic proclamation or reclamation of heritage.

Heritage, ethnicity and nationalism are all themes which are evoked when dealing with the diaspora both contemporaneously and historically. Nicholas O’Donnell’s invocation of his ‘Irishness’ certainly encompasses these themes. The Australian Dictionary of Biography describes him as ‘Irish nationalist and Gaelic scholar.’ He was born at Bullengarook in rural Victoria in 1862 and due to his scholarly ability was sent to school in West Melbourne, eventually completing a medical degree at the University of Melbourne and setting up practice in Victoria Street, North Melbourne, the most Irish part of the city. His interest in Irish affairs and Irish cultural activities manifested themselves

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10 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 61.
early on, particularly his devotion to Irish nationalism. He became president of the non-sectarian Celtic Club from 1907–9, and was also a central figure in the Irish National League of Victoria, becoming president of its successor organisation, the United Irish League. As Chris McConville asserts:

From the 1890s O’Donnell promoted Irish cultural activities. Almost alone at first, he seized on the Irish cultural revival and battled to revive Gaelic while the Irish-born in Victoria were dying out. His enthusiasm kept the Gaelic League alive in Melbourne and he became one of Australia’s outstanding Gaelic scholars, writing extensively on Irish language and politics in both Gaelic and English.16

Similarly Patrick O’Farrell describes him as Australia’s foremost Gaelic scholar: ‘His mastery was real. O’Donnell developed an interest and expertise sufficient to form a professional friendship with Douglas Hyde, among the greatest of Gaelic scholars and activists: O’Donnell provided Hyde with a transcript of the late Middle Irish text Hyde published as ‘The Adventure of Leithin’ in *Legends of Saints and Sinners* (1915).17 The language was obviously an integral part of ‘Irishness’ for O’Donnell, allied with, as we shall see, Catholicism and a nationalism based on a proud and distinct past. This correlates with the Gaelic Revival in Ireland but what brought about O’Donnell’s interest and enthusiasm in the language when, as previously mentioned, most of migrants wished to integrate with the English-speaking majority? Val Noone points out that there is some evidence that he may have had exposure to it through his Aunt Ellen, with whom he lived for a number of years.18 This influence is alluded to in O’Donnell’s autobiography: ‘She was a good woman, mild and gentle in disposition, fond of fun and humour and prepared to make the best of life in adversity. She spoke Irish well and had a fair share of memorised Irish verse at her command.’19 Although written in English, his autobiography contains a frontispiece with an Irish epigram:

Truagh sin, a leabhair mhóir bháin,
Tiocfaidh an lá ort go fíor,

16 Ibid., 61.
Go ndéarfadh neach os cionn cláir
‘Ní mhaireann an lámh do scriobh.’

It’s a pity, oh big and brilliant book,
The day will surely come for you
When someone will say about your contents:
‘The hand that wrote you no longer lives.’

This epigram appears in a number of Irish manuscripts from the 18th and 19th centuries. Denis King has noted that such epigrams have their origins in comments left by scribes in their manuscripts. ‘Such comments are common in Irish manuscripts, a kind of graffiti recording the passing thoughts, feelings and opinions of the scribes.’ This and the annotations in his book collection demonstrate both O’Donnell’s aforementioned desire for posterity and his scholarship and interest in an older Ireland, a lost ‘golden age’ in which he perceived that the Irish kept learning alive in Europe. O’Donnell’s sentiments on this are reflected in his lecture published by the Celtic Club in Melbourne, *A Lecture on Ancient Ireland: Its Civilisation, Art and Valour.* The lecture was delivered on 16 April 1900 at the Guild Hall, Sydney and was published by the *Advocate*, the Catholic newspaper in which O’Donnell would later publish ‘Our Gaelic Column’. The funds from the lecture and publishing were to defray the debt of the 1798 memorial in Waverly Cemetery, Sydney. Both the cover page of the lecture and the monument itself are richly imbued with romantic symbolism such as Celtic crosses, harps and wolf hounds. The monument was completed with Ogham inscriptions reading ‘The bright days of ancient Ireland will dawn once more.’

This epitaph is symbolic of the emotion and nostalgia evoked in O’Donnell’s lecture. The lecture was delivered in a polemical style, lamenting the treatment of the Irish at the hands of the English and invoking the glorious and proud history of Irish civilisation prior to colonisation. O’Donnell, in an almost postcolonial manner, challenged the constructed subalternity of the Irish in relation to the coloniser:

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20 Translation by Val Noone.
The public is taught that the Irish at some remote period were discovered by the English who found them barbarians; just as Captain Cook one day made the acquaintance of the aborigines of Botany Bay. It is taught that the English have ever since been trying to refine and civilise the Irish; but that their best efforts have been met with ingratitude and were wasted… So accustomed are we from day to day to this damnable reiteration of inferiority—sometimes plainly stated, always inferentially hinted at—that we have grown only too ready to acquiesce in this hateful and untrue estimate of the history of our race.24

O’Donnell refuted this false portrayal of ‘Irishness’, delving back into the sort of hagiographic history of the Irish that was earlier deployed in an anti-colonial manner by Geoffrey Keating (Seathrún Céitinn). O’Donnell evoked an antiquity for Ireland that would place it in succession to classical Greece and Rome. He covered the ‘perfection of the clan system’, Brehon Law, and early Christian learning stating that while the rest of Europe was in turmoil Ireland ‘became not only the Athens but also the Mecca of its age for religion’.25 Ancient Irish valour was explained and the treatment culminated with the last stand of Gaelic civilisation under Hugh O’Neill and Hugh O’Donnell at the battle of Kinsale. This invocation of valour, temporality and classicality was important in establishing an authenticity to claims of an ancient civilisation which existed and functioned prior to English ‘interference’. Religion was also an important tool in depicting the civilised Irish in opposition to their neighbours:

Ireland had learnt and accepted the faith of the true God when neighbouring races of Western Europe were still slunk in the sloughs of paganism, worshipping sticks and stones, and the sun and the moon. And she taught these people their Christianity and evangelized them; and by way of manifesting their gratitude, up to a period within the memory of the grandfathers of some who are listening to me here to-night, the descendants of these same people made it a felony for the Irish to practice their old religion.26

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24 O’Donnell, A Lecture on Ancient Ireland, 3.
25 Ibid., 9.
26 Ibid., 20.
The sense of persecution and victimisation at the hands of the coloniser is profound and significant here. O’Donnell continued in this vein:

Finally, they were made Pariahs and Ishmaels in the land that bore them, or else they were swept off to the Barbadoes to die as slaves or sent to perish in the unholy wars of Gustavus Adolphus in Russia—anywhere out of Ireland to make room for the hungry adventurers and confiscators of Great Britain. In the zenith of her glory the story of Ireland shines out from those ages of old like a beacon-light in the darkness—brilliant, dazzling and superb. Aye, even in the day of defeat and subjugation the history of our race is a grand one.²⁷

Britain was constructed here as a calculating force, clearing Ireland of its people and ancient culture and enforcing subalterneity on those that remained. The binarism of O’Donnell’s construction of Ireland and Britain continues through the text and is an anti-colonial or perhaps even decolonising attempt at inverting the traditional binaries of the British-Irish relationship constructed under colonialism. This sense of persecution is akin to what Kerby Miller describes in his description of the term ‘exile’ in the Irish diasporic context.

O’Donnell portrayed the dispersal of the Irish throughout the globe as beneficial. They were seen as a vehicle of this proud civilisation and because of their persecution they would have an innate understanding of the struggle for freedom and a recognition of oppression:

the sufferings of the Irish people in their own land have unfortunately been but of little material use to Ireland. Every fresh turn of the screw only served to render the condition of the captive more abject and more helpless, but persecution and misgovernment have led to the dispersal of the Irish people over the civilized globe, and into their exile they have carried with them the lessons they had learnt in their own land and became in the land of their adoption foremost as leaders in every struggle for freedom.²⁸

O’Donnell’s lecture on ancient Ireland and his attachment to the Irish language are good examples of what Gerry Smyth (developing Homi Bhabha’s

²⁷ Ibid., 21.
²⁸ Ibid., 21.
second mode of decolonisation, nationalism) terms radicalism.

focusing on what is imagined as unique and different about native identity. This mode of critical decolonisation involves the rejection of metropolitan discourse, a celebration of difference and otherness, and the attempted reversal of the economy of discourse which constructs the colonial subject as inferior.29

This was not unusual and formed part of the cultural nationalism being deployed in the Ireland of the time. Why, though, did O’Donnell feel the need to put such time and effort into extending this in Australia, constructing a deterritorialized identity and a great concern for a country he had not visited? To some extent he revealed this motivation in his autobiography:

It is with the object of furnishing those who come after me with as full an account as I have been able to obtain of their ancestors and pedigree that I am writing this book. How many gilded Americans today would pour out their dollars like water to be able to trace their pedigree in orderly precession back to England, Ireland or Scotland! While this was still possible it was neglected and then a stage came when it was for ever too late.30

O’Donnell seemed to fear that it would soon become too late for him to record his family history for the benefit of future generations. His relatives in Australia were old and ailing. He was left with attempting to contact relatives in Ireland and the response he received, as was often the case, was one of caution and trepidation:

It is a pity to have to admit it but the replies received from Ireland were neither copious nor elucidative. The relatives in Ireland appeared to believe that I was labouring under the hallucination that I was descended from a ‘grand’, ‘noble’, ‘wealthy’ family and were apparently afraid to disabuse me of the idea for fear of disappointing and paining me! It is hardly necessary to say that I have cherished no such delusions.

My ancestors I knew to be tenant farmers in Ireland and I am familiar enough with Irish history to know too that those who were dispossessed at the time of the confiscations under Elizabeth, James, Cromwell and William had at least as ‘grand’ and ‘noble’ a blood and pedigree as the English bodaigh [louts] and adventurers who robbed them of their lands and supplanted them.\textsuperscript{31}

Even though he was aware that he was from a tenant-farming background he attempted to link this to a form of mythical past, to a noble blood. The blame for the loss of this is again laid firmly with the English.

O’Donnell also feared that his sense of Irishness, and that of his descendents would be erased by a hegemonic English culture in Australia:

I must not omit another consideration that has had some influence on me in stimulating me to leave this book to my descendents. I believe that the future will see here in Australia a tendency—covertly forced by the authorities—to the obliteration of old-world \textit{racial} sentiment and the ingenious suggestion and gradual substitution of a common local sentiment which the majority will endeavour to make English in tone and spirit—to found it if I may put it that way, on English history and English pride.\textsuperscript{32}

He countered this vociferously on grounds of nationality, blood and religion:

But what have we Irish to be proud of in English history? The experience of our race in the old country has been that of oppression and callous cruelty at the hands of their English rulers. I wish my descendents to know as I feel that though Australians by birth and fealty they are Irish in blood and have not a drop of English blood in their veins. I wish them also to be unflinching in their fidelity to the Catholic faith. It ought to be part of their nature like their nationality. Because they are Irish they ought to be proud to be Catholic and they ought to be truly Catholic because they are Irish. They must be prepared to suffer injustice and bear obloquy for being Irish and Catholic as their ancestors suffered persecution and even death for the same cause: and they will be ranked as traitors of the traditions of their ancient race if they ever deny either

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 8.
their race or their faith. I hope none of my seed, breed or generation will ever disgrace the grand old name of O’Donnell by renouncing his race or his creed.33

Again O’Donnell here was invoking almost mythical qualities for his Gaelic name and was vitriolic in his diatribe at the thought of anyone attached to the name denying the ‘essence’ of their ethnicity or identity. The historical memory of persecution and subalternity seems unavoidable. Where does this ardent, and at times extreme, nationalism come from in O’Donnell? In some ways the fear of loss is reflected in a folkloric attitude to emigration. David Lloyd describes this in writing on one of Máirtín Ó Cadhain’s short stories: ‘The motifs of change, transmission, translation that cluster around the moment of scattering, the scattering of a people for which that of the gems and the money are mere figures, recur constantly to the idea, deeply inscribed in Irish folklore, of emigration as a death, a crossing over from which the emigrants will not return, or, if they do return, will do so “changed”, subject to a Lethe-like forgetting.’34 O’Donnell sought to stem this tide of forgetting with what may have seemed like an anachronistic memory in his Australian context.

Some of O’Donnell’s rhetoric bears a striking resemblance to a document published in Boston in 1911, The Irish Vindicator both of Race and Language: An Appeal to the Irish Race to Save the Irish Language.35 This text, beginning with an Irish-language epigraph, also asserts the antiquity of the Gaels and is even more aggressive in its polemic than O’Donnell’s. It also evokes a sense of diaspora with the term the ‘sea-divided Gael’, calling on them to heed the history and language of their ancestors:

But if the race is not in Ireland, it is abroad all over the world, in both hemispheres, north and south; and the universal multiplication today, of the Irish race, which went close on extinction as late as two centuries ago, may be an indication that they are destined for some important mission in the future, both at home and abroad. They have a record in the far back past that no nation in the world thus far, is able to produce; and ‘No people can look forward to prosperity who cannot often look

33 Ibid., 12.
35 P.J. O’Daly, The Irish Vindicator both of Race and Language: An Appeal to the Irish Race to Save the Irish Language (Boston, 1911). My thanks to Kathleen Williams at the O’Neill Library, Boston College, for notifying me of this.
back to their ancestors.’ With the Irish language revival Ireland will become again the School of Europe, as it was before for ages anterior to the Anglo Norman invasion.36

Incredible freight is placed upon the language here. It is to be the vehicle for the salvation of an entire culture. The Gaelic revival provided an opportunity for people of Irish descent ‘to demand an equal part in the determination of the character of the new nation’ having previously been seen as foreign to the ‘Englishness’ of the nation.37 O’Donnell was not alone in this sentiment. The Advocate, for which he wrote ‘Our Gaelic Column’, was replete with Irish nationalist sentiment, covering nationalist affairs ongoing in Ireland, as well as activities of the various supporting societies in Australia. Coverage was given to St Patrick’s Day activities and the various hurling matches that were being organised. The Irish language in ‘Our Gaelic Column’ was often taken from Hyde’s collections of poems, or from *An Claidheamh Soluis*, Patrick Pearce’s newspaper. In later years there was a section dedicated to the learning of the language. O’Donnell was instrumental in importing a Gaelic font for the publication of the column. Matthew D. Staunton has noted how this font often reinforced a separate sense of Irish identity, arguing it was being deployed as propaganda.38 Seamus Deane suggests ‘aesthetically pleasing but commercially expensive typefaces were essentially cultural weapons in a war of religion and political propaganda’.39 In this context, although it forms part of a nationalist matrix, it is important to note that it was used as a cultural weapon in the assertion of an identity.

Again, turning to America here, it is possible to discern how some of this nationalist sentiment came to the fore outside of Ireland. Úna Ní Bhroiméil quoting Dale Light writes in *Building Irish Identity in America* that: ‘[T]here was no common historical experience to bind together Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century America and to instil in them a sense of ethnic identity’.40 Indeed, Ní Bhroiméil concludes that ‘it was nationalism that seemed to unite the Irish most clearly in the new world’. She states that as well as political

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36 Ibid., 14.
37 O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, 244.
independence other aspects of nationalism such as history, music and the language were often given as reasons why the Irish deserved respect and status. Journalists in Irish-American publications sought to evoke the ‘greatness’ of the old country and reinforce the concept of the Irish constituting ‘a distinct and superior race complete with admirable traits and worthy characteristics’: ‘In 1884, the Irish World, in an article about an Irish musical performed in New York, “An Bard agus an Fó”, linked language and music with the self-respect of the Irish and with their rights to nationhood.’\(^{41}\) This demonstrates that the Irish diaspora was active in identity politics and that the language played a constituent part. Given that such an enormous number of emigrants during and since the Famine have come from Gaeltacht areas it is reasonable to assume that there were Irish-speaking communities amongst the diaspora. This is most well documented in the United States, where there have been Irish-language sections in newspapers, and Irish-speaking priests were sent to officiate in communities where, anecdotally at least, there were large numbers of people with no English. The settlement of these Irish communities in America seems to have followed a discernable pattern: ‘Immigrants needed sponsors to ensure their survival until they found employment. Sponsors were often family or friends from the home village in Ireland. Due to this custom, different American cities or parts of American cities (as is the case of New York) were settled by Irishmen and women of one particular county or another.’\(^{42}\) Despite the fact that these communities were relatively close-knit and often maintained connections with family in Ireland (attested to by collections of letters in Irish), the Irish language ceased to be used as mode of communication. This is due to similar reasons as in Ireland; English was seen as a language of progression and Irish as economically inhibitive. Indeed the stigma attached to speaking the Irish language persisted outside of its cultural environment despite the strong rhetoric of the importance of language to nation, culture and identity. Yet, it is not unusual that Irish effectively died out in North America when one considers the hegemonic position of English, which has to a large extent effectively subsumed or assimilated languages with a greater degree of prestige than Irish, such as German or French. Given this, why, as Úna Ní Bhroiméil asks, ‘would the American Irish support the Irish language or its revival?’\(^{43}\)

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 29.


\(^{43}\) Ní Bhroiméil, Building Irish Identity in America, 30.
Ní Bhroiméil uses Joshua Fishman to show that for many immigrants the language would have been a source of embarrassment and an obstacle to assimilating with mainstream America. This is particularly so given that Irish stereotypes were often exported with the immigrants to the ‘new world’.  

Similarly, Patrick O’Farrell notes that ‘the facts of Australian life in regard to Gaelic are best illustrated by an incident in 1800 when a group of Irishmen who had been talking in Gaelic were brought to trial on this basis alone’. [L]anguage loyalty and language maintenance became aspects of consciousness for many immigrants as they became aware of their “groupness”. Allied to this was the fact that, ‘dependant as they were on transmuted ethnicity rather than upon a daily ethnic way of life, language maintenance may have become ideologized and wedded to a philosophy which combined national mission.’

This conception of the language amongst the diaspora seems, to a certain extent, to have persisted. The contemporary renewal of interest in the Irish language in Ireland seems also to be mirrored amongst the diaspora, with a large demand for Irish-language classes. This is often linked to exploring an Irish identity, ‘Irish-Americans who seek to define more fully what it means to be Irish in America often turn to the language of their ancestors.’ This is paralleled in a study of Welsh diasporic use of the language in a newspaper called Y Drych. ‘Welsh tradition is not so much being kept alive as being revisited nostalgically—one might say reinvented. Correspondents to Y Drych appear to value Welsh as a heritage language, more than as the living, politicized, antagonistic social force that it is in contemporary Wales.’ Could it be that, despite the fact that Nicholas Michael O’Donnell was fluent and in regular contact with interlocutors in Ireland, he was, in his attachment to the language and nationalism, also revisiting nostalgically and reinventing an Irish tradition, invoking a distinct past? His lecture and autobiography would suggest so.

Writing on a diasporic sense of loss and attempts to retain or invoke a sense of past culture Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins note that: ‘At other times, in other contexts, holding on to the lost culture may assume more epic

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and dramatic dimensions, and involve the invocation of a “mythic past”.

They use a poetic analogy to describe this phenomenon of ‘loss’ and the mythologised sense of homeland and culture that is constructed in a new society. They cite Eva Hoffman’s *Lost in Translation* (1991) as an example of this tendency towards mythologisation. The experience of separation from home culture here is conceived as a ‘fall from paradise.’ “Loss”, says Hoffman, “is a magical preservative. Time stops at the point of severance, and no subsequent impressions muddy the water you have in mind. The house, the garden, the country you have lost remain forever as you remember them. Nostalgia—that most lyrical of feelings—crystallises around these images like amber”. The crystallisation of these poetic images and interpretations of the home culture is certainly resonant with the diasporic idealisation of the homeland constructed by O’Donnell. In his peroration he attempted to explain, even justify, what could be understood as a diasporic patriotism for the ‘homeland’:

That emotion of the human breast which we call patriotism, or love of country, may originate in two distinct ways—an objective and a subjective way. It may be aroused by familiarity with the physical feature of one’s country and all the fond associations and memories connected therewith. It may also be engendered by a close acquaintanceship with the history and legendary lore of one’s country and by a healthy pride in noble past. This is the truest and most enduring type of patriotism; for it has its source in study and contemplation, and in the exercise of the faculties of comparison and criticism.

We see here an explanation of how the diasporic community can love their country of origin even without having visited. This ‘subjective’ and ‘studied’ approach to love of one’s country was deemed to be equally valid by O’Donnell.

Towards the end of his lecture his tone changed, despite his earlier rhetoric, to a certain sense of compassion for his English-Australian compatriots: ‘So under the rising beams of the new Democracy, the English, Scottish and Irish masses, too long deluded and estranged by the wiles and intrigues of malevolent men will cleave together in a brotherhood that will never be dissolved, because it will be sanctified by a mutual love and trust that will live to the end of

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50 Ibid., 91.
time.\textsuperscript{52} This would seem to be quite a turnaround, but perhaps if O’Donnell’s attachment to language and nationalism was largely symbolic, it is not such as surprise. This is not to denigrate the energy and effort he evidently put into what became in many aspects a life-task. He was clearly committed to his cause. The Irish language in this matrix is a badge of an ‘authentic Irishness’, an all encompassing direct link with the past, providing reaffirmation of an essential identity, against what is feared, in O’Donnell’s case, to be an identity-effacing Englishness (one could read globalization today). The language was the key register in which a proud and ancient heritage could be invoked (not wholly dissimilar to a contemporary resurgence of interest in the language). It lent authenticity to this reclamation of heritage and thus had an incredible amount of cultural significance invested in it.

Colin Graham suggests ‘that “authenticity” has increased in its value as a marker of what is Irish as Ireland has (partially) moved out of its anti-colonial mode.’\textsuperscript{53} He concludes that the persistence of authenticity in Irish culture can be seen as a desire for validation arising ‘from the cultural crises of colonialism and its de-authenticating of the colonized’.\textsuperscript{54} Although Graham writes this on contemporary Ireland it holds true with O’Donnell’s diasporic project too. Writing on tracing alternatives and potentials for transformation from spectres of the past David Lloyd writes that ‘The form of the imagined future is sketched in the ruins of the present.’\textsuperscript{55} The language in this context can be viewed as such. Lloyd continues

\[\text{[m]emory, in this respect, is at once the memory of damage—of dispossession, coercion, ‘disappointed hope’—and the memory of an alternative that has not been realized. But to view the latter memory as mere nostalgic fabrication would be to miss the dynamic of the past: the work of memory is not to preserve the past in its fixity, but to loosen from the truncated becomings of the past the fluid possibilities that defy the notion that the social formation in dominance is the only historical possibility.}\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Lloyd, \textit{Irish Times}, 72.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
It is this ‘social formation in dominance’ that O’Donnell eschewed in his writing and his promotion of the language. In seeking to come to terms with a ruptured past and an unforgiving present Nicholas Michael O’Donnell is representative of a diasporic utopian impulse to connect with and invoke some authentic essence of ‘Irishness’. In his case it was deployed through the symbols of nationalism, religion and language. The fervour of his activities in these areas is striking. His desire for posterity was matched by a desire that his progeny and other Irish-Australians not abandon his cause. Yet O’Donnell was not entirely recalcitrant, for he was a pragmatist in his wish for a harmonious Australia and as such was caught in a classic diasporic bind: the desire for the persistence of his heritage and the desire to assimilate without turbulence into a new ‘brotherhood of mutual love and trust’ with his compatriots.
The Scottish-Canadian community—as reflected in its literature—has traditionally been shown a keen interest in its origins and history. In the last decade, two works were published that stand out in this respect: Alistair MacLeod’s novel *No Great Mischief* (1999) and Alice Munro’s collection of stories *The View from Castle Rock* (2006). Both these texts deal with questions relating to emigration, belonging and the articulation of national and cultural identities. Both of them also consider how Scotland is remembered, which traditions are brought to the New World, and how they are employed in the creation of a diasporic identity. Alistair MacLeod’s fiction is mostly set on Cape Breton and depicts its close-knit Scottish Gaelic community. *No Great Mischief* in particular is concerned with the experience of emigration as well as questions of transmitting cultural traditions and the construction of a diasporic identity. Furthermore, the circular structure of the novel allows MacLeod to reiterate the experience of the diaspora in Canada itself by fashioning Cape Breton as a ‘second Scotland’ and depicting the exodus of the younger generations from the island. Alice Munro’s *The View from Castle Rock*, and in particular the title story, is concerned with similar questions: though she is not attempting to write a ‘new Scotland’, she is interested in the question of how history and cultural traditions can be transmitted. This juxtaposition of the oral and the written tradition feature prominently at the beginning of her short story collection. Moreover, Munro portrays the actual experience of emigration and of arrival in North America in greater detail than MacLeod presenting the birthing moment of the diaspora.

**Alistair MacLeod, *No Great Mischief***

Alistair MacLeod’s first, and so far only, novel is steeped in questions of memory and identity.\(^1\) The memory of an ancestral home is presented in

\[^1\] Karl E. Jirgens calls it ‘a work of memory’. Karl E. Jirgens, ‘Lighthouse, Ring and
No Great Mischief in relation to Scotland as well as to Cape Breton, in both cases revolving around the central foci of the history and family structure of the Cape Breton MacDonals. While the frame narrative deals with the relationship of the I-narrator, Alexander MacDonald, and his eldest brother Calum, the embedded narrative is the story of the clan Chalum Ruaidh, the Canadian branch of the MacDonald family named for the founding father, the red-haired Calum MacDonal (Calum Ruadh). Karl E. Jirgens points out that a circular pattern is the central structural element of this novel, in which the frame narrative and the various embedded stories and memories continuously mirror and echo one another. Indeed, MacLeod even presents history as cyclical and hints at the potential for identity construction inherent in these circular patterns.

In No Great Mischief history functions as the most important means of identity construction, and accordingly the MacDonals are closely linked to important events in Scottish and in North American history. They fought at Bannockburn, suffered the massacre of Glencoe, and Calum Ruadh himself—prior to his emigration—participated in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. When Calum Ruadh and his family leave Scotland in 1779, this is due to the Highland Clearances, as Alexander points out: ‘Anyone who knows the history of Scotland, particularly that of the Highlands and the Western Isles in the period around 1779, is not hard-pressed to understand the reasons for their leaving.’ For Alexander, the Clearances are so much part of common memory that they do not need to be explicitly mentioned. The mechanism of identity construction that MacLeod suggests in this passage can be read as an echo of the one described by Stuart Hall in ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’. According to Hall, diasporic communities define their identity along two axes: one of continuity and one of discontinuity or rupture. As he points out,

Fountain: The Never-Ending Circle in No Great Mischief in Irene Guilford (ed.), Alistair MacLeod: Essays on his Works (Toronto et al., 2001), 85 (emphasis in the original).

2 Ibid., 84–94.

3 Benedict Anderson, for instance, discusses the role of history in the process of identity construction arguing that historical events are frequently emplotted and interpreted in such a way as to serve the needs of each community. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (3rd edition, London, 2006), 187–206.

4 Alistair MacLeod, No Great Mischief (1999; London, 2001), 17–18.

continuity plays a vital role in the construction of cultural identity for the diaspora as it provides ‘some grounding in, some continuity with the past’. For the MacDonalds in *No Great Mischief* the various significant events in Scottish history that some of their family members were involved in serve as this element of continuity. Hall’s axis of discontinuity is important for the development of a diasporic identity in so far as implies the experience of emigration and being uprooted. In *No Great Mischief*, the Clearances are not only an experience shared by Scots in Scotland and Scots who emigrated. For the Scottish Gaelic community on Cape Breton, the Clearances provide this experience of discontinuity, appearing here almost as a founding myth, albeit a traumatic one. At the same time, however, the narrator’s fleeting allusion to the Clearances and the necessity of emigration has another implication. The historical events Alexander refers to—Bannockburn, Glencoe, the Jacobite Rebellion and the Highland Clearances—are well-known outside of Scotland as well. By presupposing some knowledge of them on the reader’s side, MacLeod creates not only a common memory for Scots at home and Scots abroad, but allows the reader to feel included in this group, thus possibly enlarging the ‘imagined community’.

Yet MacLeod does not link this history-based construction of identity only to Scotland; the MacDonald family history is also intertwined with North American and in particular Canadian historical events. Members of the MacDonald family fought on both sides in the American War of Independence and they played an important role during the French and Indian War in the battle of Quebec in 1759:

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6 Ibid., 113.
7 Ibid., 113.
8 With reference to the short story ‘Clearances’, Kirsten Sandrock argues that MacLeod tends to describe the Clearances as a shared memory. Kirsten Sandrock, ‘Scottish Territories and Canadian Identity: Regional Aspects in the Literature of Alistair MacLeod’ in Petra Rüdiger and Konrad Gross (eds), *Translation of Cultures*. ASNEL Papers 13 (Amsterdam, 2009), 176.
9 The Clearances are frequently alluded to in the literature of the Scottish diaspora in Canada, for instance in Alistair MacLeod’s short story ‘Clearances’, in Margaret Laurence’s *The Diviners*, or in Lister Sinclair’s drama *The Blood is Strong*. For a discussion of further echoes of the Clearances in Canadian as well as Scottish literature see also Christopher Gittings, “Sounds in the Empty Spaces of History”: The Highland Clearances in Neil Gunn’s *Highland River* and Alistair MacLeod’s “The Road to Rankin’s Point”, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 17 (1992), http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol17_1/ & filename=Gittings.htm [accessed 12 January 2010].
‘It is true’, said my grandfather …

‘What?’ asked Grandpa.

‘Wolfe and the Highlanders at Quebec, on the Plains of Abraham. He was just using them against the French. He was suspicious of them and probably would have been satisfied if the French had killed them all. Just using them for his own goals, for as long as they might last.’

‘But’, said Grandpa, ‘didn’t you tell me once that it was a French-speaking MacDonald who got them past the sentries? And that he was first up the cliff with the other Highlanders, and that they pulled themselves up by grasping the roots of the twisted trees? Didn’t you tell me that?’

‘Yes’, said my grandfather. ‘First up the cliff. Wolfe was still below in the boat. Think about it.

‘They were first because they were the best’, said Grandpa stoutly. ‘I think of them as winning Canada for us.’

Grandpa, Alexander’s paternal grandfather, postulates here the decisive role members of his clan played in the colonisation of North America. The pronoun ‘us’ appears to be ambiguous in this passage as it can either refer to the Highlanders or the Scottish or it can—in a narrower sense—refer to the MacDonalds themselves. This final interpretation would emphasise the family’s close connection to North American or Canadian history. This idea of a personal interpretation of history is also suggested in another passage that is directly linked with the family. Calum Ruadh represents the parallels between family and national Canadian history:

[After 1820] He continued to live for another fourteen years, giving his life a strange sort of balanced structure; living to be one hundred and ten years old; fifty-five in Scotland and a second fifty-five ‘in the land across the sea’. Of the second fifty-five, he spent five as a sort energetic squatter and thirty-six as a ‘citizen of Cape Breton’ and fourteen as a citizen of Nova Scotia. When he died, in 1834, it was thirty-three years before Confederation.

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10 MacLeod, *No Great Mischief*, 101; emphases in the original.


12 MacLeod, *No Great Mischief*, 23.
The ‘balanced structure’ of *Calum Ruadh’s* life implies a strong connection between the old and the new home, virtually turning them into mirror images. Moreover, this suggests that the MacDonalds are older than Canada itself: settling and attempting to cultivate the land in colonial times makes them, as Cynthia Sugars argues, ‘emblematic founders of Canadian settlement’.13

At the same time, MacLeod hints at the potential difficulty of making history the basis of identity. As Laurie Brinklow points out, he often uses the characters of grandparents to serve as guardians of the old traditions and as protectors of memory.14 In *No Great Mischief*, however, Alexander’s two grandfathers also represent different approaches to memory and different treatments of the past. The paternal grandfather Grandpa stands for an oral culture with an emotional, at times even romanticised attitude towards history, whereas (the maternal) Grandfather represents a more objective, almost academic approach to history.15 The juxtaposition of the oral and the written tradition is noticeable, for instance, in the discussion about the Battle of Quebec quoted above. Grandfather presents his latest findings from the library while attempting to paint a more differentiated picture. He tries to make Grandpa understand that the MacDonalds fought against Wolfe at Culloden and changed sides in fighting for the British in Quebec. Grandpa, however, appears to be disinterested in these questions and chooses to keep his entirely heroic view of his ancestors as ‘the best’, ‘winning Canada for us’.16 These different attitudes towards the past and the opposition of a written and an oral tradition are also aptly rendered in the description of their deaths. Grandpa, still firmly rooted in the Celtic cultural heritage, dies at a social function ‘from jumping up in the air and trying to click his heels together twice.’17 Grandfather also dies in a manner fitting his life, ‘reading a book called *A History of the Scottish Highlands*.’18 Despite the opposition of these two approaches to history, MacLeod does not favour one over the other. For the MacDonalds, Grandfather’s academic interest in the past is as relevant

13 Sugars, ‘Repetition with a Difference’, 134.
15 David Williams, ‘From Clan to Nation: Orality and the Book in Alistair MacLeod’s *No Great Mischief*’ in Guilford (ed.), *Alistair MacLeod*, 70.
16 MacLeod, *No Great Mischief*, 101.
17 Ibid., 245.
18 Ibid., 245.
as Grandpa’s romanticised, heroic view. In fact, the tension between these approaches is also tangible on a more abstract level. As David Williams shows, the novel is modelled on an oral narrative; being a novel, however, it is also part of the written tradition.\textsuperscript{19} Like the two grandfathers, the two traditions appear to complement each other by portraying two equally relevant and important means of transmitting memory.

Another idea of the memory of, and the connection with, Scotland is presented in the role and structure of the family, it is almost a form of genetic memory.\textsuperscript{20} The \textit{clann Chalam Ruaidh} is modelled on and still lives according to the Gaelic clan structure they brought with them from Scotland. The Scottish-Australian poet Les Murray has commented on the role of the family in the Scottish diaspora, arguing that the clan or ‘extended family’ is central to the identity of members of the Scottish diaspora.\textsuperscript{21} In \textit{No Great Mischief}, the clan is one of the most important elements for the construction of identity for the family members.\textsuperscript{22} The importance of the family is emphasised many times in the novel, for instance in Grandma’s admonition to ‘always look after your own blood’, the many repetitions of which emphasise the significance of this idea.\textsuperscript{23} The most dominant characteristic in this family history is again the cyclical element.\textsuperscript{24} It is not only grander history repeating itself, but also that of the MacDonalds as various allusions indicate: be it the ‘balanced structure’ of \textit{Calum Ruadh’s} life or the recurrence of family characteristics, such as the red or black colour of their hair.\textsuperscript{25} Even more noticeable in this respect are the first names of the characters that are also passed from one generation to the next. There is, for instance, Alexander’s eldest brother Calum, who is named not only after his grandfather, but bears the name of \textit{Calum Ruadh}. Calum also functions as the head of the family after the parents’ death and even lives in \textit{Calum Ruadh’s} old house for a while. The most remarkable

\textsuperscript{19} David Williams, ‘From Clan to Nation’, 62.
\textsuperscript{20} For a more detailed discussion of this almost innate memory see also Sugars, ‘Repetition with a Difference’, 136 ff. and Brinklow, ‘A “Subterranean River” to the Past’, 11–14.
\textsuperscript{22} David Creelman, \textit{Setting in the East: Maritime Realist Fiction} (Montreal, 2003), 140.
\textsuperscript{23} MacLeod, \textit{No Great Mischief}, 12.
\textsuperscript{24} Williams discusses this in greater detail. Williams, ‘From Clan to Nation’, \textit{passim}.
\textsuperscript{25} MacLeod, \textit{No Great Mischief}, 23.
instance of the identity of names occurs with Alexander himself, the \textit{gille bhig ruaidh} (the ‘little red-haired boy’). While this Gaelic epithet does still grant him some individuality, he also has two red-haired cousins called Alexander.\footnote{26 Sugars, ‘Repetition with a Difference’, 138–9.} When his Cape Breton-based cousin dies in an accident in the uranium mines of Ontario, the narrator is asked to replace him. The repetition of names and of outer appearance thus acquires an almost symbolic quality implying the replaceability of the individual within the clan system.\footnote{27 Williams, ‘From Clan to Nation’, 49–52.} This notion is emphasised again with the appearance of the third red-haired Alexander, a distant cousin from San Francisco, a draft dodger who takes over at the mines for the narrator. MacLeod renders the idea of the mirror images of these three characters in the carefully crafted image of a tartan shirt:

\begin{quote}
We never saw Alexander MacDonald again. I realised later that he had been wearing my MacDonald tartan shirt. The one that the mother of the red-haired Alexander MacDonald had purchased for him on my graduation day, the day that he had been killed. The shirt had been purchased for one Alexander MacDonald who had never worn it. It had been worn by a second and vanished on the back of a third.\footnote{28 MacLeod, \textit{No Great Mischief}, 241.}
\end{quote}

The relative unimportance of the individual suggested here is almost a grim echo of the novel’s title. At the same time, however, this also illustrates the grandmother’s postulate to ‘always look after your own blood’.\footnote{29 Ibid., 12. The only MacDonald who refuses to act accordingly is the American Alexander. Just before the fight between the MacDonalds and the Quebeckers, he flees from the mines saying: ‘I didn’t come here to die in the boondocks.’ Ibid., 235.} The idea of a horizontal family structure and the lack of individuality are also stressed by the narrator’s use of the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ in the chapters set in the mines.

