Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

RETHINKING THE IRISH DIASPORA

After The Gathering

Edited by Johanne Devlin Trew and Michael Pierse

Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

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Introduction: Gathering Tensions

Johanne Devlin Trew and Michael Pierse

Emigration has been an enduring and defining experience for the island of Ireland, usually associated with conceptions of failure, taboos of adulteration and myths of authenticity. While the pre-1922 Irish nationalist historical narrative had blamed that experience on the history of extirpation and persecution attendant on British imperialism, Ireland and Northern Ireland's continuing haemorrhaging of youth, from the 1920s to the mid-1990s—and again during the recent recession—has on the one hand attested to and amplified a sense of national shame in the South, while in the North, successive pro-union governments remained largely silent for fear of the uncomfortable issues emigration raised in relation to a failing economy and ongoing sectarianism. Yet the relationship between

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home and diaspora has been compelling, socially, economically and culturally for those who claim an Irish heritage internationally and for those who inhabit the two states on the island of Ireland, which have both profited—though very differently, and with no shortage of ethno-national anxiety—by their capacity to harness that relationship in expedient ways. From the "homecoming" tourism so vital to Ireland and Northern Ireland's hospitality sector to the self-affirming (or perhaps not-so affirming) representations of Ireland in Hollywood; from traction gained in the identity politics of hyphenated selves in Irish-American and Scots-Irish cultures, to the ever-present and influential engagement of American political clout in the recent Peace Process, Ireland's diaspora culture still fashions identities, supports industries and creates important yet often contradictory relationships between home and abroad. But what do such hegemonising processes omit? What has been swept aside in the cultural and intellectual imaginary of globalised Irishness that might begin to unpick its inevitably homogenising drives? While Ireland lays claims to the cultural imaginary of its diaspora, is there adequate space for the historically diverse, fractured, dissonant and contested identities that make up the divided Ireland of the past and the diverse Ireland of today? What also of those more long-standing communities on the island who identify their Irishness differently, or indeed, who identify as British, Northern Irish, Anglo-Irish or Ulster-Scots? And what of those diasporas, like the Scots-Irish, whose Irishness differs from that of the East-coast Irish-American Catholics so often invoked in imagery of the Irish abroad?

Coming 15 years after the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 1998, some 20 years after the onset of the Republic's economic boom, with the unprecedented flow of inward migration that enabled, and 5 years after a seismic economic crash that saw youth emigration return to shocking levels, *The Gathering 2013* homecoming organisation grappled with various meanings of Irishness, and with various representations of belonging, amid a deeply troubling and contradictory set of social and economic transformations. In its emphasis on commonality and transnational/trans-historical fixity, *The Gathering* was marked by tensions centred around Ireland's diversity, fragmentation and rapid historical change. This was in some respects to crystallise a problematic relationship that has long

existed between Ireland and its diaspora. Enda Delaney and Ciaran O'Neill (2016: 8) characterise Ireland's connection to its diaspora and history of emigration as "contradictory […] seen as a burden, an embarrassment, or a mark of domestic and cultural failure." But how important were these tensions to government agencies, when, in the final analysis, *The Gathering* was calculated to have attracted an extra 250–275,000 visitors in 2013, along with an additional €170 million in revenues, on promotional costs of less than a tenth of that amount (Backer and Hay 2015: 101)? Did *The Gathering*'s success also conveniently eclipse the embarrassing, returned spectre of mass Irish emigration, thus resulting "in a silencing of sentiment in relation to the exodus of mainly young people from Ireland in that exact period" (O'Leary and Negra 2016: 133)? Embattled by unprecedented, post-2008 Crash economic woes, and engulfed in the significant social unrest, mass mobilisations and civil disobedience that accompanied the "Right to Water" and emerging "Right to Change" movements from 2014—along with, among other issues, growing calls for marriage equality for LGBTQs (see Mackle, this volume) and the demand for rights to abortion spearheaded by the "Repeal the 8th" movement—the Republic has struggled in dealing with recent political agitation (Hearn 2015; Murphy 2016) that coincided with commemorations of a period of burgeoning republican, suffragist and socialist political struggle a century ago.

Ellen Hazelkorn and Andrew Gibson have noted (2016: 106) an increasing focus in Ireland on the economy to the detriment of more cultural concerns, observing, for instance, that, in the Irish public sphere, recent "discussion of constitutional reform (2012–2014) – a proxy for another discourse on national identity – largely bypassed A&H [arts and humanities]." This narrow focus on financial profitability—understandable as it has been amid the economic gloom—has extended across policy areas, including tourism and heritage. If *The Gathering*, as a phenomenon that "morphed into an exercise of social capital and community-centred activity" (Cochrane 2015: 143), was explicitly envisaged as an opportunity to harness the cultural to the economic, to what extent would the latter eclipse the former? As Feargal Cochrane argues in relation to Gabriel Byrne's controversial characterisation of *The Gathering* as a "scam" (Byrne, *The Irish Times*, 5 November 2012):

> the substance of the criticism was linked to the fact that in Ireland, Scotland and elsewhere, diaspora tourism is heavily focused on its income-generation potential [… and] such return visits present a key revenue stream for homeland economies (2015: 144, 145).

But Byrne had drawn attention to diasporic resentment of the extent to which, as Alfred Markey (2014: 64) puts it, "the expression of Irish identity has so overwhelmingly, so totally been sequestered by mercantilist ideas." *The Gathering* seemed to some the quintessence of this neoliberal appropriation, which cheapens and reifies a profoundly emotional and complex relationship between Ireland and its enormous diaspora. As Cochrane (2015: 145) notes, the focus on revenue often belies the fact that "diaspora tourism is driven by a series of deeply held emotions that go beyond the purely pragmatic." On the one hand, crucial to *The Gathering's* success (economically or otherwise) was its reliance on human contact and cultural events that tapped into these "deeply held emotions," ranging from family reunions, to festivals, exhibition GAA matches, historical commemorations and tours, and across a myriad of general celebrations of Irishness. On the other hand, there was an air of superficiality and "paddywhackery" to *The Gathering*; which as Mary Gilmartin (2015: 1) notes, "displayed a particular and limited understanding of Irishness [and] conveniently evaded the reality of life in contemporary Ireland." Here, emphasis is placed on an often loosely historical and questionably essentialising Irish imaginary. Claire Lynch (2014: 82) has articulated that *The Gathering* was driven by identity politics in which members of the diaspora were encouraged "to play a version of themselves […] an Irishness version 2.0." This Irishness is at once, paradoxically, simplistically static and mesmerically pliable, "built on long-lost family connections, granting visitors a licence to express an identity that might otherwise be unstable" (Lynch 2014: 82). But where is the breaking point in this Irish imaginary's exceptional elasticity? Ironically, an Irishness granted to those at a significant remove from Ireland is often less or indeed *un*available to hundreds of thousands who live on the island of Ireland. Gilmartin points to the 2011 census, in which 15.5% of the Republic's population "did not describe themselves as 'White Irish'" (2015: 2). In events and marketing material related to *The Gathering*,

little reference was made to this newly diverse and radically changed Ireland, or of the possibility of belonging and Irishness (or more complicated versions of it) for those newcomers who have now made Ireland their home. Gilmartin (2015: 2) notes the lack of diversity or inclusivity on *The Gathering's* flagship website, which "made scant reference to many of Ireland's current residents" thus "legitimat[ing] a form of exclusion."[1]

In considering the "cultural commodification" of Ireland, Marion Markwick (2001: 48) notes that "ironically, perhaps, as Ireland has become a dynamic, modern and integrated European State, so too may marketing myths have become more successful in selling Ireland as a static, insular and remote place." She observes (ibid.) the pervasive imagery of "a peripheral and primitive, but never productive Ireland," that while there is "commercial merit in promoting such images […] this poses questions (including some ethical ones) about the possible negative effect of these images. […] Can contradictory messages be successfully juxtaposed or blended?" As David Lloyd (2013: para. 11) has claimed of the common "diasporic imaginary" in Ireland after the Celtic Tiger, "the new Irish diasporic discourse does not give rise to an alternative politics founded in the critique of the nation-state from the place of displacement but is bound instead to an almost euphoric disavowal of the successive violences of Irish history." A rich tapestry of deeply critical social commentary emerges in the history of the Irish abroad, furnishing instances of reflection on Ireland and emigrant experience that are evidently still salient today. They recommend what Lloyd has advocated in calling for a "continual mindfulness" in how we conceptualise the Irish diaspora which "can furnish the basis for movements of solidarity with other diasporas" (2013: para. 17). Here the backward glance of the modern diaspora and the frequently commodifying designs of those meeting it call for mediation by a robust critical engagement with the ways in which the heritage and tourism policies of "Ireland Inc." are shaping our sense of transnational Irishness today.

Micheál Ó hAodha and Máirtín Ó Catháin (2014: ix) have attested that "the recent past has witnessed a new fluidity in concepts of Irishness and a reappraisal of its frames of articulation including the nexus that is Ireland and the Irish, and the concepts that are 'at home' and abroad." Yet little of this fluidity and reappraisal was evident in *The Gathering* as it

struggled to reconcile an arguably outmoded diaspora imaginary with the realities of a post-Celtic Tiger Ireland that produced a new generation of Irish economic migrants. If, in the Republic, much of the controversy surrounding *The Gathering's* year-long celebration of Ireland centred on the echoes of Gabriel Byrne's claims, in the North the lack of accord on diaspora strategy was also apparent when the Stormont Assembly's Executive avoided participation in *The Gathering*, preferring to launch their own "Our Place, Our Time" campaign in 2012, which focused on the centenaries of the Ulster Covenant and the Titanic disaster (see Devlin Trew, this volume). The significant, long-term concern for scholarship, then—and indeed for the Irish public—might be what *The Gathering* can teach us about Ireland's problematic self-fashioning in the twenty-first century. Thus, this book will argue that *The Gathering* provided a unique window on the lacunae and tensions repressed by or resistant to Ireland's hegemonic imaginary and that further events taking place during the current long "Decade of Centenaries" North and South (2012–2023) are providing new space for salutary critical debates in this regard. *The Gathering*'s aftermath presents a significant opportunity to interrogate the unconscious of Ireland's relationship with its diaspora communities.

The idea for this book emerged from prevalent concerns, during the course of *The Gathering 2013* year, with the manner in which "Irishness" and "Northern Irishness" were being newly constructed, deconstructed and imagined in the trans-Atlantic discourses of tourism and cultural heritage marketing and historiographical revisionism. It produced a conference, *After The Gathering: Dissonant Voices in Irish Diaspora Studies*, at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, on 6 June 2014, at which speakers explored how critical approaches to the analysis and reproduction of the Irish diasporic imagination might elucidate the perceived successes and failures of *The Gathering* year. As we approached the major centenary commemoration events of 1916—the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme—in which the Irish and Northern Irish governments respectively had again invested considerable resources and political purchase, this debate intensified. The discord between government policy and the academy was made painfully clear when one of Ireland's most prominent historians, Diarmaid Ferriter, uncharacteristically and

controversially dismissed the marketing video that launched the Republic's official programme of 1916 commemorations as "embarrassing, unhistorical shit" (Brophy 2014). A public clash between the state committee set up to advise on the commemorations and the Irish government itself ensued. In the event, the Somme commemorations in Northern Ireland were overshadowed by the shockwaves of the previous week when the United Kingdom voted marginally in favour of leaving the European Union in its referendum (Brexit), while Northern Ireland voted to remain.

In the encounters explored throughout this volume, there are repeated, compelling disjunctures between expediency and epistemology, between history and "Ireland Inc." Ireland, its postcolonial history, its legacy of Partition and its diasporic imaginary are repeatedly harnessed to the calculus of neoliberal ideology. The first section of the book focuses on state involvement in diaspora engagement. To set the scene, Chap. 2 provides a statistical profile of the diaspora as it relates to Ireland and Northern Ireland and then traces the divergent paths of governments in both jurisdictions towards state-diaspora engagement. Johanne Devlin Trew considers whether the neoliberal economic policies geared towards the economic "rescue" of the state will continue to dominate diaspora engagement in a post-Brexit scenario and force key North-South constitutional issues onto the table rather sooner than might otherwise have been the case. In Chap. 3, Mark Boyle and Adrian Kavanagh propose an alternative framing of state-diaspora engagement policy which mobilises feminist care ethics and which strives to nurture and fortify relationships built upon mutuality, reciprocity and shared mission. They identify "diaspora economies of care" based on emotional, moral and business care economies in which resources circulate in alternative ways to norms that prevail under capitalist logic. Within the context of the emergence of "national" cultural institutions in Ireland (North and South) since Partition, Brian Lambkin in Chap. 4 considers the opportunity to create one cross-border diaspora centre on the island of Ireland, rather than two separate "national" diaspora centres. He argues that in order to properly address the problem of "dealing with the past", one cross-border (Irish and British) "diaspora-related" institution is still needed in Ireland. Setting the state-diaspora binary on its head, Danielle Mackle examines in

Chap. 5 how, in the absence of overseas voting rights, the diaspora engaged itself in the Irish state's 2015 Marriage Equality Referendum, specifically through its activism in the Yes campaign. This new generation of mostly well-educated recent emigrants employed their savvy with social media for political ends and demonstrated their determination to create a more open and tolerant society in Ireland, to which they might someday return. Mackle reflects on marriage equality in the South and recent political developments in the North and how these might help to move the gender equality agenda further ahead in Northern Ireland.

The volume moves on to consider the diaspora in geographic and historic contexts. Two essays interrogate connections between Ireland and the United States. In Chap. 6, Carol Baraniuk examines the transnational career of the radical poet and United Irishman James Orr of Ballycarry, County Antrim, exiled for a period in the United States following the 1798 Rebellion. Orr's verse is exceptional in its range, and his unequivocal, pluralist assertion of his belief in tolerance and diversity both within and beyond his native land demonstrates an inclusive Irish patriotism. Baraniuk thus offers a nuanced discussion of the Ulster-Scots literary tradition, arguing that it represents a significant and unjustly neglected northern dissenting school of Irish literature and challenges contemporary portrayals of Ulster-Scots identity. In Chap. 7, Brian Kelly considers recent Irish government assertions celebrating the role of famine-era Irish immigrants in the cause of slave emancipation in the late antebellum United States. He notes, on the contrary, a more uneven and problematic record among these Irish immigrants marked, at times, by intense antipathy towards slaves and free blacks. Departing from an influential recent literature generated by proponents of critical whiteness studies, Kelly argues that to the extent the famine-era diaspora consciously embraced "white racial identity", their options were severely circumscribed both by difficult material circumstances and their alienation from the main currents of mid-nineteenth-century social reform, most particularly from the cause of abolition.

We next turn towards Britain to focus attention on those in the diaspora who are less visible, less celebrated and often less fortunate. Although some visits were organised for less well-off groups from Britain (McGarry 2013), *The Gathering* final report acknowledged that the United States

was the "prime focus" of their marketing strategy (Miley 2013: 8).[2] Thus, in Chap. 8, Bronwen Walter questions the low profile of the Irish diaspora in Britain in the celebration of *The Gathering 2013* in Ireland. She posits that this is part of the ongoing denial in Ireland of the scale and significance of Irish emigration to Britain, reflecting expectations of higher economic returns from Irish-American investors. Drawing on qualitative data from the *Irish 2 Project*, Walter shows that Britain also fails to acknowledge the specificity of Irish backgrounds, noting however important differences in England, where there has been reluctance to disaggregate the "white" ethnic category, whilst in Scotland, Irish descent identities are still controversial and strongly contested. Ultan Cowley in Chap. 9 considers an older generation in the diaspora who over many years toiled in Britain in labouring occupations and made the sacrifice of contributing funds to maintain families in Ireland. Noting their almost unfathomable loyalty to Ireland, often while suffering deprivation, loss and trauma, Cowley considers the duty of the Irish state towards this "forgotten" diaspora who were absent in the publicity surrounding *The Gathering*. Tony Murray continues on the related theme of the "lost generation" in Chap. 10, noting, that contrary to the presentation of Irishness in tourism initiatives such as *The Gathering*, a great deal of fictional and autobiographical writing about the Irish migrant experience in Britain emphasises dislocation, fragmentation and discontinuity. Taking the case of Edna O'Brien's short story, *Shovel Kings* (2011), which rehearses many of the archetypal motifs of male Irish exile in London, Murray examines the role that narrative plays in voicing and mediating the dissonances and dislocations of the Irish diaspora. The concluding chapter by Michael Pierse explores three literary texts depicting working-class Irish emigrant experience in Britain in the early twentieth century. Pierse notes that none of the texts provides an antidote to the chaotic experiences of emigration, but neither is there the possibility of a return to a romanticised Ireland. He suggests that such critical perspectives, exemplified by these working-class texts, may not be welcome in the commercialising reductivism of *The Gathering*'s global Irish project.

During *The Gathering* year, Tina O'Toole et al. (2013: 80) questioned the "extent to which economic concerns will be brought to bear on upcoming commemorative events." She noted also a curious "disjunc-

ture" between the major tourism event of the decade and the title of Anne Enright's Booker Prize winning novel *The Gathering* (2007):

> which also focuses on Irish migrancy, but which critically interrogates the "differing and incomplete" versions of Irish history and memory [and] might be seen as a case study for the sharply different ways in which collective memory is framed. The latter, which might be read as one of Anne Rigney's "portable moments" of the Irish past, attests to the erasure of dissident histories and extends the range of possibilities offered by cultural production as a means to commemorate more complex and traumatic elements of the past.

Dissident histories sit uneasily with tourism-centred initiatives. So too does trauma. In this regard, this book aims to generate scholarly scrutiny, from a range of social science, arts and humanities perspectives, of what is dissident or dissonant, what is resistant to both and why. It endeavours to interrogate the cultural politics, historiographical probity and theoretical complexity of recent, post-*Gathering* conceptualisations of Irishness, Northern Irishness and the diaspora. *Rethinking the Irish Diaspora*, then, suggests future pathways for researchers seeking to nuance a debate plagued by generalisation, gesticulation and garishness.

Notes

1. Perhaps in response to criticism on the lack of inclusion of minorities in the festival, the souvenir book for *The Gathering* included a short chapter near the end entitled "The New Irish" (O'Brien 2013), which includes brief biographies of five immigrants but does not even mention whether they attended or participated in *The Gathering* events.
2. The United States focus is borne out by North American visitor numbers for the first 10 months of 2013 which were up 14.6%, compared with an increase of 5.1% from Great Britain (Tourism Ireland 2013: summary headlines, n.p.). *The Gathering* was reported in several British newspapers and some roadshow events were held in British cities.

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Part 1

Policy Contexts and Political Change

2

Diaspora Engagement in Ireland, North and South, in the Shadow of Brexit

Johanne Devlin Trew

The Irish Diaspora in the Shadow of Brexit

Those steeped in the study of the history of Irish partition may well have shivered momentarily at the announcement by former British Prime Minister David Cameron of 23 June 2016 as the date of the UK referendum on leaving the European Union (EU).[1] For exactly 100 years previously, on 23 June 1916, just as British and Irish soldiers were preparing to embark on the bloody Somme campaign, representatives attending the Ulster Nationalist Convention in Belfast voted in favour of the proposal that six counties of Ulster (that eventually became Northern Ireland) would be excluded from Home Rule on a temporary basis during wartime to last no more than 5 or 6 years (Hepburn 2008: 179).[2] Although the shock of the Easter Rising had stimulated these negotiations to try to settle the Irish question, Prime Minister Asquith and his cabinet, under pressure from Edward Carson and fellow unionists, soon retracted the

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"temporary" provision, leading to the failure a few weeks later of the proposal altogether. Nevertheless, the blueprint for six-county secession had been put on the table and was the precursor to Partition.[3]

One hundred years later, on 23 June 2016, in a UK-wide referendum, Northern Ireland along with Scotland voted to remain in the European Union (EU) while a small majority in England and Wales opted to leave (Brexit).[4] From geographical analysis of the Northern Ireland result, it is estimated that most nationalists chose to remain while unionist-dominated constituencies voted to leave (Tonge 2017).[5] Unease at the result, especially in nationalist areas, centred on the loss of EU funds for agriculture, fear that Brexit would undermine the peace process and human rights, and that the majority vote of the North had to be respected.[6] In the days following the result, Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny expressed concern about the future and Sinn Féin Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness called for a border poll on Irish unification,[7] while other politicians and commentators at home and abroad speculated about whether "hard" or "soft" border controls would once again be required on the island.[8] On the more positive side, some argued that the Northern Ireland referendum result could lead to "greater all-Ireland integration"[9] with significant economic benefits across the island[10] and journalist Fintan O'Toole proposed that Northern Ireland form an alliance with Scotland and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) to remain within the EU.[11] It was even suggested that an independent Northern Ireland might be on the cards and Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, mooted the possibility of alternative frameworks to a United Ireland scenario.[12]

Several reports on the implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland have all pointed to the likelihood of negative economic impacts, in addition to the problematic security and border issues frequently raised in the media. All have noted that the Northern Ireland economy (2014 data) is more dependent on exports to the EU (at 59 percent) than the UK overall (at 46 percent) (Mac Flynn 2016: 18) and is particularly at risk due to its reliance on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). An analysis of HMRC (Revenue Commission) trade data from 2004 to 2014 (Stennett 2016: 9; 2017: 3) indicated that 60 percent of Northern Ireland exports over the decade have gone to the EU—the ROI being the single largest export market (House of Lords 2016: 8). Another report commissioned by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland

(DETINI), based on an analysis of nine possible Brexit scenarios, clearly showed that the sectors which dominate the Northern Ireland economy, such as manufacturing, construction and agri-food, are likely to be particularly adversely affected (Oxford Economics 2016: 7–8) with, for example, only 3 percent of Northern Ireland agri-food sales currently going to countries outside of the EU (NI Affairs Committee 2016: 20). No longer having tariff-free access to the EU, Northern Ireland would also likely lose "comparative advantage" for its products to the benefit of the ROI (de Mars et al. 2016: 17). In addition to the risk of declining FDI due to Northern Ireland no longer providing a base for access to the EU market, the impact of losing EU structural funds which from 2007 to 2013 amounted to 8.4 percent of annual GDP for Northern Ireland—two-thirds of this for agriculture—has been predicted to lower GDP by 3 percent and create higher levels of unemployment (Budd 2015: 8, 13). With EU structural funds for Northern Ireland from 2014 to 2020 estimated at €460 million (including €181 million from the UK), it is unclear how or indeed whether the EU balance of these funds will be replaced (Phinnemore 2015: 32). Given a "hard Brexit", it has been posited that Northern Ireland might be better to stay out of the single market due to its significant level of trade with the rest of the UK; however, being outside the customs union on WTO tariffs for the vital agri-food sector (average = 22.3 percent) would be catastrophic and create political instability with the imposition of a hard border with the ROI (Mac Flynn 2016: 22). In addition, the resulting decline in inward migration of EU migrants with much higher levels of skills and economic activity compared to the NI-born would have a detrimental impact on the local labour market (Mac Flynn 2016: 25–6). As Northern Ireland is already the second-lowest performing economic region (11 out of 12) in the UK, with significantly lower Gross Value Added (GVA), higher levels of economic inactivity and poor qualifications in its working-age population, it is difficult to see how it could afford the economic implications of Brexit (US Congressional Research Service Report 2016; cited in Daly 2017: 16). Notwithstanding the lack of mandate and the severe economic and political outcomes forecast for Northern Ireland in the studies above, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Arlene Foster has continued to insist since the referendum result that Northern Ireland will leave the EU.[13] For nationalists in particular, the

echo of a century ago is palpable—Partition, Mark 2—for having been separated from Southern Ireland in 1921, they may soon be taken out of the EU against their collective will. And there is another alarming historical parallel. Key to understanding British policy on Ireland a century ago, as Ronan Fanning (2013: 137) has pointed out, was that it developed under fragile minority and coalition governments, with pressure from leading unionists in the Cabinet. The troubled legacy of their resolution of the Irish question is still apparent. Consider therefore the potential legacy for Ireland of any Brexit solution brought about by a fragile minority Conservative government dependent on support from the DUP.

Concern about the EU referendum campaign was evident among the Irish abroad; the majority view apparently aligned with Ireland's interest in keeping the UK, and especially Northern Ireland, within the EU. Indeed, the support of the Irish diaspora in Britain was actively lobbied in the months leading up to the referendum when a campaign sponsored by European Movement Ireland encouraged them to vote to stay in the EU[14] and Taoiseach Enda Kenny even made an unofficial visit to attend Irish community events in London 3 weeks before the referendum.[15] Although the existence of the Common Travel Area between Britain and Ireland pre-dates the EU, there has been much concern among Irish migrants in Britain about being allowed to stay there and also among British-born Irish second and third generations about losing EU citizenship rights. According to figures from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), a significant increase in applications for Irish passports from British-born people took place in the year prior to the referendum, and a surge in applications immediately following the result caused the Irish government to issue a plea to cease the application panic.[16] Overall for 2016 there were increases of 42 percent and 27 percent, respectively, for Irish passport applications from the British-born and Northern Ireland-born, while figures for the first quarter of 2017 are up over the previous year's record numbers by 69 and 68 percent, respectively. In addition, Britons are increasingly applying for passports from other EU countries for which they have dual citizenship entitlement.[17]

Social media websites such as the *Irish Times Generation Emigration* and *Irish Central*, among others, have served as focal points for comments and reactions to Brexit from the global Irish diaspora, notably recording

initial expressions of shock and dismay at the referendum result and even fear among the Irish in Britain about increasing racist attacks.[18] Not surprisingly, much of the initial reaction to the outcome was negative, though ironically, Brexit may well prove a unifying factor among the Irish and Northern Irish abroad, especially for the young generation which favours EU membership. As one young emigrant from Northern Ireland wrote on the morning of the referendum result:

> Part of the reason I moved to London was to be part of a global talent hub, a place where you are judged on what you can do and not where you are from. A place where diversity is celebrated and encouraged, a city of the world, not just the UK. Or so I thought. Coming from the North [of Ireland], I've grown up seeing first hand how division can hold a society back. However, in recent times there has been a definite shift in mentality, certainly in my age group, and a greater sense of unity has emerged. The post-Troubles, uber-connected generation have grown up with a forward looking sense of perspective and ambition – illustrated perfectly by the spirit of both NI and ROI fans at this year's European Championships. This morning's result feels like a 30-year step backwards (Ciaran Crudden, age 27, *Irish Times Generation Emigration*).[19]

Colette Bryce, a writer and poet originally from Derry but now based in Newcastle, England, like many others expressed concern about the implications of Brexit for the peace process and the future of Ireland, writing in *The Irish Times* that,

> The Border, which has calmed so much in recent years, is likely to be reinflamed like a wound. For the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland our shared EU membership with the Republic has been one of the few *psychological consolations* since Partition. It has made it easier to live with a *fractured identity* (emphasis added).[20]

Emigrants and the diaspora in the dual contexts of Ireland, North and South, have always played an important role in the development of politics and society at home. While sometimes appearing to fuel the flames of conflict, they have also contributed significantly to the emergence of peace on the island (Cochrane et al. 2009; Devlin Trew 2010, 2013; Wilson 1995). Undoubtedly, they will want a say in the

development of the future of Ireland and Northern Ireland in this new era of Brexit negotiations.[21] How, for example, might diaspora engagement efforts, as evidenced by the Irish government's recent diaspora strategy (DFAT 2015b), factor into the development of potential new frameworks for North-South trade, cooperation and the pursuit of peace? Will Northern Ireland's emerging recognition of its own diaspora spur on the Executive to develop an official diaspora strategy, especially to avail of potential economic benefits likely to be even more crucial in the post-Brexit era? Indeed, neoliberal economic policies geared towards economic "rescue" of the state may dominate Irish diaspora engagement even more in a post-Brexit scenario and force key North-South constitutional issues onto the table rather sooner than might otherwise have been the case. This chapter sets the scene for this volume in view of these rather uncertain times for the island of Ireland and its diaspora by: firstly, providing a brief statistical profile of the Irish/Northern Irish diasporas; secondly, by consideration of the impact of the "diaspora turn" in governance internationally; thirdly, by tracing how diaspora engagement has been variously perceived and developed in the two Irish jurisdictions since Partition; and finally, in the context of an emerging care agenda, how North-South differences in diaspora relations manifested in the homecoming year of *The Gathering 2013*.

Profiling the Diaspora

It is estimated that approximately 10 million people left Ireland between 1607 and 2007 (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008: 293), most after 1820, and that as many as 70 million people worldwide (Irish-born and those of Irish ancestry) now claim Irish heritage. Between 1851 and 1920, the recording of overseas departures by the Board of Trade indicated that emigration from Ireland (largely to North America) numbered over 4.2 million individuals and the six counties that now comprise Northern Ireland accounted for just over 21 per cent of the total (900,754).[22] From Partition to the end of the twentieth century, another 2 million left Ireland: 1.5 million from the 26 counties and 500,000 from Northern

Ireland (Delaney 2002: 1). For both jurisdictions, the 1920s and the 1950s were high emigration decades, as was the 1970s for Northern Ireland primarily due to the conflict, and the 1980s for the Republic of Ireland (ROI) due to economic recession. The Celtic Tiger economy in the South saw a return to net immigration from 1996, including significant numbers of returnees,[23] while in the North net immigration took hold in 2004 due largely to the international inflow from new EU accession countries. Both Irish jurisdictions had returned to net emigration by 2009, however, with the impact of the economic downturn felt more severely in the ROI. From 2011 to 2016, some 495,700 emigrants left the ROI; of these 50 percent (247,200) comprised Irish nationals and unlike previous generations, there were more males leaving than females (CSO 2016). In the North, 21–25,000 people departed each year since 2010; however, both jurisdictions returned to net immigration—Northern Ireland in 2014 and the ROI in 2016—primarily due to international inflow, which for the ROI was especially strong from outside Europe (CSO 2016; NISRA 2016). According to the OECD in 2014, of 34 countries ranked, the ROI had the highest ratio of native-born people living abroad (17.5 percent) relative to its resident population, while the UK (at 6.8 percent) was in tenth position.[24] Figure 2.1 below provides estimates of Northern Irish/Ulster as well as British and Irish diasporas recently drawn from authoritative sources for the principal destination countries.

English-speaking countries have been the predominant destinations for Irish emigrants, North and South. Although the US was the single largest recipient of immigrants from the British Isles (62 percent) during the nineteenth century (Richards 2004: 4), after the First World War, British emigration turned towards empire destinations and Irish emigration, North and South, shifted towards Britain from 1930. While the UK and Australia have been the most popular destinations from 2011 to 2016 for emigrants from the ROI, statistical evidence indicates that one fifth are now relocating to a variety of lesser known destinations represented by the Rest of World category (see Fig. 2.2).[25] Qualitative information about Northern Ireland emigrants would suggest a similar trend.[26]

	British diaspora	Irish diaspora	NI diaspora
Britain	—	6 m (e)	1.55 m (Gen. 1-3) (f)
Canada	12.1 m (b,d)	4.3 m (b)	2.5 m "Ulster" (c) 847,000 (NI, Gen. 1-3)(g)
USA	33.2 m (h) 28.6 m (d)	34.7 m (h)	3.25 m "Scotch-Irish" (h)
Australia	7.9 m (d)	2 m(a)	540,000 (g)

Fig. 2.1 Whose diaspora? Consider some estimates (m = million) Sources: (a) Australia, Census 2011; Canada, Census 2006; (c) DETINI (2011); (d) Finch et al. (2010: 27); (e) Hickman et al. (2001: 13); (f) Devlin Trew (2013: 133); (g) Devlin Trew, calculation; (h) United States, Census Bureau, 2010. Categories will overlap to some extent.

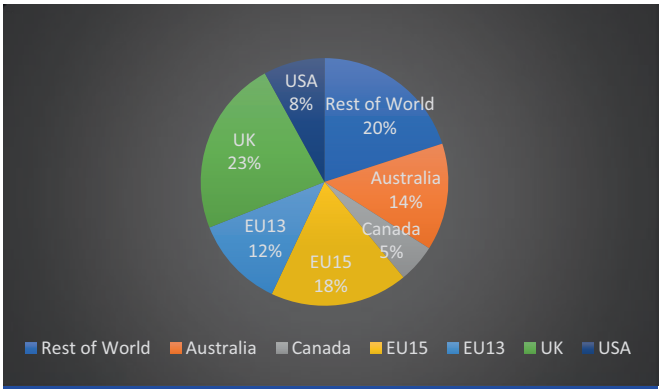

Fig. 2.2 Destinations for all emigrants leaving the ROI, 2011–2016 (CSO 2016)

Since Partition, emigrants from Ireland and Northern Ireland have become increasingly professionalised. While emigrant cohorts from the seventeenth to the first half of the twentieth century tended to be dominated by labourers and domestic workers, post-war decades saw the accelerating departures of young people with skilled trades and, by the 1980s, university students and graduates. For the most recent wave of emigration, the *Émigré* survey conducted by researchers at University College Cork found that Irish emigrants tended to be higher qualified than the resident population (which itself ranks highly among OECD countries) (Glynn et al. 2013: 34–5). From 2008 to 2013, 47 percent of emigrants surveyed were employed fulltime at the time of their departure though many were unsatisfied with their career prospects in Ireland: the almost 23 percent unemployed largely emigrated to find a job (Glynn et al. 2013: 39, 42, 46). Annual migration statistics for the ROI for the year ending in April 2016 indicate that over half of adult emigrants had a third-level qualification or higher and only one in ten was unemployed at the time of their departure (CSO 2016). In a recent survey of post-2008 emigrants conducted in May and June 2016 by Ipsos MRBI for *The Irish Times*, 79 percent reported that their quality of life abroad was better than when they had lived in Ireland. In addition, 70 percent said that they were happier since emigrating: 50 percent had been promoted at work, 19 percent had purchased a home, 16 percent had married, and 12 percent had had children.[27] These survey results are important for diaspora engagement policy, as satisfaction with the migration experience and a positive view of the homeland have been shown by recent research to indicate willingness among emigrants to contribute back to the homeland (Barnard and Pendock 2013: 59).[28] Northern Ireland remains a net loser of population to Britain, especially university students and graduates (NISRA 2015, 2016). The Department of Education statistics for 2014–15, for example, record that over 30 percent of Northern Ireland school leavers overall chose to attend higher education institutions in Great Britain (GB), but this was disproportionately higher for Protestants (37.3 percent) (DELNI 2016: 29), and studies over many years have noted the tendency of Northern Ireland graduates of GB universities to remain in Britain after graduation (Devlin Trew 2013: 98–9).

The Strategic "Diaspora Turn" of the Twenty-First Century

The development of state infrastructure and governance for diaspora engagement in Ireland has been part of a world-wide trend since the late 1990s towards recognition by sending states of their diaspora populations abroad (Delano and Gamlen 2014; Gamlen 2008, 2014).[29] Furthermore, the growth of diaspora governance, known as the "diaspora turn" (Agunias 2009), has been dramatic in recent years as a response to processes of globalisation, where increasingly "networked" states are regulated from the outside by global economic markets and information systems (Fitzgerald et al. 2006; Castells 2011, cited in Gray 2012). Countries around the world have been availing more and more of diaspora networks to help navigate this global system, such that in 2013, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) held the first ever global conference of diaspora ministers with over 500 delegates attending (Newland and Plaza 2013: 2). In 1970, less than ten states maintained an official diaspora institution (e.g. standing committee, advisory council, dedicated seats in the legislature); this had grown by the year 2000 to around 40 states, and to 110 of 193 United Nations member states by 2014, with 25 states providing full ministerial status (Gamlen 2014: s185; United Nations 2013: 87–89). The drive for state-diaspora engagement emerges from more recent optimistic views that envision migration as a "win-win" scenario for both homeland and host states, in contrast to older pessimistic notions of homeland decline and brain drain (Delano and Gamlen 2014: 44). Indeed, this pessimistic view underpins world-system theory (Wallerstein 1974), where capital and skills are seen to flow from less-developed states towards industrialised first-world economies. However, recent analysis has shown how the influence of "diaspora effects" (e.g. via emigrant remittances and investment, new skills and capital brought home by returnees and the diaspora's contribution to peace-building frameworks) may go some way towards rebalancing the world system in favour of poorer nations (de Lange 2013). Francesco Ragazzi (2014) has described the "diaspora turn" in state policy as a global shift towards neoliberal governmentality; that is, as more governments provide access to

citizenship rights abroad and national populations include the diaspora, new forms of "post-territorial citizenship" (2014: 87) are created and thus present a challenge to traditional Westphalian sovereignty by extending national governance beyond the borders of the nation-state. Diaspora policies then are developed as part of a self-regulating political-economic model that opens up trade and finance "to transnational networks not bound to a territorialized conception of economic development" (2014: 86). Thus, a diaspora strategy is a neoliberal project of the state, as Larner (2007: 334) describes, in which members of the diaspora become "entrepreneurial, globally networked, subjects [which] create new possibilities for economic growth." Diaspora engagement then is a form of "global gerrymandering" as states avail of their diasporas to assist with the project of "neoliberal restructuring" (Gamlen 2013: 240).

Diasporas contribute to home countries in several ways: individual and collective remittances; donations; investment; sharing knowledge and stimulating innovation, often through homeland/diaspora partnerships; and contributing to institutional and policy development, including social and political reform (Kuznetsov 2012). Gamlen (2008) has described three overlapping stages of diaspora engagement: firstly, the diaspora building stage, which includes constitutional recognition of the diaspora, collecting statistics and commissioning reports about the diaspora, encouraging diaspora networks and creating formal bureaucratic structures such as the Irish Abroad Unit. Stage two, diaspora integration, involves the extension of citizenship rights (e.g. dual citizenship), political rights such as voting abroad, provision of consular services (passports, legal representation), enhancing the portability of social benefits (e.g. indexing of pensions); the offer of special identity cards or certificates, such as the Certificate of Irish heritage which was available from 2011, but cancelled in 2015 due to lack of interest.[30] Stage three, extracting diaspora benefits, involves setting up a remittances infrastructure and/or diaspora business networks; the option of developing targeted financial products, such as De Valera's "diaspora bonds" of the early 1920s (Lainer-Vos 2012); involving influential members of the diaspora as political lobbyists abroad, often to influence change at home (e.g. Northern Ireland peace process); and extracting emigrant skills and research, sometimes via academic, science and technology returnee programmes, as in Israel

(Cohen 2016). Of note is an important "diaspora effect" that has been found among academics who form "knowledge bridges" (Larner 2015: 202) by having a strong tendency to work and co-author disproportionately with others of the same background, even over long distances. This has important implications for diaspora networks in an increasingly competitive market among knowledge economies.

In the increasing drive to compete globally for the skilled migrants required for growing knowledge economies, many diaspora engagement strategies now specifically target elite expatriate nationals to return home. State-assisted return programmes (SARPs) have been introduced by several countries into their diaspora engagement strategies to attract leading academics and business people, especially those in the science and technology sphere. Israel, for example, which extends the right of abode to the Jewish diaspora has, since the recent economic downturn, even set up SARPs funded under a partnership with the private sector that employs measures such as pay-to-go schemes, wage incentive packages and other means of practical assistance to attract highly skilled expatriates (Cohen 2016). Return migration from the diaspora has thus become part of the state's neoliberal economic armoury. Conversely, many host societies (e.g. Canada, USA) have in recent years implemented fast-track naturalisation programmes to retain foreign postgraduate students and skilled workers, especially in the science and technology sectors.

Diasporas are also important to host states. There is evidence to show, for example, that there are "strong links between the presence of a diaspora and increased trade" (Newland and Plaza 2013: 4). In addition, a recent study of migration flows from 195 countries to 30 OECD countries, 1990–2000, reported that the relative size and position of a diaspora in a host country had the strongest effect on immigrant selection and that even accounting for variables such as distance, colonial links and linguistic proximity, "71% of the observed variability of the migration flows can be explained by diaspora effects" (Beine et al. 2011: 40). These findings are potentially very important for migration policy development as they indicate that established migration networks or pathways (e.g. the movement of nineteenth-century Irish emigrants to American cities) most influence subsequent immigration trends, despite host country point-system immigrant selection policies based on education and skills.

However, there is a divide in diaspora policy around the world between governments that think of the diaspora as a potential asset and those which think of it as a potential threat (Lum et al. 2013; Newland and Plaza 2013). Indeed, the role of diaspora engagement in divided former states, those undergoing conflict or in fragile post-conflict societies, has a small but growing research literature (e.g. Bosnia Herzegovina, Cyprus, former Soviet Republics, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, etc.). Diaspora governance may serve to legitimise unstable and/or relatively new states as well as lobby for the rights of stateless populations (e.g. Armenians, Palestinians). Although diasporas may play an important role in brokering peace processes, there are many examples where diaspora engagement has failed to effect positive change. A particular challenge occurs when the diaspora is heterogeneous, as in the Irish case, and the divisions, whether religious, ethnic or political, remain unresolved. For if, as noted above, state sovereignty is extended or legitimised by means of a claim on the diaspora, the question of "whose diaspora" becomes vitally important. Indeed, formal diaspora engagement first requires documentation of the diaspora and this may be interpreted with suspicion in the diaspora as surveillance by a contested regime. In the event of ongoing intractable conflict as in the Palestinian case, diaspora spaces (Brah 1996) abroad will most likely not be shared and diasporans who dominate numerically (or represent the elites) may control organised activities, community spaces and political influence; thus a form of "double exclusion" may exist for those who do not share the same political goals (Mavroudi 2008: 69).

