

*Journal of
Irish
and Scottish
Studies*

Volume 8: Issue 1

On the Edge

Aberdeen University Press

JOURNAL OF IRISH AND SCOTTISH STUDIES

Volume 8, Issue 1
Autumn 2014

On the Edge

Published by
Aberdeen University Press

in association with

The Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies

ISSN 1753-2396

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne



ABERDEEN
University Press

Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies

General Editor: Cairns Craig

Issue Editors: Eleanor Bell and Aaron Windel

Associate Editor: Michael Brown

Editorial Advisory Board:

Fran Brearton, Queen's University, Belfast

Eleanor Bell, University of Strathclyde

Ewen Cameron, University of Edinburgh

Sean Connolly, Queen's University, Belfast

Patrick Crotty, University of Aberdeen

David Dickson, Trinity College, Dublin

T.M. Devine, University of Edinburgh

David Dumville, University of Aberdeen

Aaron Kelly, University of Edinburgh

Edna Longley, Queen's University, Belfast

Graeme Morton, University of Dundee

Shane Alcobia-Murphy, University of Aberdeen

Ian Campbell Ross, Trinity College, Dublin

Graham Walker, Queen's University, Belfast

International Advisory Board:

Don Akenson, Queen's University, Kingston

Tom Brooking, University of Otago

Keith Dixon, Université Lumière Lyon 2

Marjorie Howes, Boston College

H. Gustav Klaus, University of Rostock

Peter Kuch, University of Otago

Brad Patterson, Victoria University, Wellington

Matthew Wickman, Brigham Young

David Wilson, University of Toronto

The *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* is a peer reviewed journal published twice yearly in autumn and spring by Aberdeen University Press in association with the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies. An electronic reviews section is available on the RISS website at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/issjournal.shtml>

Editorial correspondence, including manuscripts for submission, should be addressed to The Editors, *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, Humanity Manse, 19 College Bounds, University of Aberdeen, AB24 3UG or emailed to: riiss@abdn.ac.uk

Subscription information can be found on www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/publications

Cover image:

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Scottish Poetry in the South Seas: John Barr at the Edge of the Map <i>Liam McIlvanney</i>	5
J. L. P. O’Hanly, Irish Catholic Nationalism, and Canadian State Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century <i>Michael S. McLaughlin</i>	32
Minds on the Edge: Immigration and Insanity among Scots and Irish in Canada, 1867–1914 <i>Marjory Harper</i>	56
Spatial Subversion in Alexander Trocchi’s <i>Young Adam</i> and <i>Cain’s Book</i> <i>Gillian Tasker</i>	80
The Failed Attempts to Implement a Native Rector at the Irish College in Rome, 1773–98 <i>Christopher Korten</i>	100

Sections from The Winds of Vancouver 125
by Kenneth White

Notes on Contributors 171

Editorial

This special edition of JIIS brings together articles that began as papers delivered at the conference ‘On the Edge: Transitions, Transgressions, and Transformations in Irish and Scottish Studies’ convened in Vancouver in June 2013. The conference, which included around seventy papers and several keynote speakers, was hosted by Simon Fraser University and co-sponsored by the Canadian Association for Irish Studies, the Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies, and the University of Aberdeen. The conference included a striking array of papers that were deliberately cross-disciplinary, and many were concerned with questions of space and place, with interactions of communities (especially in diaspora), and with questions of genre and periodization. There was an especially strong focus on the entangled histories and literary cultures of empire and on experiences of migration. The following articles represent some of the very best papers and keynotes delivered in Vancouver from both well-established and up-and-coming scholars.

Liam McIlvanney’s article on the New Zealand poet John Barr (1809-1890) is an expansion of his Conference keynote lecture. The article is an exemplar of the inter-disciplinary character of the conference and shows how much literary analysis has to offer historians concerned with the ‘New British History’ advanced by J. G. A. Pocock. Pocock’s call in the mid-1970s for an exploration of the interactions between peripheral cultures of the British Isles has been taken up by numerous scholars who have worked to destabilize the anglocentrism of much previous historical scholarship and to replace it with an archipelagic focus. Here McIlvanney picks up a neglected thread in Pocock’s critique – that a focus on identities and cultures forged in the interaction of peripheral peoples of the British Isles should also be extended to an ‘oceanic’ perspective and involve those entangled histories of immigrants from the British Isles relocated to colonies. McIlvanney uses the example of John Barr, a poet of Scottish descent working in a ‘Burnsian’ mode, to explore the relationship of Scottish poets to the creation of a New Zealand national literary canon. McIlvanney shows that Barr and other Scottish poets were

left out of national anthologies that privileged English connections, especially after the 1960s, and this exclusion worked to push Scottish poetry ‘to the edge of available maps of New Zealand verse.’ As McIlvanney points out, Barr’s depictions of New Zealand, Otago in particular, are far from a ‘transplanted Scotland’. On the contrary, his use of Scots ‘signals a rootedness in Otago’, a means of transitioning into the new country, far removed from ‘the colonist’s nostalgia for home.’ In foregrounding this example of Barr, McIlvanney then draws attention to the legacy of Lowland Scots and its role as a possible idiom for expression within contemporary New Zealand literature.

Mike McLaughlin explores tensions between Irish nationalism, Canadian nation-building, and settler colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century through the life and writings of J.L.P. O’Hanly, an immigrant Irish nationalist steeped in Canadian politics and whose career as a government land surveyor in Canada involved him in the British-Canadian colonization of aboriginal lands. O’Hanly actively engaged in press debates about Irish nationalism and the relationship of Irish Catholics to a nascent Canadian nation, and much of his advocacy writing was shaped by the context of Fenianism in Canada. O’Hanly had to navigate troubled political waters as he argued in support of Irish nationalism yet sought to distance himself and the Irish Catholic community in Canada from Fenianism, especially in the years immediately after the Fenian raids across the U.S.-Canada border in 1866 when government repression of Fenianism threatened to spill over into blanket repression of all Irish Catholics. During the Irish Home Rule movement as well, O’Hanly supported the cause from Canada. In his private correspondence he acknowledged that Home Rule was not an end goal but only a step on the way to ‘annihilation of the cursed British empire.’ This strident anti-imperialism makes O’Hanly’s own work in service of settler colonialism particularly enigmatic, and McLaughlin argues that O’Hanly’s complicity with empire can be only partly explained as the result of a pragmatic personal interest in finding well-paying work. More important was the fact that O’Hanly, like many Irish immigrants abroad in the British Empire, largely accepted discourses of Western imperialism and its purported civilizing mission.

Marjory Harper’s contribution, also based on a keynote lecture at the Vancouver conference, explores experiences of mental illness for Irish and Scottish immigrants to Canada, especially British Columbia, from the 1860s through the 1910s. Using asylum admission registers that record biographical detail of patients’ lives and reading these alongside a wealth of individual case files (which include doctors’ case notes as well as intimate letters between

patients and their families), Harper is able to evaluate the perceived causes of mental illness among immigrants and to draw conclusions about the consequences of 'migrant insanity.' Here Harper is in conversation with postcolonial scholars who have shown how dependent were settler colonial regimes on maintaining discourses of racial superiority. The figure of mentally ill settlers, Harper explains, belied this discourse, and so mental illness was thought to be a particular threat to the colonial order and required either asylum confinement or expulsion for those labelled 'insane.' Canada deported more immigrants than any other country in the British Commonwealth, and Harper explores how definitions of insanity and doctors' diagnostic practices were central to how the state, under the influence of eugenic science, identified people to be deported. The asylum records show how medical professionals understood and diagnosed mental illness, revealing doctors' preoccupation with race, ethnicity and heredity as causal factors of mental illness as well as doctors' tendency to make moral judgments about their patients. To grasp the experience of immigrant mental illness, Harper probes beyond the question of diagnostic norms and reads across many case files to reveal meaningful patterns in the inner world of migrants' experiences of dislocation and the common 'triggers of mental breakdown.'

Gillian Tasker's article engages theories of space in literature to explore the work of Alexander Trocchi, Glasgow-born writer of the 1950s and 1960s. While Trocchi's work is often associated with French existentialism and the Beat Movement, in this article Tasker focuses on the representation of heterotopic and 'other' spaces in both *Young Adam* (1954) and *Cain's Book* (1960), in order to examine the forms of subversive spatiality in evidence within each text. Referring to the work of both Michel Foucault (on heterotopia) and Gaston Bachelard (on interior space), the article opens out the idea of heterotopia as existential space. As Tasker points out, for Foucault the model of the ship represents 'heterotopia *par excellence*' and this notion of nautical heterotopia fits directly with Trocchi's novels in which the images of the barge and scow feature strongly. In each text there are similarly heterotopic concerns with the mirror, that is, with the image of the reflected self as site of self-disassociation and estrangement. Linked to this, there are also heterotopic readings of the fairground in *Cain's Book*, where 'the heterotopia of the fairground is also the setting for an existential moment on the edge.' A key counter-cultural writer of his age, Trocchi proclaimed himself a 'cosmonaut of inner space'. It is therefore unsurprising that the protagonists of each novel are 'on the edge' in several evident ways. Through an examination of drug culture at the heart

of each novel, Tasker goes on to examine the representation of the heroin hit as site of spatial transformation. In tying these various strands together, Tasker points out that in Trocchi's work 'heterotopia is both the space of, and beyond, the edge.'

The article by Christopher Korten is the only one included here that was not originally presented in Vancouver. We thought it a welcome addition, though, since like many of the papers presented in Vancouver it explores peripheral spaces and events in order to illuminate an historical problem relevant to Ireland. Here Korten offers a fresh view of Irish Catholic education at the end of the eighteenth century by looking to the opposite edge of Europe and to local events and controversies in Rome. Korten's main concern is to explain the failure of a movement to establish an Irish-born Rector at the Irish College in Rome during the three decades following the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 (a failure despite much lobbying by Irish clergy and bishops). Korten goes against the grain of recent scholarship that has characterized Rome's relationship to its Churches in the British Isles as primarily shaped by a struggle for control wherein Rome sought rapprochement with the British Crown in order to deal with their common enemy in the French Revolution and so advised its followers in Ireland to be obedient to the authority of the British Crown. On the thorny issue of establishing a native Rector at the Irish College, Korten shows that such questions of national control and obedience came, at best, second place to much more important local considerations to do with key individuals' interests (especially those of the long-standing Italian Rector, Luigi Cuccagni, and all of the three Italian Cardinal Protectors of the colleges) in maintaining their offices, privileges and authority over the colleges. Through a close reading of petitions from Irish clergy and correspondence between Cuccagni and other officials in Rome, Korten reveals important insights into the local politics of patronage in Rome as well as the theological debates and xenophobia that shaped the native Rector controversy.

The final section of this issue contains extracts from Kenneth White's 'waybook', *The Winds of Vancouver*, which was launched at the Vancouver conference: being 'on the edge' has been fundamental to White's writings throughout his career – both in geographical and in theoretical terms, and we are delighted to be able to include a piece directly relevant both to the theme of the conference and to its location.

Eleanor Bell (University of Strathclyde)
Aaron Windel (Simon Fraser University)

Scottish Poetry in the South Seas: John Barr at the Edge of the Map

Liam McIlvanney

‘I live at the edge of the universe, / like everybody else.’¹ These lines from ‘Milky Way Bar’ by the New Zealand poet Bill Manhire rehearse a gesture that resonates with Scottish and Irish as well as New Zealand experience. That confession of remoteness and isolation – ‘I live at the edge of the universe’ – is countered, after the line-break, by a consolatory punch-line: ‘like everybody else’. Viewed from the cosmic perspective, the poem suggests, we are all in the same boat (‘all earth one island’, as Allen Curnow has it), and the marginality of small peripheral nations becomes – on this view of things – representative, exemplary, central.²

Manhire’s perspective is not a new one in New Zealand poetry. Indeed, his ‘Milky Way Bar’ is in dialogue with an earlier New Zealand poem, R. A. K. Mason’s ‘Sonnet of Brotherhood’, in which Mason founds a precarious human solidarity on the perception of a hostile cosmos, with the earth envisaged as

... this far-pitched perilous hostile place
this solitary hard-assaulted spot
fixed at the friendless outer edge of space.³

A sense of a cosmic isolation and marginality is, we might argue, something that comes naturally to the poet of New Zealand, a country that occupies the ends of the earth, the margins of the map. On the brink of the vast inhuman blue of the Pacific and the blank white page of Antarctica, New Zealand stands at the historical edge of European New World settlement (its founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, dates from 1840), and indeed of human settlement: as Michael King observes, ‘no direct evidence has been found of

¹ Bill Manhire, *Collected Poems* (Manchester, 2001), 146.

² Allen Curnow, ‘Discovery’, *Early Days Yet: New and Collected Poems, 1941–1997* (Manchester, 1997), 217.

³ R. A. K. Mason, *Collected Poems* (1962; repr. Christchurch, 1971), 35.

a human occupation of New Zealand...earlier than the thirteenth century AD'.⁴ As the events of recent years in Christchurch have reminded us, New Zealand is geologically on the edge, at the meeting of the earth's tectonic plates. It is perhaps tempting to read New Zealand's post-*Hobbit* eagerness to rebrand itself as 'Middle Earth' as an attempt to evade its precariously edgy condition.

Implicit in the two poems I have quoted is the suggestion that living on the edge, living with remoteness and distance, enables a perspective in which neglected connections become apparent. This is a lesson that has been absorbed not just by New Zealand's poets but by at least one of that country's historians (and exchanges between poetry and historiography remain vigorous in a country where so many of the historians have been poets – or so many of the poets, historians). It was the *New Zealand Journal of History* that first published what has been called the Magna Carta of the new British history: J. G. A. Pocock's 1974 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', with its call for a more expansive, pluralist and disaggregated approach to the subject.⁵ Over the past four decades, Pocock's manifesto has transformed the writing of British history, effecting – as he hoped – a 'revolution in perspectives'; still, it would be fair to say that some of his recommendations have been more attentively heeded than others.⁶

Pocock's call for a less anglocentric and more archipelagic focus has underwritten the four nations and three kingdoms approaches of the new British history. His reminder that the peripheral cultures of the archipelago have interacted with each other as well as with the metropole has given impetus to the development of comparative Irish-Scottish Studies.⁷ What has been *less* enthusiastically taken up – at least in the field of Scottish Studies – is Pocock's proposal that a new British history should attend closely to the interactions between the Atlantic archipelago and the 'neo-Britains' established by settlement in the southern hemisphere. In Pocock's terms, the archipelagic

⁴ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (North Shore, 2003), 18.

⁵ J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 8.1 (1974), 3–21; reprinted in *Journal of Modern History*, 47 (1975), 601–24, and in J. G. A. Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge, 2005), 24–43. The reference to Pocock's essay as a 'Magna Carta' occurs in Donald Harman Akenson, 'What did New Zealand do to Scotland and Ireland?' in Brad Patterson (ed.), *The Irish in New Zealand* (Wellington, 2002), 189.

⁶ Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands*, 28.

⁷ Liam McIlvanney and Ray Ryan (eds), *Ireland and Scotland: Culture and Society, 1700–2000* (Dublin, 2005), 11–22.

perspective has overshadowed the oceanic perspective.⁸ I want to suggest that, for Scottish Studies – and, quite possibly, for Irish – the oceanic perspective may pay significant dividends.

For New Zealand Studies, too, there are unheeded lessons of Pocock's project. Fifteen years ago, at a conference on the Irish in New Zealand, Donald Akenson observed that New Zealand historians, including James Belich, have tended to homogenise the identity of Pākehā – that is, of those New Zealanders of European, mainly British, descent.⁹ Akenson suggested that two developments – the historiographical disaggregation of Britishness by the new British history, and the constitutional reconfiguration of the United Kingdom via devolution – have rendered this view of a monolithic Pākehā identity archaic and untenable. He predicted that the work of the next generation of New Zealand historians would be 'disaggregative', exploring the 'factionalism, the tessellation, and ... the ethnic and religious fractures' within Pākehā identity.¹⁰

To some extent, the 'disaggregation' predicted by Akenson has taken place. The *New Oxford History of New Zealand* (2009) sets out explicitly to 'complicate' its subject, dissolving 'national identity' as an organizing concept, and exploring how history and identity have been 'made (and remade) along the lines of culture, community, family, class, region, sexuality and gender, among other factors'.¹¹ Similarly, accounts of migration to New Zealand have attended closely to the varieties of Pākehā experience.¹² More, however, remains to be done, not least in studies of literature and culture. My aim in this essay is to bring into focus a body of imaginative writing that combines the two perspectives I have attempted to outline. First, it connects Scotland with

⁸ Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands*, ix-x.

⁹ For his view of Pākehā identity, see James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (1996; repr. North Shore, 2007), 313–37.

¹⁰ Akenson, 'What did New Zealand do to Scotland and Ireland?', 187–9.

¹¹ Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (South Melbourne, 2009), 1, 2.

¹² See, among others: Tom Brooking and Jenny Coleman (eds), *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement* (Dunedin, 2003); Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland* (Auckland, 2008); Angela McCarthy, *Scottishness and Irishness in New Zealand Since 1840* (Manchester, 2010); Lyndon Fraser and Angela McCarthy (eds), *Far From Home: English Migration and New Zealand Settlement* (Dunedin, 2012); Brad Patterson, Tom Brooking and Jim McAloon, *Unpacking the Kists: The Scots in New Zealand* (Dunedin, 2013); Rebecca Lenihan, *From Alba to Aotearoa: Profiling New Zealand's Scots Migrants, 1840–1920* (Dunedin, 2015).

New Zealand, the northern part of the Atlantic archipelago with one of the ‘neo-Britains’ in the south; and, second, it points up some of the faultlines in Pākehā identity. And that body of writing is the Scottish verse tradition in colonial New Zealand.

In January 1848, the Reverend Thomas Burns – the man for whom the Arts Building in my own university is named – recorded the following vignette in his shipboard journal, on board the *Philip Laing*, bound for Otago:

[Q]uite cheering to see the Emigrants all looking so like health & in such good spirits & particularly the children in their boisterous glee... In the evenings on Deck we have songs in which they all join – such as Auld Lang Syne, Banks & Braes o’ Bony Doon...¹³

The songs of Thomas’s uncle Robert no doubt helped the Scottish emigrants feel connected to their homeland as they made their way to the edge of the map. But Burns’s poetry and song, as imitated, customised, adapted by poets in the new colony, also allowed Scottish emigrants to come to terms with their new environment. There is a significant body of Scottish poetry – much of it Burnsian in mode – written in colonial New Zealand. However, this is a body of poetry that has itself, at least since 1960, been pushed very much to the edge of the available maps of New Zealand verse (and remains pretty much *terra incognita* on the maps of Scottish verse). I want, therefore, first to explain how and why the Scottish tradition in New Zealand poetry has come to be marginalised, before going on to consider some examples of Scottish-New Zealand poetry, focusing principally on the writings of John Barr (1809–89). And along the way I hope to provide reasons *why* we might wish to rescue at least some of this poetry from the enormous condescension of Allen Curnow.

The most lastingly influential attempt to establish a canon of New Zealand poetry was undertaken by Curnow in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, published in 1960. Curnow’s selection and his substantial introduction ‘set the tone’ for postwar cultural criticism in New Zealand.¹⁴ Four years earlier, however, in 1956, a now largely forgotten *Anthology of New Zealand Verse*, edited by Robert Chapman and Jonathan Bennett, was published by Oxford

¹³ Diary of Reverend Dr Thomas Burns, Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, accession number 1924/95/1, Manuscript Diary Collection M-08.

¹⁴ Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (eds), *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature* (Auckland, 2012), 3.

University Press.¹⁵ Like Curnow's Penguin book, the Oxford anthology devotes much space to the remarkable efflorescence of New Zealand poetry since the 1930s, in the work of R. A. K. Mason, A. R. D. Fairburn, Denis Glover, Robin Hyde and other poets associated with the Caxton Press and *Phoenix* quarterly. But it also offers a profile of the colonial period in New Zealand verse that is significantly more inclusive than the version canonised in Curnow's Penguin book. I want to begin, then, by looking at the opening section of the Oxford anthology as a kind of 'road not taken' in New Zealand literary studies.

The Oxford book opens – rather safely, we might argue – with a sonnet on 'The Avon' written by Henry Jacobs, the Oxford-educated Anglican Dean of Christchurch Cathedral: 'I love thee, Avon! Though thy banks have known/ No deed of note'.¹⁶ Jacobs praises the river Avon in Christchurch for recalling its Warwickshire namesake ('I love thee for thy English name'), and because 'England's sons' have settled on its shores. Using the venerable, 'Old World' form of the sonnet, Jacobs anticipates a time when the vacant and formless 'new' society will have been disciplined into the familiar, regular patterns of English life. He looks forward (or in some ways looks backward) to the day when an English landscape of 'verdant meads', 'fields of waving grain' and 'Heaven-pointing spires' will have replaced the 'wastes' on Avon's banks. The sentiment of the poem is perhaps best expressed in the concluding line of another Jacobs sonnet: "'Tis England, where an English spirit dwells'.¹⁷

Following Jacobs's opener, the Oxford anthology changes tack with a group of five poems in fairly dense vernacular Scots, using traditional Scots forms (the Christis Kirk stanza and the Burns stanza), by the Renfrewshire poet John Barr, an Otago farmer. Where Jacobs's sonnet looks longingly back to a mythologised England, or forward to Canterbury as it might become, the first Barr poem in the selection celebrates Otago as it already is, and on account of its *difference* to Scotland:

¹⁵ Harvey McQueen describes the Chapman and Bennett book as 'the "forgotten anthology"' in his introduction to McQueen (ed.), *The New Place: The Poetry of Settlement in New Zealand, 1852–1914* (Wellington, 1993), 13.

¹⁶ Robert Chapman and Jonathan Bennett (eds), *An Anthology of New Zealand Verse* (Wellington, 1956), 1.

¹⁷ These two sonnets were first published in a sequence of seven 'Sonnets of the Old Pilgrim Days of the Canterbury Settlement, New Zealand' (a title that evokes the 'Merrie England' of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), in Henry Jacobs, *A Lay of the Southern Cross and Other Poems* (London, 1893), 83–7. The sonnet that refers to 'an English spirit' is entitled 'Patriotism'.

There's nae place like Otago yet,
 There's nae wee beggar weans,
 Or auld men shivering at our doors,
 To beg for scraps or banes.
 We never see puir working folk
 Wi' bauchles on their feet,
 Like perfect icicles wi' cauld,
 Gaun starving through the street.¹⁸

Where Jacobs's Canterbury is an imagined replica of England, Barr's Otago stands only for itself: there is 'nae place' like it. Where Jacobs deploys archaic or poetic diction ('verdant', 'beautify', 'ere long', 'Henceforth') to signal his allegiance to an English idyll, Barr uses Lowland Scots in a repudiation of the Old Country's poverty, destitution and class stratification. Where Jacobs invokes the 'bard of Avon', Barr's poems echo the Bard of Ayrshire (Robert Burns's animal poems inform Barr's 'To My Auld Dog Dash', and the accents of Burns's political verse are audible in Barr's denunciation of the 'purse-proud, upstart, mushroom lord' in 'There's Nae Place Like Otago Yet').

There is, however, a less overt connection between the opening two poems in the Chapman and Bennett anthology. Though it has stood for over a century as a paean to the 'Englishness' of Christchurch, Henry Jacobs's poem is in fact founded on a misconception. The River Avon in Christchurch is not, as Jacobs assumed, named after the river in Warwickshire: 'No bard of Avon hath poured forth in song / Thy tuneful praise'. Instead, the river was named by the pioneering Deans brothers after the River Avon – or Avon Water – in their native Ayrshire.¹⁹ The Jacobs poem therefore has a kind of subterranean connection to those poems of Robert Burns that celebrate Ayrshire's rivers: 'While *Irwin*, *Lugar*, *Aire an' Doon*, / Naebody sings'.²⁰ The New Zealand poem that seems most overtly to celebrate England pays an unconscious tribute to the patriotism of the Scottish pioneers.

Following Barr's five poems, Chapman and Bennett offer extracts from *Ranolf and Amobia* (1872), the vast and 'devastatingly predictable' epic written

¹⁸ Ibid. To 'starve' in Scots ('Gaun staving through the street') can mean to perish of cold as well as hunger.

¹⁹ Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, 'The High Arts in a Regional Culture – From Englishness to Self-Reliance', in John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall (eds), *Southern Capital: Christchurch, Towards a City Biography* (Christchurch, 2000), 300.

²⁰ Robert Burns, 'To W. S*****n, Ochiltree' in James Kinsley (ed.), *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (3 vols; Oxford, 1968), I, 94.

by Alfred Domett, the former New Zealand premier, and a single poem by Frederick Napier Broome, before another group of ‘Scottish’ poems by Jessie Mackay.²¹ Born in the Canterbury hill country to Scottish parents, Mackay worked as a schoolteacher and journalist, and distinguished herself not only as a poet but as a strenuous advocate of causes as diverse as women’s suffrage, prohibition, Scottish and Irish nationalism and vegetarianism. Her oeuvre encompasses poems on Scottish themes and imaginative reworkings of Māori mythology. In the Oxford anthology she is represented by two poems in Scots: the balladesque ‘Maisrie’ (‘Maisrie sits in the Gled’s Nest Tower, / A her lane in the fine June weather’); and the stirringly indignant ‘For Love of Appin’ (‘They tore us oot o’ Scotland, they flang us in the west, / Like a bairn’s thread o’ beads, an’ we downa look for rest’), as well as ‘The Burial of Sir John Mackenzie’, in praise of an eminent Scottish New Zealander. The Mackay poems are followed, in the Oxford book, by a selection of similar size from William Pember Reeves, the statesman and historian, including his classic rumination on the shifting co-ordinates of ‘home’, ‘A Colonist in His Garden’.

In its accommodation of Scottish and English colonial verse on something like equal terms, the Oxford anthology stands as a kind of literary embodiment of the ‘Better Britain’ that New Zealand so often aspired to be, a place where the Scots are more equally represented than in Britain itself and contribute on more equal terms to a common endeavor.²² In their selections, Chapman and Bennett make no attempt to enforce a singular idiom of New Zealand poetry: rather, the English and the Scottish traditions are presented as complementary modes of New Zealand verse. This is an anthology in which we can move from William Stenhouse’s ‘The Empty Jar’ (‘Parritch, pease-brose, an’ whusky bauld, / Tae fend us frae the bitin’ cauld’) to Katherine Mansfield’s elegantly menacing ‘Sanary’ (‘Her little hot room looked over the bay / Through a stiff palisade of glinting palms’) with no implication that these are warring modes or that one must in time supplant the other.²³

Tellingly, the inclusion of Scots-language poetry by Chapman and Bennett is no innovation. The first anthology ‘devoted to surveying New Zealand verse from its beginnings’²⁴ was W. F. Alexander and A. E. Currie’s *New Zealand*

²¹ MacDonald P. Jackson, ‘Poetry: Part One: Beginnings to 1945’ in Terry Sturm (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* (2nd edn; Auckland, 1998), 414. For a more sympathetic reading of Domett, see Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature, 1872–1914* (Wellington, 2006), 23–56.

²² On ‘Better Britain’, see, among others, Belich, *Making Peoples*, 297–312.

²³ Chapman and Bennett (eds), *An Anthology of New Zealand Verse*, 59–61.

²⁴ Robert Chapman, ‘Introduction’ in *ibid.*, xix.

Verse, published in 1906 in the popular ‘Canterbury Poets’ series, with a second edition in 1926. In this, the ‘first national anthology’, Scots-language verse by John Barr, Jessie Mackay, Catherine H. Richardson and William Stenhouse is interspersed with the ‘English’ poetry of Reeves, Domett, Broome and others.²⁵ In their introduction, Alexander and Currie observe that the specific circumstances of New Zealand poetry – the fragmentation of literary culture among a dispersed and isolated population, the absence of literary coterie, the lack of an acknowledged leader – has prevented the emergence of a ‘distinctive school’ of New Zealand poetry and that, in consequence, ‘each writer is a law unto himself in the choice of models, and responds to influences flowing anywhere out of the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature’. The use of Scots language and forms in New Zealand verse reflects not simply the geographical origins and influences of the new country’s poets but their engagement with local materials and themes; among the most successful versifications of Māori myths and legends, according to Alexander and Currie, have been those ‘modelled... on the old English or Scottish folk-ballads’.²⁶

That Scots verse should form an integral part of the New Zealand canon is no surprise. Arguably the ‘first New Zealand poem in English’ is Thomas Campbell’s ‘Song of the Emigrants to New Zealand’, written half a world away as a ‘fantasy portrayal’ of the new colony.²⁷ More importantly, the first book of poetry published in the country – and one explicitly conceived as a contribution towards a new ‘national’ literature – was William Golder’s *New Zealand Minstrelsy* of 1852, written by an immigrant from Strathaven, and consisting largely of ‘colonial’ lyrics set to old Scots melodies.²⁸ There is often an intriguing blend of ‘here’ and ‘there’ in the titles and the tunes of Golder’s songs: ‘Erratonga’ (Tune – *Maid of Islay*); ‘A Bushranging’ (Tune – *Come O’er the stream, Charlie*), and indeed in his customising of Scottish lyrics: ‘Will ye come

²⁵ Jackson, ‘Poetry: Part One: Beginnings to 1945’, 405.

²⁶ W. F. Alexander and A. E. Currie (eds), *New Zealand Verse* (London, 1906), xx, xxviii; idem, *A Treasury of New Zealand Verse, Being a New Edition of “New Zealand Verse”* (Auckland, 1926). On Alexander and Currie, see Alan Mulgan, ‘The Anthologists’, *Great Days in New Zealand Writing* (Wellington, 1962), 41–52.

²⁷ Jane Stafford, “‘No cloud to hide their dear resplendencies’”: The Uses of Poetry in 1840s New Zealand’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 28 (2010), 13, 15.

²⁸ On the ‘national’ dimension to Golder’s project, see Brian Opie, ‘*The New Zealand Minstrelsy* (1852): William Golder and the Beginnings of a National Literature in New Zealand’, *Victorian Poetry*, 44 (2006), 273–92. On Golder more generally, see the biographical essay in Brian Opie’s electronic edition of *The Poetry of William Golder*, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-golder.html> [accessed 21 April 2013].

to Waiwetū, bonny lassie, O'; 'Let's go a bushranging, thou fairest of lassies'. As John Barr and Dugald Ferguson would later do, Golder transposes Burns's 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' to New Zealand in 'The Bushman's Harvest Home'. There are poems in Scots dialect – 'Colonial Courtship' and 'An Old Bachelor's Soliloquy on His First Honeymoon' – and the *Minstrelsy* reprints a selection of poems from Golder's earlier volume, *Recreations for Solitary Hours*, published while the author was still resident in Scotland. The first book of New Zealand verse, then, carries an appendix of Scottish poems, including a vernacular ballad called 'Donald's Return', 'A Translation of an Episode in Ossian', 'The Flowers of Clyde', 'Sweet Home' ('All hail! Caledonia, dear to my breast; / Sweet land of my fathers, in thee how I'm blest'), and an ode celebrating the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill in which Golder echoes Burns's 'Scots Wha Hae' ('And rather choosed the gory bed, / Than yield to abject slavery'). And this 'Scottish' New Zealand book did not lack the seal of official approval: Golder's subscription list is headed by 'His Excellency SIR GEORGE GREY, K. C. B.' (Governor of New Zealand), and 'A. Domett, Esq., Colonial Secretary'.²⁹

And Golder was not alone. Among the poets who, as E. H. McCormick says, flourished like imported weeds in colonial New Zealand, Scots were strongly represented.³⁰ Taking 'New Zealand Scottish poetry' to encompass the work of New Zealand poets who were born in Scotland, or whose Scottish ancestry is pertinent to their poetry, and who deploy some degree and variety of the Scots language in at least some of their work, the roster of such poets would include, alongside Golder, figures like John Barr, William Hogg, Alan Clyde, John Blair, Dugald Ferguson, John MacLennan, Andrew Kinross, Jessie Mackay, Catherine H. Richardson, William Stenhouse and Hugh Smith.

The 'Scottishness' of this body of verse is evinced through its themes (panegyrics on Wallace, Bruce, Knox and Burns, blustery incarnations of 'Unionist Nationalism'), through its use of the Scots language, traditional Scottish stanza forms (especially the Burns stanza and the Christis Kirk stanza), and characteristic Scottish genres like the last testament and the mock elegy, as well as in its frequent allusion to the works of Burns and Scott.³¹ The

²⁹ William Golder, *New Zealand Minstrelsy: Containing Songs and Poems on Colonial Subjects* (Wellington, 1852).

³⁰ E. H. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1940), 51.

³¹ On 'Unionist Nationalism', see Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* (East Linton, 1999); for examples of the mock elegy, see John Barr's 'Otago's Misfortune', *Otago Witness*, 13 July 1861, and John Blair's 'Dr S[tuar]t', *Lays of the Old Identities* (Dunedin, 1889), 80–2.

connection to Scotland is also evident in matters of publication. John Barr's *Poems and Songs, Descriptive and Satirical* (1861) was published in Edinburgh; William Stenhouse's *Lays from Maoriland* (1908) was published in Paisley; some of John MacLennan's work appeared in the *Ross-shire Journal*, while Jessie Mackay's poems featured in Glasgow's *Celtic Monthly*.

Alongside this Scottish dimension, these poets enjoyed a celebrity that was intensely local. As McCormick observes, many of these early poets were community bards or 'poet-entertainers' who wrote topical occasional verse on local themes, read them at social gatherings, and published them in local newspapers.³² As with the 'Rhyming Weavers' of Ulster, placenames tended to affix themselves to these poets, John Barr of Craigielee being the most notable instance. And their title pages often emphasise community affiliations: Barr appears as the 'Poet to the Caledonian Society of Otago', William Stenhouse as 'President of the Dunedin Burns Club'. Tellingly, however, neither the Scottishness of this poetry, nor its localism, prevented its absorption – at least in the case of John Barr and Jessie Mackay – into the canon of New Zealand poetry as formulated in the country's early anthologies.

So what changed? To a large extent, the eclipse of the Scottish verse tradition in New Zealand can be related to the rise of cultural nationalism in the mid-twentieth century, and specifically to the work of Allen Curnow. Born in 1911, educated in Christchurch, Curnow became one of New Zealand's most accomplished poets (winner of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry) and cultural arbiters. He worked as a journalist in the 1930s and 1940s, having abandoned his training for the Anglican priesthood, and then, between 1951 and his retirement in 1976, he taught in the English Department at Auckland University. Curnow was one of a group of mid-century writers and intellectuals who aimed to forge an autonomous national literature in a postcolonial New Zealand emerging as an independent Pacific nation. 'New Zealand doesn't exist yet,' Curnow wrote in 1945, 'though some possible New Zealands glimmer in some poems and on some canvases. It remains to be created – should I say invented – by writers, musicians, artists, architects, publishers ...'³³ Some of the impetus for this cultural nationalism came from New Zealand's centennial in 1940, and key developments around this period would include: the publication of E.H. McCormick's *Letters and Art in New Zealand* (1940); the emergence of the Caxton Press poets in the 1930s and 1940s; the estab-

³² McCormick, *Letters and Art*, 52–3.

³³ *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, 1945.

lishment of the literary journal *Landfall* in 1947; the New Zealand Writers Conference in Christchurch in 1951; and Keith Sinclair's 1959 *History of New Zealand* with its determination to 'bring home to New Zealanders a fact which they have not always seemed to regard as important: New Zealand is in the Pacific'.³⁴ Curnow's own contribution – in addition to his original poems on national identity – was his nation-building anthologies: *A Book of New Zealand Verse, 1923–45*, published by the Caxton Press in 1945, and, more pertinently, *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, published in 1960. The selections and the substantial introductions to these two anthologies did more than anything else to establish the canon of New Zealand literature for the rest of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

It is widely acknowledged that Curnow savagely winnows the colonial period in his Penguin anthology, ruling that a 'handful of poems – not poets' – are all that can be 'salvaged' (his word) from the decades before the 1930s, helping to ensure that the colonial period in New Zealand literature – unlike the colonial period in Canadian or Australian literature – suffers a 'critical eclipse'.³⁵ What has *not* been widely noted is that the colonial poets saved by Curnow happen to be Canterbury Anglicans like Curnow himself, while the poets who vanish include all of New Zealand's Scottish poets. In effect, Curnow excises a whole mode – that of Scottish vernacular verse – from the New Zealand poetic canon. Even if later commentators seem unaware of this gambit, Curnow himself is conscious that jettisoning an entire strand of the colonial tradition represents a radical departure, and he takes time in his introduction to justify his exclusion of the Scottish poets.³⁶

Curnow distinguishes between educated English 'colonist-poets' like Edward Treagar and Alfred Domett, and vulgar Scottish 'colonist-versifiers' like Barr and Mackay. Barr he describes as a purveyor of cheap sentiment, a local bard whose 'Scots-colonial *parritch* is watery gruel at the best'. He attacks Jessie Mackay for her 'graceless botching of Scots and English locutions' and both Barr and Mackay for 'affected' use of Scottish dialect. He seems determined not merely to dismiss but to anathematise Scots poetry and clearly intends his exclusion of the Scots vernacular mode to be conclusive: 'It is schizoid writing,' he says of the poetry of Barr and Mackay, 'and I call it

³⁴ Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmondsworth, 1959), 295.

³⁵ *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, 3.

³⁶ Oddly, at the same time as he was excising the Burns tradition from the canon of New Zealand verse, Curnow was proofreading the great monograph on Robert Burns written by his Auckland colleague, Tom Crawford; see Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* (1960; repr. Edinburgh, 1994), v.

ghost-poetry, as we speak of the ghost-towns of long abandoned goldfields, husks without a past or a posterity'.³⁷

Curnow is effectively declaring that the Scottish vernacular mode is no longer fit for habitation by New Zealand poets. It is a historical relic, a 'ghost-town' that can support no life. To argue that the Scottish poetry of New Zealand is 'without a past' is, of course, demonstrably wrong, as that poetry draws on a tradition of lowland vernacular verse stretching back to the Middle Ages; to declare that it lacks a 'posterity' overlooks the series of vernacular poets – including John MacLennan, Alan Clyde and John Blair – who emerge in Barr's wake. In one important respect, however, Curnow *was* able to influence posterity. The prestige of his Penguin anthology effectively excised Scottish voices from the New Zealand canon. When Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen edited a new *Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* in 1985, the exclusion of the Scots vernacular tradition, which Curnow at least felt compelled to justify, was now silently assumed.³⁸ There may be *99 Ways into New Zealand Poetry*, to quote the title of Paula Green and Harry Ricketts' lively 2010 handbook, but the Scots language and the Scottish verse tradition are apparently no longer among them.³⁹ And even the massive new *Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature* (2012), which explicitly aims to redress the 'critical eclipse' of the colonial period, finds room for only a single poem by Barr.⁴⁰

It would be wrong to suggest that Curnow's verdict on colonial literature has gone completely unchallenged. 2006 saw the publication of *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature, 1872–1914*, a seminal reassessment of the colonial period,

³⁷ Allen Curnow (ed.), *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (Harmondsworth, 1960), 26, 31–2.

³⁸ Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (eds), *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (Auckland, 1985). The omission of Scots is all the more striking since Ian Wedde opens his introductory essay with the observation that '[t]he history of a literature with colonial origins is involuntarily written by the language, not just in it'; *ibid.*, 23. Wedde's co-editor does, however, include a generous selection of eight Barr poems in his more specialised anthology, McQueen (ed), *The New Place*.

³⁹ Paula Green and Harry Ricketts, *99 Ways into New Zealand Poetry* (Auckland, 2010). While there are a handful of references to Jessie Mackay, her Scots idiom is not discussed. John Barr, the most accomplished exponent of Scots vernacular verse in colonial New Zealand, does not even feature in the index, and the editors' prefatory remark that they 'have only explored poems written in English as neither of us are experts on the other languages of New Zealand (in particular Māori)' forecloses an engagement with – or even recognition of – Scots as one of the idioms of New Zealand poetry. *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁰ *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, 3. The Barr poem included is 'New Zealand Comforts', 59–60.

written by Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (the editors of the new Auckland anthology). Stafford and Williams take issue with the notion of a homogeneous or ‘consolidated settler identity’, pointing to important cultural faultlines between English, Scottish and Irish settlers. However, though *Maoriland* contains a chapter on Jessie Mackay, in which the authors present Mackay’s ‘Celtic nationalism’ as a challenge to perceptions of a monolithic Pākehā identity, they ignore the more radical challenge posed by the Scottish vernacular tradition.⁴¹ *Maoriland*’s starting date of 1872 is too late for Barr, who does not feature in the index. Even in this extensive reassessment of colonial literature, Curnow’s exclusion of the Scottish vernacular mode holds good.

Why, then, did Allen Curnow expel the Scots from the garden of New Zealand verse? Given his sniffy reference to ‘Scots-colonial *parritch*’, it may be tempting to convict Curnow – son of an Anglican clergyman, raised in the ‘English’ city of Christchurch by an English mother and grandmother, and given to describing England as ‘the other island’ – of vulgar Scottophobia, but there is more to Curnow’s exclusion of the Scots than simple ‘national’ jealousy.⁴² Rather, in conformity to Curnow’s ‘essentially programmatic’ conception of New Zealand poetry, the colonial poets in the Penguin anthology articulate a particular vision of New Zealand and of the colonial experience: that of man alone, confronting a hostile and unfathomable wilderness.⁴³ The poems that open Curnow’s anthology dwell obsessively on the dreadful quiet of New Zealand (‘All still, all silent, ’tis a songless land’), what Edward Tregar in ‘Te Whetu Plains’ calls the ‘awful Silences’ and ‘ghastly peace’ of the new land. There is a kind of Colonial Gothic concentration on eerie moonlit landscapes, of which Charles Bowen’s ‘Moonlight in New Zealand’ is only the most overt instance.⁴⁴ This morbid, sometimes ‘uncanny’ landscape dominates the poems in Curnow’s selection, as in the ‘endless, fading plain, how white and still’ of William Pember Reeves’s ‘Nox Benigna’, or in Arthur H. Adams’s bleak rewriting of ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’, ‘The Dwellings of our Dead’:

They lie unwatched, in waste and vacant places,
In somber bush or wind-swept tussock spaces,

⁴¹ Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland*, 15–16, 57–84.

⁴² Alan Roddick, *Allen Curnow* (Wellington, 1980), 59.

⁴³ William Broughton, ‘Curnow’s Anthologies and the Strange Case of Walter D’Arcy Cresswell’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 15 (1997), 27.

⁴⁴ On the landscape as the locus of the ‘New Zealand uncanny’, see Edmund G. C. King, ‘Towards a Prehistory of the Gothic Mode in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand Writing’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 28 (2010), 39.

Where seldom human tread
And never human trace is –
The dwellings of our dead!⁴⁵

This vision of New Zealand's awful stillness, silence, emptiness, deadness, chimes with Curnow's own mythology of New Zealand, embodied in a poem like 'House and Land' from 1941, where Curnow's devastating portrait of a stagnant Kiwi homestead ends by observing

. . . what great gloom
Stands in a land of settlers
With never a soul at home.⁴⁶

'Never a soul at home': this trope of homelessness is Curnow's master image of the settler condition. Curnow's argument, in both the Caxton and the Penguin anthologies, is that the nineteenth-century colonists 'achieved their migration bodily, but not in spirit'. The trauma of the move to so distant a clime, and the shock of confronting an alien scene, led to a 'recoil of imagination from realities'.⁴⁷ Increasingly divorced from the actuality of the old country, the settlers 'clung to the England of colonial figment and fantasy'. It took up to four generations for New Zealand poets to begin to see, record, imagine the world at their feet, and they could only do so by decisively breaking with the mother country. Until that happened, until poets learned the 'trick of standing upright here' (to quote another Curnow poem), all that the nineteenth-century poet could offer was the 'colonist's nostalgia for home'.⁴⁸

Now, putting the matter as charitably as possible, one would have to conclude that Curnow's depiction of the colonial poet as nostalgic, alienated and solitary rather fails to meet the case of New Zealand's Scottish poets, whether we are dealing with the 'communitarian lyrics' of William Golder, the

⁴⁵ *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960), 112.