However, the idea of a diaspora is not limited by MacLeod to Scotland. Kirsten Sandrock shows that there are parallels between the Cape Breton Highlanders and other ethnic groups present in the novel, particularly the seasonal workers.\footnote{30 Sandrock, ‘Scottish Territories and Canadian Identity’, 179–80.} Moreover, there is also another, distinctly Scottish Gaelic diaspora, only this time it occurs exclusively on the North American continent. This is alluded to by the exodus from Cape Breton and by the longing for this island. The ‘emigration’ from Cape Breton is suggested in several instances. The clan \textit{Chalum Ruaidh} has spread across Canada, not
only echoing the westward expansion in North America, but also indicating the younger generation’s move from their ancestral home for economic reasons.\textsuperscript{31} This notion of an emigration from Cape Breton is most noticeable in the narrator himself, who has an orthodontist practice in Ontario, and in his sister Catriona, who has moved to Calgary. Despite the economic success this generation has had, they also experience nostalgia for Cape Breton, which has become their object of belonging and longing. By his depiction of the close-knit Scottish Gaelic community on the island MacLeod has created a ‘second Scotland’. Though the grandparents’ generation still has a nostalgic longing for Scotland, they are already portrayed as being firmly rooted in Cape Breton, which Grandpa refers to as ‘God’s country’ and ‘our own country’.\textsuperscript{32}

This strong emotional tie to Cape Breton is also suggested by the song ‘\textit{Cumha Ceap Breatuinn}’ (‘Lament for Cape Breton’) which occurs twice in \textit{No Great Mischief}: once at the very beginning of the novel and once when Alexander and his grandparents return to the island after his graduation in Halifax. Placing the song in the first chapter points to the importance of the motif of belonging and nostalgia: ‘I see far, far away. / I see far o’er the tide; / I see Cape Breton, my love, / Far away o’er the sea … There’s a longing in my heart now / To be where I was / Though I know that it’s quite sure / I never shall return.’\textsuperscript{33} As Alexander says, this is ‘one of those communal songs often sung by large groups of people’.\textsuperscript{34} While the (oral) tradition of the communal song has survived in the Scottish Gaelic community, the object of lament has changed with Cape Breton becoming the lost, lamented homeland and replacing Scotland in this respect.\textsuperscript{35} In Calum, moreover, MacLeod offers the most obvious rendition of the idea of an inner-Canadian diaspora. Not only is he the first character to sing the ‘Lament for Cape Breton’, he is also the one whose wish to return is the most pronounced, a typical trait of members of the diaspora.\textsuperscript{36} At the end of the novel, Calum asks Alexander to drive with him to Cape Breton, where he dies shortly after having passed the Causeway:

\textsuperscript{31} Christopher Gittings points to the presence of this motif in MacLeod’s short fiction. Christopher Gittings, ‘A Conversation with Alistair MacLeod’, \textit{Scotlands}, 2 (1995), 101.
\textsuperscript{32} MacLeod, \textit{No Great Mischief}, 108.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 13–14.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{35} Williams argues similarly; Williams, ‘From Clan to Nation’, 56.
'I turn to Calum once again. I reach for his cooling hand which lies on the seat beside him. I touch the Celtic ring.' With the image of the Celtic ring, the ‘never ending circle’, MacLeod also repeats the circular motif of his novel. It is not only Calum’s life coming full circle, but also that of Alexander. At the same time, this might imply a significant difference between the first and the second diaspora. While the preceding generations from *Calum Ruadh* onwards could not return to their Scottish homeland, the younger generation can still do so.

**Alice Munro, ‘The View from Castle Rock’**

Alice Munro’s short story collection *The View from Castle Rock* is also a family history concerned with the diasporic experience, though one with a distinctly autobiographical background. The first part of the collection deals with the history of the Laidlaw family, from their Scottish origin to their move to Ontario. Particularly in the first two stories—‘No Advantages’ and the title story ‘The View from Castle Rock’—Munro is concerned with the transmission of (cultural) traditions and the construction of identity in the diaspora.

The opening story ‘No Advantages’ lays the ground work for the remainder of the collection. The narrator describes her visit to the village of Ettrick in the Scottish Lowlands, where she visits her ancestors’ graves and provides a short overview of their lives. These miniatures highlight the characteristics and traditions that the Laidlaw family will take with them to Canada: the rigid Calvinism, the interest in writing, and stories of fairies and the supernatural. In this last respect, the narrator’s ancestor Will O’Phaup, who lived on the family farm Far-Hope in Ettrick Valley, plays an important role. As a young man, he was a larger-than-life character, prone to alcohol abuse and with occasional supernatural encounters. Particularly these episodes, which present Will O’Phaup as a brother in spirit to Robert Burns’ Tam O’Shanter, play an important role for the emigration story ‘The View from Castle Rock’.

This second story encapsulates two ideas central to the diaspora: the experience of emigration and being uprooted and the question of how

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37 MacLeod, *No Great Mischief*, 261.
memory can be transmitted and kept alive through the juxtaposition of oral and written traditions. The father in this story, Old James Laidlaw, expects economic betterment for his family in North America and is at first more than keen to leave Scotland. The further the ship moves across the Atlantic, however, the more Old James clings to the old family stories involving the notorious Will O’Phaup. Walter, Old James’ son, is present when his father narrates some of these tales to an audience of fellow emigrants:

[Walter] has heard these stories his father is spouting, and others like them, for the whole of his life, but the odd thing is that until they came on board this ship he never heard them from his father. The father he has known up till a short while ago would, he is certain, have had no use for them … ‘To be born in the Ettrick is to be born in a backward place,’ he would say, ‘where the people is all believing in old stories and seeing ghosts and I tell you it is a curse to be born in the Ettrick.’

A profound change within the character has taken place on board the ship. The father who used to scorn the ‘old stories’ is now eagerly telling them. The growing distance from home increases the sense of loss and appears to necessitate story telling as a means of maintaining and affirming identity. Munro underscores this by recreating Old James’ remarks about Ettrick and the New World. When the family leaves Scotland and the Scottish coast fades in the east, Old James declines looking back saying, ‘It is nothing to me. I have seen the last of the Ettrick so I have seen the last of Scotland already.’ However, when the family sees the coast of Nova Scotia for the first time, he has a change of heart refusing to look at the new home, ‘What does it matter to me? It cannot be my home. It can be nothing to me but the land where I will die.’ Even for him, who so far appeared to be eager to leave rural Scotland, North America has lost its allure. Emigration is marked here as a highly unsettling experience and predictably Old James turns to his two-year-old grandson Young James to tell him another story about Will O’Phaup in a final attempt to remember the old home.

Munro juxtaposes this oral tradition with its inklings of folklore with the written tradition of history and memory. This second approach is represented

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40 Ibid., 44.
41 Ibid., 80.
by Walter who is keeping a journal of the journey. On board he befriends a young girl, the daughter of the wealthy merchant Carbert, with whom Walter converses while his father tells stories from Ettrick:

‘I only write what happens,’ Walter says, wanting to make clear that this is a job for him and not an idle pleasure …

[Carbert:] ‘You are not writing about what we have just heard?’

[Walter:] ‘No.’

[Carbert:] ‘It might be worth it. There are people who go around now prying into every part of Scotland and writing down whatever these old country folk have to say. They think that the old songs and stories are disappearing and that they are worth recording. I don’t know about that, it isn’t my business. But I would not be surprised if the people who have written it all down find that it was worth their trouble – I mean to say, there will be money in it.’

The allusion here is to writers such as Walter Scott, who collected the old ballads and stories in the early nineteenth century. This folklorist approach is contrasted with Walter’s reductive notion of recording only ‘what happens’. The question invoked here is whether the oral or the written tradition allows for a more accurate or at least adequate rendition of memory. It is notable that Munro refrains from portraying one tradition as being superior to the other, implying instead that one cannot exist without the other. In an authorial, essentially metafictional comment her narrator says of ‘The View from Castle Rock’: ‘Except for Walter’s journals, and the letters, the story is full of my own invention.’ On the one hand this implies that written sources may not always suffice to create a complete image of the past and that there is more to history and memory than the mere recording of ‘what happens’. On the other hand, this comment points to the potentially problematic nature of memory and historiography, which are subjective interpretations of past events. Munro may imply that a narrative woven around the mere facts might be necessary to attribute meaning to these events and thus help to create identity.

Connected with the idea of memory is the emergence of a diasporic community and identity, Munro’s second concern in this story. This is alluded

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42 Ibid., 60–1.
43 Munro mentions Scott’s *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in Munro, ‘No Advantages’, 21.
44 Munro, ‘The View from Castle Rock’, 84.
to, for instance, in the behaviour of the passengers on board the ship. During boarding, Old James is worried about the fellow travellers, as the Lowlander does not appreciate his Gaelic countrymen: ‘Highlanders being one of the sorts the old man despises.’\textsuperscript{45} In fact, Old James told his family that on the ship there would be ‘All Scotsmen and all decent folk. No Highlanders, no Irish.’\textsuperscript{46} Though the reader does not get to know whether the family members or other travellers share this sentiment, this statement suggests significant regional, linguistic, religious and possibly even social differences between the Lowlanders and the Gaelic Highlanders. Significantly, this changes utterly once the ship comes within sight of the North American shore:

People are dancing, not just in the figure of the reel but quite outside of it, all over the deck. They are grabb[ing anyone at all and twirling around. They are even grabbing some of the sailors if they can get a hold of them. Men dance with women, men dance with men, women dance with women, children dance with each other or all alone and without any idea of the steps, getting in the way—but everybody is in everybody’s way already and it is no matter.\textsuperscript{47}

This \textit{impromptu ceilidh} starts with the first sight of Nova Scotia. It appears as if all social and regional distinctions are equalised by the new territory: the ‘New Scotland’ amalgamates the originally disparate emigrants into one relatively homogeneous group of diasporic Scots. The traditional Scottish music here has a twofold function. As with Old James’ story-telling, it allows the emigrants to hold on to the familiar cultural traditions when faced with the unknown territory. At the same time, the music develops a uniting moment capable of contributing to the construction of a new form of Scottishness and to a diasporic identity, free—however briefly—from the regional, social or religious differences.\textsuperscript{48} This tension between a nostalgic adherence to the Scottish traditions and the emergence of a diasporic identity is also alluded to at the end of the story, when Walter journeys back to Scotland: ‘Walter was able to take a trip back to Scotland, where he had himself photographed wearing a plaid and holding on to bouquet of thistles.’\textsuperscript{49} His choice of the traditional

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{48} The idea of music as a universal language and as a part of the cultural identity of the diaspora plays also an important role MacLeod’s fiction.
\textsuperscript{49} Munro, ‘The View from Castle Rock’, 87.
Imagining the Scottish-Canadian Diaspora

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Conclusion

Munro’s and MacLeod’s texts both emphasise the significance of memory and history for the construction of a diasporic identity. MacLeod presents the MacDonalds’ family history as inextricably linked with that of Scotland and Canada, emphasising its relevance for their identity. This is particularly evident in Alexander’s grandfathers who represent a juxtaposition of the oral and the written traditions. Munro also contrasts these traditions. Significantly, their very texts mirror the tension between both approaches: Munro and MacLeod stress the relevance of both traditions as complementing each other.

MacLeod presents the reader with a circular understanding of life, where everything is repeated or reoccurs. This is visible in the clan structure and even more dominantly in the reiteration of the diasporic experience in Canada. Cape Breton with its close-knit Scottish Gaelic community is presented as a ‘second Scotland’ from which younger generations emigrate and which becomes their object of diasporic longing. Munro, by contrast, highlights the moment of the historical emigration from Scotland and carefully depicts the birth of diasporic nostalgia. The arrival in the New World does not only create a homogenous group identity amongst the émigrés, it also goes to show how nostalgia develops with increasing spatial and temporal distance from the homeland.
A Hundred Years from Home: Cape Breton Scots and the Establishment of Cultural Dominance, 1820–1920

Sandra Barney

In Inverness County, we know everybody’s great grandfather’s name, and whether we stay or go to make a livelihood, we love each cove and mountain and turn in the road. This is home and we have a touchy pride about it.¹

In a 1920 petition to the premier of Nova Scotia, a number of Cape Breton residents appealed to the provincial government to institute the teaching of Scots Gaelic in publicly-supported schools. Citing statistics from the 1911 census indicating that almost 30 per cent of Nova Scotia’s population was of Scottish descent, they argued that Scottish language and tradition ‘embody the highest ideals of honour, virtue and patriotism.’² As descendents of immigrants who came to Cape Breton Island a century earlier, these petitioners sought to secure for their mother tongue a status equal to that granted French. They justified their argument by asserting the intellectual merits of studying Gaelic, but they also celebrated the richness and strength of their Scottish heritage. A hundred years from home, they still proclaimed the glory of their patrimony and their identity as members of ‘the Scottish race.’³

Scots who immigrated to the western reaches of Cape Breton in the nineteenth century experienced unique success in preserving their natal identity even as they struggled to avoid economic failure in this new land. Given the challenging environmental circumstances presented by the fierce North Atlantic weather and the inadequacy of most of the island’s soil for agriculture, settlers found themselves facing daunting odds as they attempted to carve farmsteads out of a Maritime landscape described by geographer Stephen Hornsby as ‘too steep [and] too wet.’⁴ The poor land proved to be

¹ Mary Anne Ducharme, ‘How We Became a County,’ http://www.invernessco.com/history_county.html [accessed 14 June 2010].
³ Ibid.
⁴ Stephen Hornsby, ‘Scottish Emigration and Settlement in Early Nineteenth-Century
fertile in its own way, however. As word spread of the difficulties faced by the island’s residents, most notably during the potato famine of the 1840s, later immigrants were deterred from making this their destination and the Highlanders secured their position as the dominant population on the island. Free from extensive interaction with outsiders and under little pressure to assimilate, they, and their offspring, developed an understanding of themselves as Scots living in a Scottish land. The strength of that identity might vary by community, but Scottish language and heritage flourished across the island and was especially defining in the west in what was, after 1837, Inverness County. That cultural dominance was challenged, however, when railroads penetrated the region and entrepreneurs, both homegrown and from the outside, began to tout the possibilities presented by new methods of agriculture and mining. Faced with the arrival of immigrant miners from continental Europe, Cape Bretoners were disinclined to accommodate and integrate new populations.

Scottish immigration to Cape Breton was both part of a broader movement of Scots to the Maritimes in reaction to economic modernisation at home and a unique experience of chain migration as residents from a very specific region in the west of Scotland departed in immediate and extended family groupings. The story of Cape Breton’s settlement is rooted in the Highland Clearances and the numbers, and the nature, of Scottish arrivals were determined by events at home as well as by circumstances in Nova Scotia. W.C.A. Ross commented in 1934 that, ‘Broadly speaking, in the eighteenth century people go from the Highlands, in the nineteenth they are sent.’ The Cape Breton example supports this claim that early emigrants left on their own initiative and later departures were driven by landlords seeking to increase profits by remaking agriculture. By the 1820s and 1830s thousands of economic refugees from the Highlands and Islands were setting out for Cape Breton every year. In the first

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decades of the nineteenth century, however, only a trickle of settlers moved to the island from Scotland while others came across from Prince Edward Island or the mainland of Nova Scotia. Cape Breton was not a primary destination for these earliest Scottish emigrants as they departed for British North America, but circumstances pushed some of them across the Strait of Canso and onto the island.

Rusty Bittermann’s careful documentation of the settlement of Middle River presents an example of the process by which Scottish settlers were recruited to other Maritime destinations but abandoned those locations to move on to Cape Breton. Angus MacAulay, who petitioned for land along the Wagamatcook River in 1807, had served as an agent recruiting potential settlers for Lord Selkirk’s emigration schemes in Upper Canada and on Prince Edward Island. Recognising the desperate circumstances faced by Highlanders who were being displaced as landlords consolidated their holdings to pursue more financially rewarding endeavours, Lord Selkirk proposed a series of resettlement programmes to move displaced Scots to Canada. After assisting in the establishment of the community of Belfast on Prince Edward Island, MacAulay grew dissatisfied with conditions there and attempted to organise a movement of Highland emigrants to Cape Breton. Although MacAulay’s scheme to establish a community was not immediately successful, Bittermann notes that several of the earliest permanent settlers of Middle River had originally been recruited to the Maritimes by MacAulay and had been participants in Lord Selkirk’s programme. As the first successful European claimants to this land, these early families were able to secure the more valuable plots, a situation that advantaged them when subsequent immigrants arrived in later decades.7

MacAulay’s followers joined other Scots who were moving to Cape Breton from their initial settlements around Pictou and Antigonish, in eastern Nova Scotia, and from Prince Edward Island. Incomplete records suggest that, by 1801, more than a hundred families of Scottish origin resided on Cape Breton Island.8 Lucille Campey asserts that, unlike most immigrants who preferred Upper Canada and its more agriculturally rich land, Scots coming from the Hebrides purposefully selected Cape Breton and Eastern Nova Scotia as their

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8 Barbara Kinkaid, ‘Scottish Immigration to Cape Breton, 1758 to 1838’ (MA thesis, Dalhousie University, 1964), 69.
preferred destination; in this early period ‘most emigrants paid their own way across the Atlantic and carefully chose where they would settle.’ In her view, they did so in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the timber trade and to benefit from the availability of inexpensive passage on empty timber ships returning to British America.

Campey joins Hornsby in claiming that Scots from the Highlands and Islands made these decisions about emigration based on their desire to maintain their families and communities in the new world. An agent in South Uist commented that ‘[t]he people from this country will all go to Cape Breton, and nowhere else if they can help it.’ While immigrants were driven by a longing to hold on to the familiar and to keep their immediate and extended families intact, subsequent waves of Scottish exiles had even more intense reasons to cling together and to clutch at portable symbols of home. These nineteenth-century immigrants, whose exodus was not so freely chosen, saw Cape Breton as a refuge ‘for the reassembly of Highland families and communities disrupted during the Clearances.’ Having been coerced or enticed from their old homes, they sought to recreate home on new terrain.

The significance of the Clearances, of the arrival of those who were ‘sent’ from their homes, on the history of British America has been well documented by historians. Unlike the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century trickle, this wave of immigration constituted an undeniable flood and Scots by the thousands arrived in the Maritimes as the old clan system was finally laid to rest in the face of modern notions of efficiency and profit. Hornsby documents the increase in arrivals in Cape Breton and breaks this era of immigration into two periods: the era from 1815 to 1825 when passage was relatively expensive and settlers possessed more capital, and the mid-1820s through the 1840s, decades marked by the collapse of the kelp industry and a massive increase in the numbers, and the poverty, of Scottish immigrants. Settlers who arrived in the first era were able to secure freehold grants but colonial regulators changed the requirements for the acquisition of Crown land in 1827 in the hopes of attracting wealthier arrivals. The more affluent who immigrated in the first decade benefitted from this policy; those in the second wave with fewer material possessions or capital at their disposal were

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10 Hornsby, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton*, 46, 84.
11 For a recent, and easily accessible, survey of the literature on the Clearances see Eric Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh, 2007).
further disadvantaged by these new regulations. Whether well poised to exploit the new land or vulnerable from the beginning, around 20,000 settlers had arrived on the island from the west of Scotland by 1845.\(^\text{14}\)

In his consideration of the meaning of the Clearances for immigrants Bittermann notes the conflicting emotions of hopefulness and grief as Highland Scots abandoned their ancestral homes for new lands across the Empire.\(^\text{15}\) His description of competing emotions is supported by Michael Kennedy’s analysis of contradictory verses from the 1830s by cousins who had come out from Lochaber to resettle at Mabou Ridge, Cape Breton. John the Hunter MacDonald lamented the going, ‘I left my heritage, my mirth remained over there,’ while Allan the Ridge MacDonald celebrated this ‘land of prosperity where [the immigrants] are now men of worth.’\(^\text{16}\) Kennedy goes on to survey popular songs and verse, as well as early local histories, and finds that there was much enthusiasm for immigration, both in Scotland and in the Maritimes. Although sometimes stunned by the enormity of the challenges before them, the settlers spoke hopefully about the opportunities available to them and expressed a consistent memory of the difficulties that had prompted them to leave Scotland.\(^\text{17}\) Highland arrivals were situated in a unique position; they understood that home as they knew it no longer existed in Scotland but they had brought with them so many of their cultural traditions, and so many of their family and friends, that they could reproduce and preserve many essential elements of home in this new land. As J.M. Bumstead wrote, ‘the Highlander recognised full well that only by departing his native land could he hope to maintain his traditional way of life.’\(^\text{18}\)

Carrying home on their backs and in their hearts and minds, the Scots were able to impose their identity on many of the communities of Cape Breton because they quickly outnumbered both those Native Americans who persisted on the land and other European settlers. The busy port of Sydney flourished and, given its proximity to Fortress Louisbourg, possessed a diverse population dominated by Loyalists and their descendents. Acadian settlements around

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\(^\text{14}\) Hornsby, ‘Scottish Emigration and Settlement’, 50.
\(^\text{15}\) Rusty Bitterman, ‘On Remembering and Forgetting: Highland Memories within the Maritime Diaspora’ in Harper and Vance (eds), *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory*, 255.
\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 267–97.
\(^\text{18}\) Bumstead, *The People’s Clearance*, xvi.
Cheticamp, Isle Madame and River Bourgeois grew and Irish immigrants were to be found in a variety of communities across the Island. None of these immigrant groups, however, could challenge the dominance of the Scots; this was especially true in the rural, western, territory of the island. In Inverness and Victoria Counties Hornsby documents that Scots and their descendents comprised more than 75 per cent of the population by 1870.\textsuperscript{19} Given the homogeneity of their communities, the Gaelic language—a key element of Highland culture—was well preserved in Cape Breton through the nineteenth century and Campey asserts that, at mid century, Cape Breton possessed the largest Gaelic-speaking population outside Scotland.\textsuperscript{20}

Kennedy, in discussing the development of a Scottish migration myth, spends much time exploring the importance of Gaelic in comparison to English sources and the necessity of looking to the Gaelic record, both oral and written, in uncovering the legitimate reflection of the conditions and attitudes of the people.\textsuperscript{21} If Kennedy’s imperative to find the Scottish Gaelic history of Cape Breton rings true, it is a challenge reflective of the experiences of the people themselves in seeking acknowledgement of their language. Although the majority of citizens on the island, the Scots were disadvantaged in preserving their language as they were subjects of English rule from the administrative capital of Nova Scotia, Halifax. In an 1845 petition to the provincial general assembly, Jacob Kuhn, the editor of \textit{The Spirit of the Times}, a Cape Breton newspaper based in Sydney, appealed for the publication of agricultural guides in Gaelic. In his petition, Kuhn noted that Cape Breton was ‘peopled by a race of men, for the most part from the Hebrides of Scotland, and ignorant of the most simple modes of Colonial Agriculture.’ He went on to state that the agricultural pamphlets printed in English were of no use to island residents since English is ‘a language with which five-sixths of the population of Cape Breton are totally unacquainted, their mother tongue being the Gaelic and that, consequently, the opportunity of acquiring beneficial information is wholly lost to them.’ Kuhn was quick to comment on his reservations about ‘cherishing different languages,’ but stated that their ignorance of any language except Gaelic should not be a ‘crime’ or ‘furnish a plea for their proscription or for depriving them of those rights in which their English brethren are allowed to participate.’\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Hornsby, \textit{Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton}, 121–2.
\textsuperscript{20} Campey, \textit{After the Hector}, 13.
\textsuperscript{21} Kennedy, “Lochaber no more”, 275–7.
\textsuperscript{22} Jacob D. Kuhn to Nova Scotia Provincial House of Assembly, 1845, NSARM, Nova Scotia
In seeking recognition of the dominance of Gaelic among the population of Cape Breton, Kuhn appealed to the assemblymen’s sense of benevolence and justice. The provincial assembly did not share Kuhn’s pragmatic view of the need to assist Cape Breton farmers, however. The Agricultural Committee affirmed that it would be beneficial ‘that a large portion of our population might be enabled to read such works in their native language’ but the expense of publication should not ‘be borne upon the general fund of the Province.’ Reservations about the dominance of Gaelic in Cape Breton were demonstrated by others outside the provincial assembly. Reflecting on his 1844 visit to the Maritimes, the secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society admitted ‘I did not visit Cape Breton, partly from want of time and partly from want of Gaelic.’

The importance of preserving Gaelic among the Cape Bretoners was magnified by the low status ascribed to the language in Scotland. Even as Highlanders were departing for North America, public as well as private educational institutions were moving towards English as the primary language of instruction and examination. Although some efforts were pursued to provide Gaelic instruction to young children, educational bodies, as well as Scottish citizens, were driven by the belief that ‘English was the language of the future.’ This presumption was so strongly held that many Gaelic-speaking Highlanders advocated for English instruction, believing that ‘the Highlander who reads only Gaelic [was] only half educated.’ J.L. Campbell wrote about the ‘extreme political and economic unimportance to which the Gaelic-speaking population has been latterly reduced’ in Scotland. Forced to function in English, native speakers in the homeland saw the mother tongue relegated to a ‘patois.’ The Nova Scotia Provincial Assembly’s refusal to fund publications in Gaelic demonstrated the unwillingness of the public sector to respond to the desire of Scottish immigrants to preserve the language of their home, but private enterprise was not so constrained. Gaelic

24 Robert Burns, quoted in Kenneth Donovan ‘“May Learning Flourish”: The Beginnings of a Cultural Awakening in Cape Breton During the 1840s’ in Donovan (ed.), The Island, 112.
26 Ibid., 23.
might not be recognised as an official language, but it thrived in this region of the province.

The influence of Gaelic as a language of daily commerce and communication in the nineteenth century was illustrated by the number of newspapers published in that language in Cape Breton or in nearby towns on the Nova Scotia mainland. As early as 1851 a Gaelic-language newspaper, An Cuairtcar Og Gaelach or The Young Highland Visitor, was printed in Antigonish, just across the Canso Strait from Cape Breton. The Casket, which included a Gaelic-language column, began publishing in 1852 and lasted for several decades. Mac Talla (The Echo) was published from 1892 until 1904 in Sydney and a contemporary observed that it ‘was read by Gaelic speakers all over the world and could be considered the periodical of the whole Gaelic-speaking population throughout Scotland and the Empire.’

Gaelic-language newspapers continued into the twentieth century. Published in Sydney from 1926 until 1933, Teachdaire nan Gaidheal (Gaelic Messenger) offered news in Gaelic but advertisements in English. Although written in English, many advertisements still specifically targeted a Scottish audience. ‘It is a well known fact’, touted one example, ‘that a man can talk the grand old Gaelic better in a nobby suit tailored by M.W. Ross.’ The Havelock Bottling Company proclaimed that ‘The Scots are noted for delicacy of taste. Havelock Ginger ALE just suits the Scots.’

The Gaelic community’s ability to support these newspapers reflected the ubiquity of the language on the island in the nineteenth century. During the potato famine that so imperilled rural farming populations in the 1840s the relationship between Scottish agriculturalists and English-speaking merchants was revealed by an exchange in Mabou. William McKeen, of Scottish ancestry but born in Nova Scotia, was an English-speaking merchant who held a position of economic importance on the western side of the island. He was described by R.J. Morgan as ‘the chief merchant of Inverness County.’ When one of McKeen’s ships loaded with provisions arrived in Mabou desperate men showed up with ‘empty bags and no money.’ McKeen warned the people that he could not afford to distribute the food without compensation or his own business would be undermined. In response, after having McKeen’s comments

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29 Teachdaire nan Gaidheal (Gaelic Messenger) 2 (1926), NSARM, Newspapers, Sydney, Cape Breton County.
translated, a ‘Gaelic man’ exclaimed in dismay in his mother tongue. After his plea was translated into English for McKeen, the merchant ordered his men to open the hatches and to parcel out the supplies. This episode demonstrates both the persistence of the Gaelic vernacular and the economic advantages offered by embracing English. As Morgan argues in his essay on the potato famine in Cape Breton in the 1840s, the most successful merchants on the island were fluent in English and ‘the famine re-enforced their economic power over the Gaelic-speaking Scot, and helped to make them his role models.’

The determination of the Scots to abandon Gaelic for English can be debated for there is substantial evidence illustrating the persistence of the mother tongue in public institutions on the island throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Judge James MacDonald, who served as the chief justice of Nova Scotia from 1881 to 1904, oversaw a civil trial in Baddeck that was carried out entirely in Gaelic since neither of the parties involved spoke English. Along with the antagonists and the judge, the attorneys were also fluent in Gaelic. One of the advocates, Duncan Fraser, went on to serve as lieutenant governor of the province. Most revealing is the fact that the court could empanel a jury of Gaelic-speaking citizens, indicating the extensive use of the language among residents of Victoria County.

Churches, both Roman Catholic and Presbyterian, played a critical role in preserving the traditional language of the people through this period. An article published in Mac Talla in 1902 documented the commonality of Gaelic as a language of worship. The author declared that thirty three of the thirty-nine Presbyterian churches on the Island held services in Gaelic. Twenty nine of the thirty-five Presbyterian ministers were fluent enough to present sermons in the language. There were thirty-seven Catholic parishes and ‘all but six have Gaelic.’ Thirty one of the forty-one priests on the island were competent in the language.

J. L. Campbell, who presented the above information in his study of Gaelic in Cape Breton, queried the clergy in 1932 and found that, even at that late date, the language was still strong across the island, although less dominant in the more industrialised sections around Sydney and Glace Bay in the east and, unsurprisingly, in the Acadian communities. As is consistently reported,

31 Donald MacDonald, Cape North and Vicinity: Pioneer Families, History and Chronicles, including Pleasant Bay, Bay St Lawrence, Aspy Bay, White Point, New Haven and Neil’s Harbour (Port Hastings, N.S.: n.p., 1933), 21.
32 Morgan, “Poverty, wretchedness, and misery”, 99.
he found that Inverness County, in the western part of the Island, ‘was most Gaelic of all the counties.’ There, he found that fifteen of the eighteen Roman Catholic parishes that responded reported that more than 40 per cent of their parishioners were Gaelic speakers.35

The use of Gaelic as a liturgical and devotional language reminds us that this was a vital, vibrant, tongue that Scottish Cape Bretoners used in the most routine, and the most significant, areas of their lives. In describing the service of a Scottish minister from the mainland of Nova Scotia who preached in Gaelic, D. Maclean Sinclair quoted a contemporary observer who said that, ‘when he addressed the Highlanders in their native tongue the effect was most striking. With breathless attention, and tears in their eyes’, they listened to a language that ‘awakened the most heart-stirring associations.’ In Gaelic, Sinclair concluded, ‘the preacher had at his command a very impressive and devotional language.’36

The experience of attending a Gaelic-language service in rural Cape Breton was described by Charles H. Farnham in his essay ‘Cape Breton Folk’. A local colour piece published by Harper's New Monthly Magazine in 1886, the article described a canoeing and hiking excursion around the Island. Throughout the trip, Farnham commented on the frequency of Gaelic, lamenting in one case that, upon arriving at a rural homestead in search of accommodation, ‘Gaelic was given us instead of bread.’ In his description of a Presbyterian service conducted in the Highlanders’ native tongue, he claimed that ‘These Gaelic psalms often have an extraordinary effect’ on the people whose voices are united in a way that is ‘wonderfully touching.’ While Farnham may have celebrated the uniqueness of this open-air ceremony in order to sell his story to urban readers, it does appear that the Gaelic language did help maintain the identity of these immigrants from the Highlands and Islands beyond the first generation. As Farnham observed, in the 1880s Cape Bretoners consciously understood themselves to be Scots living in exile. As part of his travels he attended a festival, which he called a ‘Gathering of the Clans’, where residents united to raise money to assist in the construction of a house for a member of the community.37 The name with which he labelled the event suggested a desire to romanticise Scottish identity, but the communal sharing of resources and work recalls the traditions of the Highland clan and supports Rosemary

35 Campbell, ‘Scottish Gaelic in Canada’, 129.
Ommer’s claim that clan identity and organisation were transported to Cape Breton and persisted beyond the initial generation of immigration. Although the Highlanders had accepted Cape Breton as their new home, they retained many of the traditions and practices of their first home in Scotland.

Ommer argues in her essay that the clan system had been undermined for decades and was finally overwhelmed by the Clearances but that it did not entirely disappear as critical elements were purposefully transported to Cape Breton and, as described in her analysis, onward to Newfoundland as well. She argues that the challenges to clan ownership and identity were so great by the beginning of the nineteenth century that ‘the choice for the tacksman and ordinary clansman alike, was to become marginal to the new status quo or, for those who could manage it, to emigrate.’ The nature and process of that emigration, she asserts, reflected a purposeful desire to hold on to clan identity and traditions. To support her claims, she looked at settlement patterns in Broad Cove and on the Margaree, finding that the majority of settlers in this area were members of Clanranald. Most compelling was her discovery that 71 per cent of the adult males who initially settled the land were related to one another before they departed from the Highlands.  

Hornsby’s more complete analysis of familial identity and land holding supports Ommer’s claims. He found that, as at Broad Cove and on the Margaree, land further south in Inverness County between MacKinnon’s Point and Judique was held by related families and 68 per cent of the landholding families in that area had one of seven surnames. These conditions reflected the nature of departure from Scotland. When the St Lawrence arrived in Port Hawkesbury on the Canso Strait in 1828, for example, 170 of the 208 passengers bore one of four last names. Bittermann finds that similar connections tied together the men who pioneered the settlement of Middle River. Two of those families, the MacRaes and the Campbells, were from Applecross in Ross-shire and had immigrated together while a third, Roderick MacKenzie, was from nearby Lock Aish. MacKenzie was married to a daughter of Kenneth MacLeod, the fourth of these earliest settlers. According to Bittermann, by 1812 these four families controlled enormous pieces of land along Middle River. ‘All subsequent settlers,’ he writes, ‘would … have to contest the claims of these families.’

39 Hornsby, Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton, 76, 46.
40 Bittermann, ‘Economic Stratification and Agrarian Settlement’ in Donovan (ed.), The
By the middle of the nineteenth century, then, much of Cape Breton was dominated by Scots who clung to their traditional language and practices even as they lived under an English-speaking government. Although the struggle to prosper, or to even survive as during the agricultural crisis of the 1840s, was daunting, ‘the relative economic backwardness and isolation of the island allowed Gaelic culture to be established.’ The arrival of new economic institutions and challenges during the second half of the century created circumstances that threatened the dominance of the Gaelic language and Gaelic traditions. As railroads and steam ships carried many of the island’s youth off to the United States or to other locations in Canada, families were left to occupy what Hornsby calls a ‘meager rural niche in a rapidly industrialising world.’

The industrial era did come to the western part of the island, however, as mining concerns grew interested in the Sydney coal seam in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Of lesser quality and quantity than the deposits on the eastern side of the island but still attractive to investors, the coal was accessed by mines at Port Hood, Mabou Harbor, Inverness, and between Chimney Corner and St Rose. The most significant operations were established in Inverness, with initial, unsuccessful, attempts launched in 1865, 1872 and 1877. Fully functional mining and transportation facilities were finally opened by the efforts of William Penn Hussey, who organised the Broad Cove Coal Company in 1888. A Boston native, Hussey was a charismatic and ebullient fellow; J.L. MacDougall, a contemporary observer, said that he ‘loved to dance on difficulties.’ Hussey travelled across Europe drumming up support for his mining operation and, with funds from Swiss investors, he initiated the construction of the infrastructure necessary to mine and transport coal. This capital investment paid off and the mines employed 300 workers when Hussey dissolved his corporation in 1899. With his departure the mines came under the control of the Inverness Railway and Coal Company, which operated the

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41 Hornsby, Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton, 84.
42 Ibid., 203–4.
43 Douglas Campbell, Banking on Coal: Perspectives on a Cape Breton Community within an International Context (Sydney, 1997), 29–34.
mines through the prosperous first decade of the new century but was in receivership by 1917.46

The introduction of this new industrial opportunity had significant consequences for communities along the west coast. In Inverness the railroad, and the coal industry it served, influenced every community from Port Hawksbury through Inverness. In Inverness itself, which grew from a rural settlement known as Broad Cove into an industrial town incorporated in 1904, the mines produced new economic opportunity for farmers and their sons. A survey of the 1891 and 1901 census for the area that was incorporated as Inverness in 1904 reveals a region still almost exclusively populated by Scots. These census returns, in fact, are so consistent in some locations that the census takers did not bother to provide specific information for individual respondents; instead, the word ‘Scotch’ is scrawled across the column, indicating that everyone in the whole location surveyed possessed that ‘racial or tribal’ identity.47 Religious identity, however, was recorded with care and there was a significant number of Presbyterian Scots in the area when both of the surveys were completed.48 When the town was incorporated there were roughly 3,000 residents; Campbell indicates that approximately 70 per cent were Roman Catholic and 30 per cent were Protestants with a few Jewish families also living in the town. While Catholics outnumbered Protestants, he asserts that ‘the class structure was strongly skewed in favour of the Protestants’, who dominated merchant activity, held most of the local political appointments and managed the mine.49

Whether Presbyterian or Roman Catholic, the men who went to work in the colliery in these first decades were primarily local and Scottish. A few French and Irish miners were recorded in these census documents, but the vast majority of miners possessed familiar local surnames, lived in families, and were part of economic units that typically included members engaged in farming as well as wage labour. On the eve of incorporation, then, the new opportunities offered by mining were being enjoyed by established families with mining employment being taken up by sons who might have, in previous decades, had to leave the county for employment in the United States or elsewhere in Canada. Unlike Richmond and Victoria Counties, which lost

46 Campbell, Banking on Coal, 31–2; 40.
47 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness District 1891, 1901.
48 Ibid.
49 Campbell, Banking on Coal, 34–5.
population between 1881 and 1891, Inverness County’s population increased by half a per cent as out migration slowed.\textsuperscript{50}

The decade after incorporation was a period of economic prosperity for Inverness as the mines expanded and new opportunities developed. By 1913, the high water mark of the coal boom in Inverness, the mines employed 725 men.\textsuperscript{51} For the first time since the Scottish migration of the early nineteenth century, Inverness County became an attractive destination for new immigrants. Cape Breton Scots, having established a new ‘home away from home’ now had to respond to this subsequent generation of immigrants seeking employment and economic opportunity. While the industrial heartland of the island around Sydney was accustomed to the influx of workers drawn to the mining and steel enterprises there, western Cape Breton experienced a challenge to its cultural and ethnic identity.