Successful engagement and positive impact on homeland conflict may depend on the position of the diaspora, whether it is contiguous or "near", as with Russians living in former Soviet bloc states, or "distant" (across the world) as in the case of the Sri Lankan diaspora: in any event the level of engagement may not be easily discernible, taking place at the subnational or familial levels (Van Hear and Cohen 2017). Even a large, well-established and relatively wealthy diaspora, such as the Lebanese, has not been able to effect change in the sectarian nature of homeland politics because the partisanship at home is mirrored in the diaspora (Skulte-Ouaiss and Tabar 2015). There is thus the tension within a conflicted diaspora between constructing a unified powerbase and coping with the inevitable

disunities that arise (Mavroudi 2008). Similarly, Maria Koinova's research (2009: 60) has shown that diaspora engagement with democratisation processes in the post-communist world has not necessarily advanced the liberal aspects of democracy but in several cases (Albania, Armenia, Serbia) has continued to support ethno-national debates in the homeland along exclusively nationalist lines. States emerging from conflict may also engage with hostile, ambivalent or "reluctant" diasporas (Devlin Trew 2010) by organising homecoming campaigns. For example, Rwanda's "Come and See" homecoming campaign in 2010 was a media spectacle which "staged" national unity for a domestic and international audience and also took on the role of disarming the external threat of disaffected diasporans by attempting to transform them into "positive" citizens. The homecoming media spectacle depicted returnees from hostile segments of the diaspora being welcomed back to Rwanda: thus, by publicly performing its power of inclusion the state co-opted the diaspora to heighten its sovereignty or the "stateness of the state" (Turner 2013: 279). This international discourse on the relationship of diaspora engagement, sovereignty and conflict has important lessons for Ireland.

Diaspora Engagement in Ireland to 2000

"Whose diaspora, whose migration, whose identity?" (Mac Éinrí and Lambkin 2002) remain uncomfortable questions in Brexit-era Ireland. Certainly, the concept of the "diaspora" in the Irish context is now well established, although it has in recent years been rehabilitated from "victim" diaspora (Cohen 1997) to the *Global Irish* neoliberal economic project of the Irish government, as evidenced by initiatives such as the Global Irish Economic Fora (2009–2015). Nevertheless, rather stubborn images endure of eighteenth-century departures from Ulster to Colonial America of the "Scots-Irish" and large numbers of departing famine emigrants, mostly Catholics, to the USA. This generally ignores the complexities of Irish migration, especially the continuing outflow of Protestants during and after the famine, well through the twentieth century and now into the twenty first, especially to Britain, Canada and places further afield (though see recent work by Sherling 2015).[31] Thus, two distinct essential-

ist and mythological narratives of diaspora have developed in Ireland which are evident to the present day in the divided nature of relations with the diaspora: the general lack of agreement North and South about the terminology of diaspora and its definition (i.e. who is included or excluded), the sketchiness of the numbers, and the lack of cooperation on homecoming campaigns such as *The Gathering 2013*. Indeed, a recent report commissioned by the Irish government further divides the discourse of diaspora suggesting the need for "bridging the historical *and* contemporary understanding of diaspora in a global context," noting that, "the definition of diaspora continues to be an evolving scholarly discussion with deep historical rooting. Contemporary scholarly and policy foci have shifted towards understanding diaspora in an operational framework" (Kennedy et al. 2014: 8). In trying to bridge the apparently dissonant narratives of "emigration as exile" and the "globalised mobility" of the present, Gray (2013b: 118) has suggested that the Irish government has systematically employed "operational" mechanisms (e.g. heritage certificates, homecoming campaigns) to "link an emigrant past and diaspora present."

It is evident that civil servants and academics have not always been comfortable with the term diaspora in the Irish context since it came into general use in the 1990s. For example, in key Irish government policy, reference to the "overseas Irish" (Emigrant Advisory Committee 1969), "the Irish abroad" (Task Force on Emigrants 2002) or "people of Irish ancestry living abroad" (Ireland, Constitution, article 2) have been employed as terminological alternatives (Daly 2006). The *Belfast Telegraph* editorial headline, "Hopes for Ulster diaspora" (21 April 1998), written in relation to the Good Friday Agreement, is apparently the earliest use in print of the term in regard to Northern Ireland and only since 2005 has it infrequently appeared in academic literature on the North (Devlin Trew 2013: 10, 226). Recently, David Lloyd (2013) has warned that "emigration recast as diaspora" actually risks diminishing or even erasing the traumatic essence of emigration history; that it is a disavowal by Irish elites of the history of colonialism which if properly acknowledged might form the basis of an alternative egalitarian politics. In neighbouring Britain, with its own long history of emigration, the focus on Empire-Commonwealth and the peopling of this greater British world amounted

to a "denial of diaspora" (Constantine 2003: 22); thus, the term is rarely used in literature on British emigration and only recently appeared in the title of a report on the "British diaspora" (Finch et al. 2010) and in an article in *The Economist* (2014).[32]

It is perhaps due to the shame of high emigration which followed Partition and continued subsequently through several decades of the twentieth century (and now arguably into the twenty-first)—an indicator of two failing states in Ireland—that may account for governments North and South appearing rather reluctant to take on responsibility for emigrants. Indeed, Breda Gray has noted that the nationalist vision of an independent Ireland was of a state "free of emigration" (2013b: 103). Although state efforts to deal with emigration can be seen in the work of the 1950s Commission on Emigration and some further attention during the 1970s by the COWSA and later DION (est. 1984) committees[33] to assist young emigrants in Britain, other efforts to support emigrants were largely initiated in the diaspora (e.g. Donnelly and Morrison programmes) or left to the Catholic Church until the twenty-first century.[34] Indeed it was a report commissioned by the Irish Episcopal Commission on Emigrants (Harvey 1999), recommending a task force on emigration, that set the stage for a new era of state-diaspora engagement (Gray 2013b; Glynn et al. 2015).

In Northern Ireland over the twentieth century, significant population loss due to emigration occasioned little explicit attention from politicians, government officials or social commentators. This was rather surprising, since the loss of half a million mostly young people through emigration from 1921 to 2001 in a population over the same period of only between 1.2 and 1.7 million should have been significant enough to warrant concern. But even though the issue of emigration was raised several times in Northern Ireland parliamentary debates during the 1920s, most often by Joe Devlin, and later upon release of the 1961 census figures which revealed the high emigration of the 1950s, Northern Ireland administrations never undertook any significant measures concerning ordinary emigrants and their welfare (Devlin Trew 2013: 43–7). However, there was some emerging awareness during the 1950s and 1960s at the most senior levels of the Northern Ireland government of

the potential of emigrants abroad, or more precisely, of Protestant emigrants—the Scots-Irish diaspora in the USA and the Ulster unionist diaspora in Canada—as a source not only for tourism income but for funding nation-building at home (Ollerenshaw 1996). Inspired by the vision of a national culture espoused by leading intellectuals such as Estyn Evans that was based on "a blending of native and settler characteristics in Ulster" (Loughlin 2016: 239), Northern politicians and civil servants set about the creation of heritage and tourism institutions and organisations, many of which were marketed at the diaspora.[35] For example, the Ulster-Scot Historical Society[36] was established in 1956 at the behest of the Prime Minister, Basil Brooke, Lord Brookeborough, to encourage links with the influential Ulster-American diaspora (UHF 2007), and senior civil servants such as Eric Montgomery were instrumental in courting wealthy and influential Ulster-Americans, like the Pittsburgh-based Mellon family who Montgomery persuaded to first finance the development of the Mellon's ancestral County Tyrone homestead as a National Trust property (opened 1968) and subsequently, the development of the Ulster American Folk Park (opened 1976) on adjacent land (Montgomery 1991). However, this fantasy of a modern liberal Northern Ireland could not prevail against the ugly reality of sectarianism on the ground that was publicly confirmed by the Cameron Commission report (1969). The outbreak of violent conflict in 1969 and the imposition of direct rule a few years later (1972) ended any hope of stemming the increasing outflow of population or seeking formal engagement with the diaspora, which by this stage was as polarised as the resident population of Northern Ireland and viewed with great suspicion (especially the role of Republican organisations abroad such as NORAID in the USA and the Troops Out Movement in Britain) (Wilson 1995; Renwick 2016). It was no doubt the influence of the International Fund for Ireland (established in 1986, much of its funding coming from the USA) and its emphasis on supporting peace-building through cross-community development initiatives, which created the atmosphere by the early 1990s for the Irish and Scots-Irish/unionist diasporas to become more visibly involved in the peace process (Cochrane et al. 2009; Devlin Trew 2013).

The Strategic "Diaspora Turn" in Ireland

The recommendations of the *Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants* (2002) initiated a new era of state-diaspora engagement in the Republic of Ireland (ROI), with the establishment of the Irish Abroad Unit in 2004 within the Department of Foreign Affairs and soon after, the launch of the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) to provide funding for emigrant welfare services, and cultural and sporting activities. Since 2004, over €135 million has been disbursed by the ESP to fund over 400 organisations in 26 countries to assist Irish emigrants; over €83 million has been destined for organisations in Britain where the aging Irish population has presented a particular need (see Murray, this volume).[37] The ESP has continued in spite of the economic downturn in 2008; in October 2015, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan, announced ESP funding of €11.6 million for 2016.[38]

However, the 2008 economic downturn nevertheless signalled a shift away from the focus on emigrant welfare towards strategic engagement of the diaspora for economic rescue of the state (Gray 2013b). To this end, the first Global Irish Economic Forum (GIEF) was held at Farmleigh in September 2009 (DFAT 2009) and its most significant outcome was the formation of the Global Irish Network (GIN) early in 2010, which currently comprises "over 350 of the most senior Irish and Irish connected business people based in some 40 countries."[39] Three other economic fora have been held since: in October 2011, when the proposal for *The Gathering* was launched; in October 2013 towards the end of *The Gathering* year; and the most recent in November 2015. The focus of GIEF events and activities has been aimed at developing connections with both the kin diaspora (Irish nationals/descendants) and the affinity diaspora[40] (non-nationals with an interest in Ireland) (Agunias 2009; Ancien et al. 2009) in order to: strengthen Ireland's reputation abroad; develop global business, technology and trade relations; develop the financial services sector; tackle youth unemployment and job creation; and engage with alumni of Irish third-level institutions and move towards the internationalisation of education and research.[41] In his opening words to the 2015 GIEF, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan, made the principal goal of current diaspora engagement clear, stating that, "in this modern globalised

world, the reach, power and influence of so many members of the Irish Diaspora can provide Ireland with an important competitive edge."[42] In addition to the GIEF and influence of the GIN, the Irish state has continued to develop its diaspora engagement infrastructure with significant milestones: the appointment in July 2014 of the first Minister of State for the Diaspora, Jimmy Deenihan (replaced in May 2016 by Joe McHugh and in June 2017 by Ciarán Cannon); the publication of the first official state-diaspora policy, *Global Irish*, in March 2015 (DFAT 2015b); and the appointment to the Seanad in June 2016 of Galway-born Billy Lawless from Chicago as the first overseas senator representing the diaspora.[43]

It has been suggested that devolution facilitated the diaspora engagement that was integral to the agenda of the newly formed Welsh Assembly (1999) and in 2007, to the newly elected government of the Scottish National Party (SNP), leading to year-long homecoming festivals in each jurisdiction in 2000 and 2009, respectively (Morgan et al. 2002; Morrison and Hay 2010; Sim 2012; Sim and Leith 2013). In Scotland, a state-diaspora engagement strategy was also developed (Scottish Government 2010b). Devolution was likely also an important factor in Northern Ireland's burgeoning interest in its diaspora since the economic downturn. Inspired by the Global Scot initiative, and Ireland's Global Irish Network, the Northern Ireland Diaspora Working Group was formed in 2010, chaired by Roy Adair, CEO of the Belfast Harbour Commission, with representatives of identified stakeholders who "were aware that NI Inc. has been uncoordinated and perhaps dysfunctional in its efforts to date" (Finlay 2011: 39).[44] They commissioned a pilot research study in 2010–2011 (directed by Mark Finlay), during the course of which several networking events were organised abroad with the aim of attracting people either from Northern Ireland or with some affinity to Northern Ireland (university graduates, people who had worked previously in Northern Ireland, etc.). Approximately 1000 people were contacted via such events, informal gatherings, formal consultations and social media to obtain their feedback about the potential benefits of diaspora engagement for Northern Ireland. The establishment of an "internal delivery organisation" (Finlay 2011: 16) was then recommended for funding for an initial 3-year period and branding for the new organisation was undertaken.[45] While the pilot study had avoided discussion of political

disagreements about the future of Northern Ireland, it did refer to the problematic nature of nomenclature (i.e. that some people insist on referring to "the North" and others refuse to be labelled "Irish"). It acknowledged that the partition of Ireland was not well understood in other countries, such as the USA, and that in any event, "a considerable proportion of the later day descendants of the original Diaspora is the product of seed sown before the partition of the island" (Finlay 2011: 42). The study also recognised the particular challenge of "the Northern Irish and Scots Irish tendency towards invisibility, through assimilation in GB and US markets" (Finlay 2011: 51).

Thus, Northern Irish (NI) Connections was established in 2013 within Invest NI, the government's business development agency, and with an advisory council comprised of representatives of the original stakeholders along with others representing major tourism attractions in Northern Ireland such as Titanic Belfast (Northern Irish Connections 2014). It is significant that it engaged Andrew Cowan, former marketing executive of *The Gathering,* as its Director in 2014. Describing itself as "the established network for 150,000 friends of Northern Ireland globally,"[46] the new agency seeks to integrate the efforts of its stakeholders, many of whom have already had considerable involvement with the kin diaspora and "affinity" networks, together with the development of new diaspora engagement initiatives. NI Connections conceives of the diaspora in three categories: (1) "cultural," which it defines as second, third and older generations all descended from original emigrants for which heritage tourism is likely the main connector; (2) "strategic," first- and second-generation emigrants that are in influential positions abroad—"corporate émigrés"—where they have spending and decision-making powers; and (3) "recent diaspora/future strategic"—the annual outflow of recent third-level graduates, some of whom may also be "corporate émigrés" (Finlay 2011: 48).

Cognisant that recent cohorts of emigrants have generally been highly educated and skilled and therefore of great value to the state, governments in Ireland, North and South, have recently taken measures to encourage their return. An MRBI poll of recent Irish emigrants reported in 2012 a high intention to return (72 percent) (Gray 2013a: 30) and the *Emigré* survey found that although almost 40 percent of their respondents stated

a desire to return, only 22 percent thought that it was likely in the shorter term and furthermore, the longer the time abroad, the less the likelihood of return (Glynn et al. 2013: 101–102). In June 2015, government officials announced the launch of the Global Irish Hub, an online consular portal, and Connect Ireland, a business start-up or relocation incentive programme.[47] Working through its diaspora engagement networks, the Irish government also set a goal of attracting 70,000 emigrants back to Ireland by 2020 and created the *#Home to work* social media and poster campaign over Christmas 2015. However, the Minister of State for the Diaspora, Joe McHugh, remarked that there was a need to be "more targeted" in attracting expatriates back home as there may not be enough jobs for all emigrants who might wish to return.[48]

In Northern Ireland, it was estimated that skills shortages in 2015 caused 19 percent of vacancies in higher-skilled jobs and it is anticipated that by 2020, over half the local workforce will require advanced-level skills. To this end, the firm Cpl spearheaded a diaspora recruitment campaign in 2014–2015, working with NI Connections and the Global Irish Network, managing to attract 1000 returnees back to Ireland, North and South.[49] Although not a formal State-Assisted Return Programme (SARP), it is nonetheless an important example of the state-diaspora partnership with the private sector engaged to deliver targeted skilled returnees. But there are also efforts to deter elite workers from departing at all. In June 2016, an appeal on the 4C Executive Search firm's website referring to the recent spate of arrivals of multinational companies in Northern Ireland (mostly in greater Belfast), noted that "exciting opportunities now exist on our doorstep and relocation is no longer a necessity to gain that experience in a global firm."[50] How Brexit will affect the economy and potential return of the diaspora to Northern Ireland remains to be seen.

Diaspora Engagement: A Care Agenda?

While the emphasis of diaspora engagement in Ireland shifted from emigrant welfare to economic rescue at the time of the economic downturn, progress towards a state-diaspora strategy continued to develop, not only

along infrastructural terms. Input from Irish diaspora organisations around the world continued to create awareness of the difficulties of emigration in human terms, especially with regard to mental health.[51] Perhaps the most influential effort in this regard was the survey research conducted with 500 emigrants who left Ireland from 2009 to 2014 by the Crosscare Migrant Project, which launched the *Mind how you go* report and website in March 2015[52]—the same month as the government launched its diaspora strategy. A few months later, in June 2015, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in collaboration with the Clinton Institute of University College Dublin, hosted the first Global Irish Civic Forum, which was attended by over 200 delegates from 17 countries, representing 140 organisations (DFAT 2015a: 1). A second Civic Forum took place in May 2017. The 2015 event, which coincided with emerging economic recovery, marked another stage in Ireland's diaspora engagement—setting a care agenda—and was described as "a valuable space in which government and diaspora representatives could enjoin open and robust discussion about many of the matters that entail the health and sustainability of state/diaspora relations" (ibid.: 3).

Key to the care agenda is the recognition that issues concerning emigrants and the diaspora parallel larger philosophical debates about welfare; specifically, the intersection of informal, voluntary and state sectors in the care agenda (Offer 1999). Ho et al. (2015) have recently made the case for a more progressive generation of diaspora engagement strategies that need to be framed within an ethics of care. Unlike the predominantly economic models of engagement in which the homeland exploits the diaspora for utilitarian goals that may be financial, political or knowledge/skills oriented (Kuznetsov 2012), state-diaspora relations need to be sustained within a care agenda where the dialogue is in both directions: from homeland to diaspora as well as from diaspora to homeland. Boyle and Kavanagh (this volume) note that the Irish government's diaspora strategy already demonstrates the understanding that "the diaspora is both an asset and a responsibility" and that for the relationships to endure they must be built on respect, mutuality and reciprocity. To this end, an important recent initiative, The Global Irish Media Fund, has been established within the DFAT to support journalists and media professionals to

tell the stories of Irish experience around the world, including the "successes and challenges," and "the impact of emigration on those at home."[53]

However, the deficiency of care is still evident in the need for the removal of practical social barriers for returning emigrants, such as access to welfare benefits, and in the lack of voting franchise for emigrants; aspects of state-diaspora relations that were central to discussions at the Global Irish Civic Fora. While the ROI does not currently permit external voting rights to its non-resident citizens, in March 2017 the Taoiseach announced that there would be a referendum on external voting in presidential elections which would also extend to Irish citizens of Northern Ireland (DFAT 2017).[54] With the voting abroad issue still unresolved in time for the May 2015 Marriage Equality Referendum, emigrants themselves took action via a social media campaign *#Home to vote* (Get the boat 2 vote) organised by the Yes campaign to mobilise significant numbers of the recent cohort of young emigrants to return to Ireland in order cast their votes or, if that wasn't possible, to lobby their family and friends in Ireland to vote yes (Murphy 2016: 321; Mackle, this volume). Perhaps following the effect of their activism in the Marriage Equality Referendum, the diaspora became involved in the recent abortion debate with the postcard campaign *#Post4Repeal* to Enda Kenny demanding a referendum on repealing the 8th Amendment of the Constitution, which essentially denies the right to abortions in Ireland.[55] One of the earliest signs of the emerging care agenda in state-diaspora relations was evident in the organisation of the homecoming year known as *The Gathering 2013*. Significantly, however, *The Gathering* also made plain how North/South cooperation diverged on diaspora engagement.

The Gathering 2013

The proposal for the year-long festival entitled *The Gathering 2013* was launched at the Global Irish Economic Forum (GIEF) in 2011, taking inspiration from successful initiatives in Wales ("Homecoming 2000—Hiraeth 2000") and in Scotland (Homecoming 2009), both of which had resulted in increased visitor numbers, tourism revenue and strength-

ened links with their respective diasporas (Bhandari 2016; Morgan et al. 2002; Morrison and Hay 2010; Riddington 2010; Scottish Government 2010a; Sim 2012; Sim and Leith 2013).[56] *The Gathering* had a precursor in *An Tóstal*, a cultural festival of the 1950s that took place in local communities around Ireland, a key aspect of which was to attract tourists from the Irish diaspora.[57] Said to be inspired by the 1951 Festival of Britain, *An Tóstal* was held over 3 weeks in April or May from 1953 to 1958, though the town of Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim, has continued to celebrate *An Tóstal* every year since. The festival included parades, sporting and beauty contests and film and theatre festivals, some of which continue to the present day.[58] The Rose of Tralee festival, which was inaugurated in 1959, is said to have been inspired by *An Tóstal*.

Although *The Gathering* was conceived as a means of increasing tourism and was harshly criticised initially as a plan to rip off the diaspora yet again,[59] others have argued that it conveniently switched the media focus away from the 50,000 emigrants who departed from the Republic of Ireland that year (O'Leary and Negra 2016). However, *The Gathering* campaign was not entirely underpinned by economic goals. Notions of mutuality and responsibility towards the diaspora were evident in an emerging care agenda, as in *The Gathering*'s espousal of diaspora engagement through "reverse genealogy"; a concept pioneered by the *Ireland Reaching Out* (Ireland XO) online genealogy web platform (est. 2009).[60] Organised at the parish level inclusive of all 32 counties, "reverse genealogy" involves employing genealogical research methods in the home community to reach out to the local community diaspora abroad, rather than waiting for descendants from the area to make contact. Through the Ireland XO parish network, 76 "Weeks of Welcome" were organised as part of *The Gathering* festivities (Miley 2013: 26). Speaking at the GIEF in October 2013 on a panel assembled to review the success of the festival, which included Leo Varadkar, then Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Caroilin Callery of Strokestown Park, The National Famine Museum in Co. Roscommon, remarked on the important connections that had been forged with groups in Canada and the USA during the Strokestown "Week of Welcome," saying, "I would call it The Awakening, and I don't think it's *The Gathering* year to me because I know what started in Strokestown is going to continue on over the next number of

years."[61] Overall, *The Gathering 2013* was rated highly by the Irish public and visitors alike; an MRBI poll suggested that Ireland's overseas profile had been raised by at least 64 percent and that locally organised events had had a highly positive impact (71–77 percent) in the community (Miley 2013: 44, 18). *The Gathering* was also an economic success: with a budget of approximately €13 million, the festival attracted additional visitor numbers of between 250,000 and 275,000 to over 5000 events and generated an estimated revenue of €170 million (Miley 2013: 9, 51).[62]

In view of the perceived success of *The Gathering*, it is perhaps not surprising that there was criticism of the Northern Ireland Executive about its lack of support for joining in the year-long celebration. The Executive had decided to promote a Northern Ireland homecoming-style campaign, *Our Place Our Time,*[63] in 2012 which coincided with the Titanic centenary and that of the Ulster Covenant. Although a Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) motion in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 30 April 2012 to support *The Gathering* in principle was narrowly carried,[64] Arlene Foster, then the Minister responsible for Tourism, complained about the lack of consultation, saying that she had been informed of *The Gathering* only 1 day prior to its launch at the GIEF in October 2011.[65] But it was the tone of the Assembly debate which annoyed many in the chamber, especially that several pro-union MLAs insisted that the motion had political intent, which Sydney Anderson, DUP MLA described as "a one-sided green agenda."[66] Those in favour of the motion argued that in view of the poor economic conditions, *The Gathering* would provide benefits for all people on the island, especially those working in tourism. DUP MLA Stephen Moutray's derisory objection to the motion emphasised Ireland's old monocultural image—an Irish, Catholic, green island homeland—not inclusive of Protestant unionist identities (Hickman 2007):

> Next year's Irish Homecoming will be hugely sentimental and very Irish in a way that I, for one, cannot and will not really identify with. It is a sort of Mother Ireland concept, which conjures up images of leprechauns, shillelaghs, pints of Guinness, donkeys, [derisive laughter] dancing at the crossroads, thatched cottages. … We must concentrate on marketing our own distinct Northern Ireland image. That has got to be our priority and we have plenty of work to do and plenty of opportunities to seize … This is

> indeed Our Time, Our Place [sic] … Plans are also well advanced for the celebration of Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and like many others, I look forward to the Orange demonstration that will be held here at the end of September.[67]

Moutray's words and the tone of the debate were a reminder of the uneasiness that exists in the North about the discourse of diaspora emanating from south of the border. In spite of progress in recent years towards a more inclusive definition of the Irish diaspora (see Lambkin, this volume), the lack of resolution of the contested space of Northern Ireland—an old wound now "re-inflamed" due to the Brexit crisis—sustains old divisive boundaries of unionist and nationalist within diaspora discourse. In spite of local communities organising some 116 *Gathering* events in Northern Ireland (Miley 2013: 19), there was deplorably little cooperation evident at official level, especially from the Northern Ireland Executive, for a homecoming year which could have benefitted the entire population of the island.

Conclusion: Sovereignty, Brexit and Diaspora Engagement

Clearly, the Republic of Ireland is much further along the path of diaspora engagement than Northern Ireland. Having faced criticism that its interest in the diaspora was purely for cynical economic benefit, the Irish government is now in the process of implementing a care agenda in its dealings with the diaspora, though this is still in its infancy and it remains to be seen whether demands from diaspora organisations, for example, for full voting rights, will be addressed. Northern Ireland's fledgling agency, NI Connections, based within Invest NI, nurtures primarily the aspiration that "harnessing the economic potential of the diaspora equals jobs for local residents", although its director, Andrew Cowan, insists that "the [diaspora] programme needs to be anchored in a policy or strategy that is globally focussed."[68] A diaspora strategy for Northern Ireland may be more difficult to achieve since, as a devolved jurisdiction of the UK, it is quite limited in terms of what it can offer its diaspora. For example, Northern

Ireland cannot provide consular services or access to citizenship; it cannot mediate the indexing of pensions as this is subject to the UK's agreements with individual countries; and as welfare reform has recently been imposed by the Westminster government, it is unlikely that Northern Ireland will have the freedom to remove barriers to benefits access for returning members of the diaspora. However, Northern Ireland could and should permit overseas voting rights by post as that is currently available in the rest of the UK for Westminster and European elections (pre-Brexit) and it should also consider extending the voting franchise to include Assembly elections.

How diaspora engagement relates to issues of sovereignty in Ireland, North and South has remained "below the radar." Irish emigrant welfare and organisations abroad, whether in the past run by the Catholic church or more recently, funded by the Irish state, have tended to take a generous and inclusive approach towards the "whose diaspora" question and have not turned away emigrants from Northern Ireland, Catholic or Protestant, who wish to avail of their services (see discussion in Devlin Trew 2013: 120). At the same time, the North's lack of recognition of, or responsibility for, its own diaspora has fed into this ethos. The Irish government has welcomed Northerners as members of the Global Irish Network and other offshoot networks which likewise do not discriminate, for example, the Irish Technology Leadership Group (est. 2007), which promotes technology connections between Silicon Valley and Ireland, or the Wild Geese Network of Irish Scientists (est. 2011) in Washington, D.C.[69] It is also the case that the GIEF has held pre-conference regional meetings in Belfast (in 2013) at the Invest NI headquarters, sponsored by InterTrade Ireland, and in Derry (in 2015), in partnership with NI Connections, the Northern Ireland Science Park, the district councils of Derry, Strabane and Donegal and the Letterkenny Institute of Technology. On the other hand, NI Connections has recently featured ("claimed") Monaghan "Ulster" boxer Barry McGuigan in its magazine.[70] But if a state's claim on its diaspora is a means of extending its governance beyond territorial boundaries (Ragazzi 2014), does the Irish government's claim on the diaspora have extra-territorial implications? Gray (2013b: 119) suggests that in spite of the territorial reconfiguration that such a claim might imply, the "territorial nation-state holds politically." For now. But could Northern Ireland's emerging recognition of its own diaspora in the event

that the Executive develops a formal strategy perhaps motivated by Brexit be a means of establishing its own legitimacy and a claim to sovereignty?

Meanwhile, having triggered Article 50 and held a general election, the minority Conservative Government in Britain continues to steer the country towards a "hard Brexit" out of both the EU single market and the customs union, despite their White Paper promise "to find a practical solution that keeps the [Irish] border as seamless and frictionless as possible" (HM Government 2017: 75).[71] This appears rather fanciful in the view of commentators who point out that "discussions about a digital customs frontier … seem somewhat detached from reality" (Mac Flynn 2016: 23). While Sinn Féin continues to argue for "special status" post-Brexit for Northern Ireland within the EU (Sinn Féin 2016: 4), there are other signs of Brexit-motivated change and protest. The emergence around the centenary commemorations of the Easter Rising of a new "revolutionary" Republican political party, Saoradh (officially launched in September 2016) is noteworthy; its stated aim to address "the failures of successive ventures into constitutional nationalism" and empower "the Irish people in the struggle to regain our sovereignty."[72] Only a few weeks after the referendum, on the occasion of the symbolically potent commemoration at the Bodenstown graveside of United Irishman Theobald Wolfe Tone, former Republican prisoner Davy Jordan (now Saoradh National Chairperson), noted in his speech that the Brexit vote had "handed Republicans 'a unique opportunity.'"[73] Growing concern about the reimposition of a "hard" national boundary led to the establishment in September 2016 of the group Border Communities Against Brexit, which has staged "go slow" protests at major border crossings to remind the population of how things used to be during the Troubles.[74] They have also erected black and yellow signs on border roads warning, "If there is a hard border this road may be closed from March 2019." Concern about the border escalated sharply in February 2017 when it became apparent that the Irish government had already begun identifying locations along the border for the erection of customs checkpoints.[75] The same evening that the checkpoints story appeared in the media, Colum Eastwood of the SDLP chillingly reminded the audience during the live televised leaders' debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly election campaign that Brexit was "the most dangerous

issue for Northern Ireland since Partition."[76] So will Brexit bring opportunity or catastrophe to Ireland, North and/or South? Does "Brexit at any price" come, as Peter Hain, former Northern Ireland Secretary, has suggested, "at a dangerously high cost for the Northern Ireland peace process"[77] or is it more likely that due to Brexit, "[Irish] unity will come wearing the clothes of 'partnership'" (Meagher 2016: 219)?[78] Could this offer, in poet Colette Bryce's words at the beginning of this chapter, some "psychological consolations" that might alleviate "fractured" identities at home and in the diaspora? Clearly, resolve and cooperation far beyond the level required for the organisation of a homecoming festival such as *The Gathering* will be needed to meet the coming challenges of demographic and Brexit-induced change in Ireland and to this end, as with the example of the peace process, Ireland [North and South] would do well to "engage in a deeper way with its diaspora."[79]

Notes

1. "EU referendum: Cameron sets June date for UK vote", *BBC News*, 20 Feb. 2016. Due to considerations of space, web addresses for news media sources have not been included here as they can be easily located on the internet.
2. The negotiations were led by Joe Devlin, the popular journalist and politician, and the Convention vote divided Nationalists.
3. Exactly two years prior to that event, on 23 June 1914, an amending bill introduced in the House of Lords had provided for indefinite exclusion of the entire province of Ulster from Home Rule, a proposal said to have been acceptable to Carson, but which Nationalist leaders would not concede and with the outbreak of the First World War negotiations were shelved (Hepburn 2008: 152).
4. The vote for Leave = UK (51.9 percent), England (53.4 percent), Northern Ireland (44.2 percent), Scotland (38 percent) and Wales (52.5 percent). Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results (accessed 11 Aug. 2016).
5. "EU referendum: How Northern Ireland constituencies voted", *BBC News*, 24 June 2016; Marc Champion, "Divided Northern Ireland faces Brexit hangover", *Bloomberg*, 19 July 2016. Tonge estimates that 89% of nationalists and 35% of unionists voted to remain.

6. Pat Leahy, "Post-Brexit repeal of Human Rights Act in North opposed by the State", *Irish Times*, 11 July 2016, p. 5; Fintan O'Toole, "English nationalists have placed a bomb under the peace process", *Irish Times*, 25 June 2016; Ryan McAleer, "Brexit may cost Tyrone millions", and "Full extent of Tyrone EU funding examined", *Ulster Herald*, 30 June 2016, pp. 1, 7.
7. Sarah Knapton, "EU referendum: Martin McGuinness calls for referendum on United Ireland", *The Telegraph*, 24 June 2016.
8. See for example, "Merkel refuses special deal for Ireland after fears Brexit could cause border tensions", *Express*, 13 July 2016; Emer O'Toole, "Ireland faces partition again: preserving the peace is critical", *The Guardian*, 26 June 2016; Gerry Adams, "Brexit and Irish unity", *New York Times*, 12 July 2016; Shashank Bengali, "Unease along the open border of Northern Ireland and Ireland after the 'Brexit' vote", *Los Angeles Times*, 11 July 2016; Siobhán Mullally, "Brexit Postmortem: Changes to the Common Travel Area with the UK inevitable", *Irish Times*, 10 July 2016.
9. Matt Carthy, "Economic benefits of Irish unity", *Irish Times*, Letters, 11 July 2016, p. 13, cites a recent economic study on Irish unification (Hübner and van Nieuwkoop 2015).
10. Diarmaid Ferriter, "Referendum result may bring North and South closer", *Irish Times*, 2 July 2016, p. 14.
11. Fintan O'Toole interviewed on the *Spotlight* programme, BBC NI television, 29 June 2016.
12. James O'Shea, "Independent Northern Ireland possible as top Tories talk federal UK", *Irish Central*, 11 July 2016; Conor Humphries and Amanda Ferguson, "How Brexit has suddenly made the prospect of a United Ireland thinkable", *The Independent*, 3 July 2016; Marie O'Halloran, "Sinn Féin 'willing to look at alternatives to United Ireland'", *Irish Times*, 23 July 2016.
13. Newton Emerson, "Confusion reigns as Arlene Foster embraces Brexit", *Irish News*, 30 June 2016.
14. Peter Foster, "Irish urged to 'phone-a-friend' in UK to warn against perils of Brexit", *The Telegraph*, 9 May 2016.
15. Gary Gibbon, "Corbyn and Irish diaspora: All hands to EU pump", *Channel 4 blogs*, 2 June 2016, at: http://blogs.channel4.com/gary-gibbon-on-politics/corbyn-irish-diaspora-hands-eu-pump/32882 (accessed 13 July 2016).

16. Esther Addley, "Rush for Irish passports brought on by Brexit fears", *The Guardian*, 16 Mar. 2016; Dermot Dorgan, "My Irish passport is suddenly fashionable in London", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 6 July 2016; Katy Harrington, "People of the UK – stop the rush for Irish passports says Minister for Foreign Affairs as he addresses Irish Brexit fears", *Irish Post*, 30 June 2016; Gareth McKeown, "Demand for birth certificates for Irish passport applications soar", *Irish News*, 19 July 2016.
17. "Record 733,060 Irish passports issued last year", *Irish Times*, 5 Jan. 2017; "Ireland on course to issue one million passports in wake of Brexit", *Irish Times*, 15 Apr. 2017; Maurice Smith, "People are applying for EU passports because Brexit ruined Britishness", *The New European*, 15 Apr. 2017.
18. Jennifer Nyhan, "Why I'm relieved to be living in Scotland after Brexit result", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 28 June 2016; "Brexit has utterly changed the relationship between Ireland and the UK", *Irish Central*, 22 July 2016; Mark Hilliard, "Irish in Britain feared being attacked after the Brexit vote", *Irish Times*, 3 Jan. 2017.
19. Ciara Kenny, "'I'm in shock. I feel lost': Irish in Britain respond to Brexit", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 24 June 2016. This was one of the top ten most read articles of the year on the website.
20. "Irish writers respond to Brexit", *Irish Times*, 2 July 2016, p. 5.
21. Paul, Breen, "Irish voice in Britain more important than ever", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 26 June 2016.
22. Calculated from figures provided by Vaughan and Fitzpatrick (1978) from the Board of Trade emigration returns and census data.
23. Over half of the immigrant flow in the late 1990s was comprised of returning Irish emigrants but their proportion declined to 27 percent by 2003 and to 18 percent by 2006 (Gray 2013b: 104).
24. Niall McCarthy, "The countries with the most native-born people living abroad", Forbes.com, 15 Jan. 2016. No ranking was available for devolved jurisdictions of the UK.
25. See for example, Daire Louise O'Dowd, "The Irish in Vietnam: a new diaspora arises", *Irish Central*, 30 Apr. 2017.
26. Articles on NI emigrants living in a great variety of locations around the world are included in: Northern Irish Connections (magazine special issue), *Belfast Telegraph*, 22 Dec. 2015.
27. Ciara Kenny, "The embedded emigrant", *Irish Times*, 2 July 2016, Review, pp. 1–2.

28. The research by Barnard and Pendock was with emigrants from South Africa, a country that parallels Northern Ireland in its difficult history of discrimination against minorities. Thus, it is significant that the study findings also indicated that the impact of negative emotions had an important effect on diaspora engagement; specifically, that anger regarding the migration experience is a disincentive for engagement.
29. Note special issue: "The Magic of Diasporas", *The Economist*, 19 Nov. 2011.
30. Ciara Kenny, "Certificate of Irish Heritage abandoned after low uptake", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 17 Aug. 2015. Less than 3000 people applied for the certificates over 4 years.
31. There is not the space in this chapter to allow for a review of literature on diaspora generally and the Irish and Scots-Irish diasporas specifically, but see Devlin Trew (2013, Chapter 1), Fitzpatrick (2014, Chapter 8) and Sherling (2015).
32. "The British diaspora: And don't come back", *The Economist*, 9 Aug. 2014.
33. Committee on Welfare Services Abroad, located in the Ministry of Labour. DION (from an Irish word meaning 'shelter') was the government's Advisory Committee for the Irish Community in Britain.
34. For example, the Catholic Welfare Bureau, est. 1942; Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants, est. 1957, etc. The Irish government provided €13 million from 1984 to 2002 to the DION committee for emigrant welfare in Britain (Glynn et al. 2015: 16). Many Northern Ireland migrants availed of these services.
35. The Ulster Folk Museum was created by an Act of Parliament in 1958, while the Museum Act (NI) of 1961 formally recognised the Ulster Museum as the "national museum" of Northern Ireland, effective 1962.
36. The Ulster Historical Foundation since 1975.
37. "Overview of the Emigrant Support Programme", Irish Abroad Unit, DFAT, January 2016.
38. Dáil Éireann Debates, Vol. 893, No. 1, 14 Oct. 2015.
39. "Global Irish Network", at: https://global.irish/GlobalIrishNetwork.aspx (accessed 31 July 2016).
40. An affinity diaspora is comprised of people that are linked to a particular country by having studied, worked or resided there or who simply have a strong interest in the culture.
41. https://global.irish/Default.aspx

42. Charlie Flanagan, "Welcome to the Global Irish Economic Forum", 19 Nov. 2015, at: https://global.irish/GlobalIrishNetwork.aspx (accessed 31 July 2016).
43. Ciara Kenny, "Billy Lawless: the emigrant senator", *Irish Times*, 4 June 2016, Review, p. 5.; "A voice for the diaspora", *Irish Times*, 4 June 2016, p. 15.
44. Stakeholders included: Invest NI, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Belfast Harbour Commission, British Council, Northern Ireland Science Park, Strategic Investment Board, Queen's University, and Ulster University.
45. Invest NI is part of the Department for the Economy.
46. "Bringing together the Northern Irish diaspora", *Belfast Telegraph*, 29 Sept. 2015.
47. https://www.dfa.ie/globalirishhub/; https://www.connectireland.com/. See David Monagan, "Psst! Cash on the barrelhead for moving jobs to Ireland", Forbes.com, 4 Mar. 2013; Gavin McLaughlin, "Clune's Connect Ireland on course for €1.6bn-€1.8bn boost to Ireland's GDP by 2020", *The Independent*, 6 Mar. 2016.
48. Ciara Kenny, "Joe McHugh appointed Minister of State for the diaspora", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 19 May 2016; and, "'Honesty' with emigrants needed, says diaspora Minister", *Irish Times*, 7 June 2016, p. 1.
49. Aine Brolly, "Northern Ireland diaspora can plug skills gap", *Irish News*, 29 Dec. 2015.
50. Claire Reid, "Time has never been better for a diaspora return to Northern Ireland", 6 June 2016, at: http://4cexecutive.com/time-has-never-been-better-for-a-diaspora-return-to-northern-ireland/ (accessed 14 July 2016).
51. Ciara Kenny "Mental health among biggest issues facing Irish abroad", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 3 June 2015; Lochlann Scott, "Lonely or depressed abroad? Skype counselling could help: Helplink.ie plans new Cabhrú online service for Irish people living in Australia", *Irish Times Generation Emigration*, 17 May 2016; Sorcha Pollak, "Irish emigrants 'lead the way' in mental health awareness", *Irish Times*, 5 May 2016; Dean Ruxton, "More than 120,000 take part in Darkness into Light walk", *Irish Times*, 7 May 2016. The Pieta House *Darkness into Light* (http://dil.pieta.ie/) annual walks for mental health, which began

in Ireland in 2009, have more recently taken place among Irish emigrants in several locations around the world, 120 locations in 2016.