⁴⁶ Allen Curnow, 'House and Land', *Island and Time* (Christchurch, 1941), 21.

⁴⁷ *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960), 20. Intriguingly, Keith Sinclair, in a lecture delivered the year Curnow's Penguin anthology was published, uses a similar formulation in describing colonial New Zealand: 'The life of New Zealand Europeans was lived here physically, but mentally they acted as though Wellington or Canterbury was an English county and not a Province of New Zealand'; Keith Sinclair, 'Life in the Provinces' in Keith Sinclair (ed.), *Distance Looks Our Way: The Effects of Remoteness on New Zealand* (Auckland, 1961), 41.

⁴⁸ *A Book of New Zealand Verse, 1923–45*, 21, 37.

vigorous regional verse of Alan Clyde, the political ballads of Jessie Mackay, the documentary anecdotes of John Blair, or the songs and satires of John Barr.⁴⁹ Settling blithely into a landscape that often seemed familiar – the ‘Otago hills and sea coast are not unlike the hills and sea coast of Argyllshire’ – and participating in a lively associational culture of Burns Clubs, Caledonian Societies and Highland Games, poets like John Barr simply bear no relation to Allen Curnow’s ‘deeply held personal fiction of the spiritual isolation of New Zealanders’.⁵⁰ And it is to the poetry of John Barr that I now wish to turn.

Born in 1809 in the manufacturing town of Paisley in the western lowlands, a burgh noted as a centre of handloom weaving and political radicalism, John Barr trained as an engineer and established the Clydeside shipbuilding firm of Barr and McNab. When the firm folded following ‘contract failures’, Barr, then in his mid-forties, emigrated with his family to Dunedin, landing in 1852, and reinvented himself as a farmer, first at Halfway Bush and then at Kaihiku near the Clutha River where he named his property ‘Craigielee’ after the wood north-west of Paisley.⁵¹ ‘You can’t fell timber with one hand and write a tale with the other,’ says Kipling in his New Zealand story, but you *can* write poetry.⁵² The bulk of Barr’s poetry appears in the 250 pages of his *Poems and Songs, Descriptive and Satirical*, published in Edinburgh in 1861, though he also published a short pamphlet of *Poems*, mainly written for the Caledonian Society, in 1874. Barr’s often topical and satirical verse, some of it published first in the columns of the *Otago Witness*, won him a local celebrity and a recognised place in Otago’s public life. He is, in Ronda Cooper’s words, the ‘poet laureate of early Otago’.⁵³

Barr’s poetic stock has fallen rather precipitously since the days when his fellow townsmen feted him as the equal of Burns, and T.M. Hocken rhapsodised about his ‘perfect versification’.⁵⁴ Modern commentators have been

⁴⁹ Opie, ‘*The New Zealand Minstrelsy* (1852)’, 281–2.

⁵⁰ James K. Baxter, *Recent Trends in New Zealand Poetry* (Christchurch, 1951), 7; idem, *Aspects of Poetry in New Zealand* (Christchurch, 1967), 16. On Scottish associational culture in New Zealand, see Tanja Bueltmann, *Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850–1930* (Edinburgh, 2011).

⁵¹ Ronda Cooper, ‘Barr, John’, from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 30-Oct-2012: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1b7/barr-john> [accessed 20 April 2013]; Jenny Robin Jones, *Writers in Residence: A Journey with Pioneer New Zealand Writers* (Auckland, 2004), 177–9.

⁵² Rudyard Kipling, ‘One Lady at Wairakei’ (1892) in *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, 201.

⁵³ Cooper, ‘Barr, John’.

⁵⁴ Thomas Morland Hocken, *Contributions to the Early History of New Zealand* (London,

more muted in their approval. Even those who question Curnow's patrician dismissal of Barr tend to damn the 'Craigielee' with faint praise. For Keith Sinclair, Barr is the best of the local bards who flourished in the early colonial settlements.⁵⁵ E. H. McCormick approves of Barr's 'neat' verses, with their 'muscular quality' and their 'vivid and concrete' dialect phrases.⁵⁶ J. C. Reid suggests that Barr's 'simple, homely verse' represents the 'first successful use in New Zealand of the Scots dialect'.⁵⁷ Robert Chapman credits Barr's poems with 'energy and relevance'.⁵⁸ And Mac Jackson considers that the 'rough struggles of pioneering life are caught in [Barr's] rhythms and diction', and finds that Barr's 'demotic' poetry remains more readable – though not, we should add, more read – than the 'hieratic' verses of Charles C. Bowen and Frederick Napier Broome.⁵⁹ All commentators on Barr concur, quite properly, that his most successful work is in his satires.⁶⁰

How, then, does Barr measure up to Curnow's description of the colonial poet? Certainly, Curnow's presumption that the colonial poet must be mired in nostalgia still colours the reception of Barr. In a 1997 issue of the Hocken Library's *Bulletin* devoted to Scottish resources, the writer briefly discusses *Neptune's Toll* by John MacLennan, before introducing a list of Scots poetry volumes with the words: 'other collections of nostalgia and dialect include...'⁶¹ The first item in this list is Barr's *Poems and Songs*. Similarly, the *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* (1998) presents Barr as one of a 'whole school of homesick Otago settler poets' inspired by Burns, while a major new study of the Scots in New Zealand places Barr among a school of 'local poets' concerned with 'purveying sentimental nostalgia'.⁶²

As we saw in 'There's Nae Place like Otago Yet', Barr's vision of the industrial lowlands from which he fled is infernal rather than idyllic. His enthusiasm for Otago, as Ronda Cooper notes, is often 'grounded in a grim retrospection'.⁶³

1898), 200.

⁵⁵ Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, 4th edn (Auckland, 1991), 106.

⁵⁶ McCormick, *Letters and Art*, 55–7.

⁵⁷ J. C. Reid, *Creative Writing in New Zealand: A Brief Critical History* (Auckland, 1946), 13.

⁵⁸ Chapman, 'Introduction', xx.

⁵⁹ Jackson, 'Poetry: Part One: Beginnings to 1945', 412.

⁶⁰ McCormick, *Letters and Art*, 56; Reid, *Creative Writing in New Zealand*, 13; Jackson, 'Poetry: Part One: Beginnings to 1945', 411.

⁶¹ 'Memories of Auld Scotland', *Bulletin of the Friends of the Hocken Library*, 21 (1997), 4.

⁶² Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (eds), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* (Melbourne, 1998), 80; Brad Patterson, Tom Brooking and Jim McAloon, *Unpacking the Kists: The Scots in New Zealand* (Montreal & Kingston, 2013), 252.

⁶³ Cooper, 'Barr, John'.

This is certainly the case in ‘New Zealand Comforts’, where Barr speaks in the voice of an emigrant handloom weaver contrasting his present felicity with the bad old days at home:

Nae mair the laird comes for his rent,
 For his rent, for his rent,
 Nae mair the laird comes for his rent,
 When I hae nocht to pay, sirs.
 Nae mair he’ll tak me aff the loom,
 Wi’ hanging lip and pouches toom,
 To touch my hat, and boo to him,
 The like was never kent, sirs.

But now it’s altered days, I trow,
 A weel I wat, a weel I wat,
 The beef is tumbling in the pat,
 And I’m baith fat and fu’, sirs.
 At my door cheeks there’s bread and cheese,
 I work or no’, just as I please,
 I’m fairly settled at my ease,
 And that’s the way o’t noo, sirs.⁶⁴

What is notable here is the way Barr takes that familiar elegiac refrain, ‘No more’, a staple of poetic lamentation that goes back at least to Lucretius’s ‘non iam domo ...’ (‘No more now will your happy home welcome you ...’), and uses it not to mourn a vanished world, but rather to consign it to happy oblivion.

The Otago celebrated by Barr is not a transplanted Scotland, but a place where a popular Scottish ideal – the Burnsian idyll of a ‘quiet competency, a moderate independency’ secured by wholesome labour – is more readily achieved than in the Old Country.⁶⁵ This is why, when Barr comes to write his New Zealand version of ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’ – ‘There’s Nae Place Like our Ain Fireside’ – there is no backward glance to Burns’s Scotland. Barr

⁶⁴ John Barr, *Poems and Songs, Descriptive and Satirical* (Edinburgh, 1861), 226–7.

⁶⁵ The phrase is from the Rev. Thomas Burns, *A Discourse, Delivered in the Church of Otago, On Friday, the 23rd of March, 1849, Being a Day of Public Thanksgiving, Humiliation and Prayer, and the Anniversary of the Arrival of the First Party of Settlers* (Dunedin, 1849), 5; but the sentiment is common in the poetry of his uncle.

describes the familiar domestic idyll – the toil-worn patriarch in his ‘humble cot’, his fireside armchair surrounded by playing children and his ‘kind and braw’ wife – but set in the ‘fragrant bush’ of Otago.⁶⁶ The poem is much shorter than its model – four stanzas to Burns’ twenty-one – as if the virtues of southern New Zealand do not require to be laboured:

Otago boasts her valleys green,
 Her hills and fertile plains,
 Where scenes like this are often seen,
 Spread o’er her wide domains;
 Where happy hearts make happy homes,
 Where plenty reigns supreme,
 ’Tis worthy of the painter’s eye,
 And of the poet’s theme.

It is not that the nostalgic note is entirely absent from Barr’s verse. In songs like ‘Grub Away, Tug Away’ or ‘The Grubbin o’t’, the backbreaking labour involved in clearing a section of bush can make Scotland look like a lost Eden.⁶⁷ So too there are songs in which the memories of ‘youthfu’ days’ produce the usual lachrymose issue: ‘Thy very name, O Scotia dear, / Brings saut tears to my e’e’.⁶⁸ What is remarkable, however, is how comparatively rare such moments are in Barr’s oeuvre – much rarer, for instance, than in the work of Barr’s near-contemporary and fellow-Renfrewshire exile Alexander McLachlan, ‘the Burns of Canada’.⁶⁹ And even where Barr does bemoan his absence from Scotland, as in ‘The Yellow Broom’, he also celebrates the landscape before his eyes: ‘O weel I lo’e the woody glen / Whaur pours the roarin’ linn’, are lines that – despite their Scottish topographical vocabulary – refer to Otago, not Scotland.

And Scottish vocabulary is very much to the point in these poems. The lazy coupling of ‘nostalgia and dialect’ by certain commentators masks the extent to

⁶⁶ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 18–19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 149–50; 164–7.

⁶⁸ ‘The Yellow Broom’ in *ibid.*, 82–3.

⁶⁹ On McLachlan, see: Edward J. Cowan, ‘Alexander McLachlan: The “Robert Burns” of Canada’ in Patrick Scott and Kenneth Simpson (eds), *Robert Burns and Friends: Essays by W. Ormiston Roy Fellows presented to G. Ross Roy* (Columbia, 2012), 131–49; Elizabeth Waterson, *Rapt in Plaid: Canadian Literature and Scottish Tradition* (Toronto, 2001), 24–7; Elizabeth Waterson, ‘The Lowland Tradition in Canadian Literature’ in W. Stanford Reid (ed.), *The Scottish Tradition in Canada* (Toronto, 1976), 208–11.

which settler poets used Scots to assert a rootedness in their new homeland that was not available through standard English. The comparison with the Ulster ‘Rhyming Weavers’ is instructive here. In ‘The Course of Writing in Ulster’, John Hewitt distinguishes between the writing of ‘colonial’ verse by English settlers and the writing of ‘vernacular’ verse by Ulster-Scots planters which ‘began, by comparison with the English colonial, to appear a rooted activity’.⁷⁰ As the lingua franca of a global empire, English had in effect been ‘deterritorialised’. Scots, by contrast, was associated with commitment to a particular locale; however, because Scots was also throughout the nineteenth century viewed as a ‘literary standard that non-Scots can write’, it could be readily exported to serve as a marker of belonging in other parts of the world.⁷¹ Scots thus becomes, in the nineteenth-century Anglophone world, a global language of locality.

Typically, Barr’s Scots signals a rootedness in Otago – ‘I wark nae mare wi’ grubbin’ hoe, / But whistle at the pleugh’ – instead of a longing for Scotland.⁷² In this sense, Barr fits very ill with the image of the homesick poetic exile. No more is he, like Curnow’s colonial poets, a hapless man alone, alienated from a hostile and terrifying environment. The man alone topos, named for Alan Mulgan’s 1939 novel, is a powerful element in New Zealand literature and criticism.⁷³ In a recent monograph, *The Lonely and the Alone: The Poetics of Isolation in New Zealand Fiction* (2011), Doreen D’Cruz and John C. Ross argue that isolation (or aloneness) forms a kind of master-trope or ‘informing symbol’ in New Zealand writing, comparable to the topos of the frontier in American literature, and it certainly functions as such in the work of Allen Curnow and the mid-century cultural nationalists.⁷⁴

John Barr, once again, triumphantly fails to fit the bill. As a ‘bard’, Barr maintained a ‘vital poetic relationship with his community’.⁷⁵ Barr not only published his verses in community newspapers but performed them irrepressibly in public: ‘[a]t a gathering, he was pretty sure to come down and sing one or two of his new compositions,’ recalls T. M. Hocken.⁷⁶ Barr hosted informal

⁷⁰ John Hewitt, ‘The Course of Writing in Ulster’ (1953) in Tom Clyde (ed.), *Ancestral Voices: The Selected Prose of John Hewitt* (Belfast, 1987), 66.

⁷¹ Murray Pittock, ‘Introduction: Global Burns’ in Murray Pittock (ed.), *Robert Burns in Global Culture* (Lewisburg, 2011), 14.

⁷² John Barr, ‘When to Otago First I Came’ in Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 224.

⁷³ See Lawrence Jones’s entry on ‘Man Alone’ in *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, 331–2.

⁷⁴ Doreen D’Cruz and John C. Ross, *The Lonely and the Alone: The Poetics of Isolation in New Zealand Fiction* (Amsterdam, 2011), xv–xvi.

⁷⁵ Robert Crawford, *The Bard: Robert Burns, A Biography* (London, 2009), 3.

⁷⁶ Hocken, *Contributions*, 201.

ceilidhs in his own barn at Halfway Bush, and was deeply involved in Dunedin's Scottish associational culture, as founder of the Burns Club and official 'Bard' of the Caledonian Society.⁷⁷ As such, he was part of the vigorous 'tradition of public performance of literature' that characterised colonial Otago, whether at so-called 'sixpenny readings', town-hall lectures, or memorial dinners for Burns and Scott.⁷⁸

Barr's favoured genres are the social ones of song and satire. He lauds his province in boosterish ballads for convivial male audiences ('Cheer Up, My Jolly Boys'), and lashes the settlement's vices in his 'broad and caustic' satires.⁷⁹ He attacks the colonial habit of drunkenness ('Drunken Davie Deil-Me-Care'), while disparaging the Free Kirk 'unco guid' who would ban strong drink altogether ('Noo Quat Your Fiddlin' and Your Fun').⁸⁰ His satirical targets include money-grubbing ('Get Siller, Gude Neighbours'), religious hypocrisy ('The Hypocrite Gangs to the Kirk'), and snobbery, as when Dunedin's smug upper classes are lampooned in a song ('Fy Let us a' to the Dinner') modeled on one of Burns's election ballads:

His Excellency's health will be toasted
 Wi' mony a hip, hip, hurra;
 But I hope it'll never be mentioned
We e'er SIGNED the Maine Liquor Law!
 We'll boast o' our high moral standin' –
 The workin' folk kept out o' view,
 An' then we will toast ane anither
 Wi' "Claw me an' I will claw you."⁸¹

The speaker's shamefaced allusion to the temperance principles of Otago's Free Kirk founders – the Maine Liquor Law introduced prohibition to that

⁷⁷ James Barr, *The Old Identities: Being Sketches and Reminiscences during the First Decade of the Province of Otago* (Dunedin, 1879), 346–7.

⁷⁸ Tony Ballantyne, 'Placing Literary Culture: Books and Civic Culture in Milton', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 28 (2010), 84–8. It is worth noting that some of the volumes of Scottish New Zealand verse – such as John Blair's *Lays of the Old Identities: And other Pieces suitable for Recitations and Readings* (Dunedin, 1889) – seem expressly intended for public performance.

⁷⁹ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 68–70

⁸⁰ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 5–7 and 206–7. James Barr, *The Old Identities*, 347. On the endemic abuse of alcohol in colonial New Zealand, see Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, 107–8.

⁸¹ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 78–9, 247–8 and 181–3.

American State in 1851 – throws into sharp relief the sedulous debauchery of Dunedin’s grandees as they toast one another in ‘Champagne, port, sherry, and claret’.

In the very forms of his verse, Barr’s orientation is social. The default measure of Barr’s poetry is the Christis Kirk stanza, a form that has traditionally served as the vehicle for genial, satiric overviews of festive events and community customs (as in Robert Ferguson’s ‘Leith Races’ and Robert Burns’s ‘The Holy Fair’).⁸² Barr uses a modified form of the Christis Kirk stanza (minus the ‘bob-wheel’) in manners-painting poems of courtship (‘As Johnnie Rode o’er yonder Muir’), studies of popular superstition (‘Stanzas Respectfully Inscribed to James Kilgour’), and sketches of drunken shenanigans (‘Tam Maut was Fou’ whan he Cam Hame’).⁸³ When not using the Christis Kirk stanza, Barr deploys the Burns or ‘Standard Habbie’ stanza in ‘To My Old Dog Dash’, in the verse-epistle ‘Hoo’s A’ Wi’ Ye, Dear Gowan Ha’, and in the burlesque ‘I Wonder What in This Creation’.⁸⁴ ‘Standard Habbie’ takes its name from a festive mock-elegy on a community musician (Robert Sempill’s ‘Life and Death of Habbie Simpson, the Piper of Kilbarchan’), and the term itself is coined by Allan Ramsay in the course of a sociable exchange of verse epistles written in the measure. Burns uses it for verse epistles and for other poems of direct address. As with the Christis Kirk stanza, Standard Habbie has a communitarian bias encoded into the form: as Alan Riach has recently argued, the use of Standard Habbie implies a ‘context of social reciprocity’.⁸⁵

Barr also favours the dialogue form, with two speakers taking alternate stanzas, as in ‘Crack Between Mrs Scandal and Mrs Envy’, or ‘Rise Oot Your Bed’, in which a hungover husband and his scolding wife berate one another. This poem illustrates another favourite Barr device, which is the appearance of the poet as a character in his poems. Here is the climax of ‘Rise Oot Your Bed’, in which the wife monopolises the closing two stanzas to chide her errant spouse:

And wha’s the warst ane o’ the twa,
Ye’ll maybe tell me that?

⁸² See Allan H. MacLaine (ed.), *The Christis Kirk Tradition: Scots Poems of Folk Festivity* (Glasgow, 1996).

⁸³ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 41–2, 48–51 and 218–20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 144–6, 151–3 and 198–201.

⁸⁵ Alan Riach, ‘James K. Baxter and Robert Burns: The Form of Address’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 30 (2012), 62.

It sets ye weel to lie up there,
 And see me dreepin' wat,
 Wi' fechting 'mang the sharney kye,
 'Mang glaur up to the kuits,
 Wi' scarce a sark upon my back,
 My taes clean oot my buits.

O swear awa, just swear awa,
 Ye canna bear the truth;
 Ye'll what? ye'll rise and tak your nieve
 And gie me ower the mouth:
 But, Guidsake, here comes Craigielee,
 Let's a' oor fauts conceal; –
 'O come awa, ye're welcome here,
 Our Johnnie's no that weel.⁸⁶

So far from being Man Alone, or an aloof observer, 'Craigielee' shoulders his way into his own poem. There is a jarring adjustment of focus required by these final lines. The fiction that the poet has been eavesdropping on the squabbling couple breaks down when the poet himself – named for his farm of Craigielee – apparently hoves into view. And yet, that fiction is reinstated when we reflect that the wife's anxiety to screen their disagreement, and indeed to veil the cause of Johnnie's indisposition, comes too late: it has been preempted by the poem we have just read.

Barr's final publication in book – or at least pamphlet – form is the *Poems* of 1874, which comprises eight occasional poems, most of them written in honour of the annual gathering of the Caledonian Society of Otago, to whom the volume is 'respectfully dedicated'. These are formal public verses in 'correct' English, written by Barr in his official capacity as 'Poet to the Caledonian Society of Otago' (as the title page puts it), and they are almost uniformly dreadful. The poems – 'In Honour of the Eleventh Annual Gathering', 'In Honour of the Twelfth Annual Gathering' – are as perfunctory, dull and predictable as their titles. What is most striking about the volume is that, precisely at the moment when Barr's favoured stanza form – the Christis Kirk stanza, with its long history of depicting scenes of festive revelry and sports – is called for, Barr abandons it in favour of earnest and dull

⁸⁶ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 131–3.

heroic couplets ('true heroic lays', as he puts it in 'Written in Honour of the Seventh Annual Gathering of the Caledonian Society of Otago'). In place of the panoramic vividness and pungent concretion of the Christis Kirk genre, Barr relies on banal and capitalised abstraction: 'Let all our sports with Virtue be combined, / And hateful Discord ever kept behind'. These are certainly the poems that Tom Leonard has in mind when he talks about Barr's later poetry 'taking on the platitudes of the professional expatriate'.⁸⁷

However, amid the remorseless pomp of these poems, there is one satiric gem: a 'Genealogy of the Clan Macgregor'.⁸⁸ In a poem that carries echoes of the Ossian controversy and of Burns's poem 'On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations Through Scotland', Barr provides a mock-genealogy of the clan, asserting that the first Macgregor was playing his pipes a hundred years before Apollo took up the lute, while the *Iliad* was written in Gaelic 'by Homer, in Balquider'. Here Barr is sending up his own position as seannachie, the reciter of the tribe's whakapapa and traditions, finding Gaelic originals not just for classical but Biblical events:

And you must know the gaelic tongue
Was spoken in Glen Eden,
For Adam wrote his highland sangs
The time his sheep were feeding;
And Mrs Adam's name was Grant,
She came frae Abergeldie;
She was a Poetess, and made
"The Birks o' Aberfeldy."

The tradition that Gaelic was the world's first language is being satirised here, partly through a local joke, since 'Glen Eden' is not just a Scotticising of paradise but the name of an Auckland suburb. 'The Birks o' Aberfeldy' is a song by Robert Burns, adapted from an older song, 'The Birks of Abergeldy', and written during Burns's Highland tour of 1787.⁸⁹ A prelapsarian vintage is thus ascribed to a song barely eighty-years old. Similarly, the Highland Games, a Victorian invention, whose Otago incarnation was launched in 1863 by a

⁸⁷ Tom Leonard (ed.), *Radical Renfrew: Poetry from the French Revolution to the First World War* (Edinburgh, 1990), 224.

⁸⁸ John Barr, *Poems* (Dunedin, 1874), 12–14.

⁸⁹ Donald A. Low (ed.), *The Songs of Robert Burns* (London, 1993), 199.

group of ‘Old Identities’ alarmed at the changing demographics of Dunedin,⁹⁰ is confidently declared to be of antediluvian origin, invented by the builder of the ark:

Now, Noah is a Grecian word,
In gaelic it’s Macpherson;
He instituted highland games
Just for his own diversion.
M’Callum Mhor, his son-in-law,
Was Lord Duke of Argyle –
His mother’s name was Janet Gun,
A sister of King Coil.

Historical personages (the duke of Argyle) meet legendary figures (the Old King Cole associated with the district of Kyle in Ayrshire) in this cod-genealogy. This is Barr the urban lowlander, the Clydeside engineer, mocking the invented traditions of Scottish ‘Highlandism’. But it is also Barr the New Zealander, the emigrant who has reinvented himself, casting a cold eye on the pretensions of his fellow Caledonians. Whatever else this is, it is not the work of a writer clinging to the Scotland of colonial figment and fantasy, to adapt Curnow’s formulation. It is the work of a writer who is secure in his own identity and not afraid to mock it.

I want to finish by looking briefly at one of Barr’s boosterish pro-Otago songs, ‘Otago Goes Ahead, My Boys’, whose final stanza runs as follows:

Then come along, my merry men,
Our fair Otago see;
It is a glorious retreat
For honest poverty.
It is a place of health and strength,
No workhouse to be seen;
And honest men soon stand upright
That bowed down have been.⁹¹

The echo of Burns (‘For honest poverty’) is less to the point here than the

⁹⁰ John Stinson and Donald Gordon, *Cabers and Ceilidhs: 150 Years of the Caledonian Society of Otago* (Dunedin, 2012), 6.

⁹¹ Barr, *Poems and Songs*, 212–13.

anticipation of Curnow: ‘And honest men soon stand upright’. For Curnow, the ‘trick of standing upright here’ is a gradual acclimatisation, a milestone in the development of an infant who had previously crawled or been carried:

Not I, some child, born in a marvellous year,
Will learn the trick of standing upright here.⁹²

What Barr reminds us is that standing upright is also the achievement of grown men who had previously ‘bowed down’, whether under the burden of oppression or in deference to their supposed superiors. And to stand upright in Barr’s sense does not require Curnow’s four generations, or Charles Brasch’s ‘century of quiet and assiduity’.⁹³ John Barr was standing upright on his way down the gangplank.

This is not to suggest that Barr is somehow the first authentically ‘New Zealand’ poet. For all the comparisons with Burns, Barr is not a ‘national’ bard. He does not engage with Māori. He barely raises his eyes north of the Waitaki, far less to what Janet Frame calls the ‘foreign places beyond Cook Strait’.⁹⁴ It would, however, be anachronistic to look for the expression of national consciousness from a poet writing at a time when New Zealand showed no sign of becoming – or of desiring to become – an independent nation.⁹⁵ That it was the 1930s before anything approaching a national voice entered New Zealand literature is a critical truism.⁹⁶ However, the implication often drawn from this – namely, that New Zealand literature prior to the 1930s can offer only the ‘colonist’s nostalgia for home’ – is, as I hope to have shown, strikingly wide of the mark. If Barr is not a ‘national’ bard, he is emphatically not the kind of homesick and heartsick colonial poet limned by Allen Curnow. It perhaps makes most sense to view Barr, as Tony Ballantyne has done, in the context of a ‘kind of popular regional patriotism – which

⁹² Allen Curnow, ‘The Skeleton of the Great Moa in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch’, *Early Days Yet*, 220.

⁹³ Charles Brasch, ‘The Silent Land’ in Charles Brasch, *Collected Poems*, Alan Roddick (ed.) (Auckland, 1984), 218.

⁹⁴ Janet Frame, ‘Dot’ in *Gorse Is Not People: New and Uncollected Stories* (Auckland, 2012), 64.

⁹⁵ J. C. Beaglehole, ‘The Development of New Zealand Nationality’, *Journal of World History*, 2 (1954), 106–23.

⁹⁶ This truism has, nonetheless, been challenged; see Kirstine Moffat, ‘Fashioning a Past and Constructing a Present in Maoriland’, review of Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature, 1872–1914* (Wellington, 2006), *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 24 (2006), 148–54.

saw Otago as a new patria, a homeland for a distinctive colonial order that drew heavily on Scottish antecedents'.⁹⁷

If, as W. P. Ker argued in the 1920s, the 'history of Scottish poetry ... is the history of forms establishing themselves and being followed closely by writers of poetry', then that history must encompass those New Zealand poets who used Scottish forms, modes and idiom to assert their rootedness in a landscape half a world away.⁹⁸ And these poets must also feature in accounts of New Zealand poetry since, *pace* Curnow, Barr and Mackay *do* have a posterity. Barr's use of Scots language and stanza forms as vehicles of political dissent and social satire, his customising of Burns, was exemplary not just for the Scots-language poets who followed him but for fiction writers like Vincent Pyke, whose remarkable Lallans novel *Craigielinn* (1884) surely nods to the Bard of Craigielee in its title as well as to the eponymous waterfall in Renfrewshire. An adapted Burnsian mode survives the attenuation of spoken Scots in New Zealand to surface in unexpected places in the twentieth century, as in the unpublished poetry of Archibald Baxter, with its Burns stanzas and its local patriotism.⁹⁹ And Archibald's son James K. Baxter, New Zealand's pre-eminent twentieth-century poet and the closest the country has come to a national bard, maintained an obsessive engagement with Burns throughout his poetic career.¹⁰⁰ It was Baxter who observed, in a lecture to the New Zealand Writers' Conference in 1951, that 'a 'good tradition is like fat: it can be clarified and used indefinitely'.¹⁰¹ In the work of New Zealand writers as diverse as Cilla McQueen, Bill Manhire, Keri Hulme and John Summers, elements of Scottish tradition are used in just this way.¹⁰² And recent developments – such as Sarah Paterson's translations from te reo Māori into Scots in her 'Bagpipe

⁹⁷ Tony Ballantyne, 'Life in the Provinces: Poetry and Politics in Victorian New Zealand', unpublished Keith Sinclair Lecture 2011, University of Auckland, 27 October 2011.

⁹⁸ W. P. Ker, *Form and Style in Poetry: Lectures and Notes*, R. W. Chambers (ed.) (London, 1929), 201.

⁹⁹ Archibald Baxter's unpublished poetry, together with the MS of an unpublished novel on Scottish migration to Otago, can be found in the archive of his literary papers held by the Hocken Collections at the University of Otago, Hocken MS ARC-0350.

¹⁰⁰ See the special 'Baxter and Burns' number of the *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 30 (2012). On Baxter and Burns, see also: Dougal McNeill, 'Baxter's Burns', *ka mate ka ora: a new zealand journal of poetry and poetics*, 8 (2009), http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/08/ka_mate08_mcnell.asp [accessed 6 August 2014]; Liam McIlvanney, 'Editorial: Burns and the World', Special Robert Burns Number, *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, 6 (Spring/Summer 2010), <http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue6/editorial.htm> [accessed 6 August 2014].

¹⁰¹ Baxter, *Recent Trends in New Zealand Poetry*, 10.

¹⁰² Alan Riach, 'Scotland' in *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, 483–5.

Waiata’ – suggest that Baxter’s ‘clarification’ continues, and that Lowland Scots may yet regain its place – alongside te reo Māori, ‘cockney slang ... Australian vernacular, American hipster cool, [and] Pasifika inflections’ – as one of the available idioms of New Zealand literature.¹⁰³

University of Otago

¹⁰³ *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, 15; Sarah Paterson, ‘Bagpipe Waiata’, in Madeleine Campbell, Georgina Collins and Anikó Szilágyi (eds), *Quaich: An Anthology of Translation in Scotland Today* (Cathair na Mart, 2014), 49–54.

J. L. P. O'Hanly, Irish Catholic Nationalism, and Canadian State Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century

Michael S. McLaughlin

John Lawrence Power O'Hanly was born in Waterford, Ireland on 24 June 1827. He immigrated to Canada in 1846. Following his arrival in the port city of Quebec, O'Hanly became employed as a clerk for the lumber merchant Robert Ackert. He later taught school in the town of Buckingham. In March 1851 O'Hanly moved to Aylmer where he became indentured to Joseph A. Mason, provincial land surveyor for Lower Canada, and J.J. Roney, provincial land surveyor for both Lower and Upper Canada. Upon completion of his apprenticeship O'Hanly obtained his diploma as land surveyor for Lower Canada in May 1853 and Upper Canada in July 1854. In August 1854 O'Hanly moved to Bytown, soon to be renamed Ottawa. O'Hanly then embarked on a distinguished career as a civil engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railway, as well as a land surveyor for the Department of the Interior, mapping provincial boundaries and laying out Indian Reserves. Along with his professional résumé, O'Hanly was an ardent supporter of Irish nationalism and actively involved in Irish Catholic voluntary associations in Ottawa. Though not a Fenian, O'Hanly was a radical who not only attacked British imperial rule, but also Irish Catholics whom he felt betrayed the nationalist cause through their accommodationist positions.¹

On first blush, the colonialism evident in O'Hanly's professional career might seem inconsistent with his radical Irish nationalist politics. However, the role that Irish Catholics played in various types of colonialism has begun to be rethought. Rather than an understanding of Irish Catholics functioning outside of, or in strict opposition to, the British Empire and its global colonial practices, this approach probes the role of Irish Catholics in global systems of colonialism and imperialism while aiming to destabilise the binary between Irish nationalism and imperialism. As Alvin Jackson has outlined, the Irish were 'simultaneously major participants in the Empire, and a significant source of subversion.'² One of the first major forays into this subject was S. B. Cook's 'The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian

¹ Library and Archives Canada, O'Hanly Papers, MG 29 B11 Volume 34, File 2: 'Biography of J.L.P. O'Hanly.'

² Alvin Jackson, 'Ireland, the Union, and the Empire, 1800–1960' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 123.

Civil Service, 1855–1914.’ Cook argued that of the various Irish responses to British rule the most common was that of support, which he characterised as ‘a broad category encompassing conscious and active collaboration as well as acquiescence in laws, values, and social structures that were partly shaped by British hegemony.’³ More recently, S. Karly Kehoe explored the careers of Irish surgeons in the British Royal Navy in the mid-nineteenth century. Kehoe focused specifically on two brothers from Belfast, Richard and Frederick McClement, and some of their Irish medical colleagues and concluded that the pragmatic loyalism these Irish surgeons displayed ensured a stronger relationship between Ireland’s middle class and the British state.⁴

Though situated in a different geographical and professional context, O’Hanly can be placed among this group of Irish individuals who aided in the expansion and maintenance of the British Empire. As a prospering participant in Canada’s internal colonial system, O’Hanly was at the leading edge of Canada’s nineteenth-century nation-building project that included westward expansion through projects that aimed to define and expand Canada’s boundaries and impose a paternalist, racialised order on aboriginal peoples. This essay details O’Hanly’s activities as an Irish nationalist who advanced, and advanced in, the global system of colonialism, and by way of conclusion probes the relationship between O’Hanly’s Irish nationalism and his views on Canadian aboriginals.

The 1867 St Patrick’s Day Parade in Ottawa

J. L. P. O’Hanly was elected president of Ottawa’s St Patrick’s Literary Association (SPLA) in the 1860s. The ethno-religious component of Irish Catholic voluntary associations meant that such organisations acted as vehicles through which individuals could demonstrate their respectability in an often hostile social environment, and indeed circumstances were especially hostile for Canadian Irish Catholics following the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870. Coming from the United States, Irish revolutionaries attacked Canada at Campobello, New Brunswick; Eccles Hill and Huntingdon, Quebec; Ridgeway, Ontario; and in Manitoba’s Red River Valley.⁵ Within this strained context, many within the Irish Catholic community sought to distance themselves from an association with the Fenians, fearing a negative backlash from

³ S. B. Cook, ‘The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian Civil Service, 1855–1914’, *Journal of Social History*, 20 (1987), 507–8

⁴ S. Karly Kehoe, ‘Accessing Empire: Irish Surgeons and the Royal Navy, 1840–1880’, *Social History of Medicine*, 26 (2012), 204–24.

⁵ C. P. Stacey, ‘Fenianism and the Rise of National Feeling in Canada at the Time of Confederation’, *Canadian Historical Review*, 12 (1931), 238–61; Hereward Senior, *The Fenians and Canada* (Toronto, 1978).

the wider society. Representative of moderate middle-class Irish Catholic reaction to the raids was Thomas D'Arcy McGee's swift anti-Fenian response. McGee wrote that Irish Catholics had a special obligation to take a determined stand in the defence of Canada, and this 'must be no half-way work' on their part.⁶ All Canadians, McGee continued, have their duties, but Irish Catholics 'have a duty additional to the duty of others. We are belied as a class, we are compromised as a class, by these scoundrels; and as a class we must vindicate our loyalty to the freest county left to Irishmen on the globe.'⁷ O'Hanly and Patrick Boyle, editor of the *Irish Canadian* newspaper and frequent ally of O'Hanly, both took a more combative approach in their response to the Fenian Raids than McGee suggested. Instead of an unqualified rejection of Fenian actions, this contingent concentrated on the unfairness of the 'duty to loyalty' position advocated by McGee, and were hostile to the suspicions leveled against the entire Irish Catholic population of Canada in the wake of the raids.

When Michael Murphy was arrested along with seven other alleged Fenians in Cornwall in 1866, Boyle, rather than deal with issues related to strains of Irish nationalism, the legitimacy of the Fenian organisation within the Irish community, or injunctions to the Irish community to show increased loyalty in tense times, instead emphasised the injustice of the Cornwall arrests. 'We cannot imagine', an editorial in the *Irish Canadian* argued, 'why they were even interfered with, as it has not been shown that they were guilty of any breach of law, and were merely traveling as ordinary citizens would and in the usual way.'⁸ The *Irish Canadian* asserted the men did not act guilty before, during, or after their arrest. The eight purchased their tickets openly, and did not resist when arrested aboard the train. They were, the *Irish Canadian* argued, 'not conscious of having done anything wrong.'⁹ The arrest of Murphy and the others was viewed by Boyle and the *Irish Canadian* as a consequence of their ethno-religious identity rather than alleged ties to the Fenian organisation.

The *Irish Canadian* was treading a dangerous path by taking such a truculent approach to the events of 1866, and the wider society soon became critical of the paper's views. Boyle and the *Irish Canadian* certainly did themselves no favours by defending the Cornwall prisoners, nor did it gain public sympathy when they printed a manifesto from the Canadian branch of the Fenian Brotherhood. This document read like one of Boyle's defences of Murphy and the other prisoners, stating that 'the Government of Canada has wantonly and treacherously caused the arrest and imprisonment of a

⁶ *Canadian Freeman* (Toronto), 7 June 1866

⁷ Ibid. Also see David A. Wilson, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee Volume 2: The Extreme Moderate* (Kingston, 2011) which covers McGee's response to the Fenian Raids.

⁸ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 18 April 1866

⁹ Ibid.

number of our fellow-citizens, seized them without charges.¹⁰ The manifesto asserted that prior to this act on the part of the Canadian government, the Fenian Brotherhood of Canada had ‘steadfastly and honestly opposed any attempt at the invasion’ of Canada. However, they took the arrest of the individuals at Cornwall as

a challenge and a defiance, and will act accordingly...whenever the head centre gives his consent, we shall be ready to avenge the insult, and root out from American soil the last vestige of the tyranny to which, ninety years ago, the ‘thirteen colonies’ gave the first blow, and, aided by our French Canadian fellow-citizens, replace it with the emblem of an independent sovereignty or the starry flag of that nation which is the last hope of freedom, republicanism, and Ireland.¹¹

Canadian press outlets had long lashed out at the *Irish Canadian* for adhering to a radical nationalist perspective, and this intensified during the period of the raids. The *Belleville Intelligencer* argued that the *Irish Canadian* ought to be shut down. It reasoned that during times of relative normalcy and peace it might be acceptable to ‘allow these hot-headed treason mongers to boil over occasionally, but in times like these, when the country is sacrificing so much to preserve the peace’, it was objectionable to allow ‘the men who are aiding and abetting her (Canada’s) enemies, and openly publishing their shame to the world’ to continue their activities.¹² It was no time, the *Intelligencer* maintained, ‘to trifle with treason, nor parry with traitors.’¹³ This was not the only instance of the loyal Canadian press referring to the *Irish Canadian* using terms such as traitors and treasonous. The *Brantford Courier* also joined in on the attack. Calling the *Irish Canadian* a ‘wretched journal’ and ‘the Fenian organ of Canada’, the *Courier* claimed that it ‘does not hesitate to give utterances to the most treasonable statements.’¹⁴ Like the *Intelligencer*, the *Courier* argued that the *Irish Canadian* ought to be shut down on grounds of treason, calling for the government to ‘snuff it out at once.’¹⁵

O’Hanly also openly railed against the treatment of Irish Catholics during the raids and rejected McGee’s duty to loyalty position. O’Hanly and McGee had a history of animosity, especially with regard to Fenianism within the Canadian Irish Catholic community and on issues of Irish nationalism in general. O’Hanly outlined his antipathy toward McGee’s actions during the Fenian tumult of 1866, when McGee

¹⁰ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 25 April 1866.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Belleville Intelligencer*, 23 March 1866; *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 11 April 1866.

¹³ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 11 April 1866.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

accused members of Montreal's St Patrick's Society of having Fenian ties. O'Hanly was angered not only by McGee's assertions but by the timing of his accusations. 'Be it not forgotten', O'Hanly wrote, 'that he (McGee) played this nefarious role at a time of great excitement, at a time of acute exasperation...when all passions of the worst elements of society were in open hostility to his own countrymen, always a despised minority.'¹⁶ He believed McGee was 'the biggest rascal that ever crossed the Atlantic Ocean', one of the most prominent of the 'innumerable breed of traitors which mother Erin has hopelessly brought forth', and referred to him as the 'informer general' of the Canadian government for what he viewed as McGee's treasonable actions toward his fellow countrymen.¹⁷

Owing to O'Hanly's rejection of McGee's duty to loyalty injunctions and adoption of a bellicose response to the situation, the wider society lashed out at what they viewed as O'Hanly's traitorous actions. As president of the Ottawa SPLA, O'Hanly became the central figure in a controversy surrounding the flying of two banners associated with the Fenian Brotherhood during the St Patrick's Day parade in the new nation's capital in 1867, only a year removed from the Fenian Raids. During this episode, O'Hanly's combative reaction to the government's response to the Fenian Raids was evident. At a planning meeting for the parade, a division appeared within the SPLA between supporters of the various strains of Irish nationalism. At this meeting, according to a report in the *Canadian Freeman*, 'a pretty numerous and rather unusual increase' of the society's membership took place.¹⁸ As was usual, the election of officers of the SPLA took place on the first Tuesday in March. Under a by-law of the organisation, new members were not allowed to vote in these elections. Upon being made aware of this rule at the election meeting, the correspondent for the *Freeman* observed that a 'very enthusiastic' young man charged at the minute book in an attempt to seize it. This proved unsuccessful. The man was dragged off the platform, but not before a general scuffle ensued which made the continuation of the elections impossible that evening. It was believed and reported, though never confirmed, that these new members had ties to the Fenian Brotherhood. Their alleged plan was to elect officers to the executive committee of the organisation whom they felt would promote their more radical nationalism. Owing to these disturbances, a second night of election voting was held where a similar occurrence was reported to have taken place.

¹⁶ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 18, File 9: 'Status of Irish Catholics, Darcy McGee of Nonsavory Memory.'

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 26, File 13: 'Press Clippings—Irish.'

At that point Father Michael Molloy, the spiritual director of the SPLA, took the floor to announce that he had been authorised by Bishop Bruno Guigues of Ottawa to inform the members present that if this trouble could not be resolved then the St Patrick's Day procession would be censured by diocesan administration. This brought the 'enthusiastic' young man back to the stage to proclaim that the SPLA had conspired with the clergy to 'kill the procession.'¹⁹ He thanked God that he had made friends at a distance from whom he had borrowed 'two banners' that he would carry all by himself on St Patrick's Day should he have to.²⁰ Following the 'enthusiastic' young man's outburst, the 'hot-heads' at the meeting backed down in the wake of Molloy's threat. It was agreed by members of the SPLA, at the behest of the Catholic bishop of Ottawa, that no revolutionary flags would fly on St Patrick's Day. Notwithstanding the Bishop's demand, however, the Sunburst banner was flown during the parade. Upon seeing this flag the Chief Marshall of the parade 'turned his horse homewards and left the procession.'²¹ A few members forcibly pulled the flag down and re-started the stalled procession.

In the aftermath of the incident, letters printed in the Ottawa press signed 'Londonderry', 'True Briton', 'A British Canadian', and 'Young Canada', expressed unease over the degree to which O'Hanly, and Irish Catholics in general, were loyal to the crown. 'Londonderry' asserted that the Sunburst was the flag of enemies of Queen and Country and thus wanted to know whether these gentlemen were in sympathy with the robbers and pirates who murdered their fellow-citizens during the Fenian Raids. 'True Briton' argued that all 'loyal' men must look with suspicion upon processions in which the emblems of avowed enemies are paraded. The writer reasoned that, given the circumstances, O'Hanly should have known that flying Fenian flags would place the loyalty of Irish Catholics in question. 'A British Canadian' echoed these sentiments, maintaining that at a time when treason was boldly manifested in portions of the British dominions such actions were unwise. These calls were taken a step further by a group of 'Loyal inhabitants of the capital of Canada' who signed a petition addressed to Ottawa mayor Robert Lyon requesting that he take steps to find out whether there existed in Ottawa men

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ The two banners in question were the Sunburst banner and a flag associated with noted Irish nationalist Robert Emmet, which was emblazoned with the nationalist slogan 'Erin Go Bragh.'