The 1901 and 1911 censuses for Inverness and the surrounding areas reveal how the region was being changed by immigration. The earlier census documents a trickle of miners who moved in from other areas of the Maritimes to work in the mines. By 1911, a more significant stream of new workers was coming to Inverness; among these were German immigrants. Unlike Belgian immigrants, who ultimately constituted a significant population in the town, the Germans were generally intermingled with the Scottish population and the location of their homes seems to have been defined by economic conditions and religious identity. For example, John Pettengel and his wife Mary, who arrived in Canada in 1910 from Germany with their four children, lived among Cape Breton Scots from long established families. On one side resided the widow Mary Gillis and her children and mother; on the other were a family of McDonalds. Both the McDonalds and Gillises had been present on the island since the earliest days of Scottish settlement. These particular families, however, were not as economically stable as some of their siblings or cousins might have been. Rather than relying on a mix of agriculture and wage labour, as many established households did, these economically marginal families were entirely dependent on employment in the coal mines or reported no means of support. Mary Gillis was a twenty-eight-year-old widow who lived with her three young children and mother and offered no information about employment to the census taker. Alexander McDonald, living on the other side of the Pettengels, was a twenty-eight-year-old miner who oversaw a house

\textsuperscript{50} Hornsby, \textit{Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton}, 189; Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, 1891, 1901.

\textsuperscript{51} Campbell, \textit{Banking on Coal}, 39.
occupied by three younger sisters, a brother and their widowed mother. All of these families were Roman Catholic.52

Along with these Germans and the Cape Bretoners of Irish and French heritage who had intermarried with the Scots and settled in Inverness, the presence of a Syrian miner and his family also illustrates how a new arrival might be integrated into the primarily Scottish community. Joseph Charles was a Syrian native who had immigrated into Canada. He was twenty six when the 1911 census was conducted and was employed in the mines. His wife Lucy, of Scottish heritage, was twenty four and they were the parents of four young children. The children’s nationality was identified as Syrian based on their father’s status, but each of them bore a common Scottish or Anglo name. Like the Pettengels, they lived alongside Scottish coal mining families who shared their religious identity as Roman Catholics.53

Inverness was unique in that the vast majority of immigrants who came in the first decade of the twentieth century were from Belgium. The 1911 census for the town documents the number of Belgian miners who had moved into the village to take up positions in the colliery. Like the Scots who had settled the Broad Cove region a hundred years earlier, the Belgians came in family units. Different from the Scots who had been able to access free or low cost land for agriculture, the Belgians faced a pre-existing population who controlled the resources and the political and social institutions. The Belgians were able to secure employment in the mines, but were limited in the other economic activities they could pursue and in the locations in which they could reside. The 1908 edition of McAlpine’s Nova Scotia Directory, which provides information about residents and businesses in the various towns of the province, lists the earliest of these Belgian miners and their families as residents in the community, but illustrates the persistence of Scots as the dominant force in commerce.54

The Belgian immigrants were settled together in a section of Inverness commonly called ‘Belgium Town’, an area also home to a small population of German and French immigrants and, later, a refuge for the few Italian immigrants who settled in Inverness.55 There were 190 Belgians residing here in 1911. While a few young men lived in boarding houses, the vast majority

52 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness District, Inverness Subdistrict, 1911.
53 Ibid.
54 McAlpine’s Nova Scotia Directory, 1907–1908 (Halifax, 1908), 1467–76.
55 Sam Migliore and A. Evo DiPierro, Italian Lives, Cape Breton Memories (Sydney, 1989), 79.
of the recent immigrants were organised into thirty-eight families. There is no surprise to the discovery that the men were all employed as miners or labourers at the colliery. Like the population of Inverness as a whole, the Belgians were divided between Protestant and Catholic affiliation. Twenty-two of the families were Roman Catholic while nine followed the Presbyterian faith. The rest were called ‘free thinkers,’ an affiliation not applied elsewhere in this district. The arrival of these Belgian miners was notable in the community. When the census was conducted they made up 12 per cent of the population of the sub-district in which they lived. They were 6 per cent of the entire population of the town of Inverness.56

The arrival of the Belgian miners and their families certainly shaped Inverness, but the number of recent immigrants in the county was insignificant when compared to changing conditions on the eastern side of the island. Around Sydney and Glace Bay, the industrial centre of Cape Breton, foreign workers were arriving by the thousands during the 1890s and early 1900s. As mentioned earlier, the coal deposits on the eastern side of the island dwarfed those in the west and the number of workers needed in the mines, and in the subsequent steel industry developed there, was much greater than was the case in Inverness County. As the mines were expanded in the 1890s, Sydney and Glace Bay grew exponentially. In 1901 Glace Bay ranked forty-sixth in the list of most populated cities in Canada; by 1911 it had leap-frogged to twenty-second. During the period of most rapid growth, Sydney and its close environs grew by 40 per cent in one two-year period. The vast majority of this expansion was due to new arrivals; some came from the hinterlands of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia and from Newfoundland and other territories in the Maritimes. The most significant population increase of the twentieth century, however, was created by newly-arrived immigrants. More than 50 per cent of the population of both Sydney and Glace Bay in 1910 had arrived in the previous decade. In some communities around the mines and the mills, more than 60 per cent of the residents were immigrants. While Inverness experienced the arrival of Belgian and German miners, their numbers paled in comparison to the thousands who were remaking the more developed areas of industrial Cape Breton.57

Port Hood, just thirty-five kilometres from Inverness, experienced the coal boom in a way that set it apart from both Inverness and Sydney. As

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56 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, Inverness, 1911.
both the smallest of the commercially-significant mining regions and the most homogeneous before the boom, Port Hood was uniquely positioned to resist challenges to its Scottish traditions. Unlike Inverness, which was home to significant populations of both Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Scots, Port Hood was dominated by Roman Catholics, a dominance that was unchallenged through the coal boom and beyond. More than 80 per cent of the 1,489 residents enumerated in the 1881 census reported that they were Catholics; when the census was conducted in 1891, 89 per cent of the district responded that they attended the Roman church. By 1901, the population of the area had grown so large that the area around the collieries had been set apart as a new sub-district aptly called Port Hood Mines. In both this more rural area and in Port Hood proper, 86 per cent held that faith. Although the community would experience an influx of immigrants who came to work in the mines in the first decade of the twentieth century, 74 per cent of Port Hood residents still indicated their allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church in 1911.\(^{58}\)

The population around Port Hood was defined by its Roman Catholic loyalty, but also by its primarily Scottish identity. Originally settled by New England Loyalists in the 1780s, Scottish Highlanders began moving into the area within a decade. Many came north from a Scottish settlement in Judique which had been created by immigrants from Prince Edward Island twenty years earlier. By 1818, when the first census was taken, the Scottish community was firmly established; the enumeration revealed that one half of the 170 local residents was Scottish.\(^{59}\) The Scottish population grew throughout the nineteenth century and their numerical and cultural advantage continued to increase. By 1871, 70 per cent of the inhabitants of Port Hood were Scottish. As was the case from the beginning of the settlement, Irish immigrants and their descendents were the second most significant population, boosting the Roman Catholic identity of the region.\(^{60}\)

As the numerically-dominant population, the Scots wielded enormous influence in this region of Cape Breton. By 1776 the English colonial government had officially named the village and its companion island Port Hood after Lord Admiral Samuel Hood. The Scots, however, called it Seastico, a Gaelic corruption of Justaucorps, the name given to the island by French

\(^{58}\) Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, Port Hood and Port Hood Mines, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.


\(^{60}\) Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, Port Hood, 1871.
soldiers when they quarried stone there in the 1740s and 1750s to build Fortress Louisbourg. This place name continued its evolution as English gained status on the island. After evolving from French to Gaelic it emerged in an Anglicised form—Chestico, which is still in common use today. The annual historical and cultural festival in Port Hood is called Chestico Days for instance.\(^{61}\)

English settlers arrived in this region of Inverness County first and claimed some of the richest land in the area for themselves. They, and the descendents of Irish pioneers, prospered due to their early arrival and authority over developing economic and political institutions, but Scots were quickly able to compete and to influence local and provincial decisions. Cape Breton County, the administrative unit that had previously served the entire island, was broken up into three smaller counties by the provincial assembly in 1835. The westernmost of these counties, which included the heavily Scottish areas from Judique up to Inverness and beyond, was originally called Juste-au-Corps County. In recognition of the dominant Scottish population and culture of the place, the name was changed to Inverness County in 1837.\(^{62}\) The proposal to do so, according to a 1922 local history, was driven by William Young, the county’s first representative to the provincial assembly and a ‘cultured Scotsman to the backbone.’\(^{63}\)

English and Irish men continued to have positions of significance in Port Hood, the administrative seat of Inverness County and an economic hub of western Cape Breton due to its exceptional harbour but Scots gained positions in the professions and in political life. Local histories and genealogies note the number of Scots who secured prominent places as merchants, politicians, physicians and attorneys. These included men like John H. Jamieson, born at Broad Cove, who served as clerk of the Municipal Council and in the House of Assembly in Halifax, and Donald Gillis, another attorney who was also a merchant in Port Hood and Judique. Sir Donald Cameron MacDonald, also a barrister, was treasurer of the Municipality of Inverness County and was made a knight of St Gregory the Great by Pope Pius XI. He married the wife of the postmaster of Port Hood and their children included a physician, a school principal and a son who eventually took on the position as postmaster himself. Physicians such as Duncan Campbell, born at Margaree Forks, practiced medicine but also engaged in politics; he was a clerk of the

\(^{61}\) ‘A Brief History of Port Hood’.


\(^{63}\) MacDougall, ‘History of Inverness County, Nova Scotia, 1922’.
county and served in the provincial assembly. McAlpine’s Nova Scotia Directory, 1907–1908 documents a commercial landscape dominated by these Scottish merchants and professionals.

The Scots were secure in their positions of authority and influence when the coal boom reached Port Hood. Exploitation of the local seam was pursued in erratic bursts in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. First attempted in 1865, there was much hope that the deep water harbour at Port Hood would make transport of the coal efficient and affordable. Internal financial troubles undermined that first effort and more than a decade passed before new development was pursued. In those intervening years, however, the port had silted up due to damage to the protective neck that connected Port Hood Island to the mainland and it was necessary for rail transport to be developed to make mining profitable. Efforts to complete the rail line were successful but attempts to open a mine were sporadic and it was only in 1906 that a company was established that enabled the village to experience a sustained period of productivity. That mine, which was worked from 1906 until 1911, created the greatest demand for labourers yet experienced—employing 250 in 1911.

Like Inverness and Sydney and Glace Bay, then, Port Hood experienced a coal boom that created new opportunities for labourers seeking employment. Here, however, new immigrants found few opportunities and, instead, local men dominated the colliery. In the 1871 census of Port Hood no man reported that his employment was in mining; instead, most were farmers and a few were fishermen. In 1881, 237 of 1,489 residents stated that they were farmers and many of the young men responded that they were ‘farmer’s sons.’ Once again, no one was labelled as a miner. Even in 1891 no miners were noted. It was only in 1901 that mining began to be reported as a profession; in that year there were ninety-one miners. There were individual immigrants from Russia, Belgium and France included in this category, but the vast majority of the miners were Roman Catholic Scots born in Nova Scotia who were living in families. A number of households included a father who was reported to be a farmer, an elder son labelled a farmer’s son, and a younger son identified as a miner. There were more than twice as many farmers as there were miners and 123 young men identified as farmers’ sons.

66 Campbell, Banking on Coal, 33.
With the expansion of mining in the 1900s, personal identification and comprehension was transformed and the 1911 census reveals a profound change in the way the community, and especially the young men, understood work. In that enumeration, 252 miners were identified but only two farmer’s sons. Young men who previously presumed their future to be a choice between the family farm or emigration to employment in the US or Upper Canada now comprehended themselves as wage workers in the local colliery. This transformation was possible for them, in part, because they did not have to compete with outsiders to secure these new positions. By 1911 the population had grown to 2,499 in Port Hood and Port Hood Mines. Of those residents, five were recent English immigrants, two had come from both Ireland and Belgium and solo immigrants had arrived from Spain, Germany and Denmark, respectively.  

The census is an imperfect record, however, and it does not preserve the memory of immigrants who arrived and departed in the ten-year period between enumerations. Other immigrant miners did come to Port Hood in the 1900s, but the welcome they received was mixed and, for some, the experience was tragic. The explosion that occurred in the Port Hood mine in 1908 was devastating to the local community as six men from the surrounding farms and settlements were killed. Four Bulgarian miners died along with these local men. The community’s reaction to this loss illustrated the inability of new immigrants to be successfully integrated into the tightly knit Scottish society. When the local newspaper announced the explosion it proclaimed ‘six men and four Bulgarians’ had been killed. The community did not actually deny these recent immigrants their humanity as the comment suggested, but their treatment in death spoke to the inability of this closely integrated and homogeneous community to incorporate outsiders.

When the coroner, a physician named R. St John MacDonald, prepared his report for the inquest he carefully described the injuries each victim had received. The six local men, a Beaton, a Campbell, a Gillis, a MacKenzie and two MacDonalds were each listed by their full names. The Bulgarians were identified by their employee numbers and their last names only. In his analysis of the cause of each man’s death he referred to the Cape Bretoners by their names but to the immigrants as ‘one of the Bulgarians’ or ‘Bulgarian

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68 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, Port Hood and Port Hood Mines, 1911.

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no. 503. Charles Stewart, the mine supervisor who was called to give an account of the rescue efforts, reported that they ‘found the body of a Bulgarian’ and subsequently found ‘another Bulgarian.’ His comments about the native Port Hood miners were different, however, and he identified each of them by name, even referring to Lauchlan Gillis by his nickname Lauchie.71

Stewart’s observations are particularly significant because he was not a local man himself. A Scottish native, he had immigrated to Nova Scotia after working for fourteen years in coal mines at home. He came to Port Hood after labouring an additional five years in other mines in Nova Scotia and had been in the community for just two years. Although not a native Cape Bretoner, his shared Scottish heritage connected him to the local community and he had become familiar enough with the resident miners to know their nicknames, suggesting he enjoyed a camaraderie not always experienced by mine overseers.72 The Bulgarians, with whom he shared the immigrant experience, were much more foreign in this place than was he, a fellow Scot.73

The disconnect between the Bulgarian miners and the local miners, made so obvious in death, had been experienced in life as well. An elderly woman whose father had worked in the mine and assisted with the rescue effort reported in an interview in 1980 that the Bulgarian miners were regularly teased and tormented by the locals who hid their tools and belittled them for their language and customs. The Bulgarians protected their picks and other tools by hiding them in the mine and, according to her memory of the popular wisdom of the day, it was the flame from a Bulgarian miner’s lamp that caused the explosion. His lamp ignited a pocket of gas when he slipped into a side chamber to retrieve his gear. Distrust of the Bulgarians as outsiders continued after their deaths. A controversy over whether their bodies should be buried in the Roman Catholic or Protestant cemetery developed. There was doubt about their Catholic orthodoxy so some advocated burying them in the Protestant graveyard. Alexander Peterson, the father of the woman who recounted these events, insisted that the Bulgarians were Roman Catholic and should be buried in the church cemetery. Given uncertainty about their status, they were buried outside the boundaries of the graveyard and a message was

71 Ibid.
73 ‘Port Hood 1908: Horrific Mine Explosion Kills 10’.
sent to Rome asking for guidance. In 1910, in response to directions from the Vatican, the fence around the cemetery was expanded to include the graves of the deceased miners, although no stone marker was established.74

The Bulgarians experienced the difficulties of integrating into a tightly bound society, but it has to be noted that, in death, they were also treated with respect and concern by members of the Port Hood community. When Charles Stewart and the other rescuers came upon an injured Bulgarian miner they worked desperately, if unsuccessfully, to revive him. Alexander Peterson was deeply distressed about the inability of the mine operators to contact the families of the deceased Bulgarian miners and compensate the widows and children for their loss. He was also an ardent crusader who insisted that the Bulgarians had to be buried in their faith. The Scots of Inverness County were not unwilling to treat outsiders with dignity, but they were more able to extend generosity in death than in life.

Although the challenge to Scottish identity in Inverness County was less significant than it was in the region around Sydney and Glace Bay, western residents joined others in advocating for the protection of their culture and patrimony in this era of industrial development. As early as 1879, when the mining boom was just beginning, John A. Morrison, a member of the provincial assembly from Victoria County, gave an impassioned speech in the house in Gaelic demanding that the language be offered in island schools.75 When writing to a Gaelic scholar at St Francis Xavier College in Antigonish in 1901, Alexander MacDonald bemoaned the lack of interest the people demonstrated towards Gaelic language and culture and noted that ‘sufficient for the day is the evil thereof’, a dramatic lament for a past in which the Scottish vernacular and tradition were not challenged by new ideas and experiences.76 As industrial and transportation changes brought the people of Cape Breton into greater and more intense contact with outsiders, a purposeful effort was initiated to preserve the Scottish tradition. In 1922, an organisation called the Scottish Catholic Society of Canada began to publish a journal called Mosgladh or The Awakening. Founded in 1919, the magazine was printed in Sydney and offered essays such as ‘The Celtic Voice Not Waning’ and ‘Our Scottish Catholic Heritage’. It presented about half of its essays in Gaelic. In a survey of the history of Scottish Catholics in the old

76 Alexander MacDonald to MacLean Sinclair, 9 January 1901, NSARM, MG 1, vol. 2660, no.326.
world and the new, the Rev. J. W. McIsaac mourned the passing ‘of those grand old men and women, the sons and daughters of those who had to leave the Highlands.’ He continued on to write, ‘what a sturdy race of people they were who came to this country from the islands and glens of Scotland’ and celebrated their ‘vigorous nationality.’ His view of their descendents, however, was less enthusiastic:

We are fast degenerating into a race of imitators. That is one of the greatest faults of the youth of the present day. They are fast becoming imitators of the vicious habits and unchristian ways and manners of the votaries of wealth and luxury. They seem to have entirely forgotten the priceless heritage of faith and character left them by their grand old grandfathers and grandmothers.77

‘Faith and character,’ ‘honour, virtue and patriotism’, all were characteristics associated with Scottish identity by these descendents of the Highlanders who settled Cape Breton a century earlier. Refugees from a homeland that could no longer support them, the Scots succeeded in creating a New Scotland, as the name Nova Scotia recalls, in the Maritimes. In Cape Breton, especially, they found a land where they could establish their language, traditions and culture. When challenged by the arrival of outsiders during industrialisation, rural residents along the west coast of the island struggled to prevent their communities from being transformed by the arrival of newcomers. Advantaged, ironically, by the weakness of their coal reserves and the cost of underwater extraction and transport, the coalfields in Inverness County simply did not draw the numbers of immigrants who were attracted to the industrial region around Sydney. Many of those who did come as individuals were quickly entangled in the Scottish community and saw their own traditions and customs eroded. A Polish miner who lived in Port Hood in 1901, for example, married a Scottish Cape Bretoner and lived alongside her family. His children, although identified as Poles by the census taker, spoke Gaelic as their first language.78 A significant population of Belgians did immigrate in families to Inverness but little evidence of their presence exists there today. The release of the 1921 census in 2012 will present the opportunity to determine how many of them stayed in the county after the boom went bust. It is possible that, like the Bulgarian

78 Census of Canada, Nova Scotia, Inverness County, Port Hood, 1901.
miners who rest in unmarked graves on the edge of St Peter’s cemetery in Port Hood, their labour and their lives disappeared in the face of Scottish nativism, Cape Breton style.

*Lock Haven University*
The Spoils of Spiritual Empire: Emigrant Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Irish Catholic Church-Building
Sarah Roddy

The role of Irish Catholic emigrants in their native church’s ‘devotional revolution’ has been understood primarily as a passive rather than an active one. A remarkable drain of over two million of the poorest people in the decade or so after the Great Famine, it is agreed, both increased the ratio of priests to people, and left behind the more prosperous and already more religiously devout sections of the population: ideal conditions in which to impose even greater Ultramontane orthodoxy. In at least one respect, however, post-Famine emigrants were expected to contribute directly to this transformation. While the treatment of the Irish abroad as a vital source of familial remittances and as a cash cow for political purposes represent familiar territory, the Catholic Church’s exploitation of this source of funding has had considerably less attention. This essay will therefore explore the resort of Irish clergy to fundraising for church-building among the Irish diaspora. It will assess the origins, nature and extent of the practice, ask how it was that emigrants were persuaded to contribute in such numbers to churches in which they would never even worship, and finally determine what this may mean for the relationship between the Irish at home and abroad.


While much discussion has centred on relative church attendance levels before and after the Famine, it is arguably the churches themselves which provide the most cogent evidence of Emmet Larkin’s thesis of a specifically mid-century devotional revolution. Some scholars have attempted to counter Larkin by highlighting a gradual and continuous process of Roman conformity stretching back to the eighteenth century. The transformation in devotional practices, they contest, was not nearly so rapid as the term ‘revolution’ implies. That may yet be proven—and Larkin has since clarified that 1850–75 was a period of ‘consolidation’ in a longer-term process—but, with regard to the arena in which devotions were practiced, a very clear-cut difference can be discerned between the generality of churches that were constructed before the Famine and those that were built after. According to one estimate, in the century following Catholic Emancipation, twenty-four cathedrals and some 3,000 churches were built in Irish parishes. While the period between 1820 and 1840 may have seen the most intense activity, the chapels built tended to be functional ‘barn’ structures, designed primarily to bring Masses in from the open air or out of smaller thatched buildings in poor repair. It is likely that even these new, slated edifices did not provide

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The power of infinitely grander and awe-inspiring churches to attract more and more regular visitors should not be discounted.

Secondly, post-Famine churches were intended to project outwardly, in Archbishop John MacHale’s words, ‘the majesty and splendour of religion’. With Catholic chapels, for historic reasons, often situated on inferior sites, sometimes even outside the bounds of villages, there was a growing feeling that they ought to compensate by being architecturally outstanding. In particular, there was a need to outshine those Anglican churches that were

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McCracken (Belfast, 1981), 164.
8 Connolly, Priests and People, 108.
9 Keenan, Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland, 119.
10 Connolly, Priests and People, 149–50.
12 William Carleton described ‘a long, thatched chapel, only distinguished from a dwelling house by its want of chimneys, and a small stone cross that stands on the top of the eastern gable’. William Carleton, Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry (3 vols, Dublin, 1834), II, 161. While the Halls encountered barn churches in 1841, thatched chapels could certainly still be found in the post-Famine landscape. See The Nation, 7 June 1854; Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, &c. (3 vols, London, 1841), II, 18–19.
13 Keenan, Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland, 119.
often the usurped former property of the pre-Reformation Roman church.\textsuperscript{14} If the chapel could not be centrally located, the logic went, it might at least demonstrate that it served the majority of the population through other means. The pointed words of one bishop at the newly consecrated cathedral in Limerick that it was, with its sky-scraping tower, a ‘magnificent’ building ‘before which the glories of the olden temples paled’ is a clear reference to this point.\textsuperscript{15} Such considerations had even greater currency in Ulster, where, as Oliver Rafferty has remarked, new churches were ‘a statement to the world that Catholicism was no longer content to be retiring and elusive in the northern Protestant landscape’.\textsuperscript{16} The bishop of Dromore, for one, saw putting churches into ‘architectural order’ as ‘a matter of importance, especially in the north of Ireland where Catholics are regarded as an inferior race’.\textsuperscript{17} Post-Famine church-building, therefore, reflected, and was expected to reflect, a new Catholic orthodoxy, self-confidence and ebullience.

Expressing all of these qualities architecturally was necessarily expensive, particularly given the overwhelming preference for ornate neo-Gothic composition. In the late 1830s the great Gothic revivalist A.W.N. Pugin received the first of several commissions in Ireland, including a number of parish churches in County Wexford, the chapel of St Peter’s seminary in the same county, and the cathedrals at Enniscorthy (also Wexford) and Killarney, County Kerry.\textsuperscript{18} His stylistic example was followed by ‘the Irish Pugin’, J.J. McCarthy, whose extraordinarily productive career, begun in 1846, saw him work on several dozen ecclesiastical buildings all over Ireland, including at least seven cathedrals.\textsuperscript{19} Other prolific Irish ecclesiastical architects followed in their train. These included George Ashlin, who formed a partnership with Pugin’s son Edward in 1860 and is credited with work on at least sixty churches across the island; William Hague, a Cavan builder’s son who appears to have been a former pupil of McCarthy and who was commissioned to design or remodel several churches and other ecclesiastical

\textsuperscript{14} On siting of churches see Kennedy, \textit{Church-Building}, 8; Keenan, \textit{Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland}, 120.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, 26 July 1861.
\textsuperscript{17} John Pius Leahy to Tobias Kirby, 24 October 1872, Irish College Rome Archive (hereafter ICRA), Kirby papers, KIR/1872/298.
\textsuperscript{19} Jeanne Sheehy, \textit{J.J. McCarthy and the Gothic Revival in Ireland} (Belfast, 1977).
institutions in both south Ulster and the Dublin area; Andrew Egan, dubbed ‘the builder of Tuam’ and reputedly responsible for every Catholic church within twenty miles of that town; and John Benson, who was the architect of several Gothic revival churches in both his native Sligo and in County Cork.

While it is clear from the above that priests could call upon the services of more specifically local, as well as prominent national architects to build their churches, and that this likely translated into corresponding differentials of cost, it is also the case that any kind of professional input added to the overall bill. Certainly, the architect’s pursuit of stylistic integrity in buildings could sometimes clash with the commissioning priest’s greater consciousness of financial constraints. William Hague, for instance, having proposed altars for the parish church in the County Kildare town of Rathangan, was dismayed to be told by the incumbent Fr Kavanagh that his design was too costly, and that Kavanagh had seen a less expensive, if profoundly out of keeping, example in a Dublin chapel which he wished to copy. Evidently the priest got his cheaper tabernacle, but not from Hague: the architect related this tale with not a little relish at Kavanagh’s inquest, where cause of death was recorded as a blow to the head from a falling altar statue.  

Nevertheless, the scale and pretention of the new church buildings rendered former fundraising methods inadequate. While the average pre-Famine parish church cost c.£400, even the smallest and most basic post-Famine gothic chapel was built for anywhere between £2,000 and £3,000. The bill for more ambitious parish churches routinely ran into many thousands, while that for cathedrals could be astronomical. Tuam’s Cathedral of the Assumption, built between 1828 and 1837, cost £20,000: cathedrals finally completed at the turn of the century cost multiples of that amount. St Colman’s cathedral in Queenstown (now Cobh) in County Cork was built for a final total of £235,000; the cathedral of St Eunan and St Columba in Letterkenny, County Donegal ended up costing over £300,000. As the historian of the diocese of Killaloe, Ignatius Murphy, has outlined, priests in some parishes had a deal of trouble extracting even £400 from

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20 *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 October 1886.
21 Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 121.
22 Ibid., 121 – 2; *Irish Builder*, 1 June 1860, *passim*.
23 Peter Galloway, *The Cathedrals of Ireland* (Belfast, 1992), 55, 156.
their congregations in the 1820s and 1830s. A weekly halfpenny subscription was tried and abandoned by many priests; charity lectures by notable guest speakers attracted people from miles around and proved more lucrative, but could hardly be a regular occurrence; while, finally, donations from candidates at election time were ‘handsome’, but were obviously intermittent and may well have tailed off by the time of the Famine.\(^{24}\) Although charity lectures, offerings from congregations and larger donations from more well-heeled parishioners continued to be exploited in the second half of the century, more expensive churches would clearly require more imaginative means of raising money.

II

It was in this context that enterprising priests increasingly turned to the diaspora to plug gaps in funding, most notably by undertaking tours abroad in emigrant destinations. By spending several months conducting house-to-house collections, and delivering charity sermons, clergymen hoped to reap healthy sums. There was an element in this of following—perhaps unconsciously—Presbyterian example. Although the 1830s and 1840s saw intensive Presbyterian church-building in Belfast, largely funded by the city’s wealthy laymen, there was a parallel history of ministers of poorer, especially rural congregations seeking money for necessary building projects abroad. In 1843, for example, the newly installed incumbent of the infant Portrush congregation, Jonathan Simpson, made the first of three successful visits to the United States begging funds for ‘a wee kirk’.\(^{25}\) However, this practice seems to have been substantively discontinued with the advent of the General Assembly’s Manse and Church Building Fund for Weak Congregations in 1854. At a meeting to explain the parameters of the new scheme, Rev. James Morgan, himself an able church-builder, was particularly disapproving of foreign fundraising tours. They forced long clerical absences on congregations that could ill-bear them, they did not always reap adequate rewards, and they were, he said, ‘disrespectable to religion’.\(^{26}\) Morgan saw an unbecoming indignity in these sojourns; as he apparently thought to himself on meeting

\(^{24}\) Ignatius Murphy, ‘Building a Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland’, *The Other Clare*, 2 (1978), 20–5.


\(^{26}\) For similar sentiments, see W.D. Killen, *Memoir of John Edgar* (Belfast, 1867), 174.
a young Ulster minister in London, despite letters of character from home, ‘everyone thinks you are a rogue and will treat you as such’.27

Notwithstanding a confirmed case of such roguery in 1842—an Irishman in London impersonated a parish priest and fraudulently solicited donations for an invented County Wicklow chapel-building fund—there were evidently no such qualms in the Catholic Church.28 Indeed, just as Presbyterians were abandoning such fundraising methods, Catholic clergy began stepping up what had hitherto been a practice of last resort. Before the Famine, fundraising tours had been instigated by at least two bishops. William Browne of Galway and William Higgins of Ardagh had personally made trips to London in 1837 and North America in 1842 respectively.29 As Higgins told Cullen in Rome, ‘in order to complete the undertaking [St Mel’s cathedral in Longford Town] I must not confine my exertions to a narrow sphere and having done what I can in Ireland, it will be necessary to appeal to the religious generosity of other countries’.30 These examples were to be followed more widely during the second half of the century.

Initially, a number of small-scale collections took place on behalf of churches and cathedrals during and in the immediate aftermath of the Famine. Fr Batt O’Connor, parish priest of Milltown, County Kerry, was dispatched to Boston to collect for Killarney cathedral in 1847.31 Similarly Fr Michael Quinlivan, curate in Ennis, fundraised for a local church in England in 1850.32 So too Fr Theobald Mathew made a fundraising trip to the United States

28 Freeman’s Journal, 31 October 1842. Another such case was reported in 1858 in Liverpool. Armagh Guardian, 6 August 1858.
29 William Browne to Paul Cullen, 19 August 1837, ICRA, Cullen papers, CUL/1837/368a; William Higgins to Cullen, 8 November 1841, ICRA, Cullen papers, CUL/1841/692.
30 St Mel’s cathedral was by no means unusual in not being finally completed for another fifty years. (Freeman’s Journal, 12 May 1889). One local historian has noted that O’Higgins had also been given unprecedented leave by other Irish bishops to fundraise in their dioceses. It may be that the scale of his ambition for what he felt would be ‘the most extensive and most elegant church of modern times, in any part of the United Kingdom’ impressed other prelates, even if the result does not seem entirely at home in its modest surroundings. As Galloway notes, ‘it looks as though it was put here by mistake’. M. J. Masterson, ‘Centenary of St Mel’s Cathedral, 1840–1940’, Armagh and Clonmacnoise Antiquarian Journal, 2 (1940), 59; James Mac Namee, History of the Diocese of Ardagh (Dublin, 1954), 436; Galloway, Cathedrals of Ireland, 171. See also Yates, Religious Condition of Ireland, 247.
31 Shelley Barber (ed.), The Prendergast Letters: Correspondence from Famine-Era Ireland, 1840–1850 (Amherst, MA, 2006); Freeman’s Journal, 4 October 1847; ibid., 9 October 1847.
between 1849 and 1851. A lack of proper targeting meant that this last trip was remarkably, and perhaps uniquely, unsuccessful. Mathew’s appeal as a temperance advocate was cross-denominational and his attempt to raise money not merely for that cause, but also for the completion of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Cork consequently backfired. The non-Catholics in his audiences could not but be left with the uncomfortable impression that their contributions might end up benefiting the Catholic Church, and his efforts therefore raised little but Protestant hackles.\(^{33}\)

That high-profile failure might have discouraged further efforts, were it not for the successes of the campaign undertaken on behalf of the putative Catholic University. Begun with great fanfare at the reforming Synod of Thurles in 1850, it was anticipated that ‘our brethren, who are scattered not only through the sister kingdom and the British Colonies, but throughout the Continent of America’ might be appealed to for ‘the pecuniary means for the accomplishment of such an object’.\(^{34}\) This appeal took the form, initially, of an impassioned address by the Catholic University Committee to the Irish in America:

Ireland turns with confidence to her children in the ‘far west’, and their numerous and prosperous descendants in the land of freedom. She has nurtured them in the true faith, which she has preserved for them and for herself by the ready sacrifice of earthly possessions, and often, when the occasion demanded, by the generous expenditure of her blood. In poverty she asks for assistance from the wealth and generosity of her friends and children.\(^{35}\)

At least eight clergymen were subsequently sent in personal pursuit of this assistance. Two went to England—Francis M’Ginity, curate of Dundalk, and Michael Hope, parish priest of Ballymore, County Meath—and six to North America.\(^{36}\) Robert Mullen, curate of Clonmellon, County Westmeath and Alexander Peyton, curate of Fermoy, County Cork jointly toured the interior


\(^{34}\) *The Synodical Address of the Fathers of the National Council of Thurles to their Beloved Flock, the Catholics of Ireland* (Dublin, 1850), 11.

\(^{35}\) ‘Address of the Catholic University Committee to their Brethren in America’, *Battersby’s Catholic Register* (1852), 184–6.

\(^{36}\) *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 July 1851.
dioceses of the United States from late 1851 to early 1853. A separate team, consisting of James Donnelly, a future bishop of Clogher, and Philip Devlin, the curate of Buncrana, had been sent in July 1851 and appears to have concentrated on the east coast. They were accompanied on their trans-Atlantic voyage by Daniel Hearne, a well-known Manchester priest, who seems to have collected mainly in Canadian dioceses. Finally, at least one priest was also sent to the United States on behalf of the university in 1864. As head of the university committee, Cullen had written in advance of the collectors to the bishops of the dioceses they planned to visit, asking co-operation. By and large, the collectors got it. There seems to have been a genuine enthusiasm for their cause among some members of the North American hierarchy, particularly Dr Walsh of Halifax, who was an early and vocal champion of the project. In addition, it certainly helped that, as Archbishop Hughes pointed out in a letter to his clergy in New York, the pope himself had sanctioned the collection. All of which resulted in substantial amounts of money—each collector’s total ran into the thousands—being gathered for the never-built institution.

There was an escalation in the number of foreign fundraising trips in the university collectors’ wake. The trend appears to have branched into three. First,
of the nineteen Catholic cathedrals built wholly or in part during the second half of the nineteenth century—cathedral-building generally being a process phased out over many years—at least sixteen were partially funded by a priest of the relevant diocese touring abroad in England, Scotland, North America or Australia. Indeed, during that timeframe, only the prelate of Ossory could boast that his episcopal seat in Kilkenny was built using subscriptions gathered entirely within the diocese. \(^{44}\) Often, as with the University collection, more than one priest was fundraising abroad at a time, and in several cases collection tours were undertaken more than once, as each new phase of building required. \(^{45}\)

Secondly, there appears to have been a tendency to fundraise abroad for the chapels attached to religious institutions. The Augustinian Fathers in both Galway and Dublin, the Franciscans in Clara, County Offaly and Clonmel, County Tipperary, the Jesuits in Galway, and the nuns of an unspecified St Joseph’s convent school each went down this route, with the latter order employing the services of a Canon Magee to do the collecting. \(^{46}\) The chapel of Carlow College and the seminary in the diocese of Kilmore were similarly funded. \(^{47}\) It is likely that such activity exploited close connections with sister orders and alumni working among emigrant communities. \(^{48}\) Moreover, religious orders may have felt it a particular necessity for chapels which were normally the secondary church in a parish, and could not therefore command a monopoly on local peoples’ largesse.

\(^{44}\) *Freeman’s Journal*, 6 October 1857. Of the other two, the builders of St Peter’s Cathedral in Belfast almost certainly did not use this method of fundraising, but the cathedral at Loughrea certainly received substantial donations from emigrants in America, even if it is not apparent that a priest was sent abroad to fundraise. (See below.) The planned Killaloe diocesan cathedral in Nenagh, which was never completed, was also begun with the proceeds of a priest’s tour in America. *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 February 1899; ibid., 8 November 1860; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe, 1850–1914*, 69–70.

\(^{45}\) St Patrick’s Armagh, for example, necessitated collections in the United States in 1854, 1856, 1868 and 1900. Archdeacon Felix Slane to Joseph Dixon, 4 December 1854, Armagh Diocesan Archives (hereafter ADA), Dixon Papers, II Box 1, Folder 2; *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 June 1856; Fr Murphy to Michael Kieran, 1 March 1868, ADA, Kieran Papers, Cathedral collection; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11 March 1900.


\(^{47}\) *Freeman’s Journal*, 24 May 1887; Nicholas Conaty to Lefebvre, 12 October 1868, UNDA, Lefebvre papers, III-2-I-Printed L.S.– 1p.– 4to. – {1}.

\(^{48}\) Fr Michael Page O.S.A., collector for the Galway Augustinian Fathers, was one who mentioned staying with Augustinians in Philadelphia in a letter home. *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 February 1854.
Thirdly, and possibly most significantly, there seems to have been a pattern of clerics in poorer parishes seeking donations from emigrants, who often, but not exclusively, had a personal connection to the area. To a great extent, this remains a hidden process. There are a number of mentions of foreign collections for ordinary parish chapels in national newspapers, including the *Nation* and *Freeman's Journal*, with references to be found particularly in speeches made at opening consecration Masses.\(^49\) These can, however, be just a tiny sample of what was by and large a localised undertaking repeated across the country. Nevertheless, this limited evidence, coupled with occasional mentions in parish and diocesan histories, and in the Archives of the Irish College, Rome, hint that it was thought common practice for priests to travel to raise otherwise unobtainable sums in emigrant destinations.\(^50\) As William Hague recalled of his run-in with Fr Kavanagh, when he challenged him on the unsuitability of the cheaper altars he had chosen for the building, the priest laughed, said he was not bound by architectural rules and might very well ‘go to America some day, collect funds, and build a church to suit the altars’.\(^51\)

The clerical tour abroad was not, however, the only means of extracting money from the diaspora for religious purposes. The amount of remittances sent home by ordinary Irish emigrants to their families was a source of amazement and curious pride among the great and good in Ireland. Charles Gavan Duffy M.P. spoke for many, when at a meeting to devise how to pay for the completion of St Catherine’s Church in Meath Street, Dublin, he

\(^49\) These include churches at Askeaton, County Limerick, St Johnston, County Donegal, Clogheen, County Tipperary, Louisburg, County Mayo, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim, Clonea, County Waterford, Crosserlough, County Cavan, Omagh, County Tyrone and Castlerea, County Roscommon and Castlebar, County Mayo. *Freeman's Journal*, 10 July 1851; ibid., 3 October 1855; ibid., 6 January 1859; ibid., 17 October 1860; ibid., 20 October 1885; ibid., 26 November 1888; ibid., 19 June 1893; ibid., 2 October 1899; *The Nation*, 28 June 1873.