52. *Mind how you go*, report at: www.migrantproject.ie; website at: http://www.mindhowyougo.ie/ (sites accessed 7 Aug. 2016).
53. https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/staying-in-touch/global-irish-media-fund/ (accessed 13 Mar. 2017).
54. "Irish Leader Announces Referendum – Diaspora, Northern Irish Citizens to Vote in Presidential Races", *Irish Central*, 13 Mar. 2017. See, the 34th Amendment of the Constitution (Presidential voting) Bill 2014: Second stage, Dail debates, 871, no. 2, 11 Mar. 2015.
55. Ciara Kenny, "'To Enda with love': Irish Abroad send #Post4Repeal Postcards", *Irish Times*, 7 Mar. 2017; Claire McGowan, "'We're striking for Repeal in London in Solidarity with our Sisters in Ireland'", *Irish Times*, 8 Mar. 2017.
56. Wales calculated a ratio of 77:1 return on investment with campaign budget of £276,684 and estimated revenue generated of £21.2 million (Morgan et al. 2002: 78). For Scotland, the budget spent was £8.5 million which attracted 72,000 additional visitors and generated revenue of £31.6 million (Riddington 2010: 2–3).
57. The Gathering is a traditional Scottish clan event celebrated in late nineteenth century Belfast in 1863, 1889–1893 (Hughes 2013: 109–110), and currently in several Ulster communities e.g. "The Broadisland Gathering, 5 Sept. 2015", *Belfast News Letter*, 4 Sept. 2015.
58. Film clips of An Tóstal (1953) are available at www.britishpathe.com
59. "Actor Gabriel Byrne labels The Gathering 'a scam'", *RTE News*, 6 Nov. 2012.
60. Founded in 2009 by Mike Feerick, Ireland XO is funded by The Heritage Council and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. See http://www.irelandxo.com/
61. The Gathering and its legacy: panel at the GIEF, 5 Oct. 2013 [video], available at: http://www.rte.ie/news/player/2013/1005/20449547-panel-debate-the-gathering-and-its-legacy/ (accessed 3 Aug. 2016).
62. Core funding was provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (€12 m) plus €1 million from Failte Ireland. An additional €1 million was provided by IPB Insurance Ltd. for *The Gathering* event fund and additional in-kind support was leveraged from other key partners (Miley 2013: 9).
63. Just under £11.2 million was spent on the *Our Place Our Time* campaign and the evaluation report (June 2013) claimed a benefit of £42 million

amounting to a spend / revenue ratio of £1/£4.78 including domestic tourist spend; out of state tourist spend was considerably less at £1/£1.60 (NI Tourist Board 2013: 11). Tourism Ireland reported a drop of 12 percent in overseas visitors to Northern Ireland, July-Sept. 2012 (Tourism Ireland 2013a: 4.1), while in the same period of the following year of *The Gathering*, visitor numbers increased by 13 percent (Tourism Ireland 2013b: 4.1). See, "NI tourist numbers "virtually unchanged" in 2012", BBC News, 4 July 2013; also, "Short–sighted north fails to join in Irish diaspora tourism plan" and "Meanwhile, despite multi–million–pound 'our place, our time' promotion, number of overseas tourists drops by 13 percent", both stories in the *Irish News*, 17 July 2012, 8–9.

64. Northern Ireland Assembly, Official Report (Hansard), vol. 74A, no. 5, 30 Apr. 2012, pp. 224–36, 249–54. The SDLP, Sinn Féin and the Alliance Party were supportive of the motion (48 votes), with pro-union parties against (46 votes).
65. Northern Ireland Assembly, Official Report (Hansard), vol. 74A, no. 5, 30 Apr. 2012, p. 252.
66. Northern Ireland Assembly, Official Report (Hansard), vol. 74A, no. 5, 30 Apr. 2012, p. 226.
67. Northern Ireland Assembly, Official Report (Hansard), vol. 74A, no. 5, 30 Apr. 2012, pp. 225–6.
68. "Connecting the diaspora", *Agenda NI*, 4 July 2016.
69. http://www.itlg.org/; http://www.wildgeesenetwork.org/
70. Northern Irish Connections, [magazine special issue distributed with the Belfast Telegraph], 22 Dec. 2015, p. 3.
71. British PM Theresa May triggered Article 50 on 29 Mar. 2017, thus notifying the European Commission of the UK's intention to withdraw from the European Union.
72. See the Saoradh website at: http://saoradh.ie/ (accessed 20 Feb. 2017).
73. Connla Young, "Discussions under way to set up new anti-agreement republican party", *Irish News*, 18 July 2016.
74. "Border Communities against Brexit, press release", 13 Sept. 2016, Jude Collins blog, at: http://www.judecollins.com/2016/09/border-communities-against-brexit-press-release/; Adam Lusher, "Anti-Brexit protesters bring traffic to a crawl on road between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland", *The Independent*, 18 Feb. 2017.
75. "Brexit: Irish government identifying possible checkpoint locations on Northern Ireland border", *The Independent*, 16 Feb. 2017.

76. Leaders debate: Northern Ireland, UTV, 16 Feb. 2017; Deborah McAleese, "Brexit, most dangerous issue for Northern Ireland since partition", *The Independent*, 16 Feb. 2017.
77. Peter Hain, speech in the House of Lords debate on triggering Article 50, 27 Feb. 2017.
78. The EU has allowed that in the event of Irish unity, Northern Ireland would become part of the EU (European Council, "Guidelines following the United Kingdom's triggering of Article 50 TEU", EUCO XT 20004/17, 29 Apr. 2017).
79. Peter Murtagh, "Irish success depends on the diaspora, ex-diplomat says", *Irish Times,* 17 Jan. 2017.

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3

The Irish Government's Diaspora Strategy: Towards a Care Agenda

Mark Boyle and Adrian Kavanagh

Introduction

Recently, Ireland celebrated the year of *The Gathering 2013*, a tourism campaign designed to encourage those who consider themselves to be part of the Irish diaspora and those with an affinity to Ireland to visit during 2013. In the lead up to the event, in a radio interview broadcast on Today FM in October 2012, Irish actor Gabriel Byrne controversially stated that *The Gathering* was little more than a "scam" and a "shakedown of Irish America":

> People find it mildly offensive. People are sick to death of being asked to help out in what they regard as a scam. Most people don't give a shit about the diaspora except to shake them down for a few quid. The diaspora has a very powerful spiritual connection to the island of Ireland. I remember when I was growing up in Dublin those buses would pull up and those people in Burberry coats would be laughed at because they'd say "here

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> come the yanks looking for their roots." Well, as far as I'm concerned one of the most sacred things you can do is look for your roots (Gabriel Byrne, Today FM, 6 November 2012).

In the weeks that followed and amidst a maelstrom of rancour and recrimination, whilst adding the caveat that he wished *The Gathering* every success, Byrne refused to publicly deny that his intention had been to make a sharp, direct and at times angry attack on the integrity of the event on behalf of disaffected overseas communities:

> The bulk of what I was saying about nurturing and developing a real relationship with a very complex group of emigrants is absolutely essential. As one guy said to me: "Stop calling us tourists. We're exiles, we're emigrants" (Gabriel Byrne, Irish Central, 4 December 2012).

Later he conceded that perhaps the use of the lexicon of "shake-down" had been "too strong" but he still reiterated:

> I wouldn't take back anything that I said. I have lived in America since 1987, I understand how complex that group of people is. What I was saying was, this is the reaction that I have received about *The Gathering*. They're an incredibly complex group. Emigrants have a tremendous spiritual connection to this country. If you're going to have a relationship with the diaspora, you have to nurture it, you have to take care of it, you have to tend it, you have to pay attention to it (Gabriel Byrne, *Irish Independent*, 21 January 2013).

With the benefit of hindsight, what are we to make of Byrne's provocation? By his own admission, his comments bore the traces of a wound inflicted elsewhere. In his capacity as Cultural Ambassador for Ireland, in 2011 Byrne oversaw Culture Ireland's widely acclaimed but short-lived *Imagine Ireland* campaign promoting Irish culture and arts throughout the United States. He believed that Culture Ireland's support of this campaign was fleeting and transitory and squandered

any good will that he had garnered. It led him to doubt the Irish government's commitment to supporting cultural and arts events hosted by and/or for diasporic audiences. His fear was that the very same philistinism was now threatening to engulf *The Gathering*. Byrne worried that the Irish government risked treating the Irish abroad as little more than a cash cow, degrading what was a powerful but complex relationship to the status of a one-sided and economic "transaction."

This chapter places under scrutiny the ethics of Ireland's recent "turn" to its diaspora. It begins by locating the Irish state's diaspora engagement policies within what it calls an age of diaspora-centred development. It argues that the diaspora option is becoming popular in many migrant-sending states because these states are coming to recognise the role which overseas communities might play as sources of "soft power." Informed by Foucault's theorisation of state power, it contends that as neoliberalising sending states build globalising governmentalities to fortify their competitive capacity in the global economy, biosocial collectivities bearing the name of "diaspora" are being imagined, convened, mobilised and enlisted. It is here that ethical conundrums begin to emerge. The chapter then examines the Irish government's ongoing efforts to birth, fortify and scale-up relationships with its overseas populations. It argues that whilst Ireland's diaspora engagement policies can certainly be read as governmental *dispositifs* or biopolitical *technes*, which work to sculpt from afar Irish-minded subjects (consumers, active citizens and market actors), the Irish case is complicated by the fact that the Irish state has (a) adopted a significantly "light touch" in its dealings with the diaspora and (b) approached the diaspora both as an obligation and an opportunity. This said, Byrne's comments we argue, still offer wise counsel. In the final section, we acknowledge the need to subject Ireland's diaspora engagement policies to constant vigilance. Drawing upon feminist care ethics, we make a case for founding future relationships more centrally upon mutuality, reciprocity and solidarity, supporting in particular transnational ties which serve a "public good."

Biopower: The Age of Diaspora-Centred Development

de Haas (2012) instructs us that from 1945 to the present, perceptions of the relationship between emigration and the development of migrant-sending states have lurched between "development optimism" and "brain drain" pessimism. Over the past decade, the mantra of "diaspora-centred development" has enjoyed a meteoric rise to prominence. In a new twist, migration today is being reframed as a modern and even patriotic act that bequeaths transnational practices which result in "brain gain", "brain incubation" and "brain circulation" (Ancien et al. 2009; Kuznetsov 2013; Boyle and Kitchin 2013). Through tourist visits, the consumption of ethnic or nostalgia goods, remittances, philanthropy, knowledge networks, brokerage, mentoring, investment, voluntarism and circular migration, many migrant communities it seems care for and support the cultural, social, political and economic wellbeing of their homelands from a distance. Emigration then should not necessarily be lamented as a public bad; emigrants are never lost to countries of origin—or so the argument goes—and can serve as potential catalysts of development and nation-building from a remove.

Accordingly, a growing number of migrant-sending states have become interested in revisiting, refreshing and rebuilding relations with their overseas populations. A new field of public policy, referred to as *diaspora strategy*, has emerged. A diaspora strategy is an explicit policy initiative or series of policy initiatives enacted by a sending state, or its peoples, aimed at leveraging, harnessing, fortifying and developing relationships with expatriate communities, diasporic populations and even foreign constituencies who share a special affinity and belong to "elective diasporas" (Ancien et al. 2009). Whilst most commonly championed by poorer countries, including Armenia, India, Mexico, China, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Jamaica, El Salvador, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Ghana and Morocco, diaspora engagement strategies have also been pursued by comparably more economically advanced nations such a New Zealand, Canada, Singapore, Australia, Israel, Scotland—and Ireland. From a position of systematic neglect, according to Gamlen (2014), more than

half of all United Nations member states now have emigrant-focused institutions, diaspora-building programmes and policy instruments that are designed to court and leverage the skills, knowledge, resources and contacts of diasporic communities and affinity diasporas (see also Kuznetsov 2013; Boyle and Kitchin 2013).

Why at this particular juncture has there emerged a decisive new attitude towards the contribution of diaspora to the development of migrant-sending states? To answer this question, we might usefully engage genealogies of modalities of state power. Inspired by Michel Foucault, many scholars claim to discern a historical shift in advanced liberal states from the mid-eighteenth century in modes of state power—from sovereign power or "power over" to governmentality and biopower or "power to" (Foucault 1977; Agamben 2011; Dean 2013; Boyle and Ho 2017). Once predicated upon absolute rule, hard power and brute force, political power, it seems, increasingly depends upon governmentalities and biopolitical interventions which work from a distance to manage the "conduct of conduct" and therein "normalise" discipline and align subjects. A fresh analytics of government has been called for, one which registers the importance of governing visualisations or rationalities and assemblages or *dispositifs* which work to craft responsible, self-disciplining, self-reliant, resilient and mainstreamed consumers, active citizens and market actors. Concomitantly, debate has emerged over whether this shift applies equally to the actions of states and institutions in the international arena. According to some, it now makes sense to speak in terms of "globalising governmentalities" (Larner and Walters 2004; Dean 2013; Joseph 2012). In place of geopolitical hard power, there are now in addition forms of soft power, which work through assemblages and networks—comprising multiple actors, calculative schema, standards, technologies, peer review and benchmarks—to discipline and cultivate subjects from afar.

We argue that the ascent of the age of diaspora-centred development cannot be understood apart from historical developments in modalities of state power and changing approaches to the government of international space. Sending-state diaspora engagement strategies might be thought of as constituent *techne*s in globalising governmentalities which work for sending states to increase competitive advantage in the

neoliberalised, globalised economy (Larner 2007; Boyle and Ho 2017). Diaspora strategies can be construed as acts of biopower in that they conspire to invent new biosocial collectivities—*diasporas*—purportedly held together by national, racial and ethnic characteristics and other types of affinity, only then to condition the subjectivities, passions, emotions and proclivities of members of these collectivities. It is unsurprising that at the heart of many diaspora strategies is a quest to build a range of consumer subjects and niche markets, active citizens and donor communities and market actors and ethnopreneurs. The objective for sending states is to: (a) cultivate a new tourist market and market for the export of cultural, ethnic and nostalgia goods; (b) scale and harness social welfare transfers (remittances, philanthropy, volunteerism); and (c) exploit the resources, knowledge, contacts, linguistic skills and cultural insights of diaspora brokers, investors, advocates, activists, agitators and ambassadors to enhance geo-economic interests. Concepts of nationhood are being de-territorialised only to be re-territorialised so as to extend "soft power" or "smart power."

In making this case, we align with and advance recent research which draws attention to the political economy of the present diaspora turn. Pellerin and Mullings (2013), Gamlen (2014; see also Delano and Gamlen 2014), Ragazzi (2009, 2014) and Sinatti and Horst (2015) all explain the ascent of the age of diaspora-centred development with reference to the wider material, intellectual and political context, and the role of organisations such as the OECD, ILO, UN, IOM, UNDP, World Bank and EU, contending that diaspora strategies are being sanctioned and sponsored by the international development community as part of a "Post-Washington Consensus" to help migrant-sending states stand on their own two feet in the global economy as mainstreamed, resilient and sustainable market actors. Mohan (2008), for example, charts the imbrications of diaspora strategies in the neoliberalisation of sending states. Ho (2011) highlights the ways in which diaspora strategies extend extra-territorial citizenship rights only to privileged, resourceful diaspora elites. Gray (2012) notes the ways tropes of "ancestry" and "affinity" are being used to sculpt, mobilise and leverage "ethnopreneurial" subjects useful for brokering interactions with the global economy. Dzenovska (2013) observes the selective ways in which diaspora elites are being subsumed

into "governing aggregates" or assemblages which mediate sending states' relationships with other countries.

Recognising that diaspora strategies approach the diaspora as a governmental category more so than an actually existing empirical population invites critical commentary on the ethics of these strategies and the damage they might (unwittingly) be doing to complex actually existing diaspora-homeland relationships. In fact when insensitively implemented, these strategies risk diminishing and degrading this relationship because they shift the risks and responsibilities of driving national development to diaspora populations; privilege certain diaspora groupings deemed more deserving of courting because of their socio-economic status or other axes of identity; and fail to give equal weight to the reciprocal care that should guide the relationship and value the diaspora-homeland relationship only in terms of quantifiable, utilitarian and instrumental measures and outcomes. By treating diasporeans as consumers, they turn the invented traditions and cherished cultural and artistic canons of the nation into commodities and promote soulless philistinism. By calling upon diasporeans to become active citizens with seemingly more responsibilities than rights, they risk treating diasporic populations as little more than cash cows. And by asking diasporeans to serve as market actors for Nation Inc., they risk free loading on the labour of kin, exploiting their goodwill and profiting from their talents without appropriate recognition or compensation (Fig. 3.1).

The Irish Diaspora and Diaspora Engagement Strategy

The historical and geographical formation of the Irish diaspora has been a complex process incorporating a wide range of migrant flows and experiences of resettlement. The principal migrant streams include the missionary and mercenary migrations to Europe between the sixth and the fifteenth centuries, the movement of the Scotch-Irish to North America, which began in the early eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, the "convict" and "free" migrants relocating to the far shores of Australia, New Zealand, Argentina

Biopower and the constitution of the 'diaspora' as a governmental category	**Likely outcome**	**Care ethics and the promotion of caring relationships based upon mutuality and reciprocity which serve the public good**	**Likely outcome**	**Diaspora economy of care**
Diaspora subjects as consumers	A steady commodification of Irish cultural goods, services, and experiences which progresses to a vacuous and soulless philistinism. Feeling 'ripped off', consumers develop hostility towards the proposition.	Diasporeans as co-nationals with existential interests in roots and heritage.	Nourishment of a shared interest in celebrating, preserving, experiencing, curating, and narrating the story of the global Irish.	**Emotional economy of care** Sustainable tourism and a growing market for authentic Irish cultural goods, services and experiences.
Diaspora subjects as active citizens	Citizens loaded with expectations and responsibilities in excess of rights and who become degraded to cash cows. The spirit of generosity dissipates.	Diasporeans as citizens with rights as well as responsibilities	Empowered citizens energising transnational circuits of social protection and imbued with an elevated sense of social solidarity and concern for the welfare of the collective.	**Moral economy of care** Increased philanthropy and increased impact of philanthropy, greater appreciation of remittances, outstanding experiences for volunteers and extended impact of volunteerism.
Diaspora subjects as market actors	Freeloading on the labour of and abusing the trust of the broker leads to a depletion of good will. Poor or withdrawn brokerage leads to underachievement and stunted and unfulfilled potential.	Diasporeans as high achievers with multiple obligations whose time is precious and whose reputation is hard earned and cherished.	Proper incentive and reward structures for brokers who act in a responsible manner to integrate productive factions of Irish capital into the global economy and productive factions of global capital into Ireland.	**Business economy of care** On-going competitive advantage leading to strategically productive, higher valued added, sustainable and resilient economic development and growth.
End Result	*Weakening and rendering more fractious and precarious of the diaspora-homeland relationship*	*End Result*	*Strengthening and enriching of transnational circuits of care*	*Enduring growth in the 'incidental' circulation of resources within and between diaspora communities and homelands*

Fig. 3.1 Ireland's diaspora engagement policies: towards a care agenda (Source: Produced by the authors)

and Uruguay in the nineteenth century, the scattering of the famine migrants to North America and the United Kingdom in the 1840s, the flight of the impoverished to the United States and the United Kingdom from the 1850s to the establishment of the Irish Free State in the 1920s, the economic migrants who left in the 1950s and the 1970s and 1980s, principally for the Britain, and the flight which has marked the post-2008 recession (see Devlin Trew, this volume, and for historical perspectives, see O'Sullivan 1992; Akenson 1996; Culligan and Cherici 2000; Fitzgerald 2006; Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008; Devlin Trew 2013). Migrants have settled in a multiplicity of rural and urban settings, variously facing prolonged alterity and estrangement and enjoying rapid assimilation and new belonging.

Given that the Irish diaspora has been a long time in gestation and has developed differently in different places and at different times, it is unsurprising that its relationship with Ireland has been varied, complex and at times contradictory. But certainly, this relationship cannot be characterised as one sided, in which the Irish in Ireland are portrayed as playing the role of the cynical and arch exploiter and the diaspora that of the badly treated and vulnerable victim, dwelling in misery in exile (itself a much-abused notion). The reality is that whilst at certain moments both Ireland and the Irish diaspora have meddled in the affairs of the other on the bases of shabby and self-serving motives, on other occasions both have behaved honourably towards each other and on the bases of mutual self-respect.

Today, there is emerging an oft-repeated narrative that is helping to build a case for a new revisiting of Ireland's relationship with its diaspora. The history of Anglo-Irish relations, the Great Irish Famine in the 1840s and the representation of the Irish diaspora as a "victim diaspora", it is argued, conspired in the past to create an elevated patriotism among Irish communities abroad. For much of its history, the relationship between Ireland and its diaspora has been characterised by flows of support from the diaspora to nationalist political movements in Ireland and flows of remittances from the diaspora to impoverished families in Ireland. But times have changed: Ireland's relationship with its diaspora is entering new and unchartered territory. The peace process in Northern Ireland has tempered political activism in the diaspora, the emergence of Ireland as

an advanced economy has removed the need for remittances, and with socio-economic advancement and a historically unprecedented prominence in regions of destination, the Irish diaspora has new concerns, resources, motivations, tastes and capacities. Meanwhile, to the extent that Irish-based institutions have in turn reached out to support emigrant communities, it has been religious fraternities and in particular the Catholic Church rather than the Irish state which worked to secure social and spiritual protections. Given that it was the failed policies of the Irish state which triggered the emigrant waves which have occurred across the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there is an obligation on the Irish government, some now argue, to better atone.

Persuaded by this narrative, the Irish government has for over two decades been refreshing its relationships with its overseas communities. President Mary Robinson's famous lighting of a candle in a window at the Áras an Uachtaráin in 1995 in solidarity with the Irish worldwide marked the beginning of this new phase in diaspora-homeland relations. In 2002 the *Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants* mapped for the first time the extent and geography of the Irish diaspora, identified the scale and nature of the welfare needs of vulnerable emigrants and provided a road map for affirmative action in support of emigrants. In 2004 the Department of Foreign Affairs established the Irish Abroad Unit, which has in turn administered Ireland's pioneering Emigrant Support Programme, designed to extend social protection and welfare relief to vulnerable Irish citizens living overseas. In a further development, in response to the country's growing economic woes, the Global Irish Economic Forum led to the establishment of the ongoing Global Irish Network in 2010. The aforementioned *The Gathering 2013* then constituted the next milestone in this developing relationship. Meanwhile, in July 2014 the Irish government formally created the position of Minister for Diaspora and appointed to this post Jimmy Deenihan TD (from May 2016 Joe McHugh). Deenihan crafted and published in March 2015 Ireland's first diaspora strategy, entitled *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy* (DFAT 2015).

Global Irish stands as the most significant declaration yet that the Irish state sees virtue in nurturing and developing the relationship between the Irish diaspora and Ireland. It is built around two principles; first that the diaspora is both an asset and a responsibility and second, that enduring

and authentic relationships must be built on trust, respect and reciprocity. The document identifies five key areas in which the Irish state might act. Firstly, *supports* are to be provided to those who intend to leave Ireland (pre-departure information), for those in diaspora (through a scaled-up, multi-annual Emigrant Support Programme), and for those thinking about returning home (especially in regard to job vacancies). Secondly, the Irish state will help to better *connect* diaspora communities and those with an affinity for Ireland with Ireland and with each other by convening a new inter-departmental committee on the Irish abroad, developing local diaspora engagement policies across Ireland's local authority network, establishing a Global Irish Media Fund to promote diaspora-inspired media stories, expanding the Emigrant Support Programme to include funds to support the commemoration in the diaspora of important events in Ireland's past and creating a new Fréamhacha (roots or heritage) programme offering summer camps in Ireland for younger diasporeans, the first of which took place in 2016. Thirdly, efforts will be made to *facilitate* improved two-way engagement between the diaspora and Ireland (by convening a new Global Civic Forum and hosting further Global Irish Economic Forums, and creating a new Alumni Challenge Fund). Fourthly, the Irish state is to *recognise* and reward with accolades diasporeans who have contributed to the promotion of Ireland's culture, identity and development (through the launching of a new Presidential Distinguished Service Award). Finally, recognising the surge in emigration which occurred during the crisis years from 2008, the strategy is to be implemented in a *flexible* way and to be allowed to evolve to meet change.

At one level, it is entirely possible to use the analytics of government outlined above to render intelligible Ireland's emerging diaspora engagement strategy. The notion of the "Global Irish" invokes a powerful national imaginary: Ireland is to be visualised and rationalised not as a small island of six million people located at the edge of Europe but as a globally networked community of six million people in Ireland *plus* over one million Irish born, nearly three million Irish citizens and as many as 70 million people of Irish descent living overseas in key business centres including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, continental Europe, the Emirates and the Asia Pacific region.

The Irish diaspora strategy aspires to convene and mobilise this network principally, by conditioning and disciplining the Irishness (often narrowly defined) and subjectivities of the Irish abroad, for the benefit of Ireland. This strategy rests upon a loose assemblage of actors and technologies—or a *dispositif*—comprising the Irish Abroad Unit of the DFAT; other ministries, ministers and departments; globalising Irish firms; the Global Irish Network and other business networks such as the Asian Pacific Irish Business Forum; immigrant and emigrant fraternities, clubs, associations and networks, including a globalised Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA); Irish overseas chambers of commerce; media; the Ireland Funds and other charities and foundations; and diaspora engagement schemes, toolkits and mechanisms such as the Global Irish Forum, Emigrant Support Programme or the President's Distinguished Service Awards. The objective—rendered more urgent by the 2008 crash and period of austerity which then followed—is to craft, normalise and discipline Irish-minded consumers, active citizens and ethnopreneurs.

And it is in these terms that we might better grasp the meaning and implications of Gabriel Byrne's scepticism concerning the authenticity and ethical integrity of the Irish government's diaspora turn. To the extent that Ireland's diaspora strategy seeks to leverage diasporic populations to accelerate economic growth and development in Ireland it risks misapprehending the complexity of the relationship between Ireland and its diaspora and the contestations and dissonances which can often pervade this relationship. Approaching the Irish diaspora as a governmental category and apprehending the relationship between the diaspora and Ireland in essentially pragmatic and utilitarian terms will undoubtedly lead to the jeopardising and weakening rather than scaling and fortifying of existing ties, bonds and connections. If diasporic populations view themselves as co-nationals with a strong sense of cultural affinity and social solidarity, then to treat them as soulless consumers, cash cows or sources of free labour is to damage fraternal bonds, ties and associations, damage which might prove difficult to repair.

But is it fair to assume that this is *all* that the Irish state is doing? In fact, Byrne's critique needs to be tempered by two key observations: firstly, the Irish government has engaged the diaspora through a largely "light touch" strategy, and, secondly, has attended (although perhaps not

always in a balanced way) to both serving the diaspora and courting its resources. Arguably a more nuanced and balanced reading is necessary.

In contrast to many other states, there is no official government ministry for the Irish diaspora and whilst coordinated by a junior minister and the Irish Abroad Unit, responsibility has been dispersed across relevant departments or bodies, such as the Department of the Taoiseach, other sections of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Enterprise Ireland, the Irish Development Agency and Fáilte Ireland. Moreover, the Irish government is happy to seed fund and, when invited, to support already existing diaspora engagement schemes, but with a few exceptions, it has little appetite for setting up and managing schemes directly. The Irish government supports networks by sending Ministers to promote events, providing secretariat assistance, inviting key guests, providing meeting spaces and so on, but often does little more. The Emigrant Support Programme, for example, has sought to provide supports to already existing Irish welfare and advocacy groups embedded and active in the diaspora. Most of the (literally hundreds) of Irish Business Networks which now operate across the world (such as the Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) based in Silicon Valley, the Irish International Business Network (IIBN) based in London, Dublin, Belfast and New York and the Asia Pacific Irish Business Forum (APIBF) rooted in Asia as well as more local networks like the Irish Business Network Dubai, Irish Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, Irish Canada Business Association and Boston Irish Business Association) are diaspora birthed and led. Likewise, global diaspora foundations such as Atlantic Philanthropies and the Ireland Funds exist as autonomous actors, choosing which causes to support based upon their own agendas. Moreover, at root *The Gathering 2013* was at most an invitation to communities around Ireland to organise events in whatever form they chose to attract visitors to their areas—an invitation that was enthusiastically embraced by over 4000 "voluntary" organisations.

In addition, as foregrounded in the *Global Irish* strategy, the Irish government has approached the Irish diaspora as an obligation as well as a resource. More so than many other governments, the Irish state continues to place "culture building"—alongside economy—at the heart of its diaspora engagement strategy. For example, through its embassies and

consulates, regular visits to the diaspora from relevant ministers take place, and via the new schemes in *Global Irish*, the state works to meet the cultural needs and serves the cultural interests of the overseas Irish. This is not to say that culture and economy can be separated in any simple way of course, only to point to the broader diaspora building which is being attempted. Moreover, it is significant to note that as it came into new-found wealth at the start of the Celtic Tiger period, the Irish government recognised the weight of responsibility it ought to shoulder to provide welfare relief for vulnerable citizens dwelling overseas, the "forgotten Irish", many of whom had emigrated in the bleaker days of the 1950s and 1980s. From 2004, the Irish Abroad Unit, through the Emigrant Support Programme, has administered over €135 million (Devlin Trew, this volume) to emigrants living in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Argentina who are homeless, suffering from alcoholism, drug dependency and mental health problems, poor, infirm, or simply lonely. This budget surpasses by some margin the combined budgets of all the other diaspora initiatives pursued in the past decade and amounted to, for example, 13 times the budget of *The Gathering 2013.* Of course, there remains much work to do. The plight of the forgotten Irish has not been fully addressed. The palpable hostility of some emigrants who were forced to leave following the 2008 crises remains an open wound. And of course, the failure of the Irish government to extend voting rights to the Irish diaspora in parliamentary elections continues to trouble. But the notion that the Irish state has an obligation to give as well as to receive is now at the very least on the table.

The Irish Diaspora Strategy: Towards a Care Agenda

Now is an opportune moment to consider again the philosophy underpinning Ireland's diaspora engagement policies and to ensure that these policies are underpinned by explicitly progressive principles. In this final section, we mobilise feminist care ethics to establish a basis from which future policies and actions might begin and against which they might be judged (see also Ho et al. 2015). In so doing we challenge the proclivity

in some quarters to treat the diaspora as a category of governmentality and biopower. Instead we suggest approaching diaspora strategising in terms of its embroilment in complex transnational circuits of care. We claim that the Irish state has an ethical imperative to support caring relationships between (and perhaps even within) the Irish diaspora and Ireland which serve the public good. It is this imperative that justifies and in fact demands state intervention in this space. Our contention is that long-term reciprocity and relationality must always triumph over short-term utility and extraction. Strengthening circuits of resource flows can never be the priority. In fact these circuits can only be sustained and strengthened if support is centred upon dignifying authentic and caring relations. Material transactions between diasporas and homelands are derivative outcomes of caring relationships and must always be approached as such. We introduce the concept of diaspora economies of care to capture these incidental economies and identify three such economies: an emotional economy, a moral economy and a business economy.

Literature on ethics often draws a distinction (explicitly and by implication) between "humanitarian care" (calibrated by justice ethics) and "intimate care" (calibrated by care ethics). Humanitarian care refers to care motivated by a sense that injustice has been inflicted upon an abstract other and is predicated upon impartial and rational judgement. Intimate care in contrast refers to care motivated by personal relationships and is best characterised as embodied, emotive, partial and partisan care (Barnett 2011). Feminist care ethics explicitly rejects this dualism. It distances itself from established "enlightenment" ethical frameworks based upon universal principles of Cartesian objectivity and disembodied reasoning. Recognising these to be metropolitan and masculinist, feminist care ethics begins instead with a social ontology of connection: insisting that ethical decisions be rooted inside complex relationships—webs of connective lines and tissues—which are undergirded by power asymmetries (Noddings 1984). Nevertheless, at its best care ethics brings into conversation both justice and care perspectives when arbitrating the virtues and vices of particular actions. Whilst advocates of humanitarian care turn to concepts of justice to validate particular actions, care ethics proposes that normative judgements be calibrated through situated and embodied reasoning, or "practical reason" exercised in context (Barnett 2011).

When is it ethical for the state to dignify caring relationships by attending to these relationships and nurturing them? Tronto (1993) argues that it is most often women, the poor or ethnic minorities that carry out the care work necessary for societies to function. This work can be said to serve the public good when it substitutes for unavoidable work which the community would have to shoulder were it to be absent. Polities functioning upon market principles further redistribute and reallocate care burdens to social groups who already carry more than their share, allowing the privileged to pass on responsibilities and to practise what Tronto (2013) refers to as "privileged irresponsibility" (the ability of elites to exploit the proclivity of others to care thus excusing or relieving themselves of obligations which ought to fall on them). Tronto (2013) furthers her case by arguing that democratic systems are in crises precisely because liberal democracies and market economies hand out "charity passes" (charitable assistance) and "bootstrap passes" (help to kin) as an alternative to providing structural and systematic supports to care providers. She calls for a new rapprochement between politics and care so that carers feel that the state is aligned and in solidarity with the caring they provide. Care work should not provide the state with an opportunity to abrogate on its responsibilities; instead this work should be registered, rewarded and supported by the state.

Informed by Tronto's insistence that political systems and care work be reconciled, we argue that the Irish state has a duty to register the caring work being done by diasporas for homelands and homelands for diasporas and to support this work when it serves the public good. Aligning the Irish diaspora strategy to *transnational* care work would parallel a wider agenda centred upon the alignment of the Irish state and *domestic* care work. But what types of caring should be supported? How might we decide when it is ethical to intervene? Which relationships can be said to support the public good? Care ethics offer a modest, nonfoundational but equally anti-relativist ethics that is characterised by the application of practical and normative reasoning in concrete situations and milieu. Care ethics approaches ethics as historically emergent and therefore nonfoundational—we cannot decide in advance what types of care are to be nurtured. But crucially it refuses to elide nonfoundational ethics with ethical relativism—not all forms of care merit support. Reasons must be

given. Situated rationalities must resonate. In the end, we might say that the legitimacy of interventions by the Irish state to support relationships between diasporas and the Irish in Ireland rests upon situated judgements as to whether these interventions are supporting caring relationships which both communities consider to be in the public interest.

Whilst always context specific, care ethics nevertheless provides some orientation as to what might constitute an ethical diaspora engagement strategy. Approaching the Irish diaspora as a governmental category raises ethical questions in so far as this category is always then being invented and mobilised by specific actors to further their own interests. Biopolitical approaches fail to dignify the actually existing diaspora-homeland relationship, in all its embodied complexity, contrariness and passion. Where governmentality might construe the diasporic subject as a consumer, active citizen and/or market actor, care ethics might recast diasporic kin as co-nationals with existential interests in roots and heritage, citizens with rights as well as responsibilities and high achievers with multiple obligations whose time is precious and whose reputation is hard earned and cherished. Treating diasporic kin as co-nationals is more likely to nourish and deepen shared interest in celebrating, preserving, experiencing, curating and narrating the story of the global Irish. Respecting and empowering extra-territorial citizens as co-nationals is more likely to energise transnational circuits of social protection and instil an elevated sense of social solidarity and concern for the welfare of the collective. Providing generous incentive and reward structures for brokers who act in a responsible manner to integrate productive factions of Irish capital into the global economy and productive factions of global capital into Ireland is more likely to generate sustainable and resilient economic growth (see Fig. 3.1).

Strengthening and enriching transnational circuits of care which serve the public good must be the beginning and end of a progressive Irish diaspora engagement strategy. But co-incidentally and paradoxically, this philosophy is more likely to scale and fortify transnational flows of resources than governmental strategies which in spite of their best intentions more often weaken and render more fractious and precarious diaspora-centred development. Caring relationships generate what might be termed *diaspora economies of care*—defined as economies in which

resources are refracted by caring relationships so that they circulate in ways that may not occur should a straightforward capitalist logic prevail. They are strictly derivative and incidental. We might identify three kinds of diaspora economies of care (see Ho et al. 2015). First, emotional diaspora economies of care arise when diasporic kin are treated as co-nationals and arise when resources flow between diaspora populations and their homelands on the bases of a shared interest in preserving, encountering and narrating the story of the nation. Examples include sustainable tourism and a growing market for authentic Irish cultural goods, services and experiences. Second, moral diaspora economies of care arise when diasporic kin are recognised as citizens with significant rights who in turn display an elevated sense of interdependence and social solidarity and an appreciation of their care. Examples include effective and transformative philanthropy, the valorisation of remittances and rewarding and high impact volunteerism. Finally, business economies of care emerge when gratitude is shown for the work of selfless brokers, resulting in ongoing competitive advantage and strategically productive, higher valued-added, sustainable and resilient economic development and growth. Examples include the co-production by diasporic innovators and domestic capital over the *longue durée* of technological innovation which transforms entire economic sectors (Fig. 3.1).

Conclusion

Gabriel Byrne's attack on *The Gathering 2013* was overly harsh and painted a caricature of the Irish state's attitude towards the relationship between the Irish diaspora and Ireland. But it did serve to call attention to the need to establish an appropriate philosophical foundation upon which to build a progressive Irish diaspora engagement strategy. Perhaps we have not debated this foundational question enough. Perhaps we have launched a new diaspora engagement programme based upon incremental and opportunistic policy accumulation and pragmatic motives and lacking in any deep thinking about vision, purpose and long-term consequences. Because of our failure to attend sufficiently to the ethics of dias-

pora strategising, are we in danger of degrading transnational circuits of care which are currently serving the public good? How can we ethics proof Ireland's diaspora strategies in the future? Byrne's provocation has served us well in so far as it has forced us to ask such questions and confront some uncomfortable conundrums.

In this chapter, we have cautioned against a simplistic reading of the motives and practices of the Irish state's recent diaspora turn. But we have argued that, were the Irish state to reduce the Irish diaspora to the status of a governmental category or biosocial collectivity, to be deployed as part of a new biopolitical power play, then it is likely that alterity, estrangement and disaffection would soon result. We have mobilised feminist care ethics to "free" the diaspora-homeland relationship so that it is allowed to exist as a means without ends, with intrinsic value in and of itself. We have argued that the Irish state has an imperative to intervene to support transnational circuits of care when these circuits serve the public good. It is from this vista that a progressive generation of diaspora engagement policies might now be pioneered. We have argued that capturing and appropriating resources for self-serving ends must cede to a new care agenda, but have noted the ways in which such an agenda is likely to scale and fortify "incidental or derivative material flows." We have developed the concept of diaspora economies of care to render intelligible these flows, noting the existence of emotional, moral and business economies of care. Whilst important, these economies, we insist, must be kept strictly subordinate.

It remains too early to judge whether the new policy blueprint, *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy*, will meet the ethical demands we have set forth. For now, we will need to be content with the ongoing care-proofing of the policy planks of this blueprinting as they become implemented.

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4

The Need for a "National" Diaspora Centre in Ireland

Brian Lambkin

Introduction

As the *After the Gathering* conference was taking place in June 2014 at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)—Northern Ireland's 'national' archives—a public competition was under way in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) for the title 'Irish National Diaspora Centre.' To the conference delegates, it appeared that the competition's front-runner was the 'Irish International Diaspora Centre' project, based in Dún Laoghaire Harbour at the Carlisle Pier, from which the famous Mail Boat sailed to Holyhead (1859–80). There seemed a good chance that it would emerge as a cross-border institution, not least because the Dún Laoghaire projectors had approached the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies at the Ulster American Folk Park in Northern Ireland as a cross-border partner.

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In February 2015, the Irish government cancelled the competition. Nevertheless, *Epic Ireland*, a new Diaspora Centre financed by entrepreneur Neville Isdell, was opened by former President Mary Robinson on 7 May 2016, in the Custom House Quay (CHQ) Building, Dublin—but not as a cross-border institution. In effect, this move establishes a 'National' Diaspora Centre in the ROI, and increases pressure to establish a separate 'National Diaspora Centre' in Northern Ireland.[1] It may well seem that little has changed since 1981, when Colum Sands put the key question in a popular satirical song: "If it wasn't for the Border, what would we do?" and answered, "We'd only have one parliament [national archives, national library, national museum, etc.] instead of having two."[2]

The contention of this chapter is that the opportunity to create on the island of Ireland one cross-border Diaspora Centre, rather than two separate National Diaspora Centres, is in danger of being lost to the detriment of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 1998. It reviews the story of how this point has been reached, including: the emergence of 'diaspora' as a term in common use and its relevance to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement; the establishment of the need of a 'National Diaspora Centre'; the setting-up and cancellation of the government competition; and the opening of the private enterprise initiative *Epic Ireland*. These developments are then set within the history of the emergence of 'national' cultural institutions in Ireland (north and south) since Partition. Finally, it is argued that, not least for addressing properly the problem of 'dealing with the past', one cross-border (Irish and British) diaspora-related, or better, migration-related institution is still needed in Ireland.

Establishing the Need

Official recognition of the need for a 'National Diaspora Centre' in the ROI was confirmed by the publication of the *National Diaspora Centre Feasibility Study* by the Irish government's tourism body *Fáilte Ireland* in April 2013.[3] It explained that "the Government has taken the position that a National Diaspora Centre is desirable" because "for a number of years now, there has been growing recognition of the importance of the *Irish Diaspora* in the cultural, political and economic development of

Ireland—Northern Ireland and the Republic, as well as in host communities" (Fáilte Ireland 2013: 3; emphasis added). It is important for what follows to note that this introductory statement defined the 'Irish Diaspora' in terms of the whole island of Ireland including *both* Northern Ireland *and* the Republic. The explanation continued:

> This recognition has come at a period in which cultural tourism is growing rapidly worldwide and is of particular significance … There continues to be interest in genealogical research and in academic diaspora studies in which Ireland, as the country with the largest overseas diaspora compared to its native population, has taken a leading part (2013: 3).[4]

The *Feasibility Study* further explained that the announcement in 2011 of *The Gathering 2013* "has served to remind us of the unique national attribute and asset which is represented in the global Irish Diaspora." In recognition of this "unique national attribute and asset", the government had made the following commitment in its Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan for 2012–16, which was published in November 2011:

> in terms of iconic projects, support will be given to a Diaspora Centre or Diaspora Museum should a suitable project and partner be available (2013: 4).

The 'journey' of this idea was explained in the *Feasibility Study*. First, it was traced back to "President Mary Robinson's lighting of a candle in a window at *Áras an Uachtaráin* in 1995 in solidarity with the Irish worldwide." So successfully has the notion of "Cherishing the Irish Diaspora" been popularised, not least by President Robinson (1990–97) and her successor Mary McAleese (1997–2011), that the term 'Irish diaspora' ("the scattering of the peoples of Ireland world-wide") is now part of general discourse and no longer in need of special explanation (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008: 278; Lambkin 2015: 171).[5] Then the *Feasibility Study* traced the idea forward through the landmarks of the 2002 *Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants*, the establishment in 2004 of the *Irish Abroad Unit* of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the first *Global Irish Economic Forum*, held at Farmleigh in 2009, which resulted in the

Global Irish Network (Fáilte Ireland 2013: 5). The Executive Summary of the *Feasibility Study* (April 2013) concluded with the following recommendation:

> At a time of increased emigration from Ireland, the National Diaspora Centre could help recast the relationship between Ireland and its diaspora, by developing key linkages and resources. It has the potential to enhance the image and appeal of Ireland, both at home and abroad, not just for the benefit of tourism but also for economic, academic and socio-cultural benefit (2013: 3).