²¹ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 26, File 13: 'Press Clippings—Irish.'

whose aim it was to encourage and assist the Fenian Brotherhood in the invasion of the province and the subversion of Her Majesty's Government.²²

O'Hanly responded to these accusations of treason in a letter published in the 21 March 1867 edition of the *Ottawa Citizen*.²³ He first contested the claim that the Sunburst banner was brought to Ottawa by Fenian 'roughs.' Rather, O'Hanly asserted, the banner originated in Ottawa. The material of the banner was purchased in Ottawa and the design was prepared by a mechanic from Ottawa, it was sewn in a Convent in Ottawa by the Sisters of Charity, and it belonged to the St Patrick's Society of the township of Gloucester. According to O'Hanly this was a sufficient guarantee that the banner was neither revolutionary nor seditious in design. Further, O'Hanly questioned the contention that the flag itself was treasonous or revolutionary. If the Fenians used it, he maintained, that did not make it a Fenian flag. O'Hanly contended that the Sunburst was the old national flag of Ireland and was meant to symbolise the banner under which the fathers of Irishmen in Canada fought the common enemies of the sister isles. O'Hanly refused to denounce the unfurling of the banner, instead framing the banner in a way that would be more acceptable to the Protestant majority.²⁴

The Catholic League

O'Hanly's defence of the use of a flag associated with the Fenians scarcely one year after the Fenian Raids illustrates that he did not shy away from expressing his nationalist beliefs even when Irish Catholic loyalty to crown and country was deemed paramount by the wider society and by many within the Irish Catholic community. O'Hanly's combativeness with respect to the place of Irish Catholics in Canada continued to be displayed through his participation in the Ontario-based Catholic League. An example of identity politics that sought political integration, the Catholic League was an Irish Catholic voting bloc that urged Irish Catholics to vote only for their co-religionists in order to ensure a greater number of Irish Catholic representatives in political office.²⁵

The Catholic League emerged out of a belief that Canadian political culture discriminated against Irish Catholics and denied them their fair share of government appointments. The perception that discrimination against Irish Catholics permeated colonial Canada, and thus precluded the Irish from achieving positions of influence,

²² Ibid.

²³ *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 March 1867.

²⁴ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 26, File 13: 'Press Clippings—Irish.'

²⁵ For the Catholic League see Michael Cottrell, 'John O'Donohoe and the Politics of Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Ontario', *Historical Studies*, 56 (1989), 67–84.

was prevalent among the Irish Catholic population at the time. As O'Hanly once remarked in a letter to John A. Macdonald in which O'Hanly was seeking government work, 'my countrymen and co-religionists complain that we (Irish Catholics) are denied a fair share of public appointments, particularly in higher offices. I am of those who have always held that that complaint was well-founded.'²⁶ The actions of the government during the Fenian Raids, particularly the suspension of Habeas Corpus, heightened a sense among Canadian Irish Catholics that they were not viewed on equal terms as Protestants. In the wake of the Fenian Raids of 1866, the government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in order to facilitate the arrest of suspected Fenians in Canada. This was seen by many Canadian Irish Catholics as a deliberate attempt to arrest Irish Catholics, whether they were associated with the Fenian movement or not, and cast undue suspicions on the entire Irish Catholic community. A letter writer to the *Irish Canadian*, presumably O'Hanly, remarked on the myriad origins of the Catholic League and stressed that there could be no doubt the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in the aftermath of the Fenian Raids, a measure he argued was 'solely directed against the rights and liberties of the Irish Catholics of Canada', contributed to the establishment of the League.²⁷

In a circular announcing the formation of the Catholic League, it was asserted that while Catholics of Ontario are called upon in common with their fellow-subjects of every denomination to bear their proportion of the expenses of the government, and are affected in every way by the laws enacted by the government, they 'are almost totally unrepresented in the halls of the Legislature.'²⁸ The 'ostracism', as termed by the *Irish Canadian*, of Catholics in Ontario owing to this lack of representation necessitated the formation of the League.²⁹ The *Irish Canadian* argued that there existed power in numbers, and urged the Catholics of Ontario to form a branch of the League even if there were 'but ten men in any township or village in Ontario... the mere fact of your doing so trebles your political power at once, and your influence and vote will be courted where now you are neglected or despised by Parliamentary aspirants.'³⁰

John O'Donohoe was the president of the main branch of the League, which was located in Toronto. Also on the executive committee was John Shea, first

²⁶ J.L.P.O'Hanly to M Macdonald, 14 October 1881 in LAC, John A. Macdonald Collection, MG26 A, Reel C1752, Volume 377, 176094 to 176097.

²⁷ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 12 October 1872. The vitriolic tone, and the fact that it was signed 'O'H', leads me to suggest that O'Hanly penned the letter.

²⁸ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 27 January 1875.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9 August 1871.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1872.

vice-president; Dr M. Lawlor, second vice-president; J. D. Merrick, secretary; Jeremiah Murphy, assistant secretary; and Eugene O’Keefe, treasurer.³¹ Unlike church sodalities, which were organised on a parish-basis, the Catholic League was configured according to political wards and had affiliates in cities and towns across the province. In October 1871 a meeting was held to consider the advisability of opening a branch of the Catholic League in Hamilton. A provisional committee was elected for the Hamilton Catholic League, consisting of John McKeown as chairman, J. A. Devlin, M.D., as vice chairman, Martin Fitzpatrick as secretary, and George McGann as treasurer.³² For the occasion, O’Donohoe and other Toronto representatives, John Mulvey, J. D. Merrick, and A. P. Devlin, attended the meeting in Hamilton to explain in some detail the objectives and merit of the Catholic League. O’Donohoe laid out the case for the League in a ‘very forcible and eloquent’ speech that lasted over an hour.³³ He repudiated the claims of opponents who saw the League as hostile to the rights or privileges of their Protestant fellow-subjects. Rather, O’Donohoe explained, it was the belief of League members that Irish Catholics should not be ostracised simply because they were Catholics, and, with a view towards remedying their exclusion, the purpose of the League was to make sure that Catholics of Ontario ‘get fair play and nothing more.’³⁴ He asserted that given Catholics of Ontario numbered one-fifth of the population, it was strange that ‘in all public offices and positions (Irish Catholics) were almost totally ignored, except in the position of menials.’³⁵ This object of the League was echoed in an editorial in the *Irish Canadian*, which asserted that the League sought ‘fair representation of Catholics in the Provincial and Dominion Parliaments.’³⁶ The editorial called upon Catholics of Ontario to ‘join the league if you would hold the position to which you are entitled.’³⁷ The *Irish Canadian* concluded this injunction proclaiming, ‘until Catholics are united, and decide on the policy to be pursued, let party and politics be merged, and our sole and only motto be ‘Union—Unite! Unite!! Unite!!!’³⁸

Though the League attempted to present itself as a non-partisan organisation, it in fact had a reformist agenda. The political stance of the Catholic League rested on the perception that Irish Catholics had not benefited from the rule of the Conservative Party during the Union period, an era marked by political struggles between conservatives and reformers in the decades following the Rebellions of Lower and

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1872.

³² *Globe* (Toronto), 24 October 1871.

³³ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 25 October 1871.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 6 September 1871.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Upper Canada. This recognition led the League to place its support behind the Liberal Party, and promote reform sentiments.³⁹ Within this political context O'Hanly penned 'The Political Standing of Irish Catholics in Canada', a paper that reviewed the treatment of Irish Catholics by governments during the Union period that was written for the Catholic League in 1872 under the auspices of the Liberal Party. O'Hanly accused the Conservative Party of Canada of discriminatory treatment toward Irish Catholics with respect to patronage positions. Prior to Civil Service Act of 1882, which established a three-member board of Civil Service examiners to supervise exams for appointments and promotions, the early years of the Canadian public service was marked by patronage as newly-elected governments typically removed large numbers of civil servants employed by previous governments in order to place their own people in those positions. While O'Hanly contended that this system was generally corrupt and held Irish Catholics out of positions of power, he believed that the Conservatives predominated in such discrimination. He noted that since 1854, 495 first-class appointments to positions in the government administration had been given. Of these, the Conservative Party conferred 455, while the Liberal Party conferred forty during their time in power from May 1862 to March 1864. Of the 455 appointments made by the Conservatives, O'Hanly observed, nine went to Irish Catholics, which resulted in a ratio of about one in fifty. Of the forty appointments given by the Liberal Party, four were to Irish Catholics, which comes to a ratio of approximately one out of ten. In Quebec, where O'Hanly noted one would expect a greater proportion of Irish Catholics in positions of social power owing to the Catholic population there, the numbers of Irish Catholics in both administrative positions and elected positions were equally low. Of the 178 legislators in the province of Quebec, asserted O'Hanly, eight were Irish Catholic while forty five were Protestant. One might imagine that the high number of Protestant legislators resulted from the Protestant population of Quebec voting in a co-religionist rather than a French or Irish Catholic. However, O'Hanly remarked that an Irish Catholic did not represent a single constituency where the French element predominated. He did note, though, that 'many such are represented by Protestants.'⁴⁰ The antipathy O'Hanly believed French Catholics felt toward Irish Catholics stemmed from the influence of the George Cartier and Conservative Party in the province. 'My countrymen', O'Hanly wrote, were 'systematically ignored and sneered at by Sir George Cartier, Protestant Englishmen preferred to them and raised

³⁹ For useful overviews of Irish Catholic politics during this period see David Shanahan, 'The Irish Question in Canada: Ireland, the Irish and Canadian Politics: 1880–1922', PhD dissertation (Carleton University, 1989).

⁴⁰ John Lawrence Power O'Hanly, *The Political Standing of Irish Catholics in Canada, A Critical Analysis of its Causes, W With Suggestions for its Amelioration*, Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions Fiche 23746, 34.

over their heads.⁴¹ O’Hanly was more than a booster for the League and its principles, and ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the riding of Russell in 1872. While he lamented this defeat, he did not back away from the issue of Catholic political representation and continued to champion the cause of Catholic rights into the twentieth century.

The 1882 Home Rule Resolutions

Beyond his work for the Catholic League, O’Hanly was an active supporter of the Irish Home Rule movement, a political campaign that sought to secure Irish control over internal affairs and agitated for the creation of an Irish government. The Irish Home Rule movement originated on 1 September 1870 when Isaac Butt, a prominent Protestant lawyer in Dublin, founded the Home Government Association and began advocating for a kind of federalism for each country in the United Kingdom. Butt was a conservative who was committed to keeping the geographical and political integrity of the British Empire largely intact. For Butt, the concept of federalism within the Empire was the best possible solution to the problem of conflicting national identities in the United Kingdom. Butt led the Home Rule movement throughout the 1870s, and when he died in May 1879 Charles Stewart Parnell took over the leadership. Parnell was less enamoured with the British Empire than Butt. Parnell built up relations with the Irish population of North America, including the Irish-American revolutionary group Clan na Gael, and was a leader in the newly established Land League movement. Parnell supported the Irish Land War of 1879-82 in which Irish peasants took up arms against landlords. Parnell was arrested in 1882 after he denounced a British land reform bill, calling it inadequate to the needs of the Irish. Parnell’s actions with respect to the Land League were indicative of the more militant politics he brought to the Home Rule movement relative to Butt’s conciliatory approach. The Parnellite Home Rule movement embraced both moderate and radical Irish nationalists, as well as parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means.⁴²

The Canadian Irish Catholic community gave moral, material, and physical support to the Home Rule and Land League movements.⁴³ Throughout the late

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴² For Irish Home Rule in Ireland see D. George Boyce and Alan O’Day (eds), *Gladstone and Ireland: Politics, Religion, and Nationality in the Victorian Age* (Houndmills, 2010); Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800–2000* (New York, 2003).

⁴³ For useful overviews of Irish Home Rule and Land League activities in North America see Peter M. Toner, ‘The Home Rule League in Canada: Fortune, Fenians, and Failure’, *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 15 (1989), 7–19; D. C. Lyne, ‘Irish-Canadian Financial Contributions to the Home Rule Movement in the 1890s’, *Studia Hibernica*, 7 (1967), 182–206; William Jenkins, *Between Raid and Rebellion: The Irish in Buffalo and Toronto, 1867–1914* (Kingston, 2013); Eric Foner, ‘Class, Ethnicity and Radicalism in the Gilded Age: The Land League & Irish America’, *Marxist Perspectives*, 2 (1978),

nineteenth century in Canada, Irish Catholics formed Home Rule and Land League divisions, raised funds that were sent to the main branches in Dublin, and even welcomed Parnell for a fundraising tour in 1880.⁴⁴ The central Home Rule branch in Canada was established in Montreal in 1874. The Montreal branch of the Home Rule League received its charter directly from the main branch of the Home Rule League in Dublin, and was therefore empowered to issue directions for the guidance of other branches that were to be organised in Canada.⁴⁵ The purpose of the Montreal branch was to aid their countrymen back home in the reformation of the system of property ownership in Ireland through the abolition of the landlord system. They advocated for the redistribution of land to the Irish people within an individualist framework, rather than the system of absentee landlordism which, as they saw it, had been a major source of the troubles in Ireland since the time of Cromwell.⁴⁶

Ottawa established its own Home Rule branch and O'Hanly became an active member. His most notable act came in 1882 when he worked with Canadian Irish Catholic MP John Costigan to get a series of motions in support for Irish Home Rule passed through the Dominion Parliament. The first step in bringing the Costigan resolutions to parliament involved reaching out for support from Irish Catholic organisations 'from Cape Breton to Vancouver' to show the popularity that Costigan's resolutions had among the Irish in Canada.⁴⁷ To begin enlisting the support of Irish Catholic voluntary associations, it was first necessary to identify as many of these organisations as possible. O'Hanly thus searched through the parliamentary library attempting to locate all the Irish organisations in the country. He also scanned the names of priests looking for distinctly Irish names, or names 'that even smelt Gaelic.'⁴⁸ Aware that a general election was close at hand, O'Hanly reasoned that the Irish Catholic vote was desired and if Irish Catholic voters were unanimously in favour of passing resolutions supporting Irish Home Rule then election time would be the most likely period in which such resolutions would pass in the House of Commons. As he remarked, during election campaigns "'Pat", instead of being openly despised and spat upon, (was) courted and caressed, lifted high upon a political ladder.'⁴⁹ O'Hanly searched for the names and addresses of all Irish societies in Canada so he could communicate directly

6–55; Ely M. Janis, 'The Land League in the United States and Ireland: Nationalism, Gender and Ethnicity in the Gilded Age', PhD dissertation (Boston College, 2008).

⁴⁴ *Globe* (Toronto), 9 March 1880.

⁴⁵ *Irish Canadian* (Toronto), 14 January 1874.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 April 1874.

⁴⁷ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 18, File 10: 'Home Rule Resolutions.'

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

with the Irish electorate and initiate the plan to ‘thoroughly frighten’ Prime Minister Macdonald into action.⁵⁰

The resolutions themselves invoked the language of loyalty to the Empire and Canada. They made plain the Irish subjects in the Dominion were among the ‘most loyal, most prosperous, and most contented of your Majesty’s subjects’, and these resolutions were being presented to ameliorate the positions of the Irish in the interests of ‘this loyal Dominion and of the entire Empire.’⁵¹ The resolutions contended that because the Irish in Canada had prospered under a federal system allowing each province considerable powers of self-government, such a system ought to be established in Ireland so that the Irish in Ireland would feel ‘the same pride in the greatness of your majesty’s Empire...and the same devotion to and veneration for our common flag as are now felt by all classes of Your Majesty’s loyal subjects in this Dominion.’⁵²

These resolutions were clearly written to demonstrate the loyalty of the Irish, not only to Canada but also to the wider Empire, in the hopes of offsetting fears the wider society may have had regarding the revolutionary aspects of Irish Home Rule. Given this wording, it would have been difficult for the Protestant majority to attack these resolutions. In its description of the passing of the Home Rule resolutions, for example, the *Globe* approvingly remarked that Costigan’s speech was ‘moderate in tone.’⁵³ This tone and the language of loyalty in the resolutions resulted from political pragmatism. The resolutions moved in the House differed from the original ones drafted by O’Hanly, which were more incendiary in tone and content. The major difference between the originals and the ones that actually passed was the deletion of the call for an immediate release of the imprisoned Parnell. While the resolutions called for clemency to be extended ‘to those persons who are now imprisoned in Ireland charged with political offences only, and the inestimable blessing of personal liberty restored to them’ they were careful not to refer to Parnell by name, which had been a demand of Macdonald in allowing the resolutions to be read in parliament. Macdonald demanded that Costigan and O’Hanly accept the changes or face not having parliament’s support for the resolutions. Upon learning of the compromises requested by Macdonald, Costigan visited O’Hanly and the two went over the counter-proposals of the government. O’Hanly reasoned that the specifics of the resolutions mattered less

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *Globe* (Toronto), 21 April 1882.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

than their successful acceptance and proclamation in parliament. He remarked that ‘people would know that the parliament of Canada passed resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland’, and this would ‘instil new hope and new vigour for those fighting for Irish Home Rule.’⁵⁴ They decided that the alternative to adopting the amended resolutions was the government’s rejection of the originals, and therefore O’Hanly advised their acceptance ‘in the interests of Home Rule.’⁵⁵ The resolutions easily passed the Dominion Parliament in April 1882, largely on the basis of their diluted tone.

By accepting Macdonald’s counter-resolutions, Costigan and O’Hanly did not indicate their own belief in their place as Irish Catholics in the Empire. Rather, they sought to achieve the widest possible support for their movement by disassociating the resolutions from Parnell and the more revolutionary aspects of the Home Rule movement. Indeed, O’Hanly’s own views on Home Rule veered toward the radical as he believed that Home Rule was but one step toward the larger goal of dismantling the British Empire. As he remarked in 1889, ‘if the ultimate object of our seven centuries of struggle was merely to obtain Home Rule and reconciliation with the Saxon, I for one would have none of it...our mission...is not limited to the liberation of Ireland. It will be only complete with the annihilation of the cursed British Empire.’⁵⁶ That the full measure of their support for Home Rule could not be expressed in the resolutions demonstrates that Irish Catholics were not completely in control of their situation in Canada, and had to adjust their actions based on political contingencies and the prevailing socio-cultural climate. Yet, it also demonstrated that they were far from helpless. They could not determine the course of Home Rule or Canada’s actions on Irish question, but they could participate in reacting to it. They felt an overwhelming moral responsibility to respond to the situation in Ireland, and the 1882 resolutions were the result of that responsibility.

Colonialism

Through his role in the aftermath of the Fenian Raids of 1866, political mobilisation in the Catholic League, and efforts on behalf of the Irish Home Rule movement, O’Hanly advanced a radical Irish nationalist platform and sought to achieve collective acceptance in Canada for Irish Catholics. Yet his nationalist politics did not impact his desire to secure government positions, nor did it appear to impact his ability to procure

⁵⁴ O’Hanly Papers, Volume 18, File 10: ‘Home Rule Resolutions.’

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ O’Hanly Papers, Volume 1, File 1: ‘Correspondence’, 1 September 1889.

such positions. His employment was both a rationalisation of his collaboration with the British Empire and the Conservative Party that dominated the Canadian state, as well as a self-serving strategy demonstrating his pragmatism. He sought and accepted government employment because state employment offered economic opportunity and a stable source of income.⁵⁷ Furthermore, O'Hanly championed aspects of the colonial endeavour which also motivated his work. He demonstrated a belief in scientific progress, individualism, and self-improvement, all of which he put into practice through his professional undertakings.

O'Hanly worked as a land surveyor for the Dominion government, and two of his major projects consisted of surveying land in the Canadian west. Mapping this land was important in the nation-building process for the newly-established Canadian state to demonstrate its sovereignty in domestic affairs. Knowing and controlling the land through scientific cartography was a crucial component to this project of national rule. Such a project aimed to project dominant Western European meanings onto the land and in the process marginalise and subordinate indigenous meanings of the same land.⁵⁸ In addition to the nation-building aspects of O'Hanly's work, land surveying also re-configured the spatial dimensions of the Canadian west within a liberal philosophy that promoted individualist property ownership.⁵⁹ O'Hanly worked on the Ontario-Quebec boundary survey of 1873-4, where he was employed as boundary commissioner for the province of Ontario. O'Hanly received his instructions for the Ontario-Quebec boundary survey in March 1872. He was to proceed to the mouth of the Mattawan River and determine the latitude. He was then to proceed to the west side of the Ottawa River where he was to survey the islands in the lake and river and determine their positions. O'Hanly was instructed to plant structures along the line that were to be marked out by the surveying team, to sketch the natural features of the ground over which the line passed, and note the character of the soil and the timber. In all, O'Hanly spent 253 days on this project from 21 October 1872 through 30 June 1873.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 10, File 3: 'Ontario-Quebec Boundary Survey.'

⁵⁸ Shelia McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton, 2005), xviii; a post-colonial perspective of Canadian history is also presented in Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver, 2005) and Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto, 2001).

⁵⁹ Ian McKay, 'The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History', *Canadian Historical Review*, 81 (2000), 617-45; Jean-Francois Constant and Michel Ducharme (eds), *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution* (Toronto, 2009).

⁶⁰ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 10, File 24: 'Ontario-Quebec Boundary Survey.'

O'Hanly was a promoter of railway expansion, which, along with the scientific and technological advancements that allowed for this expansion, was a fundamental marker of progress and improvement in the nineteenth century. In *Machines as the Measure of Men* Michael Adas argues they were also key symbols of colonialism. Not only did these forms of knowledge aid colonists in transforming the physical landscape through their application of Western forms of property, but their belief in the superiority of Western based knowledge 'buttressed critiques of non-Western value systems and modes of organisation.'⁶¹ O'Hanly participated in the expansion of scientific forms of knowledge in his work on major railway projects during the second half of the nineteenth century. He was employed as an engineer on the Intercolonial Railway in 1869, a division engineer on the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1871 and 1875, and he was chief engineer and director of two smaller railway lines that he and his business partners organised, the Ottawa and Gatineau Railway and the Ontario Pacific Railway. O'Hanly was an active promoter of the progress he felt was engendered through the technological advancements associated with railways. As he wrote,

The nineteenth century has witnessed a marvellous development in the subjection of natural forces...to the control of man...it (the nineteenth century) has beheld the infancy, growth, and maturity of railroads with all the ingenious mechanical devices which have kept up with its progress...a journey from Ottawa to Montreal through the primitive forest would take three or four weeks of arduous toll, peril, and privations at a very great expense...this can now be done in as many hours at a trifling cost with all the comfort and luxury of a palace on wheels.⁶²

The Ottawa and Gatineau Railway was to connect the hinterlands to the emerging urban centre of Ottawa. To promote the building of this railway in the 1870s, O'Hanly employed arguments infused with the social philosophy of liberalism, focusing on both the economic and moral improvements that would accompany its construction. He argued that railroads were the veins and arteries of the body politic, because through them flowed the agricultural productions and commercial supplies which were the life-blood of the state. Without these transportation routes, argued O'Hanly, the richest productions of nature rot and waste. He observed that before railroads were laid across the prairies the west was no better than a 'barren

⁶¹ Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (New York, 1989), 15.

⁶² O'Hanly Papers, Volume 10, File 5: 'Ontario and Pacific Survey.'

wasteland.⁶³ A well-planned rail-line through the land around the city of Ottawa could, according to O'Hanly, bring economic benefits to the area. Because the land adjacent to the mineral- and resource-rich Ottawa country was 'thoroughly neglected' the citizens there were ostracised and 'shut out from the rest of creation.'⁶⁴ A railway connecting these two areas 'would add largely to the wealth and population of Lower Canada.'⁶⁵ In addition to the economic benefits of such a project, O'Hanly argued that the moral environment would be improved as a result of the construction of railroads. He pointed to the example of the Highlands in Scotland, and how the habits of the working classes there had been improved owing to the increased and improved facilities of communication, and noted that a similar transformation would occur in the Ottawa Valley in the wake of the railway.⁶⁶

Tied to his enthusiasm for railway expansion was O'Hanly's support for colonisation of the prairies in order to open up lands to prospective immigrants.⁶⁷ Beginning in earnest with the passage of the Dominion Lands Act in 1872 and following the government's acquisition of Rupert's Land in 1871, colonisation schemes aimed to attract immigrants to the Canadian west with the promise of land and opportunity. O'Hanly hoped for these intending settlers to establish an agricultural economy that, in conjunction with railway development, would bring goods to larger markets across the new Canadian territory. For O'Hanly there were qualifications that prospective agricultural settlers had to meet. He divided prospective settlers into two classes. First were immigrants from Europe, whom O'Hanly reasoned should receive a free grant of 200 acres to begin their homesteading. The other class of settlers O'Hanly wanted to see re-settle the land were 'the more indigent class... those who live in our towns and cities on a daily wage—the precarious wage of a day.'⁶⁸ These prospective settlers should be furnished with farm implements, cattle and seed, and receive a sufficient sum for transport and maintenance until the first crop is garnered. He argued that these monetary advances, 'with moderate interest', should be payable in ten years. The hard-working immigrant and the hard-working day labourer transformed into pioneer with improved moral qualities were necessary for his colonisation plans. In keeping with his support for self-improvement, O'Hanly opposed land speculators

⁶³ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 7, File 9: 'Ottawa and Gatineau Railway.'

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. It is ironic that O'Hanly used the example of the Scottish Highlands to make his argument, as that process aimed to transform the social structure of the Highlanders in order to integrate them into the British state, a process he ostensibly opposed being done to the Irish.

⁶⁷ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 20, File 9: 'The Northwest Land Regulations.'

⁶⁸ Ibid.

because he believed they would monopolise the region. His plans would not allow any man whose real and personal property exceeded \$1,000 a single acre of land, and would make every man who claimed a homestead make a declaration to that effect.⁶⁹ O'Hanly felt the individuals and families re-settling the land ought to be of the proper moral quality. He noted that in his professional capacity he had come into contact with these 'pioneers of civilisation' and he admired their 'upward and onward struggles', as well as their 'steady and undaunted perseverance under trying hardships.'⁷⁰ O'Hanly thus employed the rhetoric of rugged individualism and the pioneer myth to support colonisation schemes that would be a part of the self-improvement of the settlers through their ownership of property.

The examples showcasing O'Hanly's participation in, and support for, the material and cultural aspects of Canada's system of internal colonialism indicate that he conforms to the argument put forth by S.B. Cook that the most common form of Irish response to the British Empire was not hostility, but rather multiple varieties of support. These varieties of support could take the form of those who self-interestedly became 'agents of empire', or those who saw holding administrative positions within the imperial structure as a temporary expedient.⁷¹ O'Hanly's enthusiasm for colonialism was a function of his belief in advancing the liberal order with its emphasis on individualism, independence, and self-improvement, a cause he viewed as being independent from the British imperial project. And though O'Hanly did not see imposing a liberal regime on the west as advancing the cause of British imperialism, and would likely have bristled at the suggestion of his complicity in the imperial project, he, an Irish nationalist, certainly played a role in the expansion of the British Empire through the Canadian state.

Irish Nationalism and Aboriginals

O'Hanly must be looked at as a Canadian example of the many cases of Irish Catholics who advanced the British imperial system and who themselves advanced within that system. Yet O'Hanly's radical nationalist perspective does make him stand out among Irish agents of empire. O'Hanly was not simply an Irishman who advanced his career through practices of colonialism; he was a self-identified Irish Catholic nationalist who supported a radical political agenda and was at pains not to compromise his beliefs even when

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s–1930* (Toronto, 2007).

they outraged the wider society and did so only when he felt that accommodation would benefit the nationalist cause in the long term, as was the case with the 1882 Home Rule Resolutions. Given O'Hanly's virulent nationalist views and his professional work with aboriginals in the Canadian west, the extent to which his Irish nationalism conflated with his views on Canadian aboriginals is an important topic for scholars to approach.

O'Hanly worked on aboriginal lands and in aboriginal communities in his professional capacity as an engineer, railway promoter and land surveyor, including a stint working on the Manitoba boundary survey of 1881. Just over a decade previous in 1869/70 Louis Riel led a Métis resistance against the encroachment of the Dominion government. Tensions had not dissipated following Manitoba's entry into Confederation in 1870, and within this context the Canadian state sought to use map-making as a strategy to control the land and the population. O'Hanly was head surveyor on this endeavour, reporting to Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General of Dominion Lands who worked in the Department of Interior. O'Hanly's work on this project was much the same as his work on the Ontario-Quebec survey, marking lines for boundaries, and keeping notes on the region's natural resources such as types of soil and trees.⁷² This particular time in Manitoba was also significant in the Canadian nation-building project as it was only shortly after the passage of Indian Act of 1876, which consolidated previous laws concerning the governing of aboriginals.⁷³ The Indian Act promoted a policy of assimilation; it made aboriginals wards of the state and banned traditional cultural practices such as the potlatch. There was perhaps no clearer act of colonialism in the imperial project than the establishment of a system of reserves for aboriginals. The reserve system set aboriginals apart from broader society until they could be 'civilised' by state authorities. The imperial tool of mapping, which created physical boundaries between 'Indians' and 'whites', worked simultaneously with creating cultural boundaries and racial categories between them. It was possible to physically separate aboriginals from the rest of the population because this way of thinking had been established for years. In turn, physically separating aboriginals on reserves from the rest of the population extended the notion that they were 'different', and hence inferior. This mutually constitutive

⁷² O'Hanly Papers, Volume 10, File 25: 'Manitoba Boundary Survey.'

⁷³ For a useful general overview of the Indian Act and its assimilationist objectives see John F. Leslie, 'The Indian Act: An Historical Perspective', *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, 25 (2002), 23–7.

process of transforming the material and cultural landscape was fundamental to the imperial project, as was the civilising discourse that accompanied it.

Involvement in the material and cultural re-constructions of space based on Western forms of knowledge did not mean that O'Hanly uncritically supported Canadian colonialism. He opposed government policies toward aboriginals because he felt they created a sense of dependency within the aboriginal population, rather than cultivating autonomy. Yet, O'Hanly did not see this as a reason to abandon colonial practices. It was his view that efforts geared toward 'civilising' the native population were necessary, but should create responsible individuals able to look after themselves. He believed that aboriginals had the capacity to be good citizens and autonomous individuals, but only after they had been 'civilised' through liberal colonial practices. His views on this subject were most forcefully expressed in a paper entitled 'The Indian.'⁷⁴ In it, O'Hanly issued a scathing critique of the actions of the Canadian government toward aboriginals in Canada. He argued against the idea 'drummed into the public ear, yet utterly devoid of truth...that Indians are lazy and will not work.' It was not the aboriginal population that was to blame for their state, believed O'Hanly, but rather poorly thought-out governmental policies regarding their treatment of aboriginals. The government, he contended, had failed to live up to the responsibilities it had set for itself: 'we folded our arms in indifference, forgetting or ignoring the trust voluntarily assumed when we seized his possessions and by a legal fiction deprived him of all rights, reducing him to the condition of a minor or a maniac.' O'Hanly demonstrated a paternalistic attitude toward the aboriginal population, however, lamenting that 'a helping hand we never stretched forth to ameliorate his condition, to redeem or rescue him from barbarism.'⁷⁵

In 'The Indian', O'Hanly defined aboriginals as savages, wearing costumes, clinging to a non-English language. It was their difference from Western culture that O'Hanly held to be essential to their identity. Once these identities based on difference were outlined, he then sought to explore the similarities between their culture and Western culture by comparing what he called 'the progress of the several tribes.'⁷⁶ This comparative approach ranked the aboriginal groups of Canada based on a set of criteria which placed great emphasis on Western forms of knowledge such as science and economic progress. O'Hanly believed that even the least cultivated of the Winnipeg tribes were far

⁷⁴ O'Hanly Papers, Volume 20, File 4: 'Indian Affairs.'

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

ahead of the most advanced Eastern Canadian tribes in his hierarchy of civilisation. He asserted that this resulted owing to contact that Canadian tribes had with what he sarcastically called ‘our humane and beneficent treatment of the poor Red Man.’⁷⁷ O’Hanly was critical of the treatment of aboriginals and offered the following comment regarding the Winnipeg tribes: ‘since their contact with civilisation – fatal to them as to all their race through no fault of their own – deteriorating influences are at work, which if not stopped will soon reduce them to the same low level as their brethren in Canada.’⁷⁸ O’Hanly invoked the ‘extinction’ narrative, arguing that as a result of contact with the Canadian state aboriginals were being transformed into an abject population. The prospect of extinction troubled O’Hanly because he believed that by their inherent nature, aboriginals were ‘fitted for as high a degree of culture and civilisation as any race hitherto rescued from barbarism, and if he is not today enjoying all the benefits of civilized life it is owing to the culpable neglect in the past of his would be guardians.’⁷⁹ O’Hanly thus argued that the aboriginal population had inherent characteristics that made them suited to enjoy the benefits of civilisation and culture, but that these attributes had to be cultivated under the influence of external forces. According to O’Hanly the aim of all relief should be the transformation ‘from the savage to the civilised state . . . to extinguish the savage Indian and raise in his stead a civilised Indian.’⁸⁰ O’Hanly argued that ‘civilisation’ could only be achieved by aboriginals if administered by the forces of colonialism. O’Hanly was constructing an ‘Indian’ identity for Western consumption, in order to justify imposing the more ‘civilised’ Western culture to supplant pre-existing aboriginal ways of life. It was not that O’Hanly opposed state intervention into the lives of aboriginals. Rather, he objected to how the state intervened. He believed in the necessity of the civilising mission to transform aboriginals into autonomous individuals, but objected to the ways the government was going about that mission.

O’Hanly held condescending views of the ‘primitive’ state of aboriginals, and his work on railway expansion and surveying projects which enlarged and solidified the presence of the Canadian state on aboriginal land demonstrates that in his professional capacity he held little sympathy for the plight of aboriginals as they became entangled in the global forces of colonialism. Yet

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

O'Hanly's view that Irish Catholics were the victims of British discrimination and abuses of power in both Ireland and Canada did not lead him to adopt a perspective of shared brotherhood between the Irish and aboriginals as two groups impacted by the violence and oppression of colonialism. In fact, it is possible that O'Hanly believed that such an association between Irish Catholics and aboriginals would have weakened the cause of the former by aligning them with aboriginals, whom O'Hanly viewed as 'barbarians.' His attempt to categorise aboriginals as something less than human was possibly aimed at comparatively demonstrating the heightened civilisation of the Irish and thus their worthiness for equality in the Canadian state and fitness for running their own country free from British authority.

Ireland's colonial status is at the heart of the matter when probing possible links between O'Hanly's views on Irish Catholics and aboriginals. Scholars remain divided on the classification of Ireland's colonial status. Terry Eagleton has argued that the relationship between Britain and Ireland was most certainly a colonial one, which makes it appropriate to consider Ireland's experiences within the same paradigm as non-European colonies.⁸¹ Declan Kiberd has likewise argued that Ireland's political, economic, cultural, and ideological domination by Britain was a form of colonialism that only ebbed through a protracted process of decolonisation following 1921.⁸² Stephen Howe presented a more ambivalent view of Ireland's colonial status, arguing that Ireland was seen as both a sovereign kingdom and a location fit for colonial exploitation prior to the Act of Union, and that ambivalence was never fully erased.⁸³ Liam Kennedy has similarly demonstrated there existed higher living standards in Ireland relative to non-European colonies, and thus concluded that a meaningful comparison between the two cannot occur and Ireland cannot rightly be considered a colony.⁸⁴

This field of inquiry also addresses questions regarding the extent to which the Irish nationalist movement can be categorised as an anti-colonial movement, as well as whether the Irish nationalist movement categorised itself as such. In studies that approach this issue, the place of Ireland and the Irish in the British Empire is transformed into explorations into the subversive role

⁸¹ Terry Eagleton, 'Afterword: Ireland and Colonialism' in Terrence McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), 326.

⁸² Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, 1997), 6.

⁸³ Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish Histories and Culture* (Oxford, 2000), 13.

⁸⁴ Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996), chapter 7.

the Irish played alongside other anti-colonial activists. Matthew Kelly and Paul Townend have presented two important examples of the imperial subversion of the Irish. Kelly has argued that until recently, Irish nationalists never accepted that they were colonised, thus making their identification with other anti-colonial movement seemingly impossible, yet in his study of Irish nationalism in the 1850s and 1860s he found that a heightened level of anti-colonialism and solidarity with non-European colonies existed in the Irish press. He thus concluded that anti-imperialism was a powerful component of Irish nationalist thought and rhetoric at this juncture.⁸⁵ Townend has probed how the imperial shaped Irish nationalism, and the degree to which anti-colonialism was integral to Irish nationalism as a social movement. Exploring the Irish Home Rule campaign of the 1870s and 1880s, Townend found that anti-British and anti-colonial solidarity existed between Irish nationalists in Ireland and Zulu nationalists in Africa. Townend observed that throughout the politically charged year of 1879, the Irish press condemned British imperial policies in South Africa and championed the cause of the Zulus.⁸⁶

A review of the literature demonstrates that the relationship between Irish nationalism and anti-colonialism was marked with ambivalence. Illustrations provided by Kelly and Townend demonstrate identification with other anti-colonial movements among Irish nationalists, yet contrasting examples of Irish nationalists, such as O'Hanly's patronising and racialised views on Canadian aboriginals, abound. Moreover, Pauline Collombier-Lakeman remarks that major figures in the Irish nationalist movement including Daniel O'Connell, Issac Butt, Charles Stewart Parnell, and John Redmond, all used the themes of slavery to present the Irish as victims of British domination and oppression.⁸⁷ Yet, she goes on to argue, those leaders were careful not to present Ireland as a British colony. Instead, they described the Irish political situation as provincial rather than colonial.⁸⁸ Collombier-Lakeman suggests that one of the reasons why Irish nationalist leaders did not frame Ireland as a colony is because Ireland and Irish people have historically been deeply involved in the construction and expansion of the British Empire.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Matthew Kelly, 'Irish Nationalist Opinion and the British Empire in the 1850s and 1860s', *Past and Present*, 204 (2009), 130.

⁸⁶ Paul A Townend, 'Between Two Worlds: Irish Nationalists and Imperial Crisis, 1878-1880', *Past and Present*, 194 (2007), 148.

⁸⁷ Pauline Collombier-Lakeman, 'Ireland and the Empire: The Ambivalence of Irish Constitutional Nationalism', *Radical History Review*, 104 (2009), 60.

⁸⁸ For this point also see Sean Ryder, 'Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth Century Nationalism' in McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a Colony*, 180.

⁸⁹ Collombier-Lakeman, 'Ireland and the Empire', 61.

By and large, anti-colonial writers have not included Ireland in their analyses, and Irish nationalists have not framed Ireland's colonial status as analogous to non-European colonies. This separation from non-European colonialisms suggests a relationship between the ways in which Irish nationalists such as O'Hanly framed Irish identity in distinction to non-European identity. Indeed, O'Hanly's condescending views on aboriginals and his self-righteous Irish nationalism demonstrates how he perceived the place of Irish Catholics in Canada, the British Empire, and historical context. From O'Hanly's perspective, aboriginals were uncivilised and primitive, hence unworthy for citizenship without the proper guidance from white men. On the other hand, Irish Catholics, especially professional men like himself who espoused a liberal ideology, were automatically placed at the top of the racial hierarchy and thus worthy of equality in Canada and fit to govern themselves in an independent Ireland. In O'Hanly's estimation, the fact that Irish Catholics were denied their fair share in Canada, and forced to live under British rule in Ireland, was all the more shameful because the Irish, unlike aboriginals, were a 'civilised' race.

Carleton University

Minds on the Edge: Immigration and Insanity among Scots and Irish in Canada, 1867–1914

Marjory Harper

Migration is a phenomenon synonymous with dislocation. Migrants are, by definition, people ‘on the edge’ of homelands and hostlands, and rootlessness can be articulated in terms of the triggers for relocation, as well as its physical, cultural or socio-economic outcomes. Inter-continental migrants especially experienced varying degrees of transition and consequent transformation; and some were perceived by themselves, as well as by families, communities, employers and authorities – in both donor and host nations – to have transgressed behavioural boundaries or conventions in ways that resulted in dislocating transitions, negative transformations and disconnected lives rather than harmonious integration, fulfilled expectations and robust new networks.

The perceived transgression of boundaries was particularly problematic when it related to the mental health of migrants. The challenges faced by families, doctors, administrators and politicians, as well as patients, are at the centre of this evaluation of the causes and consequences of mental illness among Scottish and Irish migrants to Canada, primarily British Columbia, between Confederation and the First World War. The study is embedded within the scholarship of post-colonial theory, relates to debates about diaspora, and is informed by the current historiographical landscape.¹ The central focus, however, is on the perceived causes of insanity among immigrants to Canada’s most westerly province, scrutinised through a comparative empirical lens. As well as being on the physical edge of the young Dominion, British Columbia embodied the challenges generated by the economic and social volatility of its extractive industrial base, with predictable casualties among those who sought to exploit its potential or were lured by the romantic rhetoric of western settlement. Evidence preserved in the admission registers, warrants and case

¹ See, for instance, David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds), *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careerism in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2006); Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2013).

notes of patients admitted to the Provincial Asylum for the Insane² at New Westminster offers a sobering glimpse into migrant lives that were disrupted and dysfunctional, at the very opposite end of the spectrum from the fulfilling experiences portrayed in recruitment propaganda. Since record-keeping tended to follow a similar template in Britain and many parts of the empire, the existence of a similar core of quantifiable information across a range of locations offers potential for the compilation of a comparative database that could be interrogated with respect to the origin, gender, age, occupation, marital status and religion of asylum populations, as well as the perceived causes of their illness.

The danger of relying on a one-dimensional, medicalised perspective generated by doctors within the walls of the asylum is mitigated by the richness of a source that also includes family correspondence and patients' reflections. In combination with official responses to insanity commissioned or generated by the provincial and federal governments – annual asylum reports, periodic investigations and legislation – it makes possible an assessment that addresses contentious issues relating to care, custody and expulsion. While the lens is trained on Scottish and Irish patients in the British Columbia Provincial Asylum, their experiences are not analysed in artificial isolation, but as part of a wider overview of migration and mental breakdown among immigrants of different ethnicities, both in BC and in other locations within and beyond Canada. Provincial and federal responses to insanity among migrants are outlined in a brief postscript, which identifies the evolution of gate-keeping and fire-fighting strategies by policy-makers and politicians.

The Theoretical Framework

In terms of post-colonial discourse, marginalised, dysfunctional or disconnected migrants represent the colonial 'other': the antithesis of authority, achievement and heroism that dominated imperial narratives and fed the stereotypes peddled by *The Boys' Own Paper*, penny fiction, travelogues and emigrant guidebooks. The theory is particularly pertinent in studies of the non-white colonial empire, where the migrants' status was integral to the ideology of racial superiority and minority rule, so that individuals who failed to reach those standards, or violated them, not least by becoming insane, were

² Renamed in 1897 as the Provincial Hospital for the Insane.

seen as potentially subversive to the whole colonial social order, and either had to be sent home or rendered invisible by confinement.³

Maintaining the ideology of racial difference was not such an explicit issue in the dominions, in terms of separate institutions of confinement for Europeans and non-Europeans, although the descriptors attached to patients indicate that doctors and administrators still operated within a clear racial hierarchy. In the BC hospital records, for example, the names of Canadians or Europeans are recorded straight-forwardly, but First Nations people are accorded only a brief pseudonymic entry such as 'Jim (an Indian)'.⁴ One Japanese patient was also simply described as 'Japo'.⁵ While the names of Chinese patients are listed more fully (if phonetically), the intrusion of value judgements is evident in the almost invariable description of their religion by the derogatory term 'heathen'.⁶ The hospital records of other Canadian provinces have not been scrutinised sufficiently to determine whether such practices were widespread across the Dominion, but recent scholarship on New Zealand's asylums has demonstrated clearer evidence of ethnic stereotyping.⁷

Analysis of asylum records, particularly through a multi-disciplinary lens, also contributes significantly to the broad – and currently fashionable – genre of diaspora studies. Perennial debates about the causes and consequences of migration, especially the agendas of participants, sponsors and host societies, can be enriched by the insights of individuals who had experience of mental hospitals, whether as patients, relatives, doctors or administrators. Fundamental questions about catalysts and consequences can be posed (though not necessarily answered) by examining case histories and policy documents: for instance, was the act of migration itself in some cases the product of a restlessness or rootlessness that contributed to subsequent problems? Could illness be triggered by the particular challenges of the migrant environment? How were gender differences reflected in committals to an asylum? How did

³ William Jackson, *Madness and Marginality: The Lives of Kenya's White Insane* (Manchester, 2013).