\(^50\) Terence O’Rorke, *History, Antiquities and Present State of the Parishes of Ballysadare and Kilvarnet, in the County of Sligo* (Dublin, 1878), 498; Cogan, *History of the Diocese of Meath*, II, 495. Those mentioned in the Kirby collection include chapels at Lurgan, County Armagh, Clonmel, County Tipperary, Eniskean, County Cork, Donegal Town and Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim. J.P. Leahy, Newry to Kirby, 24 October, 1872, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1872/298; P.F. Flynn, S.S. Peter and Pauls, Clonmel, to Kirby, 5 February 1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/54; D. Covenly, Eniskean to Kirby, 4 March 1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/89; P. Kelly, Donegal Town to Kirby, 24 February 1874, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1874/86; Thomas Fitzgerald, Carrick-on-Shannon to Kirby, 3 May 1874, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1874/217. See also Lawrence J. Taylor, *Occasions of Faith: An Anthropology of Irish Catholics* (Philadelphia, 1995), 157.

\(^51\) *Freeman's Journal*, 7 October 1886.
reminded those present—including Archbishop Cullen—that ‘it was a known fact that more money was transmitted home by Irish emigrants in every part of the world than by emigrants of any other nation’.\textsuperscript{52} Indeed, an otherwise puzzling note in one of the earliest issues of the \textit{Dublin Builder}, the magazine of Irish architecture, pointed out that ‘serving girls and working people’ in New York had recently been paid one and a half million dollars in dividends on the ‘upwards of 30,000,000 dollars’ they had deposited in savings banks. The clear implication was that a portion of this wealth might ultimately help pay for Irish architects’ work.\textsuperscript{53} Priests and church-building projects certainly commanded their share of the bounty. It is highly likely, if difficult to prove, that a significant proportion of cash remittances sent to family members, particularly elderly parents who did not intend to emigrate, found its way into church offerings. Meanwhile, direct emigrant contributions were certainly made to bazaars, or raffles, which became an increasingly popular method of raising money from the 1860s. Tickets were frequently sent for sale to emigrant destinations, and on more than one occasion there were reports of postponing the drawing of prizes until such time as tickets could be more widely distributed among the diaspora.\textsuperscript{54} There were also cases of emigrants remitting money or liturgical items directly to Irish clergy.\textsuperscript{55}

Given these various revenue streams, putting a reliable figure on how much emigrant money was contributed to post-Famine Irish church-building is a tall order. That did not, however, prevent confident estimates being made in the early years of the new century by those answering criticism of inappropriately high expenditure.\textsuperscript{56} Horace Plunkett’s ill-judged critique of the ‘extravagance’ of so many ‘gaudy edifices’ built ‘at the expense of poor communities’, which,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 31 January 1854.
\item \textsuperscript{53} ‘Property of the Working Classes in America’, \textit{Dublin Builder}, 1 September 1859, 118.
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, 3 November 1890.
\item \textsuperscript{55} \textit{Catholic Telegraph}, 26 May 1860; Alfred P. Smyth, \textit{Faith, Famine and Fatherland in the Irish Midlands: Perceptions of a Priest and Historian}. Anthony Cogan, 1826–1872 (Dublin, 1992), 147–8; \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, 1 July 1858.
\item \textsuperscript{56} For the virulent, anti-clerical take of a Catholic barrister and polemicist see Michael J. F. McCarthy, \textit{Priests and People in Ireland} (Dublin, 1902), 262. This kind of criticism has continued to rear its head periodically. In 1966, a Trinity College student, Brian Trevaskis, notoriously called the bishop of Galway ‘a moron’ on RTE television’s \textit{Late Late Show}, for spending money on building a ‘monstrosity’ of a cathedral instead of on the poor. \textit{Irish Times}, 29 March 1966; Marcus Tanner, \textit{Ireland’s Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation’s Soul, 1500–2000} (Dublin, 1999), 162. More recently, the bishop of Ardagh was criticised for soliciting donations from ‘vulnerable’ confirmation candidates for the rebuilding of the fire-damaged St Mel’s cathedral in Longford. \textit{Irish Independent}, 17 May 2010.
\end{itemize}
he asserted, ‘shocks the economic sense’, prompted Monsignor Michael O’Riordan’s claim that somewhere between a fifth and a quarter of all money used for the purpose came not from the Irish at home but from the Irish abroad.57 The art critic Robert Elliott went further, suggesting that factoring in all forms of fundraising, half the money had been collected abroad, while the barrister Michael McDonnell asserted that Catholic churches had ‘in large measure’ been built by emigrant contributions.58 Cardinal Patrick Moran agreed with these estimates, reporting that Cardinal Michael Logue had told him that ‘it is from the United States, from friends of Ireland in the home countries, and in the colonies, that the greater part of the funds have been derived to erect such noble monuments of religion’.59 The credibility of all of these estimates, each, perhaps, with its own agenda, is questionable. However, even in the absence of an exhaustive examination of parish accounts, there can be little doubt that the diaspora’s contribution to church-building funds was highly significant, and in very many individual cases, vital.60

III

The Irish Catholic Church’s motivation in all of this seems clear. Ostensibly more curious is what prompted emigrants to contribute toward the erection of buildings in which they were never even likely to worship. To begin with, the tour diaries of three clerical collectors offer some insight. Fr James Donnelly, one of the university collectors, maintained a private diary during his two years travelling along the east coast of the United States in the early 1850s. Monsignor Michael Buckley also traversed the east coast of North America between 1870 and 1871 collecting on behalf of Cork cathedral. He, like several

60 Fr Peter Conway, parish priest of Headford, County Galway built his chapel entirely from the proceeds of three trips made to the United States in the early 1860s. He consequently attempted to nickname it ‘the Irish-American church’, but the moniker failed to endure, presumably because it was far from unusual for a church to be thus financed. *Freeman’s Journal*, 23 March 1861.
other collectors, was taken ill during his exhausting trip and subsequently died, after which his sister published what may well be a bowdlerised version of the diary he kept during his travels.\footnote{M.B. Buckley, \textit{Diary of a Tour in America}, Kate Buckley (ed.) (Dublin, c. 1870).} Fr Pius Devine, meanwhile, conducted a collecting tour between 1872 and 1875 in North America, Australia and New Zealand, intercut with a mule ride across the Andes. The Passionist father was in pursuit of funds to build a new chapel for his order at Mount Argus in south Dublin. His account of the trip, entitled ‘The Adventures and Misadventures of a Jolly Beggar’ remained unpublished, and is perhaps all the more remarkably frank because of it.\footnote{Fr Pius Devine, C.P., ‘The Adventures and Misadventures of a Jolly Beggar (1872–1875)’, Central Archives, St Paul of the Cross Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin (CD-ROM version courtesy of archivist).}

Indeed, throughout his account, and in stark contrast to the sympathetic, if slightly condescending tone adopted by Buckley, Devine did not shy away from criticising those from whom he solicited donations. Those who gave nothing, or gave less than Devine believed to be within their means, he routinely dismissed as ‘stingy’. He also found great amusement in the lengths to which a few were prepared to go to avoid contributing. Mrs Shanahan, a Cork woman described in rather unchristian terms as resembling ‘a big heap of mashed turnips, propped up into human shape’, claimed, somewhat unconvincingly, to be ‘a Prodeshan’ and therefore ‘too enlightened’ to make a donation to Devine’s cause. Devine’s greatest irritation, however, was reserved for those who joyfully heeded their own priests’ enjoinders not to give money to beggars from outside the parish. ‘Our clergy towld us to give yez nothing!’ claimed one young factory girl, prompting Devine to counter sardonically, ‘do you obey everything yer clergy tell ye as well as you do that?’\footnote{Ibid., 25 June 1873.} Such territoriality on the part of American clergy worked against the fostering of a charitable spirit, claimed Devine. In Lowell, Massachusetts, one priest (whom Buckley also encountered) told his people to give to nobody but himself, while another urged parishioners to ‘give to whomsoever you know has a good cause’. ‘The other parish has a splendid church and a generous people’, Devine pointed out, ‘this parish has a poor church and the stingiest people ever I met.’\footnote{Ibid., 4 June 1873; Buckley, \textit{Diary of a Tour in America}, 209}

Clearly, then, there were some Irish emigrants who declined to fund churches in the home country, perhaps feeling themselves ‘overbegged’. Certainly, Devine pronounced St Louis, Missouri as ‘over-run’ with religious
collectors, both local and non-local.65 Fathers Mullen and Peyton, collecting for the Catholic University buildings some years before, were similarly confounded by New Orleans, labelling it ‘a den of infamy’, where many Irish ‘had no notion of going to Mass’ and offered them ‘nothing but insults’, and where they had, as Donnelly observed, ‘no monopoly of the charity of the good people’.66 One American priest’s lament that many Irish immigrants in more remote areas ‘went to ruin’, ‘on account of not being cared for but to collect their hard earned dollars’ seemed to chime with collectors’ experiences away from the east coast.67 However, for all these complaints, as Devine attests, ‘Fifty cents in one place, a dollar in another’ soon added up, and each subsequent cheque for £200 or £500 ‘looks very nice’.68 Michael Buckley was more fulsome in his praise for his numerous contributors, asserting to have met with ‘very little meanness’. ‘The donations in general were small’, he wrote of St John, New Brunswick, ‘but everyone gave something’.69

Across the Irish emigrant world, the motivations to do so were various. As early as the 1850s, and perhaps tying in with rather mawkish attempts in popular literature to play it up, there was already a sentimentality for the ‘ould sod’ producing a distinct stream of revenue for Irish church-building projects. James Donnelly was by no means alone among collectors in noting ‘what a magic influence the very name of Ireland exercises on the hearts of those who might be supposed, many of them at least, to have long since forgotten her’.70 In fact, recent efforts by the diaspora to relieve famine distress clearly intimated that many had not forgotten the land of their birth, and that they might well be encouraged to continue giving to Irish causes that appealed to them.71 The Fenians and the Home Rule movement would later successfully politicise and capitalise on this sentiment. However, for many emigrants, contributing towards an Irish chapel, and particularly one located in his or her home county, seemed to offer a more emotionally fulfilling way

66 Alexander Peyton to Dr Murphy, Cork, 17 May 1852, Dublin Diocesan Archive, Cullen papers, 325/1/II/171; ‘Diary of Rev. Dr James Donnelly, written during fundraising trip in America, 1852–53’ Clogher RC Diocesan Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, DIO(RC)1/11B/2.
67 Fr John Brummer to Archbishop John Baptist Purcell, 18 May 1854, UNDA, Purcell papers, II-4-m–A.L.S.–5pp.–16to.–{8}.
69 Buckley, Diary of a Tour in America, 113.
70 Weekly Telegraph, 23 September 1854.
of reconnecting with their lost Irish lives. Collectors seem to have been aware of this; Buckley, in particular, appeared to target districts where he knew Cork people were in abundance. Independent of collectors, however, fond memories of a humble church from their youth certainly prompted some groups of emigrants or, in a number of cases, older female emigrants to donate liturgical adornments for its replacement. Moreover, the tendency of such better-off emigrants to sponsor expensive items like stained-glass windows, which could then contain their family name, might be interpreted as a means by which they compensated for the painful knowledge that they would never be laid to rest in Irish soil. They were, in essence, ensuring that if they were not to be buried in the churchyard, they could at least be forever memorialised in the church.

Other emigrants donated to Irish priests in pursuit of more immediate emotional succour. Several collectors reported that their nationality alone won them a hearing and a donation. The priest ‘fresh from Ireland’ was, for a host of reasons, an attractive prospect to many long-standing immigrants. Michael Buckley found that progress from house to house could be slow ‘as we had for the most part to sit down, and tell the people some news of the dear country they had left behind’. Both he and Pius Devine encountered poor people who were prepared to contribute beyond their apparent means in return for something as simple as a conversation in the Irish language; and in Montreal, one female servant from Cork gave Buckley four dollars on condition that he give her some item, however small and insignificant, from her native city. There was an element in many donations, therefore, of paying for whatever time and information the priest could offer, or simply for contact with him as an Irishman and a reminder of home.

A collector’s status as an Irish priest, however, also had a powerful effect on many emigrants. Donnelly was touched by the reaction he elicited at a parish church in Maine, where his presence caused ‘crushing and pushing for confession’. The ability to, in Devine’s unguarded phrase, ‘hear all the grannies

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72 Freeman’s Journal, 1 July 1858; ibid., 20 July 1860.
74 Buckley, Diary of a Tour in America, 113.
75 Devine, ‘Jolly Beggars’, 24 August 1872; ibid., 4 June 1873; Buckley, Diary of a Tour in America, 113, 66.
76 ‘Diary of James Donnelly’, 20 March 1852.
in the parish in Irish’ was an obvious selling point, and one that differentiated collectors even from many of their Irish-American counterparts.\(^\text{77}\) Confession was not their only apparently superior sacramental offering, however. As an extreme illustration of the truism that ‘the Irish are never content with any priest except one of their own’, Michael Buckley related the tale of an Irish widow in Boston, who was only partially content with the cleric who administered the last rites to her husband, on the grounds that a priest from Ulster could not fully empathise with a Corkman.\(^\text{78}\) How an American priest might have fared with her can only be imagined, but under normal circumstances, a Cork priest surely stood a chance of a decent contribution from such a woman. Some donors were also won over to Irish collectors by a more familiar style of preaching. One young servant girl, evidently given to a more strident form of religion, gave Devine a few dollars after a sermon because, unlike most American preachers, she felt he did not hold back ‘for fear of hurting the people’s feelings’.\(^\text{79}\) Continued devotion to a particular form of Irish Catholicism, whether characterised by the vernacular language, the accent or the style in which it was delivered, seems to have worked to the advantage of clerical collectors.

The above clearly illustrates the advantage of collection tours for Irish priests. Fostering various immediate affinities, and occasionally rekindling old personal connections, helped to fill coffers. Moreover, every fifty cents given grudgingly on the basis of direct, face-to-face ‘begging’ was fifty cents that would not otherwise have been acquired. By contrast, the ‘priest too poor to travel’ as one later commentator had it, was forced either to rely on the spontaneous, unbidden generosity of emigrants, or to devise alternative methods of pressing his cause. The case of St Brendan’s Cathedral in Loughrea, erected at the turn of the century without the aid of a collection tour, illustrates the nature of these funding streams. On one hand, the intention to build a cathedral having been adverted to in the Irish press, ex-patriate Galwegians in the United States enthusiastically—and independently—opened a subscription fund.\(^\text{80}\) Later, some of the magnificent Celtic Revival stained glass windows of the building also found individual sponsors among the diaspora.\(^\text{81}\) On the other hand, the bishop of Clonfert specifically appealed to his parishioners to

\(^{77}\) Devine, ‘Jolly Beggar’, 17 March 1873.  
\(^{78}\) Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 245–6.  
\(^{79}\) Devine, ‘Jolly Beggar’, 4 May 1873.  
\(^{80}\) *The Nation*, 11 October 1856.  
\(^{81}\) *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 February 1899.
lend their aid in attracting funding from abroad, asking them to send tickets for an impending bazaar to any emigrants they knew, ‘especially in America’.  

This exploitation of family connections in pursuit of emigrant donations was important. There is clear evidence that letters from Ireland kept migrants informed of developments in local church-building at home. One young woman in Brisbane was keen to know of her Dungannon friend ‘is the cathradle bilt yet’, while Daniel Brennan of County Down made sure to tell his relatives in Australia that fundraising was underway for the new Catholic chapel at Dromore and for the new cathedral in Armagh, and that they were set to be the best churches in the north of Ireland. Sometimes, it was a matter of providing a degree of advance notice before collection tours. The correspondence between members of the Prendergast family in Milltown, County Kerry and in Boston, for example, contains discussions of the impending trip of their parish priest, Father O’Connor, on his mission to raise money for Killarney Cathedral. Despite the fact that O’Connor had previously acted as a conduit for the family’s letters, owing to a less than warm relationship with the cleric, James Prendergast told his children not to ‘lose much to him on our account’, as ‘we were under no compliment to him’. The Prendergast children evidently ignored this advice, and their father’s tune changed when O’Connor wrote letters to various persons in Milltown, including the curate and the nuns at the local convent, which lauded the Prendergasts as ‘a credit to the land of [their] birth’ who had received him with great kindness. ‘I am glad ye did so’, wrote James, ‘for it was not an act lost. For that reason I will be glad that ye will, in future, shew him the respect due from parishioners’. The praise for his emigrant offspring around his home parish, declared again ‘publickly’ on O’Connor’s return, was clearly regarded by Prendergast senior as reflected glory, however unearned, which might yet do him some good. A similar motive drove Jane Doran from County Down to apply subtle pressure on her brother in the United States with regard to the local church-building fund.

The new church, I suppose you herd of it is going to be built on Caroelins hill. Dear brother I suppose you herd of Father O’Neil writing to George Brennan he spoke this morning from the altar of having a

82 Ibid., 8 December 1898.
83 Susan [Greame?] to Mary [?], 30 June 1872, Centre for Migration Studies (hereafter CMS), Irish Emigration Database, Doc. no. 9706236 and David Fitzpatrick, Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia (London, 1994), 408.
85 Ibid., 128–9.
86 Ibid., 150.
letter from him he said he sent five pounds to him and that there was a few other Irish men going to send some to[o]. It would delight one to listen to Father O’Neil this morning to hear the praise he gave him.87

Her family of ‘big farmers’ naturally deemed that their own emigrant members ought to be the subject of similar encomia.

Irish priests were therefore adept at cultivating the traditional sense of duty many emigrants felt towards their families for the church’s own ends. The same impulse that prompted many emigrants to send home almost all the money they earned in order to satisfy their relatives’ sometimes onerous expectations could be turned to the church’s advantage. The kind of intra-community competitive spirit which prompted parents to cover up receipt of an ‘empty letter’ (one containing no money) and publicly to flaunt and exaggerate those remittances that did arrive, had perhaps its ultimate victory in a tribute from the altar to a departed child’s generosity toward the church.88 What could more fully relay the idea to neighbours that one’s offspring had ‘arrived’ in the new world, and attained or retained respectability? A donation toward the home chapel could symbolise the achievement of financial success, the retention of what was deemed a proper sense of duty to those left behind and the maintenance of a devout Catholic faith.

It may also be that some of the habits of remitting money worked in the church’s favour. Particularly before the arrival of a post office in every parish, and before the advent of the international postal money order in 1871, the priest often acted as addressee for emigrants’ letters and as banker for remittances.89 He was therefore in a position to gauge which, if any, emigrants from the parish might be lobbied to contribute to a prospective building fund. The timing of some remittances may also have worked to the priest’s advantage. As John Francis Maguire discovered on a visit to the United States in 1868, even some otherwise negligent exiles made sure to send home their ‘Christmas box’ and Easter gift.90 This reflected an expectation that departed relatives would help provide the necessaries to celebrate, and have ‘a good Christmas’ as one emigrant put it, but it may also, given the strict obligation to attend Mass on those occasions, have led to a temporary swelling of the

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87 Jane Doran to William [Doran?], 30 March 1870, CMS, Irish Emigration Database, Doc. no. 107161.
88 Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 486.
priest’s coffers for purposes that could well have included church-building.\(^{91}\)

A final boon to the church-building Irish cleric was the remarkable proportion of remittances that reached Ireland from young, single women. Up to a third of all the money in circulation in the country in 1870, one contemporary economist estimated, came ultimately from female domestic servants in the United States.\(^{92}\) So significant was this, in fact, that many families consciously chose to send their daughters rather than their sons abroad, since they were thought more likely to remit money regularly.\(^{93}\) That same sense of duty may well have been felt towards a favoured priest when the call for emigrant charity went out.\(^{94}\) Moreover, as clergy in the American Catholic Church well knew, unmarried servant girls were also among the most devoted and generous benefactors of religious causes in the United States, helping to build churches and schools all over the country.\(^{95}\) Irish priests, whether collecting in person or via other media, therefore became assiduous in courting this demographic for their own particular projects, a fact reflected in much of the evidence above, and confirmed by a plea of the archbishop of Armagh, Joseph Dixon, in an 1863 pastoral letter which urged ‘the daughters of Ireland’ to ‘rival the zeal of the women of Israel’ in order to see their home country’s ‘first Christian temple’ completed.\(^{96}\)

**IV**

In the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, the Irish Catholic Church skilfully exploited emigrants—subjects of a phenomenon of which it ostensibly disapproved—for its own benefit. At one level, this was the pragmatic response of priests who recognised, whatever their public utterances, that, in

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\(^{92}\) Ibid., 53.


\(^{96}\) Joseph Dixon, ‘Appeal in Favour of Completion of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh, 2 March 1863’, ADA, Dixon Papers, Box 2 Folder 14.
what rapidly became hackneyed imagery, they could no more stop the tide of 
emigration than the tide of the ocean. At another, however, it reflected the 
reality that many clergymen genuinely subscribed to the idea of a ‘spiritual 
empire’ with Ireland at its centre. In this reading, as the Catholic University 
Committee had outlined, the Irish church was owed a debt for its centuries-
long efforts to preserve the Catholic faith, not only for Ireland, but for the 
entire English-speaking world. The depth of this feeling is made clear in the 
diaries of the clerical collectors. Pius Devine’s routine ascription of ‘stinginess’ 
to those he met indicated a clear sense of entitlement to the disposable income 
of Irish migrants and even that of their descendents. The idea that someone 
who would never even set eyes on a given church, let alone worship in it, may 
perfectly legitimately decline to contribute towards its erection seems not to 
have entered his mind. In that sense, clergymen mirrored the attitude of Irish 
families, who, in Grace Neville’s stinging judgement, seemed to believe they 
had ‘an unspoken right to the hard-earned dollars of those who left’.97

This sense of entitlement, unsurprisingly, caused tensions with emigrants’ 
adoptive parishes and dioceses, with the result that a number of priests and 
bishops in the United States explicitly banned outside collectors.98 A limited 
number of clergymen, including the university collectors, got around such 
measures by securing an overriding papal recommendation for their cause via 
Dr Kirby at the Irish College in Rome.99 However, as Devine and Buckley each 
found, the hostility from American clergy, and in the overwhelming majority of 
cases from Irish-American clergy, was often intense. A conversation Buckley 
had with David Bacon, bishop of Portland, Maine, suggests something of the 
origins of this hostility. On unsuccessfully seeking permission to fundraise 
among the Irish of the diocese, Buckley was asked ‘What claim have you on 
them? They are Irish you say; then why not keep them at home; they are poor, 
and we want all their resources to pay for their spiritual wants’.100 Bacon’s 
sense that charity ought to begin at home for Irish-Americans was to be

97 Grace Neville, “‘She never then after that forgot him’: Irishwomen and Emigration 
to the United States in Irish Folklore’, Mid-America, 74 (1992), 280.
99 Bartholomew Woodlock to Kirby, 10 February 1864, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1864/28; P.F. Flynn, S.S. Peter and Pauls, Clonmel to Kirby, 5 February 1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/54; J. Maher, Dublin to Kirby, 28 June, 1880 ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1880/310; James McCarthy, Queenstown to Kirby, 8 May 1881, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1881/136.
100 Buckley, Diary of a Tour in America, 137–8.
expected. However, as the bulging coffers of Irish clerical collectors, and the magnificent churches they helped construct in Ireland demonstrate, ‘home’ had dual implications for many Irish emigrants.

*Queen’s University, Belfast*
With the past half century of relative decline in travel costs and an increase in personal standards of living there has emerged a substantial market in what is called ‘heritage tourism’. As one might expect of an emerging area of study, there are countless definitions of this topic. One that many cite is by Pat Yale: ‘the fashionable concept of ‘heritage tourism’ really means nothing more than tourism centred on what we have inherited, which can mean anything from historic buildings, to art works, to beautiful scenery’.1 Understandably enough, this broad definition of heritage tourism has led to multiple sub-definitions of segments of that market which appeal to the various travel motives of tourists and destinations they seek to visit with their time and money. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the Irish and Scottish sub-segment of heritage tourists who seek their personal heritage.

A representative from the Leith Agency in Edinburgh discussed an award-winning Irn-Bru advertising at a recent meeting of the Marketing Society Scotland. The agency had been recognised for its ‘snowman’ ad where an animated snowman flies with a child (and his Irn-Bru) over very recognisable landscapes of Edinburgh and the whole of Scotland, only to let the child fall to the ground, but save the Irn-Bru. Marketers commonly acknowledge that food and drink products represent the most culturally iconic product sector. Significantly, sales of Irn-Bru often even outpace those of Coca-Cola in Scotland. Hence, it is important for those in the heritage marketing field to not only concentrate their skills promoting history, but to recognise that history can play a role in marketing modern-day products. But, as with any use of marketing images and symbols, the heritage association needs to be carefully planned and evaluated.

The present authors have elsewhere identified a segment of heritage travellers that can best be described as ‘legacy tourists’.2 In addition to the

1 Pat Yale, From Tourist Attractions to Heritage Tourism (Huntingdon, 1991), 21.
interest in travelling to visit historic sites; to explore wilderness and undisturbed nature; to climb mountains, and to visit friends and relatives there are those for whom visiting ‘places where family is from’ ranks high in the list of motivations for their tourism travels. Numerous researchers have investigated the legacy motivations of those who seek their personal ancestry while vacationing at their ancestral homes.3 There is an increased recognition that the tourism experience represents more than seeking escapism and increasingly involves a need for personal enrichment.4

I: Homecoming of the Diaspora

Brian Whalen suggests that ‘diaspora acts as a frame through which we may understand American contact with other cultures and societies’, and he states that journey abroad holds the promise of discovering one’s home in another place, to view the movement into a new society as a homecoming.5 Homecoming is a concept that captures the feelings that are associated with identification with the place one comes from.

Patricia Hampl explains this in terms of America’s immigrant population and its search for a connection to an ancestral past. She says, ‘If you go to the old country seeking, as third or fourth generation Americans often do, a strictly personal history based on bloodlines, then, the less intimate history of nation cannot impose itself upon you very strongly. History is reduced to genealogy, which is supposed to satisfy a hunger that is clearly much larger.’6

Paul Basu’s Highland Homecomings: Genealogy and Heritage Tourism in the Scottish Diaspora reports that in 1997 there were over 28 million people of Scottish ancestry around the world, with the largest percent of the diaspora in the

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5 Brian Whalen, ‘Diaspora and International Education’, Clarke Center Occasional Papers, Dickinson College, Fall (2003), 159.

United States at about 12 million. 7 AncestralScotland posed questions such as ‘Where do you come from?’ and ‘When will you come home?’ in their promotional programmes. These tourism messages came after VisitScotland undertook research that found that genealogy tourism, along with golf and culture, is of prime importance in attracting visitors. 8

Writing about the 1999 Orkney Islands Homecoming regarding the ‘material manifestation of home’, Basu reported that one of his respondents reflected, ‘These are the sights they would have seen, and this is the environment that they would have been living in on a day-to-day basis’. 9 He notes that ancestral tourists are not only interested in visiting a location relevant to their particular ancestry and where they have some documented connection, but are also drawn to archaeological areas, especially prehistoric ones, in areas nearby. 10 In the case of Orkney, archaeology tourism, a part of heritage tourism, is becoming an important source of revenue. Increasingly, tourists visit sites such as the Neolithic village of Skara Brae, the chambered cairn of Maeshowe, and the Ring of Brodgar stone circle. 11 Basu proposes these ancient sites take on even more meaning for ancestral tourists because they believe the monuments were sacred sites to their own ancestors. In their ‘Trip of a Lifetime’ article, the present authors wrote of how the travel motivations of those of Orkney and Shetland descent more closely resemble those of Norwegian descent than those with Scottish ancestry. 12 Later in this paper, the authors also find reason to discuss these northern Scottish islands separately from their Celtic neighbours.

The journey to these archaeological sites is therapeutic, according to Basu. He quotes a tourist from Colorado: ‘it is precisely by revisiting the landscape that we begin to participate “in the quest” for our healing and reconnection’. 13

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13 Basu, Highland Homecomings, 164.
Part of that quest is finding oneself. One of Basu’s respondents wrote: ‘this is finding out who I am … I feel a sense of belonging to this area, but you can never know it because it’s an emotion, not a tangible thing … it’s in here [pointing to heart] and it’s in here [pointing to head].’\(^{14}\) When Basu discusses ancestral tourists comparing Orkney to the new world, ‘North America was somehow equated with Disney World — colourful, comfortable and yet contrived and commercialized—whereas Orkney, with its cold and rain, drab fields and ancient stones … was more “natural” or “real”.’\(^{15}\)

In ‘Genealogical Tourism’, Carla Santos and Grace Yan emphasise the ‘lived experience’ of travel to genealogical libraries.\(^{16}\) This emphasis is different from other ‘legacy tourism’ which explores actual travel to ancestral homelands.\(^{17}\) Since travel to view documentation in libraries can provide a ‘powerful stimulus’ for later travel to ancestral locations, both are important research endeavours for tourism marketers.\(^{18}\)

While some ancestral-focused tours do include time at relevant libraries, not all do. For example, one of the authors, Dr Nina Ray has spent quite a bit of time over the last several years participating in such tours as part of a data gathering project. A Scottish clan society of North America did not have any stop at a records or archive collection on their trip to Scotland. However, a Welsh-American trip to Wales placed considerable emphasis on the visit to the National Library of Wales so that participants could research records relevant to family history. Perhaps one explanation of the different emphases in itineraries was unknowingly suggested by one respondent on the Scottish clan trip, when he recoiled at being asked to participate in a survey regarding his interest in family history tourism. He strongly indicated that he had no interest in tracing his roots, but was on the clan tour of Scotland because of his strong feeling for ‘family affinity’. Therefore, while some tourists do wish to explore written documentation (either on-line or by visiting physical facilities) before or during a trip to the ancestral homeland, others simply want the trip to the ‘homeland’, without the burden of continuing research.

There are also various levels of visit to the ancestral homeland. Dr Ray recalls a conversation with a colleague at the same university in the USA who reported on her summer trip to Slovakia (her grandparents had immigrated.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 224.
\(^{15}\) Idem, ‘My Own Island Home: the Orkney Homecoming’, 32.
\(^{17}\) McCain and Ray, ‘Legacy Tourism: The Search for Personal Meaning in Heritage Travel’, \textit{passim}.
\(^{18}\) Santos and Yan, ‘Genealogical Tourism: A Phenomenological Examination’, 1.
from Czechoslovakia). She visited all of the typical tourist attractions and enjoyed the knowledge that as she stood in the centre of Bratislava, she could look at the hills in the distance and know that Grandma came from there. Even though she could not locate the particular village with the information she had, she said that she would like to return and ‘take Mom there.’ Ancestral research and standing in the footsteps of one’s forbearers have multiple levels of direction and intensity, but the authors of this paper argue that most emotions associated with this search are positive and can be measured.

Ireland and Scotland have known for years that nations can be branded and marketed and both have reached out to their diaspora. Symbolic of this, in 1997, ‘Scotland the Brand’ was formed as part of Scottish Enterprise, Scotland’s main economic development agency. Research was conducted in England, France, Germany, Spain, the USA, Japan, and in Scotland. Scots were asked how they see themselves, how they think the world sees them, and how the world really sees them. Results showed that other nations see Scotland maintaining its heritage and integrity, with a strong sense of self. Recommendations included that Scotland does not need to reinvent itself, but to keep its traditional values while also projecting itself as modern.\(^\text{19}\)

In 2009, the Scottish Development Group did just that with advertising in the *Financial Times*. The headline of the advert states ‘The home of the kilt and MRI scanning. We’ve a history of exposing the body’.\(^\text{20}\) However, the researchers concluded that the Scottish diaspora do want to know where they came from but may not be as interested in what their mother country looks like or is today, even when compared to Ireland.\(^\text{21}\) Indeed, Scotland took on quite a challenge to bring home the Scots in 2009.

**II: Homecoming’s Significance in the Marketing World**

For marketers, it is critical to identify motives and behaviours that distinguish one group of customers from the whole. If there is a way to communicate with a smaller group that has a particular attraction to your product without having to pay to reach everybody and to present your product to better appeal

\(^\text{19}\) Russel Griggs, internal working paper ‘Scotland the Brand’, courtesy of past Executive Director (1999).


\(^\text{21}\) Griggs, ‘Scotland the Brand’. 
to those customers, both the seller and the buyer can come away from the
transaction further ahead. While tourism marketers were quick to identify the
importance of the broad category of heritage customers they long overlooked
opportunities associated with the genealogical tourism market segment.\(^{22}\)
That marketing neglect is changing, as those whose focus is on genealogy as
a part of heritage are realising that marketing techniques need to be used to
attract those heritage patrons. The May 2010 issue of \textit{Discover My Past: Scotland}
has an article entitled ‘Market Forces: Shop with your Scottish Ancestors’.\(^{23}\)
The authors of this paper contend that all benefit when the words ‘market’
and ‘ancestors’ appear in the same sentence and agree with Santos and Yan:
‘By understanding and recognising the lived experiences of the genealogical
tourism market segment, managers will be able to focus their marketing efforts
to attract those who have a more specific motivation driving their choices of
destination and activities’.\(^{24}\)

What better appeal to the motives of a market segment that travels to
seek their ancestral roots than a homeland creating a major celebration and
inviting them to a Homecoming? In 2009, ‘inspired by the 250th anniversary
of Robert Burns, Homecoming Scotland 2009 celebrates Scotland’s great
contributions to the world; Burns, Golf, Whisky, Great Minds and Innovation
and our enduring culture. Homecoming was also the theme for Scotland’s
2009 Marketing Conference and inspired the Marketing Society of Scotland
to welcome home from afar some of the best Scots-born marketers’.\(^{25}\) Among
the Scots who ‘came home’ for the conference were the Managing Director at
Nestle Confectionary (born in Glasgow), the Chairman of Disney Consumer
Products (born in Whitburn), and the Managing Director of amazon.co.uk
(who trained at the University of Glasgow). For two of these speakers, going
home meant heading north from England; for the Disney Chairman, it meant
travelling from California. As the conference was marketed, it was bringing
home ‘speakers who are absolutely at the top of their game, now is the time,
paraphrasing Burns, that you “tak yer place aboon them a”’.\(^{26}\)

One of the break-out sessions was ‘Homecoming Scotland — what’s the
Legacy?’ Certainly many in Scotland want to know. And the use of the term

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Rosemary Evans, \textit{The Visitor’s Guide to Northern Ireland} (Belfast, 1998).
\item Santos and Yan, ‘Genealogical Tourism: A Phenomenological Examination’, 65.
marketingsocietyscotland.com/ [accessed 7 March 2010].
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
‘legacy’ is resonant for the authors, given that we titled earlier research into ancestral tourism ‘legacy tourism’. This break-out session was mostly used by VisitScotland representatives as an expert focus group for such topics as how often a homecoming should happen, should homecomings have themes (food, ancestry, etc.) and whether homecomings should emphasise haggis and bagpipes or the more modern Scotland. The group recommended that Homecoming continue every ten years, with emphasis on various themes, especially when the themes (such as golf) tie in to already scheduled other events (such as the British Open, etc.).

Scotland’s Homecoming was the focus of an article in the special training issue of International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research. Students participating in the training exercise were asked to think about the advice they would ‘give to managers of destination sites and events (e.g. Inverness, Eilean Donan Castle, or Edinburgh Festival) to better serve legacy tourists’ and to ‘describe the types of organisations that would be interested in learning about legacy tourism motivations’.

Certainly, researchers should be interested in how influential homecoming is in a tourist’s family-history motivation. In a four-year study, the authors found that of those having made a ‘legacy’ trip, only 7.6 per cent indicated that the idea of homecoming was an influencing factor. American and Canadian tourists are more motivated by this influence than are other tourists. Hence it is not surprising that outside of Scotland, Homecoming was promoted in media in those countries which have strong diaspora links with Scotland, the USA, Ireland, Canada and Australia.

Preliminary figures of Homecoming 2009 had shown the North American market to Scotland had improved significantly against the year-long downward trend with a 25 per cent increase in Quarter 3 compared to Quarter 3 the previous year. When Quarter 4 2009 figures were released, they showed that

27 McCain and Ray, ‘Legacy Tourism: The Search for Personal Meaning in Heritage Travel’.
29 Ibid., 302.
30 Nations of citizenship are the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia/New Zealand, and ‘other’ (e.g., Ireland, Italy, Denmark, South Africa). Significant differences determined by a Chi-Square Test, with p<.05.
31 Ibid., 20.
all regions of Scotland showed double-digit growth from the fourth quarter of 2008.\textsuperscript{33} Final results show Homecoming generated almost 72,000 additional net non-Scottish visitors, with an additional expenditure (22 per cent above target) of £53.7m and a return on investment of 1:9.8, compared to a target of 1:8.\textsuperscript{34} Forty-nine per cent of these visitors have Scottish family origins.\textsuperscript{35} Due to Homecoming 2009, a comprehensive Diaspora and Scots interest database of over 6,000 worldwide organisations was created.\textsuperscript{36} Eighty-four per cent of Homecoming event organisers indicated that their Homecoming events saw a benefit of targeting new audiences as an outcome of their participation.\textsuperscript{37} As one can see, there are several measureable marketing successes.