'Ireland' here means the ROI, *not* including Northern Ireland. Although, as noted already, the Irish government's *Feasibility Study* opened positively with regard to the whole island by connecting 'the Irish Diaspora' with "Ireland—Northern Ireland and the Republic", there is no suggestion in the body of the text that the new 'National Diaspora Centre' might be a cross-border project; nor any indication of awareness that its use of 'national' in relation to the Irish diaspora ('worldwide scattering' of the peoples of Ireland, including Northern Ireland) might be problematic. To which nation do the conflicted peoples of Northern Ireland belong? The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement had given the answer "*both* Irish *and* British." However, the *Feasibility Study* showed little if any concern for the entanglement of 'Irishness' and 'Britishness' (both on the island of Ireland and in its diaspora), or for the relevance of its project to the pressing problem of 'dealing with the past' (Lambkin 2015: 169).

Running the Competition

Just before St. Patrick's Day 2014, the Irish government announced that it was proceeding with plans for a 'National Diaspora Centre' as recommended by the *Feasibility Study* (*Irish Times* 2014). It was reported that the centre would cost between €5 million and €26 million, and that *Fáilte Ireland* (not the cross-border body *Tourism Ireland*) had been "charged with looking for expressions of interest in building the centre which will have limited exchequer involvement." The Minister for

Tourism, Transport and Sport, Leo Varadkar, said "we are looking for a partner who can help to fund and build it", adding:

> The work done by *Fáilte Ireland* suggests that it should tell *the story of the Irish diaspora* overseas. It should also tell the story of how Irish people view the world. There will also be a different story about *how Irish emigration changed Ireland* over the years, and that is the kind of place we want to be in (*Irish Times* 2014, emphasis added).

Again, there was no suggestion that "the story of the Irish diaspora" and "how Irish emigration changed Ireland" might need the co-operation of Northern Ireland in order to be told fully. The arrangement for the competition was that expressions of interest would be invited and first assessed by the *Fáilte Ireland* executive. Their findings would be forwarded, alongside expressions of interest, to a committee comprising an independent chairman and relevant departments and other interested parties. Following consideration of the proposals, the Minister of Tourism, Transport and Sport was to advise the government if a suitable partner had been found. Evidently, this was not envisaged as a cross-border project that would result in a new cross-border institution.

The announcement was greeted with some scepticism in the press, including one journalist who thought the "vast divergence in the estimated cost bespeaks bureaucratic muddle rather than clarity of purpose", and criticised the "sheer conceit of the underlying concept: a would-be solemn salute to emigrants devised as a tourism wheeze, a monument to generations of political failure by a bankrupt Government that has continued the trend" (Fay 2014). The *Feasibility Study* had anticipated such criticism, referring specifically to "the furore which followed in the wake of Gabriel Byrne's criticisms of *The Gathering* in November 2012" (Fáilte Ireland 2013: 5; *The Guardian* 2013).

Less than a year later, in February 2015, the succeeding Tourism and Transport Minister, Paschal Donohoe, announced the cancellation of the competition. Following a Freedom of Information request, it was revealed that eight companies had been short-listed for the Centre project, with seven not having funding in place (relying on a mix of government funding, public and private sector borrowing, philanthropic and corporate

donations and local authority funding). Although some government capital funding had been anticipated, it had been made clear to Mr Donohoe, in a memo from the tourism division of his department, that "no government funding would be available for the foreseeable future", and that the implementation of the next phase of the project would "commit all the tenderers to a substantial spend through the production of business plans and presentations, and commit the Department and *Fáilte Ireland* to a process that will require the assignment of scarce resources to process applications and manage expectations." Further, the memo stated that "if the competition proceeded without State aid, there would be criticism of the Government's failure to provide funding along with reputational damage and criticism for lack of state investment, and the possibility of subsequent demands on the Exchequer to subsidise the centre" (Deegan 2015).

Not unpredictably, the cancellation of the competition caused much disappointment and further scepticism. As one journalist commented, "it makes one wonder about the sincerity of the Irish state's commitment to the Irish diaspora, or is it just an overseas constituency to be tapped and applauded around the St Patrick's Day season?" (Delaney 2015). The eight short-listed and disappointed projects included some if not all of the following:

- Cork City Council (Cork Docklands site, complementing *Cobh, The Queenstown Story*)
- Shannon Development (Bunratty Castle and Folk Park site; Birr Workhouse site)
- Limerick City Council (Riverside site)
- Longford County Enterprise Board (Granard site)
- Dublin City Council (Vat House Digital Hub site near the Guinness Storehouse; CHQ Building, near the *Jeannie Johnston*)
- Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company (new build at Carlisle Pier)

These projects had been identified as "Existing Embryonic Schemes for a National Diaspora Centre" by *Fáilte Ireland* in its *Feasibility Study* (2013: 16–17). It is noteworthy that some of these projects emphasised their complementarity to existing diaspora-related institutions:

- Cork City Council*: Cobh, The Queenstown Story* (http://www.cobh-heritage.com/)
- Shannon Development: *Bunratty Castle and Folk Park* (http://www.shannonheritage.com/BunrattyCastleAndFolkPark/)
- Dublin City Council: *The Jeannie Johnston Tall Ship* (http://www.jeanniejohnston.ie/)
- Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company: *The Ulster-American Folk Park* (http://nmni.com/uafp)

Other diaspora-related institutions already exist in Ireland, and the following were also referred to in the *Feasibility Study* (2013: 12):

- *Strokestown Park: The Irish National Famine Museum,* Co. Roscommon (http://www.strokestownpark.ie/)
- *The Dunbrody Famine Ship and Irish Emigrant Experience*, New Ross, Co. Wexford (http://www.dunbrody.com/)
- *The Kennedy Homestead*, Dunganstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford (http://www.kennedyhomestead.ie/)

The *Feasibility Study* also made reference to *Titanic Belfast* (http://titanicbelfast.com/) in Northern Ireland, which is currently marketed as dealing with maritime heritage and has the potential to become a diaspora-related institution. However, it did not refer to the plans of Derry City Council to develop a Maritime Museum on its Waterside Ebrington Barracks site, as part of its focus on the Derry~Londonderry Diaspora especially in 2013 when the city was UK Capital of Culture. Neither did it refer to the long-stated ambition of National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI, formerly MAGNI—Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland) to transform the Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, into a "National Museum of Emigration":

> MAGNI intends to develop a comprehensive **story of emigration**. Based on the foundations already in place at the Ulster American Folk Park, we will establish a National Museum of Emigration telling the story of all people leaving Ireland for **all parts of the world** (MAGNI 2000: 23; emphasis in original).[6]

Other possible projects publicised in the run-up to the competition included:

- Carna, Connemara: The Emigrants Commemorative Centre (*Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach*), (http://www.carnaemigrantscentre.com/ga/)
- Castlebar, Co. Mayo: ("Military Barracks site to complement National Museum of Country Life, Turlough", *Mayo News*, 4 Sept. 2012)
- Letterkenny, Co. Donegal: National Diaspora Centre (Rockhill House site) (http://ndci.ie/; see also http://www.donegaldiaspora.ie/project)
- Louth County Council: Community Tourism Diaspora Project (http://www.louthcoco.ie/en/Louth_County_Council/Latest_News/Community-Tourism-Diaspora-Project-FUNDING1.html)

As part of Ireland's diaspora-related infrastructure, the *Feasibility Study* (Fáilte Ireland 2013: 46) also highlighted institutions which provide family history services (including two based in Northern Ireland):

- *National Library* (Family History Room)
- *National Archives* (Eneclann in association with Ancestor Network)
- *General Registrar's Office*
- *Irish Family History Foundation* (all-Ireland network of family history centres, including the Ulster Historical Foundation and others based in Northern Ireland)
- *Find My Past* (global website)
- *Ancestry.com* (global website)
- *PRONI*
- *Irish Emigration Database (Mellon Centre for Migration Studies and Queen's University)*

A diaspora-related institution not referred to in the *Feasibility Study* is *Ballance House*, Glenavy, Co. Antrim. This is the main project of the Ulster New Zealand Trust, which has restored and opened to the public the boyhood home of John Ballance (Prime Minister of New Zealand 1891–93), with the aim of telling the whole story of the Irish in New Zealand.

From this, it may be seen that Ireland (north and south) already has an extensive infrastructure of diaspora-related or migration-related institutions. The need for a new 'National Diaspora Centre' was generally well recognised and supported during the run-up to *The Gathering* in 2013, and in its immediate aftermath, until the cancellation of the competition in February 2015. It seems evident that Minister Donohoe was aware that the only fully funded project of the eight shortlisted projects was Neville Isdell's *Epic Ireland*, to be based in the CHQ Building in Dublin; and that it would proceed, regardless of being awarded government funding, or the official title 'National Diaspora Centre.' In March 2015, in time for St. Patrick's Day, Isdell, the Downpatrick Co. Down-born owner of the CHQ Building, and former CEO of Coca Cola (2004–09), was reported as having assembled a "blue-chip" group to "shepherd the project to fruition", including former education and finance minister, Ruarí Quinn, managing director of the Guinness Storehouse, Paul Carty, Fiona Ross (former director *National Library of Ireland*), Catriona Crowe (*National Archives of Ireland*), Brian Donovan (*Eneclann*) and Niall O'Dowd (*Irish Voice*), using the same design team as *Titanic Belfast* (*Irish Times* 2015).

Notwithstanding the government's withholding of the 'national' title, such is the nature and scale of Isdell's *Epic Ireland* (an "emigration-themed museum" attracting 400,000 visitors annually) that it will in effect be a 'National Diaspora Centre,' as envisaged by the *Feasibility Study* (2013).[7] It has been reviewed positively by *History Ireland* as "an interactive, emigration-themed museum" (Canavan 2016: 54). If it achieves its aim of an annual visitation of 400,000, it will rank as one of the largest visitor attractions in the Republic. In 2015 the top fee-charging attractions were the *Guinness Storehouse* (1,025,677 visitors), *Dublin Zoo* (1,000,000), *National Aquatic Centre* (825,049), *Cliffs of Moher* (809,474) and *Book of Kells* (524,119). The top free attractions in 2015 were the *National Gallery* (624, 412), *National Botanic Gardens* (501,000), *National Museum of Archaeology* (402,582) and *Farmleigh* (362, 464). By comparison, the top visitor attractions in Northern Ireland in 2014 were: (fee-charging) the *Giant's Causeway* (790,000), *Titanic Belfast* (630,000); and (free) *Ulster Museum* (470,000) and *Derry's Walls* (370,000). The de facto status of *Epic Ireland* as 'National Diaspora Centre' begs the question of how it

will relate to the island's existing migration-related institutions (north and south). It may be argued that the unilateral move by the Dublin government to permit the establishment of a National Diaspora Centre in this way, without equal co-operation with Northern Ireland, marks a departure from the spirit of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 1998, and a return to the 'partitionist' approach to 'national' institutions, as expressed by Colum Sands' ironic question and answer.[8]

'Diaspora', 'National' Institutions and the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, 1998

There is a fundamental question to be faced regarding the Irish diaspora: are we dealing with *one* diaspora ('worldwide scattering of people') of the whole island of Ireland (consisting of two main parts since 1921), or *two* separate diasporas—the Irish diaspora and the Ulster/Northern Ireland diaspora (Lambkin 2015: 169; Breen 2015: 204–207)? Although the story of the 'National Diaspora Centre' so far suggests the latter, it may still be possible to restore the former, in the interest of 'dealing with the past' properly, in line with the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

The current north-south tension in dealing with the Irish diaspora and the Northern Ireland diaspora may be traced back to the provision of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement which required the Irish government to amend the two articles of its constitution which unionists found most objectionable. Article 2 of the 1937 Constitution of Ireland stated (emphasis added): "The *national territory* consists of the *whole island of Ireland*, its islands and the territorial seas"; whereas Article 3 stated:

> Pending the re-integration of the *national territory*, and without prejudice to the right of the parliament and government established by this constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the *whole territory*, the laws enacted by the parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of Saorstat Éireann and the like extra-territorial effect.

In defining the 'nation', both articles put 'territory' before 'people', whereas the amending articles, approved by referendum in 1998, did the

reverse, and also included 'the diaspora' (although not by that name). Article 2 (1999) now states: "The *Irish nation* cherishes its special affinity with *people* of Irish ancestry living abroad, who share its cultural identity and heritage." Article 3 (1999) now states: "It is the firm will of the *Irish nation* in harmony and friendship to unite all the *people* who share the *territory* of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions." Although the term 'diaspora' is not used, a circumlocution ("people of Irish ancestry living abroad") is used instead. These new articles may be regarded as the outworking of fresh thinking about the relationship between homeland and diaspora in the run-up to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, based on the key idea of the Irish diaspora as a "Fifth Province", which includes people with connections to both parts of the partitioned homeland (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008: 278). By making the commitment to 'cherish' the Irish diaspora, which echoes the marriage vow of partners 'to love and cherish', the Irish state effectively gives to the Irish diaspora the 'special position' previously given to the Catholic Church by Article 44 of the 1937 Constitution (deleted by referendum in 1972 in response to the outbreak of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland).[9]

The brilliance of the innovative diaspora-related thinking behind the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement has resulted in the people of Northern Ireland now being regarded *simultaneously* as part of the homeland of Ireland (the territory of the whole island) and part of its diaspora; and part of the homeland of the United Kingdom and part of Britain's diaspora. Accordingly, the people of Northern Ireland are 'cherished' in two ways: living in part of the homeland of Ireland they are entitled to dual citizenship (Irish, British, or both); and living outside the jurisdiction of the national government, they are 'cherished' as part of the Irish diaspora, along with other Irish citizens and people of Irish ancestry living elsewhere abroad. Also, the Irish national commitment to 'cherish' is not restricted to those "living abroad" who "share the cultural identity and heritage" of the Irish nation; it extends to those living in the homeland who do *not* share its cultural identity and heritage, since it is the aim of the Irish nation to "unite" with them "in harmony and friendship."

However, there is a structural weakness in the re-configuration of homeland-diaspora relations envisaged by the Belfast/Good Friday

Agreement. An important group is not acknowledged explicitly: "people of Irish ancestry living abroad" who do *not* share the Irish nation's culture and heritage. In general discourse they are named variously as the "Scots/Scotch-Irish", the "Ulster Scots diaspora" and "the Ulster/Northern Ireland diaspora" (Cooper 2009; Devlin Trew 2013: 10–16). It is important to add that the Ulster/Northern Ireland diaspora, in addition to the Ulster Scots and their descendants, includes the "Ulster English" and their descendants; and that both Ulster Scots and "Ulster English" may include Catholics as well as Protestants, and others (Fitzgerald 2006, 2013). An equal willingness to 'unite with' or 'cherish' the Northern Ireland (Ulster/Ulster Scots/Ulster English) diaspora(s) may be implied by the new Article 2 (1999), but it is not stated explicitly, thereby making it asymmetrical with the new Article 3. This asymmetry in the re-configuration of homeland-diaspora relations is compounded by a greater asymmetry in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which makes no reciprocal requirement of either the British government or the Northern Ireland government in respect of 'the British diaspora' or 'the Northern Ireland diaspora.' The identification of this problem is not new (Mac Éinrí and Lambkin 2002: 135–6; Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008: 278–9). A further complication is that it is not always clear how those who regard Northern Ireland as their homeland regard Britain: as part of Northern Ireland's homeland, as a site of its diaspora, or both simultaneously?

Thus, although the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement strongly implies the need for reciprocal Irish-British 'cherishing', it fails to clarify comprehensively the new set of homeland-diaspora relationships, and does not specifically require the cross-border reciprocity needed to make the new configuration work. A reciprocal commitment by the British government paralleling new Articles 2 and 3 might read, mutatis mutandis:

> *The British nation cherishes its special affinity with people of British ancestry living abroad, who share its cultural identity and heritage.*
>
> *It is the firm will of the British nation in harmony and friendship to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Britain and Northern Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions.*

This remains the position of the British nation after the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014. Given the complexity of the matter, and the absence of clear, comprehensive specification, it is perhaps not surprising that there should be confusion in Ireland (North and South) about whether we are dealing with one or two diasporas; and that the institutional response to the 'cherishing' imperative has been to revert to a 'partitionist' approach, which is to see two separate diasporas, rather than one diaspora with two main parts. So the stories of the Global Irish Forum, *The Gathering*, and the 'National Diaspora Centre' in the south of Ireland have been paralleled in Northern Ireland by that of Arlene Foster (now DUP leader) as Tourism Minister declining to engage her department with *The Gathering*, and as Trade and Investment Minister encouraging the development of *Northern Irish Connections* (www.niconnections.com). In February 2016, *Northern Irish Connections* was giving concrete expression to the idea of a separate Northern Ireland diaspora by sponsoring a 'Welcome Home' desk at Arrivals in Belfast International Airport, where take-away cards were displayed, bearing the following text:

Share Your Pride

NI Connections is a diaspora network for people with an affinity for Northern Ireland. It's your opportunity to connect with some of the greatest talent NI has ever produced.

It's also a chance to share your NI stories and help build the reputation of one of the most beautiful and talented places in the world.

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Northern Irish Connections: A Global Diaspora Initiative.[10]

In search of a way to restore the idea that a new 'National Diaspora Centre' might be a cross-border institution 'for people with an affinity for Ireland' (*both* north *and* south; *both* British *and* Irish), it may be helpful to review briefly the history of how new 'national' cultural institutions (particularly, museums, libraries and archives) have emerged in Ireland, north and south, since Partition.

'National' Museums, Libraries and Archives in Ireland

In the aftermath of Partition, neither government in Ireland saw national cultural institutions such as museums as being important. In *The Story of Irish Museums 1790–2000,* Marie Bourke explains how things were in the south:

> For nearly sixty years the arts and the cultural institutions were placed low on the list of government priorities, as the struggle to establish the independent state was impacted by two world wars, internal strife and recurrent periods of economic recession. Only in the last decades of the twentieth century did the state recognize that the cultural institutions had an important role to play in the well-being of the country (Bourke 2011: 428).

The most striking evidence of that late recognition was the Collins' Barrack site in Dublin, opened in 1997—the first acquisition by National Museum of Ireland of a new site since the foundation of the state.

Recognition of the importance of national cultural institutions was also late coming in Northern Ireland, as Estyn Evans explained in 1968, when the *Prehistoric Society* made its first visit to Northern Ireland:

> When Ireland was partitioned and Northern Ireland lost the benefits of an established capital city, monies set aside for building cultural centres in the North were diverted to the more urgent needs of civil defence, and police stations were erected instead of museums and galleries (Evans 1968: 4; quoted in Crooke 2000: 141).[11]

However, investment in new museums started earlier in the north than the south, as Prime Minister Terence O'Neill (1963–69) recalled in his autobiography (emphasis added):

> When I went to the Ministry of Finance [1956] we had *no national museums in Northern Ireland*. My first effort lay in the direction of a *folk museum* … Previous efforts to establish a much smaller institution had all foundered … Today we have a first rate institution on a magnificent site some ten miles from Belfast (O'Neill 1972: 37).

That was the *Ulster Folk Museum*, established by an act of the Stormont parliament in 1958 and opened at Cultra in 1964, seven miles from Belfast's city centre (now the *Ulster Folk and Transport Museum*, part of NMNI). Terence O'Neill's attention turned next to Belfast:

> Then we moved on to the formation of a *National Museum and Art Gallery* … Once again, after months of patient work behind the scenes, victory was achieved, and at the time of writing a large extension is nearing completion (1972: 37).

The *Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery*, which in 1929 had migrated from Belfast city centre to its new site in the Botanic Gardens, was re-named the *Ulster Museum* in 1961, and its extension was opened on 30 October 1972, the most violent year of the recent 'Troubles.' Although the Museum Act (Northern Ireland) 1961 established the Ulster Museum in law as a 'national' museum, Bourke suggests (*contra* O'Neill) that it has been "in effect a 'national museum' since inception" having had "the same status as the natural history museums of England, Scotland and Wales." Certainly, when the foundation stone for the extension was laid in 1966, the trustees hoped that it would "place Northern Ireland on a truly national level" (Bourke 2011: 295). The *Ulster Transport Museum* was established as such in 1962, and merged with the *Ulster Folk Museum* as the *Ulster Folk and Transport Museum* in 1973. The *Ulster American Folk Park* opened in 1976, owned by the Scotch-Irish Trust of Ulster, with matched funding from the Department of Education of Northern Ireland. In 1998 the three institutions housing Northern Ireland's 'national' collections—*Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Ulster American Folk Park*—were merged as the *Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland* (MAGNI). MAGNI was re-branded as NMNI in 2006 (Wilson 1995; Bourke 2011: 297; Houlihan 2000: 10; Heal 2006: 13). It is important to note that since the Museum Act (1961), the term 'Ulster', which is in the name of all three of the National Museums of Northern Ireland, has been consistently interpreted by each as including the nine counties of the historic province of Ulster—a tradition which might be built on in restoring the idea of a 'National Diaspora Centre' as a cross-border institution.

In contrast to the *NMNI*, the *National Museum of Ireland* traces its origin back to the opening of its Kildare Street, Dublin site in 1890 as the *Dublin Museum of Art and Science*. It was re-named the *National Museum of Science and Art* in 1908, not without opposition. One commentator argued against the establishment of a 'national' museum and art gallery on the grounds that "it is just analogous to wanting an Irish Parliament back, or anything else of that kind, or an Irish army or an Irish navy" (Crooke 2000: 110). However, the view taken by British government officials in the nineteenth century prevailed: that "Great Britain owes every possible compensation of Ireland for the years of tyranny and injustice to which Ireland has been subjected" and that "compensation" could appropriately take the form of provision for cultural institutions, including a "national" museum (Crooke 2000: 110; Bourke 2011: 429).

At Partition in 1921, the *National Museum of Science and Art* was renamed the *National Museum of Ireland*, in recognition of "its place in the cultural life of the Nation" (Lucas 1976: 3, 9). As noted already, the first new 'national' museum site in the south since 1921 was Collins' Barracks (opened 1997, dealing with decorative arts and history). A new *National Museum of Ireland* site dealing with 'folklife' (like the Ulster Folk Museum) was not established until 2001, when the *Museum of Country Life* opened at Turlough Park, Co. Mayo. Another new 'national' museum (not part of the National Museum of Ireland) is *Strokestown Park: The Irish National Famine Museum*, Co. Roscommon. It was opened by President Mary Robinson in 1994, marking the 150th anniversary of the Great Irish Famine.[12] Similarly, the 200th anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion was marked by the opening of a permanent *National 1798 Rebellion Centre* in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, in 1998. Neither the *Irish National Famine Museum* nor the *National 1798 Centre* involved reciprocal permanent initiatives in Northern Ireland.

Turning now from museums to the emergence post-Partition of 'national' libraries, the *Belfast Central Library* has been so named since its opening in 1888. Unlike the *Belfast Municipal Museum*, it has not been upgraded officially to 'national' status. The organisation of public libraries in Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1972 was based on the six counties, and from 1972 to 2008 on five Education and Library Boards. In 2008, all five Library Boards (Belfast, North-Eastern, South-Eastern, Southern

and Western) were merged to form the *Northern Ireland Library Authority*, known as *Libraries NI* (LNI). As well as *Belfast Central Library*, there are seven other specialist LNI Heritage libraries (Derry~Londonderry, Ballymena, Newry, Armagh, Enniskillen, Omagh and the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies Library at the Ulster American Folk Park). These, together with the *Linenhall Library* in Belfast, the *Cardinal Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive* and the *National Collection of Northern Ireland Publications* (NIPR), function effectively as the 'national' library of Northern Ireland.[13] In contrast, the *National Library of Ireland* traces its origins, like the *National Museum of Ireland*, to its opening in 1890, on the same site, adjacent to Leinster House, in Kildare Street, Dublin (Richards et al. 2015: 13).

Turning finally to 'national' archives in Ireland, the *Public Record Office of Northern Ireland* (PRONI) was so named at its opening in 1924, and retains that name unchanged to the present. PRONI first opened in 1924 on the fourth floor of a linen warehouse in Murray Street, Belfast; then, migrated to the first floor of the newly built Royal Courts of Justice in Chichester Street in 1933; then to a purpose-built new archive building in Balmoral Avenue in 1972 (the same year as the opening of the Ulster Museum extension); and finally to its splendid new premises in Titanic Quarter in 2011. Thanks largely to the vision of the pioneering Deputy Keeper of the Records, Dr David Chart (who had previously worked in the Record Office in Dublin), PRONI from the start focused on "bringing in the private archives that would plug something of the evidence gap created by the Four Courts fire" [1922] (PRONI 2008: 2). That inspired, broad approach (collecting private as well as public records) was not at first generally seen as a priority: unlike with museums and libraries, it was simply essential to the functioning of the new Northern Ireland government to create a new 'national' archive, as a repository primarily of government records. However, the broad collection policy has made PRONI effectively the 'national' archives of Northern Ireland.

For the current debate about the need for a 'national diaspora centre', it is instructive to recall that, during the negotiations that resulted in the Government of Ireland Act (1920), the management of the *National Museum*, the *National Library* and the *National Gallery* were amongst the services designated as the responsibility of the *Council of Ireland* (Crooke

2000: 140). In other words, the possibility was contemplated that these institutions might function effectively after Partition as cross-border bodies. It is instructive also that the *Public Record Office* in Dublin (established in the Four Courts since 1867) was treated differently. Its administration was passed to Westminster with provision to permit the new southern and northern parliaments to establish new repositories for records pertaining to their own areas of jurisdiction (McColgan 1983: 35–49). The *Public Record Office* in Dublin, having been destroyed by fire on 30 June 1922, was re-established in the restored Four Courts building (1932). In 1986 it was merged with the *State Paper Office* (based in the Record Tower at Dublin Castle) to form the *National Archives of Ireland* (*Cartlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann*), based now in Bishop Street, Dublin (in a new building on the site of Jacob's Factory, one of the garrisons held by rebels during the 1916 Easter Rising).

Conclusion: A 'Cross-Border' Proposal

Thus, the story of the emergence of 'national' museums, libraries and archives in Ireland after Partition is a tangle of continuities and discontinuities: from the destruction of the Public Record Office in Dublin in 1922 to the construction of the new PRONI in Belfast in 2011. Even since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 1998, none of Ireland's 'national' museums, libraries and archives is formally established as a cross-border institution. Dealing with the complexity of Ireland and its diaspora surely calls for cross-border co-operation.

The *Epic Ireland* project, based in the CHQ Building, on Dublin's North Wall, is in an unrivalled position to tell the story of one of Ireland's major migration sites. However, it is not so well positioned to tell the migration story of the others, not least Belfast and Derry-Londonderry. *Epic Ireland's* Souvenir Guide claims that it "celebrates the unique global journey of *the Irish people*" which is to beg the question of the unity of "the Irish people" (Costecalde 2016: 4). The present situation regarding the need for a 'National Diaspora Centre' in Ireland is not unlike the Home Rule Crisis 1912, when the problem was 'Whose Home(land)?' or 'Whose Nation'?[14] Now the problem is 'Whose Diaspora?' Then the

'Whose Home(land)?' question was answered in 1920 by providing for the setting up of two 'home parliaments' in Dublin (Irish) and Belfast (British). Now the danger is that the 'Whose Diaspora?' question will be answered similarly by the setting up of two 'National Diaspora Centres', reinforcing rather than transcending the Border.

A way out of this bind lies in recognising the difficulty of defining 'diaspora' in any case, let alone the special difficulties in the case of Ireland; and in preferring the term 'migration' to comprehend the totality of relationships between 'home' and 'diaspora.' The so-called 'SDO3' model explains the phenomenon of migration accessibly in terms of three 'Stages' (departing–crossing–arriving); three 'Directions' (in–within–out); and three 'Outcomes' (segregating–modulating–integrating). These comprise the process of migration or 'moving home', between 'old world' and 'new world' (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008: 1–68). Rather than a Diaspora Centre, it will help greatly to think more in terms of developing a network of migration-related institutions, which are equally focused on diaspora and homeland and equally concerned with 'cherishing' all. This means dealing with not just the peoples of Ireland (Irish and British) outside Ireland, but also with the peoples of Britain (English, Scottish, Welsh), and elsewhere, inside Ireland (north and south). It also means seeing the various initiatives in Ireland to develop migration-related institutions as part of something bigger. A global co-operative enterprise is underway to track the migration history of humanity, from its earliest known homeland in Africa to the farthest reaches of its diaspora, across the surface of the earth and even beyond into space.[15] Since one person's homeland is another's diaspora, it is not possible to come close to telling the full story without international co-operation, at all levels—national, regional and local. There is no doubt a strong case to be made, in the interest of public education, for centres which present iconic visualisations of homeland and diaspora over time, in the form of large-scale, digital historical mappings, such as are to be found on display in the world's major migration museums.[16] These include *Ellis Island*, New York, the *German Emigration Center*, Bremerhaven, the *Immigration Museum*, Melbourne, Australia, the *Migration Museum*, Adelaide, Australia and the *Canadian Museum of Immigration*, Halifax, Nova Scotia. They are the five migration museums singled out as examples to emulate by the UK-based

Migration Museum Project, whose aim is "to create a national [sic] Migration Museum in Britain" (MMP 2015: 1, 49–50).

A thought experiment may help to pursue this argument for a centre: if you shut your eyes and think of the countries of the world and their diasporas, what do you see if not myriad trajectories of light criss-crossing the surface of the earth, like a map in an in-flight magazine of the airline's global routes? Iconic visualisations of 'national' homelands and their diasporas require large, cathedral-like public spaces, and are best presented by the most powerful Geographical Information Systems (GIS), which are capable of displaying digitally layered-historical mapping, zooming out and in between the smallest and largest scales, which in the case of Ireland requires going down to townland and sub-townland level (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2004). Such visualisations ideally represent the trajectories of all known individual migrants with connections to the homeland in question—zooming in and out, enabling them to be seen in their local and global contexts.[17]

A visualisation of the homeland of Ireland and its diaspora, for example, would include the Mellon and Kennedy families, not least Thomas Mellon (1813–1908), father of Andrew W. Mellon (1855–1937); and Patrick Kennedy (1823–58), great-grandfather of John F. Kennedy (1917–63). It would enable them to be picked out as individual strands in the densely and extensively woven fabric of Ireland's migration story. Such layered-historical mapping would provide access to the most detailed local information possible about their various homes, including their ancestral homes in the townlands of Castletown, Co. Tyrone and Dunganstown, Co. Wexford. Perhaps *Epic Ireland*, located in the vaults of the CHQ Building, lacks space enough to develop the cathedral-like, iconic installation needed for such a visualisation of Ireland and its diaspora, or perhaps another migration-related institution in Ireland will prove to have sufficient space and resources. Whatever the case, the beauty of such a digital resource is that it may be made accessible, not only in 'national' centres, but also in regional and local centres, and on individual computer screens.

Such a virtual representation of homeland and diaspora simultaneously points to and contextualises the 'real' people and their 'real' places. It also points to the question of how the border between the virtual and

the real is to be negotiated in Ireland—let alone for a moment the problem of negotiating the north-south Border. Minister Donohoe gave a compelling reason for cancelling the competition for a 'National Diaspora Centre':

> rather than trying to limit the many and varied stories of our Diaspora by putting them into one Centre, I believe they are more meaningful and appealing to locals and visitors alike when told in the context of the places that our emigrants came from (Donohoe 2015).

That is to apply the principle of subsidiarity. To put it another way, are there better places in Ireland for exploring, say, the stories of Ireland and North America, or Ireland and New Zealand, than the Ulster American Folk Park, Castletown, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, and the Ballance House, Ballypitmave, Glenavy, Co. Antrim? Whether or not the Minister's decision is evidence of realisation in the nick of time that to proceed with a 'National Diaspora Centre' would be to walk into a 'partitionist' trap, his reason remains a good one. Telling Ireland's migration story in all the complexity of its 'throughotherness'—its entangled Irishness and Britishness, and more—calls for local, regional and international cooperation, especially within the three-strand framework of relationships set out in the Belfast/Good Friday agreement (Unionist–Nationalist; North–South; East–West). The issue of dealing with Ireland's migration history is so intimately connected with Ireland and Britain's still-intractable problem of 'dealing with the past' that it surely deserves the attention not only of the North–South Ministerial Council but also the British–Irish Council and Intergovernmental Conference.[18]

Is it enough to hope for the best: that *Epic Ireland* on its own initiative, as a private enterprise, will seek to develop into an all-Ireland, cross-border institution through partnership with migration-related institutions in Northern Ireland? The example of the *Deutsches Auswandererhaus* (German Emigrant Center) in Bremerhaven may be instructive in this regard. Opened in 2005, and extended in 2012 to deal with the theme of immigration as well as emigration, Bremerhaven is now the migration museum with the largest visitorship in Europe—since opening it has consistently had about 220,000 visitors each year (MMP 2015: 49). It

remains the hope of the *Association of European Migration Institutions* (of which it is a member) that the *German Emigrant Center* will eventually assume a leadership role, but experience indicates that, for at least the first ten years in the life of such a new institution, the focus and energy of its staff must be on ensuring the consolidation of initial success, leaving little to spare for leadership in broader regional, national and international partnership building.

So how will Northern Ireland respond to the unilateral move to establish a 'National Diaspora Centre' in Ireland, which has resulted in the opening of *Epic Ireland* in Dublin? Will National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) continue pursuing its ambition to transform the Ulster American Folk Park into a "National Museum of Emigration telling the story of all people leaving Ireland for all parts of the world"? *Epic Ireland* was rebranded as *Epic: The Irish Emigration Museum* in February 2017.[19] Nevertheless, the opportunity is not quite lost to create a new cross-border institution—or better, a cross-border network of migration-related institutions—suited to the need to cherish the relationship between homeland and diaspora; and, in the spirit of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, suited to the need to 'deal with the past.' The Colum Sands question "if it wasn't for the Border what would we do?" may yet be answered more constructively than by having two 'National Diaspora Centres.'[20]

Notes

1. "Diaspora Museum is virtually set to open", *Sunday Times*, 13 March 2016; "An Irish Expat's Epic Endeavour", *Irish Times*, 30 April 2016; "'Story of 70 Million Irish' told at new Dublin visitor centre: Epic Ireland in CHQ building curated by company behind Titanic Belfast", *Irish Times*, 2 June 2016.
2. Colum Sands, sung to the tune of *The Wark O' The Weavers,* on his first solo album *Unapproved Road* (1981).
3. The *Feasibility Study* was prepared for *Fáilte Ireland* by Event Communications, London, with CHL Consulting Group, Dublin.
4. The institutional development of academic diaspora studies on the island of Ireland may be traced back to the establishment of the Irish Centre for Migration Studies at University College Cork, 1997, and the Centre for

Migration Studies (now Mellon Centre) at the Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh, Co. Tyrone in 1998. On the meaning of the term 'diaspora', to include not only forced but also voluntary migration, see Akenson (1997) and Fitzgerald and Lambkin (2008: 257–9).

5. Ironically, the first political leader in Ireland to demonstrate commitment to "cherishing the diaspora" (although he did not use those terms) was the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Basil Brooke. In 1956, he was instrumental in establishing the *Ulster-Scot Historical Society* (now the *Ulster Historical Foundation*), attached to PRONI, because "he had been so impressed with the reception he had received from the descendants of Ulster emigrants he had met on his visits to North America, that he resolved to repay their support" (UHF 2007: 7).
6. *Opening Horizons: A New Vision for the Future,* launched 18 May 2000, Ulster Museum, Belfast, by Loyd Grossman.
7. Epic Ireland website at: http://chq.ie/epic-ireland/ (accessed 19 Dec. 2016).
8. The parallel issue of how best to provide a 'national' stadium for each major sport in Ireland has been similarly fraught. In 2008, the plan to build a £14m national sports stadium on the site of the Maze prison in Northern Ireland was cancelled (McDonald 2008).
9. The 'special' partnership of the State with the Catholic Church was expressed in deleted article (44.1.2): "The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens."
10. *Northern Irish Connections* may be regarded as an example of what *The Economist* has called "the magic of diasporas" (*The Economist*, 18–25 Nov. 2011). Another example is the inaugural Irish Diaspora Award, given by the Irish Film and Television Academy to Roma Downey, who is from Co. Derry, "for her achievements as an Irish artist abroad"; the award was welcomed by the Republic's minister for diaspora affairs, Jimmy Deenihan (*Irish News*, 14 Mar. 2016).
11. Estyn Evans arrived in Northern Ireland in 1928 to establish the new Department of Geography at Queen's University, Belfast, and went on to establish the Departments of Archaeology (1948) and Social Anthropology (1973), and the Institute of Irish Studies (1965) (Graham 1994: 183–4).
12. In 2013, the main contribution of the Irish National Famine Museum to *The Gathering* was a "Welcoming Home the Great Famine Diaspora" programme, with a particular focus on "Gathering the Roscommon

emigrants stories." See: http://www.strokestownpark.ie/whats-on/the-gathering (accessed 12 Feb. 2016). The National Famine Commemoration Day (*Lá Cuimhneacháin Náisiúnta an Ghorta Mhóir*), organised in a different place each year by the Dublin government since 2008, was held north of the Border for the first time in 2015, in Newry.

13. NIPR, see http://www.nibooks.org/
14. The 'Whose Nation?' question is famously asked and answered in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922): "'What is your nation if I may ask?' says the Citizen. 'Ireland,' says Bloom. 'I was born here. Ireland.'"
15. The *Cradle of Humankind* site, near Johannesburg, South Africa, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.
16. A major weakness of *Epic Ireland* is the almost total absence of any identification of sites in the homeland at parish, townland, or street level.
17. A major weakness of *Epic Ireland* is the almost total absence of attention to parish, townland, or street level and although it includes a digital display mapping group trajectories of migration from Ireland over time, mapping is generally absent, even in the *Souvenir Guide* (Costecalde 2016).
18. There are six North South Bodies which operate on an all-island basis, see: http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/index/north-south-implementation-bodies.htm (accessed 19 Dec. 2016). On the potential for developing cross-border service provision, see Ó Caoindealbháin and Clarke (2012).
19. Part One of four special magazines on "Ireland's spectacular new museum", entitled Epic: The Irish Emigration Museum, was published in the *Irish Independent* newspaper on 17 Feb. 2017.
20. The author is grateful to colleagues and friends for comments and suggestions, especially Patrick Fitzgerald, Sir Peter Froggatt, Sophie Henderson, Piaras Mac Éinrí, John Gilmour, Emily Mark-Fitzgerald, Michael Pierse, William Roulston, Colum Sands, Johanne Devlin Trew, George Woodman, and Kay Muhr.

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5

Marriage Equality North and South: The Journey After *The Gathering*

Danielle Mackle

Introduction

22 May 2015 was a historic day, not only for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) community in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) but for the country as a whole. The Marriage Referendum 2015 was passed with a resounding Yes from 62.07% of the electorate who cast their vote (Murphy 2016: 315). The ROI became the first country globally to enshrine same-sex marriage into its constitution, which came as a remarkable step forward in terms of equality for the LGBTQ community in the ROI, where until 1993 homosexual activity between men was a criminal offence (Rose 1994). To put this in context, the ROI was more than a decade behind the rest of the countries of the British Isles, with England and Wales decriminalising homosexual acts between men in 1967; Scotland in 1981 and Northern Ireland in 1982.

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Notable is that despite the ROI being 12 years behind Northern Ireland in terms of decriminalisation, to date, Northern Ireland has yet to legalise same-sex marriage for its LGBTQ citizens. Thus, if any LGBTQ couple married in England, Scotland, Wales or the ROI decided to relocate to Northern Ireland, their marriage would be downgraded and treated as a civil partnership.

This chapter will consider the journey that the LGBTQ community and its supporters in the ROI embarked upon to achieve marriage equality. It will begin with a brief review of LGBTQ rights and legislation in the ROI. Next it will consider the influence of the Church and the impact of migration not only on the LGBTQ community but on Irish society and how changing attitudes allowed for the proposal of a marriage equality referendum. Attention then turns to the YES/NO campaigns and their strategies, including the involvement of the Irish diaspora and their momentous and emotive *#HomeToVote* journey. Finally, aspirations for the future and the debate on marriage equality in Northern Ireland, as the only jurisdiction in the British Isles prohibiting its LGBTQ citizens from entering into marriage, will be discussed.

A Review of LGBTQ Rights and Legislation in Ireland

The LGBTQ rights movement in the ROI began to visibly emerge in the early 1970s, around the time of the Stonewall Riots (Barry 1987). Pertinent to the LGBTQ movement at this time was the issue of decriminalisation. The legislation criminalising homosexuality in Ireland dates back to the Offences Against the Persons Act, 1861, which made homosexual acts between men an offence punishable by imprisonment with hard labour and it remained in place until 1993 (Rose 1994). In 1983, LGBTQ activist David Norris (later Senator Norris) took a case to the Supreme Court to challenge this law but he was unsuccessful. The judgement, handed down by a 3–2 majority, referred to the "Christian and democratic nature of the Irish State", arguing that the law as it stood served public health and the institution of marriage. This was appealed by Norris, supported and represented by Senior Counsel Mary Robinson

(who became President of Ireland in 1990) and taken to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), eventually resulting in a 1988 ruling that the legislation was in breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which stipulates "a right to private and family life, his home and his correspondence." It took five more years for the Oireachtas (Irish parliament) to implement this ruling and decriminalise homosexuality in the ROI. The then first female Minister for Justice, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, sponsored the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act (1993), which addressed the decriminalisation and it was signed by *an tUachtarán* (the President) Mary Robinson.