⁴ Provincial Archives of British Columbia [hereafter PABC], GR-1754, vol. 1, Provincial Mental Hospital, Essondale, Admissions Book, 12 October 1872 to 31 December 1912. There are seventeen such entries in the Admissions Register between 1872 and 1901.

⁵ *Ibid.*, no 561.

⁶ *Ibid.* There are 104 entries (ninety-six Chinese, five Japanese and three First Nations) where the religious affiliation is described as 'heathen'.

⁷ See below, pp 00

host countries deal with migrants who failed, through mental breakdown, to conform to expectations of desirable settlers?

Attitudes to support structures for immigrants can also be better understood by studying the records of asylums, particularly in relation to whether their function was one of care, custody or cure. They first came into being in Canada before Confederation as part of the deliberate separation of criminals and lunatics. The medical theory declared that they were for those who were thought to be curable; but for the public – and for many families – they were seen as custodial institutions for the chronically insane, often when individuals had become unmanageable in the domestic environment. For administrators, wrestling with limited budgets and expanding patient numbers, asylums were holding pens from which they often sought to move migrant inmates back whence they had come.

Migration involved not just individuals but also ideas and institutions. The practical influence of colonialism can be evaluated through the careers of asylum doctors and administrators, many of whom had been educated in Britain and who took their ideas across and beyond the British world. Several Scottish-trained doctors practised in psychiatry overseas, working in – or sometimes establishing – asylums whose names reflected the founders' Scottish origins. Perhaps the most notable example is Dr Theodore Grant Gray, who graduated from the University of Aberdeen in 1906 and worked as one of the first assistant physicians at Kingseat Hospital in Aberdeenshire before emigrating to New Zealand. For twenty years he was Director General of Mental Hospitals for the country, and Kingseat Hospital near Auckland, opened in 1932, was designed, named and run on the lines of the Scottish institution.⁸ Dr Joseph Workman, described in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* as 'unquestionably Canada's most prominent nineteenth-century alienist', was born in County Antrim, but in 1829, at the age of twenty four, he emigrated from Ireland to Montreal, where he studied medicine at McGill College and married an Ayrshire-born Scot. Appointed in 1853 as superintendent of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in Toronto, he turned the

⁸ Theodore Gray, *The Very Error of the Moon, etc. Reminiscences of a Director-General of Mental Hospitals in New Zealand* (Ilfracombe, 1959).

badly-run institution into an internationally-recognised therapeutic facility during his twenty-one-year tenure.⁹

The Historiographical and Statistical Context

Intermittent scholarly attention has been paid to issues of migration and mental illness. Most pertinent in a North American context is Oscar Handlin's Pulitzer Prize-winning study, *The Uprooted*, originally published in 1951.¹⁰ Handlin's contention that immigration to the United States was 'a history of alienation and its consequences' was subsequently countered by the case for assimilation, argued by historians who highlighted the significance of various ethnic networks in assuaging dislocation by providing social, benevolent and psychological support.¹¹ More recently, however, the pendulum has begun to swing back towards viewing migration as a disruptive experience. Pioneering research by Angela McCarthy and Catharine Coleborne has led to an edited collection which analyses mental illness among migrants with particular reference to ethnicity.¹² Most contributions focus on the Antipodes, although one chapter compares Scottish and Irish admissions to four institutions in Ontario in the nineteenth century.¹³ A team at the University of Warwick's Centre for the History of Medicine has investigated Irish migrants in Lancashire asylums, and two members of that team have co-edited a comparative study of migration, health and ethnicity.¹⁴ Insanity in India and Kenya has been explored

⁹ Thomas E. Brown, 'Workman, Joseph' in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. XII (1891–1900), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/workman_joseph_12E.html [accessed 24 July 2014].

¹⁰ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that made the American People* (Boston, 1951). A revised version was published in 1973 and the most recent reprint was published in 2002 by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

¹¹ Handlin, *The Uprooted*, second edition, 4. See also Frederick Cople Jaher, *Oscar Handlin's The Uprooted: A Critical Commentary: including Contadini in Chicago* (New York, 1966); John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, 1985); George E. Pozzetta (ed.), *Assimilation, Acculturation and Social Mobility* (New York, 1991).

¹² Angela McCarthy and Catharine Coleborne (eds), *Migration, Ethnicity and Mental Health: International Perspectives, 1840–2010* (New York, 2011).

¹³ David Wright and Tom Themeles, 'Migration, Madness, and the Celtic Fringe: A Comparison of Irish and Scottish Admissions to Four Canadian Mental Hospitals, c. 1841–91' in McCarthy and Coleborne (eds), *Migration, Ethnicity and Mental Health*, 39–54.

¹⁴ Catherine Cox, Hilary Marland and Sarah York, 'Madness, Migration and the Irish in Lancashire, c. 1850–1921', University of Warwick, Centre for the History of Medicine, http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/chm/research_teaching/

by Waltraud Ernst and William Jackson respectively, and there is some literature on mental illness among post-war ethnic minorities in Britain, particularly West Indian immigrants.¹⁵

In Canada, asylum records have been used to excellent effect by scholars such as James Moran, David Wright, Lorna McLean and Marilyn Barber. While Moran and Wright have undertaken specific studies of insanity, McLean and Barber used a combination of jail and asylum records in their analysis of Irish immigrant domestic servants in Ontario whose dysfunctional behaviour – manifested as drunkenness, vagrancy or larceny, as well as insanity – was perceived to threaten public safety or transgress moral codes.¹⁶ Taking a different approach, Barbara Roberts and Anna Pratt have, at different times, analysed deportation, a policy which was from its outset rooted in the alleged mental or physical defects of immigrants. ‘Canada’s record in deporting immigrants’, declares the labour historian Irving Abella, ‘was by far the worst in the entire British Commonwealth’.¹⁷ But while many deportees were sent from asylums to Canadian embarkation ports to be shipped back to their countries of origin, it is not possible to trace specific individuals through from detention to enforced departure. Deportation was always a federal responsibility, and the records were therefore the responsibility of the federal archives, which decided some years ago to dispose of all nominal deportation papers that predated the 1940s. The small amount of federal material that survives for the earlier period consists mainly of correspondence generated by disputed cases and appeals, and does not offer a statistically meaningful sample.

Deportation papers and related correspondence feature from time to time in the case files of patients in the BC Provincial Asylum. The exchanges

[irishmigration](#) [accessed 17 September 2015]; Catherine Cox and Hilary Marland (eds), *Migration, Health and Ethnicity in the Modern World* (Basingstoke, 2013).

¹⁵ Waltraud Ernst, *Mad Tales from the Raj: Colonial Psychiatry in South Asia, 1800–58* (London, 2010); Jackson, *Madness and Marginality*; Roland Littlewood and Maurice Lipsedge, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry* (London, 1997); Philip Rack, *Race, Culture and Mental Disorder* (London, 1982).

¹⁶ James E. Moran, *Committed to the State Asylum: Insanity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Quebec and Ontario* (Montreal, 2000); James E. Moran and David Wright (eds), *Mental Health and Canadian Society: Historical Perspectives* (Montreal, 2006); Lorna R. McLean and Marilyn Barber, ‘In Search of Comfort and Independence: Irish Immigrant Domestic Servants Encounter the Courts, Jails and Asylums in Nineteenth-Century Ontario’ in Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta and Frances Swyripa (eds), *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto, 2004), 133–60.

¹⁷ Irving Abella, foreword to Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came*, ix.

between hospital administrators, provincial and federal immigration officials demonstrate not only that the policy was implemented, but also that it was a source of contention, for in a number of cases patients recommended for deportation by doctors or provincial officials were, on federal investigation, found not to be deportable under the law.

The value of the individual case files lies partly in such miscellaneous correspondence, partly in the family letters that are sometimes attached to a patient's record, but primarily in the potted personal and medical histories that were compiled at the time of admission. Equally important are the admission registers which provide a systematic, standardised record of every patient, documenting a wide range of personal details. The years 1872–1912 are covered in a single register which contains 3,525 entries, just over 6 per cent of which were readmissions.¹⁸ This study draws on a database compiled from just over 34 per cent of those entries (1,210 individuals) between 1872 and 1901, along with 340 individual sets of case notes covering the four decades 1872–1912.

In terms of birthplaces, the register reveals that patients from the British Isles topped the table, with 406 entries, compared with 322 from all parts of Canada, including British Columbia itself. The remaining 482 came from China (102), the United States (99), and a variety of continental European countries, with a handful from Japan, Australia and the West Indies. England was the birthplace of 60 per cent of patients from the British Isles, with 20 per cent from Scotland and 19 per cent from Ireland. If these statistics are measured against the general provincial population from the 1891 census, we find that Canadian-born accounted for almost 58 per cent of BC's population, but only 29 per cent of asylum patients. By contrast, foreign-born accounted for just over 42 per cent of the provincial population but 67 per cent of the asylum patients. Individuals of British birth accounted for 20.5 per cent of the provincial population, but 36.3 per cent of asylum admissions. Among the British immigrants, those born in England constituted 13 per cent of the provincial population but 22 per cent of patients. The disparity was still evident, but less marked, with the Scots and Irish, who constituted, respectively, 4.4 per cent and 2.8 per cent of the provincial population, but 7 per cent of the asylum population in each case.¹⁹

The over-representation of foreign-born in the BC asylum is not surprising, since immigrants, particularly recently arrived ones, lacked the support

¹⁸ PABC, GR-1754. Vol. 1.

¹⁹ Census of Canada, 1891 (Ottawa, 1893), vol. I, Table V, Places of Birth, 332.

systems and family networks of the native born. But the proportions differ from Angela McCarthy's recent findings in New Zealand, where Irish migrants were over-represented among asylum patients; Scots were equal to their general presence in the population; and the English were under-represented.²⁰ The British Columbia evidence therefore challenges arguments that are sometimes advanced either that Ireland exported its insane or that the Irish were predisposed to insanity.

Triggers for Mental Breakdown

Naked statistics need to be clothed with meaningful analysis. The admission registers, warrants, and especially the case files are invaluable tools which facilitate that process and allow us to engage in debate about the causes, manifestations and consequences of migrant insanity. It is to that empirical agenda that we now turn, with particular respect to the perceived causes of mental breakdown among Scottish and Irish settlers and sojourners in British Columbia.

(1) The Transition

The difficulties of the decision-making process, the pain of parting, and the discomforts of the journey feature frequently in general emigrant testimony. Yet a difficult transition has to date been noted in only one entry in the BC Provincial Asylum case notes as the catalyst for a patient's illness. Mrs C. from Edinburgh, who was admitted to the New Westminster institution in 1890 and discharged to the care of her husband four years later, fell ill, according to her record, because of 'indisposition and the long trip from Scotland to BC'. She had taken opium and attempted to commit suicide.²¹ In contrast to the relative silence in the BC – and wider Canadian – record, a traumatic voyage experience was commonly mentioned in the New Zealand record: Angela McCarthy notes that 8 per cent of a sample of foreign-born patients who were admitted to Dunedin's public asylum within a year of arriving in New Zealand were said to have been affected by the voyage.²² This statistic is reinforced by published government reports, which from time to time also mentioned symptoms of

²⁰ Angela McCarthy, 'Migration and Madness in New Zealand's Asylums, 1863–1910' in McCarthy and Coleborne (eds), *Migration, Ethnicity and Mental Health*, 57–8.

²¹ PABC, GR-2880, British Columbia Mental Health Services, patient case files, Box 2, no. 371.

²² McCarthy, 'Migration and Madness in New Zealand's Asylums', 65.

insanity among migrants manifesting themselves after a few weeks at sea.²³ But a hypothesis that might attribute the higher incidence of trauma to the much longer voyage to the Antipodes is undermined by evidence that conditions on the government-sponsored antipodean vessels were better than in the free market of transatlantic travel, and reasons for the disparity therefore require further investigation.

(2) An Alien Environment

There were specific forms of disappointment and dislocation, some of which seem to have been triggered by the unexpectedly alien environment in which the migrants found themselves. Solitude was a recurring problem. A 'solitary life and bad habits', for instance, had allegedly brought about the delusional insanity of a thirty-seven-year-old bachelor from Dingwall in the Scottish Highlands, a mill hand, who was sent to the BC asylum from Port Moody in Vancouver Island in 1900. Ten years later, P., a peripatetic Irish gold miner who had previously prospected across the United States and British Columbia, was sent down from Cascade in the West Kootenays with delusions and a diagnosis of toxic insanity. According to the admission register, his illness had been caused by 'living alone'.²⁴

But isolation and solitude were problems by no means confined to the extractive-industry-based environment of Canada's western frontier or to the turn of the century. John Tod was a Scots-born trader with the Hudson's Bay Company whose Welsh-born wife, Eliza, became violently insane in 1839 while the couple and their baby were based at Oxford House, 590 miles north of Winnipeg. Fearful that she would harm herself or the child, and unable to procure assistance from the terrified First Nations people, Tod brought her back to Britain and paid for her confinement in a private asylum while he and the child went back to Canada, where he took a 'country wife', whom he married after Eliza died in 1857.²⁵

The prairies too epitomised a depressing environment, not least for the Countess of Aberdeen, who confided to her private diary when she visited the infant Hebridean settlement at Killarney in 1890: 'May God preserve us from banishment to the far famed wheatlands of Manitoba' where 'the

²³ *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1876, H-4, 11; *ibid.*, 1884, H-7, 1.

²⁴ PABC, GR-2880, Box 26, no. 2644.

²⁵ Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman, Ok., 1980), 195.

struggle to live has swallowed up all energy'.²⁶ It was a sentiment perhaps shared by Irish immigrant M., from County Cavan, who had been treated in Montreal and Winnipeg before admission to the BC Provincial Asylum in 1881. According to her case notes, her husband 'brought her from Red River to this country hoping it might do her good, but the contrary has happened'.²⁷

On the other side of the border, O. E. Rølvaag's 1924 novel, *Giants in the Earth*, charts the descent into insanity of the wife of a pioneer Norwegian family that had moved from the Lofoten Islands to land-locked Dakota Territory. At one point, the central character and tragic heroine, Beret, talks about 'the formless prairie' with 'no soul that could be touched', the 'infinitude surrounding her on every hand', and the 'deep silence' which convinced her that 'she had passed beyond the outposts of civilisation'.²⁸ In the same vein, on the other side of the world, 'secluded life on a station' was given as the cause of the insanity of a Scottish shepherd whose admission appears in the records of Sunnyside Asylum in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1851, little more than a decade after New Zealand became a Crown colony.²⁹

(3) Disappointed Expectations

An alien environment might be coupled with disillusionment in respect of lifestyle or employment, and perhaps some patients in the BC Provincial Asylum could have testified to disappointment in their expectations of moving from rags to riches. Unlike Ontario and the prairies, the Pacific North-West in the late nineteenth century was not promoted as a place for the impecunious. 'British Columbia is not a poor man's country. There is no room for him there', was the candid opinion of Henry Murray, the Canadian government's emigration agent in Glasgow after a trip out west in 1897.³⁰

Some of the most disappointed migrants on the planet in the nineteenth century must have been those who travelled the world in a vain search for gold, and it is not surprising that many of them – like P. from County Cavan

²⁶ The Countess of Aberdeen, unpublished journal, 2 October 1890, Library and Archives Canada [hereafter LAC], C-1352.

²⁷ PABC, GR-2880, Box 1, no. 163.

²⁸ O. E. Rølvaag, *Giants in the Earth: A Saga of the Prairie*, trans. Lincoln Colcord and the author (New York, 1927, 1929), 37.

²⁹ Admission Register Book, 1872-81, no. 7, Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum, Christchurch, Archives New Zealand, CAUY-3212 CH388/2.

³⁰ H. M. Murray's report to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 29 April 1897, LAC, RG76, file 34873, vol. 147, microfilm reel C-7303.

– appear in the province which lured so many hopeful prospectors to the Cariboo in the 1860s and to the Klondike in the 1890s. The database of admission register entries to date includes seventy ‘miners’ or ‘prospectors’ (just over 6 per cent of the sample), many of whom had delusions about being robbed of their claims.

D., for example, a bachelor from Lewis, was living in the Cariboo when he was admitted in 1892, with delusions. According to the medical certificate, ‘he thinks himself poisoned, robbed and disturbed in his work ... hears voices around his cabin’.³¹ Another Scottish patient, a provincial police officer in Victoria, claimed when he was admitted in 1894 to have made over \$40,000 from gold mines in the Cariboo, to have shares in every mine in the district, and to have built up a ranch of over 600 head of cattle from one cow in two years.³² But there was no exceptionalism in the derangement of Irish or Scottish miners: W. from Wales, admitted in 1898, was described as a ‘monomaniac on the subject of gold’; while an English miner, who was sent down from Dawson City in 1900, had gone to the Klondyke from Illinois, from where his wife wrote to the Superintendent a year later: ‘I am I am so sorry to here [sic] that Mr B. is so much worse. I am afraid he will never see his home agin. If he had never went away he would never [have] been where he is’.³³

Certainly, unsuccessful gold diggers were found in asylums across the British world, and also back in their native land. For example, McK., aged thirty three, was admitted to Inverness District Asylum in 1866, his previous occupation having been gold mining in Ballarat, Australia. Diagnosed with ‘melancholia’ of two years’ duration, his case notes refer to his delusion of possessing ‘a whole gold field in Australia’, as well as intimating that his brother was detained in an asylum at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh.³⁴

If the poor were discouraged from coming to BC, the province was unambiguously – and uniquely – peddled as a haven for genteel British settlers, ‘gentlemen emigrants’, who were known by the more pejorative title of ‘remit-tance men’ in western America. The propaganda worked, for between 1891 and 1921 almost 14 per cent of the province’s British settlers fell into that category. They were persuaded that it was not only a profitable economic

³¹ PABC, GR-2880, Box 3, no. 477.

³² *Ibid.*, Box 3, no. 525. It is unclear whether this individual had ever been a gold miner.

³³ *Ibid.*, Box 6, no. 838; Box 8, no. 1046.

³⁴ Inverness District Asylum, Warrants, 15 May 1866–15 May 1869, no. 281, Highland Health Board [hereafter HHB], 3/5/2.

venue but also a loyal outpost of empire, to which they could import their British attitudes, along with their tennis racquets and fishing rods.³⁵ Many of these individuals were surplus younger sons, some of whom may have been – by background as well as experience – predisposed to mental breakdown, or who hit the bottle when the reality of frontier life failed to match the rhetoric. The remittance men constitute a small but interesting minority in the asylum records. Three have been identified from the sample to date: one from Ireland (a Cambridge graduate and former soldier) and two from England, including F., an aristocrat who had murdered his Chinese cook.³⁶

(4) Homesickness

None of these catalysts operated unilaterally. An alien environment, or disappointed expectations, could trigger or exacerbate homesickness, which, in extreme cases, could lead to mental breakdown. Although it was not mentioned explicitly in any of the register entries, it can be deduced from some of the case notes, and it is clearly evident in documentation and personal testimony from other parts of the diaspora, across the ages.³⁷ It could be triggered by a life-changing event like childbirth or bereavement; by illness; or through the memories stirred by simple celebrations like Christmas. For some migrants it was a serial and recurring affliction.

Most of the clues about homesickness in respect of BC Provincial asylum patients come from family correspondence, rather than from the sufferers' own lips, or from medical assessment. C. from Leith, near Edinburgh, was admitted to the asylum in 1902 and died there sixteen years later. An undated letter from his sister written during the First World War contained this poignant observation and plea: 'It is very heart breaking, his constant desire to get home – "where there is no home". If we could manage to pay his fare, would

³⁵ For an analysis of remittance men, see Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants. From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Manchester, 1981); Marjory Harper, 'Aristocratic Adventurers: British Gentlemen Emigrants on the North American Frontier, c. 1880 – c. 1920', *Journal of The West*, 36 (1997), 41–51.

³⁶ PABC, GR-2880, Box 28, no. 2805; Box 20, no. 2061; Box 9, no. 1139. See also below, pp 75–6.

³⁷ See in particular Alistair Thomson, "'My wayward heart': Homesickness, Longing and the Return of British Post-War Immigrants from Australia' in Marjory Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester, 2005), 119–20, interview with John and Margaret Hardie, 9 September 2000.

it be possible to get him transferred to any institution here, where we could at least see him? I would come out and see him, if I could.³⁸

(5) Predisposition: Wanderers on the Face of the Earth

There is another theory which, like homesickness, is not articulated in the official record, but which emerges implicitly from the case histories. It is the issue of whether some individuals were predisposed to mental illness simply because they were 'chronic migrants', rather than through any specific consequences of their migration. Alternatively, did mental instability sometimes induce migratory tendencies? Migration was certainly not normally a consequence of dysfunctionality; and rootlessness did not cause insanity. On the contrary, constant mobility can be seen a positive reflection of the opportunities of the international labour market. Yet one of the most striking features that emerges from the case histories in the BC Provincial Asylum is the extraordinary and sustained itinerancy among many patients prior to admission. Some of them had been rolling stones since childhood, and several had completely lost touch with their parents, siblings and all places of previous residence.

Itinerancy or the vagrancy with which it was often associated was not linked with ethnicity, and there is nothing distinctive about footloose Irish or Scottish asylum patients. They do, however, appear in the records alongside wanderers from other parts of the British Isles, Europe and North America. J. from County Antrim had left school at the age of fourteen, and was employed at various jobs in Ireland and Liverpool before coming to Canada in 1902. Between then and 1909, when he was admitted to the BC Provincial Asylum, he worked in New Brunswick, the North West Territories, Minnesota, Montana, Washington and Prince Rupert.³⁹

P. was another drifter. A native of Limerick, he had emigrated to New York at the age of sixteen and had made his way across the United States, working as a coachman, saloon keeper and labourer in railway and logging camps. When he was admitted in 1911, shortly after being injured in a train crash in Washington State, he had had no contact with his family (including his wife and son) for seventeen years, and was drinking between two and three quarts (six to eight pints) of whisky a day.⁴⁰ From west Sutherland in the Scottish Highlands we have the example of G., who had come to Canada with

³⁸ PABC, GR-2880, Box 11, no. 1326.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 24, no. 2400.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Box 29, no. 2951.

his parents in 1872, at the age of fifteen and subsequently worked in about ten locations across the United States and Canada, often (like many itinerant patients) for the railways. He was admitted to the New Westminster institution in 1911, after being turned over to the provincial police at the American border when he had tried to enter the USA.⁴¹ The same year saw the admission of J., aged thirty nine, a native of Aberdeen and ‘a heavy drinker and user of tobacco for many years’. A granite cutter, he had emigrated to Vermont in 1892 but had followed his trade for only about a year. ‘Since that time’, his case notes recorded, he ‘has been wandering round various states, never remaining in any one position for any length of time, and as he has not kept any account of his wanderings is unable to give any definite statement in this regard. This wandering was not on account of any persecutory delusions existing, apparently, but just that he did not settle down anywhere.’⁴²

(6) Absence or Breakdown of Family Support Networks

Frequently going hand in hand with constant movement were loneliness, isolation and the absence or breakdown of family and community support networks. Solitude was not just a concomitant of a frontier environment. The absence of support mechanisms could also play a part, both in triggering mental breakdown and in dictating and exacerbating its consequences.

There is, moreover, a gendered ingredient to consider here. Married women who suffered desertion, family breakdown, domestic violence, post-natal depression or bereavement were particularly vulnerable to dysfunctional or absent support networks. Many of them were left alone at home for long periods, as their husbands engaged in multiple occupations: logging, mining, cannery work. Men tended to be admitted to the asylum for violent or dangerous behaviour, or because they had broken down on their job. Women were more likely to be admitted for depression, for threatening harm to themselves or others (especially their children), or for being unable to perform their domestic duties. ‘Puerperal mania’ was another common factor in female admissions. But there is also a disturbing sub-text in at least one of the BC Provincial Asylum records that hints at domestic abuse: when J. from Nairn, a ‘mild and gentle’ woman with four children, was admitted in 1910, her

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Box 29, no. 2892.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Box 31, no. 3129.

admission record stated that the cause was ‘abuse of [sic] drunken husband and hard times’, compounded by childbirth.⁴³

(7) The Medical Perspective

Most of the triggers discussed so far have been identified by inferences in the records, rather than explicit statements of causation. Patients, families, doctors, administrators and politicians all had views about the causes and consequences of insanity, but they did not always speak in harmony. The contributory causes and diagnoses identified in the admissions register reflect a medical preoccupation with heredity and moral value judgements which – as family correspondence indicates – was sometimes challenged by relatives.

There is a notable absence in the BC hospital admissions register of diagnoses made on the basis of ‘religion’, ‘religious delusions’, or ‘religious excitement’, and in cases where such a diagnosis was made, patients’ affiliations ranged across a whole gamut of denominations. This is in stark contrast to evidence sampled from Ontario more than three decades earlier, when ‘religious excitement’ was a recurring diagnosis, and Methodism the most frequently cited denomination. The disparity is explained partly by Joseph Workman’s influence in emphasising the somatic characteristics of insanity rather than the moral or psychological causes preferred by an earlier generation of alienists.⁴⁴ The political contexts were also different, for American Methodism was seen as subversive in Upper Canada in the 1830s and 1840s, not least because it was associated with those who supported the 1837 Rebellion and with the threat of invasion from the United States. Such issues were not relevant in the Pacific North-West at the end of the century, but the putative link between Methodism, subversion and insanity further east and in an earlier generation is a reminder that medical diagnoses were influenced by the political context within which the doctors worked. We are also reminded of the socio-cultural context by the case of J., one of the few patients in the BC Asylum whose illness was attributed to ‘religious mania’. An immigrant from Scotland, who was admitted in 1894, she had been upset by a recent schism in the Free Church of Scotland. ‘Her one topic of conversation was religion’, her former employer

⁴³ Ibid., Box 24, no. 2592. J. had suffered two previous attacks of ‘puerperal insanity’, one in Scotland nine years earlier and one in Winnipeg in 1907.

⁴⁴ http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/workman_joseph_12E.html [accessed 24 July 2014].

wrote. ‘The split in the Presbyterian Church has evidently worried her very much.’⁴⁵

Heredity was a factor in mental illness that was consistently emphasised by medical opinion across Canada, the other Dominions, the United States, and the British Isles, sometimes with the implication that the insane were being deliberately exported. ‘Heredity’ appears in the ‘cause of illness’ column in seventy-two cases in the 1,210 admission register entries examined to date. It is also identified in case notes, which recorded family histories, with particular reference to hereditary insanity and any previous committals of the patients themselves, or of family members. For instance, H., from Kirkcaldy in Fife, whose niece was also ‘similarly affected’, was admitted to the BC asylum in 1904, five years after she had been a patient at a similar institution in California. J., the footloose migrant from County Antrim whom we met earlier, had an uncle in an asylum; while H. from Glasgow had a paternal uncle in an Irish asylum as a result of ‘excessive drinking’, and his father had also died in Derry Asylum.⁴⁶

That heredity was a preoccupation of asylum doctors well beyond British Columbia is abundantly evident from Angela McCarthy’s antipodean research. Annie, aged fifty three, a native of Caithness, was admitted to the Seacliff Asylum in Dunedin in 1901, ten years after arriving in New Zealand, and following two years in Tasmania. Her case notes record that her sister was an inmate of Sunnyside Asylum at Montrose in Scotland, while her brother, who had been born an imbecile, was boarded out. Her file includes a letter she wrote to another brother in 1911, alleging that ‘had I been at Home the doctors would not have dared to [do this] . . . but here, advantage has been taken of me as I have nobody in the colony but yourself that knows anything about me.’⁴⁷

The BC admission questionnaire also addressed patients’ ‘bad habits’, specifically venereal disease and alcohol abuse. Intemperance, like heredity, was a common cause of mental morbidity identified by the doctors, being mentioned in eighty-four cases in the database. It is, however, yet another

⁴⁵ Ibid., Box 4, no. 569. For details of the split, see James Lachland MacLeod, *The Second Disruption: The Free Church in Victorian Scotland and the Origins of the Free Presbyterian Church* (East Linton, 2000).

⁴⁶ Ibid., Box 15, no. 1584; Box 24, no 2400; Box 24, no. 2393.

⁴⁷ Angela McCarthy, ‘A Difficult Voyage’, *History Scotland*, 10:4 (2010), 29.

ambiguous label, for alcohol abuse could be a cause, a symptom and a consequence of illness or other dysfunction.

The ambiguities are illustrated in the case of James from Shetland, whose entry in the asylum register in 1899 states that he was a man of ‘no occupation’ whose illness had been caused by ‘inebriety’.⁴⁸ But in a letter to his mother in 1891, and preserved in Shetland Archives, James presented a rather different profile. Writing a year after arriving in Vancouver, he condemned the misleading propaganda that he said had lured him to a city where there was high unemployment and living costs, coupled with low wages, and where, despite having some training in medicine, he had been forced to resort to a succession of menial jobs which barely kept him above the breadline. His last cent had gone on posting his tale of woe to his mother, but he was anxious that news of his failure should not spread too far. ‘Had I better news to convey it would have been different’, he wrote, ‘but the outlook is so dark that it is better to keep it to yourselves.’⁴⁹ Was his traumatic experience a consequence of alcoholism, or did he start to drink to excess because of disillusionment? It is impossible to tell.

Medical diagnoses – not least in James’ case – clearly involved value judgments, which can also be inferred from the language used to describe patients. Glaswegian-born H., whose father and uncle had died in Irish asylums, was a rolling stone who had spent the six years before his hospital admission in the United States, Canada (including the Yukon), Africa and back in Scotland. Apparently characterised by the same ‘excessive drinking’ as his uncle, he had been convicted of drunkenness and vagrancy. His case notes, in describing his delusional trends, recorded that he ‘has no fixed delusions, except those usually found in a degenerate’, while, in response to the question of whether he was dangerous to others, the doctor wrote ‘Not more so than others of his class.’⁵⁰

Value judgements could also involve race and ethnicity. In the late nineteenth century the tendency to categorise patients by ethnic markers was linked with the development of eugenics. It was used particularly with central and eastern Europeans and Asiatics, not least in New Zealand, where medical reports and official returns display a strong thread of ethnic stereotyping, often linked with appearance. One patient in Dunedin was described as a ‘dull sleepy dejected looking Chinaman who stands in a slouch attitude with his

⁴⁸ PABC, GR-2880, Box 7, no. 939.

⁴⁹ James to his mother, 9 June 1891, Shetland Archives, SC. 12/6/1915.

⁵⁰ PABC, GR-2880, Box 24, no. 2393.

eyes closed', while another was reportedly 'a typical fair haired light complexioned Scandinavian'.⁵¹ Non-English-speaking migrants in New Zealand were also distinguished by language, although a handful of Scots and Irish were also judged by the way they spoke. For instance, one Scottish patient in Dunedin was 'continuously talking. Sometimes Gaelic. Sometimes senseless English', while another 'says he can only curse in Gaelic'.⁵² An Irish patient in Auckland Asylum 'talks in a rambling incoherent manner with a marked South Irish accent about his life in Ireland some fifty years ago'.⁵³

The BC Provincial Asylum records, on the other hand, are remarkably devoid of such ethnically driven evaluations, with the exception of an implicit comment in respect of the two medical certificates submitted when K., from Nelson, was sent to the Asylum in 1907. The distinguishing feature was, once again, linguistic. One doctor reported that K. 'Talks and shrieks in Gaelic continuously. Will not answer any questions, nor talk in English, merely yells in Gaelic.' His colleague confirmed that 'the patient was crying out in an unintelligible language.'⁵⁴ As in New Zealand, but to a much lesser extent, there was some ethnic stereotyping of Chinese patients, on the basis of both language and appearance. One patient 'refuses to speak except in Chinese' while another was described as 'a short stout bullet-headed Chinaman'.⁵⁵

English speakers were clearly at an advantage in terms of communication. M-M. was a Norwegian-born patient in the BC Provincial Asylum who was probably suffering from post-natal depression when she was admitted in 1899, dying in the institution nine years later. In a telling letter to her husband in Bella Coola, the Medical Superintendent wrote in 1902, 'no one here speaks her language so we have to judge by her conduct. She seldom says anything.'⁵⁶

In some ways the relative silence on ethnicity is surprising in a Canadian context, because in the eugenics-dominated decade before the First World War, Canada was preoccupied with the idea that weak-minded immigrants from Britain (especially England) were polluting their society and draining their economy because they did not fall under the current deportation law. With reference to the situation much further east, an article in the *University*

⁵¹ McCarthy, 'A Difficult Voyage', 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 30–1.

⁵³ Quoted in Angela McCarthy, 'Ethnicity, Migration and Asylums in Early Twentieth-Century Auckland', *Social History of Medicine*, 21 (2008), 56.

⁵⁴ PABC, Box 20, no. 2003.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Box 1, nos 151, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Box 7, no. 949.

Monthly in 1908 used statistics from the Toronto Asylum to suggest that immigrants made up a disproportionate part of the population of Ontario's asylums: 20 per cent of the province's population was foreign born, but between 40 and 50 per cent of its asylum patients. The article went on to link the alleged preponderance of so-called 'English defectives' in the admission registers of Toronto asylums with 'the wholesale cleaning out of the slums of English cities'.⁵⁷

Medical and administrative stereotyping was sometimes matched by public prejudice. This has not been identified in documentation relating to British Columbia in the period under review, but some time later, in 1923, a letter sent to the federal immigration authorities from R. Law, a resident of Toronto, complained about the recent assisted migration of 600 Hebrideans to Ontario and Alberta. They came, the writer asserted, from the same mould as their countrymen who had settled in Cape Breton in the nineteenth century, and whose descendants were, he claimed, 'absolutely unreliable citizens', who were crowding the asylums, 'living in poverty, and content to do so'.⁵⁸ In fact, the Nova Scotia Hospital evidence shows that Scots were not disproportionately present in that institution, but value judgements about the relationship between poverty, unreliability and insanity – as well as heredity – ooze out of Law's sweeping condemnation.⁵⁹

Postscript: Responses and Consequences

Value judgements played a major part in determining the responses of doctors and politicians to migrant insanity. Institutions of confinement were established across Canada well before Confederation. Initially these were jails or poorhouses, followed by custom-built asylums in every province, in tandem with the birth of institutional psychiatry. Committals were made by a variety of individuals, including justices of the peace, police, prison governors, and patients' families.

The admission documents and case notes reflect a multi-hued tapestry of backgrounds and circumstances. Some patients were solitary individuals

⁵⁷ K. C. Clarke, 'The Defective and Insane Immigrant', *University Monthly*, 8 (1907-8), 273-8.

⁵⁸ R. Law, Toronto, to Department of Immigration and Colonization, 22 February 1923, LAC, RG76, vol. 633, file 968592, part 3, microfilm reel C-10446.

⁵⁹ For statistics of admissions to the Nova Scotia Hospital, see Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Hospital Fonds, 1859-1958, Admission Records, RG25, Series NS, microfilm reels 9623-9628.

whose lack of a family support network might have triggered or exacerbated their illness. They were detained for their own safety, the safety of others, or because of socially unacceptable behavior. In other cases, however, committal to the asylum was a consequence of discordant relationships or the impossible strains placed on family support mechanisms. Some families saw the asylum as a place to dump unwanted relatives; for others they were poor house equivalents, a sort of medical pawn shop, where they deposited and sometimes collected family members as financial or other circumstances dictated. In other cases they were a last resort, a sanctuary to which to send uncontrollable or elderly relatives when they could no longer be handled at home. Late referral obviously had a deleterious effect on the likelihood of recovery, and those who were admitted with age-related conditions generally died in the asylum, often within a short time.

Asylums were the responsibility of the provinces, whose priority was generally to balance the books and reduce chronic overcrowding by encouraging families to take back responsibility for their relatives. Sometimes this may have worked to the detriment of the patient. J. from Nairn, mentioned earlier, whose illness was attributed to abuse by her drunken husband, hard times and childbirth, was – a month after her admission – ‘allowed to return to her home in charge of her husband’, before being fully discharged from the Asylum’s books five months later.⁶⁰

If the insane migrant had relatives in the Old Country, the Asylum encouraged repatriation. As the Medical Superintendent put it in a letter to an English patient’s sister in 1903: they wanted to send her brother home because numbers of the hospitalised insane were increasing, wards were overflowing, and the provincial government ‘does not feel disposed to keep for the rest of their lives a lot of young men who really do not belong to it’.⁶¹ In fact, that patient died in the BC Asylum thirty-two years later, because his family ‘lived in rooms’ and claimed that they were unable to accommodate him or bear the cost of repatriation.⁶² There was a different outcome in the case of the blue-blooded remittance man rancher, F., who had killed his cook. After being tried for murder and acquitted on the grounds of insanity, he was sent back to England in the charge of an attendant from the Asylum, with the cost of

⁶⁰ PABC, GR-2880, Box 24, no. 2592. See also above pp 69–70.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Box 8, no. 1034, Dr G. H. Manchester, Asylum Superintendent, to LB, 3 February 1903.

⁶² *Ibid.*, LB to Dr Manchester, 12 January 1903.

the return passage and subsistence for the attendant – who was effectively a valet – being paid to the Asylum by his family.⁶³

Financial priorities also dominated policy back in Britain and at times caused strained transatlantic relations. B.'s sister and mother wanted him to be sent, at public expense, to Hanwell asylum near London, but that was not feasible. As Dr George Manchester, Superintendent of the BC Hospital, explained to her, the British authorities 'are opposed to our sending these young men home and think that we should accept the fit with the unfit when immigrants come our way.'⁶⁴ Sometimes resources were pooled in order to share the cost of repatriating individuals who did not fall within the deportation legislation. One example was G. from Dublin, a Boer War veteran, who was sent home from the BC Asylum in 1910 at the joint expense of the provincial and federal governments. As a federal immigration official wrote to Charles Doherty, the Medical Superintendent, 'The man is not deportable under the Act, but that [sic] to save his being a further charge upon Canada, our Department will share with yourselves the costs of relief from the present public charge.'⁶⁵

The legislation to which the federal immigration officer referred was the Immigration Act of 1906, which consolidated previous immigration legislation, and clarified and enhanced provisions for deportation.⁶⁶ While the provincial response to insanity was primarily pragmatic, blending custodial oversight, community care and the repatriation of immigrants, it was harnessed to an evolving federal overlay. That federal response involved a mixture of gate-keeping and fire-fighting, and – heavily influenced by the rising profession of psychiatry – had a clearly eugenic agenda. While screening and quarantine were imposed at ports of entry, more emphasis was put on subsequent damage control through deportation. Canada, we have noted, deported many more immigrants than any other country in the Commonwealth, with the objective of getting rid of individuals who were, or likely to become, public charges. From the outset insanity was right at the centre of that definition, and – under the 1906 legislation – if such a diagnosis was made within two years of arrival, the immigrant could be deported at the expense of the shipping company which had brought them. Some of these individuals – like B., a

⁶³ Ibid., Box 9, no.1139. See also above, 67

⁶⁴ Ibid., Box 8, no. 1034, Manchester to LB, 3 February 1903.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Box 26, no. 2695, J. H. MacGill to Dr Charles Doherty, 26 September 1910.

⁶⁶ Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto, 2010), 159.

woman from Aberdeen – were sent straight from the port of disembarkation to an asylum in their native land.⁶⁷

In the Pacific North West, unofficial deportation had been the response to the first recorded case of insanity. In 1850, a year after the Crown colony of Vancouver Island was created, a deranged Scottish immigrant allegedly assaulted the jail doctor, John Helmcken, and was placed on the next ship back to Scotland. In later decades Scots and Irish were included – though not disproportionately so – in those slated for deportation from the BC Provincial Asylum. J., a miner from Glasgow, was deported in 1909 following a diagnosis of toxic insanity. On arriving less than two years earlier, he had worked as a labourer at various locations in the West before securing a position in the coal mines at Cumberland, Vancouver Island, from where he was committed after a ‘prolonged drinking bout’ had induced ‘delusions and hallucinations’.⁶⁸ Also deported in 1909 was M., a domestic servant from Aberdeenshire. According to one of the certifying doctors, ‘This is undoubtedly a case of Dementia Praecox [schizophrenia] and from history obtained [I] would say she was suffering from same previous to leaving her home in Scotland.’⁶⁹

One deportee who began but did not complete his journey back across the Atlantic was twenty-two-year-old T. from Tain in Easter Ross. Having been admitted to the institution within three months of arriving in Canada in 1908, he was ordered to be deported and was on board ship in the middle of the St Lawrence when he broke away from his attendant, jumped overboard and was drowned. His father in Tain subsequently sued the Allan Line for failing to keep a proper suicide watch, not least because T.’s deportation order had stated that he – like the female patient from Aberdeenshire – had shown signs of insanity before leaving Scotland.⁷⁰

Conclusion

T.’s story – like that of many others who have populated this study – is a reminder that issues of migration and mental health involve not simply bald statistics, medical theories and administrative practices, but dislocated families,

⁶⁷ Asylum Register of Lunatics, 22 July 1921, Northern Health Services Archives, Aberdeen Royal Asylum, GRHB 2/3/19. The example post-dates the period of this study, but correspondence in the BC Provincial Hospital records indicates that the practice was enforced from at the least the beginning of the century.

⁶⁸ PABC, GR-2880, Box 24, no. 2415.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 24, no. 2441.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Box 22, no. 2220.

personal anguish and minds that were pushed over the edge. While the asylum registers, warrants, case notes and correspondence, coupled with provincial and federal reports and legislation, provide us with a partial narrative of policy, theory and practice, they also offer a sobering glimpse into the adversity and tragedy that sometimes defined and destroyed the migrant experience.

Despite the challenges of fragmentary medical records, limited corroborative evidence, and privacy legislation, surviving and accessible documentation from the BC Provincial Asylum casts fresh quantitative and qualitative light on contemporary perceptions of mental illness among Scottish and Irish migrants to British Columbia in the province's formative decades. It also blazes a trail for further multi- and inter-disciplinary research within a wider international context. Insanity among migrants, whatever their destinations, has always been a complex and contentious phenomenon that has evoked different responses from doctors, administrators, politicians, relatives and patients, as well as arguments within the medical profession. Comparative investigation of the roots and repercussions of this global phenomenon should identify chronological, spatial and cultural patterns associated with migrant mental illness, as well as demonstrating that migration could be an alienating as well as an invigorating experience.

University of Aberdeen

Spatial Subversion in Alexander Trocchi's *Young Adam* and *Cain's Book*

Gillian Tasker

Heterotopology was first theorised by Michel Foucault in his 1967 lecture 'Other Spaces' ('Des espaces autres'), delivered at the Cercle d'Etudes architecturales and later published in his *Dits et Ecrits* in 1994. Deriving from a medical term referring to 'tissue that is not normal where it is located, or an organ that has been dislocated heterotopia's connection to space suggests its more metaphorical practice.¹ Linguistically 'hetero-topia' is 'other-place', and these places of otherness are 'spaces of alternate ordering'.² Kenneth White has also usefully defined heterotopia as 'being a stage on the way towards what I've come to call, in general terms, *atopia*, a place radically outside commonplaces, without being a no-place' to emphasise that the heterotopia constitutes a real rather than imagined space, such as utopia.³ As 'a spatial dimension of difference', discordance is integral to the function of the heterotopia which 'is capable of juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'.⁴ The uncanny nature of the heterotopia, their contradictory spatiality, and their implicitly subversive disruption of social norms, makes them particularly relevant to Alexander Trocchi's texts and, as I will argue, to the concept of the edge. Predominantly published in the 1950s and 1960s, Trocchi was a Glasgow-born avant-garde writer whose *oeuvre* is usually associated with French existentialism, the Beat Generation, and London's counterculture, due to his cosmopolitan lifestyle and experimental aestheticism.