Andrew Martin, the Director of the Scottish Centre of Tourism, commented on his impression of the success of Homecoming:

Without doubt this was an initiative that maximised media and PR exposure throughout Scotland. It was gratifying to see the whole country coming together and wrapping regional and local events in the Homecoming 2009 brand. The First Minister encouraged all sections of society, business and public sector to support the initiative.\textsuperscript{38}

He added:

The result was a twelve-month promotion of Scotland, which raised visibility of the Tourism product nationally and internationally. Certainly there was a positive impact on the Scottish Diaspora. As a marketing initiative raising brand awareness the Homecoming 2009 was a resounding success. In terms of tourism arrivals, our traditional 'home


\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 28.


\textsuperscript{38} Personal communication with Andrew Martin, Director of the Scottish Centre of Tourism, Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University (2010).
markets’ certainly were encouraged to visit Scotland. And certainly, underpinned by Tartan Day in New York, the Homecoming message was heard on the east coast of North America. Beyond that the reach is questionable. Of course, the US market had its own problems. 2009 saw the recession bottoming out, with little discretionary spending available for tourism spending.39

He concluded, ‘Homecoming 2009 was a success in terms of promoting self belief and the culture of Scotland. In terms of awareness raising and delivering a national brand to wrap the tourism products in it worked, and worked well.’40

III: Hijacking an Image

Products and symbols that can be uniquely associated with a nation are often described as having a country-of-origin attribute which endows them with a competitive advantage of quick identification of qualities. However, sometimes this identity can overpower the broader identity of what that nation has to offer. The native-Scot Disney speaker at the Marketing Society conference had been asked if it is time to move beyond haggis and bagpipes; he said yes. But, most marketers in the break-out focus group recognised that while Scotland may not wish to see itself emphasised as the home of haggis and bagpipes, that external customers (the ones coming ‘home’) are partly influenced by the ‘best links’ of images associated with Scotland. However, marketers had to be aware of the potential dangers of ‘hijacking’ the image of the country for the Homecoming.

Scotland’s heritage plays an important role in tourism. In Highland Heritage, Celeste Ray describes how Scottish descendents living in the USA identify and follow the ‘traditions’ of Scottish immigrant ancestors.41 Many Scottish descendents display their association in activities (for example, tartan wearing or highland games) invented a century after their ancestors immigrated to North America (including many from the lowlands, although this geographic area tends to be ignored in North American heritage memory). Most heritage participants and attendees identify with the Scottish-Americans.

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
They are ‘looking for authentic inauthenticity’. These people are sometimes disappointed not having their expectations met when visiting the ‘old country’. Some researchers in Scotland analyse Scottish folksongs to investigate the ‘multiple flows’ of authenticity for tourist spectacles. Richard Fletcher and Jim Bell condemned the corruption of true Irish experiences, specifically in the case of the expansion of the Irish pub phenomena without maintaining the true nature of the Irish pub. They asserted that it is time to ‘take the sham out of shamrock’ and they labelled the use of a localised adaptation of foreign cultural symbols as ‘Hijacking Country of Origin Image’.

In preparation for the Homecoming, in 2008, the Marketing Society, Scotland, held a high school competition known as the ‘Marketing Apprentice’ to secure input from young people as to how to make Homecoming authentic, and relevant to them and a representative of VisitScotland was one of the judges. The winning team of students emphasised that Homecoming needed to be relevant to young people and feature well known celebrities known to youth. They advised, based on ‘market research’ with their school friends, that a ‘traditional’ events guide cover (with traditional images of Scots wearing kilts, etc.) be replaced with one that emphasised outdoor activities and popular celebrities. The final events guide to Homecoming did have at least one depiction of what appeared to be a rock concert on the cover. But even the young people mentioned that they wanted to emphasise the Scottish saltire on the t-shirts, so that purchases can show pride in their authentic heritage.

In February 2009, the Marketing Society Scotland held a debate on the topic ‘Is Burns still relevant?’ The debate began with the organiser proposing that Scotland is not just attempting to attract tourists, but businesses as well.

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Of what relevance is Burns in attracting business? They repeated VisitScotland figures that 49 per cent of visitors engage in outdoor activities such as white-water rafting, fishing, and golf. Only 23 per cent visit museums. While not the most visited museum, the Modern Art Gallery has visits of around 500,000; only around 300,000 people visit the Burns Heritage Centre (about one-half of the number visiting the Edinburgh Zoo annually). Should not Scotland be more than a ‘one man country’, they asked. Scotland is a country of innovation and engineering and is not the picture that should be painted to the rest of the world as opposed to reliance on symbols that lend themselves to country-of-origin hijacking through exaggerated invented images of stereotypical icons of their ancestry?

In fact, before Homecoming 2009, Scottish Development International was promoting historical innovation and investment potential with such copy in ads in the *Wall Street Journal* as ‘Scottish mathematicians invented the decimal point’. Scottish Bankers discovered how to ‘move it to the right’ with such inventions as ‘the first bank note’, ‘the overdraft’ and the ‘ATM’.

The opposition at the debate proposed that nothing is as enduring and cohesive as Burns. After all, ‘Scotland has an image’. If Burns is not used as the authentic icon, what will be—the Loch Ness Monster?—they asked. In the end, the motion (decided by both those in attendance and on-line votes), ‘This house believes that Robert Burns should play less of a role in promoting a modern Scotland’ failed. Burns continues to be used as a symbol of Scotland.

The timing of the 2009 Marketing Society conference was just after Scotland’s release of Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi, the man convicted of the 1988 Pan Am flight bombing over Lockerbie. The break-out group briefly discussed the issue of how the event illuminated the differences in the cultural interpretations: the resultant outrage in the United States, and the bewilderment in Scotland of why it mattered so much. Many Americans threatened to cancel their trips to Scotland and VisitScotland and the Scottish Government were criticised for not having a ‘crisis management’ plan or handling the ‘disaster’ well.

While some outraged members of the Diaspora may have cancelled or delayed their homecoming, the unfortunate event did generate positive


discussion in the authors’ US marketing classes regarding topics such as diplomatic differences, even between nations with a ‘special relationship’, and the importance of monitoring current events to determine their effect on marketing plans, such as on Homecoming 2009.

IV: Modern Day Nation versus Ancestral Homeland

Grouping data by nationality (or nationality of ancestors) is somewhat problematic. While conducting research at a Basque Studies Conference, Ray and Nere Lete found that a ‘connection with place’ is not a connection with the ‘mother country’ (either Spain or France; the Basque Country extends into both nations’ boundaries). Rather it implies a sense of community and a personal identity commonly formed by language.\(^5^0\) The ancestral homeland is the Basque Country, not Spain or France, for an Euskaldun (one who possesses Basque).

While the Scottish Islands of Orkney and Shetland do not overlap nations’ geographic lands, as in the case of the Basque Country, descendants of immigrants from these islands often refer to their ancestry as Orcadian or Shetlander rather than Scottish. These islands have a dominant Viking heritage (the islands were given as a wedding dowry in 1469 to James III (1460–88) by King Christian of Denmark). Members of the Shetland Family History Society informed the researchers that the most important allegiance typically is to a particular island in the Shetland Islands. According to The Guardian, the head of the Norwegian group ‘We Move Borders’, says James III acted unfairly and the dowry stands. He is lobbying in Norway to raise the 58,000 florins required to reclaim the islands. Norway, however, claims to have no plans to fight for the sovereignty of Orkney and Shetland.\(^5^1\) While on Shetland one author met local residents who hope for a return of the islands to Norway. The recently adopted new flag of Orkney has been criticised for being almost indistinguishable from the Norwegian flag. Yet, the previously used flag, the flag of the former Kalmar Union—a union of Norway, Sweden and Denmark from 1397 until 1512, certainly represented the Orcadian Scandinavian ties.\(^5^2\)


\(^{52}\) ‘Controversy Continues over Orkney’s Flag’, Orkneyjar: The Heritage of the Orkney Islands,
According to the genealogical publication *Discover My Past: Scotland*, ‘to Shetlanders, moving to Scotland was as much an emigration as going abroad’. This is due to many reasons including attitudes and perceptions, while people on the northern Scottish islands may have greater ancestral affinity to those of Norwegian heritage than to Scots, and those of the Scottish diaspora.

Perhaps the best introduction to the description and rationale for the Shetland Islands’ Hamefarin (separate from and in addition to Scotland’s 2009 Homecoming) appeared in *Scottish Life* which observed: ‘Shetlanders have always had an independent streak, so it’s only fitting their Hamefarin (homecoming) will happen a full year after the rest of Scotland’s.’ Expanding on the plans being generated in Shetland, *Scottish Life* observed:

> By now, the concept should be familiar to *Scottish Life* readers: a themed programme of activities designed to draw expatriate and diaspora Scots from every corner of the globe to celebrate their roots in the lands of their forebears. The Scottish Government’s 2009 Year of Homecoming, of course? Well actually, no. The Shetland *Hamefarin* … 2010. Only in Shetland.

The author explains:

> ‘Hamefarin’ means homecoming in the islands. ‘Norse-infused Norn dialect’ and Shetland ‘could see no persuasive reason to be deflected by anything so remote and inconsequential as a bunch of politicians in far-off Edinburgh’ suggesting a homecoming in 2009.

It should be noted that the Shetlands have a *Hamefarin* every twenty-five years and since the last one was 1985, 2010 was to be the year. The Shetland
business community is quite aware of the economic and emotional potential of the *Hamefarin*. As reported in the *Shetland Hamefarin Newsletter*, the ‘Head of Business Development for Shetland Islands Council and a key organiser of the Shetland *Hamefarin* 2010’, spoke about the *Hamefarin* on Australian radio.\(^{58}\) He spoke to a presenter whose great-grandfather was a Shetlander, and ‘touched on the reasons for the mass emigration of Shetlanders and return of many members of the “Shetland diaspora”’.\(^{59}\) The Shetlands are very important in Australian and New Zealand emigration patterns, so promoting the *Hamefarin* in that area of the world certainly is logical.

The August newsletter of move.shetland.org noted that the 2010 Shetland summer had been even busier than usual.\(^{60}\) Towards the end of 2010, the organisers estimated that over 700 ‘Hamefarers’ took part in the Shetland homecoming; there were two major book launches as well as other numerous events.\(^{61}\)

Another useful comparison is with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board who implemented a programme reflecting what Ted Silberberg called the most important form of partnering with others to achieve tourism success—packaging cultural and non-cultural tourism products together.\(^{62}\) Genealogy is a ‘significant part of Northern Ireland’s tourism industry’.\(^{63}\) The Ulster Historical Foundation provides travel opportunities for those ‘searching for that elusive Irish ancestor’.\(^{64}\) In 2001, the programme included:

> a range of tours, social events and entertainment, all included at no extra cost. Delegates will visit heritage centres, explore museums and enjoy the magnificent scenery of areas of outstanding natural beauty such as The Glens of Antrim, The Giant’s Causeway and County Donegal. They will also have the opportunity to visit the historic city of

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.


Derry including a tour of the famous walls, the Guild Hall, St Columb’s Cathedral and the award winning Tower Museum.\textsuperscript{65}

In 2010 they are still bringing visitors to Belfast by appealing in the following terms:

If you are interested in finding out more about your Ulster ancestors or wish to explore the history of Ireland’s northern province this is the perfect opportunity in which to do so. Over six days you will be assisted to carry out research for yourself at Belfast’s main archives and libraries as well as discover the history of Ulster first hand through excursions to some of the province’s most historic sites such as the Outing to Londonderry and Donegal to visit the Monreagh Heritage Centre and the walled city of Derry.\textsuperscript{66}

The island of Ireland today is split between two modern-day political entities, which reinforces the fact that ancestral homeland may not correspond exactly to modern-day national boundaries. Yet Tourism Ireland was established under the framework of the Belfast Agreement of Good Friday 1998. We are jointly funded by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive on a two to one ratio, and operate under the auspices of the North/South Ministerial Council through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in the South.\textsuperscript{67}

They market the ‘island of Ireland’ (i.e., both Irelands) to overseas tourism. A key part of the 2010 strategic plan is to ‘grow Northern Ireland promotable to visitors’ especially to the Scots-Irish in the United States, by reminding visitors that they can ‘go where Ireland takes you’.\textsuperscript{68} Direct mail pieces were to be

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
sent to 1.2 million recipients in the general Irish diaspora in the USA.\textsuperscript{69} One of their Ireland themed activities as part of the ‘unique holiday experiences’ offerings is ‘Born in Ireland: A Genealogical Event’.\textsuperscript{70}

Despite similarities in terms of having a homecoming it does not appear that Ireland emphasised specific homecoming motivations. And, the authors could find little evidence that Ireland (even Northern Ireland) attempted to take advantage of Scotland’s Homecoming draw. However, there is an Ireland Homecoming Study Programme, which ‘aims to encourage the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Irish nationals, and non-resident passport holders, residing outside of the European Union to return to Ireland for their Higher Education studies. The participating Institutes of Technology recognise the important role that the Irish Diaspora plays in promoting Irish Culture and Trade’.\textsuperscript{71} On the very first page of the web site, the Irish diaspora is defined: ‘The Irish Diaspora consists of Irish emigrants and their descendants in countries such as the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Argentina, South Africa and continental Europe. The Diaspora maximally interpreted, contains over 70 million people, which is over fifteen times the population of the island of Ireland itself. According to the Emigrant Advice Network (EAN), 3.1 million Irish Citizens (passport holders) live overseas’. They describe the study programme as ‘a real Irish Experience’.\textsuperscript{72}

Both Irelands have met in Irish Diaspora Forums to improve marketing efforts to reach increasingly segmented sub brands of self-identified Irish (for example, Irish, Scots Irish, British, etc.).\textsuperscript{73} Of particular interest is the untapped American Scots-Irish market. At the initial Northern Ireland forum in Belfast in February of 2010, speakers highlighted the need to maximise opportunities in tourism by adjusting markets, using technology for better communication/networking, and maximizing goodwill with tangible tactics. In the Belfast forum, all agreed that there is a need to improve performance in the ‘Diaspora Space’. Specifically, solutions must be all-island, recognising the sub-brands identified above.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Northern Ireland Diaspora Forum Report, Northern Ireland Diaspora Forum, 25 February 2010, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
V: A Survey of Tourist Behaviour and Motivation

Paul Basu’s article, ‘My Own Island Home: The Orkney Homecoming’, served as the major source of questions for a survey undertaken by the current authors, asking respondents to indicate motivations important to interest in family history and whether they had actually ever engaged in legacy tourism by travelling to their own ancestral country-of-origin. A total sample of 1,057 was recruited from meetings and activities of cultural and historical societies. Each potential respondent was asked to complete a one-page (two-sided) survey either at the gathering or at one’s convenience to be mailed back later. Gathering data in situ allows the researcher to engage in conversations and often to conduct fairly long interviews with respondents. As Drew Martin describes, the long interview is valuable in examining influences and consequences of leisure decisions. Sometimes, consequences are potentially risky and less than desirable when ‘skeletons in the closet’ are found. By conversing in person, the researcher can learn about the range of outcomes, both good and bad. For good or bad, the sampling was of a ‘snowball’, non-probability nature. What began as a matter of geographic and personal ethnicity convenience sample for the researcher turned into a string of contacts, with a number of referrals to relevant future participants and group data-collection opportunities. Respondents representing various ethnic communities (Basques, Irish, Latvians, Norwegians, Welsh and Scots) were surveyed at events in the USA, Canada, Ireland, and the UK over a four-year period. Those of ‘Scottish affiliation’ from Scotland and North America


75 Specifically, the data was collected at events sponsored by the following organisations in Scotland: Glasgow and West of Scotland Family History Society, Tay Valley Family History Society, North Perthshire Family History Society, Fife Family History Society, Central Scotland Family History Society, Aberdeen and Northeast Scotland Family History Society, Abertay Historical Society, and students at St Andrews University and Strathclyde University. Data were also collected at the following ‘Scottish’ events and locations in the United States and Canada: Highland Games in Pleasanton, California, Columbus, Indiana, Glasgow, Kentucky, Lehi, Utah, Highland Village Museum, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, a Burns’ Night Dinner in Boise, Idaho, a meeting of the Scottish Society of Indianapolis, Indiana, and on a flight from Glasgow to Halifax. Those on a North American clan tour of Scotland also participated.
number 357 and those of ‘Irish affiliation’\textsuperscript{76} from mostly Ireland, the USA and Australia number 215. Twenty-one responses were collected in conjunction with family history societies of the Scottish islands of Orkney and Shetland and are sometimes separated for analysis purposes. In all, 593 respondents comprise the ‘Scottish and Irish’ sample which will be used in the analysis for this study. 115 Welsh-Americans were also surveyed at a Welsh festival in the western United States and during a trip to Wales specifically designed to look for information on their ancestors. While these Welsh Americans share many pan-Celtic traits with the Irish and Scottish and their diaspora (as found in this study with the same average age, the percentage who have ever travelled for legacy purposes, and the average number of legacy trips they have taken in the past two years) and rate many of the same motivations as important, they have enough differences (all citizens of the USA, mostly members of a particular church) to warrant a separate discussion at another time. However, it is worth noticing that these Welsh, along with the Scots, had the smallest proportion of respondents indicating that homecoming was an important motivator in pursuing family history. (The data was gathered before mid-2008; well before Homecoming 2009 began.) And, their differences from the Irish and the Orkney/Shetlanders are statistically significant (Chi-square test, p<.05).

Results showing the responses of the 593 Irish and Scottish respondents to motivations for interest in family history are shown in Table 1. Only one of the motivations shown has any significant difference between the sub-samples within the sample. The Scottish group had the largest proportion of respondents indicating that ‘obligation to ancestors’ as an important motivation for interest in family history (24 per cent) with the Irish at 18 per cent and Orkney/Shetland at 5 per cent (differences significant at p<.05). When differences exist, they are between the Scottish mainland group and Orkney/Shetland. Thus, all groups are combined in the table and analysis.

Organisers of Homecoming were correct to reach out to the North American diaspora, since the citizenship of respondent is associated with whether homecoming is checked as a motivating factor. The homecoming interest in the USA and Canada (at 9.5 per cent) is significantly higher than the importance to citizens of the UK or Australia and New Zealand. Other

\textsuperscript{76} The Irish samples were gathered at the Northern Ireland exhibit at the 2007 National Folk Life Festival in Washington D.C., a 2006 meeting of the Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, a 2006 genealogy conference of the Ulster Historical Foundation in Belfast, and a 2007 tour of Australian genealogists to Ireland.
differences based on country of citizenship are: those in North America place significantly less importance on ‘quest’ than do those from the UK (25 per cent indicating), Australia and New Zealand (19 per cent); and on the motivation of ‘sacred’ (but only 7 per cent indicated as important) than the other nationalities, as well as with ‘recovering of social identity’ (11 per cent), ‘community’ (9 per cent), ‘inward journey’ (10 per cent). ‘Intellectual challenge’ is selected by a significantly higher proportion in the UK (43 per cent) and Australia/New Zealand (50 per cent) than in the US and Canada (31 per cent).

As reported by Santos and Yan and the present authors, self-identification or personal identity is often the most important ancestral tourism motivation.77 We have found that a connection with place was a close second motivation, followed in third and fourth places by intellectual challenge (‘learning’ was also found to be important by Poria, Reichel and Biran78) and obligation to ancestors. The latter reason (obligation to ancestors) was raised by Yakel79 and reiterated by Santos and Yan.80 As can be seen in Table 1, the Irish and Scottish sample closely parallels findings of other research mentioned above.

Table 1: Motivations for Interest in Family History—593 Irish and Scottish Respondents (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection with place</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal identity</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual challenge</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovering continuities</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation to ancestors</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing the circle</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quest</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding oneself</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the gap</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

77 Santos and Yan, ‘Genealogical Tourism: A Phenomenological Examination’; Ray and McCain, ‘It was the Trip of a Lifetime’.
78 Poria, Reichel, and Biran, ‘Heritage Site Perceptions and Motivations to Visit’.
80 Santos and Yan, ‘Genealogical Tourism: A Phenomenological Examination’.
Recovery of social identity  59  10.3%
Magical feeling  54  9.5%
Inward journey  43  7.5%
Homecoming  42  7.4%
True home  41  7.2%
Community  37  6.5%
Pilgrimage  30  5.3%
Sacred  27  4.7%

a. Each respondent was asked to check up to three motivations

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of importance of several reasons for engaging in leisure travel, 85 per cent of the 593 Irish/Scottish sample indicated that ‘visiting friends and relatives’ was important, and 80 per cent said that ‘where family is from’ and ‘being together as a family’ are important. Being with ‘people of similar interests’ and going ‘where I feel safe’ (the next most important reasons for leisure travel) were listed as important by 66 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively.

Of the Irish and Scottish respondents 237 (40 per cent) responded in their own words to the opportunity to list phrases ‘that you would use to describe your motivations behind any interest in family history’. The most common verbatim had to do with learning more about general family history and connecting with other family members. Also important is the idea of getting back to one’s roots. In addition, searching for health/medical history always surfaces in the various groups. Passing on the legacy to the next generation is often mentioned. Others wish to identify with ancestors who were successful in a particular field and to gain a greater understanding of the hard work performed by ancestors. Results from the verbatim responses of the Scottish and Irish sample appear in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbatim</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning more about family history/connecting with family members</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting back to roots/seeing where I came from</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in History (other than family history)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation to ancestors/future generations</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenge of finding out/detective work</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate family stories</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Categorization of Irish and Scottish sample verbatims

‘Describe your motivations behind any interest in family history’
Other (e.g., for work, “born with it”, “finding strength”, “need to know”) 4%
Gaining specific knowledge 2%
Religious requirements/motivations 2%

Relevant additional verbatim comments are: ‘I am addicted to this’, ‘discovering why I am the way I am’, ‘admiration for courage of emigrant forbearers’ and ‘cross-cultural connections’.

Of the total Irish and Scottish 593 respondents, 360 (61.2 per cent) have taken a legacy trip. Responses for reasons for ancestral travel appear below:

- Location relevant to one’s ancestor – 78 per cent
- Information (researching libraries, etc.) on one’s own ancestor - 76 per cent
- To find living relatives of one’s own ancestor – 39 per cent
- Location relevant to spouse or friend – 42 per cent
- Information (library research) on ancestor of spouse or friend – 51 per cent
- To find living relatives of ancestor of spouse or friend – 18 per cent

VI: Conclusions and Suggestions for Tourism Marketers

Even though homecoming may be rated low as a motivation for interest in family history, VisitScotland is happy with the results of Homecoming 2009. While the success can be attributed to numerous factors, perhaps one explanation is that the message tied in very well to other motivations rated more highly by Scots and the Scottish diaspora, notably personal identity and connection to place. One example advertisement sums this sentiment up, ‘I am a Scot. I buy the first round. I’m true to my word. I’ve bagged a munro. I never miss the nineteenth hole. I’ve taken the High Road and the Low Road. I don’t know the words to “Auld Lang Syne”; but I know what they mean. I’m a New Yorker, but I’m a Scot at heart. In 2009, I am going home’.81 Notwithstanding the fiasco of the year’s Gathering – Edinburgh, the appeal of the homecoming to those seeking their ancestors drew many to spend their tourist budget in Scotland rather than in some other destination that year.82

81 ‘I am a Scot’ advertisement, VisitScotland, National Geographic, February 2009, 15.
82 For example, see Ian Swanson, ‘Gathering Storm Sparks War of Words between Leaders’, Scotsman.com, 2 March 2011, http://www.scotsman.com/news/gathering-
Poria, Reichel and Biran said it well: ‘marketers should emphasise the emotional involvement that visitors may feel’ and that these tourist perceptions can be associated with identifiable visitor characteristics.\textsuperscript{83} They also note that ‘fun and recreation’ should not be ignored. Also of interest is the fact that while visitors place special importance on heritage locations relevant to their own heritage, they are also interested in other heritages as well.\textsuperscript{84}

While the legacy tourism subset of heritage tourism is beginning to be researched more, research may never capture all of the emotional aspect of ‘going home’. In the summary to his \textit{Highland Homecomings} book, Basu writes ‘the homecoming journey articulates that which cannot be voiced and “speaks” directly to the heart and soul.’\textsuperscript{85} For tourism marketers, homecoming is not simply an event. It did not begin with the Scottish Homecoming promotion or the Shetland \textit{Hamefarin}. It is a condition, a part of an overall set of motivations to seek out personal identity, family history and connection with ancestral places. It will remain a part of the makeup of a substantial target market that endures long after these events become faint memories. A market that may be served by those tourism professionals who recognise and promote the true country-of-origin benefits of places, events and activities that bring back the feelings of our past to our travel plans of today.

Key to building strategies is to remember to match the marketing activities to objectives that take advantage of the motives of legacy travellers. Starting with the leading motives for interest in family history and motivations to travel one can begin to develop insights for marketing efforts. Tourists are motivated to travel by locations relevant to their personal ancestors. They seek family history for connection with those locations and personal identity. To meet those motivations for this market segment tourism destination places, whether nations, regions, cities or villages, must enable tourists to experience the finding of where ‘my people’ came from. Tours can include some discretionary time to seek out records and provide lists of libraries, archives, church records and other resources for these tourists. Local holders of these records can make their records available to visitors with appropriate schedules and precautions to insure their safety. Tourists coming to see an archived birth, marriage, death or any other record are more than just inquisitive intruders. They spend

\textsuperscript{83} Poria, Reichel, and Biran, ‘Heritage Site Perceptions and Motivations to Visit’, 325.
\textsuperscript{85} Basu, \textit{Highland Homecomings}, 228.
money for travel, food, lodging and souvenirs in the immediate community. For many, access to archive records on internet databases leads to plans to visit and see the places they researched. Both authors have included visits to ancestral homelands which had been researched beforehand. Some find additional information for their records, but more time and money was spent just experiencing where their ancestors had been. Scotland’s research found that 69 per cent of international visitors and 47 per cent of UK visitors during the Homecoming year (the highest percentages) visited locations associated with ancestors (e.g., towns, schools, graveyards).86

The focus needs to be on taking early action with current opportunities rather than waiting to build on long term needs and designs for a perfect solution.87 Marketing communications can be directed toward tourists with these motives to generate awareness of the opportunities for ancestral research and experiences. In the United States, for example, nearly every nationality and regional identity has a social or fraternal organisation with publications, meetings and festivals where relatively inexpensive advertisements can reach and pay for just those who identify with an ancestral home. These people tend to be web wise. They work with online databases. Advertising on the web, with tabs and click-through opportunities on genealogy resource sites, often with the ability to focus on specific locales, can minimise total costs while providing a narrowly defined target market of tourists with opportunity to connect with their own personal place or country-of-origin.

In 1997 John L. Lahey, the president of Quinnipiac College—a relatively small, private college in central Connecticut—served as the Grand Marshall of the New York City Saint Patrick’s Day parade. Lahey’s selection as Grand Marshall gained considerable notoriety for two reasons: he was at the time the first Connecticut resident to serve as Grand Marshall of the New York City parade; more significantly, his status as the leader of an educational institution positioned him to participate in the heated political, educational and historical controversies concerning the commemoration and interpretation of the Great Irish Famine that were then unfolding in New York and across the northeastern United States. Lahey spent the year that he served as Grand Marshall moving to the forefront of this conversation as it grew in scope and intensity. His efforts fit within a larger movement among elements of the Irish diaspora to transform awareness about and representations of the nineteenth-century famine in American consciousness and in the educational curricula of secondary schools. Indeed, Lahey himself was reported as saying ‘it was no accident that the parade committee chose an educator to be Grand Marshall on the 150th anniversary of the famine.’ These debates, in themselves, are historically significant because they raised a series of important questions about the politics of historical memory and representation.

Equally important, however, were the ongoing efforts undertaken by Lahey and his academic institution, subsequently rechristened as Quinnipiac

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1 Peggy McCarthy, ‘A New York Irishman and Flaunting it’, The New York Times, 16 March 1997, CN12; R.F. Foster, The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it up in Ireland (Oxford, 2002), 30–1. Foster somewhat misrepresents efforts to include the Irish Famine as part of a larger human rights curriculum. He claims that it was part of an effort to include the famine into the realm of ‘Holocaust Studies.’ Margaret Kelleher criticised Foster’s characterisation of American curricular efforts in her talk on ‘Hunger in History: Monuments to the Great Famine’, but left these criticisms out of the published version of her talk, see the video of ‘Hunger in History’ at http://frontrow.bc.edu/program/kelleher/ [accessed 28 April 2010] and Margaret Kelleher, ‘Hunger and History: Monuments to the Great Irish Famine’, Textual Practice, 16 (2002), 249–76. See more on this in this essay, below.
University, to lead an ongoing discussion about the significance of the famine. In 2000, as part of a larger reconstruction of its main library, Quinnipiac established a major commemorative site dedicated specifically to the famine on its Mount Carmel campus. This consisted of a large collection of famine art contained in a museum-style display room. The room also included a significant body of interpretative materials on the history and impact of the Great Irish Famine. To create this ‘An Gorta Mór’ special collection, the University secured a major donation from two of its most prominent supporters, Murray and Marvin Lender, both of American-Jewish descent. In the decade since the establishment of the An Gorta Mór room, the University has built ‘one of the most extensive collections of art and literature in America devoted to Ireland’s Great Famine.’\(^2\) The University uses this collection to promote itself among the Irish-American community in the northeast, frequently advertising the collection in Irish cultural publications, advertising it on television during the broadcast of the St Patrick’s Day parade, and most recently mounting an exhibition of its art collection at the Irish consulate in New York City. This paper will examine the history of efforts to raise the visibility of the famine in the Irish-American diaspora and will analyse the efforts by Quinnipiac University to create a commemorative site that offers an interpretation of the famine that speaks in particular to Americans of Irish descent.

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Contemporary controversies over the representation of the Irish famine in America began around the time that commemoration of the sesquicentennial started in Ireland during 1995. The timing and content of these commemorative efforts were almost immediately the source of controversy, both in Ireland and around the world. Some, like the eminent famine scholar Cormac Ó Gráda, publically complained that the commemorations had ‘jumped the gun’ by beginning in 1995, a date too early to mark the anniversary of any significant excess mortality or even widespread hunger in Ireland.\(^3\) Others criticised

\(^2\) http://www.thegreathunger.org/. This website was originally developed by one of Quinnipiac’s reference librarians, Terry Ballard, as a semi-independent website. The site has more recently been administered directly by Quinnipiac through its office of Public Affairs in conjunction with the Information Technology department and the Arnold Bernhard Library. The author now serves as a consultant in the ongoing development of the site.

\(^3\) Cormac Ó Gráda, ‘Making Irish Famine History in 1995,’ History Workshop Journal, 42
both the form and content of these commemorative events. R.F. Foster, in particular, has derided much famine commemoration as either ‘theme parks’ or efforts toward a ‘therapeutic catharsis.’

This essay will not seek to engage in a broad analysis of famine commemoration, but instead will focus on the uniquely American aspects of the politics and uses of famine remembrance over the past two decades. This issue, as we shall see, takes on a rather different cast when examined from the perspective of the diaspora; discussions central to the debate within Ireland, quite naturally, have less relevance when considered from across the Atlantic. Similarly, the criticisms that have been put forward by Ó Gráda, Foster and others concerning the commemorative process may have less relevance, or indeed even prove to be simply unfounded, when considered from an American perspective. Thus, an examination of the process of famine commemoration in America can lend an important corrective to some of its most strident critics; at the same time it can bring us to a deeper appreciation of the critical perspectives the experience of the diaspora bring to native historical interpretations.

Controversies over famine remembrance and commemoration in the United States date to 1996. The experience of political debate over famine commemoration and education, however, was significantly prefigured by debates that unfolded in Canada during the previous decade. At that time, the Canadian government undertook measures to create a Parks Canada site at Grosse Île in the St Lawrence River. The government’s intention, apparently, was to create a centre on the island focused on the history of Canadian immigration that might be made to parallel the reconstruction of Ellis Island in the United States. The main theme of the proposed site was to be ‘Canada: Land of Welcome and Hope’.

This plan was controversial from the start, since the island was the site of a mass grave of newly-arrived Irish immigrants who had died from a massive outbreak of typhus in 1847. Organised opposition to the Parks Canada plan rapidly developed from a vocal group of Canadians—primarily

(1996), 87.

Foster, *The Irish Story*, 29 – 32.

This undertaking was first discussed by the Canadian government in the 1980s. For a brief discussion of the early politics of this decision see Kathleen O’Brien, ‘Famine Commemorations: Visual Dialogues, Visual Silences’ in David A. Valone and Christine Kinealy (eds) *Ireland’s Great Hunger: Silence, Memory and Commemoration* (Lanham, Md., 2002), 282 – 3 and Lorrie Blair, ‘(De)Constructing the Irish Famine Memorial in Contemporary Quebec’ in ibid., 311 – 29.
of Irish descent—who banded together to form Action Grosse Île, a group devoted to ‘ensure that the mass graves of the Irish Famine victims of 1847 [be] perpetuated as the main theme of the National Historic Park on Grosse Île and as a permanent monument to the Irish role in the building of Canada’. The Canadian controversies over the representation of the national park site eventually termed ‘Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site’ thus were resolved through a great amount of attention being paid to the events that are referred to carefully during the guided tours of the island as ‘the Irish tragedy’.

This was the exact opposite result of what had been suggested in the early documents created by Parks Canada as they set forth a plan to develop Grosse Île into a heritage site: the proposed development plan from 1992 had asserted that ‘there should be not too much emphasis on the tragic aspects’ of the island’s history. Today, however, the official Parks Canada website contains an interpretive essay dated September 1995 by André Charbonneau recounting the circumstances surrounding the typhus outbreak and mass grave. Perhaps not surprisingly given that this is an official governmental website, the essay focuses on the epic and unprecedented scale of the immigration to Canada during the course of the famine and the fact that the immigrants were ‘[a]lready weakened by malnutrition and starvation, they had been crowded aboard unsanitary sailboats, unfit for transporting human beings. They reached their destination in a deplorable state, many already infected with typhus’. Significantly, the page makes no mention at all of the British other than to state that the largest number of ships departed from Liverpool. It is careful to note, though, that a far greater total of ships came directly from Dublin, Cork, Sligo and Limerick. It may be that the British colonial context is entirely obvious and therefore bears no greater mention. Still, the discussion of the famine itself—of mass starvation, land clearances, and widespread outbreaks of disease—on the Parks Canada site is minimal and no interpretive effort is put into understanding either the historical background or the historiography

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6 From the programme guide for the 1997 Irish Person of the Year Award in Canada. Quoted in Blair, ‘(De)Constructing the Irish Famine Memorial’, 314.
7 This was the phrase used repeatedly by the English-language tour guides at the site during my visit in August, 2009.
of the event that caused the emigration. This is in keeping with the policy of a revised statement by Parks Canada regarding the interpretive focus it was to adopt toward the history of the island. This statement explicitly rejected bringing to bear historical events ‘beyond the borders of Canada’. Such efforts to contain an international historical event like the famine within national borders is clearly fraught with all kinds of difficulties, not the least of which is the completely agnostic position adopted by Parks Canada concerning the historicising of the famine as a discrete historical event. Nonetheless, according to one sympathetic account by a member of Action Grosse Île, the experience at the park site itself as designed by Park Canada represents a ‘vindication of a four-year-long campaign to prevent Parks Canada from turning it into a Canadian Ellis Island’.

Similar disagreements over the modern significance and contemporary politics of famine remembrance soon erupted in the United States. Public controversies over the interpretation of the famine within the context of the sesquicentennial commemoration began to heat up when New York State Assemblyman Joseph Crowley introduced a bill into the legislature that sought to add ‘the mass starvation of Ireland from 1845 to 1850’ to the existing human rights curriculum that had been mandated into public schools by another legislative act in 1994. Crowley had been approached by Ann Garvey, then the president of the American Irish Teachers Association of New York, with the idea for the bill. The legislation, according to Crowley, was intended to rectify the fact that the Irish Famine was a ‘tragedy in world history that hasn’t been given proper attention.’ Highlighting the famine in this particular context, however, which linked it pedagogically with other human rights violations including slavery and the Holocaust, rankled many. Governor George Pataki did little to quench the controversy when he declared upon signing the bill that ‘history teaches us the Great Hunger was not the result of a massive failure of the Irish potato crop but rather was the result of a deliberate campaign by the British to deny the Irish people the food they needed to survive’. Pataki also specifically noted the appropriateness of setting the famine within a broader human rights curriculum while also subtly connecting it with the

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larger national debate on abortion, another issue very close to the hearts of many American Irish Catholics: ‘it is my sincere hope,’ he wrote, ‘that our state’s pupils will … develop a respect and universal concern for human rights, the sanctity of human life and a toleration of other races’.13

Pataki’s declaration set off a storm of controversy that soon stretched across the Atlantic and caused the political leadership in the Governor’s office to reach out to various professional historians to provide their expert opinion on his interpretation of the famine.14 Some might argue that these debates became particularly testy due to the possibility that increased scrutiny of the British role in the famine might inflame the ongoing and delicate peace process in Northern Ireland. Whether the underlying motivation was historical or political, Pataki’s rhetoric quickly drew criticism from some scholars and many in the political community, including an official protest from the British Embassy in Washington. John Kerr, the British ambassador, was incensed by the implicit comparison of the famine with the Nazi extermination of the Jews: ‘it seems to me rather insulting to the many millions who suffered and died in concentration camps across Europe to imply that their man-made fate was in any way analogous to the natural disaster in Ireland a century before’. Even the vice president of the American Historical Association’s teaching committee was critical of the bill’s apparent endorsement of a genocide interpretation of the famine ‘being mandated this way into the curriculum’.15

It was in the midst of these developments that Quinnipiac president John Lahey, acting in his role as the Grand Marshall of the 1997 parade, weighed in on the various debates over educational curricula, famine commemoration and even the issue of the historical interpretation of the famine. Lahey participated in the public debate over the passage of the bill in the New York State legislature and was particularly vocal in defence of governor Pataki’s insistence that the famine could be likened to the Holocaust. In December 1996, Lahey published an opinion piece in the British Guardian newspaper entitled ‘A Hunger for Justice.’ There, he made the case that ‘when all the facts are known about England’s conquest in Ireland between 1500 and

13 As quoted in ibid., 139.
14 Scholars that were contacted include James S. Donnelly Jr and Thomas Archdeacon. See ibid., 146.
1850, any dispassionate, objective observer would conclude that the British government bears at least some responsibility for the death by starvation of 1.5 million Irish men, women and children. This somewhat measured statement, however, came at the conclusion of the article. The opening of the piece was more polemical, arguing that ‘[i]t was a terrible natural disaster; it was also a human-rights violation by the British government, part of Britain’s 700-year oppression of the Irish people’. The language marking the famine as a ‘human-rights violation’ was clearly an effort to echo the tone that had been set in the course of the debate that had unfolded just weeks earlier after the passage of the New York State curriculum revision. Discussions of the famine as a ‘human-rights violation’ by the British government highlighted the impact of the British presence in Ireland both during the nineteenth century and implicitly throughout the era of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Lahey’s article in The Guardian made this link explicit, arguing that ‘understanding this period of Ireland’s history will help put in further context and better perspective the current struggles in Northeastern Ireland and hopefully advance the fragile peace process that we all hope will result in a just and lasting peace accord’.