The decriminalisation of homosexuality in the ROI paved the way for a number of other pieces of legislation which would help protect members of the LGBTQ community. These included: The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989), intended to criminalise hate crime on the basis of sexual orientation; the Unfair Dismissals (Amendment) Act (1993); the Employment Equality Act (1998); the Refugee Act (1996), which paved the way in international legislation for those seeking asylum and refuge based on their sexual orientation; and the Equal Status Act, 2000 (Irishstatutebook.ie, 1989, 1998, 2000). The laws offered protection in that they prohibited any form of discrimination in the areas of employment (except for faith-based schools and hospitals which could dismiss teachers and staff for being LGBTQ), vocational training and the provision of goods and services. In the summer of 2015, the Employment Equality Amendment Bill (2015) was passed by the joint houses of the Oireachtas, thus removing the article in the Employment Equality Act that had previously granted faith-based schools the right to dismiss teachers and staff who identified as LGBTQ.

A further shift forward for the LGBTQ community in the ROI came in the form of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act (2010), which allowed same-sex couples the opportunity to form an official partnership and included many of the same rights accorded to heterosexual civil marriage. However, the act omitted protection for same-sex parents and did not include changes to the adoption legislation to allow rights for same-sex couples. Bell and Binnie (2000: 55) considered similar legislation in Denmark and remarked that the exclusion of parental and adoption rights as well as the right to form a

partnership in a Church was "seen by some activists to have consolidated the status of homosexuals as second-class citizens, while also advocating a fixed model of homosexual relationships that denies an acceptance of their diversity." LGBTQ activist groups in the ROI shared this sentiment towards civil partnerships and voiced their opposition to the lack of parenting rights (Clarke 2009). Politically, however, some Senators in Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) were vocal in their support of the "traditional" definition of the family as defined in the Irish Constitution. Senator Ronan Mullen stated:

> In approaching the question of same-sex adoption, I look at the Constitution's pledge to guard with special care the institution of marriage on which the family is founded […] that has always been understood to be the two-parent, man and woman, father and mother family. One of the questions we must address is whether we would like that to continue to be the case or to see the wording of that revisited in a dramatic and, perhaps, surprising way to include other family forms […] the law can seek to promote and champion what works best, not to treat as equal value forms which do not work so well. […] The Constitution underpins my argument and it was drafted in this spirit. Common sense would acknowledge that allowing for same-sex adoption would deny children the acknowledgement of their right to a mother and a father, where possible (Seanad Éireann 2009: 352).

Although gaining civil partnership rights represented a major advance for the LGBTQ community in terms of rights and recognition, it did not deter activists from seeking full marriage equality, to include the right to adopt, the right to assisted fertility and the right to guardianship of their partner's children. Thus began the mobilisation of campaigners to lobby and seek commitments in favour of equal marriage from the political parties in the run up to the next general election in 2011 (Murphy 2016); however, this would require a change to the Irish Constitution.

The Catholic Church, Society and Migration

It is significant that the Irish Constitution of 1937 was sent to the Vatican in Rome to be approved by the Pope before it was officially ratified (Asher 2009). The Catholic Church had a strong grip on Irish society and there

was an element of conservativism around issues of contraception, sex, abortion and divorce. Indeed, the existence of sexual minorities was not spoken about and therefore the LGBTQ community remained an invisible part of society (Inglis 1998). Identifying as LGBTQ was considered to be an abomination and a mortal sin from a religious perspective (Scheper-Hughes 1979) and Catholic Church teachings on the issue of homosexuality included statements such as:

> Homosexual acts are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith 1986).

Fone (2000) notes that the Catholic Church considered homosexuality to be a perversion, that it was something pathological and a mental illness, and as such, Irish society was led to believe that identifying as LGBTQ was immoral, perverse, a crime and indicative of mental illness (Musingarimi 2008). Indeed, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) used by medical professionals globally to diagnose mental illnesses, classified homosexuality as a mental illness up until 1973. Research conducted by Coyle and Rafalin (2000) and Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) has identified the difficulties LGBTQ individuals may experience in negotiating their LGBTQ identity under the weight of such biased religious teachings. Keogh et al. (2004) considered how hiding a minority sexual orientation might have a significant impact on mental health and may have contributed to many LGBTQ people relocating from rural Ireland to Dublin or abroad due to fear of rejection by their families and of excommunication from the Catholic Church. Hatton (1998) notes that in the case of LGBTQ individuals, many may have left Ireland under the guise of seeking work to flee from the clutches of the Church.

While issues of gender and sexuality remain important yet underresearched in Irish migration studies generally (Luibhéid 2008; Ryan-Flood 2016), it is clear, however, that migration has not necessarily provided resolution of the difficulties that emigrants may have faced at home and that in any event sexuality may be only one reason among many for their departure. For example, while migration may have provided an alternative for young men to the "emasculation" of staying at

home in the declining economy of rural Ireland (Ní Laoire 2001) or as a means of escaping the "hypermasculinity" of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland (Ashe 2012: 238), migrants in their new environment may not necessarily have found the freedom they had envisioned. Indeed, gendered narratives may place them outside the present discourse of "globalised mobility" and, as with older male migrants in Britain, locate them in English pubs and clubs rather than homes, where, resistant to change, they are "holding on to an imaginary social world that has disappeared" (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2010: 392). Indeed, research with young Irish gay men in Britain has noted the importance of class differences in their experiences of migration, with working-class gay men reporting institutional marginalisation and exclusion from the gay scene in England, which they perceived as middle-class (Popoviciu et al. 2006: 174–5).

Over the last 20 years, however, the shift in legislation and policy, combined with growing tolerance in Irish society, has had an important impact on the lives of the LGBTQ community, particularly around employment. Elkink et al. (2017: 367) have noted that in Ireland "religiosity has been dropping for some decades, especially since the 1990's", not least because of the publicity surrounding numerous sex abuse allegations, and the social impact of Ireland's rising GDP and membership of the EU. The Civil Partnership Act (2010) also helped reduce the invisibility and stigmatisation of the LGBTQ community. By 2015, these factors had facilitated a shift in societal attitudes to allow for the proposal of an equal marriage referendum.

The Irish Referendum Proposal

2011 saw the incoming Labour/Fine Gael coalition in the ROI lay out in its Programme for Government the establishment of a "Constitutional Convention" (Taoiseach.gov.ie 2011: 17), which was set up in 2012 to consider several issues including the provision for same-sex marriage, reducing the presidential term to five years, amending the constitutional clause on women in the home; reducing the voting age and removing the offence of blasphemy from the constitution. This was a positive step forward for Irish society, not least for the LGBTQ com-

munity and most pertinent was the statement by the *Tánaiste* Eamon Gilmore TD at the Dublin LGBTQ Pride festival in July 2012 that the issue of marriage equality was "quite simply, the civil rights issue of this generation" (Gilmore 2012). At its third plenary meeting in April 2013, almost 80% of members of the Constitutional Convention voted in favour of a change to the constitution to provide for equal marriage and as such, the recommendations presented to government set out that the proposal for amendment should be given to the electorate (Convention on the Constitution 2013).[1] The Taoiseach Enda Kenny accepted the recommendation and agreed that there would be a referendum on equal marriage by the middle of 2015 (Press Association 2013; Murphy 2016).

A Referendum Commission was established in January 2015 (as per the Referendum Act, 1998) and the referendum was tabled for the 22nd May 2015. Alongside the Thirty-Fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill (2015) was the Thirty-Fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Age of Eligibility for Election to the Office of President) Bill (2015), with both votes taking place on the same day (Referendum Commission 2015; Murphy 2016). It was proposed that the wording for the amendment to the Irish Constitution in relation to marriage equality would be included under Section Three of Article 41, with the wording: "Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex." This would allow full marriage rights for same-sex couples as per their heterosexual counterparts. The proposal was passed unopposed in the Dáil in March 2015 and in the Seanad later that month by a vote of 29 to 3 (O'Halloran 2015). To ensure that same-sex couples were extended full marriage rights, amendments had also to be made to the adoption legislation and issues of assisted reproduction and guardianship would have to be addressed. To do this, the Children and Family Relationships Bill (2015) was passed, although it would have been enacted regardless of the outcome of the equal marriage referendum (Murphy 2016). Therefore, the only issue that the citizens of the ROI had to vote on was whether marriage equality could be inserted into the Constitution of Ireland, as the legal reform in relation to adoption rights, assisted reproduction and guardianship had already been passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas.

The Yes/No Campaigns

Unlike the political opposition to marriage equality in Northern Ireland, the Yes campaign in the South was supported by all the main political parties, with the exception of a small number of national politicians and independent TDs who publicly backed the No campaign (Minihan 2015a, b). The No campaign was further supported by a number of conservative Catholic/Christian groups including the Catholic Church itself and the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, and it was consistent with the views expressed by Pope Francis. The Christian-run Iona Institute and the Mother and Fathers Matter organisation were the most prolific No campaign organisations involved in publishing and distributing leaflets and posters, engaging in public debates and using social media such as YouTube to broadcast videos promoting their No arguments (Elkink et al. 2017). Their opposition focused primarily on the traditional notion of the family illustrated by slogans such as "Children need a Mother and a Father" being advertised on posters and leaflets and in social media. The central stance of the No argument was that not having a mother and a father left children at a disadvantage (McGuire 2015). Children's rights and advocacy organisations criticised this view, highlighting that it insulted the vast number of one-parent families living in Ireland (O'Connor 2015). Furthermore, the issues of adoption and assisted reproduction were unrelated to the equal marriage vote, having already been addressed in the Children and Family Relationships Bill (2015) which would not have been affected by the outcome of the referendum (Mac Cormaic 2015; Murphy 2016).

The Yes campaign was set up and mobilised by the Yes Equality (2015) group and it targeted not only the LGBTQ community and their supporters but the entire ROI electorate. Backed by Ireland's political parties, the Yes campaign was further supported by a variety of rights-based organisations such as Amnesty International, LGBTQ-sector organisations in the ROI as well as internationally renowned public figures, including musicians, actors and authors. Elkink et al. (2017) noted that the Yes campaign also had a strong presence "on the ground" and engaged in widespread door-to-door canvassing. The Yes campaign strategy actively encouraged members and supporters of the LGBTQ community to engage friends, family members, colleagues and peers in discussion

about the campaign, stating, "this is a vote about real people, people that we know; our family members, friends, people in our community" (O'Regan 2015). Indeed, previous research has noted that individuals who know an LGBTQ person will tend to hold more pro-gay attitudes than those who do not (Cullen et al. 2002). LGBTQ individuals' personal stories were used throughout the campaign, which served to help educate and inform society about the struggles many LGBTQ people face, and to turn the concept of equal marriage and equal rights for all into a more relatable context (Murphy 2016). Furthermore, online campaigns such as Vote With Us (2015) broadcast videos of members of the public and famous faces opening up about why they would be voting Yes. Social media banners such as "I'm Voting Yes: Ask Me Why?" were used to keep the momentum going and the Yes Equality campaign also had a strong merchandising strategy (Elkink et al. 2017: 365) with badges, t-shirts, bags and flags with "Yes/Tá" and "Make Grá [love] the Law" printed on them. It organised a registration initiative, reporting that approximately 60,000 new voters were added to the electoral register. Research by Murphy (2016) and Elkink et al. (2017) has noted the strong use of social media during the Yes and No campaigns; indeed, both Twitter and Facebook were used extensively to encourage voters to go out and cast their votes on referendum day. Both platforms also allowed voters to record that they had voted. Other initiatives on voting day included car sharing/pooling to get people to the ballot boxes. To promote the Ireland-based taxi app Hailo's offer of a free journey to the voting stations, the company broadcast a sketch on social media in which they pranked customers in Dublin taxis with a "heterophobic" driver.

The Vote and the Diaspora

The equal marriage referendum also attracted much media attention internationally. Twitter published a map of the activity on the hashtag *#MarRef* which demonstrated the significant interest in the referendum globally, particularly as at the time Ireland was the first country to stage a referendum to vote on equal marriage. However, the ROI does not allow overseas voting for Irish citizens living abroad and although emigrants

can keep their voting rights for up to 18 months, they need to return to Ireland in order to cast their vote.

A striking aspect of the marriage referendum was the social media campaign that documented the journey of voters from across the globe returning to Ireland to vote. The Twitter hashtag *#HomeToVote* was used 72,000 times across their platform in the 24 hours from 5 pm on 21 May to 5 pm on referendum day (Elkink et al. 2017: 366; Murphy 2016: 321). Fottrell (2015) has noted that emigrants not able to vote participated in other campaign strategies such as tweeting pictures of themselves, sometimes in groups, in front of major international landmarks with Yes posters. The Twitter hashtag *#Ringyourgranny* was used by young people and emigrants unable to cast their votes due to their young age or location (Irishtimes.com 2015) and some actually broadcast YouTube videos of themselves telephoning their family members, parents and grandparents to urge them to vote Yes. Although previous research has indicated that younger voters in Ireland are generally less likely to vote (Blais et al. 2004; Wattenberg 2011), a significantly higher proportion of young voters participated in the marriage equality referendum (Elkink et al. 2017). Healy (2015) has reported that the Union of Students in Ireland facilitated young voters and registered approximately 27,500 new voters in the run up to the referendum. It is clear that the *#HomeToVote* campaign made a significant impression and served to highlight the importance of the referendum and equality for the LGBTQ community in the ROI.

Over the last two years, the media in Ireland has published many stories about the impact of the equal marriage referendum on individuals from the LGBTQ community. This highlights an important impact of the referendum campaign and its aftermath which has provided public space for LGBTQ voices and issues to be heard. Ryan-Flood (2016: 52) reports of her research interviews conducted in 2008–09, for example, that there was the sense in the Irish LGBTQ community in London that "they were absent from wider discussions of the Irish experience of Britain and of migration more generally." Disputes over the participation of the LGBTQ community in St. Patrick's Day parades in the United States and elsewhere have contributed to the sense of exclusion among the Irish LGBTQ diaspora (Marston 2002, 2004; Mulligan 2008; Munt and O'Donnell 2007). Media stories, such as that of Brian O'Flynn, published in the *Irish Examiner* a

year after the referendum (May 2016), have helped to bring LGBTQ experiences into the mainstream. At the age of 18, O'Flynn had left the ROI in search "of a new life and a more accepting society" (O'Flynn 2016). Prior to the equal marriage referendum, he had wondered how any LGBTQ person could have a sense of national identity in a country where the LGBTQ community were excluded from their own constitution. However, following the Yes vote, O'Flynn remarked of Ireland that "home has finally become home" (ibid.). Laura Enright, writing for the *Moving to Canada* website (movingtocanada.com 2015) about why she had left her new home in Toronto to come home to vote, explained, "I felt it was important to show my family, friends and the LGBTQ community that I, along with many others, cared enough to stand up and say yes, for and with them." Thus, not content to await their long-promised overseas voting rights, the diaspora, especially recent young emigrants, mobilised to make their voices heard in the hope of creating a more open and tolerant society at home to which they may someday return. The diaspora activism of the campaign was not simply a reflection of the continued engagement of emigrants with the homeland but of "the role of the diaspora in both national imaginaries and practical political engagement" (Ryan-Flood 2016: 52).

Hopes for the Future

While there were many positive aspects to the journey to marriage equality in the ROI, not least the support from the diaspora and wider society, there were also some negative impacts. Researchers from the University of Queensland and Victoria University in Australia conducted a study on the social and psychological impacts of Ireland's marriage equality referendum "NO" campaign (Dane et al. 2016). The findings from this study highlighted that participants recalled in particular a number of campaign events. For example;

> 97% recalled the 'NO' campaign posters placed on buildings and poles throughout the cities and countryside towns. 80% reported being upset by these images and around two-thirds reported feeling anxious (66%) and distressed (64%) (Dane et al. 2016: 5).

Further findings specific to the young ROI LGBTQ community found that young people were more likely to experience distress and anxiety when exposed to negative comments from family members. The study also noted that, of the 1657 participants surveyed,

> a very large number and range of negative emotions were reported, having ripple effects in society. These included feeling: demeaned, degraded, invalidated, humiliated, violated, attacked, exhausted, devastated, traumatised, and suicidal (Dane et al. 2016: 7).

It is clear from the review of the literature that the journey to marriage equality was not easily travelled and difficult personal costs were borne by many who fought the campaign. Nevertheless, this once Catholic Church-indoctrinated, socially conservative country, became the first in the world to legalise same-sex marriage through a national referendum (Murphy 2016).

Even before the final count of the Marriage Equality Referendum was announced in the South, citizens on both sides of the border and the diaspora across the globe were calling for equal marriage in Northern Ireland, which now remains the only part of the British Isles to not extend equal marriage to its LGBTQ citizens. Despite being part of the United Kingdom, the legal framework in Northern Ireland differs to that of England, Scotland and Wales and subsequently the policies pertaining to its LGBTQ communities. To give an example, Northern Ireland did not decriminalise male homosexuality until 1982 with the passing of law reform in the House of Commons (Duggan 2012) despite it having been decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967. Opposition to the decriminalisation had been spearheaded in 1977 by the Reverend Dr. Ian Paisley, then leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and head of the Free Presbyterian Church, with his "Save Ulster from Sodomy" campaign (Duggan 2008). As a result, activist Jeff Dudgeon brought a case to the European Court of Human Rights in 1981, which ruled that Northern Ireland was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, eventually leading to the repeal of homosexual criminalisation (Duggan 2008).

Further advancements in equality for the LGBTQ community in Northern Ireland (NI) came as a result of the Northern Ireland Act

(1998), Section 75, which required statutory bodies to "promote equality of opportunity and good relations" and, for the first time, the LGBTQ community was included as a minority group requiring legal recognition in the legislation (Duggan 2010). Subsequent legislation has further sought to address the gaps in terms of inequalities, including the grounds of sexual orientation:

- The Employment (NI) Order 2002, which allows same-sex parents the same parental and adoption leave as their heterosexual colleagues;
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003, which "make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation within employment and vocational training";
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004, which allows same-sex couples formal legal recognition of their relationships;
- The Equality Act (Sex Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006, which bans discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of sexual orientation (Duggan 2010: 34).

It is important to note here that the Civil Partnership Act (2004) in Northern Ireland came about during a period of direct rule from Westminster; whether or not the Northern Ireland Assembly would have passed the act is unclear. On five occasions since 2013, Sinn Féin has tabled a motion on same-sex marriage legislation for the power-sharing Assembly to vote on, with the most recent vote seeing a small majority in favour (McDonald 2016). However, by activating a "petition of concern", the DUP has exercised its right to block legislation designed to further equality for the LGBTQ community. Employment of the "petition of concern" along sectarian fault lines (broadly, unionists against and nationalists in favour) to block same-sex marriage has been controversial; particularly that "a device which was intended to protect communal interests has been used to restrict movement on social issues" (Thomson 2016: 496). Unsurprisingly, the DUP cited as a key reason the fear that marriage equality would undermine the traditional and nuclear notion of the family; a position common to the Catholic Church and most Protestant denominations in Northern Ireland. An open letter from the Catholic Cardinal and Bishops of Northern Ireland to the Stormont MLAs stated:

> The proposed 'Marriage Equality' motion before the Assembly effectively says to parents, children and society that the State should not, and will not, promote any normative or ideal family environment for raising children. It therefore implies that the biological bond and natural ties between a child and its mother and father have no intrinsic value for the child or for society (McDonald 2014).

However, following the Northern Ireland Assembly elections in March 2017, due to a significant loss of seats, the DUP has lost the power to raise a "petition of concern" (*Belfast Telegraph* 2017). A valid petition requires 30 Assembly Member signatures, and in the previous mandate, the DUP, with 38 seats, was the only party that could table a petition as a stand-alone party. Further to the March 2017 elections, the DUP won only 28 seats, thus ensuring that one party alone cannot trigger a petition (*Belfast Telegraph* 2017). To once again veto the issue of equal marriage, the DUP would have to find support from others in the chamber to reach the required 30 signatures.

As was once the case in the ROI, the grip of religiosity remains prevalent in Northern Irish society and this has a negative impact on the LGBTQ community. Hinrichs and Rosenberg (2002) report that individuals or groups who value religion tend to hold negative views of people with an LGBTQ identity, and Stopler (2008: 369) has suggested that Foucault's (1978) theory of power is "particularly conducive to a proper analysis of the power that culture, and religion as an important part of culture, has in people's lives." Recent research demonstrates that Northern Ireland remains a society that places momentous importance on its religious associations and affiliations, and as Bloomer and O'Dowd (2014: 367) state, Northern Ireland,

> is one of the areas exhibiting the highest rates of religious affiliation and practice in the UK. Churches influence politics in Northern Ireland by being consulted by, if not negotiated with, the British and Irish Governments on political issues.

Indeed, it is not simply the LGBTQ community that struggles with the "moral conservativism" handed down by the Church (Bloomer and O'Dowd 2014: 366). A recent example which is currently making head-

lines in the public domain in both Northern Ireland and the ROI concerns the abortion debate. While abortion is legal in most of the British Isles (England, Scotland and Wales), it is only allowed in extremely limited circumstances in the ROI and Northern Ireland which serves to highlight the continued unofficial "moral authority" (Bloomer and O'Dowd 2014: 366) and influence that the churches continue to have on Irish and Northern Irish policy. In the ROI, the "Repeal the 8th" campaign (the 8th Amendment to the Irish Constitution, which denies women abortion rights) has once again motivated political activism from the diaspora. Irish women living abroad and unable to attend the "Strike for Repeal" marches in Dublin in March 2017 started their own *#Post4repeal* campaign which was trending on Twitter. They tweeted photographs of themselves posting postcards to *Taoiseach* Enda Kenny from all over the world with a message calling on him to repeal the 8th Amendment (*Irish Times,* March 2017). Perhaps it was the strength of their voices in the marriage equality referendum that inspired the diaspora with the confidence to mobilise again and add their weight to the next rights-based issue facing the ROI and its constitution.

In terms of marriage equality, Northern Ireland is very much a jurisdiction out on its own. The issue of religiosity in Northern Irish politics has meant that equality for the LGBTQ community remains steadfastly behind that of their ROI and UK counterparts. Opinion polls have shown, however, that Stormont and the DUP, in particular, are out of step with the opinions of the electorate as a whole. In July 2015, an Ipsos MORI Survey indicated that 68% of people in Northern Ireland were in favour of equal marriage, while an estimated 20,000 people took part in a pro-marriage equality march in Belfast (13 June 2015) organised by Amnesty International, the Rainbow Project and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Amnesty.org.uk 2017). As with most equality legislation in Northern Ireland, particularly that pertaining to the LGBTQ community, it is likely that marriage equality will have to be sought through the courts. There are two cases being brought by couples who are arguing that being denied the right to marry is in breach of their human rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This is the same argument used previously by Senator Norris in the ROI and Jeff Dudgeon in Northern Ireland in their cases to decriminalise

homosexuality. The judgements of these cases have yet to be handed down. However, Northern Ireland's lack of formal engagement with its diaspora (Devlin Trew, this volume) would suggest that, unlike the case of the ROI, it is doubtful whether the Northern Irish abroad will come to the rescue with political activism.

Notes

1. The Convention on the Constitution is a forum of 100 people, representative of Irish society and parliamentarians from the island of Ireland, with an independent Chairperson. It was established by a resolution of both Houses of the Oireachtas to consider and make recommendations on future amendments to the constitution. See: https://www.constitution.ie/Convention.aspx

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Part 2

Echoes from History and Irish Imaginaries

6

Bringing It All Back Home: The Fluctuating Reputation of James Orr (1770–1816), Ulster-Scots Poet and Irish Patriot

Carol Baraniuk

The Gathering 2013 was billed as a celebration of Ireland, Irishness and of Ireland's people worldwide. In its essence a tourism initiative, it was rolled out with a vigorous call to the Irish diaspora, particularly those located in the United States, which was urged to participate in a great homecoming festival centred on the mother country in 2013. The project was criticised, famously, by former Irish cultural ambassador to the United States, actor Gabriel Byrne (BBC 2012) as an attempt to "shake down" Irish Americans for "a few quid" and more widely as a self-indulgent culture fest that, in resorting to hackneyed and stereotypical images of Ireland, excluded many whose cultural or confessional backgrounds did not easily fit with traditional models. This chapter originally offered as a paper for the conference *After The Gathering: Dissonant Voices in Irish Diaspora Studies* held in June 2014 at the Public Record Office of

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Northern Ireland, posits a counter-narrative. Its subject is the Ulster-Scots poet, Irish patriot and Presbyterian radical James Orr (1770–1816), Bard of Ballycarry, Co. Antrim. The chapter will argue that Orr is not sufficiently known and appreciated in his native land, his legacy victim to a complex interplay of social and political forces that shape identity formation and nation building.

The term Ulster-Scots has sometimes been contested on the grounds that it is a form of nomenclature which dates from the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it has also been distrusted, or caricatured, as an artificial construct deployed to serve an aggressive form of Ulster loyalism. In fact, uses of the term have been recorded in official correspondence as far back as the early seventeenth century, as, for example, Sir George Radcliffe writing in 1640 that: "None is soe dim-sighted but sees the gen'rall inclination of the Ulster Scots to the Covenant" (Whitaker 1810: 209). Although here the term is used in an ethnic sense, it establishes an historic usage. However, the term has been employed in this chapter for two main reasons: first, it is an accurate descriptor of writers within Ulster such as Orr and his contemporary Sam Thomson (1766–1816), who possessed Scottish ancestral roots, employed Scots language (though not exclusively) in their writing and in their everyday speech, and whose work demonstrates "pre-existent poetic and linguistic patterns which prevailed in both lowland Scotland and in Ulster" (Akenson and Crawford 1977: 33). These poets wrote within the Scottish literary tradition which had been transported to Ulster by seventeenth century migrants. They developed it, and through it addressed Irish, British and global issues. In referring to his own sense of identity, Thomson himself wrote that he felt "every item Scotch within" (Thomson 1806: 87). Second, in academic literary studies a considerable body of scholarship has accumulated over several decades in which these eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writers are referred to as "Ulster-Scots poets."[1]

James Orr's home village, Ballycarry in County Antrim, nestles in a delightful location among the hills above Carrickfergus and Larne, where it enjoys fine views over Belfast Lough to the coast of County Down and eastwards across the Irish Sea to the Scottish hills. It was James Orr's home throughout his life, except for a brief period following the 1798 Rebellion when he was forced to emigrate to the United States. Villagers

past and present have always taken justifiable pride in his memory. In 1935 a committee of residents, including the local poets William Calwell, William Hume and Crawford Jenkins, succeeded in re-publishing Orr's two volumes of verse, which had been out of print for over a century. In his introduction Calwell commented:

> James Orr, the humble and gifted Ballycarry weaver, has long been classed with the Irish immortals. No collection of Irish verse, wherever published is complete without selections from his works. This reprint will bring back to local men and women a remembrance of Orr and will stimulate their pride in one, whose genius has shed an immortal lustre on his native village (Orr 1936: foreword).

Orr was a self-educated weaver, a Presbyterian and descendant of seventeenth-century Scots migrants to Ulster. A keen reader, he participated in the book clubs and debating societies popular among many people of all classes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Orr's radicalisation was partly effected through his reading of philosophers such as Locke and Hume, and the works of Thomas Paine, in particular *The Rights of Man*, a key text for the northern United Irishmen during the 1790s. He became a published poet and essayist, employing his creative gifts to highlight injustice and oppression wherever he observed them while articulating the grievances of the dispossessed and disempowered. It was perhaps inevitable that he should be drawn to the Society of United Irishmen, inspired by the perceived ideal of a more democratic and inclusive Ireland, and that he should be attracted to the social justice wing of the movement represented by his fellow Presbyterians Henry Joy McCracken (1767–98) and James (Jemmy) Hope (1764–1847).

Ballycarry, as Orr knew it, was a community set apart from the English-speaking, Protestant Ascendancy by its inhabitants' Scottish ancestry, their Presbyterian religion and their linguistic register—the Scots language, or vernacular, which was the normal medium of communication employed in daily life.[2] The greatest influx of Scots settlers into Ulster occurred during the plantations (both private and government sponsored) of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[3] The planters spoke the Central Scots of the Western Lowlands and in the early days for

the most part came to Ireland to improve their economic prospects. Later in the seventeenth century, however, their numbers were swollen by Covenanter fugitives, who had resisted the authority of state over church in Scotland and who fled to Ireland to escape persecution from the government of Charles II in what came to be known as "the killing times."

Orr became connected with other radically minded young men through the writers' network that centred on the home near Templepatrick of his friend and mentor Samuel Thomson (1766–1816).[4] Henry Joy McCracken's name appears close to Orr's on the list of subscribers to Thomson's first volume of poetry. The inaugural meeting of the United Irishmen took place in Belfast in October 1791, with Wolfe Tone present, but the organisation had developed in the wake of Bastille Day, which was enthusiastically celebrated in the city in that year. The contemporary inspiration for the network, originally called the Irish Brotherhood, had come from Dr. William Drennan (1754–1820), an Ulster-Scot and son of the minister of the First Rosemary Street Presbyterian church, but its roots may be located in the radical programme of the Volunteer movement of the 1770s. Volunteer companies were formed in Ulster in response to threats of French invasion during a period when British troops in large numbers were required to fight abroad in the American war. By 1779, there were 40,000 armed companies throughout Ireland with half of them in Ulster where many included large numbers of Ulster-Scots Presbyterians. Their numerical strength and armed capacity made them a formidable force and they set about campaigning for a more independent and representative Irish parliament. Their largest, most significant demonstration, the Dungannon Convention, took place in 1782, after which the Whig government in London granted the Irish parliament legislative independence. However, the Volunteers did not succeed in achieving a more equal representation of all the people of Ireland within the Irish parliament, or of reforming the electoral process to make elections to the parliament free and fair. One might say that the United Irishmen were formed to deal with this unfinished business.

Other early or founding members of the Belfast United Irishmen were also Presbyterian and Ulster-Scots in background. They included Samuel Neilson (1761–1803), editor of the *Northern Star* newspaper, Archibald Hamilton Rowan (1751–1834), a landowner from Co Down, and once

again, Henry Joy McCracken and James Hope. Elaine McFarland (1997: 65) writes of the "Belfast principle"—the shared vision of these men—which was recognised by contemporaries as "an outward-looking and challenging blend of rationalist Presbyterianism and political liberalism."

Their early agenda could be characterised as more reformist than revolutionary. They aimed to achieve Catholic emancipation; improved representation in the Irish Parliament in Dublin for Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters; and strengthened legislative powers for the Dublin parliament. They were encouraged by successful revolutions in America (1776) and France (1789) as they set about working to establish a more inclusive Ireland which would enjoy greater independence of the metropolitan centre of government. They felt the Irish situation intolerable: "In the present great era of reform, when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe … we have no national government—we are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen" (Joy 1817: 358). Their newspaper, the *Northern Star* asserted their people-centred inspiration in its striking masthead motto: "The public will our guide; the public good our end." It was through this medium that Orr made his debut as a published writer and demonstrated his sympathy with the United Irish reform programme. In an early, wide-ranging, combative essay he argued for the freedom of the press and attacked the Penal Laws, which he claimed made the Catholic population "aliens in their own country" and subjected the fruits of Presbyterian industry to the depredations of a "rapacious hierarchy"—a reference to the loathed tax, or tithe, paid to the Anglican church.[5] Orr's piece, argued with erudition and with striking confidence for a man barely into his twenties, was perfectly in line with the audacity and the general thrust of many of the pieces that appeared during the paper's six year history. Another was the anonymous "Dialogue between an Aristocrat and a Democrat" which described the French Revolution as "the most glorious effort of mankind", deplored "men of titles and great wealth" who "pass their whole time in idle gratifications" and warned the latter of a day soon coming when they would be "made accountable to the Justice of the Nation."[6]

When Britain went to war with revolutionary France in 1793, radicals with French sympathies came to be regarded by the government as poten-

tially dangerous enemy agents and efforts to suppress them increased in strength, culminating in General Lake's imposition of martial law in Ireland in March 1797. Nevertheless, Orr contributed occasional pieces to the *Northern Star* until its demise on 19 May of that year when the Monaghan Militia smashed the printing presses. Perhaps because he saw such actions as evidence that the authorities would never facilitate the development of the type of Ireland he had advocated, Orr made the transition from articulate, outspoken radical to United Irish activist. Certainly, on 7 June 1798 he is known to have led a troop of men from Ballycarry to the mustering ground at Donegore Hill, County Antrim, in order to join with Henry Joy McCracken's forces in preparation for the Battle of Antrim. Here the United Irishmen suffered the first of their heavy defeats in the North during the Rebellion of 1798. With a price of 50 pounds sterling on his head, a massive sum at the time, Orr spent a period on the run with McCracken and Hope in the wild and barren Antrim countryside until he succeeded in escaping to America, whither many of his routed compatriots from within the United Irish movement had also fled.

Of Orr's time in the United States little is known. Other migrants from his own village settled there and prospered, including John Neilson (c.1770–1827), who was also implicated in the Rising (Hume 1999: 11–14). Neilson established himself in Philadelphia, became a successful architect and carried out work for presidents Jefferson and Madison with whom he developed personal friendships. There is no certainty regarding where Orr settled; because of a vivid account he wrote of a sea voyage from a port in the north of Ireland to Newcastle on the Delaware in his poem *The Passengers*, it has usually been assumed that he stayed, like other Ballycarry exiles, in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia (Orr 1936: 135–41). Occasionally one hears New York mooted as a possibility; an essay that appeared in *The Irish Shield and Monthly Milesian,* published in the United States in 1829, asserts that Orr briefly resided there (Pepper 1829: 55). The piece grates somewhat on the contemporary reader's ear being heavily adorned with overblown rhetorical flourishes but, more seriously, its accuracy is rendered highly suspect due to the author's evident ignorance of many established facts about Orr's life. For example, Pepper identifies him as the brother of William Orr of Farranshane, the

"Presbyterian martyr" hanged in October 1797 for allegedly administering the United Irishmen's oath to two soldiers. Contemporary accounts, however, identify James Orr as an only child, born in Ballycarry after his parents had been married for many years. Pepper additionally fills in or embroiders his narrative with unsubstantiated, even ludicrous, assertions, for example, that on his return to Ireland, Orr the former "red-hot republican" became "an ardent advocate of the 'divine right of kings'" (Pepper 1829: 57).

Orr's friend A. McDowell, who wrote a brief biography of him for a posthumous edition of his poetry, indicated that he did not find America congenial; he stayed there only a few months, taking the opportunity offered by an amnesty to return home as soon as he was sure it was safe, probably late in 1799. What appears to be an oblique reference in one of Orr's poems to this period of exile does little to shed light on his experience. He comments only that "With upright ends I sought a happier plain;/But was unfortunate where felons thrive" (Orr 1936: 90–91). If Orr's career in America fell far short of glittering, he did apparently manage to publish some of his work while there. McDowell quotes the commendation expressed by the editor of an American newspaper in which his verses were published, while unhelpfully neglecting to name the newspaper itself: "We understand the present production is by James Orr, an humble weaver from the North of Ireland. We could wish that his writings were better known" (McDowell 1936: 188). But it was in the north of Ireland, in his native village of Ballycarry and through the literary and journalistic opportunities offered in the nearby thriving industrial and mercantile centre of Belfast, that Orr really began to build a serious reputation as a poet and essayist of considerable skill, and again to address the condition of the island—"Erin" his "lov'd land"—in verse and in prose (Orr 1936: 316). By 1801 the Irish Act of Union was a *fait accompli*; the United Irishmen had been thoroughly routed; McCracken, his own commander, was hanged in July 1798. In this phase of his life, Orr resumed his attacks on injustice and deprivation through the printed media that soon became available to him.

So far we have observed Orr living out a succession of iconic, often romanticised, Irish identities—the rebel poet, the tragic emigrant, the returning exile. On his restoration to Ballycarry, however, he took prag-

matic steps to establish a "respectable" post-Rebellion persona, returning to weaving and acquiring a reputation as the village bard who celebrated local characters, customs and landscape in verse. But quickly his ambitions moved beyond his immediate environs. He wrote verse for the *Belfast News-letter*, the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle* and the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, offering an astute and carefully nuanced perspective on local, national and global affairs—the latter within the contexts of post-Union Ireland, and Britain's engagement in the Napoleonic conflict. From this period, Orr's most famous work is *The Irishman*, a poem often unfairly derided for sentimental nationalistic enthusiasm. In fact it is a bold affirmation of Irish distinctiveness, published in the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle* during the era of the war with France, when loyalist verse endorsing Britain and Britishness became wildly popular.[7] Orr, by contrast, hints at his admiration for the leaders of the pre-Union United Irishmen's movement, many of whom paid with their lives for their adherence to the principles that had driven them to rebellion. He also deliberately avoids expressing the bullish, militaristic sentiments typical of much wartime poetry:

> Erin, loved land! from age to age,
> Be thou more great, more fam'd and free!
> May peace be thine, or should'st thou wage.
> Defensive war, cheap victory!

In January 1811, a poem titled *To a Red-Breast, my daily visitor* appeared in the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, prefaced with the following explanatory note: "Written in 1798, while in a state of concealment. The writer succeeded in getting out to America afterwards." The piece records the thoughts of a wanted man in hiding, who derives comfort in his secret retreat from the regular appearance of a robin. While experiencing the isolation and insecurity of a fugitive, he elevates the bird into a symbol of liberty, inspired by his observation of the natural freedom it enjoys. The work is characteristic of many texts produced in the Age of Sensibility, which depict how "a sensitive interpreter stoops to ponder some humble object—mouse, louse, daisy—that has captured his eye by chance" and uses it "to set the speaker apart from the mainstream of normal sociabil-

ity" (McGuirk 1997: 7). An additional twist in this case, is that the speaker is set apart not only by his sensitivity but by his status as a man on the run. The poem, which throughout contrasts the freedom of flight enjoyed by the redbreast with the enforced confinement suffered by the fugitive, strikes a defiant note in its concluding lines, where the speaker remarks, "When tyrant's thunders cease to roar,/I'll share with thee, blest liberty." Liberty and tyranny were potent terms for radicals, signalling revolutionary sympathies or intentions. The government is clearly implicated in the reference to tyranny, and is depicted as a viciously roaring predator. But the speaker evinces a determined faith that the situation will eventually change:

> Repeat! repeat thy woodnotes o'er,
> Nor from this hallow'd mansion flee:
> When tyrant's thunders cease to roar,
> I'll share with thee, blest liberty.

The poem is anonymous and its authorship has never been definitively proven, but the situation of the writer, the note of defiance struck alongside the sensitive appreciation of nature, the privileging of the libertarian ideal and the confidence exhibited as the speaker draws a moral from the behaviour of a simple, natural creature, give reasonable grounds for speculation that its author may well have been Orr. The one-time exile was at the time of the poem's appearance a fairly frequent contributor of poetry, essays and letters to the *Belfast Monthly Magazine,* a publication edited by the poet, radical patriot and founding United Irishman, William Drennan.

An earlier piece of verse in Orr's native Scots is similar in tone and viewpoint: *To a Sparrow* was inspired by an incident in which he observed young hooligans robbing a bird's nest (Orr 1936: 71–3). In this case Orr focuses on the mistreatment of the bird in order to voice his abhorrence of cruelty towards all the poor and disempowered. He reserves particular disapprobation for "rich, rude ruffians" who taunt a helpless widow, rendered homeless with her children due to a heartless eviction. Orr urges that real courage shows itself in the extension of sympathy and compassion to the weak:

But still the brave will rapine, blood,
An guile bewaur o', ['beware'
An' spare the creature o' their God,
Tho' but a Sparrow.

That Orr was a realist as much as a romantic, however, is evident from an essay for the *Belfast Monthly Magazine* in which his reasons for abandoning an armed struggle in his quest for reform and social justice seem implicitly expressed. First he urges, "hazarding life becomes criminal whenever nothing valuable can be attained by the exploit" (Orr 1810: 27). Orr is on record as having prevented an atrocity being committed by some of his troop, so hatred of bloody violence, which he had observed at close quarters, was likely also a significant factor in his rejection of physical force. But his verse reveals a further reason. His great poem *Donegore Hill* records the bitterness of a narrator who observes half the troop that had marched to join McCracken's attack on Antrim deserting in disarray and panic at a key moment. The speaker is clearly a unit commander, as Orr was, and since he was present at the Donegore Hill debâcle, one must presume that in writing about it he has drawn on his own experience. He comments that the men he considers heroes—McCracken and all the others who endured "the nine-tail'd cat, or choakin' rape" [rope]—might have been successful in their enterprise, if only they had not been forsaken (Orr 1936: 36–7). In other words, he accuses a substantial number of the rank and file of betrayal, despite the oaths of loyalty they had sworn when initiated into the United Irishmen. Such experience has clearly fed his distrust of attempts to bring about a better world by armed revolution, and his narrative is thus disruptive of the traditional republican myth which imagines a harmonious gallery of revolutionary heroes.

If Orr's newspaper publications are evidence of his popular appeal in his lifetime, his reputation was enhanced and perpetuated by the publication of two volumes of his verse: one in 1804, *Poems on Various Subjects* which was supported by subscriptions from his friends and neighbours; the second, *The Posthumous Works of James Orr of Ballycarry*, a collection that appeared in 1817.[8] At the heart of his published *oeuvre* are his poems in Ulster-Scots, or "Braid Scotch" the term he himself employed for the Scots language as spoken in parts of Antrim, Down, North–West Derry and east Donegal. These have proved an invaluable resource for linguistic

scholars, social historians or researchers of folk culture.[9] However, they have not, or not until recently, had sufficient attention as a literary *oeuvre*. Understood as such, they may be appreciated for their excellent crafting, for their power to challenge and move, and for the unique perspective they offer on Irish experience, expressed through a dynamic exploitation of traditional Scots poetic genres. They demonstrate Orr employing characteristically Scots verse structures such as "standard habbie", the *Christis Kirk* stanza and *the Cherrie and the Slae* stanza to address pivotal events in contemporary experience and in Irish history. Though his work is frequently rooted in local settings, Orr writes not from a parochial or localist perspective, but with a full grasp of the global dimensions, the philosophical and political debates from which events such as the 1798 Rebellion emerged, and at times he has a prophetic eye to their long-term consequences. A sequence of outstanding poems in his first published volume is particularly significant and includes his wry eye-witness account of the rebellion and its aftermath.[10] In *A Prayer*, written in the strict form of a Scots Presbyterian metrical psalm, he wrestles with his conscience over whether it can ever be right to take up arms against the government or to take a life in pursuit of a cause, however just (Orr 1936: 47–8). This is a complex piece which evidences some of the breadth of Orr's reading; its phrasing here and there incorporates deliberate echoes of Alexander Pope's *The Universal Prayer* and of Robert Burns's *A Prayer, Under the Pressure of Violent Anguish* (Kinsley 1971: 17). *Donegore Hill* exploits the Scots *Christis Kirk* stanza, traditionally reserved for rollicking accounts of peasant brawling at fairs. Here Orr employs it to depict the farcical confusion, cowardice and perfidy that he observed among the insurgent troops before the Battle of Antrim. The text offers a searing critique of the disparity between human idealism and weak, self-serving human nature (Orr 1936: 33–7).