Reading the novels *Young Adam* (1954) and *Cain's Book* (1960) through a spatial lens, Foucault's theory of heterotopology from 'Other Spaces' (1967) will be primarily used to explore the subversive spatiality experienced by

¹ M. Christine Boyer, 'The Many Mirrors of Michel Foucault and their Architectural Reflections' in Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (eds), *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society* (London, 2008), 56.

² Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 25.

³ Kenneth White, *Ideas of Order at Cape Wrath* (Aberdeen, 2013), 46.

⁴ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 25.

Trocchi's characters in the texts. To a lesser degree, the phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard's ideas on interior space from *The Poetics of Space* (1958) will also be used alongside Foucault.⁵ Building on the notion of heterotopia as existential space, I will begin by applying the model of the ship as Foucault's 'heterotopia *par excellence*' to the barge and scow in the texts, in order to determine the extent to which Trocchi's two central protagonists encounter subversion in nautical space. I will then analyse the heterotopia of the fairground and the spatiality of the hanged man to explore their impact upon Trocchi's characterisation, before ending with a discussion of how the mirror functions as an existential device that simultaneously comprises real and unreal space. By considering Trocchi's writing alongside the various examples of heterotopia, this approach will situate Trocchi within a contemporaneous theoretical framework while also analysing the extent to which Trocchi, the self-professed 'cosmonaut of inner space', renders his characters' outward spatiality as subversive.⁶

Plucked from a pile of notes for 'Cain's Book' in *Cain's Book*, Joe Necchi reads:

It was the warmth of the sun that came on my cheek and on my hand through the open window which made me get up and go outside and find the sun already far overhead and the skyscrapers of Manhattan suddenly and impressively and irrelevantly there in a haze of heat. And as for that irrelevance ... I often wondered how far out a man could go without being obliterated. It's an oblique way to look at Manhattan, seeing it islanded there for days on end across the buffering water like a little mirage in which one wasn't involved, for at times I know it objectively and with anxiety as a nexus of hard fact. Sometimes it was like trumpets, that architecture.⁷

⁵ The combination of Bachelard and Foucault is appropriate because in 'Other Spaces' Foucault directly acknowledges Bachelard's text as complementary to his theory of heterotopia. Indeed, Bachelard's focus is on 'internal space' and Foucault's primary focus is on 'external space' (although I would argue that each theorist discusses both dimensions), and both theories are similarly rooted in, and united by, the exploration of anthropomorphic space.

⁶ The official transcript of the 1962 International Writers' Conference in Edinburgh reveals that Trocchi had first described himself as a 'cosmonaut of inner space'. On the platform on day three he stated that 'I rather sensationally described myself as a cosmonaut of inner space'. See Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell (eds), *International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (Glasgow, 2012), 108.

⁷ Alexander Trocchi, *Cain's Book* (London, 1998), 13.

Necchi is the narrator. He is also an industrial scow captain transporting cargo around the Manhattan waterways, a struggling writer, and a heroin addict. Positioned on the edge of the city at the pier, the scow symbolises an inner world of heightened subjectivity by contrasting with the external world of objectivity symbolised by Manhattan's looming landmass. Significantly the passage reveals that Necchi feels 'far out', and this conceptually carries a double meaning. First, it linguistically links to Necchi's psychological space of the heroin-hit; 'far out' was a 1960s countercultural coinage used to signify the highly subjective mental experience of narcotic experimentation. Second, in terms of space, an existential relationship between Necchi and the environment is inferred because 'far out' also refers to the distance of the scow from land by acknowledging the space between the scow and Manhattan society. The passage describes the famous Manhattan skyline as 'suddenly and impressively and irrelevantly there', which demonstrates the deep sense of detachment that Necchi feels for everything but his own immediate environment. Trocchi's word choice of 'far out', 'obliterated', 'oblique', and 'objectively', and the repetition of 'irrelevance', also function to further highlight Necchi's acute isolation, as does the image of the city as a 'mirage'. Necchi's belief in the truth of inner self, or of inner space, is acknowledged here; 'mirage' implies that Manhattan could in fact be false, and although he knows it *is* there 'objectively' as 'a nexus of hard fact' this makes him anxious; it is only through subjectivity that Necchi believes any truth can be mediated, or found. Donatella Mazzoleni's insight is useful here: 'In the metropolitan aesthetic the eye fails in its role as an instrument of total control at a distance; once more the ears, and then the nose and skin, acquire an extra importance'.⁸ The poetic and synaesthetic imagery of the architecture being 'like trumpets' also conveys Necchi's detachment; the eye has indeed failed as 'an instrument of total control at a distance' because the city is abstract and incomprehensible: it is more like sound than anything tangible and concrete. Necchi's subversive disconnection from the city is furthered again; Manhattan is described as 'the alien city' because he is 'abstracted from it all'.⁹

The dualism between the inner and subjective space of the scow and the outer objective space of society is further elucidated in Foucault's theory of heterotopia. Perhaps most importantly, Foucault's 'Other Spaces' theorises

⁸ Mazzoleni, 1993: 297.

⁹ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 230, 181.

that the ship specifically is 'the heterotopia *par excellence*'.¹⁰ Ships are markedly prominent throughout Trocchi's *oeuvre*: they are absolutely central to the setting of *Cain's Book* and *Young Adam* and to a lesser extent in other titles including *Helen and Desire* and *Sappho of Lesbos*. Foucault's ship corresponds to heterotopic criteria by implying freedom through its association with 'the infinity of the sea', whilst also being 'closed in on itself': 'the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea'.¹¹ Being both closed and open, the ship's spatiality is hinged on the edge and this central dualism is evident in *Cain's Book* in which the river scow can be considered in tandem with the concept of the heterotopous ship. Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* (1957) connects the ship with a coffin, stating that in certain circumstances 'the ship then is no longer a box', and he also states that, 'the ship may well be a symbol for departure; it is, at a deeper level, the emblem of closure'.¹² Gary A. Boyd's insight into Necchi's spatiality is useful here: 'The carceral significance of the boat is not lost on Trocchi who describes it in *Cain's Book*, as a 'retreat into abeyance' and whose alternatives were 'prison, madhouse, morgue'.¹³ Accordingly, Necchi's scow is described as 'a low-slung coffin on the choppy-grey water' and a motor-tug is described as being 'like a terrier pushing floating coffins'.¹⁴ In keeping with this notion of absolute closure, it is revealing that Necchi's heroin hit often takes place within the secret space of the scow. This is immediately established in the opening page: 'Half an hour ago I gave myself a fix. I stood the eye-dropper in a glass of cold water and lay down on the bunk'.¹⁵ Necchi's brazen admission makes clear that in the process of the heroin hit he seals himself off from the outside world two-fold: first, Necchi enters the self-isolated psychological sphere, and secondly, he is also physically isolated. Situated in the closed and clandestine space of the scow he is on the edge both existentially and spatially.

The barge upon which Joe works as a barge-hand in *Young Adam* can also be considered in tandem with the concept of the heterotopous ship. The barge

¹⁰ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² Trocchi, 1993: 67, 66.

¹³ Gary A. Boyd, 'Alexander Trocchi: Glasgow through the Eye of the Needle' in Jonathan Charley and Sarah Edwards (eds), *Writing the Modern City: Literature, Architecture, Modernity* (London, 2011), 13.

¹⁴ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 116, 181.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

is unable to take advantage of ‘the infinity of the sea’; instead it is confined to carrying loads on the Forth and Clyde canal, situated on Scotland’s central belt between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Joe, the narrator of *Young Adam*, is aware of the freedom that the ship and the open sea signifies, and at the start of the narrative he makes the following observation, which emphasises the closed and restricted feeling he has on the canal: ‘Beyond it on the far bank, a network of cranes and girders closed in about a ship. “To sail away on a ship like that,” I thought, “away. Montevideo, Macao, anywhere. What the hell am I doing here? The pale North”.’¹⁶ Furthering this notion, Joe also reveals that, ‘A feeling of constriction descended on me one morning as I was touching up the paintwork of the barge . . . The feeling of constriction remained with me all morning’.¹⁷ Joe finds life on the barge stifling, which is emphasised through the use of repetition. He confesses, ‘I couldn’t keep my eyes off the ships on the river, especially those which I knew would sail over the horizon into the southern hemisphere’ and he is distracted by ‘the claustrophobic atmosphere’ which was ‘still constricted and yellow, drawn in on all sides by the black spokes of the dock.’¹⁸ Psychologically Joe is trapped on the artificially constructed canals, which parallels his existential situation of being trapped in the mystery surrounding his ex-girlfriend Cathie’s death.¹⁹ Alan W. Watts claims that ‘The degree of our freedom and self-determination varies with the level which we realize to be our self – the source from which we act. As our sense of self is narrow, the more we feel our existence as restraint.’²⁰

Responding to a lack of existential autonomy, Joe feels that ‘The more I became involved in the small world of the barge, the more I felt myself robbed of my identity’; Joe’s intense isolation and lack of control over his external environment are suggested by the personification of the barge which robs his ‘identity’, and this, in combination with the constrictiveness of the canal, mirrors his trapped state of mind.²¹ Joe is existentially on the edge, and

¹⁶ Alexander Trocchi, *Young Adam* (London, 2008), 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 110, 111.

¹⁹ Trocchi’s text is comparable to Camus’ *The Fall* (1957), which is set in the canal-centric city of Amsterdam. Interestingly, both novels were published around the same time, and the texts bear striking thematic parallels: *The Fall* is a first-person narrative monologue, which also portrays a man’s psychological struggle after he witnesses a young woman jumping to her death off a bridge in Paris. The protagonist Clemence – like Trocchi’s Joe – does not attempt to save her, and Camus’ canal setting reflects Clemence’s constricted psychological state.

²⁰ Alan W. Watts, *Nature, Man and Woman* (New York, 1970), 135.

²¹ Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 110.

in an acknowledgment of his self-stagnation he 'wanted to break through the immobility with which I had become involved'.²² His inaction on the barge is further suggested by the following: 'Often when I woke up I had a feeling that I was in a coffin'.²³ The barge as 'coffin' is clearly aligned with the heterotopic ship as Barthes' 'emblem of closure' which pushes Joe towards the existential edge of death through his loss of self.²⁴ Gary Hentzi's claim, that 'we see how a way of life that offers the illusion of freedom and self-determination to men like Joe and Les [the barge's skipper] is in fact almost unbearably claustrophobic', is particularly pertinent.²⁵

While Joe in *Young Adam* is confined by the space of the barge, the closed and clandestine nature of the cabin in *Cain's Book* functions in contrast as a private, safe haven for Necchi. Spending the evening aboard the scow with a female companion Necchi comments, 'we talked for hours, the ambiguous presence of rain and night silence seeming to hold us closer together within the small wooden shack'.²⁶ In contrast to Foucault's perhaps negative notion of the ship being 'closed in on itself' and where constriction is equated with a loss of identity in *Young Adam*, Bachelard's consideration of enclosed interior space instead acknowledges the existential importance of what he terms 'the hut dream' whereby 'a dreamer of refuges dreams of a hut, of a nest, or of nooks and corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole'.²⁷ Barthes' insight into the space of the ship is also useful here: 'To like ships is first and foremost to like a house, a superlative one since it is unremittingly closed ... a ship is a habitat before being a means of transport'.²⁸ Furthering Barthes' analogy of the ship as habitat, Bachelard writes that 'the house, even more than the landscape, is a 'psychic state', and even when reproduced as it appears from the outside, it speaks intimacy'.²⁹ Accordingly, Necchi rejects the outside world and outer society by forming his own alternative world on the scow: in the closed cabin he is a writer, dreamer, and junkie, but in the open space of the deck, he is a scow captain. Bachelard has acknowledged that 'philosophers, when confronted

²² Ibid., 110.

²³ Ibid., 67.

²⁴ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London, 1993), 66.

²⁵ Gary Hentzi, 'Counterculture Revisited: *Young Adam*, Then and Now', *Scottish Studies Review*, 9 (2008), 9.

²⁶ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 130.

²⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, 1994), 31, 30

²⁸ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 66.

²⁹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 72.

with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being', and in this way, the scow cabin is analogous to the house or hut, which Bachelard also fittingly describes as being in 'dynamic rivalry' with the universe.³⁰ Necchi's scow cabin is a space of intense intimacy and Barthes claims that, 'Most ships in legend or fiction are, from this point of view ... the theme of cherished seclusion'.³¹ In *Cain's Book* the scow undoubtedly parallels this typical nautical portrayal.

The dialectical nature of heterotopias does however also determine that although they are restrictive and inward, they are also spaces of liberation. Edward Soja claims that heterotopias are 'meant to detonate, to deconstruct' and in addition to functioning as a safe haven for Necchi's heroin use in *Cain's Book* the scow also functions as a space for transgressive sex; Necchi spends the night with a man and on another occasion with a married woman.³² Casare Casarino provides insight into the key relationship between heterotopic space, social practices, and bodily behaviour: 'if heterotopias are particular conceptualisations of space, then the crisis of a heterotopia will necessitate a reconfiguration of specific social practices of space, that is, of specific articulations of bodies in space.'³³ Casarino equates heterotopic space with subversive bodily behavior, and it is significant that Trocchi draws attention to the clandestine nature of the cabin in the narrative: Necchi, describing the night with his male companion, personifies the cabin believing that it was 'infecting us with its own secrecy', and he then admits that, 'it occurred to me that it was better that way'.³⁴ The heterotopic ship is also described as a 'site of alternate ordering' by Kevin Heatherington who echoes Casarino's claim that Sade's castle in *One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom* is fundamentally heterotopic because it is 'a space of unlimited individual freedom, a freedom that pays no heed to moral sanctions over one's sexual conduct.'³⁵ This notion that heterotopic space enables and permits sexual deviance is also outlined by Foucault's example of the American motel: he writes, 'a man goes with his car and his mistress where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely

³⁰ Ibid., 212, 47.

³¹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 67.

³² Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places* (London, 2006), 163.

³³ Casare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad In Crisis* (Minnesota, 2002), 35.

³⁴ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 65.

³⁵ Kevin Heatherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London, 2002), 39.

hidden, kept isolated without ever being allowed out in the open'.³⁶ It is apparent, then, that as analogous to the motel, the isolated space of the scow consequently allows similarly secluded, 'absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden' sexual freedom; the scow permits 'deviant' behaviour. Additionally, although the barge in *Young Adam* is primarily portrayed as restrictive, it is however rendered as further heterotopic by also functioning as 'a temporary passage away from power'; for Joe, who may or may not be guilty of Cathie's mysterious 'murder', the barge enables him to avoid any police inquiries. Moreover, there is also the narrative of infidelity in *Young Adam*: Joe has an illicit affair with Ella, the wife of the barge's skipper Leslie, and in doing so the space of the barge (the recurrent site of the affair) disrupts the social norm. Creating such covert reciprocity between characterisation and spatiality enables Trocchi to deepen his characterisation while the use of heterotopic space furthers the surreal sense of dislocation that Joe experiences aboard the barge and which adds to the uncanny and unsettling atmosphere of the narrative; like Joe who is out on the edge of things in heterotopic space the reader is situated in an uncanny and uncertain narrative space because they are unsure of whether what Joe reveals is the actual truth.

The conflicting duality of the heterotopia has led to the claim that 'the space of the ship is the heterotopia of modernity as crisis'.³⁷ This dualism responds to the traditional purpose of the ship (colonialism, imperialism etc.) while also acknowledging that the ship is also a symbol of cultural and mythical. Indeed, while the ship is 'the greatest instrument of economic development' and a symbol of Western success, Foucault also recognises that heterotopias 'dissolve our myths'.³⁸ Significantly, the scow in *Cain's Book* destabilises this traditional, mythical standpoint; although Necchi is employed as a scow captain, he rarely engages in any actual hard graft and he is portrayed as almost always lying around: 'lying on the bunk', 'I had been lying in the bunk for over an hour', 'I found myself lying on my bed', 'we lay down on the bed', 'I spent most of my time lying on the roof of my shack'.³⁹ The scow is not a place of productivity but a place of idleness and experiment. Necchi smokes, indulges in illicit sex, philosophises, and gets high on heroin and it is apparent that Necchi indeed attempts to cultivate as 'vast amount of leisure' as possible. Joe is similarly lazy; he and Leslie are

³⁶ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 27.

³⁷ Casarino, *Modernity at Sea*, 34.

³⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 2002), xix.

³⁹ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 10, 65, 123, 132, 183.

described as frequently feeling ‘a bit uncomfortable there on deck and doing nothing because Ella never seemed to stop working’.⁴⁰ In ‘Other Spaces’, Foucault suggests that retirement homes are exemplars of what he terms ‘heterotopias of deviation’ because, ‘since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation’.⁴¹ Both texts’ protagonists are well aware of the importance of being idle; by breaking with the norm of productivity and labour in capitalist society, the scow and barge are analogous to the unexpectedly subversive space of the rest home.

Foucault outlines a different type of heterotopia – ‘heterochronies’ – in ‘Other Spaces’.⁴² Specifically embodying temporal discontinuity, Foucault argues that these ‘function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time’, and such heterotopias, he suggests, are cemeteries, fairgrounds, ‘primitive’ vacation villages, museums, and libraries.⁴³ Foucault proposes that fairgrounds are specifically heterotopic because they are ‘marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclitic objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth’.⁴⁴ In *Young Adam* it is significant that there is a fairground in the narrative:

As evening approached, Clowes came in sight: another small canal town, more industrial than Lairs.

We noticed the fair immediately. The marquees were pitched in the fields to the left which bordered the canal, and the hurdy-gurdy music was suspended in the atmosphere for a long time before we saw them, or the stalls or the brightly painted caravans and lorries.⁴⁵

The fair is positioned spatially on the edge – the marquees are pitched on the fields ‘which bordered the canal’ – and accordingly, the scene has an odd and oneiric quality: the music is uncannily described as being ‘suspended in the atmosphere for a long time’ which contrasts with the immediacy of the ‘real’ time in which Joe and the others ‘noticed the fair’. Time is also on the edge because Joe encounters the fair at the end of the day ‘as evening

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁴¹ Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, 25.

⁴² Ibid., 26.

⁴³ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁵ Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 71–2.

approached', which adds to the strangeness of the scene, as does the double heterotopia of the barge and the fair. Consequently, the time of the fair appears analogous to what Foucault calls 'time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival'.⁴⁶ In *Cain's Book* the heterotopia of the fairground is also the setting for an existential moment on the edge, and once again, Trocchi uses heterotopic space to highlight Necchi's existential experience of alienation and dislocation through the 'far out' spatiality of the scow:

5 a.m. Tug came for three of us before midnight. We moved line ahead over the dark water past Brooklyn towards Coney Island. My scow was at the stern of the tow. The ferris wheel was still alight. I felt rather than saw the activity as we drew nearer. Faint sounds. Suddenly round the point on our starboard side the unutterable night of the Atlantic, big, black, and menacing; there was no more light from the Jersey coast. From now until we gained the lee of Rockaway Point we were in open sea.

I'd heard about it from some of the other scowmen but I hadn't thought much about it, how a flat-bottomed scow loaded down almost to the gunwales with a thousand ton of stone, and slung in a chain of scows behind a tug, moves when it is suddenly struck broadside by the black Atlantic.

It struck me as funny tonight that it should take place off Coney Island in sight of the ferris wheel and all that crazy-motion machinery.⁴⁷

The lights of the famous Coney Island ferris wheel brutally and uncannily remind Necchi that he is alone on the 'big, black, and menacing' open sea, while also adding to the unsettling and surreal atmosphere. Against the backdrop of Coney Island's fairground frivolity, Necchi goes on to describe having 'the impression of tottering at the night edge of a flat world. Then I was going down like you go down on a rollercoaster'.⁴⁸ He is then 'aware of the Atlantic rising like a sheet of black ink high on my starboard and blotting out even the night sky' and admits then that 'it occurred to me that I might be about to die'.⁴⁹ Trocchi directly aligns the experience of the fairground with Necchi's

⁴⁶ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 7.

⁴⁷ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 143.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 142, 143.

terrifying on-board experience; the out-of-time and surreal spatiality of the fairground is mirrored by, but also emphasised by, Necchi's intense existential ordeal. Like the fairground that he hauntingly sees on the land, Necchi experiences a similar disruption of 'traditional time' because he is positioned so close to death aboard the scow during the storm. This notion of being suddenly close to death is an integral element of the fairground rollercoaster experience too; the rider is aware that they are entering a potentially precarious danger zone of intensity and unpredictability. The three-way reciprocity that Trocchi renders between Necchi's experience of the storm, the scow, and the fairground, works well in the text by also concomitantly furthering the reciprocity between characterisation and environment: the subversive double heterotopia of the scow and the fair effectively emphasises Necchi's spatial and existential on the edge experience.

Bachelard uses the term 'ambiguous space' to describe when 'the mind has lost its geographical homeland and the spirit is drifting'.⁵⁰ This seems apt to apply to Necchi's experience of the storm because aboard his mastless and engineless vessel in the ambiguous space of the sea he is unable to take control. Rather, he is at the mercy of the elements because he is entirely reliant on the tugboat to which he is tied. However he knows that the lines to the tug are also unreliable and if they failed he would be left 'without power' after which 'my scow would be so much flotsam in the Atlantic'.⁵¹ Acknowledging that the tug must take another turn in order to secure his scow, Necchi saw that there was 'Not much of his line left, after which I in my weighted coffin would drift off alone into the night'.⁵² Not an elevated 'heterotopia *par excellence*', the scow is instead reminiscent of the Ship of Fools. In Book VI of *The Republic*, Plato tells a parable which warns of the dangers of being directionless and powerless. Plato uses the ship as an example and describing a mutiny: 'befuddling the worthy master with mandrake, or alcohol, or something else, they [the crew] take control of the ship and as they sail use up everything on board and drink and gorge themselves as you'd expect men like this to do'.⁵³

Necchi, who is almost always intoxicated, is here voyaging in such a manner as might be 'expected': as an addict who is absolutely reliant on the drug to stabilise him and to provide his daily direction to get their fix, the scow is similarly absolutely reliant on the tugboat as its lifeline because without it,

⁵⁰ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 218.

⁵¹ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 143

⁵² *Ibid.*, 144.

⁵³ Plato, *Republic*, Books 6–10 (Harvard, 2013), 21.

the scow is completely powerless and directionless. Indeed, Necchi appears to self-reflexively acknowledge this, perhaps making an indirect reference to Plato's parable: looking over notes from his work-in-progress 'Cain's Book' he reads, 'I am alone again and write it down to provide anchorage against my own mutinous winds'.⁵⁴ It is significant that Trocchi correlates the act of writing with the figurative position of the ship on the sea; once again, there is a detectable exchange between Necchi's existentialism and the external environment.

In *Young Adam*, Joe is a self-acknowledged drifter, 'a rootless kind of man' who has severed his connection to what Bachelard called the 'geographical homeland'.⁵⁵ However, it is intriguing that he connects his sense of self to the canal:

Of all the jobs I had been forced to do I think I liked being on the canal best. You are not tied up in one place as you are if you take a job in town, and sometimes, if you can forget how ludicrously small the distances are, you get the impression that you are travelling. And there is something about travelling.⁵⁶

The passage suggests that Joe's existential directionless is partly remedied by his job on the barge. It continually moves him from one place to another, albeit linearly from one point on the canal through what Gary A. Boyd aptly calls 'the unrelenting horizontality of the canal'.⁵⁷ Indeed, while Necchi is aboard a rudderless and engineless vessel, Joe's barge is propelled by power, and it is apparent that the movement of the characters, and accordingly the degree of their existential angst, is shaped by these spatial factors.⁵⁸ The connection between Joe's identity and the water is furthered by Joe's discovery of Cathie in the Clyde. Jean-Paul Sartre has acknowledged the connection between water and ontology writing 'water is the symbol of consciousness – its movement, its fluidity, its deceptive appearance of being solid, its perpetual

⁵⁴ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 230.

⁵⁵ Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 110.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 42

⁵⁷ Boyd, 'Alexander Trocchi: Glasgow', 150.

⁵⁸ Gary A. Boyd has also identified an analogy between the barge in *Young Adam* and the *Ship of Fools*. He uses Foucault's example of the *stultifera navis* from *Madness and Civilisation* to argue that the barge mirrors 'the constrained and austere environment of a late nineteenth-century institution of confinement' See *ibid.*, 152.

flight – everything in it recalls the For-itself'.⁵⁹ This is particularly true of Joe's consciousness (the 'For-itself'), which is absolutely connected to the water because it relentlessly reminds him of Cathie. Consequently, it is apparent that the physical fluidity *of* the water gives Joe essentially fluid lifestyle *on* the water, and yet this notion of liquid is particularly poignant: caught between being guilty and innocent Joe is indeed formless. Mirroring the water which 'does not rebound, never moves into reverse', Joe is similarly unable to reverse because he is unable to change the course of events that lead to Cathie's tragic death and to his own existential crisis.

Another instance of spatial subversion is evident in *Young Adam* through the symbol of the hanged man, an important leitmotif throughout Trocchi's writing trajectory to the extent that Edwin Morgan identifies that it is one of Trocchi's 'incidental similarities'.⁶⁰ While the hanged man in-itself is not heterotopic, the unusual spatiality of the body in a hanged position fundamentally is. By being suspended in an unnatural position between earth and sky, the atypical spatiality of the body corresponds with what Foucault in 'Other Spaces' outlines as 'crisis' heterotopias: spaces of ritualistic practices 'reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis'.⁶¹ In *Young Adam* the hanged man symbolically suggests the fate of the criminal sentenced to death, and hanging is indeed an ancient and ritualistic practice. Therefore, with the hanged man symbolising the brutal fate of the criminal, the unique spatiality of death by suspension relates to Foucault's concept of the individual being situated in a ritualistic heterotopic space – and existential state – of 'crisis'.

Trocchi implies the notion of hanging early on in *Young Adam*, which he then later develops to explicit effect. It is first subtly suggested in part one of the text, when Joe makes a seemingly standard observation from the deck of the barge: 'I could see a boom raised ahead in the distance. It looked very awkward perched there in mid-air like a sign that meant nothing but was black in the thin meagre afternoon light.'⁶² Joe acknowledges the uncomfortable, 'awkward' position of the ship's boom in its suspension half way between sea and sky. This heterotopic position has an eerie significance;

⁵⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (London, 2010), 631.

⁶⁰ Edwin Morgan, 'Alexander Trocchi: A Survey' in Allan Campbell and Tim Niel (eds), *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi* (Edinburgh, 2010), 50. The symbol of the hanged man also appears in *Cain's Book*, but its inclusion is less obvious than in *Young Adam*.

⁶¹ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 24.

⁶² Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 42.

although Joe thinks at the time that it looked 'like a sign that meant nothing', the boom's position is arguably analogous to that of a body on a noose. This 'sign' then, if taken to suggest hanging by the gallows, ironically turns out to have a horrible connection; in addition to its destabilised spatiality, the hanged man as an image covertly highlights the impending sense of doom that Joe feels as he struggles to come to terms with the trial of the innocent Daniel Goon for the alleged 'murder'. Hanging is suggested again through Trocchi's covert use of imagery in part three, when Joe finally abandons Ella and leaves the barge. He rents a temporary room in Glasgow, which he describes as follows: 'the bits of furniture seemed to be suspended in mid-air and I had the impression that I was within a shaft with unsubstantial furniture around me, and that below, where no floor was, the shaft continued downwards without sensible bottom.'⁶³

Joe's bizarrely sinister vision of the room-as-gallows occurs on the night before the first court date, and it arguably reflects his anxious, guilt-ridden state of mind because he is aware that Goon, if found guilty, would be sentenced to death. The following day, propelled by a mixture of guilt and a perverse curiosity, Joe consults an issue of the *British Medical Journal* at an unspecified 'large public library', in which he reads the entry on hanging.⁶⁴ As akin to the boom that Joe somewhat innocently saw on the canal, the entry on hanging also implies a heterotopic spatiality because in its hanged position, the corpse is suspended in an uncanny and unsettling state that subverts the normal spatial order of the body. Existing in a space of heterotopic 'crisis' by rejecting the normal grounding of the body on terra firma, the disturbing spatiality of the hanged man's body in its suspended position responds to Joe's own unstable existential position: he too is suspended as he waits to find out the fate of Goon. Indeed, this is in keeping with the novel's narrative development, which climactically builds to the final court scene when Goon is found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging.

John Pringle has written that throughout Trocchi's *oeuvre* 'sex is never far from death'.⁶⁵ Continuing the concept of a more abstract heterotopic space, this is suggested in spatial terms by the canal in *Young Adam*, which connects sex and death simultaneously. Aboard the barge, Joe frequently observes chimneys and church towers rising up into the sky; a brick factory stack is described as 'enveloped in a stagnant mushroom of its own yellow smoke' and this use of

⁶³ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁶⁵ John Pringle, 'Introduction' in Alexander Trocchi's *Young Adam* (New York, 2003), vi.

phallic imagery figuratively suggests life.⁶⁶ The canal is also eerily personified: 'Now it was dark and the water was there as a witness. It forced itself upon me, a sound, a smell, present as we walked'.⁶⁷ The canal's dominance is depicted by the description of its synesthetic qualities, and although its description as 'a witness' seems an innocent enough observation at this point in the narrative, when it is later revealed that Joe was involved with Cathie's death this has highly sinister undertones; the water was the sole witness to what actually happened between Joe and Cathie. Disturbingly, Joe also relates the industrial landscape to first finding Ella sexually attractive: 'She had come to me suddenly, a woman hanging out washing with a vacant lot and a factory chimney in the background'.⁶⁸ The phallic image of the factory chimney again concomitantly connects Ella with sex and the topography of the canal, and this allows Trocchi to further fuse landscape and character.

This sexual association with death is developed further through the macabre 'brainwave' that Joe experiences on the day that he discovers Cathie's corpse: 'I wanted to talk about Ella, about how she suddenly came to me, like a brainwave, on the very day we dragged the dead woman from the river'.⁶⁹ Joe's admission more than merely hints at necrophilia, and this notion underlines Ella and Joe's illicit affair which starts shortly after Cathie's corpse is discovered; they have sex on the barge and on the banks of the canal, which further fuses the canal with life and death. This is also evident at the start of the text: 'As I leant over the edge of the barge with a boathook I didn't think of her as a dead woman, not even when I looked at the face. She was like some beautiful white water-fungus, a strange shining thing come up from the depths'.⁷⁰

The reader first encounters the canal under these horrifying and macabre circumstances, which clearly connects the canal, the barge, and Cathie (the unidentified human flotsam); it is apparent that the canal is rendered as such a space, where sex (thus life) and death are intimately fused. Indeed, the interplay between death and life is absolutely symbolised by Cathie's corpse; Joe and Cathie have sex on the edge of the Clyde on the night she dies and it is also later revealed that she was pregnant with Joe's child. In this way, Cathie becomes a literal embodiment of the water's uncanny heterotopic spatiality

⁶⁶ Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 41.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

of life and death; she experiences the orgasmic 'minor' or 'little death', and afterwards, actual death.

It is intriguing that Cathie and Joe's relationship appears to be fundamentally built upon the dynamic of life and death. This is again represented in *Young Adam*, when Joe describes Cathie's death to explain why he 'knew she couldn't swim':

A summer's day perhaps, not far from shore somewhere off the west coast, and we would be lying naked on the bottom boards under the seats. She was more passionate that way than any other, because she knew she couldn't swim, because our erotic struggle in the drifting boat represented for her a life and death matter. It was not only her body which prostrated itself in the flimsy shell of the dinghy. It was her life she gambled with, uttering little screams of delirious pleasure when a chance wave decapitated itself on the gunwale and splashed like quicksilver about her buttocks.⁷¹

The flashback conveys a direct interplay between Cathie's experience and the outer environment; the waves are part of her erotic pleasure, and her inability to swim heightens not only the danger but also her desire. On the surreal spatiality of the heterotopic dinghy, it is clear that Cathie experiences an erotic thrill by being pushed to the existential edge between life and death, and in the uncanny space of the dinghy, Cathie experiences a sexual synthesis between herself and the environment.

Building on the exchange between inner identity and outer environment, Trocchi uses the mirror as an existential emblem throughout *Young Adam*. It is worth noting that Trocchi employs the mirror at the very start of the narrative: the reader first encounters Joe (although at this point he is anonymous) self-consciously scrutinising: 'this morning, the first thing after I got out of bed, I looked in the mirror'.⁷² Joe then goes on to meticulously study his appearance, describing how it had changed 'unperceptively during the night', and observing: 'Nothing out of place and yet everything was, because there existed between the mirror and myself the same distance; the same break in continuity which I have always felt to exist between acts which I committed yesterday and my present consciousness of them.'⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid., 90.

⁷² Ibid., 19.

⁷³ Ibid., 19.

This opening immediately highlights Joe's narcissistic nature and the existential dualism he experiences due to the distance between the physical-self and the image-self in the mirror. Joe shows that he is highly aware that the mirror disrupts continuity, and his experience of self-disassociation is brought on by the uncanny nature of the mirror. Foucault usefully argues that the mirror is fundamentally heterotopic in 'Other Spaces':

In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my worn visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent ... From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there.⁷⁴

Foucault implicitly interlinks notions of distance and absence through the 'unreal virtual space' of the mirror, an embodiment of 'I am there where I am not', and indeed, the mirror 'reflects the context in which I stand yet contests it'.⁷⁵ Joe struggles to simultaneously identify with his perceiving-self and his image-self, and this conflict parallels M. Christine Boyer's claim, that the mirror is a heterotopic 'place of devilish doubling'.⁷⁶ The mirror for Joe is indeed doubly devilish where through his inability to wholly identify he struggles to see himself as an absolute and consistent being. By beginning the narrative with this scene, Trocchi instantly introduces the notion of unstable identity by inferring the disconnection - both physical and psychological - that Joe feels when presented with his mirrored-self. Upon seeing his reflection Joe also muses: 'I don't ask whether I am 'I' who looked or the image which was seen'.⁷⁷ Joe clearly experiences an existential crisis of identity in the mirror: he is simultaneously subject (the looking 'I') *and* object (the looked at 'image'). Furthermore, Trocchi playfully uses linguistics to highlight Joe's dual-status as subject/object: the 'I' (subject) is set against the conflicting notion of 'I' as the 'image' (object). In the space of the mirror which is hinged on the edge between the real and the reflected, Joe's subjective 'I' is disconnected from his objectifying 'eyes', and again, he existentially discontinuous.

Significantly, Trocchi again returns to the heterotopic mirror in order to

⁷⁴ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 24.

⁷⁵ Boyer, 'The Many Mirrors of Michel Foucault', 54

⁷⁶ Ibid., 54

⁷⁷ Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 19.

highlight Joe's self-dichotomy during the novel's denouement. Joe, driven by a conflicting mixture of guilt and curiosity, attends the penultimate court trial of Daniel Goon for Cathie's 'murder'. The following excerpt is a crucial point in the novel's narrative development:

As soon as I was seated I began for some reason or another to think of my shaving mirror. I remembered on more than one occasion I had dropped it and I was being continually surprised by the fact that it didn't break. No matter how often I repeated to myself that it was made of metal I could not rid myself of the response to expectation that it would break. Why did I think of that then?⁷⁸

The mirror's fundamental doubleness literally reflects Joe's doubleness as either guilty or innocent. It seems apparent that Joe's awareness of his precarious position is heightened through looking at himself in the mirror; Joe could (or should) be on trial instead of Goon, and if found to be guilty, he would be sent to the gallows. The mirror can also be seen to figuratively function to further reflect Joe's fragmented identity, as both Cathie's ex-boyfriend, but also as Cathie's possible killer. Joe has a secret double-identity, and by self-consciously probing, 'why did I think of that then?' it can be suggested that he, perhaps subconsciously, acknowledges that the mirror highlights his self-fragmentation. Foucault also ascertains that the mirror is 'the frailest duplication of representation', and whilst Joe is arguably aware of its duplicative nature, he is also aware of its frailty; Joe worries that his secret will be revealed and that he might mirror the mirror by breaking.⁷⁹

In *Cain's Book* Trocchi again uses the heterotopic spatiality of the mirror to suggest fragmented and unstable identity; referring to the ancient myth of Narcissus he uses 'Cain at his orisons, Narcissus at his mirror' as an epigraph.⁸⁰ Although its textual placement appears to be random because the prose that follows does not appear to be directly related to the statement, covertly, the epigraph functions to quickly introduce the concept of inconsistent identities to the reader. Indeed, despite this early reference to Narcissus, when Necchi looks in the mirror later in the narrative, he experiences an inversion of Narcissus' attempt to self-unify. Eerily, the nickname of William Burroughs' narrative persona in *Naked Lunch* is 'El Hombre Invisible – The Invisible

⁷⁸ Ibid., 143.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 335

⁸⁰ Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 10

Man'.⁸¹ Trocchi presents a similar vision of the addict's experience when Necchi makes a similarly haunting self-observation: 'If I had looked in a mirror and seen no reflection there I feel I wouldn't have been unduly startled. The invisible man'.⁸² The absence of any self-recognition is disturbing, and this representation of Necchi's body (or more accurately the *lack* of representation) can also be read as an inversion of Lacan's mirror stage, the definitive moment of self-recognition in a child's development. As an adult whose sense of self is supposed to be firmly established, Necchi's failure to affirm his own self-recognition in the mirror is abnormal; as a heroin-fuelled 'cosmonaut of inner space' he seems unable to experience a relationship with anything outside of himself, not even his own reflection.

Erica Carter and James Donald specify that space differs from place because it is inherently more ambiguous:

How does space become place? By being named: as the flows of power and negotiations of social relations are rendered in the concrete form of architecture; and also, of course, by embodying the symbolic and imaginary investments of a population. Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed.⁸³

Carter and Donald place emphasis on place as anthropomorphic space, as lived space that derives meaning from being socially populated and consequently named. In contrast, the multiple examples from *Young Adam* and *Cain's Book* all show that the heterotopias – the ship, the fairground, the canal, the spatiality of the hanged man, and the mirror – are not defined or 'named' places but more abstract and often 'meaningless' spaces. It is also apparent that in these various spaces Necchi and Joe often experience reciprocity with the external environment; in both texts Trocchi implicitly associates outer space with the protagonists' inner existential experiences, which are often subversive or disturbing like the heterotopic spaces that they encounter. By being built on conflict the subversive nature of the heterotopia means that space in the narratives is never rendered fixed, and as a dialectical model of fluid and existential space the heterotopia ideally responds to, and affirms, the concept of the edge: formed from oppositional elements, heterotopias are always on

⁸¹ William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch* (London, 1993), 63.

⁸² Trocchi, *Cain's Book*, 70.

⁸³ Erica Carter and James Donald, 'Introduction' in idem (eds), *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London, 1993), xii.

the edge between elements because they are 'simultaneously mythic and real'.⁸⁴ It is fitting to end with Tom McCarthy who writes that a fundamental question in *Cain's Book* is 'where's that edge's edge, the point beyond which you fall off?: heterotopia is both the space of, and beyond, the edge.'⁸⁵

University of Strathclyde

⁸⁴ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 24.

⁸⁵ Tom McCarthy, 'A Moveable Void' in Alexander Trocchi, *Cain's Book* (Richmond, 2011), vi.

The Failed Attempts to Implement a Native Rector at the Irish College in Rome, 1773–98

Christopher Korten

The suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 set off a movement among the English-speaking secular colleges in Rome to appoint a native rector. Over the next three decades attempts to install such persons were unsuccessful. Italian candidates were given the nod over their Irish counterparts. This effort was particularly important for some of the Irish bishops as penal legislation had prohibited a Catholic higher education in Ireland; this fact raised the stakes of institutions in Europe, such as the Irish College in Rome. The focus of this article is on how to understand the dynamics that were at play and to offer a fuller and more accurate explanation than currently exists in the historiography as to why no changes were made. At the centre of this inquiry is the Irish College; yet the Scots and English Colleges will also play important roles since at times their stories intertwine.

For the Irish College, the yearning for one of its own as superior coincided with the appointment of each of the three Cardinal Protectors during this period – Mario Marefoschi named in 1772; Gregorio Salviati, in 1781; and Carlo Livizzani, in 1795. This article is, thus, divided into three sections. On every occasion the spirits of the Irish petitioners were buoyed, prompting renewed attempts for an Irish rector. Whereas Marefoschi had effectively pre-determined the outcome of the request by Archbishop John Carpenter of Dublin in the early 1770s by inserting his own men into college positions, it was the long-standing, deeply-entrenched rector, Luigi Cuccagni (1772–98), who held off the final two attempts, supported by his Cardinal Protectors and ultimately the pontiff himself. These, in all brevity, are the arguments that this article will put forward. Both Cuccagni and the three Cardinal Protectors had their reasons for retaining the status quo, and they dovetailed nicely. Cuccagni desired to retain his post and standing in Rome; the Cardinal Protectors desired to retain their privileges and authority. The issue, from Rome's perspective, was never really about who would be a better administrator, Italian or Irish, although much of the debate was ostensibly fought on these grounds. Nor

was it about the needs of the mission field; rather it was a one-sided, self-serving plan to protect the prerogatives of those in control.

Until now our understanding of the national rector issue has been clouded by a misreading of the evidence. The curia and especially the Cardinal Protectors have been infused with a degree of forthrightness when examining the reasons proffered for not installing an Irishman that in fact never existed. Symptomatic of the problem is a general misunderstanding of the Roman side of the story. In one recent work Pius VI's Secretary of State is misidentified as (Placido) Zurla – a Cardinal from 1823 – instead of Francesco Zelada.¹ The result of this unfamiliarity has been for historians to take the reasons for denying a native-born rector literally, unaware of the scheming taking place in Rome. Instead blame is directed at Irish bishops for their collective failure to understand the times and seize the appropriate opportunities.² Historian Francis Gasquet was lulled – as were many contemporaries – into believing Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Antonelli's promises to the English College in 1783 to appoint a national rector.³ Even if sincere at the time (two years later he would oppose reform⁴), Antonelli was not in a position to force change, as a relative newcomer to the curia; the inveterate Cardinal Protector of the English College, Camerlingo and great-nephew of Clement XII, Andrea Corsini, did not conceal his dislike of the proposed amendments.⁵ In the case of the Scots College, it was believed at various times that its Cardinal Protectors, Caraffa (1774–80) and Albani (1780–1803), were committed to change, and that the Scottish hierarchy merely had to wait for a more 'propitious' time.⁶ But this was also a period of forlorn hopes for the Scots; Caraffa and Albani, like contemporaries Marefoschi and Corsini, never seriously contemplated relinquishing power. Thus, despite all of the lip service paid to this

¹ Michael E. Williams, *The Venerable English College Rome: A History* (2nd edn: Herefordshire, 2008), 85. Zelada served from 1789–96.

² For the Scottish College see James F. McMillan, 'Development 1707–1820' in Raymond McCluskey (ed.), *The Scots College Rome 1600–2000* (Edinburgh, 2000), 43–66. See also Williams, *The Venerable English College*, 83–5, and Paul MacPherson, 'History of the College from 1706 to 1793', *Innes Review*, 12 (1962), 115–42.

³ F. A. Gasquet, *A History of the Venerable English College, Rome: An Account of its Origins and Work from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London, 1920), 179.

⁴ McMillan, 'Development 1707–1820', 58.

⁵ Bernard Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England, 1781–1807* (2 vols; London, 1909), i, 63.