Controversy over the passage of the bill, especially over the apparent effort to draw a parallel between the Great Famine and the Holocaust, continued to simmer throughout the fall and into the summer of 1997, particularly in an exchange of letters between Governor Pataki and Ambassador Kerr. This exchange was commented upon extensively in the Irish-American press. The Irish Voice and Irish Echo both criticised Pataki for apparently backing away from his earlier statement that the famine constituted a human-rights violation directly comparable to the Holocaust. Pataki, though, had not significantly softened his position despite the critical way that his words were received by more strident advocates in the New York Irish community. Pataki had merely denied that the law explicitly ‘equated’ the famine and the Holocaust.

In the end, however, the political rhetoric surrounding the passage of the bill was quietened through both political and educational interventions. Politically, a public apology of sorts for the Great Irish Famine was issued by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in the summer of 1997. Blair admitted, ‘[t]hat one

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17 Ibid., 13.

million people should have died in what was then part of the richest and most powerful nation in the world is something that still causes pain as we reflect on it today. Those who governed in London at the time failed their people’.

At the same time, a careful and systematically constructed set of teaching materials on the famine was undertaken at Hofstra University by a team of educators led by Maureen Murphy, Maureen McCann Miletta and Alan Singer. This New York State famine curriculum was several years in the making and was the product of a coordinated team of academics and educators that included some of the most prominent famine scholars. For their part, Murphy, Miletta and Singer explicitly reject the assertion that the famine constituted genocide, at least according to the most widely cited definition of the term. In contrast, they very clearly articulate that ‘we do not believe that British policies during the Great Irish Famine meet the criteria for genocide established by the United Nations (1951)’, although they concede that it is ‘a legitimate subject for discussion’.

The issue of British culpability with regard to the famine is not, however, a central theme in the New York State curriculum. Rather, the stated goal of the curriculum is to set the story of the Irish Famine into the history of the modern world. It argues both for the centrality of the famine in shaping the history of modern times and its use as a case study in broader issues concerning the human condition through what its authors call ‘essential questions’ such as: ‘Is there enough to go around (i.e. food, clothes, water?); Is history a history of progress?; When is law unjust?; Who owns what and why?’ These broad questions are applicable both to the history of the famine and to other historical episodes that are part of the human rights curriculum, including African slavery and the Holocaust. But they clearly also have a wider resonance with political, social and economic issues at the heart of contemporary crises and debates that students encounter in their daily lives and thus provide the basis for a wider questioning of the contours of the present and future condition of the human race.

This large-scale and comprehensive effort to create an educational curriculum about the famine, however, provides an interesting contrast to the

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21 Ibid., 383.
private and indeed even personal effort undertaken by John Lahey in his role as the president of Quinnipiac University to create a famine commemoration and education site. Under Lahey’s leadership, Quinnipiac has undergone a dramatic transformation marked by bold initiatives and sometimes controversial actions. During the year that Lahey was the Grand Marshal of the St Patrick’s Day parade, the institution was at what might be described as an inflection point. Since Lahey had arrived as president in the late 1980s, Quinnipiac had gradually expanded its enrolment from a low of around 2,000 to more than 3,500. It had constructed a new Health Sciences Centre, a Mass Communications building, and a Business School. Quinnipiac had also purchased a Law School from the University of Bridgeport, an institution in the midst of a deep financial and governance crisis, in the early 1990s. The increase in Quinnipiac’s enrollment and the growth and diversification of its academic programmes suggested that by the late 1990s the institution was poised to take on a new and more prominent regional and even national profile. To this end, in the years immediately following Lahey’s tenure as Grand Marshall, the institution unveiled two new initiatives to further its institutional growth: it announced that it would become a ‘university’ and it undertook a major expansion and renovation of its main library.

It was in coordination with the second effort that Lahey realised an opportunity to continue his efforts to engage in discussions about the famine. Given that the newly-declared University was set to reconstruct its library, Lahey was engaged in raising funds to support the effort—funded in part by a one million dollar donation from A. Van H. Bernhard, the largest such gift ever given to Quinnipiac at that time. In coordination with the reconstruction of the library, Lahey secured a second and presumably smaller gift that would be used to fund a collection of Irish Famine commemorative art. This gift came from Murray and Marvin Lender, members of the Lender family who had made their fortune selling frozen bagels in grocery stores across the United States. The two had a long association with Quinnipiac and the area. The Lenders’ father, Harry Lender, had emigrated from Poland to New Haven in 1927 and had established the bagel business there in 1929.

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22 Examples of these include decertifying the faculty union, expanding Quinnipiac into three separate campuses, and vastly expanding the university’s enrolment. For an analysis of many of these developments see Goldie Blumenstyk, ‘A Private University Builds on its Confidence’, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 7 March 2008, A1.

23 ‘About the Library,’ Quinnipiac University’s website https://myq.quinnipiac.edu/IT%20%20Libraries/ABL/Pages/AboutTheLibrary.aspx [accessed 16 May 2010].

Murray was an alumnus of the College from 1950, and is a long-time member of the Quinnipiac Board of Trustees. According to official sources within Quinnipiac, the donation came as a result of conversations that took place between Murray Lender and John Lahey during the year that Lahey served as Grand Marshal of the parade. According to Lahey, ‘Murray took to heart what he had learned about the famine. Like so many, he was not aware of its true magnitude. He thought it was so important, that we could make a difference and he wanted to give a gift to the new library that would be dedicated to the Great Hunger.’

The exact content of the room was largely shaped by Lahey himself through his personal association with Des Kenny of Kenny’s Booksellers and Art Gallery in Galway. Kenny’s was, in many ways, a perfect match for the *An Gorta Mór* collection that Lahey envisioned for the new Quinnipiac library. Although Kenny’s had begun in 1940 as a book trader specialising in rare and antiquarian books, the business had expanded into an art gallery as well by the 1950s. Having convinced the Lender family to support an effort to create an educational site dedicated to the famine as part of the library reconstruction, the notion that a scholarly and artistic collection might be the best combination for the Quinnipiac campus was not a far stretch. Kenny’s provided both a model of such a combination and a ready source from which the collection could be obtained.

The development of an educational resource on the Great Hunger that combined a scholarly collection with an installation of famine commemorative art was fortuitous. Scholarly interest in the famine had been exploding throughout the 1990s as the sesquicentennial approached. At the same time, a huge outpouring of famine commemorative art was produced, some of it a by-product of the more than eighty famine memorials and public monuments created around the world since 1990. Furthermore, Quinnipiac had room to strengthen its position in the arts. Since the College had begun

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27 For a summary of this work, see Kelleher, ‘Hunger and History’, 249–50.
28 Emily Mark Fitzgerald, ‘Toward a Famine Art History: Invention, Reception and Repetition from the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth’ in David A. Valone (ed.), *Ireland’s Great Hunger, vol. 2: Relief, Representation and Remembrance* (Lanham, Md., 2010), 181.
as a business school and had expanded into the health sciences fields in the 1950s, its arts and humanities programs were limited; even after expanding to become a comprehensive institution in the 1960s and 1970s — offering degrees in the social science and humanities — the College continued to have no degree programs in the arts throughout the 1990s. Thus, creating an artistic corpus for the campus made a certain amount of institutional sense, as did adding a special collection to the University’s modest library acquisitions.

The opening of the room took place soon after the dedication of Quinnipiac’s newly reconstructed Arnold Bernhard Library in September of 2001. Eminent famine scholar Christine Kinealy was brought in to speak about famine commemoration and the recent historiography of the famine. In addition, sculpture Margaret Lyster Chamberlain, who Quinnipiac had commissioned to produce a work of famine commemorative art specifically for the An Gorta Mór collection, attended the opening to greet dignitaries and to discuss her sculpture ‘The Leave-Taking’. The collection contained a wide variety of famine art, primarily in the form of sculpture but also including paintings and a limited collection of nineteenth-century etchings and engravings from publications such as The Illustrated London News. Artists represented in the collection include John Behan, Niall Bruton, John Coll and Michael Farrell. The room itself was laid out by Centerbrook Architects and was designed to suggest the shape of the hold of a ship, symbolically linking those who enter the room with the immigrant experience of a sea journey.

In addition to a large collection of recent commemorative art, the room contains a number of interpretive displays that educate visitors about the famine itself and its historical significance, particularly with regard to its impact on America. These interpretive panels include brief historical interpretations of various topics related to the famine, including ‘Historical Context for the Great Hunger’, ‘The Potato Blight and the Great Hunger’, ‘British Government’s Response to the Great Hunger’, ‘Exports from Ireland to England During the Great Hunger’, ‘Emigration, Coffin Ships and the Great Hunger’ and ‘Irish in America and the Great Hunger’. Many of these interpretive panels contain extensive quotations from scholarly sources and from contemporary accounts of the famine.

The room is dominated by Chamberlain’s ‘The Leave-Taking’, which is positioned as its centrepiece, and by a large stone tablet on the wall that provides the most comprehensive statement in the room about the famine itself:

Ireland’s Great Famine or the Great Hunger, as it is more commonly referred to today, ranks among the worst tragedies in the sweep of human history. Between 1845 and 1850, approximately 1.5 million Irish men, women and children died of starvation or related diseases. By 1855, more than two million more fled Ireland to avoid a similar fate. The combined effect of this death and flight cut the population of Ireland in half, from eight to four million, in a single decade. By the end of the nineteenth century, only two million people remained in Ireland. The decimation of her population makes Ireland’s Great Hunger both the worst chapter in the country’s history, and, arguably, the single worst catastrophe in nineteenth-century Europe.

The Lender Family Special Collection Room, with its art and library materials, will serve as an educational and scholarly resource to increase the awareness and improve the understanding, of the causes and consequences of Ireland’s Great Hunger. As part of its educational mission of teaching, research and service to the community, Quinnipiac University is proud to take a leadership role in educating people in this country and throughout the world about the Great Hunger and the lessons to be learned from this terrible tragedy.\textsuperscript{31}

While this statement largely steers clear of making an overt interpretation of the causes of the famine, it also overstates the magnitude of the population decrease in Ireland throughout the later nineteenth century. According to the census conducted in 1901, the population of Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century was 4,458,775.\textsuperscript{32} Both the artwork and some of the interpretive materials in the room also contain a significant interpretive viewpoint. There are several panels that address the exportation of food from Ireland during the famine years and the paintings ‘Black ‘47’ and ‘Wounded Wonder ‘47’ by Michael Farrell bring British culpability for the famine to the forefront. The interpretative materials in the room published by Quinnipiac’s

\textsuperscript{31} This quote appears on a large stone tablet on display in the \textit{An Gorta Mór} collection in the Arnold Bernhard Library at Quinnipiac University.

\textsuperscript{32} Ireland Census Office, \textit{Census of Ireland, 1901: Summary Tables} (Dublin, 1903), iii.
Office of Public Affairs also carry a significant political undertone. For instance, one panel notes that ‘[a] rift still exists between the Irish and the English, resulting in years of conflict and challenges to peace and justice in all of Ireland. Since 1922 the twenty-six counties that make up the Republic of Ireland exist as an independent Irish nation while the six counties of northeastern Ireland remain to this day under English control as part of the United Kingdom’.33

Other interpretive materials produced for the room also set the famine into a particular interpretive framework. ‘An Educational Guide’ developed for the room by the Public Affairs office at Quinnipiack contains an unattributed essay on ‘The History of a Disaster’. It features a thumbnail history of Irish-English relations, focusing on the military conquest by the English, the effects of the penal laws in the eighteenth century and the growing poverty and population expansion in Ireland after 1800. It also asserts that ‘for those who remained in Ireland and survived the famine, a long-standing animosity for England blossomed into hatred’. With regard to the inadequate response of the British government to the crisis, the pamphlet argues

> [t]he government did implement some public works projects, as well as soup kitchen programs and poor houses. However, in most cases these efforts were slow to materialise, inadequately funded and poorly run. As a result, many people view the British government’s lack of effective action during the Great Hunger as an example of its callous disregard for human life.34

The _An Gorta Mór_ collection, then, is suggestive of the deep emotions stirred up by the famine within the diaspora and the passions that it generates within that community. Although the room was born from the interpretive and curricular debates that spun out of the 1990s commemoration in Ireland, a more significant historical context for Quinnipiack’s collection might well be the evolving peace process in Northern Ireland and the shifting economic and demographic foundation of college students in the northeastern United States. With regard to the former issue, it is not difficult to read through the


documents and interpretive materials on display in the Great Hunger room, as well as the public statements made by John Lahey, to find support for Irish nationalism. At the same time, the University’s growth and its dependence on the upwardly mobile and upper middle-class market within the northeast makes an appeal to individuals of Irish descent a coherent, and so far successful, marketing strategy.

Finally, since the collection is essentially a private one, under the control of the University, it has been essentially freed from the political entanglements of the various famine curricula that have been put forward by New York and New Jersey. In this way, the An Gorta Mór collection might be argued to hold a unique status as a source to discuss the continuing evolution of the place of the Irish famine in modern historical consciousness. Without question, it represents to some degree the interests of the University and its president, but nonetheless it says much about the uses of historical memory, of commemoration and their relationship to economic, political and intellectual power and leadership. In this way, the room might represent a purer way to understand the authentic views and desires concerning the famine of at least a portion of the Irish diaspora in America.

*Quinnipiac University*
Recognisably Irish?
The Diasporic Fiction of Regina Maria Roche

Christina Morin

Recent studies of migration into and out of late eighteenth-century Ireland have noted the ways in which Dublin, then ‘the second city of the empire’, served as a ‘cultural centre’, offering a variety of individuals, including artists, musicians, actors and teachers, a fresh start and ample opportunity for patronage. Although emigration into Ireland remained proportionally higher than relocation out of the country in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the 1798 Rebellion, coupled with the ensuing Act of Union (1800), brought a notable increase in outward movement. This was, as Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin contend, a crisis-response that initiated a half-century long period of ‘mass’ emigration from Ireland. Until now, however, emigration in the early part of the nineteenth century has largely fallen by the critical wayside in concentration on the large-scale exodus of Irish natives from Ireland during the Great Famine. This essay turns attention to the emigration, or, more rightly speaking, the migration of literary culture and production that occurred in the wake of Anglo-Irish Union, when Ireland became subject to strict copyright laws that rendered the country’s formerly flourishing publishing industry suddenly defunct. As a result, Ireland’s authors came to depend on publishers in London and Edinburgh and, as the price of publication rose accordingly, on readers located outside of Ireland.

Correspondingly, a kind of literary ‘brain-drain’ set in, just as Maria Edgeworth presciently warned would happen in *Castle Rackrent* (1800): ‘[t]he few gentlemen of education who now reside in this country will resort to England’. Although Edgeworth herself remained resolutely physically attached to Ireland and her father’s County Longford estate, her fiction was largely published in London. Similarly, Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan

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1 This essay was completed under the auspices of a postdoctoral research fellowship funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), whose assistance I gratefully acknowledge.


3 Ibid., 149.

Christina Morin (1783–1859) lived in Ireland during the heyday of her fiction-writing career, but again published mainly in London, where she relocated permanently in 1837. Charles Robert Maturin (1780–1824) also published abroad, either in London or Edinburgh, and complained bitterly to Walter Scott about the lack of literary culture in Ireland: ‘there is no excitement, no literary appetite or impulse in this country, my most intimate acquaintances scarcely know that I have written, and they care as little as they know’.\footnote{Charles Robert Maturin to Sir Walter Scott, 11 January 1813, National Library of Scotland, MS3884, ff.10–11.} Impelled, at least in part, by this general indifference to literary production in Ireland, authors like Regina Maria Roche (1763/4–1845) and John Banim (1798–1842) wrote and published a majority of their fictional works in London, confirming both the imaginative and physical relocation of Irish fictional production from Ireland to England in the early nineteenth century.

Yet, while the number of books written and/or published by Irish authors outside of Ireland dramatically increased from the Act of Union onwards, so too did the number of Ireland-related titles, suggesting that despite the relocation of literary culture, Irish authors were increasingly concerned with their native land.\footnote{Rolf and Magda Loeber, \textit{A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650–1900} (Dublin, 2006), lxii.} Invigorated interest in and attention to Ireland by Irish authors writing in English is apparently testified to by the predominance in the first three decades of the nineteenth century of fiction resolutely centered on the local. The literary forms that pioneered what Katie Trumpener understands as a move away from the more international, cosmopolitan fictional concentration of the 1790s to a narrower, regional field of focus are the national tale and the historical novel.\footnote{Katie Trumpener, \textit{Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire} (Princeton, NJ, 1997), 165.}

Conventionally understood, such texts envision a decisive meeting of traditionally conflicting temporal and geographical zones in order narratologically to effect national reconciliation. In the case of the national tale, usually seen to originate with the 1806 publication of Owenson’s \textit{The Wild Irish Girl}, resolution occurs with the English hero’s embrace of Ireland, a country he has hitherto viewed as uncivilised, rebellious and unworthy of his attention. His new attachment to Ireland is allegorically confirmed by his successful marriage proposal to a native Irish girl and his decision to take up residence in Ireland, thereby renouncing the habitual absenteeism seen to cause many of Ireland’s social problems. With the historical novel, a development of the national tale predominantly associated with Walter Scott and his Waverley
Series, local colour provides a picturesque setting in which past and present collide, resulting in the hero’s determined, if nostalgic, support for a modernity in which Scotland enjoys the many benefits accruing from its once contested union with England.

In both national tale and historical novel, the physical relocation of the hero from the centre—England—to the margins—Ireland, Scotland and (less frequently) Wales—is central to the narrative goal of countering English stereotypes and thereby assuaging English concerns about its supposedly violent, dissatisfied and savage neighbors. The hero’s journey to the peripheries of the British nation in texts like *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Waverley* (1814), in fact, begins a necessary process of re-education whereby his preconceived notions of the nation’s margins are fundamentally overturned. This reconfiguration of the hero’s understanding of the outer regions of Great Britain occurs as a result of what Ina Ferris describes as a process of estrangement. Motivated by ‘a migratory impulse through which contending cultures may come into contact’, the national tale and its allied literary forms unsettle the hero’s sense of cultural belonging by forcing him to undergo a geographical, cultural, and ideological ‘bouleversement’.

Only through a personal encounter with the foreign-become-local as a stranger—unknown and unknowing—can the heretofore prejudiced Englishman come to appreciate the true worth of Ireland/Scotland/Wales and thereby cultivate an appropriate sympathy for its people. The Celtic periphery, in such fiction, becomes a kind of tourist destination, its teleological nature, combined with the oftentimes extensive antiquarian discourse that threatens to subsume the fictional narrative itself, revealing Romantic national fiction’s debt to travel literature, and in particular to the so-called ‘Home Tour’ of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Such texts, written by English authors about neighboring but strangely alien regions, like Ireland, frequently focused on data-gathering. In the case of Ireland, for instance, Home Tours very often centered on what Glenn Hooper describes as ‘the ceaseless drive to acquire information on Ireland’.

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9 Ibid., 58–9.
10 The ‘Home Tour’, as opposed to accounts of the ‘Grand Tours’ undertaken by aristocratic English males in order to complete their educations, began to develop from 1760 onwards and focused on local regions such as North Wales, the Scottish Highlands and Ireland, which despite their proximity remained as foreign and exotic, if not more so, than the far reaches of the European Continent. See Glenn Hooper, *Travel Writing and Ireland, 1760–1860* (Houndmills, 2005), 12.
and the Irish’.

In the wake of the Union and the effectively defeated but still threatening violence of 1798, concern with information about Ireland increased dramatically, as did the number of travelers intent on producing their own accounts of a country with which so few people in England felt either familiar or comfortable. English travelogues in the post-Union period, as Hooper convincingly maintains, highlight the fundamental danger of incomplete knowledge and resolutely insist on a causal relationship between this informational lack and the country’s recent unrest. Works such as William Patterson’s *Observations of Ireland* (1804), Edward Wakefield’s *An Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political* (1812), John Gamble’s *A View of Society and Manners in the North of Ireland* (1813), William Shaw Mason’s *A Statistical Account of Ireland* (1814) and J.C. Curwen’s *Observations on the State of Ireland* (1818) suggest that ‘if Ireland had been more effectively understood[,] then rebellion might never have happened’. In such texts, securing information about Ireland becomes central to securing the peaceful future of the British nation itself.

Where, however, many English travel writers imply a need to ‘write’ Ireland according to an English agenda—‘from outside the country and with an eye to policy and the transmission of certain cultural and ideological values’—the national tale develops along a related but opposing trajectory. Although Roche, Edgeworth, Owenson and Maturin are equally concerned with acquainting their English readers with Ireland, thereby providing the information about the country and its people much desired in the post-Union period, their fiction speaks from an insider position. For these writers, Ireland is not a strange and exotic travel destination but home—an important consideration not only because of the apparent authority with which they write but also the stance they take on travel literature authored by ‘outsiders’. Whereas the Irish tour, as Ferris explains, revolved around ‘someone from “here” travel[ing] “over there” and report[ing] back, the national tale dislodged English readers from home space without securing the journey by a reassuringly English enunciation’. In this way, Ferris maintains, the national tale ‘[d]isplac[ed] its English readers in a way the Irish tour never did … [and thus] compelled them to consider Ireland as a habitat (a native and independent place) and not simply as the primitive, ridiculous, or dangerous colony of English imaginings’.

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11 Ibid., 4.
12 Ibid., 61.
14 Hooper, *Travel Writing and Ireland*, 67.
The significance of contrasting authorial perspectives in the Irish tour and the national tale becomes clear in Edgeworth’s *Ennui* (1809). Betraying her indebtedness to the earlier travel literature of Arthur Young, whose 1780 text, *A Tour in Ireland*, ‘pioneered the modern Irish tour’ and distinguished itself from many post-Union tour texts with its Enlightenment commitment to facts and figures as well as its dedication to land improvement as the key to future Irish economic growth and success, Edgeworth includes in her novel an example of a ‘bad’ travel-writer: Lord Craiglethorpe.16 ‘[A]n English lord travelling through Ireland’, Craiglethorpe displays an ‘ill-bred show of contempt for the Irish’ and becomes the subject of Lady Geraldine’s ire because of his evidently incomplete and patronising take on Ireland.17 Although Craiglethorpe intends ‘to publish a Tour through Ireland, or a View of Ireland’, he is criticised for paying attention only to the upper class and thereby acquiring a fundamentally biased, imperfect and wholly unsatisfactory view of Ireland. The result of his flawed and defective itinerary, Lady Geraldine promises, will be an account as biased as the Irish stereotypes it ostensibly sets out to overturn:

So after posting from Dublin to Cork, and from the Giant’s Causeway to Killarney; after travelling east, west, north, and south, my wise cousin Craiglethorpe will know just as much of the lower Irish as the cockney who has never been out of London, and who has never, *in all his born days*, seen an Irishman but on the English stage; where the representations are usually as like the originals, as the Chinese pictures of lions, drawn from description, are to the real animal.18

For Lady Geraldine, a publication so misleading about the Irish people as Craiglethorpe’s promises to be is unacceptable, and the trick she determines to play on her cousin centers on a deliberate system of deception. Repeatedly feeding him misinformation, Lady Geraldine sets out to assist Craiglethorpe in producing, in Trumpener’s terms, ‘a book so completely untrue that it will be unpublishable, even within the exaggerating and denigrating genre of English guides to Ireland’.19 For the Irish Lady Geraldine, to scupper Craiglethorpe’s intentions is plainly a patriotic endeavour; in determining on her scheme to

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16 Ibid. 27; Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 58.
18 Ibid., 211.
trick her cousin Lady Geraldine tells her friends ‘You shall see…how I’ll deserve well of my country’.20

Although Lady Geraldine does not produce her own ‘Tour of Ireland’ to show English readers the truth she believes Lord Craiglethorpe will never see or know, Edgeworth’s point is clear: writing from home about home is an entirely different matter than writing about a foreign location as a foreigner. This episode in Ennui, however, remains silent about another ontological possibility—writing about home from outside that home, an insider/outside position that, as suggested above, became increasingly prevalent amongst Irish writers in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Neither does it point to a further possibility, a condition of present absence that Terry Eagleton identifies as a central preoccupation in the Irish novel from the early nineteenth century onwards. Such fiction, Eagleton contends, ‘returns recurrently to those who are both home and away, present and absent simultaneously’.21 Eagleton’s arguments can be taken to refer to two separate bodies of individuals in early nineteenth-century Irish culture. On the one hand, this position of present absence afflicted individuals who relocated to England, where, even after the Union and the ostensible integration of Ireland into the United Kingdom, they remained outsiders. As Donald MacRaild explains, ‘The Act of Union, taken as a neutral constitutional fact, should have obviated the language of “aliens” and “outsiders” when discussing Irish migration because these settlers were migrants within, not emigrants into, the United Kingdom. No act of parliament, however, could change attitudes overnight’.22 On the other hand, this experience of estrangement can be interpreted more allegorically, as, in Eagleton’s terms, ‘less literal expatriation’ and more ‘the plight of the internal or metaphorical émigré’, alienated and estranged from Ireland even while inhabiting it.23

The case of Edgeworth’s near contemporary, Regina Maria Roche, highlights both of these occasions of present absence that go unmentioned in Ennui. Born in Waterford and raised largely in Dublin, Roche (née Dalton) moved to England shortly after her marriage to Ambrose Roche in 1794 and there published the novel that secured her literary reputation, The Children

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20 Edgeworth, Ennui, 211.
21 Terry Eagleton, Crazy John and the Bishop and Other Essays on Irish Culture (Cork, 1998), 215.
22 Donald M. MacRaild, Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750–1922 (Basingstoke, 1999), 6–7.
23 Eagleton, Crazy John, 215.
of the Abbey (1796). Although we know few of the details of Roche’s life, her correspondence with the Royal Literary Society—to which she applied for financial assistance three times between 1827 and 1831—reveals that she and her husband suffered incredible financial hardship throughout their marriage. In 1802, Roche’s husband was declared bankrupt for the first time, and between 1802 and 1804, they became subject to the corrupt conduct of an Irish lawyer, John Baswell, who effectively defrauded them of their Irish estates. The Roches initiated a chancery suit, that, as Roche explained in an 1831 letter, ‘eventually terminated in my favour, [but] proved a millstone round our necks from the year 1820 to the present time … [and] nearly, I may say entirely, drained us of our last shilling’. In 1827, in fact, Mr Roche was forced to declare bankruptcy for a second time, after suffering ‘a severe paralytic stroke’ in December 1825. So bad was the situation that, in 1828, Roche published her novel, Contrast, by subscription and noted in the preface that the narrative was written under ‘peculiar circumstances’ of want, deprivation and ill-health. After the death of her husband in 1829, Roche returned to Ireland in 1831 and spent the remainder of her life penniless and destitute, despite her ‘entitle[ment] to an estate of considerable value’. Due to ongoing legal complications, Roche was never able to reclaim the estate she had inherited, and she died in 1845 in rented accommodation in her native city of Waterford.

Although now a largely forgotten Irish author, Roche is a vital point of interest and concern for the scholar of Romantic Ireland and its literary
production. Not only do her experiences as a migrant and, later, a wanderer returned consistently inform her novels, but her fiction frequently bridges the gap between forms we now understand as inherently divergent—the Gothic/sentimental and the regional/national. Conventionally, Roche is understood to begin her literary career with Radcliffian-inspired Gothic novels such as The Children of the Abbey and Clermont (1798)—both of which were so popular as later to be mentioned by Jane Austen, however scathingly, in Emma (1816) and Northanger Abbey (1818), respectively. Roche was keenly aware of the success these novels enjoyed, writing to the Royal Literary Society in November 1831 that ‘[t]he success of the work [The Children of the Abbey] I need hardly add from what I have just said, was beyond my hopes—but I have reason to be truly grateful to the public’. Despite such success, Roche is traditionally understood to reject the Gothic mode in 1820 in favor of what Claire Connolly calls ‘a recognisably Irish mode’ in texts like The Munster Cottage Boy (1820) and Contrast (1828). The turning point in Roche’s career from Gothic/sentimental to regional/national is thus conventionally understood as, in Natalie Schroeder’s terms, Roche’s literary ‘return to Ireland’.

Elsewhere, I have argued against current literary criticism’s division of Roche’s oeuvre along formal lines, maintaining that Roche routinely wrote across the formal constraints of the ‘Gothic’ and the ‘national’ as we now traditionally understand them. In fact, Roche consistently allowed the Gothic mode to infiltrate her so-called ‘Irish’ novels while also exhibiting a keen concern with

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29 Austen’s noting of Roche’s novels attest to their popularity amongst the hordes of Gothic novels that inundated British library shelves during the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first few decades of the nineteenth. Traditionally, the Gothic novel as a form is understood to begin with the publication in 1764 of Horace Walpole’s short novella, The Castle of Otranto, but it is only with the success of the novels of Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823) and Matthew Lewis (1775–1818) in the 1790s that the Gothic novel really began to develop the mass readerly following for which it became famous. For critics, the astonishing success of the Gothic novel was a matter of some concern, especially as its readership was largely female and therefore considered particularly prone to the excesses of imagination and feeling the form encouraged.

30 Roche to Royal Literary Society, November 1831; Letters to the Royal Literary Society, BL, Microfilm 1077, Reel 17.


Ireland in works generally understood as wholly Gothic in nature. Breaking down the by-now entrenched divide between the Gothic and the national is, I think, an important part of current literary criticism’s attempt fully to understand the nature of literary production in Romantic Ireland, and Roche provides an excellent starting point. In particular, by noting the continuities between Roche’s ‘Gothic’ works and her ‘national’ fiction, we can more clearly understand the diversity of Romantic-era literary production in Ireland as well as its manipulation of critically accepted but largely retrospective formal boundaries and divisions. Here, in fact, I want to highlight the ways in which Roche’s fiction, whether now considered ‘Gothic’ or ‘national’, frequently engages with what must have been a particularly relevant theme for Roche herself—unhomeliness. There is certainly a danger of reading too much of Roche’s personal experiences into her fiction, but even a cursory consideration of her treatment of the notions of ‘home’ and ‘homecoming’ suggests that her experience of Ireland and of home vitally informs her oeuvre. As with Roche herself, many of her fictional characters become exiled from Ireland in some way and return to it only to find it an unwelcoming and hostile terrain. For Roche, as for her heroes and heroines, the longed-for homecoming frequently reveals itself as a deeply unsettling event, promising continued alienation and discord rather than personal happiness as well as social and cultural integration. The Ireland of Roche’s experience and of her fiction is, in fact, fundamentally ‘unhomely’—simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, known and unknown, comfortable and uncomfortable, welcoming and unwelcoming.

An idea central to the Gothic novel as a literary form, the notion of the unhomely was famously articulated by Freud in his 1919 essay, ‘Das Unheimlich’. Conventionally, Freud’s essay title and the term it gives rise to is translated as ‘the uncanny’, but, as James Strachey has noted, a more precise translation is ‘the unhomely’. This is a term that accurately relates the sense of, in Jerrold Hogle’s words, ‘the deeply and internally familiar … as it reappears to us in seemingly external, repellant, and unfamiliar forms’ haunting the passages of the Gothic novel and its many ruined castles, dilapidated houses, and long-deserted villas. Homi Bhabha offers a similarly compelling description of the unhomely when he argues that it occurs when ‘suddenly the home

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33 See Morin, “‘Gothic’ and ‘National’?”.
turns into another world’. Or, as Freud earlier articulated it, what produces the unhomely is not something ‘new or alien’, but rather, something that is fundamentally ‘familiar and old-established in the mind’ but which has somehow become strange and alienating. The unhomely is, as Freud further explains, simultaneously ‘the opposite of what is familiar’ and that which ‘leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’.

This is exactly the sense of home experienced by Amanda Fitzalan in *The Children of the Abbey*. Her new Irish home at the end of the novel—Castle Carberry—is actually her old home—one in which she had lived earlier in the novel—and is therefore familiar, well-known and comfortable to her. Nevertheless, because of the memories associated with this home, particularly that of her father’s ignominious dismissal from his position as agent of the castle and his subsequent death, Amanda views her home with feelings of repugnance and resentment. Rather than feeling ‘at home’—at ease and content—in Castle Carberry, therefore, Amanda experiences her ‘home’ as strangely repulsive, so much so that she is forced to flee that home for the nearby convent in which she had earlier taken refuge in her frantic attempts to escape the lascivious designs of Lord Belgrave. Amanda’s ‘escape’ fundamentally disrupts what, until the pivotal moment of return to Castle Carberry, has prepared the reader for the kind of conclusion we now conventionally associate with the national tale. Described by Miranda Burgess as an earlier national tale than *The Wild Irish Girl*, Roche’s narrative initially constructs Amanda’s homecoming as a joyful occasion in which the wrongs of the past have been righted and Amanda herself is re-integrated into polite society after spending much of the novel falsely barred from it. Where, however, Castle Carberry’s ‘poor tenants’ rejoice in Amanda’s return and that of her new husband and former absentee landlord, Lord Cherbury, Amanda finds herself a stranger to the joyful celebrations accompanying her return. Literally estranging herself from her new husband and the home she associates with her father’s death, Amanda takes refuge in the dilapidated convent which, despite its otherworldly, Catholic peculiarity, still seems more welcoming and

38 Ibid., 220.
40 Regina Maria Roche, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796; New York, undated), 583.
familiar to her than her own home. For the elated peasants, whose ‘indigence’ is blamed on ‘the emigration of their landlords’, the return home of the Cherbury family represents a rectification of past sins, inaugurating a period in which their landlord is literally more ‘at home’, and thus creating for them a more homely environment in which to live and work.\textsuperscript{41} For Amanda, however, Castle Carberry is quintessentially unhomely.

A similar situation occurs in Roche’s later novel, \textit{Contrast}. In one of its two inter-related plotlines, the Irish girl, Helena Rossglen, the first daughter of the earl of Rossglen, owner of the beautiful country home, Woodston, returns to Ireland after being raised primarily by her grandmother in England. Expecting to find Ireland as dismal as she has been led to believe it by her prejudiced grandmother, Helena very quickly begins to feel ‘something like remorse. Where were the hideous bogs, and the menacing rocks, and the deforming aspect of misery in every direction?’\textsuperscript{42} While at Woodston, Helena falls in love with Sigismund Mountflorence, the son of Lord Rossglen’s second wife by her first husband and imagines her maternally-inherited wealth saving her lover from almost certain disinheritance. When, however, Helena comes of age and receives her inheritance, she is deceived by the Bridgemores—the English family with whom her grandmother had been friendly and who have only mercenary intentions—into believing her father and his new family have absolutely no regard for her. Tricked in this way, Helena enters into a period of dissipation, encouraged by the Bridgemores, and very quickly finds herself defrauded of all of her remaining money. Penniless and apparently friendless, Helena flees, first to Ireland and then to Wales, where she ‘yearn[s] to find [her]self again an inmate of the home [Woodston] endeared by so many tender recollections’.\textsuperscript{43}

When she is eventually discovered by Lady Rossglen and entreated to return to that home, Helena agrees, but only upon the condition that the subject of marriage with Mountflorence never again be broached. Helena refuses to give reasons for her strange request, one obviously contrary to her continued affection for Mountflorence, but Lady Rossglen complies. Helena’s subsequent return to Ireland is accompanied by far different feelings than those she had experienced on her earlier journey. Not at once awed and surprised by the pleasant mix of familiarity and unfamiliarity of her Irish home, Helena is instead overcome with ‘grief’ inspired by the recollections of the recent death

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 156.  
\textsuperscript{42} Roche, \textit{Contrast}, I, 101.  
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., III, 171.
of Sir Ross Glen and the loss of Mountflorence. For Helena, the return home, marred as it is by these painful thoughts, becomes an inherently upsetting and disagreeable experience, to the point where, at the moment of her encounter with her longed-for home, she is forced to take refuge elsewhere: ‘At the thought of all she had suffered—was probably doomed to suffer, through the death of her father, the want of his watchful care, his zealous counsel—her anguish became overwhelming; and, stealing away, she sought refuge in the wood from observation.’

Eventually, Mountflorence overcomes Helena’s still unspoken objections to marriage with him, and they are united in what, at first glance, reads as a standard national tale conclusion, especially as Mountflorence avoids disinherition and inhabits once again his father’s ancestral home, St Finian’s. Yet, as Aileen Douglas argues, ‘What looks like resolution is, however, only a momentary balancing of fictional codes (those of the national tale and the Gothic).’ Precisely when the novel should end, in fact, ‘the narrative rears into unexpected vigor and begins to repeat in scrambled and perverse form those very textual elements shared with the national tale’. Still haunted by ‘the horrid past’, Helena is not the happy bride we expect her to be, and she soon reveals the cause of her continued discontent. In her dying letter to her husband, Helena explains that, in the moment of her worst extremity, alone and poverty-stricken, she had allowed herself to be convinced by the rogue, Sir Osbert Henley, not only that he was in love with her but that she had also been deceived by Mountflorence about his character. Believing Mountflorence on the verge of marriage with another woman, Helena eventually agrees to marry Sir Osbert, but, just as she gives her consent and is ushered aboard the boat that will take her away from Ireland forever, she discovers the deceit he has practiced. She escapes only when a fire sinks the ship, apparently taking

44 Ibid., III, 180. Throughout the novel, there is a sense in which the descendants of Irish exiles and émigrés return to Ireland with a near-memory of homes they have never seen. The major character of the novel’s secondary narrative, for instance, describes his arrival in Ireland as one pregnant with a strange sense of déjà-vu: ‘Almost he could have persuaded himself he was in the place before, so familiar did every object appear, from the minute manner in which it had been described by his mother’. Ibid., I, 70.