Of particular relevance to the theme of emigration, are two pieces he composed based on his personal experience of the voyage to America: *Song, written on the Banks of Newfoundland* expresses the grief and disorientation of the forced migrant, while *The Passengers*, a further essay in the *Christis Kirk* stanza, adopts a strikingly different tone and insists, in an acerbic Scots idiom, that even if routed by poverty or conflict Irish resilience will inevitably reassert itself (Orr 1936: 167–8; 135–41). Finally, in

a verse epistle to his friend and mentor Samuel Thomson, which expresses his relief at having returned to Ireland, he chooses the highly demanding *the Cherrie and the Slae* stanza in which to encode repentance for his rashness in taking up arms, though he still manages to sound a radical and insubordinate note (Orr 1936: 122–5):

> Th'inglorious rhymes o' *countra clouns* [unsophisticated country fellows
> Get plenty to degrade 'em,
> Wha wad reward wi' laurel crowns,
> Gif Kings or Priests had made 'em.
> Tho' vain folk, disdain folk,
> *We'se* sing the burns, an' bow'rs, [We shall
> O' *AIRLAN'*, our fair lan'—[Ireland
> *Deel tak' her faes* an' ours! [May the devil take

The 1801 Union may be a hard political fact but, he asserts, Ireland's fields, streams and shady nooks will always belong to her poets and to her people.

Within Irish literary heritage Orr's work represents a distinctive and a varied northern school of mainly Dissenter writers. Others in this tradition include Samuel Thomson (1766–1816) of Carngranny, Templepatrick, a fine landscape poet and instigator of an important writers' circle; Robert Huddleston (1814–87) of Moneyrea, who addressed the poverty and deprivation of Famine-era Ireland; Sarah Leech (c. 1809–30) the proto-feminist bard of Lettergull, Donegal and Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810–86), a cultural nationalist, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records of Ireland, and a major influence on W.B. Yeats.[11]

While Orr's best pieces offer revealing insights into the mind-set of the Presbyterian, labouring-class radicals of '98, they certainly deserve to be far more widely known and celebrated for their literary merit, which is considerable. This is especially true of his greatest work, *The Irish Cottier's Death and Burial*, one of the finest entries in the Four Nations literary canon (Orr 1936: 260–66). Executed in the difficult Spenserian stanza and published posthumously, it is an affectionate but ultimately tragic portrayal of a whole community on the edge of extinction. The poem highlights the dignity, faith and independence of the northern labouring-class folk with whom the writer is intimately acquainted. While depicting

their attendance at a deathbed and the ensuing wake and funeral he offers deft pen portraits of community members, rendering their individuality but subtly universalising their experience. The narrative lingers in the dying labourer's cottage with its companionable warmth and comforting fellowship, then portrays the characters exposed to atrocious, and typical, Irish weather as they follow the coffin to the graveside. Orr's conclusion confronts them, and the reader, with the harsh fact of human transience and the inevitable dissolution of body, personality and community:

> An' while the sexton earth'd his poor remains,
> The circling crowd contemplatively stood,
> An' mark'd the empty sculls, an' jointless banes,
> That, cast at random, lay like cloven wood:
> Some stept outbye, an' read the gravestanes rude
> That only tald the inmates' years an' names;

It is quite astonishing that knowledge and appreciation of this poem, one of the jewels in the crown of Irish literature, is still almost wholly concentrated among academics or language activists.

But let us return to William Calwell's 1935 claim that James Orr once had a place "among the Irish immortals." Was this simply wishful thinking in Orr's home village? The evidence suggests that it was not. In Templecorran Cemetery, Ballycarry, Orr lies buried beneath an imposing monument which honours him as "Poet, Patriot and Philanthropist." It was erected in 1831, at the then enormous cost of £9000 and testifies to the high regard in which he was widely held. Furthermore, George Pepper's 1829 essay in the journal *The Irish Shield and Monthly Milesian*, referred to earlier, indicates that Orr's reputation was acknowledged in the United States at a period of noteworthy developments in the history of Ireland. The journal's target market was the Irish migrant community, whose support was being canvassed in support of Daniel O'Connell's campaign for repeal of the Act of Union. Along with Pepper's essay, a small selection of Orr's standard register poetry is reproduced, including the moving *Lament for a Beloved and Affectionate Mother*, likely to tug at the heart-strings of expatriates, while recommendations are made for further reading. Orr's rousing anti-slavery piece *Toussaint's Farewell to San Domingo* is one of several texts which reveal Orr as a keen supporter of

the abolitionist movement.[12] Pepper concludes by acknowledging Orr as "one of the most gifted bards of green Ullin of sylvan groves and limpid streams" (1829: 457). Something of Orr's memory clearly lingered in America, for an American serviceman stationed in Ballycarry in preparation for the D-Day landings is reported to have read the words of *The Irishman* reproduced on Orr's monument and to have expressed amazement because he knew the poem well from his school poetry text-book, but had never expected to find himself walking in the lanes and fields which the poet had known as home (Fig. 6.1).[13]

Orr certainly appeared alongside other "Irish immortals" in canon-forming nineteenth-century anthologies, among them Charles Read's weighty *The Cabinet of Irish Literature: Selections from the Works of the Chief Poets, Orators and Prose Writers of Ireland* (Read and O'Connor 1879–84). This compendium emerged during the Home Rule era and includes a small selection of Orr's pieces, one of which is *The Irish Cottier's Death and Burial*. It is prefaced with a revealing editorial comment on the

Fig. 6.1 James Orr's Monument, Templecorran Cemetery, Ballycarry, Co. Antrim (photograph by the author)

community who it acknowledges were "with few exceptions of Scots descent": "They were … considered by the native Irish of the other provinces an alien race" (Read and O'Connor 1879–84, vol 2: 167). The idealistic pluralism of Wolfe Tone's Ireland of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter is strikingly absent here, perhaps a casualty of sectarian bitterness generated during the Famine, the Land War and mounting opposition to Home Rule in Ulster itself. While there were always exceptions, ultimately the later Ulster-Scots cultural tradition became largely dissociated, certainly in public perception, from the sense of Irishness many within it had embraced during James Orr's lifetime. This tradition and its diasporic representatives appear not to have been acknowledged, still less to have been perceived as a target market worthy of address, in the course of *The Gathering* project of 2013.[14]

Unionist hostility to Repeal and later to Home Rule was rooted in two main objections: Ulster, with its developing industrial-based economy, was prospering within the British Empire, and many of Ulster's Protestants feared for their religious liberty in a United Ireland. The Reverend Henry Cooke (1788–1868), an influential Presbyterian minister with a formidable talent for oratory had expressed these objections following Daniel O'Connell's campaigning visit to Belfast in 1844:

> … look at the town of Belfast. … our giant manufactories lifting themselves on every side, our streets marching on … And all this we owe to the Union. No, not all-for throned above our fair town … I behold the genii of Protestantism and Liberty, sitting inseparable in their power … Yes, Mr. O'Connell, we will guard the Union as we will guard our liberties, and advance and secure the prosperity of our country. Were you to succeed in effecting Repeal, we know our liberties were strangled forever. … Look at Belfast and be a Repealer—if you can (McComb 1841: 10).

In 1868 W. E. Gladstone (1809–98) announced his intention to "pacify Ireland" and attempted to realise his dream in two Home Rule Bills (1886 and 1893). In opposing this policy, Unionist politicians in Ulster repeatedly played the Scottish "card" to remind the population of their ancestral, religious, and linguistic links to Scotland, and thus their close relationship with Britain and the Empire. Literature, journalism, and

public demonstrations were all employed to this end. Graham Walker argues that the active promotion of a sense of Ulster-Scots identity developed in this era because, "Ulster unionists sought to disrupt … the Irish nationalist view of Ireland as a nation, one and indivisible with an historic destiny to be self-governing" (Walker 1997: 93–4). This should not be interpreted as implying that "Ulster-Scots" is coterminous with "Ulster unionist", since there were significant voices within the Ulster-Scots communities, the poet Florence Wilson (1918), for example, who supported the nationalist position in the period 1916–21. However, the idea of an Ulster-Scots identity was useful, as Walker indicates, in disrupting the popular monist narrative of the Irish nation: it could be, and often was, employed by those taking a unionist position to emphasise Ulster's historic connection to Scotland and, therefore, to the wider British Empire. We see this strategy used by the journalist John Harrison, who wrote a series of articles for *The Scotsman* newspaper sketching the history of Scots settlement in Ulster. Harrison was an opponent of Home Rule, viewing it as a cover for a movement which really aimed to separate Ireland and Great Britain (Harrison 2009 [1888]: Preface). In his conclusion, Harrison makes much of the Scots cultural identity of the Ulster population, insisting that any Scotsman who visits Antrim or Down "cannot feel as if he were away from his own kith and kin" (Harrison 2009: 97–8).

Many writers from within Ulster during this period reflected the Ulster-Scots community's growing consciousness of its distinctiveness. Archibald McIlroy (1859–1915) set a series of novels in the County Antrim town of Ballyclare, *Craiglinnie* in the stories. In one of these the opening description of the community brings out its Presbyterian character and some of its eccentricity, employing some characteristically Ulster-Scots expressions, such as "doon the water," "shilties" [small horses] and "whins" [yellow flowering gorse bushes] (McIlroy 2011: 1).

In the O'Connell era, Repealers associated their cause with Gaelic culture, and frequently with Catholicism. Christine Kinealy points out that O'Connell told his Repeal campaign managers to "be sure to have the approval of the Catholic clergy in every place you move to." He stated in 1840 that "The Catholic Church is a national church, and if the people rally with me, they will have a nation for their church." He remarked confidentially to a correspondent that "Protestantism would not survive

the Repeal ten years" (Kinealy 2009: 33–4). As the century progressed, nationalism increasingly identified with Ireland's Gaelic culture, for example, in the Gaelic League, founded in 1893 with the aim of restoring the Irish Language. In the field of literature, W.B. Yeats sought for something in English that was still characteristically and uniquely Irish, asking, "Is there no hope for the de-Anglicizing of our people? Can we not build a national tradition, a national literature which shall be none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language?" He felt this could be achieved "by translating and re-telling in English, which shall have an indefinable Irish quality of rhythm and style, all that is best in the ancient literature" (quoted in Kiberd 1995: 155).[15] The critic and literary historian Seamus Deane has amplified Yeats's purpose and motivation thus:

> Nationalism, as preached by Yeats or by Pearse, was a crusade for decontamination. The Irish essence was to be freed of the infecting Anglicizing virus … The Gaelic league pointed one way towards this restoration—the recovery of the Irish language and displacement, partial or total, of English …Yeats and Synge looked to the emergence of a new [Irish] literature in English vivified by the linguistic energies of an Irish civilization (Deane 1985: 94).

It must be obvious that James Orr's politically radical, Ulster set, Irish-themed, Scots language verse fits neatly with neither the Gaelic literary nationalist culture of Yeats nor with the pro-British, Unionist voices which frequently cited the Scottish connection to strengthen their case for maintaining the status quo. In the highly charged atmosphere of the partition era and its aftermath, the nuance and generosity of Orr's vision, and the sheer power of his poetry, seem to have attracted little attention across the island or beyond. The lack of focus on dissonant voices such as Orr's in Irish themed events such as *The Gathering 2013* surely reveals that the island still lies to some extent under the shadow of that aftermath.

The Ulster-Scots poets were largely dismissed as insignificant or as mere imitators of the Scottish bard, Robert Burns (1759–96).[16] In such circumstances, which pertained for much of the twentieth century, the re-publication of Orr by Calwell and his committee in 1935 represents a commendable determination not to permit a major Ulster and Irish liter-

ary figure to become wholly marginalised and forgotten. The *Collected Poems* of 1935 (reprinted 1936) represents a crucial milestone on the road to the recovery of Orr's reputation. Indeed, the mid- and late-twentieth century saw Orr's work eventually beginning to attract attention more widely. To what extent, then, may the poet and his reputation be said to have "come home" in the contemporary era? To answer this, we must briefly consider three separate but overlapping contexts, beginning with Orr's immediate locality.

Ballycarry, his home village, has undoubtedly kept faith with him. In 1922 an event called *A Reading and Service of Song* was held in his honour, then came the re-publication in 1935, while in recent years the very active Ballycarry Community Association has ensured his *oeuvre*, tolerant ideals and interesting life continue to be appropriately memorialised. James Orr Spring/Summer Schools were held in the village in 2003 and 2004, and an annual Bard of Ballycarry poetry competition has stimulated writers to engage with and continue the local verse tradition. Heritage Lottery funding has enabled the creation of *The Weaver's Trail*—six plaques around Ballycarry to highlight locations particularly associated with the poet.[17] In 2014, Orr's monument in Templecorran Cemetery was impressively restored and unveiled following a service of commemoration in the Old Presbyterian Church, where the poet himself would have worshipped. The financial support of the Brotherhood of Freemasons, of which Orr was an enthusiastic member, has also been crucial in the monument restoration.

More widely throughout the province of Ulster, John Hewitt, poet and committed regionalist, brought Orr's work to the attention of the public and of academics in the mid-twentieth century. He was in no doubt about Orr's skill and importance, noting that "*The Penitent* and *The Irish Cottier's Death and Burial* are far beyond the capacity of any other of our local rhymers, in firmness of structure and consistency of language, undoubtedly the major successes in scale in our vernacular literature" (Hewitt 2004: 94). Hewitt's work coincided with, and was underscored by, the research of major linguistic scholars such as Robert Gregg, Brendan Adams and John Braidwood, who researched and documented the uniqueness of indigenous Ulster speech, and the enduring Scottish influences it bears (Adams 1964). Experts in linguistics and social history took increasing interest in Orr's work from the 1970s onwards, but a further

landmark in the recovery of his reputation proved to be the publication of all his extant Scots verse within a collection selected by Philip Robinson and J.R.R. Adams in 1992. While reflecting that these poems are "a treasury of local information", Robinson's introductory essay draws attention to Orr's admiration for a key figure within the Scottish Enlightenment, the Moderate literary and divinity scholar, Dr. Hugh Blair, and he reminds the reader that Orr's poetry also dealt with "international issues and major historical events" (Adams and Robinson 1992: x, xix). More recently, Orr's published volumes were made widely available through a digitisation project undertaken by Ulster University. The same project included an outreach element, which permitted community engagement with Orr's poetry, and that of other Ulster-Scots poets, in a programme of workshops in libraries and schools throughout Northern Ireland.[18] The latter development has occurred in a post-conflict North, and in the wake of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement's endorsement of Ulster-Scots, which further developments have strengthened: the St Andrews Agreement of 2006, for example, committed the Northern Ireland Executive to a strategy for developing the Ulster-Scots language, including its attendant culture (St Andrews Agreement, Annex B).[19] This must, of course, include the literary tradition.

Yet one feels that in the present, Orr is not sufficiently known and appreciated. In Scotland, it would probably be impossible to find anyone unable to identify Robert Burns as an iconic national bard, or to name some of his best-known pieces, such as *To a Mouse*, or *Auld Lang Syne*. In Northern Ireland, at least in popular culture, James Orr still inhabits a type of shadowland, from which he is occasionally permitted to emerge as the subject of a radio discussion or a TV documentary. Notable examples include *Weaving Words,*[20] *The Hamely Tongue*[21] and *Minding our Language*.[22] Yet it is puzzling that a poet of Orr's skill and significance, born and raised in County Antrim, whose work offers unique insights into Irish people's experiences during the Rebellion-Union and Napoleonic eras has no official place within the school curriculum in Northern Ireland and that the public examination system, which routinely incorporates the study of English and Irish poets as challenging as Chaucer, Pope, Edward Thomas, Heaney and Kavanagh, includes not a line of James Orr.

More widely throughout the island of Ireland Orr's name has, however, become familiar to citizens within both its jurisdictions who hold Irish passports. In 2013, the Irish government released details of a newly designed passport which includes an extract from Orr's poem *Song, written in winter*—a haunting evocation of the landscape in the dead season, and of the privations endured by the poor within it. In response to a query from the present writer concerning the reasons for the addition of Orr's name and verse, the following reply was forwarded:

> Ulster Scots is a language spoken on the island of Ireland and is part of our common heritage. James Orr, known as the Bard of Ballycarry, is one of the so-called Ulster Weaver Poets. A United Irishman, he fought in the Battle of Antrim and fled to America in its aftermath before returning under amnesty. He and his poetry are included as they represent a number of important strands of Irishness, encompassing amongst other things, the Protestant tradition, the written word and rural life. The specific lines selected were "The hedge-hauntin' blackbird, on ae fit whyles restin, Wad fain heat the tither in storm-rufflet wing."[23]

This appearance on an official travel document which carries Orr's verse from Ireland to abroad and back again seems symbolic and resonant, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the multi-faceted nature of Irish identity that appears to have been absent from the vision of *The Gathering* project. Orr's inclusion on the Irish passport is at the very least an encouraging development, and one for which the recognition of his poetry within the school curriculum in Northern Ireland would provide an appropriate complement.[24]

Orr's best work is local in setting and voice, global and timeless in its range. The rising generation throughout the island of Ireland, and especially in the northern part that he knew best, deserves to know about its author's passion for his country's beauty and history, and about the hand of fellowship he extended to all. *The Penitent*, a long poem in broad Scots which modulates into English for its final stanza, encapsulates the vision of home and homeland that he wished to share:

> May my wild brethren turn to wisdom's path
> An' grace poor Erin, plagu'd with want and dearth!

And banish from her shores religious wrath,
Desponding sloth, and dissipated mirth!
May sun-like Science from the poor man's hearth
Chase Ignorance, the owl that haunts the stys!
So patriots brave, when we lie low in earth,
"Harmless as doves, and yet as serpents wise,"
Shall follow Truth and Right, and guard the land they prize. (Orr 1936, 179–80)

Notes

1. See, for example, Liam McIlvanney, *Burns the Radical* (2002), particularly the chapter entitled, Burns and the Ulster-Scots Radical Poets, which discusses Orr and Thomson. There are also two significant volumes of essays—*Cultural Traditions in Northern Ireland: Varieties of Scottishness* (Erskine and Lucy 1997), and *Ulster-Scots Writing: An Anthology* (Ferguson 2008)—and more recently the special issue of *Etudes Irlandaises, vol. 38, no. 2* (2013): *Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland Today: Language, Culture, Community*. The author has also taught a modular course entitled, The Ulster-Scots Literary Tradition: 1750–2000, at Ulster University during 2013–14.
2. For a detailed account of Orr's life and work see Baraniuk (2014).
3. Attempts at "planting" or settling parts of Ulster with colonists from England and Scotland included the Essex plantation in County Antrim in the 1570s; Hamilton and Montgomery's plantation in Counties Antrim and Down in the early 1600s; James I's Plantation of Ulster, inaugurated in1609.
4. See Jennifer Orr (2012) for Thomson's correspondence and Jennifer Orr (2015) for the significance of his writers' circle.
5. The *Northern Star*, 12 January 1792.
6. The *Northern Star*, 4 April 1792.
7. *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, 1 July 1805; poem dated 26 June 1805. See, James Orr (1936: 316–17).
8. Both texts have been digitised and are available on the Ulster-Scots Poetry Project website, at http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulsterscotspoetry/ (accessed 20 January 2016).
9. See, for example, Gray (1993: 249–75).

10. A detailed analysis of this poetic sequence and a full assessment of its significance may be found in (Baraniuk 2014: 123–42).
11. For digitised texts from these and a further wide range of Ulster-Scots writers, see the Ulster-Scots Poetry Project, at: http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulsterscotspoetry/ (accessed 12 February 2016).
12. See also Orr (1936: 291–2 and 225–7) for these texts.
13. The present writer is grateful to members of the Ballycarry community for the report of this incident.
14. A discussion of Ulster-Scots culture as a means of allowing Ulster Protestants to be "Irish on their own terms" may be found in Baraniuk (2012).
15. Both Yeats and Douglas Hyde, first president of the Gaelic League, came from the Protestant (Anglican) tradition.
16. See, for example, O'Donoghue (1895: 20–22).
17. See Ballycarry—Co. Antrim—Home of Poet James Orr, at: http://www.weavers-trail.co.uk/a-modern-legacy (accessed 10 February 2016).
18. See the Ulster-Scots Poetry Project, at: http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulster-scotspoetry/ (accessed 12 February 2016).
19. See *Agreement at St Andrews*, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136651/st_andrews_agreement-2.pdf (accessed 12 February 2016).
20. *Weaving Words*, BBC Radio Ulster, available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00y47c2 (accessed 12 February 2016).
21. TG4, 2006.
22. BBC Northern Ireland, 2015.
23. Email to the author from Robert O'Driscoll, Private Secretary to Charles Flanagan T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 28 November 2014. The quoted lines mean: "The hedge haunting blackbird, standing (keeping) from time to time on one foot would love to heat the other in its storm ruffled feathers (wing)."
24. A detailed discussion of the absence of Ulster-Scots poetry from the Northern Ireland school curriculum is to be found in Baraniuk (2013: 55–73).

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7

Gathering Antipathy: Irish Immigrants and Race in America's Age of Emancipation

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Historical commemoration is often fraught with tension between the demand for a faithful reconstruction of the past and the conflicting pressures of the present. In this sense, at least, there is nothing exceptional in the Irish state's attempts to claim its place in the "reminiscence industry" that has grown up around the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War (Blight 2001). In May 2015, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, accompanied by the US ambassador and an entourage of less prominent dignitaries, travelled to Sligo to unveil a monument to some 200,000 Irish emigrants who fought in that bloody conflict. Unexpectedly, perhaps, the ceremony was met by "angry scenes" which erupted when protestors incensed over the government's imposition of water charges and its acquiescence in allowing US military flights through Shannon airport heckled Kenny and turned their backs on the speakers' platform. Following clashes between protestors and Gardaí, local politicians worried that the demonstration

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might spoil plans for "annual festivities" at the site where, they hoped, "busloads of American tourists" would "[swell] the crowds."[1] From New York, the influential newspaperman Niall O'Dowd bitterly denounced the protestors for "sullying the good name of Ireland" with their "remarkable display of ignorance and arrogance" in disrupting an event "held to honor the most poor and desperate of Irish people who fled famine and misrule and ended up fighting against slavery."[2]

Though none of the officials involved in staging the Sligo commemoration seemed aware of it, their ceremony for "soldiers who served on both sides" and the monument that will outlast it represent a transatlantic extension of a quite specific way of interpreting the meaning of the American Civil War—one in which, as David Blight has written, the demands for national reconciliation and healing between whites North and South "overwhelmed the emancipationist vision" of a war that ended in the liberation of four million slaves. Outside "the endearing mutuality of sacrifice among soldiers that came to dominate national memory", Blight insists, "another process was at work [:] the attempted erasure of emancipation from the national narrative" (Blight 2001: 2, 5). It was not exactly true, as organisers of the Sligo ceremony at Ballymote solemnly declared that the war was universally regarded as "one of [America's] most painful periods." For the country's most downtrodden—the four million African Americans held in slavery in the Confederacy—war heralded instead "the coming of the Lord": a welcome reckoning long overdue and an essential prelude to the "slaves' jubilee." Organised public remembrance is always and everywhere a selective exercise, and in analysing commemoration, we need to be attentive not only to *what is included* in narratives constructed out of a broad range of possible renderings but also to *what is left out*.

Beyond the transparent manner in which the Ballymote ceremony was conceived as an affirmation of increasing political, economic and security cooperation between the United States and the Irish state during a period of profound global turbulence, the event drew upon stock elements in a facile and well-worn, teleological narrative of Irish-American success. Variations of this have circulated since the early 1960s, when the Kennedy presidency seemed to consummate the ascent of Irish Catholics to the pinnacle of US society, but today a renovated version perfectly comple-

ments the entrepreneurial zeitgeist of the neoliberal age. The first of these themes, a Celtic variation on the "rags-to-riches" fables that circulated widely in late nineteenth-century American dime novels, emphasises the famine-era immigrants' triumph over adversity. Though they arrived destitute and friendless, much of the standard literature insists, hard work in a land of opportunity won for the immigrant Irish ethnic and religious tolerance and material prosperity (MacRaild 2001).

A second strand in popular representation stresses the Irish contribution to American freedom. O'Dowd's assertion that the famine Irish "ended up fighting against slavery" falls within this category, though his case is undermined by the fact that up to a fifth of the 200,000 soldiers whose service is being marked fought in Confederate ranks, in an army organised to establish a slaveholders' republic (Gleeson 2001: 154).[3] More than that, it requires an imaginative rendering of the historical record to suggest that the Irish soldiery in Union ranks were committed to ending slavery. Scholars have detected a "palpable bitterness and hatred for African Americans" (O'Driscoll 2016: 4) in the letters many of these men sent home from the battlefield, and their most prominent spiritual leader of the time explicitly warned the Lincoln administration that any attempt to compel Irish recruits to "fight for the abolition of slavery" would make them "turn away in disgust" (Zanca 1994: 247).

Even a superficial familiarity with this tumultuous period in American history calls into question the depiction of mid-nineteenth-century Irish immigrants as ardent fighters for black emancipation who rose to prosperity and acceptance in the war's aftermath. Turning this facile story of hardship overcome and devotion to freedom on its head does not move us towards a closer approximation of the truth, however. The destitution and material hardship faced by many of those fleeing famine-era Ireland in their adopted homeland was real, as was the pervasive ethnic and sectarian hostility that confronted them. Relations between urban Irish immigrants and the smaller African American populations in cities like Philadelphia, New York and Boston were frequently tense and occasionally explosive. The Irish—who for reasons we will explore were heavily influenced by the intense racism circulating in mid-century America—were prominent in some of the worst racial atrocities of the era, and widely portrayed as embracing a special animus towards blacks. But like

all generalisations this concealed a more complicated and varied record of interaction with African Americans. This chapter, focussed on the Irish immigrant experience in the antebellum North, explores the context in which famine-era immigrants' attitudes to race and the mid-nineteenth-century slavery controversy took shape.

By the early 1880s, white Northerners had by and large repudiated the abolitionist legacy of the Civil War years, retreating from the qualified embrace of racial egalitarianism that had begun, tentatively, to undermine northern prejudice during and just after the war. A deep unease over immigration had permeated national life since the late 1840s. The Oxford-trained historian and English Liberal politician Edward A. Freeman, travelling across the eastern United States on a lecture tour in the early 1880s, found in the mob violence then becoming rife against Chinese immigrants on the West Coast "an exact parallel to the Jews in Russia"—an eruption of tensions driven not by religious persecution, he insisted, but by the "natural instinct of any decent nation to get rid of filthy strangers" (Stephens 1895: 254). A cavalier proponent of the race-laden social Darwinism then becoming ascendant on both sides of the Atlantic, Freeman proposed a formula for American citizenship that reflected his convictions about Teutonic supremacy: "Dutchmen, high and low" should be admitted "at once", he suggested; "[o]ther Aryans" after three generations; and "non-Aryans not at all" (1895: 237). Like many of his peers then engaged in concocting elaborate hierarchies of race and ethnicity, Freeman was confused about where America's large Irish immigrant population fit along this spectrum. But his antipathy was clear: "This would be a grand land", he wrote from New Haven in December of 1881, "if only every Irish man would kill a negro, and be hanged for it" (1895: 242).[4]

In linking the "low Irish" with descendants of African American slaves as undesirables, Freeman drew upon stereotypes that had exerted a powerful hold over Anglo elite opinion on both sides of the Atlantic at mid-century, but which by the time of his visit had fallen out of fashion in the United States. In the tumultuous years between mid-century—when an intensification of sectional tensions inaugurated the long descent into Civil War—and the return of the white South to power in the late 1870s, ethnic and sectarian hostility against the Irish had abated, though they

remained disproportionately confined to the urban working class and over-represented in the ranks of unskilled labour. Prejudice lingered, to be sure, and would surge again dramatically in the aftermath of World War One, but the intense aggression faced by famine-era immigrants at mid-century diminished over the war years, undercut in part by their military enlistment. Black Americans, by contrast, endured a humiliating and traumatic descent—from the high optimism of the immediate post-emancipation period to the terror attending the offensive waged by the Reconstruction-era Klan and, finally, their re-subjugation after 1876 in a "redeemed" white supremacist-led South. This was true despite their having enlisted in Union military ranks in greater numbers than their Irish-born comrades-in-arms (Berlin et al. 1982: 12–15; Ural 2010: 100). Though linked in mid-century as twin threats to Anglo-American civilization, by the late nineteenth century the relative position of blacks and the immigrant Irish in American society had diverged sharply.

Freeman's gibe drew also upon the widespread perception of an unyielding antipathy among famine-era Irish immigrants towards black Americans. Here his assumptions rested on more solid ground, though even this generalisation obscures a more uneven and contradictory experience. The common assertion that the Irish provided an important constituency for proslavery forces in the late antebellum and wartime United States, and that racial antipathy towards African Americans during wartime was most palpably manifested among the urban Irish poor, is largely accurate (Du Bois 1935: 18). Few recent studies succeed, however, in offering a convincing explanation for why that section of northern white society that stood closest, in social terms, to the slave was among the least inclined to take up the anti-slavery cause and the most receptive to demagogic appeals in defence of the South's "peculiar institution." The explanation generated by proponents of critical whiteness studies—an explanation that has become influential over recent years—rests on the immigrant community's purported embrace of white racial identity—"becoming white", to borrow from the title of one influential study (Ignatiev 1995). Eager to grasp the "public and psychological wage" associated with whiteness, this literature contends, the Irish immigrant community rejected the possibility of making common cause with slaves and free blacks and moved, instead, to align itself with the dominant white "race" and assert its racial supremacy.

At a very general level this is difficult to dispute. Certainly there is no shortage of evidence attesting to the prevalence of race prejudice among Irish immigrants during the years straddling the Civil War. Though they played a negligible role in actual slave owning, the small numbers of famine-era immigrants settling in the South had made their peace with the region's "peculiar institution", demonstrating their wartime loyalty in the ranks of the Confederate military. In the North, the Irish were overwhelmingly loyal to the Democratic Party and prominent, during the tense period preceding the outbreak of war, in street mobilizations against a rising abolitionist movement. During wartime, Irish immigrants in New York and elsewhere engaged in violent conflicts with black Northerners and explosive confrontations with the Lincoln administration—episodes sometimes heavily laden with the rhetoric of white supremacy and unconcealed racial hostility. This antagonism between the urban Irish and African Americans outlived the war, moreover, and persisted—or was perhaps resurrected—in clashes over de-segregation more than a century later (Formisano 2004). While we might question claims about the *special disposition* of the Irish to embrace white supremacy, there is no disputing its strength or pervasiveness in the Civil War era.

Beyond this common acknowledgment of the depths of race prejudice, however, there are problems in recent studies constructed around racial identity that render their explanations for the Irish embrace of "whiteness" deeply unconvincing. Anxious to demonstrate "the agency of the [white] working class in the social construction of race" (Roediger 1990: 10)—as one of the foundational texts in this *oeuvre* puts it—they systematically understate the much more impressive power of the dominant classes in shaping the environment in which the relatively powerless manoeuvred and, in so doing, downplay or ignore the context that generated such palpable friction (Kelly 2007: xxix–xlviii). Few studies, for example, pay serious attention to pervasive and virulent nativism, which had the effect of alienating the Irish from the most important currents of progressive reform, including the labour movement and abolition, during the antebellum period. They seem anxious, as well, to dismiss labour competition between blacks and the Irish as a contributory factor, though its bearing on events seems self-evident. Noel Ignatiev's seemingly generous offer to "make [the Irish immigrant working class] the actors in their own his-

tory" (1995: 3) in reality amounts to obscuring the greater agency of institutions like the Democratic Party and the Catholic hierarchy in shaping immigrants' racial attitudes. Gregory Meyerson notes the peculiar way in which the seminal text in critical whiteness studies, David Roediger's *Wages of Whiteness*, frames the role of these powerful institutions. At most the Church can be charged with "not question[ing] their whiteness"—"reflect[ing] the racial attitudes of its [Irish immigrant] members" or "reproduc[ing] existing white supremacist attitudes without challenging them" (Roediger 1990: 140). Framing the relationship between powerful institutions like the Church and its flock in this way, Meyerson suggests, "biases the argument about the construction of whiteness in favour of the Irish proletariat themselves, as if the Irish proletariat first asserted this whiteness and this was not questioned" (Meyerson 1997).

In light of these problems, this chapter attempts to follow through on Kevin Kenny's appeal for a "better historical explanation [that] shifts at least part of the focus away from individual agency and toward the wider social and cultural structure in which both Irish immigrants and African Americans operated" (Kenny 2000: 68), advancing an alternative reading of the deep antipathy between blacks and famine-era Irish immigrants in the years straddling the American Civil War. In the absence of other feasible options, the hostility confronting the rapidly expanding Irish immigrant population from the early 1830s onward compelled a retreat into ethnic politics.

The withdrawal into the boundaries of the urban ethnic ghetto encompassed also an embrace of the immigrant-friendly Democratic Party and its proslavery outlook, a new identification with the conservative leadership of the Catholic hierarchy, and—crucially—an estrangement from the rising anti-slavery movement and other currents of progressive reform. Underpinning this was a deep sense of class resentment—directed at employers and urban elites, occasionally during the war at the Republican Party and its draft agents, but also at black workers, with whom the Irish found themselves frequently thrown into competition at the bottom of the northern labour market. Understandably, much of the recent literature has focused on the volatility of relations between city-dwelling black Northerners and Irish immigrants, exploding occasionally into lethal epi-

sodes that sometimes (as with the 1863 New York Draft Riots) show all the earmarks of a racial pogrom. Horrific as this record is, it reflects both the virulence of racism and the fact that more than any other section of white northern society, it was the Irish who lived and worked in closest proximity to blacks, and whose desperate circumstances set them off from much of the white North. Without seeking to call into question the general perception of Irish racial antipathy towards African Americans, it is worth pointing out that sometimes, at least, living and working in close quarters seem to have generated a substantial record of interracialism—socialising, camaraderie, and public and private intimacy; love and occasionally marriage across the colour line; and on rare occasions even combined resistance against perceived enemies.

Immigrants had, of course, been arriving into the United States from Ireland since the early colonial period. The profile of pre-famine migrants differed significantly from the communities that began to take shape at mid-century, however. Ulster Protestants figured disproportionately in the "distinctive migration of the eighteenth century" (Kenny 2000: 8), and by the revolutionary period many of the Scots-Irish had assimilated into what was in many ways a familiar society—Anglo, English-speaking and Protestant. As David Gleeson suggests, having taken part in the Revolution and in the politics of the early republic, these were "among the first 'Americans'" (Gleeson 2001: 5). New York and other growing cities had seen a further wave of Irish migration after the failed 1798 Rebellion, and many of these newcomers—mainly though not exclusively Protestant—had been influenced by the egalitarian ethos of the United Irishmen. In expanding urban enclaves up and down the east coast, Irish community life was dominated by émigrés influenced by non-sectarian and republican ideals. In several key urban areas—New York, Philadelphia and Charleston among them—a spirit of ecumenical cooperation prevailed among the still small numbers who traced their lineage to Ireland, and together the assimilated Protestant and Catholic middle classes oversaw the integration of new arrivals into the life of the young republic (Walsh 1996: 63–65; Gleeson 2001: 15–16; Rockman 2009: 31–32). Importantly, while the numbers of new arrivals remained low, this generation of republican-minded ethnic leadership promoted assimilation at the same time it was able to provide a buffer against

nascent anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic agitation—including sectarian provocations by Orange mobs (Walsh 1996: 65, 68).

As the influx began to accelerate in the early 1830s, however, and as the composition of the immigrant community began to reflect increasing desperation among poorer Catholics from the rural south and west of Ireland, nativist hostility intensified dramatically. Well before the onset of famine, the 'men of '98' had lost their hold over urban Irish immigrant communities, and among newcomers a retreat was under way towards a more defensive ethnic politics that "relied increasingly on the rough and tumble street tactics of machine politics" (Gilje 1996: 79). The parting of ways reflected not only sectarian divisions but also growing social and economic cleavages between a prosperous, established elite and an incoming flood of rural poor who would, in many urban areas, find themselves confined to living in deplorable slum conditions, earning a meagre living at the lower end of the unskilled labour market (Walsh 1996: 66). Significantly, tensions arose not only between the immigrant poor and middle-class Protestants, but between the labouring classes and Catholic elites as well: bitter confrontation erupted between church trustees and the "lower-class Irish" over the selling of pews in Manhattan's St. Peter's Church, for example (Gilje 1996: 73).

Regional differences shaped the evolution of immigrant communities, and these became more pronounced with the flood of new, mostly destitute immigrants driven across the Atlantic by famine. Of the 1.2 million Irish-born living in the United States on the eve of the Civil War, less than 7 per cent made their homes in the slave South (Gleeson 2001: 2). North and south the Irish concentrated overwhelmingly in large towns and cities, though the demand for railroad, canal and mining labour brought significant numbers into the rural interior, the Midwest and even the booming far West. Their presence as a cohesive ethnic group, however, was felt most acutely in the expanding industrial and commercial cities of the Northeast and the port cities of the South. New York had earned a reputation by the mid-1840s as the "most Irish city in the Union" (Potter 1960: 180), though proportionally it lagged behind both Boston and Jersey City, with Philadelphia not far behind. New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston and Memphis in the South were each home to established Irish communities by mid-century. Throughout the antebel-

lum period, the region's growing obsession with abolition tempered nativist aggression below the Mason Dixon line, but relations between native-born southern whites and Irish immigrants remained volatile, with tensions exploding into street fighting in New Orleans during the mid-1850s (Gleeson 2001).

Famine-induced migration wrought dramatic transformations in the size and social weight of Irish immigrant communities, testing the already strained relations between mostly Anglo and Protestant city fathers and the new, overwhelmingly Catholic Irish in the North. The arrival of some 50,000 destitute Irish immigrants to the city of Boston during the decade of the 1850s (Hanna 1990: 262) marked the beginning of a fundamental transformation in that city's economic and cultural profile. Before 1830, new arrivals from outside the United States had never exceeded 2000 annually. In 1840, immigration had increased to just under 4000, but by 1849—just 4 years after the onset of the potato blight in Ireland—that number had multiplied sevenfold to 29,000. An overwhelming majority of these immigrants were Irish-born, so that by 1855 Boston's Irish population had gone from a mere handful before the famine to over 50,000, or a third of the city's total population (Handlin 1959: 56). It was this meteoric rise that led Theodore Parker to complain that the city of the Puritan fathers was being transformed into "the Dublin of America" (Mulkern 1990: 14). New York experienced similar growth: between 1847 and 1851 some 1.8 million immigrants disembarked there, of whom nearly 850,000 were Irish. By 1855 Irish immigrants made up some 28 per cent of the population of Manhattan, and across the East River the Irish settled into Brooklyn in similar numbers (Diner 1996: 91–93). Philadelphia grew by more than 165,000 between 1850 and the eve of the war, with Irish immigrants making up the bulk of that expansion (Clarke 1984: 24).

Though a considerable number of new arrivals eventually found their way into the interior, setting out on overland routes for Philadelphia and other interior cities and towns, canal and railroad work camps and coal-mining districts, many found themselves confined in overcrowded urban settings lacking the basic infrastructure necessary for absorbing them. Conditions were especially dismal in the overcrowded slum housing of New York's infamous Sixth Ward—described by journalist George

G. Foster in 1849 as a "great central ulcer of wretchedness—the very rotting Skeleton of Civilization" (Foster 1852: 22) where "the scattered debris of the Irish nation" was herded into wretched tenement housing (Binder and Reimers 1995: 60). With its "narrow ways, diverging to the left and right, reeking everywhere with dirt and filth", Charles Dickens observed in his searing *American Notes*, "all that is loathsome, drooping, and decayed" was concentrated in the Five Points district, Manhattan's most notorious Irish immigrant enclave (Dickens, quoted in Anbinder 2001: 32–33).

In Boston, too, the rapid influx of tens of thousands of immigrants overwhelmed the city's limited housing supply: in the city's North End and in Fort Hill, vacant warehouse buildings were hastily partitioned to make room for the newcomers. Dank underground cellars previously deemed unfit for human occupancy became home to extended families, with flimsy "sheds" and "shanties" thrown up hastily to house those unable to secure proper housing. "This whole district", the City Health Commissioner wrote in 1849, "is a perfect hive of human beings, without comforts and mostly without common necessities … huddled together like brutes, without regard to sex, age or decency" in neighbourhoods where "despair, or disorder, intemperance and utter degradation rule supreme" (Committee on Internal Health 1849: 13). Philadelphia, by contrast, seems to have offered some relief: beyond the slums at the city's core, a patchwork of neighbourhoods served as "cloistered way stations between urban and rural living" where "garden plots and a smattering of livestock came as standard accoutrement to the city scene" (Wiebe 1967: 3).