⁶ McMillan, 'Development 1707–1820', 56 (Albani), and MacPherson, 'History of the College', 135 (Caraffa).

issue, not one native rector would be installed in any of the three colleges between 1772 and 1798, when they were closed by the French.⁷

In the case of the Irish clergy, they argued in good faith in their petitions, unaware that their requests had no real chance for success. Clare Carroll's work on the *Memoriali* by Cuccagni offers a rich panoply of ideas and intertextual comparisons and analysis, much of which is instructive for this discussion. However, her main themes, that of control and obedience, place the onus on the Irish for the curial decisions rendered. The Church under Pius VI was supposedly concerned that the Irish fall into line politically, and adhere fully to the authority of the English crown: "The Memorial of 1783 needs to be understood in relation to the struggle over obedience to both Church and State in late eighteenth-century Ireland."⁸ It is true that conservative corners of Rome, especially those at the Irish, Scottish and English colleges, still held to the legitimist notions for the Stuart family, addressing them in regal terms. These Jacobite loyalists were, however, gradually reduced in strength by a contrary trend in Rome towards greater cooperation with England, reaching its peak during the Napoleonic wars, faced as they were with a common enemy.⁹ For Rome to elicit England's trust and political support, Popes, beginning with Clement XIV (1769–74), felt it incumbent to distance themselves officially from such treacherous notions; they began denouncing all forms of Jacobitism and instead recognising unequivocally the legitimacy of the Hanoverians, and asked the clergy to follow suit.

While the themes of control and obedience are indeed important in determining a national rector, the context is misplaced. The decisions by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide and the Cardinal Protectors were not influenced to any considerable degree by politics in Ireland or England, not even in the mid-1790s. In fact, English parliamentarian John Coxe Hippisley's impassioned pleas to the pontiff and other key prelates in 1795 about the need for native rectors to ensure order back home ultimately fell on deaf ears.¹⁰ And Pius VI, who plays the central role in Carroll's version, actually absented

⁷ F. A. Gasquet suggests that Paul MacPherson was installed as rector at the Scots College just before the French invasion. Gasquet, *A History*, 180.

⁸ Clare Carroll, "'The Spiritual Government of the Entire World': A Memorial for the Irish College, Rome, January 1783" in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds), *The Irish College and its World* (Dublin, 2008), 65.

⁹ For more on this topic, consult F. A. Gasquet, *Great Britain and the Holy See, 1782–1806* (Rome, 1919).

¹⁰ Hippisley letter, 15 January 1795, Cashel Diocesan Archives, (Bishop Thomas) Bray letters: microfilm National Library of Ireland, p5999.

himself from the national rector debate and the decision-making process until 1795, when, as will be shown, he in effect stalled any progress on this front.¹¹ Instead, local, more immediate considerations predominated in Rome – that of maintaining influence and ensuring *obedience* to the traditional power structures of the college system and its Cardinal Protectors. Unfortunately for the Irish, their circumstances would be too often neglected during this period.

There was, however, a small minority in the English-speaking community in Rome who accurately sized up the state of affairs. For example, the Scottish cleric John Thomson observed in 1786: ‘Padrons [sic] are so ambitious of power and so jealous of their jurisdiction that they cannot suffer anyone, much less a stranger, to meddle with it.’¹² And the veteran English agent, Monsignor Stonor, a fixture in Rome since 1748, opined that this rector issue represented one extra ‘favour’ at the Cardinal Protectors’ disposal: ‘Not only would the jurisdiction of the Cardinal Protector over the college be diminished, but his influence in Rome would suffer, as he would no longer have posts at his disposal – such as the places of superiors, masters and prefects – to hold in prospect to his dependents.’¹³ These disparate and discerning voices, though, have been drown out by a chorus of historians advancing quite another version.

1773 Request

Holding discretionary powers over any of the various colleges vacated by the Jesuits in the aftermath of their suppression in 1773 paid dividends, as Monsignor Stonor reveals. Cardinals jockeyed to receive such prestigious appointments left in the wake of the Jesuit dissolution; those closest to Clement XIV and involved in the Jesuit demise were rewarded appropriately. The conflict between the Jesuits and the so-called Jansenists in Italy was partly theological, but was also fuelled by personal enmity on both sides, as there was room enough in Rome for only one of them. The term ‘Jansenism’ in Italian lands, primarily an eighteenth-century phenomenon, is somewhat problematic, given the differences between it and the authentic Jansenism of northern Europe, especially France, from an earlier period. This ‘Italian Jansenism’ represented ‘almost every shade of progressive opinion’ and is thus difficult to define.¹⁴ Theologically, the movement sought to ‘reassert and

¹¹ Carroll, ‘A Memorial for the Irish College’, 66–7.

¹² McMillan, ‘Development 1707–1820’, 58.

¹³ Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 63.

¹⁴ J. M. Roberts, ‘The Italian States’ in Elliot H. Goodwin (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern*

purify Augustinian doctrines'; morally, it desired reform of 'clerical discipline and lay manners'; liturgically and ecclesiastically, it deplored 'the cult of saints' and vindicated 'the authority of bishops'; politically, the group was anti-Jesuit and anti-curial. Churchmen who championed such positions, and especially those who were opposed to the Jesuits, benefitted from the great changes which took place under Pope Clement XIV, most notably, the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. One of the beneficiaries was Mario Marefoschi, Cardinal Protector at the Irish College.

Marefoschi, described in 1771 as the 'true favourite of the Pope', was allotted control over the Irish and German-Hungarian Colleges, as well as the theological academy at *La Sapienza*.¹⁵ But the biggest prize was the Roman College. Marefoschi eventually fell out with other cardinals close to Clement XIV over the handling and reappointment of positions within the college.¹⁶ Marefoschi initially desired Peter Tamburini and Giuseppe Zola to take up positions there; instead they had to be reassigned to the Irish and Umbro-Fuccioli Colleges respectively. The intensity of the disagreement this generated indicates the importance that was attached to the accompanying privileges. On 12 November 1773, Marefoschi was conspicuously absent from the *commissione deputata* sent to restart the Roman College.¹⁷ The effects of this shakeup were felt at the Scots College as well, when Marefoschi resigned his protectorship after the fallout and withdrawal from the commission, incurring the displeasure of Clement XIV.¹⁸

Having been reduced in stature with the loss of control of two colleges, Marefoschi was determined to hold tightly to what authority was still vested in him. These circumstances, however, were unknown to the Irish hierarchy back home, when they first raised the topic of a national rector in early 1773. The Irish bishops had generally reacted with approval to the fall of the Jesuits, unaware of the full implication that accompanied this change. In a letter to Marefoschi, John Carpenter chimed: 'Irish Bishops gladly hear he [Marefoschi]

History Volume 8: The American and French Revolutions, 1763–93 (Cambridge, 1976), 378–96. Although somewhat dated, it still contains one of the best descriptions of Italian Jansenism.

¹⁵ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-compagnoni-marefoschi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-compagnoni-marefoschi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) [accessed 4 June 2016].

¹⁶ Enrico Carusi, 'Lettere Inedite di Gaetano Marini', *Studi e Testi*, 82 (1938), 47.

¹⁷ Domenico Rocciolo, 'Dalla Soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù al Pontificato di Leone XIII (1773–1903)' in Luigi Mezzadri (ed.), *Il Seminario Romano: Storia di un'istituzione di Cultura e di Pietà* (Turin, 2001), 66; and C. Sica *Cenni storici del Pontificio Seminario Romano* (Rome, 1914), 31–2.

¹⁸ MacPherson, 'History', 132.

has rescued the College where perfidious administration injured it.¹⁹ Believing this an advantageous moment, he suggested a native superior, underscoring the importance of cultural affinities between rector and student, especially in terms of language. The Archbishop recommended two clerics at that time, a certain Horford and Purcel.²⁰

Carpenter's initial overture to Marefoschi – dated 12 January 1773 – was answered two months later. With rector Cuccagni already in place, Marefoschi responded in a very respectful manner. He was pleased to hear that the Archbishop welcomed what he had accomplished for the Irish College. Brushing aside Carpenter's recommendations, Marefoschi wrote that he would gladly appoint an Irish rector were a suitable one to be found. But in lieu of an appropriate candidate, someone had to be appointed.²¹

Carpenter innocently offered a well-reasoned response, putting forth another possibility, Richard O'Reilly, who at the time was vicar-general of Kildare and formerly a student of good repute at the Propaganda.²² In fact, the young O'Reilly had been the recipient of favourable testimonials by Marefoschi himself.²³ The wily Cardinal's implausible excuse – the one that in hindsight reveals his obfuscation – followed on 23 June 1774; he was barred from granting such a petition for an Irish superior because this was 'expressly forbidden by many decrees of Apostolic Visitors and the Cardinal Imperiali in 1738' on account of the problems that arose from past leadership.²⁴ This surely must have left Carpenter perplexed (it certainly did Curran, the editor of this correspondence). Not only had six of the last ten rectors been Irish, including all between 1751 and 1769, but Marefoschi had also recently compiled a very lengthy, detailed report about the College and its history and would have been aware of this. Indeed there had been one such apostolic visit in 1738, but the fact that Marefoschi failed to explain himself in light of the clear incongruity between any little known, unheeded recommendation which had been issued and the widespread practise of employing Irish rectors in

¹⁹ Marefoschi to Carpenter, 2 January 1773, Dublin Diocesan Archives, Carpenter Letters 1770–80. In summary form, M. J. Curran, 'Archbishop Carpenter's Epistolae (1770–1780), part I (1770–1775)', *Reportorium Novum*, 1 (1955), 161. The correspondence in the next four footnotes are also referenced in Curran.

²⁰ Carpenter to Marefoschi, 12 January 1773, D.D.A., Carpenter Letter Book, 1770–1780.

²¹ Marefoschi to Carpenter, 9 March 1773, D.D.A., Carpenter Letter Book, 1770–1780.

²² O'Reilly would later become Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland from 1787 to 1818.

²³ Carpenter to Marefoschi, 19 May 1774, D.D.A., Carpenter Letter Book, 1770–1780.

²⁴ Marefoschi to Carpenter, 23 June 1774, D.D.A., Carpenter Letter Book, 1770–1780.

the eighteenth century was indicative of how seriously he took Carpenter's request. Cuccagni (and Tamburini) had been hand-picked by Marefoschi and had already travelled to Rome in order to carry out his Italian Jansenist programme of reform. He had no intention of undoing this.

The Career of Cuccagni

The passing of Marefoschi in late 1780 represented another opportunity for the Irish bishopric to renew earlier, thwarted agendas.²⁵ On top of the list was the installation of an Irishman to head up the College. This would, however, mean the removal of the existing rector, Cuccagni. This turned out to be much more difficult than anyone ever imagined. The extent of his power and influence would be revealed by his ability to rebuff attempts to remove him over the next two decades. He had moved quickly to ingratiate himself with Pius VI and his curia, as well as the Cardinal Protectors of the Irish College. For example on 20 January 1781 Cuccagni uncovered information in the Casanatense library which allowed the Cardinal Protector the right to use a room in St Isidore, an Irish Franciscan convent in Rome, for his own purposes – an extra benefit for the incoming Protector.²⁶

Yet, understandably, in the beginning Cuccagni's well-entrenched position within the curia was lost on the Irish. He had inherited the position in 1773, which at that time was essentially a sinecure post, firmly under the thumb of Marefoschi. It was assumed that, with the death of the Cardinal Protector, Cuccagni was dispensable. After all, many of the prominent philo-Jansenist clerics who had come to Rome during Clement XIV's pontificate were nowhere to be found by the early 1780s. But Cuccagni was a man of a different stamp. Instead of his hold over the college loosening, what transpires over the next two decades until its closure in 1798 was just the opposite. Adopting an agenda in line with the ideals of Pius VI, Cuccagni successfully filled the power vacuum left by Marefoschi. His strategy was quite simply to further his own career and insulate himself from any opposition by inching as close to the power centre in Rome as possible. Cuccagni displayed an uncanny ability to redefine himself by adapting his theology and currying favour with the new pontifical regime despite it valuing a different theological outlook.

The election of Pius VI in February 1775 presented Cuccagni with two sets of predicaments in fact. Theologically, Cuccagni was naturally more aligned

²⁵ Anthony Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath: Ancient and Modern* (3 vols; Dublin, 1862–70), iii, 58.

²⁶ Pontifical Irish College, Rome, Liber I, f. 267r.

with the so-called Italian Jansenists, such as Giovanni Battista Molinelli or Francisco Vasquez, but it soon became clear that under Pius VI such men and their ideas were to have very little room; individual ex-Jesuits gradually began to participate and contribute in the theological life of Pius' reign. The second dilemma for Cuccagni was more personal. His closest friends and greatest loyalties lay with those so-called Jansenists who were no longer welcomed or esteemed in Rome. If he was to maintain a positive trajectory in his career, he would have to develop new friendships and distance himself from his former ones. In both cases, he successfully made the transition, not only securing his position as rector at the Irish College, but forging a new identity as a fervent 'anti-Jansenist'.

If Cuccagni was faced with two obstacles in 1775, they were offset by two fortuitous circumstances, which aided his awkward metamorphosis in the late 1770s. First, his protector Marefoschi, an outspoken anti-Jesuit, was in the autumn of his life. He would only live to see five years of Pius VI's twenty-five year reign; what is more, his poor health side-lined him for he spent time convalescing in Macerata. As a result, he was effectively stripped of any real authority by the Congregation of Propaganda, who, in the summer of 1778, encouraged Irish prelates to circumvent the aging Cardinal and direct their queries directly to Propaganda.²⁷ Thus, Cuccagni's loyalty to the man who had single-handedly established his career would never be directly tested. He later reflected back on Marefoschi's presence in his life: 'I enjoyed for many years the honour of his protection and confidence.'²⁸

Cuccagni shrewdly kept a low profile throughout the rest of the 1770s, not wanting to draw undue attention to himself. He limited his publishing output while Marefoschi was alive. His only misstep – evidence of his past associations – was in 1777 when he produced a work, *Vita di S. Pietro*, deemed too Jansenist in its understanding of the Papal Office.²⁹ At first Cuccagni attempted to defend himself, claiming an adherence to Augustinian ideals, and not to Jansenist ones. However, when he became aware of Pius VI's desire for

²⁷ Abbe Belluzze Letter 2 June 1778, N.L.I., p5999.

²⁸ Arturo Carlo Jemolo, 'L'abate Luigi Cuccagni e due polemiche ecclesiastiche nel primo decennio del pontificato di Pio VI' in *Atti della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, 67 (1931–32), 41n.

²⁹ Nella Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni da Città di Castello Polemista Cattolico del Secolo XVIII' in *Bollettino della Regia Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria*, 40 (Perugia, 1943), 36.

him to retract part of the questionable theology, expressed in a work he had dedicated to the pontiff, he quickly fell into line.³⁰

Cuccagni also avoided the Oath of Allegiance controversy, which began brewing in Ireland in the 1770s. At issue was the desire by England for an Irish pledge of loyalty to King George III (1760–1820) and a rejection of the Pretender. While the dispute touched upon temporal issues of the papacy, the oath itself sought to avoid meddling within the spiritual aspects of the Catholic Church: the Pope's spiritual authority and Roman Catholic dogma were not to be tampered with.³¹ In 1776, during this period of great uncertainty for him, Cuccagni refused to air his views to an inquiring Bishop Butler in an uncharacteristic show of meekness. He excused himself 'for withholding his opinion on the question of the Oath of Allegiance; the problem is a delicate one; different interpretations are possible.'³² By contrast, Prefect of Studies Tamburini was more candid: he counselled the Irish to take the oath for the advancement of the religion.³³

The second fortuitous occurrence was the departure from Rome of most of his former Italian Jansenist colleagues. It was this same exodus that also swept Tamburini, his future arch-nemesis, from his midst at the college. Molinelli, a member of the Scolopi order, was Cuccagni's closest friend with nearly two decades of correspondence to back it up.³⁴ The two had met in Rome while Molinelli taught at the Nazarene College.³⁵ Molinelli, along with Vasquez, was a prime target in the swirling theological currents surrounding Pius VI, as Roman theologians produced works to rebut their ideas. Without

³⁰ Ibid., 40.

³¹ For more on the comparison of enduring Jacobite sympathies among the Irish with the actual political force of a Stuart restoration as found in pamphlet literature of the day, see Vincent Morley, 'Catholic Disaffection and the Oath of Allegiance of 1774' in James Kelly, John McCafferty and Charles Ivar McGrath (eds), *People, Politics and Power: Essays on Irish History 1660-1850 in Honour of James I. McGuire* (Dublin, 2009), 122–43.

³² Cuccagni to Butler 14 December 1776 (D.D.A. Troy Correspondence 1777-82); a summary in Mark Tierney, 'A Short-Title Calendar of the Papers of Archbishop James Butler II in Archbishop's House. Thurles: part 1, 1764-1786', *Collectanea Hibernia*, 18/19 (1976–7), 113–14.

³³ Garlaschi, *Vita Cristiana e Rigorismo Morale: Studio storico teologico su Pietro Tamburini (1737-1827)* (Brescia, 1984), 14.

³⁴ See Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni', passim and appendix; and Raffaele Belvederi, 'Nuovi Documenti su Giovanni Battista Molinelli: Teologo della Repubblica di Genova' in *L'Uomo e la storia* (Rome, 1983), 133.

³⁵ He taught there from 1769 to 1777. E. Codignola, *Illuministi, giansenisti, e giacobini nell'Italia del settecento* (Florence, 1947), 206.

the presence of those men and their now tainted theologies, Cuccagni was able more easily to conceal these friendships from those to whom it mattered. So as Molinelli established himself as Genoa's foremost Jansenist-leaning theologian, publishing on conciliarism and the limits of the Papacy – topics very out of favour in Rome – Cuccagni could maintain links in a private correspondence with his friend without incurring any repercussions.

Indeed it was Cuccagni's grasp of the importance of secrecy that facilitated his theological evolution. By remaining under the radar, he was able to alter his theological positions without any of the ill effects to his character or reputation that is normally associated with such a drastic makeover. He insisted on using initials when corresponding with Molinelli – and that his colleague reciprocate.³⁶ Cuccagni was determined not to let the 'anti-Jansenists' in Rome – or anyone else for that matter – know the extent of his personal liaisons. Secrecy would become a hallmark of his career: he published either under pseudonyms or invented initials; contributors to the *Giornale Ecclesiastico*, whose production Cuccagni oversaw, were assigned at least one set of (false) initials under which they wrote; in 1789 he used the cook's name at the Irish College as (thin) cover for his vitriol in one tract against a former student.³⁷

Hence Cuccagni's theological transformation was succeeding, despite the initial controversy attached to *Vita di S. Pietro*. In late 1779, "All were convinced that the author was a good Catholic."³⁸ With his former protector, Marefoschi, in the last months of life in July 1780, Cuccagni was courting his future patron, Pius VI, in his first audience. The meeting lasted twenty minutes. He described it as *graziosa*. By the end of 1782, he was under the 'benign watch' of the pontiff. Gradually the fruits of this patronage were in evidence: "The benefits are raining down [upon me] . . . from year to year."³⁹

This preferment became even more secure after Cuccagni had positioned himself in the vanguard of the anti-Jansenist movement in Rome. He did this through the creation in 1785 of the *Giornale Ecclesiastico*, an ultramontane theological journal. It was the Church's most potent theological weapon prior to the French Revolution, and Cuccagni, more than any other individual, was identified with it. His fate mirrored that of his respected journal, to the point that he became a gatekeeper of sorts for theological publishing in Rome; the

³⁶ Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni', 20.

³⁷ The title was 'Risposta di Giuseppe Bianchi da Gubbio Cuoco del Collegio Ibernese di Roma' (Pavia, 1791).

³⁸ Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni', 37.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

importance of this genre heightened even more after 1786 and the Synod of Pistoia. By the 1790s his theological reputation was such that key curial members, Propaganda and Pius himself, all valued his counsel. Would-be theologians were keen to get their works into Cuccagni's hands for approval, since this almost always ensured publication.⁴⁰ He assisted Mauro Cappellari, the future Pope Gregory XVI, in this way, securing for the young monk a papal dedication in 1796.⁴¹ Cuccagni's stature in Rome was such that even passers-by, like one Spanish traveller in late 1797, made reference to 'Cucagni' (along with one other Roman theologian) in his diary, adding that they were 'celebrated for their writings'.⁴²

1781 Request

What are the repercussions of these facts in Cuccagni's career for the Irish College and the petitions for a native rector? The most significant is the effect they had on determining the outcome of the two main requests for a native superior between 1780 and 1798. Cuccagni's established position within the curia doomed attempts on the part of the Irish clergy and their representatives to pry him out of office.

A new wave of petitions for a native rector was submitted in the early 1780s. This time the Scottish led the way; their Cardinal Protector, Francesco Carafa, was reassigned in the same year as Marefoschi's death in 1780. Perhaps giving impetus to the petition drive was the rumour that Carafa had been kindly disposed to the idea of a native rector (conveniently only after he had vacated his protectorate).⁴³ Bishop Hays travelled to Rome in November 1781 in order to appeal directly to the Pope and urged his counterpart in England, Vicar Apostolic James Talbort, to do the same.⁴⁴ Talbort in turn produced a request signed by three of his four English confreres for the college to be turned over to an Englishman. In the case of the Irish College, church officials dutifully proffered a candidate, one John Murphy, for rector, unaware what

⁴⁰ For example, letters 222–223, and 303–05, National Library of Rome ('B.N.R.'), Manuscripts, S. Gregorio, folder 70.

⁴¹ Cappellari to Frederico Mandelli, 19 September 1795 (Letter 134) and 2 July 1796 (Letter 140), B.N.R., S. Gregorio, folder 55, and Bishop Gardini of Crema to Mandelli, February 18, 1796 (Letter 255), B.N.R., folder 56.

⁴² Nicolás de la Cruz y Bahamonde, *Viage de España, Francia é Italie* (4 vols, Madrid, 1807), iv, 307.

⁴³ McMillan, 'Development 1707–1820', 56.

⁴⁴ Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 64.

exactly the new Cardinal Protector Salviati, who had replaced Marefoschi, felt about such a change.⁴⁵

Cuccagni's perceived dereliction of duties seems to have drawn the attention of interested observers and contributed to the motives behind the request. By the autumn of 1781, one James Connell, writing from Rome, observed: 'as to the Coll. [Irish College] its situation is deplorable, being in the hands of people who seek only their own advantage and not that of the mission'.⁴⁶ This situation would only deteriorate further, along with Salviati's health. The Irish agent Val Bodkin recalled: Cuccagni, under the 'very weak' Cardinal Protector, 'has almost ruined that college.'⁴⁷ Even back in Ireland, people were aware of the long-standing problems. Writing in 1795 Reverend John Connolly opined: 'The students of the Irish College at Rome thinking, like many of their predecessors within those fourteen years last past, they had good reason to be dissatisfied with their Rector, Abbe Cugagni [sic].'⁴⁸ Connolly's chronology is revealing, as it fixes the origin of the problem from 1781, just following the death of Marefoschi in December 1780. This could very well signify a more flippant attitude by Cuccagni towards his college responsibilities, a reflection of his more secure position within the curia.

In the event the Pope eschewed direct involvement, referring the matter to Propaganda.⁴⁹ At its special meeting, held in the early 1780s, which included two of the Cardinal Protectors (Corsini had excluded himself) and seven other Cardinal members, the motions of the three colleges were denied.⁵⁰ The congregational vote was 'unanimous', but the final verdict was 'softened' to read 'for the present', an attempt, it seems, to mollify the petitioners.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, iii, 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 57.

⁴⁷ Val Bodkin to Bishop Thomas Bray of Cashel, 30 August 1794, N.L.I., p5998.

⁴⁸ Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, iii, 178-9. While frustrating for the Irish, the College in Rome accounted for only about five percent of the overall seminary intake. French seminaries predominated, followed by Spanish. See the valuable studies on Irish colleges in France by Liam Chambers, including 'Revolutionary and Refractory? The Irish Colleges in Paris and the French Revolution', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 2.1 (2008), 29-51.

⁴⁹ McMillan, 'Development 1707-1820', 56.

⁵⁰ Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 64; McMillan, 'Development 1707-1820', 56, writes that the Propaganda meeting occurred in 1782, while Cuccagni's Memorial was published in 1783.

⁵¹ MacPherson, 'History', 140; McMillan, 'Development 1707-1820', 56, writes that the decision was left to the discretion of the individual protectors. In any case the result was the same.

Underpinning the decision of the curia were four reports produced, as we would later find out, by Cuccagni.⁵² His inclusion was in itself an indication of not only the pre-determined nature of the case but the strong position that the Irish College rector held within the curia. After all, he was tasked with producing the congregational reports effectively about whether or not he and his colleagues should be removed from office. For each of the three colleges there was a report produced.⁵³ The fourth piece was a general conspectus on the general state of college affairs arguing, unsurprisingly, against the ‘innovation’ of national rectors. Given the scope of these reports, they were almost certainly written at the behest of the Cardinal Protectors – Salviati, Carafa and especially Corsini, who had recused himself from the final vote so as to give the appearance of fairness to the inquiry.⁵⁴ Cuccagni defended their position passionately in his reports: ‘These reflections maturely pondered demonstrate how much wisdom . . . the Cardinal Protectors [possess] to any innovations.’⁵⁵ He also picked up on a general theme originally articulated by Corsini, contending that Italian rectors were inherently better administrators.

Financial considerations were supposedly at the bottom of this latest decision by Propaganda. In the case of the Irish, as well as the English, it was the high cost of the voyage which precluded them from consideration. (The Scots evidently enjoyed travel discounts.) Cuccagni argued that such expenses would use up a disproportionate amount of the revenue resulting in a smaller intake of students.⁵⁶ He cited a visitation and recommendation by Cardinal Neri Corsini years earlier as justification.⁵⁷

Furthermore Italians governed the colleges more economically, given that they were familiar with the language and the culture.⁵⁸ On this point Cuccagni devoted much space. Clothes and consumables would be more expensive due

⁵² Carroll, ‘A Memorial for the Irish College’ provides a very helpful account of this subject, though her assumption that issues, such as disobedience to England or clerical relations with the Stuarts (see introduction), were key factors is misplaced. She is also unsure about authorship, when it is certainly Cuccagni. This also provides a different context to the analysis. However, she writes very astutely on the contradictions between Marefoschi’s 1771 Memorial and the 1783 Memorial; I take these conclusions one step further to show the obfuscations and insincerity of the reports and the motives of the men who wrote them.

⁵³ Carroll, ‘A Memorial for the Irish College’, 70.

⁵⁴ Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 64.

⁵⁵ P.I.C.R., Liber I, f. 243r. See also *ibid.*, 259v.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 244r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* See also Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 63.

⁵⁸ Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, i, 63. See also Carroll, ‘A Memorial for the Irish College’, 80.

to the 'prejudices' against a non-Italian rector.⁵⁹ (Cuccagni's solution to the clothing issue was, according to the students, to deprive them of new threads.⁶⁰) He concluded that rectors needed 'to know the true way of economising.'⁶¹ This could only be accomplished, in his estimation, by those with Italian roots, implying among other things, a native command of Italian and local customs.

But it was not only cost-cutting measures on staple items that supposedly concerned Cuccagni. He also questioned the general financial aptitude of national rectors, singling out Irishmen who had earlier made poor business decisions on behalf of the college. Land or property was foolishly sold by A. Roche in 1664 and M. Giordano in 1670 or purchased by W. Malone.⁶²

In addition to their lack of financial acumen, it was argued that Irishmen lacked the proper comportment required to hold this office. It was claimed, not without cause, that native rectors were attracted only to certain dioceses.⁶³ Rectors from certain regions in Ireland tended to draw students from these same regions, thus denying the institution the designation of a 'national' college.⁶⁴ By contrast Italian rectors were allegedly unbiased. Cuccagni drew upon the example of an Irish rector having succeeded an Italian one, resulting in the College's falling into disarray.⁶⁵ And borrowing a page from Corsini, Cuccagni charged the Irish as being too lax in morals and discipline, directly contributing to the problems of mismanagement at the college.

Cuccagni held an accompanying set of beliefs which conveniently coincided with this skewed historical interpretation. If not heartfelt, they had been rehearsed to the point of appearing so. Rome was chosen by the Creator as the home of Christendom, and thus, Italians by extension were to perform an exalted role within the Church. Had God not wanted Italians to rule, he would not have placed its home where he did. In this scenario, it followed that Italians must be, in the nature of things, better administrators and governors of the Church.⁶⁶ The sharp-eyed English agent Stonor offered a more sober interpretation which seemed to hit at the crux of the matter:

⁵⁹ P.I.C.R., Liber I, f. 244v.

⁶⁰ Copy of Students' letter of complaint to Mr Hippisley, 23 December 1794 (Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide ('A.S.P.F.'), Collegi Vari, folder 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 128v.

⁶¹ P.I.C.R., Liber I, f. 244v.

⁶² Ibid., f. 245r-v.

⁶³ Ibid., f. 220v.

⁶⁴ Ibid., f. 248v.

⁶⁵ Ibid., f. 253v–254r.

⁶⁶ Ibid., f. 249v, from Carroll, 'A Memorial for the Irish College', 64.

‘Purifying the Church – as those who shut down the Jesuits viewed this period – also included Romanising it . . . preserving power and privilege dovetailed nicely into this ideology.’⁶⁷

But were Italians actually any better at governing than native rectors? Even if the criticisms had some basis of truth to them, such as the tendency towards regional bias, Cuccagni (and Salviati) contributed to the problem: they purposely allocated more positions to the sympathetic Archbishop John Troy of Dublin than to other regions.⁶⁸ Moreover, Cuccagni’s theme that Italians were inherently better rectors is untenable even at a distance. One only needs to observe the behaviour of the Italian rectors at the Scots and English Colleges after 1772. Rectors in each house fell well short in the key categories of Cuccagni’s assessment. That rector Ignazio Ceci was Italian did not help him avoid fraud at the Scots College. In the mid-1770s he was ‘cheated by his servants in his employment’ and forced to hawk valuable assets of the college in Navona Plaza at a fraction of their value.⁶⁹ The English College too had its share of financial improprieties. Rector Marco Magnani was removed for mismanagement in 1787.⁷⁰ And when dubious financial acumen was not on display, administrative shortcomings were present. On the Scottish side, in addition to the above-mentioned Ceci, L. Antonini was described as a ‘poor administrator’; Marzi was a womanizer; and F. Marchioni, neglected his office.⁷¹

Cuccagni’s seismic shift in historical re-interpretation discredits not only his reports, but also Marefoschi’s a decade earlier, which was a justificatory piece compiled in order to remove the Jesuits from the administration of the Irish College. Cuccagni – as with his mentor, Marefoschi – belonged to a milieu that argued not on the merits of a case, but rather *a priori*, selecting materials and ‘facts’ around which to prove their point. Despite using a similar methodology, drawing upon the findings of select Apostolic Visits, their conclusions are starkly different. In Marefoschi’s *Relazione*, the blame is directed at the Jesuit order for the institution’s shortcomings, while in Cuccagni’s *Memoriali*, it is the Irish who are faulted for the College’s woes.⁷² In fact, there are no disparaging comments towards the Jesuits in Cuccagni’s reports, nor is there – to this author’s knowledge – even a mention of the word ‘Jesuit’. This report would

⁶⁷ Unclear source. ‘C.R.S., vol. 19, 131; Kirk, 219–20.’

⁶⁸ Bodkin to Bray, 30 August 1794, N.L.I., p5998. Troy became Archbishop in 1786.

⁶⁹ McMillan, ‘Development 1707–1820’, 54–5, and what follows.

⁷⁰ Williams, *The Venerable English College*, 81.

⁷¹ McMillan, ‘Development 1707–1820’, 54–7 and what follows; for a more general description, MacPherson, ‘History’, 136.

⁷² An idea initially observed by Carroll, ‘A Memorial for the Irish College’, 74ff.

later be seen for what it was, when Irish agent Bodkin promised a rebuttal in 1795, to these reports of Cuccagni, on which ‘nothing can be more [unjust] . . . or a greater libel upon a whole nation.’⁷³

While Cuccagni’s writings fail to reflect accurately the college’s past, they do offer insight into his unflattering view of English-speaking clerics at the time. The tone employed in his reports reveals a hostility that borders on xenophobia. From his dismissive comments on the English language found in one report, to the more insidious criticisms pertaining to their management skills, one comes to the disturbing conclusion that Cuccagni disliked and disrespected them.⁷⁴ More troublingly, to the Irish were reserved the sharpest criticisms. He fails to mention any positive features of the Irish as a race. He writes in the Irish Memorial, ‘the Irish are totally impatient . . . neither are they educated . . . They are extremely jealous of the others and they govern with the spirit of a people under a government half republican. . . . They scream perpetually among themselves.’⁷⁵

If the Irish were as hopeless as ecclesiastical administrators as Cuccagni endlessly contended, what were to be the effects on the Irish students of a rector who seemingly harboured so much angst? These feelings of antipathy, so visible in his reports, would manifest themselves and become the focus of the controversy in 1794 during the third attempt to install a native rector.

1795 Request

The final episode in the national rector affair occurred in the mid-1790s, and, unlike 1773-4 and 1782-3, Cuccagni was a direct cause of the controversy. At the conclusion of every academic year, students would sojourn outside Rome to the *Villeggiatura* to enjoy the outdoors and relax. The retreat in 1794 witnessed a run-in between Cuccagni and the students which renewed calls for his dismissal. The students spoke of being on the receiving end of an array of curses and offensive name calling by Cuccagni and his unnamed Prefect of Studies;⁷⁶ denigrations such as *Birbi* [rogues], *porci* [pigs], *paazzi* [lunatics], and *mendicanti* [beggars] were hurled at them. Other words, they claimed, were too offensive to commit to writing. To make matters worse, this scathing talk had taken place in the presence of other *domestici* at the retreat house.

⁷³ Bodkin to Bray, 14 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

⁷⁴ P.I.C.R., Liber I, f. 256.

⁷⁵ Ibid., f. 247r.

⁷⁶ Student letter to Livizzani (A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655-1848), f. 126. busta (‘b’). 34, Irlandese (1655-1848), f. 128v), and what follows. For a comparison with Irish students in Paris, see Chambers, ‘Revolutionary and Refractory?’

The students forwarded their complaint to the new Cardinal Protector of the Irish College, Livizzani, requesting serious measures be taken.⁷⁷ They addressed the Cardinal Protector in a respectful and rational tone: ‘In order to convince Your Excellency of the truth of these words, *the Rector himself* told the deacon that not only did we not merit such admonishing, but that also he desired the Prefect to make a public declaration of his guilt.’⁷⁸

Following the incident, Cuccagni contritely asked for forgiveness. One student recalled: ‘The rector ... at the time of his illness, called us all into his room, and asked us for forgiveness for his past conduct. He told us that we were justly disgusted at his *cattivo* comportment, and he promised that we would not see any more of this from him.’⁷⁹ Such remorse on the part of the rector failed to calm the swirling winds of protest. After all, according to the students, this had not been an isolated incident: ‘It has been already ... many years that he [Cuccagni] has conducted himself in an inconsiderable and harsh manner. The current rector of this College has given the young students good reason for the continual vexations and discontent ... Most of the current students are not able to suffer any more of the poor treatment and disgusting manner of the Rector, and are close to abandoning their vocation ... thus losing the fruits of their study, witnessing the damage of a College, unuseful to the Kingdom of Ireland, to the just disappointment also of their bishops.’⁸⁰

Perhaps anticipating what was coming, Cuccagni levelled charges of his own against the students in a letter to Livizzani, ahead of their own petition.⁸¹ Thus, the students had not only to register their own complaints, but had to defend themselves against Cuccagni’s three main charges: that they wanted to assume control over the college; that they contributed to Cuccagni’s illness as a result; and that their conduct constituted ‘a series of disobediences’. This well-worn tactic gives more credibility to the first claimant, Cuccagni, as the victim, while at the same time casting the students’ grievance as petty and retaliatory in spirit.

Everyone in Rome was apparently aware of Cuccagni’s treatment of the students whom he was charged to oversee: ‘We do not lament the occasional imprudent moment or punishment of the superiors, but of being rigorously

⁷⁷ Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, iii, 178-9, on the chronology of the petitions: Livizzani, York, followed by Hippisley.

⁷⁸ Student Letter to Livizzani (A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 126).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Copy of Students’ Letter of Complaint to Mr Hippisley, 23 December 1794, A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 128v.

⁸¹ Student letter to Livizzani, A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 126.

castigated with various slanderous expressions, and for which has now become famous throughout the whole city', wrote the students.⁸²

Opinions about Cuccagni among the Irish were understandably low. Bodkin referred to him as 'a known defamer of the Irish nation.'⁸³ He later added that 'The Rector Cuccagni's proceedings and government have been a series of tyranny the most base, degrading and insulting.'⁸⁴ Cuccagni had alienated most of the Irish, maintaining contact in Rome only with Luke Concannen, Archbishop Troy's agent.⁸⁵ But even the pro-Roman Troy had run out of patience, calling the College 'very unsettled and disturbed'. He spoke of the need to remove Cuccagni:⁸⁶ 'the uncivil manner of Rector Cuccagni ... disgusts the students, provoking them to leave the College and abandon ecclesiastical life.'⁸⁷

The student's petition to Livizzani accomplished little except to deepen the divide between them and the administration. There were even rumours that he threatened to expel them. After an unfruitful overture to Cardinal York, the students turned to the Englishman John Coxe Hippisley for assistance. A member of the British parliament, Hippisley had sojourned to Rome in December 1792, ostensibly to convalesce, all the while promoting English business interests.⁸⁸ With a mixture of deep sympathy for Catholic emancipation and a strong desire for career advancement, Hippisley eventually got involved in the national rector issue. His pro-Catholic stance was an indication not only of his desire to win political points back home; it was also an indication of the policy England was adopting at this time. Italian ports were logistically critical for the crown, both economically and militarily. And as Napoleon pressured the Pope to close them to English vessels, the king desired an advocate in Rome to argue the contrary. Any concessions that he could win for his English-speaking constituents in Rome, he reasoned, would work in England's favour.

⁸² Copy of Students' Letter of Complaint to Mr Hippisley, 23 December 1794, A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 128v.

⁸³ Bodkin to Bray, 30 August 1794, N.L.I., p5998.

⁸⁴ Bodkin to Bray, 14 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

⁸⁵ Bodkin to Bray, 30 August 1794, N.L.I., p5998. Concannen, a Dominican, would later technically become New York's first bishop, though he died en route in 1810.

⁸⁶ Troy to Bray, 12 January 1796, N.L.I., p5999.

⁸⁷ Troy Letter, 6 April 1795, A.S.P.F., Collegi Vari, b. 34, Irlandese (1655–1848), f. 130.

⁸⁸ Susan Mitchell Sommers, 'Sir John Coxe Hippisley: That "*Busy Man*" in the Cause of Catholic Emancipation', *Parliamentary History*, 27 (2008), 84 and 87.

Hippisley's perceived influence in favour of the English and Scottish houses, brought the Irish hierarchy into his corner, as they too hoped for concessions.⁸⁹ Having caucused since January 1795, Irish bishops were in agreement that Cuccagni must be replaced. The recent deaths of Irish Cardinal Protector Salviati, in August 1794, and Corsini in January 1795 added to the sentiment favouring change. English agent Robert Smelt observed: 'We have a fair prospect, at present, of recovering the College again into our own hands; since Corsini died, I have been pursuing this business with every possible diligence and attention.'⁹⁰

Adding to the optimism were the very high opinions held of Hippisley. Agent Smelt spoke very favourably of his countryman:

this gentleman is considered here, almost as a publick [sic] minister [and] of course has great influence with the Government; he has been indefatigable in his exertions to serve us, whether we succeed, or not, we shall have great obligations [sic] to him. He has stated the case in a very able manner.⁹¹

What is more, he had none of the 'annoying arrogance' that might be supposed of an English parliamentarian. Rather he was 'honest', 'candid', unassuming, and possessed 'great abilities and dexterity'.⁹² His standing in Rome was buoyed by the political maelstrom which was gradually engulfing the Papal States. Pius VI looked for any sympathy he could muster in order to counteract French bellicosity. In 1793, following the assassination of French diplomat Nicolas Jean Hugon de Bassville in Rome and the subsequent French hostility, he even attempted to call on England for military assistance.⁹³

As to his arguments for national superiors in all three houses, Hippisley spoke with much verve and conviction. He repeatedly stressed the importance of order and civic responsibility on the part of the new college seminary

⁸⁹ Bodkin to Bray, 14 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999; referenced in Claude Meagher, 'Calendar of Bray Papers', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archeological Society* (1968), 109.

⁹⁰ Smelt Letter, 4 April 1795, B.A.A., A810. Corsini died on 10 January 1795. Cardinal Romualdo Braschi took over on 2 March.

⁹¹ Smelt Letter, 4 April 1795, B.A.A., A810.

⁹² Bodkin to Bray, 14 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999. This opinion was not always shared by Hippisley's colleagues in Parliament, who not infrequently found him annoying, long-winded, and opportunistic. See Sommers, 'Sir John Coxe Hippisley', 84–7.

⁹³ Smelt Letter, 7 May 1793, B.A.A., A808.

graduate.⁹⁴ ‘The proposed regulations for the reform of the national colleges’, he wrote, ‘materially interest the good order of the United Kingdom.’⁹⁵ A successful seminary experience could inculcate ‘love for the constitution of his country’ and inspire ‘the same sentiments as those whom [he] is charged to instruct’, he elsewhere observed.⁹⁶ He extended the theme of order to the spiritual realm, suggesting that unqualified rectors could leave the students feeling embittered against their superior, instead of inspiring cardinal virtues.⁹⁷ He also underscored the gradual rapprochement between their two states, after nearly three centuries of bickering. In England there were fewer restrictions and greater protection for Catholics.⁹⁸ Concessions in this present case, so his argument ran, would strengthen further the ‘links of esteem and of confidence and of attachment’ between them.⁹⁹

Hippisley also spoke of the disillusionment of parents and the ‘disadvantageous’ results of their sons’ overseas education, due to the ‘severity’ of the superior.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, parliament had been forced to step in and initiate measures for the funding of local seminaries in order to facilitate religious education at home. He dwelt on the importance of cultural homogeneity among students and rector. Being ‘under the eyes of [native] citizens’ would provide the necessary elements deemed critical for a successful mission: ‘There is no doubt that our government and our people consider it with more confidence the missionary pupils, while in a foreign country, to be under the eyes of a [native] citizen ... [who] inspires them with a new confidence.’¹⁰¹ In particular, it was the exercise of the young seminarian’s ‘natural language’, which was critical for fruitful service to the laity at home.¹⁰² Up to now the needs of English parishioners were unknown to the freshly-ordained clerics – they were simply out of touch.¹⁰³

At the core of Hippisley’s argument was a promise made by Prefect of Propaganda Antonelli in 1783, mentioned at the outset of this piece, to supply the colleges with national superiors at the next available opportunity: “‘since

⁹⁴ Hippisley Letter, 15 January 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

⁹⁵ Bodkin to Bray, 14 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

⁹⁶ Hippisley Letter, 15 January 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

this is so much desired by you, in future, care shall be taken that when next the Office shall become vacant, one of your priests, whose piety, doctrine and capability of administration is assured, shall be appointed head of the College.”¹⁰⁴ Armed with a copy of this document – and seemingly unaware of the Prefect’s subsequent and steady opposition to reform – Hippisley appealed to the curia and to Antonelli himself to follow through with his decade-old promise: “These inconveniences can easily be foreseen in adopting officially, and in a manner to ensure the next possible execution of these sage measures which your Excellency announced ... in the Act on 12 April 1783.”¹⁰⁵

In his reports, Hippisley was partial to the Irish.¹⁰⁶ While promoting national rectors for all three colleges, he mentions specifically the Irish on several occasions.¹⁰⁷ This is because the Irish were fairing poorest in his judgement. Reform was underway in the other two institutions, but not as yet at the Hibernian.¹⁰⁸ Such were the dire circumstances that ‘the unfortunate affairs of the Irish College easily capture the attention of parliament.’¹⁰⁹ Attempting to underscore the importance of his mission, he claimed that this affair interested ‘the more than two million Catholics of Ireland.’¹¹⁰

Hippisley placed the blame for this infelicitous situation squarely on Cuccagni: “The conduct of the rector has constantly embittered the spirit of those who have proceeded at the College.”¹¹¹ In defending the students, he felt that Cuccagni and others did not possess the requisite qualities to govern young people of a foreign nation: character, points of view, and the language being so different. Backing up student claims, he wrote, ‘I believe to be well assured [by] Monsignor that their remonstrance against the current Rector are founded ... These young people are not the first to complain ... Several of the Colleagues [students] it seemed to me were determined to escape the severity which they were no longer able to withstand.’¹¹² At the same time Hippisley acknowledged, albeit in an understated manner, Cuccagni’s importance to the Church: ‘It would please me if the young men would do justice to the other good qualities of their Rector. It is sufficient to note that he has been able to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hippisley Letter, 15 January 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Hippisley to Bodkin, 11 March 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹⁰⁹ Hippisley Letter, 15 January 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

merit some confidence on the part of the Cardinal Protector ... I know that he writes well, and that his journal is very useful.¹¹³

Livizzani fired back in a letter to Hoppisley on 21 February 1795, defending not only himself, but also Cuccagni, by suggesting that the persons stirring the unrest were not the administrators of the College, but rather the students themselves: 'the young men now are fomenting their alleged dissatisfaction by ... abusing in this your kindness, and they render themselves more than ever unruly and disobedient to the rules of the college.'¹¹⁴ He continued: 'With having taken to favour these bad boys [*Giovanastrì*], underscored by their remonstrance to that boldness they advance not only reasserting the accusations against the rector, which are in large part a heap of lies, as I could demonstrate in detail, if I had time to debate everything ... they try to control the administration of the college and to propose new methods and a new system of governance and discipline.'¹¹⁵ He then asked under what premise these young men were intending to run the College? Bitterly he penned, '[if] this undisciplined residue of youth wants to imitate their compatriots who have already emigrated and abandoned the college, I will certainly not be afflicted by it.'¹¹⁶

In many ways Cuccagni and Livizzani were cut from the same cloth. The friendship between them was marked by a shared propensity for a loose tongue: 'The Cardinal Protector is known as the "Bashaw"', wrote Irish agent Bodkin, 'His language is coarse and vulgar.'¹¹⁷ Bodkin was a classmate of Livizzani's secretary and spoke of the Cardinal's character: 'he is a very hard man and self-interested, as also haughty'.¹¹⁸ Livizzani's inaugural at the start of his protectorate was foreboding in many ways; he breached protocol and took possession of the College without bothering to read the Papal Brief investing him with such powers; nor did he invite the national superiors for the occasion.¹¹⁹ Even more revealing was Livizzani's reference to the Irish hierarchy as Vicars Apostolic, instead of bishops, a clear indictment, according to Hoppisley, of the cavalier nature in which he approached his duties as Protector not only of the Irish College but of Ireland as well.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Hoppisley Letter, 21 February 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Hoppisley to Bodkin, 11 March 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹¹⁸ Bodkin to Bray, 30 August 1794, N.L.I., p5998.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Hoppisley to the Pope, 11 March 1795, Bray Letters, N.L.I., p5999.