47 Roche, Contrast, III, 219.
her new husband with it. Soon after, she is located by her step-mother in Wales, returns to Ireland, and is ultimately persuaded to marry Mountflorence. As it happens, however, Sir Osbert is not, in fact, dead. Having survived the shipwreck, he has hidden himself in the countryside near Helena’s home and haunted her in both her waking and her sleeping moments. As Helena recounts to Mountflorence in her letter, ‘from a waking day-dream of bliss I was roused, the other morning, by the sight, the actual sight, of the phantom of horror that had so haunted my nightly couch!’  

*48* She further describes how, ‘even now, a monster waits within these tranquil shades, to force me hence! with blood-stained hands, to tear your shrieking Helena from your loved bosom, where she fondly hoped she should have found an earthly sanctuary!’  

The only escape from exile from her home and husband is, for Helena, death. Where, however, Helena’s death brings her the peace she seeks, it renders home a nightmarish reality for Mountflorence:

He moved on—he paused: whither should he betake him? How could he face his home, despoiled as it was of all that had rendered it delightful? For what should he re-enter it? … and he looked round him, in overwhelming wo[e], as if for the consolation, that, if offered, he would have derided.  

Devoid of comfort, home is, for the grieving Mountflorence, an unwelcoming, even forbidding place, just as it was earlier for Helena. Although Mountflorence ultimately comforts himself with the thought that ‘the grave must render up its dead’ at the coming resurrection, his hope for the future is, significantly, an otherworldly one, framed in the language and form of a prayer.  

Resolution for Mountflorence, in other words, must be a heavenly, rather than an earthly one. Such pessimism about the future of Ireland and its ability to nurture and sustain its people in a text ostensibly understood as a national tale is in keeping with early nineteenth-century writers’ perception of the increasingly fractured nature of Ireland itself. Edgeworth famously stopped writing about Ireland precisely because of the country’s volatile state in the run up to and aftermath of Catholic Emancipation (1829). As she wrote in 1834, ‘it is impossible to draw

*48* Ibid., III, 297.


*51* Ibid., III, 326.
Ireland as she now is in a book of fiction—realities are too strong'.\textsuperscript{52} Similarly, Owenson frequently cast her eyes elsewhere for literary inspiration—Belgium, India, Italy—and, though she continued occasionally to return home, physically and metaphorically, over the years, her frequently displaced engagement with that home, in her own life and in her fiction, underlines an increasing discomfort with the realities of Irish social, cultural and political life. Where, however, it is tempting to view such pessimism as the sole domain of the national tale in its later years, the central role that the notion of unhomeliness plays in Irish fiction from the late eighteenth century onwards suggests Irish authors’ continued concern with home, not just as a place for which to yearn and seek but also as a place that might ultimately disappoint. As underscored by the continuum evidenced in \textit{The Children of the Abbey} and \textit{Contrast}—two novels that frame Roche’s literary career in England—the idea of home is always undermined by its promise of mixed pleasure and pain. In Roche’s novels, as in those of her contemporaries, the seeming joy of homecoming is routinely upset by a discordant sense of alienation and disaffection, signaled by what Natalie Schroeder terms Roche’s ‘amorphous’ depiction of Ireland in her works: ‘On the one hand, Ireland is a beautiful, highly idealised backdrop for the many romantic love scenes of [Roche’s fiction]. At the same time, it is a country on its way to total ruin’.\textsuperscript{53}

Schroeder here is referring specifically to \textit{The Munster Cottage Boy}, in which the Irish heroine, Fidelia, longs for her maternal country with a firm belief in its ability to revive and refresh her after a long and tedious absence in London:

> With that dear country every thing of happiness or pleasure was still associated; to it her thoughts still reverted—to it her untravelled heart still fondly turned—to it she had determined yet, some way or other, to make her way. Oh! to breathe again the fresh air of its bright green fields, would be renovating to her soul. In returning to it, she felt as if she was returning to a home. She could recollect nothing but kindness and good-nature in it.\textsuperscript{54}

In Ireland, however, Fidelia is no more at home than when she was outside the


\textsuperscript{53} Schroeder, ‘Regina Maria Roche’, 122.

\textsuperscript{54} Regina Maria Roche, \textit{The Munster Cottage Boy} (4 vols, London, 1820), I, 52.
country. In fact, still under the reluctantly-afforded protection of the Bryerly family, Fidelia continues to be misused and secluded from society. Moreover, having become infected by Fidelia’s delight at returning to Ireland prior to their departure from England, the Bryerlys are sorely displeased with the welcome afforded by their native land:

Great were the expectations of pleasure which Mrs Bryerly and her daughters entertained from their visit to Ireland, but which, as extravagant expectations almost ever are, were fated to be disappointed. Years had occasioned changes, which, in place of old intimates, gave to them the faces of strangers, who neither knew nor cared any thing about them. Not without an unpleasant situation could Mrs Bryerly walk about D—, where they landed, and which, from being her and Mr Bryerly’s native place, they preferred to any other part of the kingdom, and find themselves stared at as total strangers.\(^55\)

The unexpected and alienating changes the Bryerlys witness upon their return to Ireland are later remarked upon by Lord Castle Dermot, who, in stating his determination ‘never [to] let any man abuse the country’, nevertheless continues to point out its faults: ‘There’s no variety here—nothing on the grand, the magnificent scale that there is abroad’.\(^56\) The answer ventured forth to this statement is a confirmation of Ireland’s decline since the Act of Union: the country’s lack of grandeur is said to result from the fact that ‘the national consequence of the kingdom has been bartered away, and with it the means of keeping up that splendour and magnificence it could once shew has been lost’\(^57\). Lord Castle Dermot suggests, in response, that those responsible for the ‘bartering’ should be ‘punish[ed]’ by ‘be[ing] compelled to live entirely in [Ireland]’\(^58\).

Even for Fidelia’s father, Glenmore, for whom absence from Ireland is a punishing necessity, homecoming is an uncomfortable, alienating experience, largely, Roche’s narrative suggests, because of the internal divisions of the country itself. Evidencing what George Haggerty calls Roche’s ‘actively pro-Catholic … narrative agenda’, The Munster Cottage Boy lays the blame for Ireland’s unhomely nature on continued sectarian segregation and the coun-

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\(^{55}\) Ibid., I, 55.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., III, 133.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., III, 133.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., III, 134.
try’s refusal to allow a majority of its population legally and literally to claim the land as home.\textsuperscript{59} Glenmore, for instance, the orphaned son of an ancient Irish family now fallen into poverty, is exiled from Ireland because of his implication in the 1798 Rebellion. When the peasant man who cared for him after his parents’ deaths is ‘accused of having given shelter to some fugitives from a rebel camp surprised in the neighbourhood’, Glenmore defends his foster father and, in the process, accidentally shoots one of the men searching his house.\textsuperscript{60} Condemned to hang for his crime, Glenmore is forced first to witness his foster father being tortured to death for his supposed involvement in the rebellion. Then, on the eve of Glenmore’s execution, ‘a party of rebels poured unexpectedly into the village where I was confined and which was but a small one[,] poorly defended, and forcing the prison, liberated me’.\textsuperscript{61} An apparent murderer and Catholic sympathiser, Glenmore flees the country only secretly to return years later to save his daughter—who he believed to have died at birth—from social infamy and financial desperation. Re-united with her hitherto unknown father and beset by continued intrigues and troubles in Ireland, Fidelia determines to emigrate with her father. Before they can embark for America, however, they are subjected to such want and deprivation that Glenmore is driven to the brink of death. In the midst of their suffering, the pair is discovered by a naval officer once known to Fidelia who, after listening to her narrative, redeems her in the minds of her friends and, moreover, reveals that the victim of Glenmore’s supposed crime—murder—had not, in fact, died but had instead lived and was desirous of making amends with his former foe. Glenmore subsequently recovers from an illness induced by want, despair, and the thought of subjecting his daughter to such deprivation and, through the timely intervention of an unknown and unnamed benefactor, is re-possessed of ‘the long-alienated estate of his family’, which had been ‘fraudulently obtained’ from him by his former, adopted parent, Mr Winterfield.\textsuperscript{62}

The conclusion to Roche’s lengthy tale sees Fidelia’s imminent emigration to America prevented and the long-established exile of her father overturned. Moreover, the reader is encouraged to believe that Fidelia will soon marry Rodolph Morven, also known as Colonel Grandison, heir to the fiercely nationalist Lord Fitzossory, in a pro-Catholic echo of the national tale’s

\textsuperscript{59} George E. Haggerty, \textit{Queer Gothic} (Urbana, IL, 2006), 72.
\textsuperscript{60} Roche, \textit{The Munster Cottage Boy}, II, 315.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., II, 320–1.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., IV, 281.
allegorical marriage plot. In fact, at stake in *The Munster Cottage Boy* is not the negotiation or, indeed, reconciliation of English and Irish to union, but a similar sympathetic take on Catholic Emancipation. Although Lord Fitzossory is often repugnant in his extremism, banishing his daughter for her marriage to an Englishman and only forgiving her upon her promise to allow him full control over her son, Rodolph, his desire for Catholic re-possession of lands and emancipation underwrites the novel’s conclusion. Unable to think calmly of ‘the alienation of the properties of the old Irish families, or the restrictions imposed on account of religion’, Lord Fitzossory raises his grandson in the hope of producing a national leader who might advocate ‘the cause of his countrymen…and gradually [lead them] to that emancipation that would permit those whom worldly policy had tempted to apostasize from the faith of their ancestors to quiet their consciences by returning to it’.63 Fidelia’s marriage to Grandison thus envisions the key to Ireland’s future redemption as Catholic Emancipation. As with the marriages in *The Wild Irish Girl*, *Ennui*, and *The Absentee*, however, *The Munster Cottage Boy*’s union remains proleptic.64 The closing lines of the novel, in fact, place conclusions in the reader’s hands: ‘leaving it to the imagination of our readers to group the several characters in the way most agreeable to their respective fancies, we shall now beg leave to drop the long-raised curtain on our dramatis personae, with a natural wish that they may not rise from the entertainment with any feeling of disapprobation’.65 Disappointment, however, is the natural response, especially when the reader finds his/her patience with the preceding four volumes rewarded not, as we might expect, with marriage or even Fidelia’s joy at having been redeemed in Grandison’s eyes, but, instead, her thoughts on ‘the frail nature of earthly bliss’.66 Reflecting on the story of her mother, who died soon after her husband’s exile to America, Fidelia is less than sanguine about the future of her own suggested marriage. Naturally, her downhearted musing at the same moment of her supposed joy—confirmed in the good opinion of Grandison and no longer facing the prospect of permanent emigration—casts a dark shadow on the happy imagery the narrator prompts us to construct in our own heads.

Roche herself, in her personal correspondence, points to the shadows darkening her own return to Ireland and home. With her husband dead, Roche

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63 Ibid., I, 168–9.
66 Ibid.
wrote to the Royal Literary Society pleading for £10 that she might spend ‘some two or three months’ in Ireland visiting friends.\(^{67}\) Shortly after being granted the sum and finding her way to Ireland, Roche discovered herself in an even more dire situation than when she had left England. As her lawyer, R.W. Barnes, explained to the Royal Literary Society:

> Since my letter to you, Mrs Roche’s situation is somewhat altered: she was then most anxious to raise a small sum, sufficient to defray the expense of her passage to Ireland… The small sum requested was lent to her & she is now in Ireland—It is quite uncertain how long she may continue where she now is and she has not a guinea in the world to support herself; and I almost fear that the difficulties of her late husband (owing to the Chancery suit, which now keeps Mrs Roche in the greatest poverty) have already occasioned so heavy a charge upon many of her [friends] that there is little hope of any effectual assistance being received from them… the only prospect Mrs Roche has before her is starvation which at the present moment she is not very far distant from.\(^{68}\)

Returned home for a short, consolatory visit, Roche finds that she is, in fact, almost wholly alone in the world. Unable to provide for herself because of past treachery, she can now no longer depend on her friends for succour. Nor can she return to her adopted home in England. Instead, she must turn to the Royal Literary Society for yet another grant to sustain her in her own home. Her bitterness at this situation is suggested by her recognition in a later letter to the Royal Literary Society that her ‘strong attachment to [her] native place’ owed primarily to the memory ‘of those who are now no more’.\(^{69}\) As with Amanda Fitzalan, Helena Rossgen, and Fidelia Glenmore, Roche experiences home and homecoming as a deeply unsettling event, haunted by the memories of the past and shadowed by continued pessimism about the future.

Impelled, at least in part, by her experiences as an Irish émigré, Roche’s fiction consistently reveals her concern with Ireland as well as an apparently contradictory imaging of Ireland as both idealised motherland and

\(^{67}\) R.W. Barnes to the Royal Literary Society, 9 November 1831; Letters to the Royal Literary Society, BL, Microfilm 1077, Reel 17.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.

\(^{69}\) Roche to Royal Literary Society, 19 November 1831; Letters to the Royal Literary Society, BL, Microfilm 1077, Reel 17.
uncomfortable, ruined, and ruinous society. Above all else unhomely, Ireland in Roche’s novels offers the returned émigré very little hope, comfort or relief. Although Roche envisions part of the solution to Ireland’s simultaneously welcoming and unwelcoming, familiar and unfamiliar nature in the aftermath of Anglo-Irish Union as Catholic Emancipation in texts such as *The Munster Cottage Boy*, her writing career had ended before she could envision this solution in her fiction or, indeed, experience it in real life. As a result, Roche remains forever silent about the ‘solution’ enacted in 1829. Her own experience of poverty, destitution and loneliness upon her partially unwilling repatriation to Ireland in 1831 suggests that the home to which she had returned was not that which she had longed for in England, or in her fiction.

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Homeless at Home:
Poetics of Place in the Poetry of Tom Paulin

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Being an inseparable ingredient in shaping and defining the human conception of the self in relation to the world, place has always been conceptualised and employed to define networks of relationships, configure boundaries of belonging, and spin webs of mutuality. The self, as Homi Bhabha puts it, is ‘at the centre of a series of concentric circles that move through various cycles of familial, ethnic and communal affiliations to “the largest one, that of humanity as a whole”’.¹ To be home ‘is first to inhabit one’s own body’.² The notion of home further extends to be the ‘whole set of connections and affections, the web of mutual recognition that we spin around ourselves and that gives us a place in the world’.³ But what happens if the web of mutual recognition is torn apart, if place is displaced, and if the self is uprooted from the intimacy of ‘us’ and thrown into the detachment of ‘them’? Investigating the poetics of place in the poetry of Tom Paulin (1949–) is an attempt to explain how the impressive dilation of the circles of belonging force the exiled to embark on a voyage of discovery wherein unquestioned perceptions and assumptions about place and identity are challenged.

In his essay ‘Roots—The Sense of Place and Past’, Edward Shils writes: ‘There is much sentiment about the place where one originated but it becomes articulated usually after departure from that place. As long as one remains fixed, there is little articulate expression of attachment to a place of origin.’⁴ The relationship between man and his homeland mostly remains neutral as long as he remains resident in it; however, everything utterly changes when he is voluntarily or forcibly dislocated. Homelessness at home, ability to belong

² Deborah Slicer, ‘The Body as Bioregion’ in Michael P. Branch et al. (eds.), Reading the Earth: New Directions in the Study of Literature and the Environment (Moscow, 1998), 107–16.
neither to the homeland nor to the hostland, and feeling torn between here and there are the main symptoms of the displacement trauma.

‘The empowering paradox of diaspora’, writes James Clifford, ‘is that dwelling here assumes solidarity and connection there. But there is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation’. In diaspora place is redefined ‘beyond the historical opposition of here versus there, since to a certain extent, there has been both merged and emerged in the very characterisation of here’. Such dramatic change in the politics of place, which bridges here and there, crosses cultural and national localities, and creates the effect of spatial compression, results in a continuous state of juxtaposition between different worlds.

Diasporans always remain entrapped in a weightless area located between a physical and an emotional world, each demanding full loyalty. The birthplace left behind ‘seems to be translated into a longing to be reborn through a ceaseless transposition of “coming and going”’. Hence, belonging turns into ‘a multifaceted, multilayered process which mobilises loyalty to different communities simultaneously’. Each community has its claims, rights and duties among which diasporans feel totally lost—unable to choose between dwelling here and returning there.

The ambiguity and richness of the displacement trauma, which has recently attracted the attention of various academic fields, render it open to different approaches and multiple perspectives. Diaspora cannot be separated from colonialism which has resulted in the displacement of millions of people across the world. Taking into consideration that all wars are wars against nature, perceiving the dual estimation of culture and nature, and realising the inseparable relationship between place and diasporans, one comes to the conclusion that ecocriticism is as essential to the study of diaspora as postcolonial theory. Diaspora is closely associated with place—the subject matter of the ecocritical theory, which ‘analyzes the role played by the natural environment in the community imagination at a specific historical moment, and examines the values assigned, or denied, to the concept of nature’.

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5 James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge, 1997), 269.
7 Ibid., 70.
9 Enzo Ferrara, ‘Review of Steven Rosendale (ed.), The Greening of Literary Scholarship:
Several points of convergence between ecocriticism and postcolonial studies make them well suited for the investigation of diaspora. First, both approaches ‘firmly situate their analyses in the historical contexts from which specific mechanisms of exploitation have evolved, and both are inextricably linked to social and political activism’. Furthermore, ecocriticism and postcolonialism are concerned with the complex relationship between the social and political centre and its margins. Thirdly, ecocriticism de-privileges the human subject, while postcolonial theory, in a structurally similar fashion, is concerned with the relative de-centring of the colonisers and their discourses. In both cases, ‘such de-centring also involves the attempt to recenter the silenced other and to listen to his or her voice’.

Both schools of thought share an ultimate goal; namely, to challenge the dualistic estimation of culture and nature, civilisation and primitiveness, centre and margin, or victimiser and victim. The combination of ecocriticism and postcolonialism—which will be hereafter termed as the ‘eco-colonial’ theory—aims at reinvigorating the anthropological insights of the former, and integrating them with the ecological tendencies of the latter. Using ecocriticism alongside and against postcolonial theory will illustrate the use of nature as a multifaceted metaphor for living and longing, exoticism and belonging, coexistence and nostalgia, otherness and togetherness.

Through an ‘eco-colonial’ approach to the paradox of homelessness at home in the poetry of Tom Paulin (1949—), this article aims at investigating the homologies between nature and diasporans, and exploring the ways in which diaspora poetry addresses intersections between racial oppression and exploitation of nature. Locating Paulin’s poetry in the context of regional histories, cultural confrontations and environmental pressures will also reveal how a potentially productive tension between an imposed and an inherited culture can create imaginative forms to articulate the diasporans’ cultural in-betweenness.

Emerging from a minority nationalist background in Northern Ireland; feeling torn between Leeds, England, where he was born and Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he was brought up; experiencing the contradictions of the Unionist culture to which his family belongs; advocating Irish Republican attempts for independence, and enduring the agonies of Ireland where ‘terror,
persecution, and privation seemed to have followed one upon the other through centuries without respite’, Tom Paulin has always felt entrapped in a weightless area between conflicting worlds each demanding full loyalty. As Paulin puts it:

I felt disaffected from my background, the whole Unionist culture—not that my parents voted Unionist—and I read Orwell in the absorbed way one does at that age. There’s a sense, particularly in Irish culture, of deliberate—in fact doctrinaire—disloyalty. I grew up in a culture that was officially Loyalist, but I came to see that it was a rotten society: I left it not for political reasons but simply because I wanted to get away from the claustrophobia of that society.

To resolve the trauma of claustrophobia and avoid suffocation under the enormous tribal, national, and religious pressures, Paulin had to embark on a lifelong journey from alienating hybridity to international displacement.

Failure to belong to a homeland, a political ideology or even a religious dogma has nurtured Paulin’s feeling of alienating hybridity. Fascinated by James Joyce’s hero Stephen Dedalus, Paulin started to question the authority of place on human consciousness, investigate the dangers of imprisonment under the siege of national identity, and examine the potentials inherent in placelessness. In an interview with Eamonn Hughes, Paulin says:

Looking back now after years of writing, I realise that at some level I’d always felt that I didn’t belong anywhere and that, indeed, I didn’t come

14 Hybridity, which commonly refers to ‘the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation’, is an enlightened response to racial / colonial oppression. As Homi Bhabha maintains, hybridity combines / articulates the oppressors discourse with ‘differential knowledges and positionalities’ that both estrange identity of that discourse and ‘produce new forms of knowledge’ or ‘new sites of power.’ Hybridity can be divided into two types: syncretism and alienation. Syncretism refers to combining the homeland and the hostland cultures through integrating the best in each within a new suitable culture. Alienating hybridity, as Hogan puts it, ‘is the paralysing conviction that one has no identity, no real home, and that no synthesis is possible.’ See Ascherthof et al., *Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London, 1995), 118; Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1995), 120; Patrick Colm Hogan, *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crisis of Tradition in the Angophone Literatures of India, Africa and the Caribbean* (New York, 2000), 17.
from anywhere. There’s tremendous pressure both in English culture and Irish culture to proclaim roots, ancestry, tradition, the past. I have no concept of ancestry … But I think that ancestor worship can be dangerous.¹⁵

Cherishing no national or historical connections with the place where he was born or the place where he was raised, Paulin feels entrapped in an alien land inhabited by helpless victims aspiring for freedom.

In his poem ‘A Just State’ published in his first volume _A State of Justice_ (1977), Paulin depicts Ulster as a totalitarian state or a concentration camp where countrymen are shackled with chains of fear and tortured with enforced uniformity:

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The children of scaffolds obey the Law.
Its memory is perfect, a buggered sun
That heats the dry sand around noon cities
Where only the men hold hands.¹⁶
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On the pretext of protecting homeland from enemies, justice is ironically enforced through terror, tyranny and isolation:

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The state’s centre terrifies, its frontiers
Are sealed against its enemies. Shouts echo
Through the streets of this angry polity
Whose waters might be kind.¹⁷
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Comparing the coloniser’s scheme for suppressing the colonised to the human abuse of nature, the poem ends with an image of a hunting trap set tactfully to prevent any attempts of escape from the homeland camp:

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Its justice is bare wood and limewashed bricks,
Institutional fixtures, uniforms,
The shadows of watchtowers on public squares,
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¹⁷ Ibid., 25, lines 5–8.
A hemp noose over a greased trap.\textsuperscript{18}

On the phonological level, Paulin depends on alliteration to delineate an image of a contact zone where cultural dualities and racial conflicts have distorted the human conception of national and natural space. The words ‘scaffolds’, ‘sun’, ‘sand’ and ‘cities’—in the first stanza—are musically associated to portray an unreachable homeland turned through years of sectarian violence and colonial oppression into a raised platform for execution of countrymen or a heated barren desert void of shelter and nourishment. Similarly, the words ‘state’, ‘centre’, ‘sealed’ and ‘streets’—in the second stanza—convey the dimensions of a nation isolated not only from its citizens but also from the outside world.

In his article ‘Building, Dwelling, Moving: Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and the Reverse Aesthetic’, Scott Brewster argues:

Tom Paulin has long positioned himself as both outsider and critical insider, developing a poetics of awkward location. His work has shown an increasing preoccupation with the potential of makeshift and peripheral structures that are to some degree placeless. The mobile ‘homes’ surveyed in his poetry seem to thwart any sense of affiliation, yet these often anomalous and ‘inauthentic’ spaces symbolise the condition of living ‘in’ history, with its terrors and possibilities. The neglected interiors and peripheral structures that litter these poetic landscapes challenge the desire for rootedness and authenticity.\textsuperscript{19}

To develop the ‘poetics of awkward location’ where the centre and the peripheral, the insider and the outsider, the real and the illusionary are paradoxically interwoven, Paulin depends heavily on imagery of the senses. The contrast between the visual images of children obeying the law and men holding hands—in the first stanza—creates an effect of temporal and spatial compression combining all Irish generations in a cycle of oppression and submission. The tactile and visual image of the ‘buggered sun / That heats the dry sands around noon cities’ are ambiguously contrasted with the tactile, auditory and visual image of shouts echoing ‘Through the streets of this angry polity / whose waters might be kind’. The images of dry hot sands

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 25, lines 9–12.

\textsuperscript{19} Scott Brewster, ‘Building, Dwelling, Moving: Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and the Reverse Aesthetic’ in Gerry Smyth and Jo Croft (eds), \textit{Our House: The Representation of Domestic Space in Modern Culture} (New York, 2006), 149.
within the centre and the kind waters locked off by the frontiers distort spatial and national relations. Within the borders of such a displaced place, locations and affiliations of enemies, allies and citizens are hardly identified.

Nature plays the role of a double agent; it is manipulated by the colonisers to facilitate ultimate control of the colonised, and used by the oppressed to flee from the harsh realities of a country feeding upon its own men. In the last stanza the visual images of ‘bare wood’, ‘limewashed bricks’ and ‘greased trap’ clarify the colonisers’ scheme not only for abusing nature but also for turning it against the colonised. Wood is uncovered, bricks are painted with lime and traps are greased to ensure the ultimate submissiveness of the colonised.

The word ‘hemp’ in the final line of the poem reveals Paulin’s subsequent reactionary choice towards the feelings of homelessness at home. Hemp is a tall Asian coarse plant cultivated in many parts of the world as a valuable source of fibre as well as drugs. Not only does the ‘hemp noose’ point out the prey-hunter relationship between the Irish and their homeland, but it also refers to Paulin’s choice to lose consciousness of place and time. The only way to escape the tortures of spatial enslavement is an enforced sleep or a spiritual hypnotisation surpassing the limitations of national space into the unlimited realms of poetic imagination. As Jonathan Hufstader puts it:

Paulin often attempts to put himself to sleep so that he may wake up again in a different place, some free and equal republic, although he finds himself again experiencing the horror of a gloomy city under a dictatorial regime (Northern Ireland) or a bourgeois ‘tennis-suburb’ where money is the tyrant (England, where he now lives).²⁰

Such enforced sleep can be further clarified through examining Paulin’s poem ‘Before History’ published in his second volume *The Strange Museum* (1980).

Immigrating to England in the 1970s—first to study at Hull University and Oxford University and later to work at the University of Nottingham—Paulin moves from the spatial compression associated with the historical burdens of colonisation, racial and sectarian conflicts to the multidimensional spaciousness created through a process of sleeping and awakening. The claustrophobic apprehensions and the cycle of trapping and fleeing endured at home are

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abandoned in favour of a process of imagined liberation from the shackles of
time, space and identity. In ‘Before History’, Paulin depicts a timeless moment
preceding all the recorded evils of humankind. With a consciousness liberated
through sleep from historical burdens, the poet manages to view his homeland
in new lights. Yet, once the machinery of time and place are turned on, the
poet wakes up again to face the trauma of homelessness at home:

Mornings when I wake too early.
There is a dead light in the room.
Rain is falling through the darkness
And the yellow lamps of the city
Are flared smudges on the wet roads.
Everyone is sleeping. I envy them.
I lie in a curtained room.
The city is nowhere then.
Somewhere, in a dark mitteleuropa,
I have gone to ground in a hidden street.21

Sleep, as Jonathan Hufstader maintains, provides Paulin ‘with an escape from
history—not in the conventional sense of losing consciousness, but because,
when he awakes, he enjoys a few moments of altered consciousness.’ Paulin
recreates his mind ‘while characterising his city, Belfast or London, as just
another dreary site of oppression, like a middle-European city under Stalinist
regimes.’22 Linking the urban city street and the natural ground, the confined
curtained room and the spacious mitteleuropa, the above ground roads and
the underground hidden streets, Paulin recreates the contact zone where his
homeland and hostland cultures are clashing and interacting. The gloomy
atmosphere is always interpenetrating to remind the reader of the harsh
realities surrounding the timeless world of dreams.

Rebuilding place, reclaiming history and recreating national consciousness
may have provided the poet with moments of psychological balance; yet, they
could not satisfy his hunger for beauty, love and security:

This is the long lulled pause
Before history happens,
When the spirit hungers for form,

Knowing that love is as distant
As the guarded capital, knowing
That the tyranny of memories
And factual establishments
Has stretched to its breaking.\(^{23}\)

For diasporans, homeland can be defined as ‘the ethnoscape of reference and the focus of what has been called “long distance nationalism”’.\(^{24}\) In Paulin’s case, such focus has been either stretched to encompass other worlds or fragmented to exclude possibilities of synthesis. With no definite focal point for nationalism, the poem remains plagued with the tortures of alienating hybridity.

In ‘Before History’, colours play an essential role in defining the poet’s relationship with place. The contrast between light and darkness is skilfully manipulated to differentiate between the dreams of belonging and the realities of alienation. Isolated from the world in a ‘curtained room’ or a ‘hidden street’, the poet is always locked in a shaded area void of pure colours. The ‘dead light’ in his room or the ‘yellow lamps of the city’ are distorting rather than embellishing images. Nature fails to alter the poet’s conception of colour and space. The early morning intensifies the poet’s isolation as he is awake while all people are asleep. Similarly, rain and wet roads smear the burning light of the city lamps. Distorted images and impure dark colours testify the fact that building new relations with a hostland permanently alters the diasporans’ relationships with their homelands.

In her article ‘World View’, Michela Wrong writes:

> The evening reminded me what a complex, tortured and incestuous thing a diaspora can be. As westerners, we tend to assume that the most challenging experience confronting a migrant worker or asylum-seeker arriving in Britain will be his relationships with the local people and officialdom. In fact, the most difficult relationship to negotiate is the one with his own community of communal solidarity.\(^{25}\)

A permanent feeling of attachment to the homeland is articulated by

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\(^{23}\) Paulin, *The Strange Museum*, 1, lines 11 – 18.
diasporans in a variety of ways. ‘One common feature of many diasporic communities’, writes James Macauley, ‘remains a sense of attachment to a homeland, whether “real” or “imagined”’. Some simply believe that they can never be fully assimilated in their host nation, or that they may never be allowed to do so. Many maintain a special sense of ‘memory’ (often frozen at the point of emigration) and express the often improbable belief that they will eventually return to the homeland. For others, a strong sense of group identity is defined by a continuing relationship with the homeland, through economic links, family and social networks, cultural links and political organisation. Diasporans’ attitudes towards their homelands also include ‘bitterness among those who consider themselves “exiles”, anger at the dispersal in the homeland, contempt for the “homeland” in the host country, and conflictual issues between returnees and resident populations.’

In ‘Before History’ Paulin seems to combine many of the above reactions in a complicated mixture of love and hatred, attachment and isolation, togetherness and otherness. The poet’s sense of attachment to Northern Ireland is maintained through a set of memories urging his soul to seek a replica of the love and beauty once cherished at home. Unfortunately, the poet’s dreams for building new ties with his homeland through maintaining a strong group identity are painfully frustrated. He is awake in a curtained room or a hidden street envying all those who enjoy peaceful sleep. The image of ‘the guarded capital’ intensifies the ambiguity of the poet’s reaction towards his homeland. His attachment to Ireland will remain protected in spite of all the acculturation forces faced in the hostland or he will remain isolated from a homeland shielded against its own citizens.

In an interview with Eamonn Hughes, Paulin maintains:

I had a year in the States, from 1983 to 1984, and I became fascinated by the way in which Americans speak and the extraordinary energy of the language. At the same time, I was trying to push my language into Northern Europe, Germany and Russia to create a feeling of displacement—international displacement. That was the ambition.

Spending a year in the United States has provided Paulin with a third level of

28 ‘Tom Paulin: Interviewed by Eamonn Hughes’, 123.
consciousness. He could view the Anglo-Irish crisis from a new perspective integrating the history of humanity at large. Hence, Paulin could finally reject alienating hybridity in favour of international displacement. Believing that all nations, in some stages of their histories, have endured the agonies of colonisation, civil war, enslavement and oppression, Paulin found solace in viewing himself as an international diasporan with a global identity:

We’ve been given, until relatively recently, the notion of identity as a fixed concept, that identity is somehow like integrity: it’s principled and it’s unitary. In fact, identity is not like that. We are imaginatively bits and pieces and maybe they don’t fit and maybe there are great gaps. Certainly, the Northern Irish experience has been one of fragmentation, and this may mean that imaginatively you have access to different cultures that you can raid for what you want. It means that things are fluid; they are unstable.29

The shift in Paulin’s view of cultural and historical spaces can be further clarified through analyzing his poem ‘Cush’, published in Paulin’s fifth volume *Walking A Line* (1994). The biblical title of the poem (which either means the eldest black son of Ham and the father of Nimrod or the Land of Cush—the countries south of the Israelites including Sudan and Ethiopia)30 invokes a post-postmodern31 conception of diaspora. Paulin integrates various worlds,

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29 Ibid., 124.
31 Since the late 1990s there has been ‘a widespread feeling both in popular culture and in academia that postmodernism has gone out of fashion.’ In her book *Surpassing the Spectacle*, Carol Becker writes: ‘We are in a moment of post-postmodernism, conscious of all that has come before, tired of deconstruction, uncertain about the future, but convinced that there is no turning back. I agree with Stuart Hall that the use of post in postmodern and post-postmodern means that we have extended, not abandoned, the terrain of past philosophical work.’ ‘In an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the postmodernist lack of moral compass’, writes Robert Greer, new insights have germinated based upon the notion that ‘absolute truth does exist, yet must be understood in terms of personality and animation.’ Prior to the ‘celebrated “turn to language” (postmodernism) is the more fundamental “turn to relationship” (post-postmodernism).’ Post-postmodernism witnesses ‘the re-birth of utopia after its own death, after its subjection to postmodernism’s severe skepticism, relativism and its anti- or postutopian consciousness.’ Such resurrection of utopia, as Mikhail Epstein puts it, is not regarded as a social project with claims to transforming the world; ‘it is an “as if” lyricism, an “as if” idealism, an “as if” utopianism, aware of its own failures, insubstantiality, and secondariness.’ Post-postmodernism; thus, marks
cultures, ages and races asserting that in the age of globalisation, displacement turns into a common fate shared by all human beings:

this could be scanning a recipe  
for a pretend morsel  
on a wide green leaf  
a way of waiting  
almost with prayer and fasting  
for the main course  
or it could be a pouffe from Turkestan  
a word out of Sanskrit  
that means something—not  
it’s love in an arranged marriage  
or love in a love marriage  
a song in Hindi that asks  
why did you leave me with my desire?32

Offering a variety of choices—lingual (Sanskrit and Hindi), affective (love and arranged marriages) and religious (praying and fasting)—Paulin dilates the circles of belonging. In a globe where the boundaries of place, time and identity are permanently transgressed, man turns into a single, homeless satellite living in an eternal state of diaspora.

Paulin’s belief in international displacement is further asserted through juggling multiple binaries, erasing spatial borders between Eastern and Western cultures, and eradicating the temporal markers separating the past, present and future. In his journey through the modern and ancient worlds, Paulin integrates languages, histories and cultures to challenge the dualistic estimation of blacks and whites, victims and victimisers, or slaves and masters:

it’s like that story where Saladin

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gets the better of Richard Lionheart
or like the difference
between a scarf and a heavy sword
or between
---air and morality
art and the law
deeblue and the devil
so many fatuous binaries
and all
to too much purpose\textsuperscript{33}

The agonies of exile, communal detachment and alienating hybridity are relieved once diaspora is regarded as a common feature of life rather than a curse befalling ill-fated races:

walking down towards the bridge
not the dream of becoming
nor the dream of belonging
but the dream of Being\textsuperscript{34}

In their book \textit{Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies}, Catrin Gersdorf and Sylvia Mayer write:

The way we perceive, interact with and ultimately change nature cannot be detached from who we are in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality and geographical location … On every hike into the world of nature—whether we actually physically move through the landscape, or stay at home on the couch and watch a wilderness programme on TV or read a scholarly article in \textit{ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment}—we carry minds full of cultural values, norms and attitudes that inform the ways in which we see, know, represent, inhabit and, ultimately, reconstruct nature.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., lines 33–43.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., lines 103–6.
In facing the predicament of growing new roots in an alien hostland, diasporans have first to confront the legacy of their native soil. If diasporans’ consciousness of nature is loaded with the tragic memories of colonisation, enslavement, subjugation, racial discrimination, resistance and sacrifice, several intersections between colonial oppression and the human exploitation of nature are established.

In Paulin’s poem ‘Cush’ nature stands as a collective memory or an eye witness revealing and healing the agonies of the displacement trauma. ‘The long sticks of sugar cane’ which ‘hide all that’s uncrushable’ are charged with the unbearable suffering of Negro slaves—the largest forced diaspora in human history. The ‘sticky brown jiggery sweet ghurr’ carry the memories of Indian and Chinese indentured labourers who were transported to the New World after the outlawing of Negro slave trade. The images of ‘space ocean air’, ‘Silent Lands’, ‘the rawpaint plain river’ and the haunted pilgrim ‘slinking down from the mountain’ establish nature as the only secure shelter for those who feel homeless, lonely and isolated.36

In responding to the trauma of displacement and the Irish ongoing plague of colonial hegemony, sectarian violence and racial discrimination, Paulin has moved from the agonizing despondency of alienation to the temporary relief of enforced sleep. To escape from the nets of religion, nation and language, Paulin had to free himself from the shackles of belonging and the bonds of history. Flying into the spacious realms of universal syncretism, Paulin could finally appreciate the potentials inherent in dwelling between cultures.