Health and sanitary conditions barely figured in the conversion of commercial buildings and other structures to make them suitable for accommodation, with the result that the most depressed immigrant neighbourhoods were inevitably hardest hit by illness and disease. Of 2742 New Yorkers who succumbed to cholera in 1850, 1086 were Irish born, and overall the death rate among Irish immigrants between 1850 and 1859—mainly from consumption—was 21 per cent, while among non-Irish it stood at just 3 per cent, leading Bishop John Hughes to label the illness "the natural death of the Irish emigrants" (Hershkowitz 1996: 21). When a cholera epidemic seized Boston in 1849, it left its mark

almost exclusively among the immigrant poor packed into overcrowded slum housing, often with an entire family—and "sometimes two or three families"—confined to a single room in "wretched, dirty and unhealthy conditions" (Committee on Internal Health 1849: 12). More than 500 of the 700 fatalities in that year were among the Irish (Handlin 1959: 114–115). Sea Street in the North End accounted for 44 deaths, and one particular address in an adjacent street suffered "no less than thirteen fatal cases": another wave of cholera 5 years later showed the same pattern, though with fewer casualties, and the decline attributed by authorities to the vacating of cellars "which in the former years were crowded with inhabitants."[5]

On the whole, their poverty, their dense concentration in slum districts with few amenities, and the precariousness of life at the bottom made new immigrants predictably vulnerable to a range of social ills. In New York's slums the Irish "succumbed by the thousands to the ill effects of long-term poverty, such as crime, insanity, domestic violence, prostitution, and alcoholism" (Vodrey 2003). Irish-born women made up a large proportion of the city's 50,000 prostitutes in 1850—many of them in their teen years and early twenties. In proportion far greater than their actual numbers, the Irish filled the hospitals and almshouses, jails and lunatic asylums, the workhouses and the morgues (Hershkowitz 1996: 21). By 1850 immigrants accounted for 97 per cent of the residents at Boston's Deer Island Almshouse, 75 per cent of the prisoners in the county jail, 97 per cent of the city's truants and vagabonds, and 58 per cent of its paupers (Ryan 1983: 23; Mulkern 1990: 14; Ware 1916: 16). Newspaper accounts attributed the leap in crime rates to the arrival of the famine Irish, and the newcomers were castigated as immoral and uncivilised. The pressures of acculturation in unfamiliar and increasingly hostile surroundings took their toll on the mental health of many immigrants, forcing Massachusetts to build two new hospitals and the city of Boston to fund a new "asylum of its own, largely to care for Irish laborers, for among other groups the incidence of lunacy was much lower" (Handlin 1959: 126).

An occasionally raucous anti-immigrant campaign that had been percolating since the 1830s needed little encouragement to see in these figures direct confirmation of its worst fears that newcomers posed a threat

to the republic. Nativism arose out of complex circumstances, coinciding with and drawing upon an intoxicating wave of evangelical revival (and a more sobering turn to temperance agitation), but it also represented a reaction against deep structural changes remaking the antebellum US economy. The declining status of (overwhelmingly Protestant) skilled artisans and the rise of a permanent class of wage earners in a rapidly industrialising North undermined popular confidence that the new republic was immune to the stark inequalities that riddled old Europe. In Massachusetts as elsewhere the nativist American Party, also known as the "Know-Nothing" movement, drew its increasing strength from the ranks of native workers and mechanics who "had to live cheek by jowl with impoverished foreigners, and daily face the challenge that the Irish Catholics posed." Many blamed the Irish, along with "the politicians and wealthy elites for having blocked 'true reform' and for having forced American working people to seek employment under disadvantages" (Mulkern 1990: 67).

Steeped in populism and taking their stand insecurely on the bridge between the pastoral ideal of the artisan's republic and the creeping reality of industrial capitalism, nativists directed their venom more frequently against immigrants—as the most visible manifestation of republican declension—than against native-born elites. There was "a disposition in the United States to use the immigrants, and especially the Irish, much as the cat is used in the kitchen to account for broken plates and food which disappears", the British historian James Bryce observed, though, as he acknowledged, New York and the urban North were "not an Eden before the Irish came" (Bryce 1920: 241). The presence of a militant Orange constituency in major cities like New York and Philadelphia enhanced the odds that incoming Irish Catholics would find themselves at the receiving end of mob violence; both cities were intermittently convulsed by rioting and violent street confrontations from the mid-1830s onward.

Serious rioting between nativists and the Irish had erupted in New York during election season in the fall of 1834, coinciding with the razing of the Ursuline Convent just outside of Boston's city limits. A decade later Philadelphia was rocked by intense violence throughout May and June of 1844, and in the same year nativists succeeded in electing one of their own—James Harper—to the mayoral office in New York, where "gangs

of nativist brawlers fought often with the Irish" (Vodrey 2003). In the period approaching mid-century, "the no-Popery press sprang to life" (Walsh 1996: 69) across the urban North: a steady stream of xenophobic pamphlets and broadsheets filled with lurid exposés of Catholic debauchery and papist designs against republican liberty circulated widely. Street violence represented the extreme end of a growing spectrum of nativist sentiment that not only gave sustenance to the emerging Know-Nothing movement, but which shifted the terms of political discussion across the North, injecting the "immigrant question" into movements for social reform.

By 1850, growing polarisation had been aggravated in cities like Boston, New York and Philadelphia, both by the shattering of their earlier ethnic and religious homogeneity and the pressures that the famine-era influx brought to bear on an already overstretched social and economic infrastructure. Boston and New York were finance and commercial centres rather than industrial hubs, and neither city could offer new arrivals economic stability, let alone prosperity. With a growing industrial economy and expanding opportunities for employment in the outlying coal districts, Philadelphia seemed to offer brighter prospects, but even there the vast majority of Irish immigrants made their living through menial labour on the fringes of the economy. For many natives, the expansion of slum districts and the visible increase in desperate urban poverty became conflated with the immigrants themselves: the Irish were poor because they lacked the rudimentary elements of a civilised people.

One of the collateral effects of nativism was the atrophy it injected into early, tentative attempts at working-class organisation. Even without the rise of anti-immigrant hostility, the newly emerging labour movement in the antebellum North suffered severe disadvantages. Labour reform during the period before the Civil War was pre-eminently an expression of artisan discontent, expressing the backward-glancing frustrations of relatively privileged white male craft workers unable to hold off the oncoming wave of deep change brought on by industrialization (Lause 2015: 165–70; Laurie 1989: 38–46). Even without the influx of the Irish, craft-rooted organised labour displayed a deep ambivalence—bordering on outright hostility—towards the swelling ranks of women workers and unskilled factory hands. The populist sensibility underpinning the Know-

Nothing movement directed its ire both upward, against Whig politicians and the business interests thought to dominate them, and downward against vulnerable immigrants. The effects in Massachusetts were profound. According to David Montgomery (1967: 120), "[t]he state's labor movement was thoroughly destroyed by the pitting of native trade unionist against immigrant factory hand and the divorcing of both from middle-class reformers." When in 1856 Irish labourers in Boston organised a trade union they did so outside the ranks of the established labour movement, and although largely excluded from the craft organisations that dominated the local scene, the Irish figured prominently in a number of strikes.

Increasing competition between native and foreign-born workers and the lowering of wages due to a flooded labour market reinforced the perception among many that the Irish were to blame for the precarious position in which native mechanics found themselves. Everywhere in the 1850s the Irish tended to be confined to unskilled menial labour at the precarious margins of the economy: gruelling, low-paying and unsteady physical labour for men; lower-paid domestic work for women. Moreover, the prominent role assumed by the Church hierarchy in blocking progressive legislation reinforced the popular association of Catholicism with despotism, and provided the pretext for an aggressive assault upon the Irish community. The prominent nativist minister Lyman Beecher, whose bellicose anti-immigrant sermon in 1834 was thought by some to have inspired the burning of the Ursuline Convent, referred to the Irish as a "dead mass of ignorance and superstition" and "priest-driven human machines" (Wittke 1996: 119).

If the fledgling labour movement seemed an undependable ally for Irish immigrants, so too did the most important reform movement of the age: northern abolition. While it is unfair to lump anti-slavery activists in with nativists as consistently sectarian, there was enough of an element of truth in this to provide conservative Catholic clerics with a potent device for immunising their flock against the pernicious abolitionist influence. Northern abolition drew its moral strength and early fervour from Protestant-led social reform, and while a minority in its ranks laboured vigorously to overcome the gulf dividing them from new immigrants, others were less energetic, resigned to accept the chasm as inevitable, or

positively content with the exclusion of Catholics. William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the Boston-based *Liberator* and a severe critic of Christian complicity in the "sin" of slavery, was one of those troubled by the antagonism but unable to divine a path towards healing the rift. After a series of riots in Philadelphia in which Irish immigrants were conspicuous for their role in attacks on blacks, Garrison noted the "strange and shocking spectacle" of seeing "those who have been forced by oppression and want to become exiles from their native [land] combining to crush and drive out of our borders a portion of the native population" (Garrison, quoted in Osofsky 1975: 900). By 1845, exasperated at the failure of the Irish in America to respond positively to Daniel O'Connell's powerful denunciation of slavery, Garrison concluded that the Irish were a "mighty obstacle … in the way of negro emancipation on our soil" (Garrison, quoted in Osofsky 1975: 906).

Garrison's frustration over the anti-slavery movement's lack of success in recruiting Irish immigrant support—widely shared by other abolitionists untainted by nativism—is understandable. But in their zeal to defend northern society against pernicious attacks from defenders of slavery, many of them seem to have become unwilling to acknowledge that the North, too, suffered increasingly from glaring inequalities. This rendered abolitionists unreceptive to valid critiques emanating from the labour movement, and hostile to any attempts to compare the plight of the slaves with that of impoverished and overworked northern free labourers, including the immigrant poor. In effect this left agitation over class inequality in the exclusive hands of Democratic Party demagogues who, as the escaped slave Frederick Douglass put it, "harped upon the wrongs of Irishmen, while in truth they care no more about Irishmen ... than they care about the whipped, gagged, and thumb-screwed slave" (Foner 1950: 138).[6]

Northern workers discerned a contradiction between abolitionist sympathy for slaves in the South and the indifference of many abolitionists towards the poor in their midst, and some anti-slavery reformers, at least, were willing to acknowledge this. "I believe that one reason the working classes of the whole country have not come up by instinct and in masses, to the support of [black] Freedom", Dr. William E. Channing explained to a Boston audience in 1850, "is that our Anti-Slavery friends have not

gone far enough in showing that man is man everywhere. They have not carried their doctrine of equality in its application to our social usages" (Lofton 1948: 250). Another suggested that "if the working people of the states could be brought, by lectures delivered to them by working men … to understand [slavery's] encroachment upon their fair earnings, how few among them, *especially the Irish portion*, would by their votes sanction the longer continuance of slavery" (Edward West, quoted in Lofton 1948: 251). The historian Bruce Laurie writes that "it was possible for some ordinary men and women to be aware of the injustice of the mill and of the plantation—to support one another and to sympathise with the slaves", but the possibility seems to have escaped even advanced anti-slavery activists (Laurie 2007: 140).

The most obvious, if unanticipated, effect of pervasive nativist hostility had been to push Irish immigrants into the close embrace of two powerful institutions: the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party. The impulse among an overwhelmingly rural people to hang on to the Church as a familiar point of reference in a disorienting new context may have been strong even in the absence of anti-immigrant mobilisation, but nativist agitation powerfully reinforced that tendency. As Hasia Diner has written, one of the stock elements of church discourse in pre-famine New York City was its disappointment with the lax religious devotion of their "unchurched" Irish flock (1996: 102–104). The complaint by one priest that "half our Irish population here is Catholic merely because Catholicity was the religion in the land of their birth" (Dolan 1975: 57) conveys some indication of the frustrations endured by the hierarchy. The famine years, Diner suggests, marked the transformation of the church from a folk institution in Ireland to an ecclesiastical one in the American setting. Jay P. Dolan concurs, arguing that the famine Irish arrived in the United States "as religious orphans—not well grounded in official Roman Catholicism and uprooted from their traditional popular Catholicism" (Dolan 2000).

In New York at the north and in Charleston to the south, bishops John Hughes and John England succeeded in "making the Irish devout Catholics" (Diner 1996: 103) through their sympathetic defence of poor immigrants against external hostility and—in New York especially—the systematic construction of an array of Church-run institutions to oversee

their spiritual, educational and material needs. One need not subscribe to the monolithic representation of the Irish community popularised by Beecher and others to allow that the Church hierarchy exerted tremendous influence in shaping the social outlook of lay Catholic immigrants; their power derived in part from the closing down of other options by nativists. Diner (1996: 103) concludes that "the efforts of the clergy alone" cannot account for this transformation; the "shrill anti-Catholicism" of the nativists "heightened [immigrant] devotion to the Church."

Critics were justified in charging that the Catholic hierarchy was consistent in its opposition to mid-nineteenth-century social reform. North and South the Church urged "acceptance of human institutions as God's revealed will" (Gleeson 2001: 92). Crucially, in the eyes of critics its acquiescence to the status quo made the Church complicit in slavery.[7] Although in his youth the County Tyrone-born Bishop Hughes had expressed moderate opposition to the extension of slavery, from the late 1850s through the war years he devoted his energies almost exclusively to denouncing the "vast mischief" of abolition (Longley 2015: 162; Singer 2008: 82–83). Hughes denounced reformers as "infidels and heretics" (Ryan 1959: 129) and the editor of the *Boston Pilot* warned readers in 1851 that "wherever you find a free-soiler, you find an anti-hanging man, women's rights man, an infidel frequently, bigoted protestant always, a socialist, a red republican" (Wittke 1996: 129). Church opposition to free public education branded it an enemy of progress in the eyes of many, and on occasion the official response to Protestant charges of Catholic intolerance only fuelled nativist fears. "The Church is of necessity intolerant", the Catholic press acknowledged in 1851.[8] "Heresy she endures when and where she must", it warned, but if Catholics should gain a sufficient majority, "religious freedom in this country is at an end—so say our enemies [and] so say we."[9]

Irish loyalty to the Democrats likewise resulted from a dearth of viable alternatives. The abstention of the existing labour movement from undertaking any action that might pull together native and foreign-born, skilled and unskilled, and the strength of anti-immigrant prejudice among both the Whigs and their Know-Nothing challengers left the Irish with little in the way of a viable political alternative. The barrier which

nativism erected between the Irish and social reformers led Irish immigrants into a semi-formal alliance with the most conservative current in American politics—embodied in the Democratic Party, and more particularly in its patronage-wielding urban political machines—which combined proslavery apologetics with an explicit appeal to immigrants and demagogic appeals to white working men. In Philadelphia and New York, the Irish served as the "pawns of the urban Democratic machine" (Diner 1996: 102). In Massachusetts, where the Know-Nothings wielded power, they "initiated an attack on [immigrants]" that "went beyond anything found elsewhere in the country"—initiating a highly sensationalised investigation into "Nunneries" and deporting hundreds of Irish paupers "across the Atlantic with less ceremony and formality … than goes to the sending of a tub of butter, or barrel of apples, form Fitchburg to Boston" (Mulkern 1990: 103). "Abused, hounded, attacked by their neighbours in the name of saving the land from 'Catholic bigotry'", David Montgomery writes, "the Irish withdrew as far as possible from the community around them and dealt with it only through the mediation of the priest and the Hunker Democrat" (Montgomery 1967: 166).

In Boston, at least, this withdrawal from the ostensible pluralism of American life—the turn to a "countercultural separatism" (Walsh 1996: 96), as one scholar has put it—meant voluntary physical segregation, often in ethnically homogenous neighbourhoods. After 1850, Boston's Irish community was geographically confined in several densely packed districts. The insularity of these communities is illustrated by the fact that at mid-century the Boston Irish married outside their own ranks even less frequently than African Americans. By the mid-1850s, "[t]wo distinct cultures flourished in Boston with no more contact than if 3,000 miles of ocean rather than a wall of ideas stood between them" (Handlin 1959: 146). Some have argued that the city's smaller African American population (less than 2000 in 1850) fared better than the new immigrants in the local economy, and one historian recounts that "Negroes joined Yankees in condemning the Irish for being Priest-ridden, paupers, drunkards, and rioters, and in an effort to protect what little property they owned [on Beacon Hill] some of them signed a petition in the 1850s to keep the Irish from encroaching on their neighbourhood" (Ryan 1983: 130).

None of the major studies of Boston tell us much about the work and residential locations where the lives of Africans and Irish immigrants overlapped.

Elsewhere in the urban North and perhaps even more dramatically in the seaport South, circumstances precluded the sharp delineation of immigrant turf from the rest of the city, making promiscuous interaction between blacks and the Irish routine rather than exceptional. The Sixth Ward in Mobile, Alabama, included the largest Irish and the largest slave populations in the city, David Gleeson reminds us (2001: 124). Railroad expansion from the early 1850s brought an influx of Irish to Memphis; by the outbreak of war Irish immigrants constituted a third of its white population (Robinson 1982: 79). In New York's densely packed Sixth Ward, where "blacks and Irish brushed regularly against one another" (Hodges 1996: 112–113), a raucous, tentative interracialism developed on the squalid edifice of the city's worst slums. Journalists and middle-class reformers outraged by the absence of social restrictions against sex across the colour line "depicted interracial sex and socializing, or amalgamation, between working-class blacks and Irish as a major threat to New York's racial and social order" (Harris 2004: 247). In the notorious Five Points neighbourhood, Graham Hodges argues, relations between African Americans and Irish immigrants were "polyvalent": though living cheek-by-jowl in sometimes intense economic competition, "Irish and black coexisted far more peacefully than historians have suggested" (Hodges 1996: 124). Despite the regularity with which rioting erupted in the district, "strikingly little violence occurred between Irish and blacks" (Hodges 1996: 115), and on at least one occasion both groups found themselves the victims of an incursion emanating from outside the district. In Philadelphia, as well, many of the Irish "settled in neighborhoods that were populated by African Americans" and were "often closely associated with free blacks, both in terms of their perceived racial attributes [and] their patterns of work" (Historical Society of Pennsylvania 2014).

Workplace interactions, though frequently marked by racial antipathy and violence, were more complicated and uneven than studies constructed around the Irish embrace of "whiteness" suggest. While the recent scholarship has focused on Irish immigrants' defence of "their" jobs from African American competitors in the North, in many places

the Irish staked a claim on particular sectors of the labour market only by driving out the (far less numerous) black workers who had occupied them previously. In antebellum New York and Boston, African Americans had dominated the service sector and menial labour—working as waiters, domestic servants, cooks and common labourers—until an influx of immigrants willing to undercut their wages began to dislodge them (Diner 1996: 100). Some occupations—porters and washerwomen—remained fairly mixed, and in others—notably along the docks—control over specific wharves changed hands frequently among competing ethnic and racial blocs (Germans, Irish, African Americans), and often under the deliberate manipulation of employers. Even in the slave South, there were contexts in which Irish free labourers and black slaves worked side-by-side: universally their paths crossed while performing "monotonous physical labor"—unskilled work, often along the docks or in gruelling ditch-digging, levee building and canal labour (Gleeson 2001: 46). At New Orleans and in Savannah, Irish dockworkers organised the cities' first trade unions (Gleeson 2001: 52), which in a new post-emancipation context following the war would be transformed by the sheer necessity of interracial cooperation. Among white artisans at the South, however, wherever they could their efforts were aimed at excluding slave competitors (Starobin 1970: 211–214). The essential point in understanding this record of conflict is that, as James Barrett has argued, the "functioning of the market, carefully cultivated by [employers], virtually guaranteed ethnic [and racial] competition over jobs[.] Whatever conflicts rose from cultural tensions, employers' habits of hiring outsiders at lower wages and breaking up labor organizations reinforced Irish hostility toward newcomers" (Barrett 2012: 117). On the whole, black labour's hold over occupations which they'd previously dominated was not dislodged by force or intimidation (though that certainly occurred) so much as overwhelmed by sheer numbers: just 12,000 blacks lived in all of Manhattan (population 630,000) in 1855, for example, as compared with over 175,000 Irish immigrants (Hershkowitz 1996: 18; Diner 1996: 91). In Boston at the same time just over 2000 African Americans (comprising just 1.4 per cent of its population) shared the city with more than 50,000 newcomers from Ireland who by then made up a third of the city's total population (Tager 2001: 88).

Both aspects of this contradictory record of interaction between the Irish poor and African Americans in the workplaces and neighbourhoods of the urban North are worth bearing in mind as we consider the hardening of racial divisions that coincided with the descent towards war. The Church's opposition to anti-slavery agitation was well established by the outbreak of hostilities, though the hierarchy bent, temporarily, to accommodate the popular outrage that shook the urban North in the wake of the Confederate attack on Sumter in April 1861. The Democratic Party carried on a relentless campaign during the build-up to war and well into the conflict to inoculate white workers in the North against support for emancipation, with its press warning incessantly of the spectre of black hordes coming northward with emancipation (Man 1951). Such fearmongering was aimed directly at exploiting the insecurities of their immigrant supporters: "[H]undreds and thousands, if not millions of [freed] slaves will come North and West," the *Cincinnati Enquirer* warned readers, "and will be either competitors with our white mechanics and laborers, degrading them by their competition, or they will have to be supported as paupers at public expense" (McPherson 1982: 274). With a record of "frequent collisions" (Ryan 1959: 126) between Irish and African American workers in cities like New York during the late antebellum period, it was inevitable that the highly charged atmosphere generated by war would bring more dramatic clashes.

Together their desperate economic predicament, their estrangement from the most progressive currents of the day and their continual exposure to the anti-abolitionist propaganda of the Democratic Party and the Catholic hierarchy generated among famine-era Irish immigrants a toxic antipathy to the cause of the slaves and their free black allies in the North. They were easy fodder for the designs of proslavery Democrats in the urban North, who agitated throughout the early stages of the war against the Lincoln administration. If we add to these conditions the inequities of the draft and the added privations of wartime, it is unsurprising that their early support for the Union gave way among the immigrant poor to seething resentment. In some communities across the North, these frustrations exploded in strikes and outbreaks of social unrest in which race did not figure at all. In the anthracite regions of eastern Pennsylvania, for example, chronic wartime strike activity was

motivated not by Democrat-led attempts to "embarrass the Union", historian Grace Palladino insists, but by working-class outrage over collaboration between "local wartime agents of the Republican administration and leading coal operators" who sought (and were granted) a standing army to impose labour peace on the district (Palladino 1990: 7). Similarly, the wave of convulsions that rocked the North when conscription was introduced in the middle of July 1863 included a number of localised uprisings that targeted prominent Republicans and civil authorities but showed no tendency to spill over into attacks upon African Americans.

In New York City, however, where the Copperhead element among the Democrats enjoyed unparalleled influence and where antipathy between Irish immigrants and blacks had simmered since mid-century, the explosion—when it came—drew upon social and economic frustration and raw, unconcealed racial animosity. The 1863 New York Draft Riots—easily the most horrific episode to shake the northern homefront during the Civil War—combined these elements to culminate in an explosive wave of lethal rage—directed early on against federal military officials, Republican authorities and symbols of wealth in the city, but later—notably—in pitiless attacks on defenceless African Americans (Bernstein 1990). Though there was nothing "rational" in this orgy of violence, its trajectory had been profoundly shaped by the long history of Irish immigrant alienation in the years since mid-century.

Understanding the link between that alienation and the famine-era immigrant's attitudes towards race requires some understanding of the powerful forces shaping their outlook and limiting their room for manoeuvre in the mid-nineteenth-century United States. We should be wary of accepting at face value the assertion that has become deeply embedded in recent historical writing of an undifferentiated Irish diaspora mourning the passing of its pre-industrial roots and obsessed with laying claim to white racial identity. Understanding the complex, often contradictory pressures confronting immigrants as they settled in to bleak new surroundings does not exclude some acknowledgment of their "agency" in carving out a new identity, but any tenable explanation must recognise also that poverty, forced marginalisation and persistent nativist hostility served as formidable barriers against their

finding common political ground with southern slaves or their closest allies in the North. In a country where assumptions about the racial inferiority of blacks had been taking shape for more than two centuries before their arrival, the Irish diaspora's absorption and embrace of prevailing ideas about race may be disappointing, but in context it is not surprising.

Clearly, it would require an extraordinary feat of historical revisionism to make anti-slavery fighters out of famine-era immigrants who made their way to the United States and found themselves, by the early 1860s, drawn into a devastating Civil War. Few of those who served in either Union or Confederate ranks were driven to battle primarily by their convictions on the slavery controversy. Substantial numbers were conscripted and had little say about when or why they might serve; many others, who enlisted, did so to secure some relief from economic hardship or, perhaps, to plot a path out of the cramped confines of the urban ghetto. Collectively, and against a backdrop of pervasive nativism, military service might have seemed like a pragmatic vehicle for assimilation.

In each of these respects, there is nothing distinctively "Irish" in the actions of these new immigrants. The involuntary nature of the Middle Passage makes for important distinctions in the African American encounter with their new surroundings, but aspects of the famine-era experience of Irish immigrants have been common to many who have struggled between that time and our own to find acceptance and a measure of economic security in a multi-ethnic United States. Although the Ireland of the new millennium is a world away from the catastrophe of An Gorta Mór, we inhabit a world in which devastating human catastrophes on a similar scale occupy our headlines, and where antipathy to whole groups of people based on their religion combines with anti-immigrant hostility to fuel deep polarisation and violence. In this context, a more fitting way for Irish society to memorialise the suffering of the famine-era diaspora might lie in undertaking an honest reappraisal of its own treatment of the modern-day victims of hunger and oppression, who are pushed and pulled from one corner of the globe to another in the same desperate search for a new beginning that the famine diaspora yearned for in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Notes

1. Marese McDonagh, "Taoiseach heckled by anti-war charge protestors in Sligo", *Irish Times,* 9 May 2015, at: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/taoiseach-heckled-by-anti-water-charge-protesters-in-sligo-1.2206756; Harry Keaney, "Sligo pol envisions Ballymote as American as apple pie", *Irish Echo,* 2 April 2002, at: http://irishecho.com/2011/02/sligo-pol-envisions-ballymote-as-american-as-apple-pie-2/ (both accessed 1 August 2016).
2. Niall O'Dowd, "Shame on protestors who disrupted Irish in US Civil War memorial", *Irish Central*, 12 May 2015, at: http://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/niallodowd/Shame-on-protesters-who-disrupted-Irish-in-US-Civil-War-memorial-.html (accessed 1 August 2016).
3. Estimates of the number of Irish recruits in the Confederate military vary widely. John Mitchell probably exaggerated in claiming that 40,000 served. David Gleeson (2001: 154) estimates that a conservative calculation would show "that around 70 per cent of able-bodied Irish men [in the South] served in the Confederate ranks."
4. Freeman to Rev. N. Pinder, 24 March 1882; Freeman to Rev. N. Pinder, 6 Nov 1881; Freeman to F. H. Dickinson, Esq., 4 Dec. 1881.
5. Communication of Dr Henry G. Clark, *City of Boston Documents*, 1861.
6. Frederick Douglass to William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, 27 March 1846; reprinted in Foner (1950).
7. William Lloyd Garrison and others had, of course, levelled the same criticisms at Protestant denominations in the North, and the white evangelical South was by mid-century thoroughly proslavery (see McKivigan 1984; Irons 2008).
8. *Boston Pilot*, 1 April 1862.
9. *Boston Pilot*, 1 April 1862.

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Part 3

Hidden Diasporas

8

"Hidden" Diasporas? Second- and Third-Generation Irish in England and Scotland

Bronwen Walter

The Irish in Britain have only recently been recognised as part of the diaspora, brought into the picture more openly by President Mary Robinson whose inaugural speech in 1990 placed "our neighbouring island" first in the list of diasporic homelands. But those of Irish descent in Britain are still frequently overlooked, regarded as necessary to the economic functioning of the Irish Republic but rarely to be recognised and certainly not fêted in ways *The Gathering* plans suggested. On "return" they are often reminded of their inauthenticity as Irish people and even of disloyal alignment with Britain, especially because of their "English" accents (Walter 2008b: 178–9).

Simultaneously, acknowledgement of the cultural difference of the second and third generations is missing within Britain. Assertions of swift assimilation deny the everyday transfer of familial and community cultural backgrounds recognised in other minority ethnic groups by migration (Hickman 1995: 7–8). This invisibility varies over time and space,

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influenced by relative numbers and length of settlement in cities and regions, as well as by mechanisms and avenues for claiming and celebration of Irishness. One of the most important, but under-explored, is national differences, notably those between England and Scotland. Whereas the profile of the second and third generations can be slight or positive in many parts of England, especially in the post-Good Friday period, in Scotland Irish-descent identities are still controversial and, indeed, significantly contested. These experiences are strongest in Scotland's west-central belt where most of the Irish have traditionally settled, only muted by this population's avoidance of the cultural, political, sporting and physical clashes which can erupt (Bradley 1995).

The notion of diaspora in the Irish Republic has evolved very swiftly from a largely unwanted intrusion into the story of Ireland by its first woman president, who brought an inclusive and caring perspective which referred to emigrants for the first time. Thus, the theme of "cherishing the diaspora" was treated with disdain by both the Dáil and Seanad in 1995. In her official biography, Mary Robinson reflected:

> I felt it as I was speaking. I felt there was a resistance. When I came out Father Paul Byrne of the Episcopal Commission for Emigrants was delighted. I had put the emphasis where he wanted it. And I said I have rarely spoken to a less responsive audience (O'Leary and Burke 1998: 196).

Commenting later, historian Diarmaid Ferriter suggested:

> Her address had a political edge because of its relevance to issues that were generating contemporary debate, including whether there was an onus on Irish governments to contribute more substantially to emigrants' welfare, and if emigrants should be allowed to vote in elections to the Seanad. Politicians, it seemed, did not want such discussions (*Irish Times,* 25 January 2012).

Nevertheless, within three years the Irish Constitution had been amended following a referendum in 1998 so that Article 2 now reads: "The Irish nation cherishes a special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage." Interestingly this expressed explicitly the notion of cherishing which had been so unpopular in President Robinson's speech.

Successive governments had represented emigration as a lifestyle choice by young people, inevitable because, as Brian Lenihan famously asserted in 1987 "we can't all live on a small island" (Whelan 1987). But by 2000 changing attitudes and an apparent acceptance of some level of responsibility for those who had left by necessity and faced hardship in their places of settlement, especially in old age, was reflected in the establishment of the Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants (Department of Foreign Affairs 2002). The report avoided using the term "diaspora", preferring "Irish Abroad", indicating that the concept had not yet been officially accepted[1]:

> This approach should encompass not only the needs of Irish-born people who have emigrated but also people of Irish descent who wish to express their Irish cultural identity and heritage. Throughout this report, these are referred to collectively as the Irish Abroad (2002: 3).

Yet despite initial promises of generous help to those identified as being in serious need, especially in Britain, the report was buried almost immediately after its launch.

It was only disinterred by the very shocked public outcry following an RTÉ *Primetime* television programme broadcast just before Christmas 2003. Paul Rouse's documentary *Lost Generation* revealed serious poverty and deprivation amongst older, especially male, migrants in London and Coventry (Rouse 2003). This led to questions in the Dáil and shamed the Finance Minister Brian Cowen, later Taoiseach, into action. He reluctantly agreed to a large increase in Irish Government Díon funding, from 2.9 million euros in 2003 to 15.1 million in 2008, as well as setting up the Irish Abroad Unit attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs. The profile of the Unit was enhanced in 2014 by the appointment of a Minister for Diaspora Affairs of Ireland (*Irish Post* 2015a). Long years of dogged spadework by the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy to Britain, which had culminated in the establishment of the Task Force, finally paid off, but the Irish Government had strongly resisted (Kennedy 2015: 189–96).

The concept of *The Gathering* might be interpreted as belated official recognition of the arrival of the diaspora as a valued part of the Irish nation and indeed was represented in this way by the organisers. The editorial team claimed that

> It has taken the Irish Government almost 20 years to absorb the insights presented to them in her address. But in declaring 2013 the Year of the Irish Diaspora they have taken to heart what the former President so passionately expounded in her speech. Indeed it would be true to say that many parts of her 1995 address to the Oireachtas could be seen as a blueprint for the Government's present initiative (Tintean 2012).

However, in reality the long delay signalled the shift to a different objective, namely the hope to secure investment and tourism in the wake of the collapse of the Celtic Tiger. Its origins in the 2009 Global Irish Economic Forum held at Farmleigh, Dublin, confirmed that the prime purpose of the initiative was a one-way economic boost to the home country. As Shaun Quinn, CEO of Fáilte Ireland explained:

> The real power of the Gathering lies in its ability to leverage the efforts of any Irish citizen, community group or indeed any diaspora member to roll up their sleeves and take an active part in mobilising behind an initiative to support our national recovery. With a fair wind, many of the seeds planted through events and initiatives at a local level all around the nation, will bloom into longer term beneficial networks and opportunities for the country (Fáilte Ireland 2012).

The Gathering offers a clear example of Breda Gray's theorisation of the "neo-institutionalisation of state-diaspora relations" and "the rise of ethno-commerce" in the guise of supporting cultural belonging (Gray 2012: 269). The primacy of the involvement of the state rather than the nation was further indicated by the relatively low level of involvement of Northern Ireland, arguably an integral part of the "home" to which the diaspora was invited to return and key to President Robinson's call for an inclusive understanding of Irishness. Only 116 of the 5000 local gatherings were located in the North. The Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) motion in Stormont to support the project was challenged by the enterprise minister, Arlene Foster, who pointed out that it was an Irish Government initiative, not initiated by the cross-border body Tourism Ireland as was being claimed (Northern Ireland Assembly 2012; also Devlin Trew, this volume).

Another critical interpretation sees *The Gathering* as a means of diverting attention from the reality of the return of high levels of involuntary emigration as the economy collapsed.

> But its greatest achievement, for the political establishment at least, was to switch the focus from the 50,000 Irish people leaving the country that year to the 270,000 Irish people who were returning – even if only on holidays. On the surface, The Gathering was a year-long festival focused on a celebration of the Irish abroad (or the Irish abroad who were willing and able to come back for a visit), but it also served to silence national sentiment about the exodus of mainly young people from Ireland in that exact period. Narratives of loss and leaving were now officially disjointed from the national project (Negra and O'Leary 2015).

The publicity also made clear that there was a hierarchy of targets relating primarily to wealth. At the top of the list was Irish America which received the largest number of mentions and produced the greatest increase in tourist numbers. In 2013, tourist receipts from the USA rose by 16.5% compared with only 3.7% from Britain. This shows that numbers from Britain were disproportionately low given that it was the major emigrant destination for most of the twentieth century and continues to receive a much stronger quota of emigrants.

Of course, national totals give only a very broad-brush picture of the origins of participants. The socio-economic mix of Irish-Americans is very wide and regionally diverse. Despite the generally accepted view that the Irish epitomise the success of the American Dream of upward mobility, there remain pockets of "poor whites" of Irish descent, for example, in Boston and the Appalachians (MacDonald 1999). The persistence of poverty within Irish-American communities in Boston has recently been represented graphically on the stage by *Good People* (Lindsay-Abaire 2012) and on screen in the film *Spotlight* (McCarthy 2015). Similarly, the Irish in Britain, whilst having a much lower overall profile, comprise a variety of levels of visibility amongst generational and geographical groupings. The most striking omissions are the second and third generations for whom there is no collective name and in particular the large population in the West of Scotland. As Joe Lee (2005: 206) points out, historically,

> The Scottish numbers were substantial, hovering during the [nineteenth] century between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of the recorded Irish-born population of the entire island. It receives nothing like comparable attention even in the very best surveys of the Irish in Britain.

Most policy-related and academic references to the Irish in Britain have very few references to Scotland, focussing mainly on England, with Wales also being subsumed without specific consideration. The former Federation of Irish Societies, an umbrella group of community and welfare groups, has recently been renamed *Irish in Britain*. It has an important role in co-ordinating funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin agreed after the Task Force Report. However, there is only one Scottish member, the Irish Heritage Foundation in Glasgow, tellingly a cultural body mainly concerned with the small St Patrick's Day parade rather than a welfare provider for the strongly disadvantaged population. Whilst a small group of academics in Scotland have written about the Irish experience, very few of those who work in England on the Irish in Britain do more than nod briefly at Scotland if they remember to do that at all. For example, Enda Delaney's highly regarded monograph *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (2007) includes only three page references to Scotland. As long ago as 1991 the historian Tom Devine put in a plea, which remains on the table, for extending knowledge outside Scotland:

> Perhaps above all there is a need to set the Scottish immigrant experience in context by comparing the Irish in Scottish cities and towns with their counterparts in English, American and Canadian urban centres. Only through imaginative use of comparative study will the distinctiveness of the Irish in Scotland be fully revealed (Devine 1991: vii).

Dimensions of Hiddenness

This chapter explores the hiddenness of populations of Irish descent in Britain which contrasts so strikingly with those in the USA and helps to explain the muted response expected, and given, to *The Gathering* in

2013. They are hidden on a number of dimensions in both Britain and Ireland. Lack of recognition by wider British society is illustrated by the absence of an ethnic label for second- and third-generation descendants of Irish migrants, their children and grandchildren. Only very recently has the opportunity to be recorded in the Census been offered with the introduction of the category White Irish in 2001, in place of the undifferentiated White in 1991. The rubric in 2001 invited those completing the form to tick this box if this was their "cultural background", but subsequent research showed that many who might have wished to accept this did not read the small print and assumed they should identify as White British because of their citizenship (Walter 2006). In 2011, the rubric was shortened to "background" for reasons of space, an even less precise definition. This may explain why there was only a very small increase in numbers of English-born people ticking the White Irish box in the England and Wales census of 2011, rising by 0.6% despite extensive efforts by the Federation of Irish Societies to publicise this opportunity (*Irish Post* 2011). Indeed, there was a 10% decline in London where most effort was put into making the large second-generation population aware of the option and its potential advantages in the form of resources to ethnically identified groups.

However, this result also reflects changes under the White heading in the ethnic question. The single category British offered in 2001 was expanded to a label called "English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish/British" in 2011. As a result, two possible boxes were provided for the population of Northern Irish background, which is likely to have split the responses. There was a fall of 48.5% in the number of people born in Northern Ireland who ticked the White Irish box, which suggests that their families may well have followed the same path. In Scotland, by contrast, the 2011 Census form retained a single Irish category under the White grouping and the proportion of the population born in Scotland ticking this box grew by 17.8%.

The option to record Irish ancestry was offered 20 years earlier in the US Census. In 1980 an ethnic category was included "to collect ethnic data on persons regardless of the number of generations removed from their country of origin." It was repeated with more open-ended instruc-

tions in 1990 and 2000, allowing multiple answers, although only the first two were actually coded. The results are very challenging to analyse but appear to indicate that an Irish ancestry, with 34.7 million claimants in 2010, is second only to German in popularity (Lee and Casey 2006: 687; US Census Bureau 2012).

There is considerable variation within the nations, regions and settlements of Britain arising from histories of immigration, relative numbers and cultural factors such as religious allegiances. These will be examined in greater detail below using qualitative data from the *Irish 2 Project* which constructed a sample of participants from four locations in England—London, Manchester, Coventry and Banbury—and one in Scotland, Strathclyde (Walter 2005). The focus group discussions revealed further hiddenness *between* Irish-descent populations settled in different geographical areas. When the findings from the project were shared with participants, shock and surprise were expressed by members of the Manchester sample at the negative experiences of people of Irish descent in Strathclyde. Their own stories had been largely positive about growing up in a large city with a long history of immigration and intermarriage and an acceptance of Catholicism by the wider society. They had never heard about the ongoing difficulties for Irish Catholics in Scotland and wanted to know how to express their solidarity.

Finally, the second and third generations, especially in England, felt that their identities were often not acknowledged when they "returned" to Ireland on visits to families and communities. The same respondents from Manchester who had described their easy relationships with local people of Irish and non-Irish descent, talked about rejection by people born in Ireland when their English-sounding voices were heard. Their right to claim Irish identities was challenged on the basis of birthplace and accent in ways profoundly at odds with the notions of diaspora being accepted at official levels. Hickman (2007: 4) describes this as "a hierarchy of Irishness" which is "configured differently in different institutional settings and in different localities."

Irish-Descent Identities in England

The invisibility of Irish-descent identities in England is most easily explored by discussions with those particularly aware of the absences, the population itself. This was a key theme of the focus groups and individual interviews with the *Irish 2* sample, which took place at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Personal experiences are clearly time-specific, depending both on lifecycle stage and historical context. When reflecting on their senses of identity, participants reviewed their lives and reported on salient and remembered incidents from the vantage point of the present. They spoke about their childhoods at home and school and recalled these against the background of the Northern Ireland conflict which impinged heavily after 1968.

Attitudes of the non-Irish population towards Irish-descent identities are much harder to analyse systematically, emerging in myriad ways which are usually taken-for-granted and overlooked (Walter 2011). Two examples can be mentioned here, drawn from very different situations. One is the reaction of an English journalist in the fairly small town of Banbury in Oxfordshire to a request by the *Irish 2* researchers for publicity in the recruitment of participants. She was eager to help and carefully researched a piece to place on the front page of the local newspaper entitled "How Irish do you think you are?" later following it up with a synopsis of the findings (*Banbury Citizen* 2000, 2002). She expressed the view that this was a very unusual topic and thus of considerable interest to her readers. The article produced over 40 responses from people who spoke about their surprise and pleasure at being given the opportunity to talk about their lives. This may have been the chance effect of a young woman who had no knowledge of an Irish population in England, but in combination with the reactions of the respondents, it strongly suggests an absence of recognition for these identities in this town. It contrasted with the dismissal of the same request by newspaper reporters in Manchester, for example, where Irish backgrounds were commonplace and not considered at all newsworthy.