Hippisley acknowledged receipt of Livizzani's letter and offered a very conciliatory response; but in truth his reply had incensed Hippisley. He called it 'coarse', 'vulgar' and 'ignorant'.¹²¹ He also resolved to counter the Cardinal's plan to recruit fresh pupils and asked Bishop Thomas Bray of Cashel, who had initially been receptive to the Protector's request,¹²² not to act upon it. The Englishman endeavoured to starve the College into submission.¹²³

Meanwhile, desire for Cuccagni's removal was transformed into optimism, as many placed much stock in the relationship Hippisley had formed with Pius VI. Bodkin, in early 1795, believed changes would be made: 'the Holy Father will approve of a just reform of the Colleges.'¹²⁴ A certain Reverend John Connolly observed independently: 'This gentleman [Hippisley], who has greatly insinuated himself into the Pope's favour, by warmly exerting himself to bring about a correspondence between the Courts of Rome and England, has so zealously undertaken the cause of the Irish students, that he is likely to succeed in his efforts to have the Italian rectors removed from the English, Irish, and Scotch colleges here, and national ones put in their place.'¹²⁵ All of this hubbub was because Hippisley himself spoke confidently about the matter. 'The memorial for reform in the name of the British apostolic vicars was presented yesterday', he remarked in March 1795: 'From what His Holiness has said in confidence to me, as well as from the conversation with the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, I am persuaded that the reform will take place.'¹²⁶

But this optimism was illusory as the man responsible for generating it, Pius VI, was ultimately to dash these hopes. The Pope, while appearing amenable to Hippisley, was in fact determined to forestall any action. Hippisley's impassioned pleas to the pontiff on the three occasions that they met produced no results, as Pius remained silent, failing to advocate the Englishman's initiatives, despite giving the impression that he would. In a letter from Archbishop Troy in January 1796, Livizzani claimed that he had not been communicated any such information by the Pope: 'The Cardinal in his Words *non conosco la materia di cui se tratta* [is not aware of the material that I referring to], must allude to the supposed determination of the pope respecting the

¹²¹ Hippisley to Bodkin, 11 March 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹²² Bray to Egan, 25 April 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹²³ Hippisley to Bodkin, 11 March 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

¹²⁴ Meagher, 'Bray Papers', 109; Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, ii, 178; see also Troy to Bray, 12 December 1795, N.L.I., p 5999.

¹²⁵ Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, iii, 178–9.

¹²⁶ Hippisley to Bodkin, 11 March 1795, N.L.I., p5999.

grant of national superiors, which as now appears never existed, of which he [Livizzani] remains ignorant, and ... it likewise appears, that the pope had not officially communicated Mr Hippisley's application to the S. Congregation, or to any Cardinal member thereof.¹²⁷

Once Hippisley left town in March 1795 Pius delegated responsibility to Propaganda now under the direction of the aged Cardinal Gerdil. In May 1795 Gerdil averred that 'he had made up his mind on the matter that althow [sic] it did not depend entirely on him, nevertheless his influence was considerable that I might inform the Bps [Bishops] in England it would be settled to their satisfaction.'¹²⁸ However, Gerdil continued the pattern of foot-dragging initiated by the Pope. Despite his promise in May, by November 1795 there was still no recovery of the English College.¹²⁹ Neither was there any more mention of the Irish College by this point. However, Gerdil informed English agent Smelt that 'it will certainly take place and that soon';¹³⁰ by November 1796, the Pope sanctioned Gerdil to 'conclude the business himself, without waiting for a general Congregation.'¹³¹ In November 1797 – another year later – the Pope authorised the recommendation of a 'proper person'.¹³² But for reasons unknown, the person could not be both the agent and the rector, effectively eliminating Smelt, the most obvious candidate at the time and currently residing in Rome.¹³³ What is more, this papal request for a potential candidate never found its way to England, either being lost in the post or never being sent. Thus, no suitable candidate was forthcoming. By Christmas 1797, the penny had dropped for Smelt: 'There has been some underhand dealings in this affair, I don't despair of finding out the authors: some self-interested persons here, do all in their power to prevent the house returning into our own possession; it is now three years since I have been in continual pursuit

¹²⁷ Troy to Bray, 12 January 1796, N.L.I., p5999. In 1811 Hippisley would reflect upon this interlude, and conclude that his failure was the result of the scheming of the Cardinal Protectors and a rather weak, though well-intentioned Pope, who was unable to exert his influence. Gasquet, *A History*, 206. Ward, *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*, ii, 178, argues that Hippisley's petition, more than anything else, accounted for eventual nomination of an English rector. If Hippisley did play a role, it was indirectly and much later, a result of his close relationship with future Secretary of State Ercole Consalvi.

¹²⁸ Smelt Letter, 16 May 1793, B.A.A., A811.

¹²⁹ Smelt Letter, 14 November 1795, B.A.A., A814.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Smelt Letter, 5 November 1796, B.A.A., A820.

¹³² Smelt Letter, 25 November 1796, B.A.A., A825.

¹³³ On being a prime candidate, Smelt Letter, 14 November 1795, B.A.A., A814.

of this object.¹³⁴ Gerdil was then supposedly authorised to act (once again) autonomously, without even a congregational meeting, this at the beginning of 1798; but any action was prorogued by the invasion of the French.¹³⁵

Conclusion

Why, despite all the petitions and well-reasoned arguments, was Cuccagni never removed from the Irish College, even though the problems were obvious? What all English-speaking parties misjudged was Cuccagni's influence and support in Rome. The Scots and English Colleges went through at least three different rectors. All of them were ousted with much less effort than was exerted against Cuccagni. His biographer commented on his position within the church as being *forte*.¹³⁶ In fact, in 1795, at the height of the third national rector debate at the Irish College, the pontiff, while meeting with Hippisley and discussing Cuccagni's dismissal, actually conferred on the rector a pension of 17,500 *scudi* annually.¹³⁷ Quite simply, Cuccagni was a critical cog in the theological wheel: one of a handful of theologians – many of the rest, not coincidentally, contributors to the *Giornale Ecclesiastico* – upon whom the Pope relied on to wage his theological battles. His first calling was to publish theological ripostes to the so-called Italian Jansenists, and this greatly outweighed the issues at the Irish College, which were essentially viewed as distractions.

Cuccagni had come out the winner. He alone among non-cardinals of any theological importance managed to survive the transition from Clement XIV to Pius VI, relying upon qualities admittedly more Machiavellian than Franciscan. Cuccagni's ability to remake himself – and thus shield himself from external threats – was key to the failure of the Irish to exact reform.¹³⁸ Even after the French arrived, his wherewithal and survival instincts were on display. In March 1798, a month after the French takeover and eight months prior to his death, he began to champion the ideas and ideologues behind French republicanism and democracy in his journal.¹³⁹ Throughout this period, most English-speaking petitioners made the mistake of assuming that they would receive a fair hearing. Hippisley naively asked in one letter,

¹³⁴ Smelt Letter, 23 December 1797, B.A.A., A818, and what follows.

¹³⁵ Smelt Letter, 10 February 1798, B.A.A., A825.

¹³⁶ Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni', 16.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁸ The somewhat positive take of Cuccagni's transformation after 1775 presented in this article is unique. Others have, justifiably, formed a critical view of his *modus operandi*. See, for example, *Jemolo, 'L'abate Luigi Cuccagni'*, *passim*.

¹³⁹ Ferrini, 'L'Abate Luigi Cuccagni', 85ff.

‘what is the ... [problem that] this great reform excites so many fears?’¹⁴⁰ He had failed to realize that the movement which removed the Jesuits in 1773 also coveted filling the power vacuum left in its wake.

The victims, or losers, were the students at the Irish College during Cuccagni’s years as rector, especially from 1785, when their College became his personal publishing house for his journal.¹⁴¹ His interest in training up young men for ministry in Ireland was, by comparison, negligible, as his actions so poignantly reveal. Ultimately for the College it was only at the death of Cuccagni in late 1798 that change was possible. The French Revolution would then delay reform for another generation.

On an administrative level, the period from 1773 to 1798 at the Irish College acts as a bridge between the earlier association with the Jesuits (1635–1772) and the post-1826 period, following the College’s suppression, which had Irishmen at the helm; the years of Cuccagni’s rectorate were unique in that an Italian secular held the position. The College would finally get the native rector that it had been longing for, in the person of Michael Blake in 1826, a former student at the College. It would soon become clear that this marriage was also far from perfect, as Blake encountered stiff opposition and even demands to be removed from office just two years into his tenure.¹⁴² But there was another irony; after all the long, arduous lobbying for an Irish rector, deemed so critical for the student body, the presence of non-Irish students would become an enduring feature of the Irish College in its modern phase.¹⁴³

Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznan)

¹⁴⁰ Hippisley to the Pope, 11 March 1795, Bray letters, N.L.I., p5999.

¹⁴¹ Jemolo, ‘L’abate Luigi Cuccagni’, 29

¹⁴² A. Quinn to Rev Mr Doyle, 12 April 1828, D.D.A.

¹⁴³ Luigi Gentili was one of the first, in 1830, Denis Gwynn, ‘Father Gentili’, *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 70 (1948), 769–84.

Sections from *The Winds of Vancouver*

by **Kenneth White**

1 The Hour of the Owl

(Arrival in Vancouver, wandering in the streets and along the docks.)

I got into Vancouver from a KLM flight out of Amsterdam. It was 3 o'clock p.m. local time, which meant for me about midnight. I might have called it a day, but preferred to wander around for a while, get some initial bearings.

I'd hardly moved a hundred yards when I was accosted by a character looking like an old Klondiker or maybe, back of that, some kind of Ancient Mariner, who said:

“Any change, Sir?”

I don't often have cash on me, but did then since I'd just changed some euros at the airport in order to pay the taxi into town. So, delving into my pocket, I fished up a dollar, which is called here in Canada a loonie because, if it has the face of the British Queen (Elizabeth II, D.G. Regina) on one side, it has the figure of a loon (*Gavia immer*) on the other, and gave it to this pilgrim .

Looking a bit surprised, and in a to my ears antiquated style of parlance, he said:

“Thank you very much, Sir. God bless.”

Five minutes later, I heard a scuffling behind me and was joined by a younger fellow, who, skipping along at my side, delivered a rambling rigmarole as follows:

“My uncle had a kid, the kid had asthma, he had to have his lungs pumped ... bad day, bad day ... you have no idea ... go ahead, go ahead ...”, at which he scudded off, flailing his arms and shouting: “Bad day! Go ahead!”

*

By now I was in the middle of Gastown.

This precinct started up when an enterprising little Englishman by the name of Jack Deighton, originally from Hull, but who had bummed his way across America, becoming in turn miner, journalist and steamboat pilot, turned up one morning on Burrard Inlet in a leaky canoe, rolled ashore a keg of some liquid he called whisky, and established a saloon. Having the gift of the gab, and being a great adept of interminable monologues, the said Deighton soon became known as Gassy Jack, hence, by derivation, the popular name of the district in which he operated.

Anyway, that's the story I got that night on Vancouver's Eastside in a pub called The Red Dog ("Your day starts here with ice-cold beer").

*

Out of the Red Dog, I came across what had to be the Scottish section of Vancouver: a huddle of little hostels bearing names like Balmoral House, Holyrood Rooms, The Bruce Arms, that lead me finally to the Carnegie Library. At its door, a ragtaggle band of derelicts, beggars, druggies and winos, among them a wench in a black leather jerkin and a skirt made of tattered tartan rags, around her head a scarf decorated with skulls, a spider tattooed on her left cheek, who, with her red, rheumy eyes raised to the heavens, suddenly started up a banshee howling. The tortured soul of old Caledonia...

*

On leaving my hotel, I'd walked left. Now, retracing my footsteps back to the hotel, I walked right.

Here, things were more spaced out.

I passed along Coal Harbour, first of all a waterfront promenade for the citizens of Vancouver; then a marina, with smart yachts and speedboats (*North Wind, Star of the Sea, Wild Spirit...*) registered in Vancouver, Seattle, San Diego; at the back end, a cemetery of old paintcrackled hulks (*The Columbia, Pride of Vancouver, The Olympiad, The Prince of Whales...*) lying in a romantic sump of

scum and detritus.

Moving on, I found myself in Stanley Park. There I came across a cluster of totem poles and posts, replicas of ones that had mouldered away in Skidegate or in this or that village of the Salish, the Haida, the Nootka, the Kwakiutl or the Tsimshian: Chief Skedans' Mortuary Pole, the Thunderbird House Post of a Kwawaka'wakw group...

I ended up on a cold shore, where ravens were picking up cockles and breaking their shells on the rocks, gulls fished alongside a lone heron and where, further out on the mud flats, a band of long-necked, grey-brown Canada Geese looked as if they were getting ready for another migration.

Back at my hotel, the Pan Pacific, I ordered a room-service meal with a bottle of California merlot from the cellars of The Burrowing Owl, and sat at my wide window, watching a white light blinking over by Hallelujah Point.

2 The Great Gateway

(Portrait of the port of Vancouver. Conversations with its citizens.)

It was only the next morning I realised just what a weird kind of establishment the Pan Pacific on Vancouver's waterfront was.

It had been recommended to me the night before by a taxi-driver as "the place where people meet". I now realised exactly what that meant.

The Pan is situated in the same building as the Vancouver Convention Centre. Which means that, before going up a flight of stairs to the hotel area, but for the moment thinking naïvely you are *already* in the hotel, you are in fact in Grand Central Station.

That morning, hundreds of people were milling about with name tabs clipped in their coat lapels.

It was a World Psychotherapy Gathering, lectures and seminars going on in a dozen halls (*Psychosis 1, Autism 3, Neurosis 5*) and participants sitting on the floor along the walls of the concourse eating cardboard meals from makeshift stands.

Understandably enough, there was an overspill, so that those who couldn't find wall space to back up on would come up the stairs and sit around the Pan Pacific fountain, called The Fountain of the Future, the base of which, in tesserae, was a map of the North Pacific Rim, from Malaysia to Alaska, via the Philippines, China, Japan, Kamchatka and the Aleutians.

It was a picturesque enough spectacle. But after a look around I was glad to take the elevator up to the fifteenth floor where my room was.

From up there, amid the keening and clamouring of gulls, I had a panoramic view of Burrard Inlet: the First Narrows up to Indian Arm, and, across the bay, the peaks of the coastal range – the Grouse, the Cypress, the Seymore .

A big OOCL cargo laden with containers that had just negotiated the Lions Gate Bridge was moving slowmotionly up the Inlet, making for the area of red cranes, docks and railroad tracks there to the right, where containers from the K Line, Cosco, Hyundai, Han Jin and Yang Ming companies were

already amassed. All around, the revving of float-planes, the throbbing of helicopters bound for Victoria, Nanaimo and beyond, and the trundling of railway wagons ready to serve the West Coast and from there the whole wide world.

“By sea, land and air, we prosper”, was, and still is (though, like everywhere else, the perspectives are not so bright as they used to be), Vancouver’s motto. Prosperity had begun with the delivery of supplies and outfits up to the Yukon and Alaska, and the bringing back down of gold, lumber and fish. Then it had extended to the Far East – China, Korea, Japan – with the tea, spice and silk trade. Those were the high days of the CPR, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, its ships of the White Empress Line berthed there at Pier BC eager to transfer all that delectable booty to the tea-trains, the silk-trains, the spice-trains that rushed non-stop across Canada on a 4-day transcontinental run to Montreal, from where the goods would be routed to New York and London. *The Empress of India*, first of the great transpacific ships, arrived at port in Vancouver on April 28, 1891, followed by *The Empress of Japan* and so many others, carrying not only consumer goods, but passengers, some out simply to enjoy the trip in luxurious staterooms, others, immigrants, hopefully eager to grab at least some crumbs of the promised land cake. It was the CPR that largely built up Vancouver, with its wharves, offices and hotels. But other railroad companies were also in the import-export business: the Canadian Northern, the British Columbian ... And the show goes on.

*

Sitting at breakfast there in the Pan Pacific, I was reading a glossy magazine I’d found in my room called *The Essential Vancouver*, the lead article of which went like this: “Vancouverites already know their city is special. It’s Los Angeles without the smog, San Francisco without the fog, Seattle without the traffic and Toronto without the snow. [...] Our safe, clean streets are gay-friendly and our hotels and beaches get pooch approval. Our fair city is accustomed to having accolades heaped upon kudos piled upon praise: world’s most desirable place to live, top Canadian destination, best North American neighbourhood. We’ve won them all. We’re placed in the top ten for gay-travel destinations and the top five for bachelor-party cities. Vancouver is third in the world for quality of life. [...] Vancouver also happens to be one of the most cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse cities around. According to the 2001 census visible minorities make up 37 percent of the city’s population.”

If with all that you’re not glad you came to Vancouver before you leave this

world you must be a cynical dog indeed.

When I'd finished my breakfast, the waitress, a very garrulous little body who spoke Canadian with a distinctly Scottish timbre, said:

"Have a good one!"

Down in the streets, I flagged a taxi, with the idea of taking a trip out to the Ethnology Museum for a little preliminary substance.

"Where do you come from?" the taximan asked.

"France. And you?"

"The Punjab."

Another one, I said to myself, thinking of the taxi I'd taken the day before from the airport, driven by a jumpy little Pakistani from Karachi.

Before coming to Vancouver, this man had lived for three years in Montreal. The people in Montreal had been "very helpful, very nice." It was there he'd learned his English, as well as some French, before that he had "no language". I asked him how things were in Vancouver. "Busy, busy, busy", he said. "I love it, but no more. I go to Saskatoon. That is a twenty-four hour drive in the middle of the Canada." "Why Saskatoon?" I asked. "Easier to create a business there, you can sponsor your family"...

To this Punjabi driver, I now said: "Quite a lot of Punjabis here?"

"Oh, yes, a lot. You know what they say: Punjabis are like potatoes, you find them everywhere."

"And they all drive taxis?"

"Many many."

"How come?"

"Not much education, not much language. So they go to lumber or taxi. It is good money too, very profit-making."

He told me he worked for a company. For license, gas, all in all, the car cost him C\$3000 a month. Beyond that, the intake was all his. He worked from seven to twelve hours a day. On Sundays, he didn't work, he'd caught on, he had somebody else drive, and took a commission.

"Like it here?"

"It's open, it's free, it's cool. You know what they say: if the US is a melting-pot, Canada is a salad bowl. I came to Canada in 1972. In Victoria for one year. Then in Alberta for four. In Vancouver since 1977. If I said I did not like it, it would not be logical."

"Maybe you're so used to it all, you don't ask yourself logical questions any more."

"That is probably so."

“Ever feel like going back to India?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Too many people, too polluted.”

“And the Punjab?”

“You know the Punjab?”

“No, but I know a little about it. The five-river country up there in the Himalayan North West, the Thar Desert from where the gypsies came to Europe, those wild dancing girls who started up the flamenco in Spain.....”

“You must be a history professor.”

“Well, something like that.”

3 A Story Written on the Winds

(Reading *Vancouver's Voyage at night in the Pan Pacific – a long white night...*)

On the afternoon of June 13, 1792, a ship nosed its way up a sound that had as yet no name, at least in English, passed by what the captain thought was an island, and was making along a large arm to a smaller arm when it was met by about fifty Indians in canoes who showed an inclination to trade, offering fish for iron. This first exchange over, and after a little conference, the Indians dispersed except for three or four canoes that hung on to the new arrival till it was anchored for the night, at which the Indians, receiving a few more gifts, were asked, by signs, to retire and did so, promising, by signs, to bring more fish the next day. The next morning, they were duly there, to deliver the promised fish, and to satisfy their curiosity, the captain noting in his journal: “A great desire was manifested by these people to imitate our actions, especially in the firing of a musket, which one of them performed, though with crude fear and trembling. They minutely attended to all our transactions, and examined the colour of our skins with infinite curiosity. [...] The general tenor of their behaviour gave us reason to conclude that we were the first people from a civilized country they had yet seen.”

*

The vessel in question was *The Discovery*, that had left Deptford, England, on January 7, 1791, loaded with trade goods (iron, copper, cloth, nails, beads, assorted trinkets), rounded the Cape of Good Hope, passed through that difficult area of islands and reefs that the French had called “L’Archipel de la Recherche” (The Archipelago of Research), spent some time in sultry, seductive Tahiti before moving up to the wild and windy coast of North America. The captain, George Vancouver – as his name indicates, of Dutch extraction (Van Coeverden) – had sailed with Cook and had now been entrusted with a very complex mission: make a survey of that North American coast, so as to ascertain once and for all if there was a Northwest

Passage; judge what possibilities of trade could be opened up for Britain; see what the French, the Russians and the Americans were doing in those remote regions; and engage in diplomatic relations with the Spanish. Not only was it a tricky mission, but it was going to take place in very intricate and uncharted territory. What maps that existed were not only incomplete but almost totally unreliable – the artefacts of what Vancouver called “closet geographers”, who built up fictions from scanty knowledge and irresponsible imagination.

On the subject of cartography, Vancouver’s task was to “discover and delineate”, beyond all hypothetical projections and idealistic imaginings, “the general line of the sea coast”, which implied “the strictest examination of every arm, inlet, creek or corner”. If he by no means underestimated (even at the starting out), the troubles of that undertaking in what he called “the northern extremities”, that “unfrequented space”, Vancouver was going to find himself faced with more difficulties than he’d expected. Once inside the work-field, the programme became a purgatory. Even getting the vessel to move was a tedious, laborious process, with head winds coming perpetually from the North and North-West in what the French navigator Fleurieu had called “the whirlpool” of the North Pacific. Add to that the fact that in one single inlet there could be various sets of tides, one driving to the south-east, another to the north-west, and a mass of irregular soundings, which made anchorage complex and precarious. At times too, thick mist would reduce visibility to next to nothing. Vancouver had with him, of course, for astronomical and nautical observations, an assortment of instruments, but the chronometers played havoc on him and the compasses read crazy owing to magnetic disturbances. Such too at any time was the sheer number of islands, islets, rocks and shores between the vessel and the continental shore that to trace its line from the vessel was out of the question. Excursions lasting days or weeks at a time had to be made out from the principal vessel in yawls and launches propelled by oars. Despite all this, thanks to a persevering ranging (“Our researches were not carried on in a direct line, but in various directions”), enough information was gathered together – compass bearings, sets of azimuths taken on shore, records of course and distance, logbook data of all kinds, sketches – as, by degrees, to trace the lines of that “intricate labyrinth”.

*

If technical map-making was his principal preoccupation, Vancouver also took time out for general sensation and contemplation. He speaks of

“the very extraordinary region we have lately passed through”, evoking its “grand and interesting character”. He describes cascades as “large, grand, tremendous”. We hear of “a stupendous snowy barrier”, of “rude masses of almost naked rocks rising into rugged mountains” and of “conspicuous ridges”. But if Vancouver’s senses are open, and if he sometimes rises to “interest” and “grandeur”, his psyche was moulded to strictly classical forms, and it is this which makes him finally experience the “extraordinary” space as dismal, dreary, barren. “This inhospitable region”, he says, “whose solitary and desolate appearance, though daily more familiarized to our view, did not become less irksome to our feelings”. Or again: “Our residence here was truly forlorn; an awful silence pervaded the gloomy forest.”

The prevailing gloom was only relieved by the sudden appearance from out those forests of Indian bands.

Here’s a meeting with Yurok Indians at the mouth of the Klamath River as described by the ship’s doctor and naturalist, Archibald Menzies, who had done his studies at Edinburgh: “The whole crew consisting of four men stood up and gave us a song accompanied by a dance, if bending their bodies forwards and moving them to and fro with the most humorous gestures without changing their situation in the canoe could be called such. They kept beating time with their paddles on the sides of the canoe seemingly in perfect unison with the song which was a kind of solemn air not destitute of harmony and ended in a loud shriek in which they all joined, raising up their heads at the same time, one of them also broke off at intervals during the song with a kind of shrill noise in imitation of some wild animal.”

Here’s Vancouver describing the Kwakiutl canoe: “The largest, in which was the chief and his family, had its head and stern curiously decorated with carved work, and rude and uncouth figures in painting, resembling those with which they adorn their houses.” Regarding those houses, he has this description of a Kwakiutl village: “The houses, in number thirty-four, were arranged in regular streets; the larger ones were the habitations of the principal people, who had them decorated with paintings and other ornaments, forming various figures, apparently the rude designs of fancy; though it is by no means improbable they might annex some meaning to the figures they described, they were too remote, or hieroglyphical, for our comprehension.” If, in the earlier excerpt, there is, alongside a downright refusal and rejection, an awakening of curiosity (“*curiously* decorated”), in this latter piece there is an admission of the inability to interpret adequately, and the opening of a possibility of deeper understanding.

*

Vancouver's general attitude to "the savages" was similar to that of the Spanish captain, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, author of the *Expedición de límites*, who became his friend: "I can perhaps flatter myself that, treating these Indians as men ought to be treated, and not like creatures of inferior nature, I have lived in the very breast of tranquillity." During the great majority of his encounters, Vancouver speaks of "quiet intercourse", the few exceptions (on one occasion, he discreetly mentions "improper conduct" and "some slaughter") being due, as he began to realise, to the various behavioural characteristics among the tribes (there was no Savage monotype), and to changing circumstances. If trade had gone on at first in a peaceable way ("they brought us the skins of the sea-otter, of an excellent quality, in great abundance, which were bartered for sheet-copper and blue cloth"), the Indians began to see that they were not getting a fair deal. Not only were they no longer willing to be bought off with beads and trinkets, more and more they were demanding firearms and ammunition. This latter development might have arisen on its own, at least here and there, but as a global transformation in relationships it was largely the work of an increasing number of American traders who, to quote Vancouver, "consider gain as the only object of pursuit", and who "fomented discords, stirred up contentions" in order to increase the demand for weapons. Strife and contention became more and more frequent since the Americans didn't even do a fair trade in weapons, palming off on the Indians inferior models whenever they could. The result was increasing tension followed by terror.

An example of the kind of context that could arise took place further up the coast, when Vancouver came in touch with the Tlingit: "A smoke had before been observed amongst the trees on the eastern shore, but we then saw no appearance of any habitations. These people approached us without much hesitation, and in their countenances was expressed a degree of savage ferocity infinitely surpassing any thing of the sort I had before observed in the various tribes that had fallen under my notice. Many of these we had seen before had their faces painted in various modes, but these had contrived to so dispose of the red, white and black, as to render the natural ugliness of their countenance more horribly hideous." There was the physical appearance, there was the obvious attitude of hostility – and there was a feature of Tlingit practice that Vancouver had never seen anywhere else: the presence, in the stern of many canoes, of an old woman with "a froward, shrewish aspect", who not only

steered the boat, but egged the warriors on. It was at the instigation of one such virago that the men in the first canoe got ready their bows and arrows, laid out their spears, while the chief “put on a mask resembling a wolf’s face.” When closer contact was made, they kept knives dangling from their wrists. The tension engendered might have risen into open, bloody conflict. But even here, some kind of propitiation and reconciliation occurred, recourse being made to the accustomed ceremonial formalities, with the singing of songs and the making of speeches. The last scene in this incident on those wan waters surrounded by boreal forest is that of a man (a shaman?) making a speech, holding in one hand a sea-bird, with the other plucking out feathers, and, at the conclusion of certain sentences, blowing them into the air.

Who was getting that message?

4 Renaissance Rock

(The contemporary discourse of the First Peoples.)

Next morning, I awoke to drum beats in the downtown streets.

It was National Aboriginal Day, a great gathering of the First Nations there in Vancouver, every one bringing a contribution to the pow-wowing potlatch. The Squamish nation was there with its Eagle Song Dances, the Chinook nation with its Songcatchers, the Métis Nation with its Louis Riel Métis Dancers.

I had got the information from a First Nations newspaper, *Drums*, which presented itself as “Canada’s National Native Newspaper”. It ran articles mainly on the social condition of First Nations people, like this one, about Vancouver’s Skid Row, that had a different tune from the glossy I’d read the day before:

“This rotten core of the Downtown Eastside where once hard-working hard-drinking longshoremen walked the streets north of Hastings is now a breeding ground for maggots fattening up on the dying meat; this is where psychopaths come when they feel the urge to exploit human weakness. The life story of the population of this place is the dark legacy of colonialism, residential school abuse and foster home alienation: the deadly plunge into drug addiction and prostitution supported by the skewed legislation in the City of Vancouver. [...] News that about half of Canada’s Aboriginal population now lives in cities and towers would not surprise anyone familiar with the derelict streets of the poorest postal code in Canada, the meanest streets in North America [...]. The cultural genocide that was historically perpetrated against the First Nations of this continent continues to this day in myriad more subtle forms to thwart the efforts of aboriginal communities to rebuild their dignity.”

What was nutshelled there was the whole history of the relationship between First Nations and government, federal or provincial, in Canada, since the beginning of colonisation.

*

In 1996 appeared a five-volume report, the result of years of study and reflection by a royal commission set up by the federal government. Its overall conclusion was that: “The main policy direction, pursued for more than a hundred and fifty years, first by colonial then by Canadian governments, has been wrong.” After digesting this for a couple of years, the federal government made the following public and official announcement: “The government of Canada today formally expresses to all Aboriginal people in Canada our profound regret for past actions of the federal government which have contributed to these difficult pages in the history of our relationships together.”

Among the “past actions” referred to was the condonement from the colonial administration of land-grabbing by newly arrived colonial settlers, as a result of which the First Nations lost vast stretches of their traditional territories. Even the “reserves” left them tended to shrink with every passing legislation. Then there was the governmentally approved missionary work, the main purpose of which was to tear up Aboriginal culture by the roots and wipe out any memory, any consciousness of it. To all that, on a succinct list, can be added the residential school system, the rules of which were laid down by the government, while the execution was performed by the churches: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist or Baptist. The idea here was not simply conversion to Christianity, but an “education” into the models, methods, and manners of a modern society. If the word “education” has to be put in inverted commas, it was because the type involved was deliberately low-g geared when it wasn’t demeaning. No cultural subjects were taught at all. What education signified here, more or less exclusively, was instruction in the simpler forms of farming and trade. Which meant, plainly, in the minds of these administrators, that “Indians” were to be maintained in a strictly subordinate position, with little to say, and no language in which to say it.

Well, an apology had been made and a “healing fund” was set up, to the tune of \$350 million. But *Drum* (and another First Nations newspaper I came across later, *Kathou*) obviously felt that no real advance had been made, no real change had taken place: only more hand-outs. No mention, apparently, of the commendation made by the Royal Commission concerning the creation of an Aboriginal Parliament and an ongoing agenda of First Nations programmes, no attention at all paid to the question of culture.

What *was* implemented, with much fanfare, was National Aboriginal Day.

Out in the streets I saw a tipi erected in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Now, no Indian anywhere near Vancouver ever dwelt in a tipi. A tipi is a Plains Indian dwelling. But, OK, no quibble, a symbol recognized by everybody, I didn't stop at that.

In fact, I went conscientiously from venue to venue, listening to the Aboriginal Blues of the Mohawk and the Micmac, the Rock of the Tlingit nation, the Folk Rock of the Cree, the Pop Rock of the Ojibway, the "Spirit of the Ancestors" performance of the Haida, and watched the dancing of the Old Elk and Black Fish nation as well as Mooshum Bob's Little Jiggers.

It was pleasant enough. It had all the trimmings and all the trappings of "the restoration of wonder", as proclaimed by the old ethnologists such as Margaret Mead, or "the re-enchantment of the world" as proposed by sociologists such as Max Weber. But as real organic culture it was non-existent. Just a dose of Native Noise added to the general cacophony.

In the evening, still conscientious, I went to a meeting called *Forum for the Future*, where I listened to a talk by one Patrick Blue Cloud Murray, a Mohawk from a Six Nations reserve on the Grand River:

"We have to try and think ahead. So as to leave a legacy for future generations, the unborn, our family. We want to show them that we made a commitment to the environment, to the land. We fought for it. That got us here in the first place. [...] What we're saying is, no more development, no more river pollution, no more poisoning. We want the government to respect the treaties, to honour our chiefs and most of all honour our Clan Mothers. [...] Our responsibility here is to look after the land. This is our Mother Earth, it is where we come from, this is our culture. We are the guardians of the land. We ask that Mother Earth is honoured, that the Native People are honoured, that our native struggles, our commitment to Mother Earth, are honoured. Mother Earth is wounded, she can't do what she used to. Watch the weather, and you'll see that the universe is talking on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples. [...] The people in Canada can be the catalyst for the environment, but this isn't happening because the people here are not listening to the Native People, the Aboriginal People. We are the heart beat of the environment. [...] There is a wisdom different from that of the White People. We are Christians, but we keep our traditions. Our art comes from spirituality. Even after the onslaught of another culture, our spirituality and our beliefs are alive. [...] The culture is still there, and we are adding to it, strengthening it. The Magical World returns! We welcome you to the Supernatural! Return to the Myth! Beat the drum, live

the dream! Follow the road that makes your heart feel good!”

I had a lot of sympathy with this. But at the same time I couldn't stomach it. It was one awful All-American mix of sentimentality, religious revivalism, identity ideology, and mythological mumbo-jumbo.

Even the best of such intentions – political, ecological, cultural – just don't have the adequate thinking and language.

The real road, if there was one, had to be elsewhere.

5 Inventing an Itinerary

(Examining maps and charts. Meeting with a man who owns a boat and is ready to travel.)

In coming to Vancouver, I had a lot of vague ideas in my head, which I'd figure out on the spot, but in the first instance I had planned an itinerary: a trip full of movement and vision, from Vancouver to Seward, via Ketchikan, Wrangell, Juneau, Skagway and Sitka.

Out there, as the man said, in the great I Am, the great It Is, an immense Here and Now, a Something-Nothing-Everything. With a logic gradually growing, in a quiet secretive kind of way, from this or that fleeting cause. Sea-lines and mind-lines. Cosmographical correspondences. An initiation, an exitiation. With always a critical eye open to the ways of the world.

Such was the wild project.

What I didn't have yet was a boat.

From breakfast and coffee tables in the Pan I'd gathered in quite a lot of information about the cruise ships, all of which berthed only a few yards away, and had gone to the local offices to check them out. One of them, *The Odyssey*, less "titanic" than the others, attracted me. Because of the simple fact that, at the stern, port and starboard, it had two spacious cabins. I could imagine living in one of those, totally isolated during all the trip, having all my meals in my cabin, out on a private deck with its 270° view by day and by night, sleeping very little...

That at least is what I was thinking as I sat in the Pan one evening at dinner, with another bottle of that Burrowing Owl.

But in fact another possibility turned up.

*

"You from Scotland?"

"Yes, I am."

This was in a groggery on the Eastside waterfront. The man putting the question had heard me asking for a certain whisky.

"Thought so by your accent. On business here?"

“No, just moving around.”

“Moving around – I’ve done a bit of that myself. Name’s Jim Carron Baird. I’ve got Scotch ancestors somewhere. That middle name Carron is from Loch Carron – you know, where they used to make the carronades.”

“My name’s White, Kenneth White. Middle name, John Dewar, collector of folktales, distiller of spirits, you take your pick.”

“Pleased to meet you.”

“My pleasure too.”

Jim Baird was a grizzled fellow of about sixty, an American, originally from Oregon, but who had lived for long years in Alaska. He’d just been down to Seattle, to pick up a boat there: a 70 foot tugboat, built for the U.S. army in Alaskan waters during World War II, when the Japs were coming up the Aleutians. He’d had it revamped and fitted out, with the idea of going into the charter or cargo business, whatever turned up to make a dollar with.

He was going to be heading up the Passage in a couple of days.

“Will you be making stops?”

“Sure. Got people to see here and there.”

“Me too.”

“That means you want to come along?”

“Could be an idea.”

“Maybe you’d like to see the boat first?”

“Right.”

“Come tomorrow morning. You know the Coal Harbour marina?”

“Yes.”

“That’s where we are, me and *The Experience*.”

“Your boat?”

“Yes.”

“Quite a strange name for a boat...”

“Comes from the name of the company I’ve started up: the Alaska Experience. My latest attempt to realise the American Dream and make a fortune. I’d actually thought of calling it something even more abstract. Everybody’s talking about concepts. So I thought I’d use something like Concept Wilderness. Then I thought again, that might put a lot of people off ... Well, look, I got to be going. See you around ten tomorrow if you can.”

*

The next morning around ten I was duly at Coal Harbour.

And there she was, *The M/V Experience*, – a sturdy, determined-looking craft, looking as if it could go through hell and high water, and still come out smiling.

On board, in addition to Captain Jim, there was a deck-hand and a cook.

“Her name is Cinderella, believe it or not. From the Philippines. We’ve agreed to cut it down to Cindie. The other guy’s name is Chris. Ex-beatnik from San Francisco. Come and see below.”

He had five cabins fitted out, and one of them was big.

“Looks good”, I said.

“Consider it yours.”

“OK. How much will it be costing me?”

We worked out a price per day for cabin and board. I was to make out a list of stops. The trip would last as long as it lasted.

“It’s a deal.”

Back up on the Coal Harbour waterfront, we saw a joker dressed in a yellow tracksuit with a red baseball hat and blue hockey gloves running along the pedestrian walk, stopping every twenty yards with his arms outstretched, shouting: “The end of the world is at hand! The end – of the world – is at hand!”

*

I spent the next couple of days getting some things together for the trip.

I already had a good map of Alaska. To it I now added a layout of bedrock across the North-American continent done by the U.S. Geological Survey, a big Digital Shaded Relief map of Alaska, and the Alaska Atlas and Gazetter with its detailed topographical maps, from Ketchikan just inside the U.S. border to Point Hope up in the Arctic.

All set, more or less.

6 An Ancestor who Passed this Way

(Still wandering around Vancouver, at night in the Pan Pacific, I read the Journal of the first white man to cross the American continent from East to West, from the Labrador to Alaska.)

In his journal, Menzies, the Edinburgh surgeon-botanist who sailed with Vancouver as naturalist, refers at one point to “the adventurous and persevering views of the Canadian and Hudson’s Bay traders” who had explored and prospected “the interior chain of lakes and rivers”.

If ever there was a man who knew all there was to know then about those lakes and rivers, about the North-American fur trade, about French-Canadian canoe-men and about Indian life, it was Alexander Mackenzie.

Born in Scotland, in the Outer Hebrides, on the Isle of Lewis, at Stornoway, in 1764, Mackenzie was ten when he accompanied his father to New York. He might have stayed in New York and become a tycoon there, the way Andrew Carnegie did in nearby Pittsburg, but after the War of Independence had broken out, and was seen as going to last, he was sent up to Montreal in Canada to continue his schooling. At the age of fifteen he entered the service of the Montreal fur-trading company Finlay and Gregory. His work was so much appreciated that by 1784 he was an associate. Between 1785 and 1787, he was head of the trading post at Île-à-la-Crosse. Then in 1787 Finlay and Gregory joined forces with the new North-West Company, and from then on Mackenzie was an associate of this bigger outfit.

In the years that followed he was stationed in the Athabaskan country where, with Peter Pond, he founded Fort Chipewyan. Pond had the idea that a certain river flowing West from the Slave Lake ought to lead to the Pacific. Mackenzie, alone after Pond had gone back East, put the idea to the test in 1789, finding that the said river (later to be called the Mackenzie) lead not to the Pacific but to the Arctic. Still with the idea of an opening from the inland country of lakes and rivers on to the Pacific, he set out on a second expedition four years later, passing the winter at Fort Fork in the upper reaches of the

Peace River before heading West in the month of May, travelling by canoe and on foot, getting information from Indians all along the way, information that was sometimes factual and at other times fantastical.

In 1795, Mackenzie left the West, becoming an associate with McTavish, Frobisher & Co in Montreal that handled the business of the North-West Company. He had the idea of one big trading business that would unite the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, but he didn't see it coming. Which is maybe why he decided to pull out, returning to Britain in 1799.

*

During his years of hard travelling and keen trading, Mackenzie had kept journals and piled up notes. With the help of a ghost, he now wrote them up, bringing together the journal of his 1789 trip from Fort Chipewyan to the Arctic, his 1793 trip from Fort Chipewyan to the Pacific, along with a "General Account of the fur Trade from Canada to the North-West" and "An Account of the Knisteneaux Indians", and publishing them, at London, in 1801, under the title: *Voyages from Montreal on the River St-Lawrence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans.*

I bought that book, second-hand, years ago in Glasgow, and it has accompanied me on my various removals ever since. It wasn't the fur trade in itself that attracted me, it was the workings of Mackenzie's mind, his attitude to French Canadians and Indians (everybody nowadays has a general picture of the Indian condition, earlier caricatural, now moral-political, but devoid of the telling existential detail), and his relationship to the land itself.