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36 Paulin, Walking A Line, lines 28–9, 31, 79, 81 and 85.
The thirty-six collages that make up *Irelantis* (1994-8), consist of images that Dublin-based artist Sean Hillen cut from postcards of Ireland that were made for tourists there by the British photographer John Hinde beginning in the mid 1950s.\(^1\) In a lesser amount, the collages include images of the cultural heritage of Europe and North America published in postcards and the mass print media, such as *National Geographic*. Hillen combined them to create small landscape and seascape scenes featuring places in Leinster, Munster, Connacht and Ulster. In addition to referencing the four provinces, other elements point to Ireland as the focus of *Irelantis*. For one thing, the first syllable of the series title orally summons Éire, the Irish name for Ireland the state as confirmed in the 1937 Constitution and the 1948 Republic of Ireland Act, which came into effect in 1949. Also, the scenes recall a tradition of representing Ireland as an island unit to signify a common politics, ethnicity or culture, and as a means to archive mythologies and histories. The scenes share something else. They hint that Ireland consists of places viewed from elsewhere. On one hand, the Ireland of *Irelantis* consists of Irish places viewed from elsewhere in so far as materially, *Irelantis* is made of postcards of Ireland intended for people who live somewhere else. On the other hand, this raises a question of whether, in some defining way, Ireland identifies as a representation constructed for elsewhere, or as a nation that is visible only from somewhere else.

Hillen created a collective representation of the nation as a series of scenes viewed from a distance. That is, he put physical distance between the locations the scenes assign viewers and the places the scenes represent. Compositionally, in each scene Hillen constructed distance between the viewer and the place either by using linear perspective or by combining perspective with other ways of organising space pictorially. The techniques have the effect of locating whomever is looking at the place the scene shows as if they are located somewhere else within the general vicinity, for example, out at sea or above

the ground or below it but not actually there, interacting with the place or with anyone or anything in its environment. Some collages locate the viewer at a great distance from a site, while others bring the viewer very close, although not to the extent that the place acknowledges the viewer hovering nearby to look at it. The scenes’ treatment of space and, by extension, the Ireland that appears therein as something to be viewed from elsewhere, raises questions regarding what other dimensions of distance Hillen brought to bear on Ireland by working with tourist postcards. Also, what does seeing Ireland from elsewhere indicate about its identity as a nation – is that located elsewhere, too? Additional questions arise regarding what the series title referencing the lost island civilisation of Atlantis bodes for a narrative collage series about Ireland.

Showing the Ireland of *Irelantis* as a series of places viewed from elsewhere links it to the historical and literary theme of insiders who become outsiders seeing the nation from beyond its borders, in other words, Irish émigrés. As Fintan O’Toole explained,

> In a country like Ireland, whose modern history is shaped by the personal journeys of the emigrant, any accurate map of the land must be a map, not of an island, but of a shoreline seen from the water; a set of contours shaped, not by geography but by voyages. The shape of the island is the shape of all the journeys around it that a history of emigration has set in motion.\(^2\)

Here, O’Toole describes Ireland as a visual effect of its emigrants’ motion and distance. The nation is a representation that indexes their lived experience of being en route to somewhere else. His account calls to mind what David Ralph rightly noted is the social sciences and humanities intensifying their study of emigration in regard to glocalism, or integrations of the local and global, including that ‘the relationship between mobility and fixity, and home and homeland is questioned as migrants move astride, betwixt and between old and new homes.’\(^3\)

Although scholars are examining the themes in written archival materials, histories, and creative responses such plays and poetry, their emphasis on text-


\(^3\) David Ralph, “‘Home is where the heart is?’ Understandings of ‘Home’ among Irish-Born Return Migrants from the United States”, *Irish Studies Review*, 17 (2009), 184.
based artefacts overshadows relevant works of visual and material culture. In redress, this paper illustrates some of the ways Irelantis summons connections between being seen from elsewhere, emigration and national identity. In particular, it focuses on the ways that two scenes in Irelantis – Boating on the Liffey, Dublin, 1996 (Figure 1), and The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge, 1995 (Figure 2) - revisit the themes with regard to questions about Ireland’s sovereignty and agency that intensified during the mid and late twentieth century. We will notice that by presenting Ireland as seen from without, Irelantis alerts us to an arc of anxiety concerning leaving the nation as well as returning via tourism and immigration during these periods.

I The Vanishing Irish

Irelantis revisits Ireland during the years following the Republic of Ireland Act and its departure from the Commonwealth. It uses subject matter and compositional features to evoke connections then developing between emigration, modernisation and tourism. Mainly, these involved treating modernisation and tourism as means to stave off emigration and show industrialised nations that Ireland was advancing economically. Of particular interest are the ways Boating on the Liffey, Dublin engages with historical dichotomies regarding the nation’s modernisation and its tourism industry. Moreover, while staging the nation as seen from without, which reminds us of the many activities then contributing to shaping Ireland for people ‘positioned somewhere between insiders and outsiders’, or émigrés visiting Ireland as tourists, Irelantis humorously suggests that Ireland became its own emigrant.4

Following Ireland’s departure from the Commonwealth in 1949, questions about its sovereignty and agency featured in government discussions about the nation’s relationship with the world. Moreover, the government saw reason for concern about the actuality, if not the eventually, of emigration, which it wanted to stem in order to stabilise the population and have the manpower to improve its infrastructure. In reporting his ‘call for economic independence’, the government’s journal, Ireland: Weekly Bulletin of the Department of External Relations detailed how, in 1950, Minister of External Affairs Sean MacBride stated ‘It was vital … that public attention should be

4 Ibid., 183.
focused on the evils of emigration, under-employment and low economic conditions. The population of Ireland is lower now, he said, than it ever was before in the history of the nation. Scholars agree that emigration for work did occur. John Kelleher noted that ‘protectionist economic policies before and after [the Second World War] led to mass unemployment and the emigration, largely to Britain, of large numbers of the [Republic’s] population. Between 1945 and 1961 more than 500,000 people emigrated. In 1956 the government reported on the recent census: ‘The average yearly net emigration was higher, between 1951 and 1956, than that during any period since 1926, amounting to 40,079 persons per annum.’ Moreover, the emigration of Irish citizens was being noticed internationally, with dire conclusions: ‘A number of articles have recently appeared in American magazines on the theme of the “Vanishing Irish”. The common thesis of the articles is that the Irish are a vanishing people who are being eradicated from the earth by the twin evils of emigration and late marriages.’ The reference was to a book anthology, John Anthony O’Brien’s *The Vanishing Irish: The Enigma of the Modern World* (1953), published from a symposium held at Notre Dame University to study the historical trajectory of Irish emigration and its effects on Ireland.

Although it does not visually show people emigrating, nevertheless, *Boating on the Liffey, Dublin* references anxieties about emigration along with hopes for means to resolve them. The collage depicts central Dublin below the intersection of O’Connell Bridge and O’Connell Street at dusk. The low vantage point of the foreground places the viewer near the mirror-like River Liffey, where a man and a woman sit facing one another in a rowboat, apparently unaware of the viewer and the gigantic raised dripping flukes of a whale diving into the river behind them. The figures’ proximity to the central commercial district of the city invokes a typology of print and photographic images that since the late eighteenth century have signified the intersection

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of business, shopping and nation, including through monuments, such as
the Nelson Pillar monument to Lord Nelson erected in the early nineteenth
century then destroyed in 1966, and the O’Connell Monument to Daniel
O’Connell erected in the late nineteenth century; sites - the General Post
Office of the Easter Rising of 1916; and public space, insofar as the bridge
and street served as a space of civil war in 1922 and national celebrations of
religious rituals and events, such as Eucharistic Congresses.9 In Boating on the
Liffey, Dublin, the sculpture of O’Connell atop his monument at the lower
end of the street near the bridge crossing is visible above the crest of the
whale’s flukes.

Charles Duff’s Ireland and the Irish, published in 1953, featured this area
of central Dublin as a sign of Ireland’s modernity, evidenced by its wide
thoroughfare devoted to modern mass transport and automobiles along
with pedestrians, shops and businesses.10 During this period, Hinde created
a postcard depicting the same location below a bright blue sky filled with
white puffy clouds.11 It would also feature in The Oracle of O’Connell Street
Bridge, discussed below. In Boating on the Liffey, Dublin, the scene restaged the
appearance of urban commerce when it was used at mid century to promote
Dublin and, by metonymy, it signified that Ireland was open for investment
and trade with England, the United States and Europe. As an ideological sign
of modern life, it counteracted attention to emigration as a response to a lack
of employment and poor living conditions resulting from a weak national
economy.

Yet, the boaters resemble figures in rural settings that Hinde featured in
the postcards he made for tourists to Ireland. In Boating on the Liffey, Dublin
they appear to be rowing, perhaps to another fishing hole nearby their bucolic
surroundings. Significantly, they are utterly disengaged from the whale directly
behind them and the commercial activity signified by the buildings and signs,
including for Baileys, and the glow of electric lights above. Their part in this
narrative is not yet clear, however, they participate in representing Dublin
dichotomously, as a place of pastoral and urban passages seeming to have
little direct interchange.

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9 For example, see photograph IND H 1865, Eucharistic Congress, Street Decorations,
O’Connell Street, 1912-1936, in the National Library of Ireland.
10 Charles Duff, Ireland and the Irish (New York, 1953), 96.
11 See John Hinde, Nelson's Pillar and O’Connell Street and Bridge, in Hindesight: John Hinde
II Assembly Plants and Scenery

The First Economic Programme published in November 1958 promoted international trade and investment. Author T.K. Whitaker coupled reducing emigration with awareness of the effects of its history and the need for a tourism industry: ‘It is to the tourist industry – now one of the most valuable we have – that we must look mainly for the creation of employment and income in those beautiful but remote regions along the western seabord that have been denuded by emigration.’\(^\text{12}\) Although international media such as *US News and World Report* would celebrate the Second Programme for Economic Expansion launched in August 1963, noting, ‘The old picture of Ireland as a backward little island of quaint peasants, periodic famines and mass emigration … [was] becoming outdated’, two representations of Ireland were emerging.\(^\text{13}\) Both aimed to foster growth in Ireland’s economy by facilitating international investment and trade. One involved modernisation in the city as a financial and shopping centre and throughout the nation in regard to industry, manufacturing and infrastructure, such as electrification and flood control. The other promoted Ireland as a rural place synonymous with a bucolic heritage in the context of a nascent tourism industry that would grow the economy and thereby reduce emigration. Both constructed an image of Ireland for outsiders, namely, the governments and business sectors of other nations as well as tourists.

To them, Lloyd Praeger wrote in the Irish Life and Culture series on behalf of the government’s Cultural Relations Committee that Ireland remains ‘essentially an agricultural country, with plenty of open space and little hurry or overcrowding; that is the main reason for its being so pleasant a refuge for those who seek rest after toil. The pity is that such conditions are, in the nature of things and the worship of “progress”, ephemeral. We realise this by looking backward, not by looking forward. The urge for “improvement” goes on incessantly.’\(^\text{14}\) Praeger here hinted at tensions between the nation as pastoral and progressive. Meanwhile, nongovernmental venues were conflating Ireland with an enduring ruralism that revealed few signs of industrialisation or commercialisation. During the 1950s *The Capuchin Annual* published multi-


page essays consisting of reproductions of photographs emphasising quaint life in towns consisting of shops filled with crafts and hand-made goods, and pictures of land, with some series devoted to non-inhabited land.\textsuperscript{15}

However, at the same time, the essays in O’Brien’s \textit{The Vanishing Irish} were revisiting emigration as the result of rural conditions. ‘We used to maintain that this national loss of blood – I might call it racial hemophilia – was entirely due to foreign misrule. But in 1946, after a quarter of a century of native rule, our census figures showed that we were still on the downgrade.’\textsuperscript{16} O’Faolain offered the explanation that ‘rural living conditions are enough to drive any young man of spirit to emigration or to drink.’\textsuperscript{17} Significantly, both rural Irelands - a bucolic refuge from work, and life steeped in deprivation - were aimed at American and British readers whom the government was targeting for its nascent tourist industry. Moreover, both images circulated along with the dichotomous representation of the nation modernising its industry and commerce alongside the modernity of Dublin, and an ostensibly unchanging pastoralism serving as the nation’s geographic and identity core.

The government distributed these images to the world through \textit{Ireland of the Welcomes}, a tourism journal it began publishing in 1952. In a piece called ‘Ireland by Road’, which appeared in 1956, J. O’Donovan explained that Ireland’s ‘assembly plants turn out the cars of America, Britain and Europe, some in their hundreds but most popular makes in their thousands every year.’\textsuperscript{18} This notwithstanding, ‘Ireland is a country for restful touring, a place to be viewed and savoured in a leisurely manner so that the kaleidoscopic changes of scenery and colour, the wealth of historical interest and the depth of the acknowledged hospitality of its people may be enjoyed to the full.’\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Boating on the Liffey, Dublin}, pastoralised urbanity to resolve the dichotomy of car assembly plants and modern urbanity and commerce, and a pastoral kaleidoscope. To be sure, it shows a city that during the 1950s was developing stronger ties with tourism as an industry and yet was continuing to witness emigration. For example, its modern hotels and transport assured tourists

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\textsuperscript{15} Examples include Pat Hudson, ‘Pictures of the Northland,’ (1948); T.J. Molloy, ‘21 Pages of Pictures’ (1948); Pat Hudson, ‘10 Pages of Pictures’ (1949); Padraig de Paor, ‘8 Pages of Pictures’ (1949); ‘Green Hilled Pleasant Erin, Pictures from Township and Country’ (1955); Arthur Campbell, ‘Beneath the Light of Irish Skies’ (1956-7); and Arthur Campbell and David Kelly, ‘Oh Land of Love and Beauty’ (1958).
\textsuperscript{16} O’Faolain, ‘Love Among the Irish’, 140.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{18} J. O’Donovan, ‘Ireland by Road,’ \textit{Ireland of the Welcomes}, 5, 2 (July – August 1956), 33.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 34.
\end{flushleft}
from industrialised nations like England and the U.S.A. that they would find the comforts they were accustomed to having at home and could use the city as a point of departure for exploring the countryside using modern modes of transport, with contemporary itineraries organising streamlined tours reaching destinations with precision. The scene also represents the Liffey River, which, if followed east to the Irish Sea, served as a reminder that Dublin was a site where the Irish emigrated. Yet, Hillen pastoralised Dublin by depicting the intersection of the bridge and street as a still backdrop glowing with soft colours that lend a romantic dreaminess to the scene.

Furthermore, with its cityscape silhouette and the wildness of the diving behemoth possibly from a far-flung place, Boating on the Liffey, Dublin conjured the city that Ireland of the Welcomes promoted to American and European: ‘Dublin retains, in spite of its efficient bus service and up-to-date hotels, something incredibly primitive and remote.’20 Ruth McManus helps us to notice a political dimension in this type of representation: ‘The purity of the Irish people and bucolic landscape was sharply contrasted with the modern immoral world and inhospitable industrial landscapes created by English influences of urbanization and industrialization.’21 Yet, despite avoiding internalising the ostensible evils of English modernity and also avoiding transposing the problems of rural life to the city, such as the lack of electricity, rivers that flooded uncontrollably and land that could not be farmed, what does the scene suggest Ireland gained?22 Dublin is missing the crowds of citizens who would give it vitality, and notwithstanding the self-absorbed couple, their boat on the river alludes to emigration via the Irish Sea.

III Seeing the Old Land

Among those to whom the government wanted to represent Ireland as ‘something incredibly primitive and remote’ were its former émigrés. The government wanted to manage Ireland’s appearance to prompt their interest

in revisiting the ‘old land.’ A statesman clarified, ‘They are people who perhaps emigrated from this country ten, fifteen or twenty years ago and, through hard work, they succeeded in saving, over a long period of years, sufficient money to enable them to take a holiday in their native land for a short term … these people supply the bulk of our tourist traffic.’ Another explained that along with ‘the Irish-American who made good … [and] wants to come back and see his homeland … He feels an urge to see how things are in the old land’, tourists from America include ‘the natural-born American who decides that he is going to leave the American Continent and see what is happening in other parts of the world.’

The government anticipated what tourists wanted to see and configured the land accordingly. Desmond Guinness, President of the Irish Georgian Society, remarked that ‘the government is, quite rightly, seeking to increase the tourist trade, and is spending large sums of money every year putting Ireland “on the map”.’ However, periodically concerns were raised about obstructions to areas deemed tourist sites and, in response, the government made changes to the landscape or urged citizens to do so. For example, Minister for Industry and Commerce Jack Lynch reported that money was needed for scenic development works ‘to finance the removal of permanent obstacles to scenic views.’ This was in response to Bord Fáilte Éireann receiving complaints from tourists that in their cars and motor coaches they ‘are denied views of some of our finest scenery by the high obstacles which flank many of our roads.’ Therefore, Lynch asked citizens to modify their walls and hedges. Earlier, Ireland of the Welcomes reported that tourists could thank the government for visual access to Ireland:

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So if the tourist should wonder at the excellence of some motor road in some remote beauty spot where it is obvious that the local population and volume of traffic is too sparse to warrant such a road, the answer is that it was engineered expressly for the benefit of the fortunate tourist who chooses to pass this way.  

That Hillen carefully constructed the scenes of *Irelantis* all to appear of a piece, and handled formal aspects so the color or mood blended over disjunctures created by size or suggested actions, also reminds us that the landscape of Ireland was fabricated to look natural in the context of being seen by someone from elsewhere. As Declan McGonagle explained, Hinde built remembrance into postcard views of Ireland. He ‘attempted to make his postcards [of Ireland] correspond more closely to the image of a place which tourists might carry away in their heads. He did this by stage-managing the photograph down to the last detail and then intensifying colours and erasing unwanted details during the post-production phase.’ Intensifying colours, editing compositions to emphasise some features and remove others, and the many additional photographic and post-photographic aspects of creating images of Ireland that Hinde pursued, Hillen maintained if not advanced. Hinde wrote,

Ireland remains one of the few unspoilt countries in Europe. Even its cities have a strangely detached atmosphere as if they lived in a world and an age of their own. Second, throughout much of the year, and particularly during the months of April, May and early June, there is a clarity of atmospheres which enhances the ordinary and makes the beautiful enchanting.  

With its unexplained whale near boaters on the Liffey and a glowing but empty cityscape behind them, *Irelantis* revived Hinde’s Dublin as having a ‘strangely detached atmosphere’ that ‘enhances the ordinary’ to the point that it becomes extraordinary. In *Boating on the Liffey*, Hillen conjured a mood of unreality to integrate the river scene and cityscape. It reminds us of how the nation was

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31 Ralph, “‘Home is where the heart is?’”, 183.
representing itself for visitors who had a memory of Ireland or who would create memories from their visit. The scene suggests a connection between their distance from Ireland in regard to space and time, and representations of the nation promoting Ireland as ordinary yet also extra-ordinary in its difference from elsewhere, such as Europe.

IV Emigrant Nation

What are we to make of Irelantis suggesting that Ireland’s customary boundaries and orders are transgressed? In Boating on the Liffey, Dublin, the mysterious presence of a whale diving under the bridge alludes to a link between the Liffey River and Irish Sea. Although whales have been recorded in Irish waters including near Howth Head and Dalkey Bay close to Dublin, in the collage the appearance of an enormous example, perhaps a humpback, invites us to imagine that the island nation had moved to closer proximity to the sea or another place where such a creature might be glimpsed migrating southward from Norway or Icelandic waters. What may seem like an element of fancy holds political significance. In his geographical study of Ireland, Marcus Heslinga observed that ‘the island aspect [of Ireland] … engages the sea, which functioned as a political boundary like the horizontal political frontier.’32 Reading the whale as a sign that Ireland had proceeded towards the sea to advance through international waters invokes a theme in Irish history regarding sovereignty - the nation has agency to venture into the world and determine its destiny. A related implication is that its borders are porous enough to allow the world to enter into it as a contained curiosity.

In fact, in many scenes Irelantis rehearses the theme of the nation embarking upon new horizons. The collage series suggests Ireland is an island that is capable of moving away from its geographic location. In particular, incongruous visual passages attest to Ireland having travelled to places that heretofore were remote. They reveal Ireland having had the capacity to act in the world, which in the context of the Irelantis series, renders the nation the protagonist in a narrative that represents its actions and, presumably, indexes what results from them across time, from pre-historical and historical eras to the late twentieth century and the end of the world. This turns the tables so that instead of perceiving a nation constructed as a representation for

outsiders, with the possibility that its identity, too, is beholden to places or people located somewhere else, we find evidence of Ireland having contained the world within its borders as it ventured there under its own will.

An interesting example is *The Great Cliffs of Collage Green*, 1997 (Figure 3), which Hillen configured by combining visual references to the west and east coasts of Ireland. The east, he signified with the façade of the east entrance to Trinity College Dublin, established by Queen Elizabeth and symbolising Tudor power in Ireland. However, Hillen removed references to its physical location in central Dublin on College Green and relocated it atop the Cliffs of Moher, using a view long familiar to tourist culture as images of it were circulating in books about Ireland written and published for British and Americans for decades. There, Trinity College marks the highest point on the cliffs by replacing O'Brien’s Tower, built during the nineteenth century to allow Victorian tourists to view the Irish landscape as they faced the Atlantic Ocean and imagined émigrés’ journeys from Ireland to America. Moreover, thus amalgamated, the Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean blend together to form a precipice like the prow of a ship pointing Ireland towards areas as yet unseen.

Many scenes support the interpretation that *Irelantis* depicts Ireland exploring its place in the world. Narratively, this can mean the nation is itinerant either as an essential condition of its being, or that it has embarked on an extended journey, a possibility that aligns *Irelantis* with classical ancient epics treating travel as the event that designates a character as the main protagonist in a narrative. Moreover, the notion of Ireland taking leave of its place can be understood as a counter-narrative. It works to ‘continually evoke and erase its totalising boundaries – both actual and conceptual – [and] disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which “imagined communities” are given essentialist identities.’ Simply put, Ireland on the move is unexpected enough to throw into question a host of assumptions about where it belongs that come from perspectives established in centers of power located elsewhere, such as London or Washington.

After 1949, assumptions linking Ireland’s identity to a geography of political and economic dependence continued to vex the government and intellectuals. Some urged a reduction in Ireland’s dependence on England - ‘To see England as the goal of material hopes is to foster the world of delusions’, while others proposed the United States as a veritable substitute, others again remained

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34 Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York, 1999), 300.
wary.’\textsuperscript{35} ‘The Emigrant Isle: A Flight of Fancy’, a satirical essay J.P. Comyn published in \textit{The Capuchin Annual} for 1950-1, is the mid century commentary that most closely approximates the agency \textit{Irelantis} attributes visually to the Ireland of the post 1949 period. It begins by describing Ireland as an island that is ‘drifting steadily [away] from England in a southwesterly direction’, an event that elicits reaction from the press. Comyn wrote, ‘The \textit{Daily Herald} made a scathing attack on the Conservatives for allowing Ireland to move further away from the “Mother Land”. This marked the beginning of empire disintegration, it alleged’.\textsuperscript{36} Simulating \textit{The Irish Press}, Comyn noted, ‘Ireland is once again making history … and will not lose her place on the map if her people are united.’\textsuperscript{37} He even conjured a statement from the Taoiseach: ‘we do not know where we are going … or where this is likely to end, but … Ireland, in her new found independence, will play an increasingly important part in world affairs.’\textsuperscript{38}

Nearly forty years later, Fredric Jameson theorised that the culture of modern imperialism omits something: ‘a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country.’\textsuperscript{39} In Comyn’s mid-century story, at one time Ireland had been ‘located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis’ of the British Empire, and then it began propelling itself towards its own future, represented by new coordinates in space and place. ‘We must look outward again or die, if only of boredom’, Anthony Cronin urged readers of \textit{The Bell} in 1953.\textsuperscript{40} He hoped to propel the unsettling of longstanding political and cultural identities of ‘peripheral’ and ‘central’ dependent on who is looking, from where, and ‘the subject’s particular sense of how space and place are organised.’\textsuperscript{41} In Comyn’s story about Ireland as an emigrant island, the weather turns colder and a new election is called. On that day it is realised the nation had travelled one thousand miles from its original position and ‘it soon became obvious that Ireland was bound for America.’\textsuperscript{42} Ireland remained at the U.S. border for one month, after which it moved on:

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid.
\item Fredric Jameson, \textit{Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature: Modernism and Imperialism}, Field Day Pamphlet (Derry, 1988), 11.
\item Anthony Cronin, ‘Nationalism and Freedom’, \textit{The Bell}, 18, 11 (1953), 15.
\end{itemize}
‘America very quickly forgot about Ireland after she left, and Europe was no longer particularly interested either.’\textsuperscript{43} In the end, ‘Ireland did not matter any more (except to herself).’\textsuperscript{44}

Jameson would proclaim, ‘It is Empire which stretches the roads out to infinity, beyond the bounds and borders of the national state’.\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Irelantis} rehearses the potential of the nation in forging its own infinity. Moreover, this Ireland stands in for the activity of its citizens, which raises additional questions about Ireland’s relationship with the world. As an emigrant isle, the nation may represent its people in their destitution and corresponding resolve to leave their homeland, feeling as though there is no alternative. Also, it may depart from its home by leaving its accustomed place in the world by choice, as a reflex to seek greater freedom through self-determination. For Comyn, the unlikelihood of the latter scenario may have prompted him to subtitle his essay, ‘A Flight of Fancy.’ Yet Hillen hints that it was an historical reality, perhaps at least as far as ideological metaphors go. Moreover, electing to emigrate is something that closely connected \textit{Irelantis} with Ireland of the late twentieth century.

V The Celtic Tiger Moment

\textit{The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge} (Figure 2) combines postcard and popular culture imagery from the mid and late twentieth century in an urbanscape featuring the area of Dublin depicted in \textit{Boating on the Liffey}. However, instead of showing the city as a still backdrop, \textit{The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge} celebrates Dublin as a bustling commercial district and eschews any hint of the city as primitive or remote. Something else that distinguishes the two scenes is point of view. Rather than locate the viewer close by the Liffey to look upward at the bridge and street crossing, \textit{The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge} places him or her looking down onto the scene sprawling into a hazy screen of trees and soft glowing lights, behind and above which a cluster of dark glass curtain-wall skyscrapers rise dramatically against an orange and slate blue sky. Standing in front is the Bonaventure Hotel of Los Angeles; an icon of postmodern architecture, topic of postmodernism theory and site for events in American movies and television shows.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 261.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 261.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{45} Jameson, \textit{Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature}, 17.}
Like other scenes in *Irelantis*, it is possible to read *The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge* as an allegory about the agency of Ireland involving the nation choosing to leave its traditional location and seek its sovereignty in the wider world. In this episode the proof lies not only with the glass wall skyscrapers that attest to a stop on the west coast of North America, but also with Greece, indicated by the ruins of the ancient Delphic oracle located in the central foreground of the scene, where it squats over the River Liffey. However, the subject matter and Hillen’s formal treatment of it warrant reflecting further about why *The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge* revisited a late twentieth-century dilemma of a homeland having become politically independent and economically strong, yet that finds itself hosting what seems neither indigenous to it, such as skyscrapers, nor congruent with what existed previously, for example, the Greek oracle in contrast to a Celtic heritage. Moreover, Hillen’s placement of what the Ireland of the post-1949 years promoted as a sign of the nation’s vitality – its central geography laced as it was with political history – here, becomes just so much detail. It is crowded by the few remaining standing columns of the oracle in the foreground, and the visually majestic distant skyscrapers, which the edge of the screen, itself consisting of trees and lights, raises up like a celestial transfiguration. It suggests an ancient promise of good fortune that has been achieved or at least deserves veneration.

Intriguingly, the combination of references to different civilisations, and what they signify about the Ireland of *Irelantis* in regard to the Celtic Tiger era, shares something crucial with the Liffey scene – concern about national identity in the context of emigration. However, in contrast to *Boating on the Liffey*, *The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge* recalls people coming into Ireland and bringing the world with it. What supports this interpretation is the status of the scene as an historical index of developments in emigration and immigration.

### VI Immigrant Émigré Nation

Shortly before the Celtic Tiger period, Irish cultural critics perceived a change in Ireland’s relationship with the world that impacted on how it conceived itself. Philosopher Richard Kearney explained, ‘Ireland can no longer be contained within the frontiers of an island. Since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Single European Act, we find ourselves committed to a new “totality of relationships” extending well beyond the limits of the
Kearney emphasised less that Ireland represented itself as the world has interest in it, and more that it conceived itself interacting within an enlarging network. Yet within the network, Ireland still supported inviting wealthier nations to invest and bring work to it.

During the 1990s, as foreign multinational capital increased its presence in Ireland and the economy grew rapidly, Irish cultural and political critics ruminated about the authenticity of the nation’s cultural and ethnic identity and heritage. At issue was Ireland developing a consumer lifestyle beholden to global capitalism spurred by American investment and cultural influence that were eroding and replacing its identity with market ideals. The changes were drawing young people away from the rural countryside to urban centers in Ireland and around the world. Meanwhile, the homeland was occupied by an increasing number of foreign workers from the European Union and citizens from nations aspiring to join it, especially from Eastern Europe but also from China and Africa. While some of the themes were not new in relation to the post-1949 moment, what differed was the degree to which questions about immigration were raised along with those about emigration, including immigration by former emigrants. The latter theme also distinguished the 1990s from the post-1949 discussions, which took Irish émigrés into account as a new tourist market, not as return migrants.

This is not to suggest the Irish did not emigrate in the 1990s. In ‘Fighting the Glossy Spin on Emigration’ Dick Hogan of The Irish Times quoted emigration historian Jim MacLaughlin: ‘Irish youngsters are growing up in an emigrant nursery. Their fate has become acceptable, and their home place no longer has the meaning for them that it does for their contemporaries on the Continent, who expect their country to provide them with a job.’ The “glossy spin” involved having the material choice of buying into the allure of leaving Ireland to live and work abroad for the short or long term. The mid 1990s represented a point when emigration from Ireland began to be outpaced by immigration to Ireland. During the 1990s, ‘more people entered Ireland than left it.’ In 1998, ‘more than half (53 per cent) of all immigrants to Ireland … were Irish nationals, most of whom (43 per cent) were concentrated in the twenty-five

to forty-four age category.\textsuperscript{49} Mary Corcoran studied emigrants with advanced education who were ‘empowered to choose whether or not to stay in Ireland’ and who left Ireland during the 1980s and returned in the next decade. Her research shows that ‘in many instances they have used their time abroad to reinvent themselves in terms of their professional career trajectory.’\textsuperscript{50} The younger emigrants differed from those who left ‘in the context of the Irish labour market and who consequently sought work elsewhere’, such as emigrants of the 1950s and ‘previous generations of Irish emigrants, bounded as they are by structural constraint in the form of economic and social conditions as well as legal barriers.’\textsuperscript{51}

*The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge* beckons and is shaped by returning emigrants of the type Corcoran interviewed who exemplify the ‘transnationally mobile educated élite’ working in ‘primary sector positions in “global” cities.’\textsuperscript{52} It features Dublin’s commercial district charged with signs of mobility. It even seems to unfold as a view from an airplane rather than a boat filled with newly-departing emigrants. In 2002, the Globalization and World Cities Studies Group labelled Dublin an emerging global city, strongly connected as it was to new strength of the Irish economy.\textsuperscript{53} During the mid 1990s its importance grew as did nearby towns that accommodated Dublin’s enlarging workforce.\textsuperscript{54} In Hillen’s work, it segues signs of civilisations of great power – the ancient Greek world, and post-war, multi- and transnational corporate America. This is Dublin having internalised images of transnational mobility and power rooted elsewhere as part of its returning citizens’ cosmopolitan perspective.

Forty years earlier, government officials and intellectuals worried what it meant for Ireland to establish sovereignty in regard to international contexts. In contrast, in the late twentieth century, as Kearney advanced, interaction between Ireland and the world seemed to dissolve Ireland’s borders: ‘the question of what it means to be Irish – who we are and where we are going

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 188 and 189.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 193.
to – cannot be limited to the frontiers of our island. The affirmation of a
dynamic cultural identity invariably involves an exploratory dialogue with
other cultures.\textsuperscript{55} For the earlier period, in government and intellectual quarters,
concerns about Irish identity involved regional and international politics as
well as how to maintain independence while constructing a representation
of Ireland for the world. In the Celtic Tiger period, discussions of national
identity centered on social and political dimensions of Irish culture as Ireland
participated as a member of several global economies. Related paradigms arose
to accommodate the nation’s sense of self into this matrix, such as “post-
nationalist” cultural reconstruction’ that combines “tradition and modernity”
characterising “creative pluralism”.\textsuperscript{56}

If returning emigrants expected a slower and more rural Ireland, Corcoran
holds they found that ‘Ireland itself has been incorporated into the globalising
project of multinational capital.’ In response, they could draw upon their ‘sense
of going abroad to work as primarily a “broadening experience”’ when they
returned and increasingly were ‘forced to negotiate lifestyle choices, or ways
of living, among a diversity of options’ that had become available in Ireland.\textsuperscript{57}

What is more, if returning emigrants ‘increasingly felt the need for some
expressive relationship to the past and for attachment to particular territorial
locations as nodes of association and continuity, bounding cultures and
communities’, they could participate in a revitalised Irish Studies and ruminate
about what belonged or did not belong authentically to Irish culture.\textsuperscript{58} Or,
they could investigate the relationship of Irish history to place vis-à-vis the
National Heritage Act of 1995 promoting ‘public interest in and knowledge,
appreciation and protection of the national heritage’ – ‘archaeological objects,
monuments, buildings, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, architectural heritage, in
other words, things and places that for many years the nation had ignored or
used to attract the world to it.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} Kearney, \textit{Across the Frontiers}, 21.
\textsuperscript{56} Desmond Bell, ‘Ireland without Frontiers? The Challenge of the Communications
Revolution’ in Kearney (ed), \textit{Across the Frontiers}, 219.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 189.
publications/heritage_act. [accessed 23 March 2010].
VII Ireland and Atlantis

This study has inquired how developments in emigration, tourism and immigration associated with recent periods in Irish history contextualise the stress that two scenes in *Irelantis* place on representing Ireland as seen from elsewhere. It has taken into account the scenes’ subject matter, spatial organisation and cultural references, and considered features of the series as a whole. In conclusion, it will briefly consider what the series’ reference to Atlantis contributes to the historical context.

*Irelantis* joins ‘Ireland’ to ‘Atlantis’ and throughout the collages several thematic points of correspondence emerge. Like Atlantis, Ireland is a complex island civilisation having an ancient past. Also like Atlantis, *Irelantis* indicates that location and topography predominate in Ireland’s formation, development, histories and futures. In addition, the Ireland of *Irelantis* knows vulnerability in its existence and is referenced through other cultures.

Legend says that Atlantis originated at the beginning of time. Correspondingly, Hillen depicts Ireland as an island civilisation having an ancient history. Scenes featuring volcanoes and glaciers point to a pre-historic age, which maps the formation of the island onto its emergence as a nation. Some scenes collapse the heavens or outer space into the earth or oceans, thus proposing a time when the earth was formed or when *Irelantis* was created as a celestial and terrestrial body, which also situates the nation in profound moments when the material means of existence came into being. Additionally, Hillen’s conflation of Ireland with Atlantis serves as a method of inquiring about Ireland’s relationship with the world and whether it will suffer a fate like that experienced by Atlantis.

On the one hand, the Ireland of *Irelantis* is like Atlantis insofar as it is real through representations. In regard to Atlantis, one might say everything is tied to land, in other words, to the status of Atlantis as an island having topographical features where gods and goddesses resided. The proof exists in and takes the form of representations in discourses of history and literature. The reality of Atlantis is representations and the ways people trace them from one culture to another and reconstitute and interact with them. While their classification as mythology throws into question their status as an index of a civilisation that actually existed. Some of the same can be said of *Irelantis*’s Ireland. It exists in visual representations from postcards and print media showing the River Liffey, O’Connell Street Bridge, Grafton Street, Henry Street, Temple Bar, St Stephen’s Green, Four Courts, and Trinity College in Dublin; and across
the rest of Ireland there is Johnstown Castle, Newgrange, Knowth, Tara, Lai Fail (the stone of destiny), Clogher Head, Narrow Water, Slieve Gullion and Crater Lake, Carlingford and Carlingford Lough, Narin Strand, Cork, Bantry Bay, the Cliffs of Moher, Knock Shrine, and the mountains of Mayo. Many of the sites relate the Ireland of *Irelantis* to the nation’s ancient myths and pre-history.

Although at first Atlantis was characterised by virtue and control, eventually, it devolved to a corrupt state and Athens destroyed it. Then, as if further punishment for its hubris, earthquakes and floods submerged it into the sea. *Irelantis* stages signs of apocalyptic activity in Ireland, even conflating the beginning and ending of the existence in its treatment of land and seascape, and the views from space and broad arc of time it engages. Combined with grand mountains and volcanoes, its glowing skies with dramatic cloud formations forewarn of eruptions from earth and sky intensified by boiling seas and depictions of waves crashing. Signs of eruptions allude both to divinity and destruction.

Did Hillen join Ireland with Atlantis to suggest the former is like the latter, a marvellous civilisation that became lost to the world through its own depravity? In this context, *Irelantis* reads as a moral allegory warning of a nation that traded autonomy and singularity of moral purpose for greed. The charge corresponds to critiques of Ireland’s development into one of the wealthiest nations in Europe during the Celtic Tiger period.

Yet, what makes the Ireland of *Irelantis* tragic is to see it caught in a false opposition between an essential, enduring nationhood and citizenry, and their vulnerability to destruction and loss caused ostensibly by outside influences that result in Ireland existing only as representations that depict it from elsewhere. For, ‘a map of Ireland that does not include its elsewheres is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the places where Ireland is always landing and returning from.’

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*O’Toole, Black Hole, Green Card*, 19.
Figure 1. Sean Hillen, *Boating on the Liffey, Dublin, Irelantis*, 1996. Private collection.

Figure 2. Sean Hillen, *The Oracle at O’Connell Street Bridge, Irelantis*, 1995. Private collection.
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