The French-Canadians Mackenzie knew and worked with were those canoe-men that did the long run from Grand Portage up to Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska via Lake of the Woods, Flin Flon, Île-à-la-Crosse, Lac La Pluie and Fort McMurray, using either the 12 meter long Montreal canoe or the shorter, 8 metre long, North canoe. Men whose motto was: carry, paddle, walk and sing. If you were young, or youngish (what was sure was, you'd never live to be old), not too tall, even better on the short side, but strong, willing to work at least eighteen hours a day, eat cheap, you could get a job with the North-West Company Mackenzie worked for. The Scotsman was often exasperated by these Franco-Canadians: to his mind, they were improvident and dissipated, indifferent to property, licentious in manners, they squandered all they ever earned, caring only for the pleasure of living

a life free of restraint. But he admired their skills, second only to those of Indians and Eskimos. As Mackenzie saw things, the French in general weren't too interested in trade, what they cared about was culture, honour and glory, almost as bad as Spaniards. Their language wasn't geared to reality: what the British called "the trade winds", they called the "*alizés*", wherever that word might come from, but it sounded lazy. They lived in a world of ideas, and those ideas could take them to all kinds of extravagant lengths. For example, they had a tendency to go native, even their missionaries. But, despite the fact that, like many of his compatriots back there in the eighteenth century, Mackenzie had decided to become as British a bulldog as was possible, there was a certain Frenchness even to him, something that had rubbed off on him in Montreal. It was evident even in his language. "I ordered my hunters to arrange their fuzees", he says in his journals, using the French word, *fusils*, in place of rifle or musket. Of a canoe, he says it "was broke to pieces and lost all her menage", again that "menage" is the French *ménage* (goods and chattels). And of a band of Redknife Indians he'll say: "They had given *parole* to Mr Leroux", and not just in plain English, "their word".

*

Mackenzie's general attitude to Indians was a compound of caution and curiosity, free both of ignorant contempt and naïve idealisation.

I love that general panorama he gives, evoking "a ridge of high snowy mountains", on which "we perceived several smokes". On closer acquaintance, the Indians are seen as small, wandering bands of savages, akin to wolves. As to mentality: "These people are of so changeable a nature that there is no security with them" – though whether that volatile changeability is due to characterial, congenital instability or swiftly changing circumstance is left moot. On the moral plane, they don't think like Christians. Child-murder (from the Indian point of view, simply to keep the population down) was not infrequent. When a woman tells Mackenzie about the shooting by some paleface hunter of her dog, saying the loss of that dog meant more to her than the loss of five of her children the previous winter, he says he cannot understand such an attitude – but probably came to suspect that it is much easier to beget children than to get hold of a good dog.

The Indians Mackenzie knew best were those of the interior, mainly Chipewyans, whom he frequented from his base on Lake Athabaska ("The

place I made my head-quarters for eight years, and from whence I took my departure on both my expeditions”), “a country hitherto unknown but from Indian report”, and which in the Knisteneaux (Cree) language, he says, means “swampland”. He describes these Chipewyans as “sober, timorous and vagrant” and as “the most peaceable tribe of Indians known in North America.” They had apparently no regular government, but followed certain general principles. They had a creation myth according to which, in the beginning, all was one vast ocean, till a mighty bird, the Thunderbird, whose eyes were full of fire, whose glances were lightning, and whose wings flapped thunder, touched the water and made earth emerge out of it, calling then into existence all the other birds and animals. In their ceremonies, they try to imitate the bear, the wolf and the caribou. They also draw figures, usually in red, on rocks and make offerings to them. In addition, they have “spirit stones” which they consider “good medicine”, keeping them as among their most precious possessions in special “medicine bags.”

They speak, he says, “a copious language which is very difficult to be attained.” Mackenzie began to study it, making a list of words comparing Indian lexicons of the West (Athabaskan) and the East (Algonquin):

	Kristeneaux	Algonquin
man:	ethini	inini
woman:	esquois	chquois
beaver:	amisk	amic
wolverine:	qui qua katch	quin quoagki
bear:	masqua	macqua
otter:	nekick	niquick
wood:	mistick	mitic
rain:	kimowoin	kimiwoini
snow:	counah	soquipo
north:	kywoitin	kewoitninak
earth:	askee	achki
sea:	kitchi kitchi	kitchi kitchi

Coming into contact with more and more tribes, including the coastal peoples

(“well-set and better clothed with flesh than any of the nations of the interior”), and the Eskimos who came in from the North in search of flint stones to point their spears and arrows, studying their ways and words, he comes to have a synthetic sense of all the Indian movements in the territory.

Of the Eskimos, he has this to say: “Their progress is Easterly; and, according to their own tradition, they came from Siberia; agreeing in dress and manners with the people now found upon the coast of Asia.” On the Chipewyans, he has this: “They have also a tradition amongst them, that they originally came from another country, inhabited by very wicked people, and had traversed a great lake, which was narrow, shallow and full of islands, where they had suffered great misery, it being always winter, with ice and deep snow”, which could also indicate a movement, a forced one this, out from lower down the coast across the Bering Straits. And of the Blackfeet and Blood Indians he says that “they are a distinct people, speak a language of their own, and, I have reason to believe, are travelling North-Westward”, as though they were completing the circle, going back to source.

*

If Mackenzie was there in Canada, and in the North-West territories in particular, it was principally with “commercial views”. His job was to extend trade from sea to sea, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by exploiting, for furs, that “mostly barren and broken land” between Montreal and Lake Athabaska. Having shown early on what he could do with a small “adventure of goods”, he had become part integral of the newly created North-West Company, out to best the Hudson’s Bay Company by travelling further, going to the farthest limits of the French discoveries, right until they were “stopped by the frost”.

When Mackenzie was on the trail, and he often was, he was meticulous to an almost maniacal degree: he even counted the number of paces to be made at the carrying places (*portages*). His *Journals* are filled with inch-to-inch steering directions, and in the introduction, he apologises for this, saying no “romantic adventures” will be found in them. But who wants “romantic adventures”? We’ve had a glut of them. I for one prefer by far a document like that of Mackenzie’s to so many novels. Especially as he is not so restrictive as he makes himself out to be. Realising acutely, in the course of his first long voyage, his lack of astronomical and navigational knowledge, he went back to Britain to learn some. And if he says he lacks “the science of the

naturalist”, he nonetheless has his eyes and other sense organs open, as well as his mind. Remarks on cedar, hemlock, white birch and other trees abound in his pages and he has a keen perception too of animals and their ways. He describes in detail (“10 ft deep, 5 ft high, 6 ft wide”) the den of a bear, using the Indian term, *watee*. Beaver he describes as “those wonderful creatures”, those “active and sagacious animals”, and he evokes a wolf “parading a ridge”. When he encounters a phenomenon he doesn’t understand, he notes it and leaves a question mark, as, for example, the strange rise and fall, the “irregular influx and deflux” of waters at Grand Portage, or his general sense of a change in the climate: “... some predominating operation in the system of the globe which is beyond my conjecture.” All in all, a country unfolds itself, is dis-covered, with all its blanks and obscurities, its beauties and its revelations.

*

The country was that wide tract of mountain and valley and wide-spread forest presented at first, without amenity, with no attempt to raise aesthetic expectations, as “a dreary waste”. But what at first, to a civilised mind, seems “dreary” is gradually invested with “a rude and wild magnificence”, containing “such an astonishing and awful combination of objects” that it leaves Mackenzie, literally, speechless. At those moments, he is reduced to the simplest of sentences which, to my mind, contain more of the real basis of poetry than so many more elaborate efforts “At the setting in of the hard frost”; “the weather was cold and raw, with small rain”; the weather was clear, with a sharp air”. Here he is arriving on the coast at the mouth of the Bella Coola River that late July 1793 at the end of his great overland crossing: “The tide was out and had left a large space covered with sea-weed. The surrounding hills were involved in fog.” Where Mackenzie debouched on to the Pacific was just a little to the north of Elcho Harbour at the mouth of the Bella Coola River, having completed the first overland crossing of North America. To commemorate the event, he mixed up some vermilion in melted grease, and inscribed, in large characters, on the South-East face of the rock on which he and his companions had slept the previous night, this brief memorial: *Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.*”

He also wrote a letter, put it into an empty rum-cask and entrusted it to the waters of the world, around which it may still be rolling. Rolling in its own orbit, like so many other lost letters of the world.

7 The Opening Space

(Moving out across the Gulf of Georgia. Then up north, calling in at Bella Coola and Ketchikan.)

Three days after my meeting with Baird, we were moving out, making for the Lions Gate Bridge at the exit of Burrard Inlet, along the log-strewn shore. Stanley Park and its totems there to port, West Vancouver to starboard, and a cone of sulphur piled up on a wharf gleaming bright-yellow in the morning sun:

“It gets transported by rail from Alberta, and it’s shipped from Vancouver all round the Pacific Rim”, said Cap’n Jim.

We passed by a big red-hulled cargo of the Hyundai Line, registered in Monrovia, a Seaspan pilot boat, a black barge with two cranes being pulled by a blunt-nosed tug, and a flotilla of six fishing boats:

“They come in all kinds – gill netters, purse seiners, trollers, long-liners.”

Moving out.

The skyline of Vancouver slowly receding.

Then up through the Narrows, under the bridge, and out into the Gulf of Georgia.

To port now, the Vancouver Island Heights that rise up from Nootka Sound. To starboard, the great gleaming peaks of the Pacific range looking over Jervis Inlet, Knight Inlet, Seymour Inlet.

A tug towing a great barge piled with sand.

Smoke rising from a pulp mill at Campbell River.

Islands of floating logs.

A great rumour of waters and a wind rising.

The Three Sisters lighthouse on Texada.

Seymour Narrows.

“The Indians called it Yaculta. Name of a wicked spirit. Because of a whirlpool of waters around Ripple Rock. Got in the way of traffic. Used to

cause a lot a wrecks. Was blasted by dynamite in 1958.”

Alert Bay.

“That’s a Kwakiutl Indian base. They’d come down to work in the canneries. But they still kept to their old ways, with totems, potlaches and all.”

Moving west-nor-west up the Gulf of Georgia, with the idea of calling in at Bella Coola, where we’d spend the night. Jim the captain had some business there.

So we moved up the narrow sea-arm to Bella Coola, past bold greyblack ice-scarred granite bluffs, and clumps of hemlock, sitka spruce, red cedar. Here and there, the great sprawling nests of white-headed eagles, the birds either hunched, or spreading their seven-foot wingspan. Seals, harbor seals, swimming with their smooth heads just breaking the surface of the water. Sea otters nestled in clumps of seaweed, basking, the image of absolute innocence.

Once we were tied up at the wharf, I went for a walk into town, where I saluted the ghost of Mackenzie on Mackenzie Street.

*

On the following morning, it was the great blue misty expanse of the Queen Charlotte Sound. Over there to the west, the Queen Charlotte Islands, called by the Indians the Haida Gwai, “the Islands of the People”.

We were now moving up close to the Canada-USA, British Columbia-Alaska frontier at Dixon Entrance.

The next port of call was to be Ketchikan.

Which meant going up the Revillagigedo Channel, past the north end of the Annette Island Indian Reservation, into the Tongass Narrows.

To starboard, forest – the cry of a raven. To port, settlements – shacks on pillars flying American flags, old boat hulks surrounded by refuse.

Here and there a little floatplane.

Fishing boats coming out from Ketchikan: *Sea Mist*, *Miss Teal*.

Half-moon hanging in the sky, sun rising, smothered orange, over snowy mountains.

*

WELCOME TO KETCHIKAN
Salmon Capital of the World.

If Ketchikan got itself billed, at least in South-East Alaska, as “the wickedest little town in the country of Uncle Sam”, it was because of a line of saloons and bordellos that got set up as from the end of the nineteenth century along the banks of Salmon Creek, then on the edge of the community, and which did great business during the flush times of the salmon canneries. As Thelma Copeland, alias Dolly Arthur, the Madam of Dolly’s House, speaking of the salmon-fishers, put it: “When they’re out fishing, all they talk about is Creek Street.” Alongside Dolly’s House stood The Star that, in addition to an assortment of sporting women, also offered as background accompaniment the catchy piano-playing of Blind Ernie. Nearby those two illustrious establishments, there were about thirty others. Despite efforts by missionaries such as the Canadian Robert Dicks and reformed soiled doves such as Molly Walsh, who herself performed a kind of missionary work by opening a Coffee & Doughnut tent on the Canadian side of the White Pass summit, where she encouraged young ladies of fortune to go back home, the red lights continued to glimmer up to 1954.

“Like to come in, honey?”, she said.

She was a good-looking woman, whorishly dressed in a flouncy crimson dress, face rouged and powdered:

“Some other time”, I said. “Maybe a hundred years ago.”

Before white miners and fishermen, followed by gold-seekers and loggers, came to settle the place in 1885, KichXáan (“eagle wing stream”) was a summer fish camp of the Tlingit. It was of Tlingit and Tsimshian people I was thinking as I left Creek Street along the quiet Married Man’s Trail, past the American Legion, past old Dodges and Pontiacs abandoned here and there, past a garden bearing on its gate this piece of bold Byronic verse:

*Here lies, cold and hard
the last damn dog
that pooped in my yard*

to the Totem Heritage Center up on Deermount.

It was a young fellow of about eighteen who was officiating at the reception desk:

“How are things?” I said.

“Oh, not so shabby.”

Since business was slack, he proposed to guide me through the exhibits, but I said, thanks, I'd rather just move around on my own.

So, it would appear that the Tlingit were divided into two lineages, according to their totemic ancestors, the Eagle and the Raven. Each of these divisions was further subdivided into clans or houses: in the Eagle lineage, for example, the Bear clan and the Wolf clan, in the Raven lineage, the Ork clan and the Salmon clan. If this structure gave the human being a larger identity, it was also at the base of a social organisation, itself based on biological considerations: to prevent degeneration, exogamy was the rule – an Eagle had to marry a Raven. Each lineage owned specific territories, resources, privileges, names and crests. It is the descent from the animal ancestor, as well as other information concerning clan and family and individual, that are carved and painted on the totem poles. There at the Ketchikan Center they had gathered in old poles from the forest, old poles decayed, covered with moss, such as the Haida poles from Old Kasaan (Gas a' a'n).

Those old poles, as well as some others I saw later, at Saxman, a couple of miles out of town, meant more to me than any of the fine remakes I'd seen here and there. If they'd been left to decay, it was because the Christian missionaries had said they were devil's work, as likewise all the rituals and dances connected with them. A statement by a woman who had lived at Metlakalta went like this: "My grandmother told me when Christianity came her uncle went down to the shore and burned everything. He had heard that the Lord would not receive you into heaven if you still held on to your treasure and looked to it." Referring to one of these missionaries, another statement, made with wry humour, has this: "We didn't know that when William Duncan handed us the Bible we would be losing our lands and our fishing rights."

One of the ceremonies that was put down by law in 1884 was the potlatch. If this consisted of songs and dances celebrating names and history, its most spectacular gesture was the wholesale distribution of wealth, mainly in the form of blankets. I've seen this interpreted in purely economic terms, but if these gifts were made (the term potlatch itself comes from a Chinook word meaning "to give"), it was, as I saw in a little note made by a Tlingit there at Ketchikan, so that, having received a gift, "people would remember what they had seen." It might only be a family eager to display wealth and power, but the larger background would also come into it. It was that larger background which was maintained by the secret societies such as the Hamat'sa who danced with blackened faces or wearing masks. I'm no ethnologist, and have no interest in renaissances. If some, indeed many, of the artefacts I'd seen

had fascination for me (I'm thinking of a "speaker's staff" decorated with octopus, frog and raven I saw there at Ketchikan), my tendency is always to extrapolation and abstraction. So that, unwilling to interpret the totem solely as "family tree" or heraldry or coats of arms, I choose to see in totemism mainly a sense of totality: human connected to animal and animals connected to the elements in which they live (air, land and sea). Extrapolation, abstraction – and basic sensation. As when, on some country lane, you see in the morning mist, looking into a pale white sun, a crow perched atop a telegraph pole.

*

After the museum, I went back downtown.

City Hall.

Masonic Temple.

Tongass Trading Store.

Annabelle's Keg and Chowder House.

The Sourdough Bar.

On the pavement in front of the sourdough, an old codger was holding up the wall wearing a miner's tin helmet, at his side a beautiful husky with dollar bills stuck in her collar:

"Name is Katie. She's a real good gal ... We'll go get a drinka water. She's hot."

I ended up facing a plate of chowder at Chinook Charlie's.

The conversation at the table next me there in Chinook Charlie's place, talk between an older man and two younger guys, was all about boats and fish and money.

"A wild salmon run is a thing of the past", the older man was saying. It was all hatcheries now. At the time of the imprinting, they'd set the graylings in a certain water. That's the water they'll return to. Days were, the scows would be coming in loaded with fish – salmon trollers, halibut schooners. At one time there was a flotilla of twenty of them schooners. Then it all failed. The price of halibut slumped, and the boats went down to Seattle.

One of the younger men had worked in a cannery, on what he called "the slime line". You'd get ten guys in a row, each one with a special task. One to slit the fish open, one to cut off the gills, and so on. Lousy work. And the wage minimal. The worst job he'd ever had. The big money was in diving. He'd been on a dive boat just a few months back. Wasn't diving himself, just handling

the gear. Even then, it was good money. But it was the divers that got the big bucks. Diving for sea cucumber and those clams – the geo-clams – markets in Japan and Hong Kong. A diver could rake in a thousand dollars a day, no kidding.

The other young fellow said he was waiting for his PFD cheque to buy himself a new rig of clothes.

I know about that PFD dividend, because Jim Baird had told me about it. The Alaska Permanent Fund gets 25% of State mineral income and distributes the money to all those who have lived in the State for at least one year. Jim had told me that in 2000 he got close on 2000 dollars. Some years it could get as low as 300. “But even then, you know, it’s a welcome boon – like Santa Claus.”

*

Out of Charlie’s, I continued wandering around Ketchikan.

Saw in the window of an old curiosity shop the picture of a legendary logger, Arvid the Swede.

Passed the workshop of a local artist, Johnny Troll, who sculpts monsters.

In a mineral shop, picked up a piece of smoky quartz – like a glacier surrounded by black mountains.

8 Salutations to the Ice-Chief

(Portrait of a mountaineer-philosopher, close to my heart since I first made his acquaintance at the age of fifteen, back there in Scotland.)

On the morning of July 20, 1879, a man leapt on to the pier at Fort Wrangell from the monthly mailboat. He was about forty years old, lean and wiry, with wavy red-brown hair, slightly stooped, wearing a Scotch cap and a long grey ulster.

His name was John Muir. For those who went in for official titles, he was “Professor Muir, the Naturalist”. For himself he was a “geologico-botanico-ornithologico-poetico tramp”. For the Stikine Indians, those among them who didn’t *wawa Boston* (speak English), he was to be known as *Glate Ankon*, the ice-chief.

He was born in Scotland, at Dunbar, twenty five miles east of Edinburgh, in 1838. Eleven years later, the family emigrated to America, where his father, a strict, God-fearing Calvinist, ready to work both himself and his offspring to the bone, set up a farm in Wisconsin. While toiling on the farm, John also found the time to explore the territory around it, read books and, thanks to a mechanical invention of his, attend for a while the University of Wisconsin where, though attached to a technical department, he followed courses in geology and botany. Determined to have nothing to do with the Civil War, he lit out for Canada. Once the War was over, more and more a student in what he called “the university of the wilderness”, Muir undertook the trip that he was to recount later in one of his books, *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*, intending to make for South America. But he stopped over in California and, discovering the valley of Yosemite, stayed there for six years, amazed by its beauty, studying its fauna, its flora, and its ancient glaciers. In a novel, *Zanita, a tale of the Yosemite* by a certain Thérèse Yelverton, published in 1872, in which Muir, caricatured, but in an admiring way, appears as the character Kenmuir, first seen by the female narrator at Glacier Point, one finds this piece of dialogue:

“What on earth is that?”, I exclaimed, pointing to the singular creature extending itself as though about to take wing from the very verge of a pinnacle overhanging a terrific precipice. “Is it a man, a tree, or a bird?”

“It’s a man, you bet”, replied my guide, chuckling. “No tree or shrub as big as my fist ever found footing there. It’s that darned idiot Kenmuir, and the sooner he dashes out that rum mixture of his he calls brains the sooner his troubles’ll be over, that’s my idea.”

John Muir was to remain a “singular creature” for many, and a “darned fool” for just as many, but he was the man who persuaded the president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, to set up a continental system of National Parks in North America and who founded the first conservationist organisation, the Sierra Club.

*

It was after eleven years studying ecstatically the forest and wild life, but above all the glaciology of the Sierra Nevada, that, “eager to gain some knowledge of the regions to the northward, about Puget Sound and Alaska”, Muir left San Francisco in May 1879 aboard the steamer *Dakota*, with “no definite plan”, but with “a grand object in view”.

On that morning, as he watched the mailboat leave from the Wrangell waterfront, he who loved being all on his own in the wilderness, felt, for the first time in his life, strangely lonesome.

Wrangell was the roughest, most inhospitable place of habitation he’d ever seen: “No mining hamlet in the placer gulches of California, nor any backwoods village I ever saw, approached it in picturesque, devil-may-care abandon. It was a lawless bedraggle of wooden huts and houses, built in crooked lines wrangling around the boggy shore of the island for a mile or so.” Placer gold had been discovered on the Mackenzie River and its tributaries about 200 miles inland in 1874, so that, every year since, Wrangell had witnessed a passing horde of miners and prospectors (eighteen hundred that year of 1879), about half of them Chinese. The Stikine River on which they had travelled inland would be freezeed over from October to end of April. Some would walk its frozen length. But most waited for the breakup and the steamer. They’d go up country in May, and come back down in September. Maybe two thirds of them would winter in Portland, Oregon or Victoria, British Columbia, but the poorest would hang around Wrangell, dozing and

boozing. That annual invasion apart, the permanent population consisted of about fifty whites who traded in fish and furs, owning half-a-dozen stores, and a hundred or so Indians of the Stikine tribe. The Whites inhabited the middle of town, the Indians the two extremes. All lived in houses of logs and planks, the Indian ones, or at least some of them, being fronted by totem poles.

There was no tavern or lodging house, and the mission house where the Presbyterian missionaries Muir had travelled with on the mailboat was full. That wouldn't have bothered him if he could have found a good place to camp. But he couldn't, the ground was too marshy. For while he got leave to spread his blanket in a carpenter's shop. Then one of the wealthier merchants, a Mr Vanderbilt, offered him a room in his home. That solved the first problem, and in addition at the Vanderbilts he met prospectors and traders as well as leading Indians from whom he could get direct information. What he was waiting for, trusting always to his good luck, was a chance to get away into the wilderness and pursue the "grand object" he had in mind.

In the meantime, he wandered around Wrangell and the immediate countryside.

He watched the Indian women who sold berries – huckleberries, salmonberries, cranberries – and berry cakes along the street, in front of the trade shops, the old women blanketed, with blackened faces, the young ones dressed in showy calico, with jaunty straw hats. He watched the men going out to fish in canoes with "high and long beak-like prows and sterns" and "lines as fine as those of the breast of a duck". And once he was invited along with merchants and missionaries to a dinner and dance at the local chief's house. What surprised him at the dinner was that there was no trace at all of Indian dishes, the whole meal consisting of "imported canned stuff" served "Boston fashion". As for the dances, they were Indian all right: "A monotonous stamping accompanied by hand-clapping, head-jerking, and explosive grunts kept in time to grim drum beats, with, in the bear dance, the deer dance, the porpoise dance, wonderfully agile and true-life imitations of animals." But when the time came for speeches, the dance display was repudiated: "That is the way we used to dance. We were long in the dark, but now we are not blind. We will not dance any more." At the end of the evening, in a kind of latter day potlatch, all the dance-dresses were given away, and Muir got "one of the fantastic head-dresses worn by shamans".

But if he kept an eye on Indian life, Muir spent most of his time gazing up at trees and poking among plants, thereby arousing wonderment, amused contempt, even suspicion, in Whites and Indians alike. Who was this fellow

who seemed to have no fixed business at all, no serious object in life whatsoever, who went around looking at stumps of trees “as if he expected to find gold in them”? If pushed to it, Muir would say that he was engaged in “forest and glacier studies”. But since that only made things worse, he preferred to keep silent, enjoying the company of his “old favourites”, the heathworts (*kalmia*, *pyrola*, *chiogenes*) along with “darling linnaea”, carex, and grasses with purple panicles, studying the growth of hemlock, spruce and Nootka cypress. One night when a heavy rain-bearing wind was blowing, he made his way unobserved up to the hill back of the town, in order to “see how the Alaska trees behave in storms and hear the songs they sing.”

He had quickly got over his lonesomeness, and he was beginning to take a liking to Wrangell. Despite its disorder and squalor, its weather was salubrious, and he especially liked its *atmosphere*. In California, the light was bodiless, pure essence, with hardly any atmosphere at all. Whereas here the light, a pearl-grey haze or a glowing silver, was substantial, palpable. The brightest of Wrangell days were not what Californians would call bright, and what prevailed was a wet mistiness, but even on the most bleak and dismal days, there would be “a flush of early or late colour”, or “some white illumination” .

So Muir came to be happy enough in Wrangell. But he never forgot his “grand object”, which meant getting into the wilderness as deeply as possible, and pushing his studies to the limit.

*

The first opportunity that presented itself was a trip up the Stikine river in the company of the missionaries whose acquaintance he had made in Wrangell. Of all the rivers that cross the coast range, the Alsek, the Chilkat, the Taku, the Chilkoot, the Stikine, the latter was then the best known because, as aforesaid, it was the best way to the Mackenzie River gold mines. About three hundred and fifty miles long, it was navigable for a hundred and fifty up to Glenora.

The little steamer Cassiar that had been chartered for the trip moved up the Stikine river canyon between its many glaciers (“admired even by the passing miners with gold-dust in their eyes”, says Muir) and tied up at Glenora around one in the afternoon. The general proposition there was more sight-seeing, followed by a missionary meeting (a “big talk”, *hyou wawa*) with a local band of Stikine Indians. But, straining at the leash, Muir had other ideas. With his eye on a group of mountains rising to about 7000 feet 8 miles NE of the landing, he determined to climb the highest summit in order to get a general view of

the peaks and glaciers and enjoy the sunset from up there. It was by now after 3, and the captain of the Cassiar said he'd be heading back to Wrangell at 2 in the morning. Muir was sure he could make it. To most of the missionaries it was a harebrained scheme. But one of them, Samuel Young, expressed the desire to go along with him. Muir strongly advised against it: a sixteen mile walk followed by a 7000 feet climb, all to be done in ten hours, some of them night hours, would be a fair day's work even for a seasoned mountaineer, which Young probably wasn't. Young said he was a good walker, had some experience of mountains, and re-expressed his keenness, so much so that Muir finally gave in, while waiving all responsibility. So off they went, each with a couple of hardtack biscuits, Muir's staple mountain diet. When the climb started, Young proved indeed to be no novice among the rocks, and Muir began to have some confidence in him. As for Young's own feelings, if he'd been with mountain climbers before, he had never seen anyone move like Muir. This fellow loped like a deer, leapt like a hare, slipped along like a snake. For a while all went well enough. But what Young hadn't told Muir (probably not wanting to admit it to himself) was that, because of a horse-riding accident, he was weak in the shoulders. So that when, at one rough spot, he took a fall, he dislocated both his arms, the humerus ripped right out of its socket. Muir managed to set one arm, not the other, which he simply bound tight to the body, before beginning to get his crippled companion back to ground level. It was a long, slow, harassing process. But, with a mixture of skill, determination and sheer physical stamina, Muir saw it through.

He was to travel again with Young, whom he called an "adventurous evangelist", but never in similar circumstances. If they climbed a mountain, Young would stop at a couple of thousand feet while Muir did the other few thousand on his own.

Back at Wrangell after that first *rendez-vous manqué* with the Stikine territory, Muir knew he had to get back up there, and this time absolutely solo.

*

He did so not long after, first taking the regular steamer up to the head of navigation at Glenora, then pushing inland along the Cassiar trail, with time at his disposal, exactly the way he liked it.

At Dease Lake, he took a pause to lay out in his mind a map of fluvial geography, seeing the waters of Dease Creek, along with those of the other creeks in the vicinity (the Thibert, the McDame, the Defot) joining with those

of the Mackenzie and flowing into the Arctic Ocean “by a very long, round-about, romantic way”. Not so long ago savage, the activity on them now was industrious, often sordid, sometimes pathetic, always restricted. All of these streams had proven rich in gold, and were littered now with wing-dams, flumes and sluice-boxes. Muir wandered along their banks, reflecting on mining and the meaning of wealth, taking a look also into the taverns frequented by the miners along that Cassiar gold trail, the worst he’d ever seen: rough shacks with dirt floors, dirt roofs, and dirt meals – “a potato, a slice of something like bacon, some grey stuff called bread and a cup of muddy, semi-liquid coffee that the California miners call slumgullion”. The conditions of life there, as well as its perspectives, contrasted strongly with those of a band of Toltan Indians he’d seen at the North Fork of the Stikine, catching their winter supply of salmon in willow traps. These inland Indians, he noted, pale copper-coloured and with small hands and feet, were very different physiologically from the thickset, heavy-featured coastal tribes, and maybe culturally too.

It was at a trading post, where the French-Canadian had come to buy flour and bacon, that Muir met Le Claire, an old *coureur de bois* who at that time had a gold mine at the head of Defot Creek. Le Claire invited Muir to his cabin, and Muir went. He admired several things in Le Claire: his generosity, his capacity to carry a heavy load and still tread lightly over rough trails (the Defot Creek was about 40 miles long), and the fact that, despite the rigours of a hard wilderness life, he had maintained undimmed a real love of nature. Once at the cabin, Le Claire introduced Muir to his favourite flower, the forget-me-not (his wife and children lived away down in Victoria) and to one of his close friends, a brown-speckled marmot, already concerned, “every hair and nerve a weather instrument”, about gathering in winter supplies. They talked there in the “wild garden” about the “plant people” (bluebell, blue geranium, larkspur, *linnaea borealis*...) and the “mountain people” (caribou, ptarmigan) before climbing up to the ridge behind the cabin to gaze out over the vast expanse of that great mountain region until sundown. Thereafter it was supper, then blankets laid out on the floor, and Le Claire telling stories of his life with Indians, bears, wolves, snow and hunger.

Another day like that, and Muir made his way back to Telegraph Creek, the end of his 200-mile inland walk, “happy and rich without a particle of obscuring gold-dust care”. From Telegraph, he travelled the fifteen miles down river to Glenora on an Indian canoe with four paddlers. He hadn’t forgotten his plan to climb to the top of Glenora Peak and get the general view of the coast Range that he’d missed out on when he’d made his first try with Young.

Once up there, he enjoyed one of the most “impressively sublime” of all the mountain vistas he’d ever known: more than three hundred miles of the amazing Coast Range and upwards of two hundred glaciers of every size and shape and context – crawling through gorges, pouring over cliffs, walled up in mountain cirques with only their edges flowing in blue cascades. “All the world seemed new-born. Every thing, even the commonest, was seen in a new light.” It was a culmination point. But the sight of all those gleaming glaciers had put Muir into an appetite for direct contact with one. After ecstasy, study, then after study, another ecstasy, and so on, *ad infinitum*. On the very next day he made for Dirt Glacier, so called because of its lateral moraine, pushing his way through thickets of thorny devil’s club (*echinopanax horridum*), till he got into its high white world, crossing over it for eight miles, wishing that in place of the few crackers he had in his pocket he had a good supply of hardtack and could spend a whole week. Back down, still obsessed with “ice-work”, he went to Buck Station, where the keeper, a Frenchman by the name of Choquette, provided him with biscuits made by his Indian wife, some dried salmon, sugar and tea, a blanket, and a piece of light sheeting before he left for the Big Stikine glacier:

“When can I expect you back?”

“Oh, any time. I shall see as much as possible of the glacier, and I know not how long it will hold me.”

“You know how dangerous it is. Russian officers from Sitka went up that glacier from here and they never came back.”

“Never mind me. I am used to caring for myself.”

He was back a week later, having learnt, as the result of “exhilarating study”, “a most telling lesson in earth sculpture”. He rested a while at Choquette’s house, writing out his notes, “planning the work that had long been in mind”, then went back down to Wrangell in a passing canoe, the “grand object” with which he had come to Alaska in the first place more and more “in view”.

*

The Stikine trips were in fact preliminary preludes to a grand programme which included in the first instance a consequential trip up north to the Chilkat country.

A first attempt to get into these regions which “burned in his mind” had been made when Muir joined a party composed of missionaries out to ascer-

tain the “spiritual wants” of the ferocious Chilkats and business people out to see opportunities for commerce. Always ready to seize on any chance if it was liable in one way or another to further his studies, Muir, his mind on “mountains, glaciers and forest”, was more than willing to string along, paying his passage with lessons in geology: reading from “Nature’s Bible”, “preaching glacial gospel”. All might have been well if the engine of the chartered steamer hadn’t begun to show signs of exhaustion and if the missionaries hadn’t got worried at the lengthening of the trip and therefore the lengthening of the bill – a situation and a consideration which resulted in a majority decision to turn back. “The extra dollars outweighed the mountains and the missions”, was Muir’s ironical comment off. But, as usual, he made the best of things, managing to extract something of value even from the most unpromising contexts. Twice he grabbed the chance of a short anchorage to jump ashore and study forest plants, and once to climb a glacier. He also learned more about Tlingit architecture and totem poles from a visit to a ruined Indian village. But compared to what he’d originally had in mind, it was a false start.

It was only when Muir got back from his lone Stikine trip that the great plan really got underway.

This time, with the exception of Young, there would be no missionaries, and no steamer. What was needed was a good canoe, with a crew of Indians who knew the way. The canoe, a 6 fathom red-cedar craft, they got from a Stikine chief that Muir calls Toyatte and that Young in his account calls Tow-a-att (Young knew more Indian language than Muir). Toyatte, as owner, and as chief, would be captain, the other crew members being Kadachan, a Stikine sub-chief who was kin to a chief of the Chilkats, Stickeen John and Sitka Charley.

The idea was to travel up north-west through the myriad-islanded Alexandria Archipelago, across a territory of land and sea that was still virtually *terra incognita*. Vancouver’s chart was good, but would almost certainly be found wanting (which proved the case), if only because the landscape would have considerably changed since 1807: new islands would have appeared volcanically; tides and rivers would have opened new passages, closing others; glaciers dumping moraine silt would have created new promontories; some glaciers might have advanced, others receded, the sea there running into long fjords and enlarging bays; and where before there was one big wall of ice, you might find now a dozen separate glaciers.

In the course of this eight hundred mile trip, there would be a double agenda. On the one hand, mission activity, with Young preaching, arranging for churches and schools, making censuses; on the other, Muir's more undefinable explorations. On the one hand ethno-evangelistic work; on the other, geo-poetic work. But there could and would be interrelationship and collaboration. Young was interested in Muir's preoccupations, and Muir was not totally indifferent to at least part of his.

Muir liked to listen around the evening's camp fire to the Indians talking about their old traditions, religion and customs, and about their relations to the wild animals. They were superstitious, but no more so than many other people. They engaged perpetually in inter-tribal warfare, but so it was all over the world, with, on national and imperial battlefields, more disastrous consequences. What he admired most was a faculty of attention to surroundings, far superior to the "poor shallow comfort of town-dwellers", and a large sense of space: those people thought nothing, for example, of a thousand-mile canoe trip from the Chilkat country to Victoria.

When asked to declare themselves on the approach to a village, Stickeen John, in the office of interpreter, would cry out: "A preacher-chief and an ice-chief are coming among you!" At the meetings, if it would be first and foremost Young who would do the talking, Muir too was often, indeed regularly, asked to speak. He'd begin by demurring: he wasn't a missionary, he was only "travelling to see the country, the glaciers, mountains and forests." But these subjects, strange to say, he notes, "seemed to be about as interesting to them as the gospels." Given the context, he obviously stuck to homiletic generalities such as the love of the Great Father for all men, the beauty and power of God's creation, and so on. But the Indians thought he spoke well. Better in fact than Young. After one such meeting, Toyatte said to Young: "*Mika tillicum hi yu tola wawa* (your friend leads you far in speaking).

In fact, Muir was in his element, engaged in what he called "foundational truth", with prime material, primal movements, right before his eyes, enhancing his senses, enlarging the scope of his thought: "fresh beauty everywhere and facts for study", facts about "world-shaping".

As they moved west across Sumner Strait, between Kupremanof and Prince of Wales, then northwards up the Keku Strait, thereafter Frederick's Sound, then up Chatham Strait to Icy Strait, and from there up the Lynn Canal, travelling sometimes late into the dark, every stroke of a paddle making a surge of white light in the phosphorescent waters, Muir had before him

every day, in all kinds of atmospheres, a multitude of islets and islands. The variety was bewildering, but back of that bewildering variety he sensed an underlying harmony, conceiving it all in terms of a complex poem still to be grasped in its entirety: "Viewed one by one, they seem detached beauties, like extracts from a poem, while, from the completeness of their lines each seems a finished stanza in itself."

Close to the Chilkat country, ready to hold a direct course up "the lovely Lynn Canal", Muir and his companions got wind of trouble among the Indians: the Chilkats were on a whisky rampage, drinking and fighting. Because of this the party turned westward towards a great bay of ice that Sitka Charley had visited years before but of whose exact location he was no longer certain. In Icy Strait they met a band of Indian seal-hunters:

"Are you going to preach to the seals and gulls?"

"This is not a missionary. He wants to see ice-mountains."

*

One of the seal-hunters accepted to serve as guide, and that was Muir's introduction to Sit-a-da-kay (Glacier Bay), the grandest "congregation of glaciers" he had ever seen. There they rose, lofty cliffs of ice that he would name the Geikie (after James Geikie, the Scottish geologist), the Hugh Miller (another Scottish geologist), the Pacific, the Muir... The next day being Sunday, Young stayed in camp because of religion and the Indians because of bad weather, so Muir left on his own "to see what I might learn". What he wanted was a general comprehensive view of the whole area, the whole arena. And he got it, that Sunday and on the days following, trudging through rain and mud, ploughing through snow up to the shoulder, doing mountaineering of the toughest kind, tracing his way amid mazes of crevasses, up to heights of 15,000 feet, sketching, writing in his notebook with benumbed fingers. Glacier Bay with its huge glaciers and the berg-filled expanse of its waters was "a solitude of ice and snow and newborn rocks, dim, dreary, mysterious." If it was "dim and dreary" (a condition which in no way lessened Muir's exaltation) that late October, the Bay could also light up suddenly with all shades of blue, from a pale, shimmering limpidity to a startling almost shrieking vitriol. And once at dawn, in a deep brooding stillness made all the more intense by the thunder of bergs newly broken off the glacier fronts, he saw a strange unearthly light, crimson, then red, then rose, spreading over the topmost peaks of the range, as though it came from inside the mountains themselves,

as though matter itself was illuminated. To Muir, the Glacier Bay experience was an insight into the morning of creation, it was world in the making (“for the world, though made, is yet being made”), landscape following landscape “in endless rhythm and beauty”.

But time was running short. The Indians began to talk of a *skeokum house* (a jail of ice), and even Muir had to admit that the danger of being imprisoned in a jam of icebergs was real and imminent. So they made back to Wrangell, with Muir “taking last lingering looks at the wonderful place I might never see again.”

He actually did see it again, because the whole area, Glacier Bay in particular, drew him like a magnet, and because, in addition to his other qualities, Muir was as persevering and determined as they make them. He was back in August of 1880, with a different crew, and on a different route, and he was back again in June of 1890, nearly blind with ice-glare, almost dying of a fall on the Muir, later near getting crushed in his lone canoe between bergs. As always, he travelled, studied, noted, knowing “measureless enthusiasm”, but it’s maybe in that first 1879 trip that he experienced the greatest “auroral excitement”.

It’s with a chapter on Auroras (of which he’d seen many, from all the variant colours of the “intense white splendour”) that Muir’s *Travels in Alaska*, written practically on his deathbed and published posthumously, ends.

*

It’s possible to say that Muir’s books are poorly composed, it’s possible to say that the writing is full of purple patches, it’s possible to say that his religiosity, if not his religion (there he can be humorous and ironical) is all too present, and that his argument from design and divine intention is antiquated. I go with all that. In my account of Muir’s Alaskan travels, I have deliberately played down the excessively religious metaphorisation (looking at a glacier: “we have met with God!”; describing a line of bergs as “the jewel-paved streets of the New Jerusalem”), preferring to use where it exists in his text a less loaded and connotated vocabulary, extract and amplify what I consider essential. And if, in his company, I had heard him say once too often: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow!”, I’d either have suggested he pipe down or, more likely, moved off on my own to a less effusively theistic spot. But to stick at this level would be to look at Muir from the wrong end of the telescope, and miss out entirely on the full scope of his intentions, the whole scape of his mind. Muir had vision, a hyper-heraclitean vision of the universe as “an infinite storm

of beauty”. He’s well aware of the toughness of the world, well aware of the forces of destruction in it, but he sees beyond them. Of the “flower-gardens” on the lower reaches of what is now called Muir Glacier, he has this: “Out of all the cold darkness and glacial crushing and grinding comes this warm, abounding beauty of life to teach us that what we in faithless ignorance and fear call destruction is creation finer and finer.” It is this kind of vision, backed up by fact and reference, that comes across in his books and that inspired his notion of national parks that would be more than a commercial tourism enterprise, more than a kind of nature reservation, more than a mere place of recreation, but, at least the way I read him, as the locus of a re-creation of humanity and culture that would go beyond all the divisions (to begin with, those of White and Indian, then man and animal, then mind and universe) that can make the world a hell. He got that idea going, but even before his death, he saw it being corrupted and corroded. Towards the end of his life, he was isolated – but that is what has always happened to the really interesting minds since humanity began its confused propagation and heavy propaganda.

[Other titles by Kenneth White published by Aberdeen University Press include,

Collected Works Volume 1: From Underground to Overground

Ideas of Order at Cape Wrath

Guido’s Map: A European Pilgrimage

Latitudes and Longitudes: Poems]

Notes on Contributors

Eleanor Bell is Senior Lecturer in English Studies at the University of Strathclyde. She is the author of *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (2004) and co-editor of *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture and Literature* (2004). Her current research focusses on the literary culture of the Scottish sixties, on which she has published two co-edited volumes (*The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (2012) and *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?* (2013)). She was founding co-editor (with Scott Hames) of the *International Journal of Scottish Literature* from 2006–2010.

Marjory Harper is a Professor of History at the University of Aberdeen and a Visiting Professor at the Centre for History, University of the Highlands and Islands. Her new book, *Testimonies of Transition: Voices from the Scottish Diaspora*, will be published later this year by Luath Press, Edinburgh.

Chris Korten is a member of the Modern History faculty at Adam Mickiewicz in Poznan, Poland. He writes on various aspects of political and ecclesiastical history in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is currently finishing a history of the Irish College in Rome for this period.

Liam McIlvanney is the inaugural Stuart Professor of Scottish Studies at the University of Otago, New Zealand. He has published widely on modern Scottish literature and is the co-editor (with Gerard Carruthers) of *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature* (2012). His third novel, *The Quaker*, will be published by HarperCollins in 2018.

Mike McLaughlin completed his PhD at Carleton University in 2016. His dissertation, "Irish Catholic Voluntary Associations in the Canadian Liberal Order, 1840-1882," explored the role of Irish Catholic voluntary associations in the development of Canadian political culture in the nineteenth century.

Gill Tasker's PhD thesis on Alexander Trocchi was shortlisted for the 2015 Universities Committee of Scottish Literature Ross Roy Medal. Gill is former Lecturer and Research Assistant in Publishing Studies at the University of Stirling's Centre for International Publishing and Communication, and from 2014-2016, she was Joint Managing Director of award-winning independent publisher Cargo. Gill is currently Book Marketing Manager at Publishing Scotland, the trade, network and development body for Scotland's sizeable book publishing sector.

Kenneth White was the founder of the Institute of Geopoetics in Paris, at a time when he was Professor of Poetics at the Sorbonne. He left Scotland in 1968 and established himself as a major figure in French intellectual and cultural life in the 1980s and 1990s. His *Le plateau de l'albatros* (1994) is an introduction to 'geopoetics', while *L'esprit nomade* (2008) offers a theoretical and historical account of the tradition of 'intellectual nomadism' which White sees his own works as continuing. Among his recent publications are the poems gathered in *Latitudes and Longitudes* (AUP, 2013), the essays of *Ideas of Order at Cape Wrath* (AUP, 2013), and the 'waybook' *Guido's Map: A European Pilgrimage* (AUP, 2015).

Aaron Windel is an Assistant Professor of History at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. He writes about the history of the British empire and has published articles and book chapters on colonial education, mobile cinemas, and community development in Africa. He currently is completing a book on the cooperative movement in the British empire during late colonialism and decolonization.