The second example is the rapid loss of acknowledgement of an Irish-descent community in the East End of London after the Second World

War (Walter 2014). In the 1930s, the descendants of the large nineteenth-century population of Irish dockers and factory workers were still described in ethnic terms as simply "Irish." However, by the 1950s references to their ethnicity disappeared and people with this cultural background became the "white working classes." There had certainly been a substantial "slum" clearance programme following bomb destruction during the Second World War, which resulted in long-established families being rehoused in Essex. But there is no record of other "white" families moving in to take their place on any scale, so that those who remained were undoubtedly the same or next generation. This appears to be an example of a more general reinventing of Irish populations as simply "white" in the strengthening of an undifferentiated "host" community against visibly racialised others. It reinforces the notion of the "myth of homogeneity" of Britain prior to the Second World War, which denied longstanding cultural diversity of which the Irish formed a major section, an ideology reflected in academic studies asserting that the Irish assimilated after the migrant generation (Hickman 1998: 296–9). It has certainly played its part in hiding Irish specificity in England, as the omission of an Irish category from the ethnic question when it was first introduced to the Census in 1991 illustrates.

From the "inside", however, continuities of Irish identification within families were much more evident. *Irish 2* participants gave detailed accounts of their early experiences when asked about their memories of childhood. What becomes clear is the enclosure of strong Irish cultures "behind closed doors", especially those of homes. This physical hiddenness meant that neighbours and friends from other ethnic groups were often unaware of the extent of differences unless they were invited to visit. The majority of participants in England were raised as Catholics and these objects, which they later realised were distinctively Irish, were most frequently mentioned.

Interviewer	What about décor of your house, were you aware that it wasn't the same as your non-Catholic friends'?
Martin	That is interesting. Perhaps it was a sheltered upbringing because I was never aware that in every room we had a reli-

gious icon, the Sacred Heart in the living room, holy water fonts. We took no notice of it, that was just the norm, that was our home. We saw it not in everybody's home that we went into, but we had some friends of similar backgrounds so you would see it from time to time. I paid no attention to this whatever until I went to college, one of my friends came to visit in the holidays. Not in any nasty way, he said "What's all this dipping water everywhere you go?" and I said "It is the holy water, no big deal." It was all good natured, and he said "What is this Sacred Heart business?" It was present in our house for sure (Coventry 7).[2]

Grace I suppose I found it slightly embarrassing when friends came, to have to explain what all these things were doing there (Banbury 10).

Irish-born parents in England reproduced many aspects of their own childhood homes which were taken for granted by their second-generation children until they were exposed to English public worlds.

Monica The holy pictures, oh my goodness, you don't notice it until you get into your teens and then everything is naff, isn't it? You bring friends home. It didn't matter when you were at school, but I went into the world of work at sixteen and had such a huge culture shock. I couldn't believe it (Manchester 13).

The presence of religious icons in Irish homes was paralleled by almost ubiquitous enrolment in Catholic schools which enclosed second-generation children in particular buildings within their localities. Most of the children attending the schools were of Irish background in the twentieth century though there were a few of Italian and Polish descent. Thus, in key formative periods of childhood, second and third generations were exposed to strong Catholic influences both at home and at school. Although these became diluted as young adults entered higher education or the world of paid work, childhood friendships forged in the neighbourhood often persisted and led to Irish networks and marriage links.

A consequence of this spatial separation is an incomprehension of, and refusal to recognise, the persistence of Irish cultural difference, which reinforces the discourse of "white" homogeneity. Many participants reported negative use of the epithet "plastic Paddy" by English people they encountered. They understood it to mean that they were not entitled to claim an Irish identity because they were born in Britain, conflating citizenship with ethnicity. Pauline, who took part in a focus group with professional women in London, said:

> You know, it's just that I don't know why people are like that, people aren't comfortable with you. It just seems like people aren't comfortable with you saying "you know, I'm Irish" if you weren't born there or you haven't got the accent.

Accents were seen as the key marker of authenticity without which second-generation people could not be accepted as Irish. Eilish, contributing to a focus group in Manchester, strongly rejected the corollary, enforced co-option into Englishness.

> It makes my blood boil, as soon as you open your mouth and they hear an English accent, everything is hunky dory. If it was an Irish accent it would be different.

Kate, another member of the London professional women's focus group, observed that her English accent and second-generation Irish identity were only reconciled in an Irish cultural situation in Britain.

> And the other thing is, I am a step dancer and it's the only, and I've only done that in the last few years. It's the only place where, I mean people assume, even though I've got an English accent, they just assume you've got Irish parents. And it's the only place where I've ever felt like myself, that I don't have to be trying to be Irish or English or anything. It's just people would, sort of automatically think, oh well you must be Irish and, and just accepted for your English accent and your ability to dance.

The deeply-engrained notion that voices are "proof" of identities is repeated in Ireland when second-generation people visit their relatives. James, a focus group member from Coventry, said:

> If I went over to Ireland and said to them, "I am Irish" they would laugh at you, they would think it is really funny. As far as they are concerned you are English, but you are not English, not English in the same way as people born and brought up here, and have English parents. You have a different element to you, which gives you a slightly different outlook on life, I think anyway.

Others spoke even more bitterly about this rejection. Two participants in a Manchester focus group saw this as a more serious limitation to their social acceptance.

Gerry	The worst racism I have encountered is in Ireland itself, with Irish people having a go at me about being English. That has happened on three or four occasions. Maybe it's been out in the town on a Saturday night, high spirits, but that is where I have encountered the problems. [Theresa agrees].
Interviewer	Is this hearing your accent?
Gerry	Yes, automatically you are English.

Asked whether she would consider moving to live in Ireland, Theresa said:

> I dream about it, and idealistically I would like to, but I don't know, I am quite cautious. But also the racism thing. I have had quite a few experiences, having an English accent. I don't think I would. I keep it just for holidays.

Clearly for Gerry and Theresa, *The Gathering* would not necessarily be an enjoyable event. The implication of their experiences of hostility is that anti-English political resentment remained an unresolved issue in sections of Irish society.

England was the only location outside Ireland to experience bombing campaigns associated with the Northern Ireland Troubles between 1968

and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The first major incident took place in Birmingham in 1974 when two pubs were bombed by the IRA resulting in 21 deaths and 182 injuries. The British Government response was to pass the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which gave extensive powers to the police to hold suspects, often on the slightest of evidence. Files of names of Irish people were collected and local communities asked to report on Irish neighbours. As a consequence, the Irish population became a "suspect community" and Irish people responded by "keeping their heads down", muffling their voices or remaining silent in public places (Hillyard 1993; Hickman and Walter 1997: 203–10). This added a much stronger dimension to the enclosure of Irish cultural identities within families. Although by the time of *The Gathering* in 2013, memories of this hostility had receded and been replaced by a perceived "Muslim threat", it had added to the low profile of Irish-descent populations in England.

Irish-Descent Identities in Scotland

People of Irish descent in Scotland are placed very differently from those in England, especially in the strongly Catholic parts of Strathclyde in the west. There is far greater encapsulation within Catholic communities where Irish identities persist over several generations. This became apparent during the preparation of research tools for the *Irish 2 Project*. When we invited focus group participants to comment on the draft format of the family tree schedule, they insisted on extending the "boxes" to include their grandparents, arguing that there was no difference in the strength of Irish identification between the second and third generations.

What became clear from group discussions and individual interviews was that expressions of Irish identity were largely confined to homes. The main exception was public participation as supporters of the Celtic football team, where Irishness was visibly claimed through match attendance and the wearing of team colours, even though this could lead to physical attack. Peter reported:

> My mum wouldn't want me when I was younger to go out to Celtic games wearing a Celtic top in case I got attacked for it or whatever. That's a sort of kinda similar issue isn't it? If I went to the game with my dad my dad would never wear a scarf because he's seen too many people attacked and stuff like that (Scotland 9).

John Joe described entering the world of work after enclosure in Catholic home and schooling, unaware of the risks associated with public affirmation of Celtic support. His father had not passed on his own knowledge of hostility to public expressions of Irishness, especially through clothing.

> Now he hadn't spoken about that to me but when I went over there the guys were wearing their football colours and you had a hard hat to wear and that kind of stuff, so the Rangers stickers and all that. So I put the Celtic stickers on mine, he went ballistic. I had not to do that. That was just something that was private, you keep that and I would never get on if that was, you know if I was going to wear them (Scotland 18).

Later in his interview, Peter explained his move away from regarding himself as Scottish because of this treatment.

> No, because if I go to the pub with my friends to watch the Scotland game they all know I'm that strictly speaking not bothered whether Scotland win or not as such. And that's because of an experience I had when I was younger, going to the game and going into the wrong end and Celtic players being called … bastards, and up until that time I was kinda supporting Scotland.

The widespread categorisation of the Celtic/Rangers rivalry as "sectarianism" indicates the hiddenness of its underlying and dominant anti-Irish (and anti-Catholic) meanings, reconstituting it as religious bigotry shared equally by Scots and people of Irish descent (Bradley 1995, 2004). However, whilst continuing to use this term, the Scottish Government has recently accepted the need to address the issue by setting up an Independent Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland, which reported in 2014 (Scottish Government 2016).

In contrast to English locations, other public expressions of relevance to people from an Irish background have traditionally been significantly muted in Scotland (Walter 2008a). No large-scale St Patrick's Day parades like those in London, Birmingham and Manchester are now held anywhere in Scotland, since around the First World War. Instead celebrations of St Patrick's Day outside the home usually take place behind the doors of some Catholic Church halls and pubs. One such departure (and soon after, a second in Glasgow) is the now annual (since 2003) celebration in the predominantly Catholic town of Irish descent, Coatbridge, ten miles east of Glasgow. Amidst much fear and hesitation on the part of the small group of organisers, the first few years of the town's St Patrick's festival was met with an outpouring of objections (including numerous letters to the local newspaper), one accusing the organisers of contributing to "the cancer of sectarianism which still blights our society." Several *Irish 2* participants said that they had travelled to New York in order to enjoy the St Patrick's Day parade which was not available to them at home. Nevertheless, there were some defiant assertions of Irishness challenging anticipated hostility. Peadar said:

> Actually, I'd say my father was at the other end of the spectrum. When it came to things like St Patrick's Day he would make sure you put on an extra big spread of shamrock and things like that. He would actually go out of his way to let people know he was Irish (Scotland 11).

Almost all second- and third-generation Irish participants in Scotland were Catholic and had attended Catholic schools, an important mechanism by which Irish identification persists through bringing together children with a shared Irish ethnicity. When asked whether their Catholic schools had celebrated St Patrick's Day, responses were polarised. In some cases, there was a strong tradition of official recognition including a mass and holiday activities, whilst in others the day was largely ignored because of fears of labelling the school as sectarian.

At home, on the other hand, Irish backgrounds were very evident in everyday life. This was visible in the form of material objects. As Rosaleen explained to the interviewer:

> If you look around here, you can see it's been passed down to me. Irish pictures, Celtic things all over the place, *The Book of Kells*, a lot of things to do with Irish music. I mean if you look at our house you would think you were in Ireland. It's very similar to relatives at home in Ireland (Scotland 17).

Again, most frequently mentioned were religious icons which had been taken for granted when participants were children, but in adulthood seen to be specific to Irish culture. John Joe spoke at length about the contrast between his own home and those of school friends. However, he also observed that only Catholics would have entered his home so that Scottish children would not have had the same exposure to difference.

> All that stuff, Sacred Heart, Theresa, Saint Theresa was a great one. My mammy she used to have that, the statues and the glass domes over them, you know. I don't know if that was to create a saintly aura or whether it was to keep the dust off them, I don't know, but they had that. They had … the Sacred Heart was a favourite, I don't think in any of the houses we went into, whether it was my mates at school, where you didn't see the Sacred Heart or the other thing was always in the house, front and back, was the Holy Water font, so you blessed yourself, even in a stranger's house, usually your mate's mammy reminded you. That paled off, that became less, I think as more … I mean probably if I'm realistic, now I'm thinking of it, I would say up till I was going to the High School or even after it, we probably didn't get any non-Catholic visitors (Scotland 18).

Interestingly Colin, one of the smaller number of Irish Protestant participants, noted the parallels between religious icons in Catholic households and political insignia of the Orange Order in his own. This again supports the view that Catholic identities in Scotland are politically significant rather than simply religious.

> Yeah, we had that in the house. In fact, we had a picture of King Billy right above the mantelpiece and it's not there now. It only came down, say a few years after my dad died, right. My dad was a very, very highly respected guy in this village, like me, a bit moderate in his views but still had that strong traditional feeling. You can go into, and I go into many people's houses and

> some of the older guys and older couples I should say, they still have pictures of King Billy, as do, I've got to say, our Roman Catholic contemporaries who will have pictures of the Pope or statues of the Virgin Mary and things like that [unclear]. Yes, we had the Flute Band record, we had that (Scotland 21).

At personal and community levels, therefore, Irish Catholic identities are rarely openly acknowledged, although their presence is strongly signposted by football club allegiance, school attendance and often postal address. Accent is no longer an identifier as a much smaller proportion is first generation than in England. However, school and name take on a much greater significance. One way in which families have attempted to protect themselves from identification is by giving children Scottish rather than Irish names at christenings. One forty-nine-year-old man had been told to shorten his name from John Joe to John when he started work. His two older sons were given the "neutral" names of Paul and David. But a much younger child had been named Liam, reflecting increased confidence as John Joe had risen to a more senior position in his employment (Scotland 18).

It was noted earlier that there has been a marked lack of attention to inclusion of the Irish in Scotland in academic publications, with titles apparently relating to the "Irish in Britain." The historiography has tended to remain at the supranational scale rather than fully taking into account the constituent nations of Britain. Within this literature there have been determined efforts to challenge the claims to discrimination against people of Irish Catholic descent, demonstrating that such attitudes continue to permeate Scottish society at all levels. The dispute reached the national press in an article entitled "Bigotry experts won't see eye to eye." The Professor of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen, historian Tom Devine, challenged social scientist Professor Steve Bruce saying "My principal view is that Professor Bruce's discipline is not capable of understanding the subtleties of this debate." He argued that "this is the only country in the world that has a problem with denominational education, and what possible explanation is there for that except that there are still latent sectarian issues there?" (*Scotland on Sunday,* 10 October 2004).

The public debate continued in 2005 between social scientists in the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, which carried an article reporting on qualitative research showing discrimination against Irish Catholics in the workforce (Walls and Williams 2003). This was fiercely attacked by academics from a non-Catholic and non-Irish background who accused the researchers of academic weakness in the methodology and selective bias in the presentation (Bruce et al. 2005). They claimed that census statistics showed no evidence at all of discrimination. It was followed by a robust rebuttal from the initial authors, but the editors quickly closed the debate. However, it clearly illustrated the continuing salience of anti-Irish attitudes in many sectors of society, now being acknowledged more openly by the Scottish Parliament. Research undertaken for the petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament in 2011 by Dr Susan Wiltshire, an expert in criminal justice at Glasgow University, provides powerful evidence for a link between deprivation and Catholic, that is Irish, background:

> The question therefore should shift from asking why Catholics are disproportionately represented in Scottish jails to why so many Catholics continue to live in areas of deprivation in Scotland, particularly the West, and why they score worse on a range of social indicators (Wiltshire 2011: 4).

In contrast to the English data from the *Irish 2* project, there was no mention of antagonism towards Scottish people of Irish descent when they visited Ireland. Scottish accents did not seem to lead to rejection or labelling as "plastic." Most participants commented on how well they were received as members of families who were "returning home." This may reflect the very large numbers of people in the Strathclyde area whose origins are in Donegal. It appeared that travel between the two locations was quite easy and that many trips were made if funds allowed. A number of participants said that they were affectionately labelled "Scotties", which they accepted and indeed many described themselves as "Scottish" in marked contrast to the participants in England who very rarely gave their identities as "English."

Conclusions

Failure to recognise fully the presence of an often thriving population of Irish descent in Britain limited the vision of the organisers of *The Gathering*. Despite the achievements of Irish professional and business people in Britain, these successful lives have often been overshadowed by negative stereotypes and the reality of poverty amongst many Irish people there. However, the second-generation Irish in England have demonstrated significant levels of upward mobility over a long period of time. Moreover, evidence from the 2001 Census showed there was a greater likelihood that people of Irish descent would tick White Irish if they were graduates (Hickman 2011: 86). The continuing hiddenness of the Irish diaspora in Britain is perhaps even more surprising given the changing social profile of the migrant generation. A large majority (62%) of all emigrants in a major 2013 survey were graduates moving to well-paid professional jobs who might have been expected to make an important economic contribution to the homeland (Glynn et al. 2013). Moreover, Britain is Ireland's most important market, including its largest source of tourists (PA Consulting Group 2013).

Lack of acknowledgement of the ongoing commitment of emigrants, especially in Britain, is evident in the strong resistance to agreeing to demands for an emigrant vote. The Irish in Britain organisation was "greatly disappointed" that the government had chosen to ignore the persistent diaspora call for overseas voting in its otherwise path-breaking *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy* launched in March 2015, following the appointment of the Minister for Diaspora Affairs of Ireland the previous summer (*Irish Post* 2015b). Many emigrants, and households in Ireland, believe that the need to leave Ireland was the consequence of political decisions in which they are entitled to have a say at election time, as is the case in many countries of emigration (Glynn et al. 2013: 96–8).

This demonstrates the contemporary complexity of relationships between the diaspora in Britain and the island of Ireland resulting from the long and difficult history of colonial connection, still salient in the

ongoing partition of Northern Ireland. In fact, Northern Irish people are "doubly invisible" in Britain, often excluded from studies of "the Irish" (Devlin Trew 2013: 151). By contrast the USA had separated violently from the British state several centuries earlier and the story of success and upward mobility dominates present-day images. But just as there is no name Irish-British to match the long-established label Irish-American, there has been no recognition of ongoing family ties between Britain and Ireland to parallel the prominent, if disdainful, category of "returned Yank."

Hiddenness both "at home" in Britain and on "return" to Ireland involves both invisibility and visibility as two sides of the same coin. For example, the enclosure of children within the Catholic school system removes aspects of Irish culture from the "mainstream" view, but simultaneously marks out Irish-descent children as different, with particularly strong consequences in Scotland. Similarly, the persistence of Irish Catholic neighbourhoods in Scotland both protects Irish communities from hostile attention, whilst confirming their difference. Although they share close cultural understandings through family connections, on holidays in Ireland accents immediately mis-identify children born in England to Irish-born parents. They are more easily singled out than Scottish-born children because their "home" places are scattered throughout the island.

Disaggregating the Irish in Britain along the important fault line between the two largest internal nations highlights the role of political context in placing this multi-generational population in the "hierarchy of Irishness." Being Irish in England has become easier since the Northern Ireland Troubles have subsided (Devlin Trew 2013: 145). The Irish in Scotland share an otherness to England with people of longer Scottish descent, which was reflected in the shift from traditional support for the Labour Party to the Scottish National Party in 2015 (Crichton 2015), but are also divided more strongly by the religio-political underpinnings of the Scottish nation. In different ways, the consequences of inequalities of power between Britain and Ireland continue to resonate at state and personal levels and were inevitably reflected in the production of *The Gathering*.

Notes

1. I was explicitly asked to remove references to "diaspora" from the accompanying study, Walter, B. with B. Gray, L. Dowling and S. Morgan, "Irish Emigrants and Irish Communities abroad: A Study of Existing Sources of Information and Analysis for the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants" (Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs, 2002).
2. Individual interviewees are identified by number and location. Each has been given a pseudonym.

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9

Placeless Patriots: The Misplaced Loyalty of "The Middle Nation"

Ultan Cowley

It is difficult to evaluate the effects of *The Gathering* on Irish diaspora perceptions of Ireland because the diaspora itself is multi-faceted, and disparate groups have different needs and expectations. However, there is merit in considering the perspectives of the various groups involved in *The Gathering*, whether abroad or in Ireland, and in particular the older Irish in Britain, of whom I have some knowledge. Americans or Australians claiming Irish descent would have had quite different expectations of *The Gathering* from the "new Irish" economic migrants in those societies, who had been born in Ireland. Many who emigrated during the 1980s were able to return during the Celtic Tiger era, and it could be argued that, more recently, migration has been ameliorated by the ability to communicate via global social media networking, blurring the traditional distinctions between 'abroad' and 'home.'[1] All of these groups, in turn, would differ from the 'undocumented' Irish in the United States, in that the latter by definition were excluded by legal practicalities from participation

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in *The Gathering*. The Irish in Britain also include both "new Irish" (and some—"the Ryanair Generation"—perhaps no longer quite so new) and the massive 1950s' exodus, in addition to the numerous and complex Irish descent. Differing again from all of these are the Irish in Scotland who, predominantly originating in Ulster, continue to maintain strong interactive links with that province across space and time and generally feel neither alienated nor ignored in Ireland.

Gabriel Byrne's acid remark that *The Gathering* was "a scam" aimed at extracting the Yankee dollar from the American-Irish derived in part from disillusionment with his erstwhile function as an official "cultural ambassador", charged with promoting Ireland in the United States, where he was then resident. "The bridge between the diaspora and the people is broken and I tried to fix that for two years and it's still broken", Byrne claimed (cited in O'Regan 2012). His criticisms may also have been underscored by his prior experience of emigration as a jobbing actor in Britain in the 1970s. Certainly, watching the official Fáilte Ireland video promoting the concept of *The Gathering* in the winter prior to its launch in 2013, I was forcibly struck by the complete absence of any reference to the Irish in twentieth-century Britain. Predictable stock images of Ellis Island and US President John F. Kennedy were not counter-balanced by any footage of the many thousands of emigrants "taking the boat" daily for Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, or London Euston between the 1940s and the 1970s. Amongst those emigrants—the so-called Forgotten Irish—I have consistently encountered two major grievances. The first is that the English give them so little credit for their enormous contribution to Britain's modern infrastructure. The second, more corrosive concern is that the Irish at home show so little appreciation for their many sacrifices and achievements. As Sr Teresa Gallagher, founder of Immigrant (formerly Irish) Counselling and Psychotherapy, put it in regard to the older Irish in Britain: "We are finding deep wells of sadness in ordinary human lives" (cited in Cowley 2012).

This sadness has its roots in the perception amongst many older Irish emigrants that they were bred, but not prepared, for emigration. It is given apt expression in the Gaelic word for exile—*deorai*—which translates as placelessness or banishment. Distinctions were of course made

between seasonal labour migration and permanent emigration, but it seems to me that Irish attitudes towards economic migration to Britain have always been ambivalent at best (see also Bronwen Walter's chapter in this volume). As long as migration was merely seasonal, the labourer retained a relatively stable place in the home community which, if at times uneasy, was largely secure. Seasonal migration took place usually in family or community groups and its primary function was to maintain a hold on the land for all concerned. Migrants and non-migrants were mutually supportive. A century before the Great Famine, according to David Fitzpatrick (1984: 7), "as many as one hundred thousand migrants annually plied back and forth across the Irish Sea." This pattern of seasonal migration persisted for a further 150 years and indeed was still a feature of life in parts of the north-west of Ireland as late as the 1970s. By that time, however, the work was usually, though not always or exclusively, in construction and civil engineering rather than in agriculture. Mayo man John Neary put it well: "It was the English pound note, or the American dollar, that kept you alive—you had nothin' else […] When the kids got old enough—about sixteen or seventeen, like me, it was off to the sugar beet, to send money home" (Cowley 2017).

Under the post-Famine stem system of inheritance, many parents came to regard remittances as a form of private pension. Journalist and author John Healy (1978: 2) recalled how his Mayo grandmother exhorted her daughters, as each in turn prepared to emigrate to the United States, to "Keep your mouth and your legs closed. Keep your ears open—an' between ye, let ye send home the slates"—that is, funds for the maintenance and renovation of "the home place." We are fortunate to possess many excellent accounts of the life of the seasonal agricultural migrant but only two or three semi-autobiographical works by Irish navvies. Of these probably the best known are the early novels of the Donegal author Patrick MacGill. In his books, MacGill attacked more than one Irish sacred cow and he had his works banned in Ireland as a consequence (see Shovlin 2011: 132; also, Pierse, this volume). As well as a denunciation of the parish priest of Glenties, MacGill's home town, for installing indoor plumbing using the pennies of the poor, *Children of the Dead End* (1914) contains two quite harsh passages directed against his mother's incessant demands for money.

> Out of my wages I sent seven pounds home to Glenmornan and kept the remainder for my own use, as I did not know when I could get a next job. My mother sent me a letter that another brother was born to me—the second since I left home, and asking me for some more money to help them along with the rent. But my disposition was changing; my outlook on life was becoming bitter, and I hated to be slave to farmers, landlords, parents, and brothers and sisters. Every new arrival into the family was reported to me as something for which I should be grateful. "Send home some more money, you have another brother", ran the letters, and a sense of unfairness crept over me. The younger members of the family were taking the very life-blood out of my veins, and on account of them I had to suffer kicks, snubs, cold and hunger. New brothers and sisters were no pleasure to me. I rebelled against the imposition and did not answer the letter.
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> […]
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> Why had my parents brought me into the world? I asked myself. Did they look to the future? At home I heard them say when a child was born to such and such a person that it was the will of god, just as if man and woman had nothing to do with the affair. I wished that I had never been born. My parents had sinned against me in bringing me into the world in which I had to fight for crumbs with the dogs of the gutter. Bringing me into the world and then living on my labour—such an absurd and unjust state of things! I was angry, very angry, with the world and the people in it (MacGill 1914: 110, 117).

MacGill, however, was unique amongst emigrant writers in articulating what must actually have been widespread resentment of this unjust burden of obligation placed on the shoulders of so many young men and women. Over two decades interacting with Irish emigrants in Britain, however, I have never yet heard any of them actually criticise this iniquitous system. What was done with the money was another contentious but little discussed issue. I have been told many stories of individuals who faithfully remitted money home at great personal cost, only to discover subsequently that it had been frittered away by parents or spouses, or else invested in a holding which was eventually willed to another sibling without prior consultation with the emigrant/s. Tunneller Ronnie Plant and his wife Freda told me of a man they knew who, after many years remitting money to his wife in Ireland, returned eventually to find her gone

and all his savings with her. Both insisted that they had encountered many similar stories over a working lifetime in England.

More insidious perhaps are the attitudes of those at home towards those who left. Whilst working for the Irish Centre for Migration Studies, University College Cork, on the *Breaking the Silence* oral history project (1999–2000), which sought the views and recollections of non-emigrant older Irish people who remained at home concerning the mass migration of the post-war decades, I interviewed a man from a region of historically high emigration, sadly since deceased, who furnished me with invaluable insights into these sensitive issues. A man with both academic and business interests—an economics lecturer, auctioneer, and publican—he was constantly involved with local people's daily lives and reflected deeply on their problems and concerns. On the matter of remittances, he had this to say:

> Sending money home was evidence of how they were doing "over"; the fella who didn't send money home was an outcast. The one who did was always described as "a good son", or "a great son." I never heard tell of a girl being described as "a great daughter"—maybe because the girls weren't in the way of earning as much.[2]

In John Healy's part of Mayo, it was often said of such men, "Well, indeed, yes—they were the good rearing surely" (Healy 1968: 24). But things were not really quite so simple. My informant had a different take on the question of status:

> "The emigrant had to put on a show […] The big thing was to 'stand to the House' (buy drink for neighbours in the local pub); but they were 'standing to the house' for fellas who had a lot more than they, maybe even their brothers, who had more than them, and they didn't even know it. There was a lot of Dry Money around at that time—savings going back over the years, which was never spoken of because to do so might affect the (State) pension."
>
> He went on: "Only the head of the household would know the actual extent of this nest egg, which was constantly added to by the remittances of his offspring, only one of whom would in time inherit 'The Place' and the accumulated savings.

> So many of the fellas who came back from England in the fifties, and put on a show of wealth in the local village, were buying drinks, and so on, for people who had more money than themselves, and more Dry Money than themselves, and maybe a better quality of life than themselves. But they had to put on that show."
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> His final remark I found truly shocking: "A certain section of the community—say, the Strong Farmer, would be saying, 'Isn't your man doing well', but, at the same time, because they had to go to England to make it—if they didn't make it at home, they were a failure" (Cowley 2002).

This was well understood by those abroad. Deirdre Carroll, a retired Irish nurse then working in Manchester, told me:

> A whole lot of families that could have, and should have, had good lives here, didn't; and yet they'd all pile into the car every Christmas and summer and go home and put on a big show. But they weren't happy […] I don't know of anyone, of all the Irish around here, who was really happy (Cowley 2002).

And she held Ireland, not England, responsible for that:

> When I looked at my husband, and looked at all the rest, and at my children's friends, I thought it was me, then I thought it was England, and eventually it dawned on me that it was Ireland, had done all this to them […] I realised that the harm was done before they ever left. England added to it, but it wasn't the cause of it […] And fathers came over here, with their sons, and worked hard, and put them to hard work, and knew what they went through, and I doubt if any of them ever wrote to their sons and said, "Come home, Son—never mind the money; there's nothin' here, but come home … Never mind the neighbours." Certainly, none of them ever said, "We'll go with our children—we won't send our children out to suffer alone" (Cowley 2001).

Limerick-born Malcolm O'Brien was trained as a carpenter, and he rose "through the tools" from the 1950s onwards to earn an MBE and become a director of Tarmac Construction. Forty years after leaving Ireland, he still spoke of it with some bitterness:

> When I first came over my mother was ashamed to let it be known that I was in London, because it might be thought that I had been in trouble with the law back home. In those days it was commonplace for a first offender to be given a choice by the courts of either going to gaol or going to England (Cowley 2001).

This brings us to the question of why, in post-independence Ireland, so many Irish men and women were still forced to emigrate, without adequate training or preparation—almost half a million between 1951 and 1961 alone—to take up menial work in Britain? Political reluctance to concentrate investment on urban and industrial development, preferring rather to see rural Ireland and the uneconomic family farm as the cornerstones of Irish society, coupled with a lack of investment in education, may appear to have been the main reasons why emigration on such a scale persisted. But there may have been deeper attitudinal causes for the prolonged failure of the Irish political establishment to tackle this issue effectively, or even attempt to ensure that, if young people must emigrate, they would at least do so equipped to survive and prosper in a more advanced society. After all, emigrant remittances were significant to the Irish economy, which between 1950 and 1988 had a much lower growth rate than the European average, largely due to high unemployment and higher dependency rates resulting in a "general standard of living failure" (O'Grada and O'Rourke 1993: 10). In 1960, for example, emigrant remittances and income from foreign pensions amounted to some 3.2% of average personal income and even more in high emigration counties such as Mayo (10%) and Donegal (6%) (O'Grada and Walsh 1994: 137). It may safely be assumed that as much again came home as cash in hand. Perhaps Alexis Fitzgerald's remarks (as quoted in Lee 2001: 380–81) in the Report of The Commission on Emigration (1954) might be helpful here:

> In the order of values, it seems more important to preserve and improve the quality of Irish life, and thereby the purity of that message (meaning Christianity) which our people have communicated to the world, than it is to reduce the number of Irish emigrants […] High emigration, granted a population excess, releases social tensions which would otherwise explode

> and makes possible a stability of manners and customs which would otherwise be the subject of radical change.

Apart from how a population of 2.8 million could be considered excessive, this begs the question of who should emigrate and who should remain at home, to "preserve and improve the quality of Irish life" and to safeguard this "stability of manners and customs?" Consider statistics from the government's Investment in Education report (Department of Education 1965), which found that professionals and white-collar workers constituted 65% of university entrants who sat the Leaving Certificate in 1963, despite being a mere 25% of the working population. Manual workers managed only a paltry 2% of university places that same year. The report writers concluded that "the disparity between the social groups has become most marked and the strong association between university entrance and social group is unmistakable" (Department of Education 1965: 173).

Economic historian James Meenan (1970: 347) shrewdly observed:

> Emigration has prevented the emergence of an immense surplus of labour and an inevitable driving down of all salaries and wages. It has allowed those who remain at home to enjoy a standard of living which is not justified by the volume of their production. In the short run at least, emigration has done a great deal to make life in Ireland more leisurely, and less disturbed by class warfare. If it ended suddenly, that life would become much more competitive, and much less remunerative.

How ironic then that John Cox, an English former chairman of Tarmac, one of the giants of British construction, should have asserted that: "I have worked all my life with Irishmen, several of whom, had they had an education, could have been sitting behind this desk instead of me" (Cowley 2010: loc. 494). Father Owen Sweeney, chaplain on the Spencer Steel Works project in South Wales between 1959 and 1962, said of the Irish workforce there:

> I came to appreciate the inestimable value of their contribution to human well-being: I came to regard them as the true nobility of society—humble, hard-working men, who rarely complained about their lot (O'Sullivan 2002).

Bronwen Walter's research (1999: Q. 62a, para. 2) has attested to Irish migrants feeling that "the economic contribution of Irish people in Britain was undervalued, because their presence was not acknowledged. The work they had done as labour migrants was not attributed to them." It seems to me that, on the evidence available to date, the contribution of the Irish emigrant worker in Britain is also underacknowledged in Ireland.

Certainly, the image of the Irish navvy amongst the older Irish in Britain, and their contemporaries in Ireland, raises problems for some. This was well articulated by *Irish Post* journalist, Martin Doyle (1995):

> A few years ago *The Irish Post* published a letter from a reader who objected to a phrase in an article celebrating the enormous and diverse contribution of the Irish in Britain. The controversial sentence in question welcomed the fact that the Irish could no longer be classified as navvies but today were as likely to be navigating the Internet.

The reader's objection was double-edged. She found the use of the word "navvies" insulting, but also she was proud of her husband's lifelong work as a labourer, and questioned whether working on a computer was a superior occupation. This complex reaction, expressing pride and seeing shame, is indicative, I think, of how many Irish here respond to a job of work and a way of life that more than any other laid the foundations for our community. We respond to the nobility of hard, honest toil but recoil from the negative imagery of fighting, swearing, hard-drinking navvies that have shored up anti-Irish stereotypes for centuries. The extent to which this attitude remains embedded is illustrated by a series of exchanges on Radio Kerry during coverage of President Michael D. Higgins' state visit to Britain. Listeners were contacting the station in response to reported comments by Taoiseach Enda Kenny on day one of the state visit. Calling it "a historic day," the Taoiseach said he was thinking of the millions of Irish people who left Ireland "in very different times" to make their way in Britain. He said, "I think of those navvies who lived in Kilburn and Cricklewood and Arlington [sic] and from that spectrum to those fifty thousand people who serve on the boards of British companies as an example of the changed relationship

between our two countries" (*Kerry Today*, 7 April 2014). The presenter, Jerry O'Sullivan, said the station had been inundated with calls objecting strongly to these remarks. He quoted a number, including the following:

> Very upset with Enda Kenny, who described the people who went to the UK in the '50s and '60s as working as navvies—who does Enda think he is? It was his crowd that sent people over to the UK to work, and now Enda is doing the same again to thousands of our young people, sending them off here there and everywhere for work. How dare he refer to Irish workers as navvies? Very upset with this terminology.
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> […]
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> Navvies—can't believe that someone in Enda Kenny's position would use that term! It was disgraceful; it goes beyond belief that he used the term. There are no words to express how angry I am about this, as someone who worked in England, as well as my husband. It's incredible that he would use the word (*Kerry Today*, 7 April 2014).

Calls for and against these sentiments were of the order of nine to one in favour. One dissenting caller stated on air that he was 70 years old, a former navvy, and very proud to say he was a navvy in the UK. He could not understand why people were getting upset about the term as "90 per cent of Irish workers in the UK would have referred to themselves as navvies" (ibid.).

I would share with Enda Delaney, who favoured the term "the nationalist elite" in his review of Clair Wills' book, *The Best are Leaving* (*Irish Times*, 6 June 2015), a somewhat jaundiced view of the Irish establishment's attitude towards our older emigrants. Clearly, however, their own peers weren't very enamoured of them either. Yet, despite being all too well aware of this, the older Irish in Britain have remained extraordinarily steadfast in their loyalty to the Irish state if not always to the society—in many instances finding the greed, selfishness, and conspicuous consumption of the Celtic Tiger era repellent. This loyalty was emphatically expressed recently by Sally Mulready, founder and chair of the Irish Women's Survivors Network, Director of the Irish Elderly Advice Network, and member of the

Council of State, in a radio interview. Asked how she would respond to listeners wondering why, when vulnerable citizens were in need in Ireland, money should be given to support Irish people in Britain who ought to receive such assistance from the British authorities, she gave the following answer:

> I would remind people that when Ireland was on its knees, every single one of us from that generation put money—cash, in registered envelopes and sent it home every week or every month. My own grandmother had sixteen children. Many of them went to England, and stayed there. It was like a bonanza—each and every one of them faithfully and dutifully sent home money. It wasn't just that they felt they were supporting their family; they felt that they were supporting their country. That generation never, ever, spoke ill of Ireland. They were very faithful to it (*Today with Seán O'Rourke*, RTÉ Radio One, 12 May 2016).

Sally was in Ireland with a group of female survivors of institutional abuse and one of these, when asked if her childhood experiences in various Mother and Baby Homes had left her feeling angry towards Ireland, responded: "Yes, in the past—but not now. I love Ireland" (ibid.).

Undoubtedly the revelations of the Ferns (2005), Ryan (2009), and Murphy (2009) reports on clerical and institutional abuse of women and children, in addition to Mary Raftery's seminal *States of Fear* (RTÉ 1999) television documentary, followed by the state's apology for its mistreatment of unmarried mothers and their children, have done much to raise public awareness and empathy in Ireland and ultimately to ameliorate the sufferings of the survivors of enormous and horrific institutional abuse over the first 50 years of Irish independence. The last ten years have seen a growing recognition and acceptance in Irish society of the country's dark post-independence past and a sincerely held desire for healing and reconciliation. Scholars must inquire whether *The Gathering*, coming as it did in the aftermath of these events, may have helped communities to reach out to, and come together with, those older emigrants in Britain who for so long have kept faith with Ireland against all odds. It would be no more than they deserve.

Notes

1. See, for instance, the findings of Emma Felton's study of the role of communication technology among recently arrived immigrants in Australia (Felton 2014).
2. Interview on CD-Rom, along with further contextual detail in accompanying text, in the Irish Centre for Migration Studies (ICMS) *Breaking the Silence* archive at the Boole Library, University College Cork.

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Ultan Cowley is the author of *The Men Who Built Britain: A History of the Irish Navvy* (2001) and a former emigrant.

10

Rafferty's Return: Diaspora and Dislocation in Edna O'Brien's "Shovel Kings"

Tony Murray

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, a generation of young men and women were leaving Ireland on a scale not witnessed since the era of the Great Famine a century before. The primary reason for this renewed large-scale emigration was economic, as successive Irish governments largely failed to deliver on the promises of independence (Delaney 2007: 36). De Valera's vision of a nation "joyous with the sounds of industry," rather than being realised in the fields and "cosy homesteads" of Ireland, had to be found on the building sites and hospital wards of Britain (De Valera 1980: 466). From the 1930s onwards, Britain displaced the United States as the primary country of choice for Irish migrants and London, and the south-east, in particular, became their most favoured destination (Ryan 1990: 49). While the Irish could be found in a wide range of jobs, they were disproportionately clustered in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. Irish construction workers, in particular, had a highly visible presence in British towns and cities.

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This may account for the figure of the navvy being popularly associated with Irish migration to Britain, despite the fact that women outnumbered men in the statistics for most of the twentieth century (Walter 2001: 124). However, with the exception of the testimonies collected for Ultan Cowley's (2001) history of the Irish navvy in Britain, there are surprisingly few recorded first-hand accounts in existence.[1] As a consequence, the Irish navvy has left a rather threadbare legacy in the recorded history of his adopted country. As the character of P.J. declares in the novel, *I Could Read the Sky* (O'Grady and Pyke 1997: 69): "We dig the tunnels, lay the rails and build the roads and buildings. But we leave no other sign behind us. We are unknown and unrecorded."

One of the reasons why the Irish navvy endures as an icon of national strength and endeavour abroad, however, may ironically be due to such fictional representations. Popular ballads such as *McAlpine's Fusiliers* and *Building Up and Tearing England Down* have held widespread appeal for many years.[2] The characters in John B. Keane's novel *The Contractors* (1993) are, perhaps, the most representative examples of such depictions in novel form.[3] Their exploits suggest that, during the 1950s and 1960s at least, life for the London-Irish navvy was a happy and optimistic one. But such men were part of what in latter years has become known in Ireland as "the lost generation." The term came into general usage in late 2003 after the screening of a documentary on primetime Irish television about the destitute plight of elderly Irish men in Britain (Rouse 2003; see also Bronwen Walter, this volume). Some of those interviewed for the programme had spent large parts of their working lives on the building sites of Britain. But due to advanced mechanisation in the construction industry and the insecure terms of their employment in the first place, these former navvies were now living destitute lives in the very neighbourhoods they helped rebuild after the Second World War. This was a stark corrective to the notion of the Irish navvy as a national hero. So disturbing were the images and accounts of the participants that heated debates took place in the Irish parliament after the broadcast and eventually led to a review by the government of its financial support to Irish welfare agencies in Britain. In short, the programme was a salutary reminder of the potential consequences of something that had appeared in the halcyon days of the "Celtic Tiger" to no longer be a major feature of Irish society, namely, emigration.

Given its preoccupation with women's issues, Edna O'Brien's work might appear to be an improbable source for insights into the condition of the Irish navvy in post-war Britain. The Irish construction workers who appear in her early novels, such as *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964) and *Casualties of Peace* (1966), are foils for her female heroines rather than fully rounded characters in their own right. But, in her short story, *Shovel Kings* (2011), O'Brien presents us with something quite different. By tracing the life of Rafferty, a retired London-Irish navvy and his workmates, she skilfully excavates a marginal yet finely delineated migrant milieu where unspoken social codes and practices of masculinity, imported from rural Ireland, are refigured in an urban ethnic context. In a revealing extract from her memoir *Mother Ireland* (1976: 37), there is a clue that O'Brien might eventually return to the topic of the Irish navvy in her work:

> To meet one's kinsmen is to unleash a whole sea of unexpected emotionalism. I was having a walk one afternoon in London, and passing a building site I slowed down to shield my eyes from the likelihood of grit. A young Roscommon boy asked, "Are you happy?"
>
> "Not very", I said.
>
> He beamed at hearing a fellow-countrywoman.
>
> "Any chance of tea at four?"
>
> "No chance." I said. (I had to be somewhere).
>
> "You won't forget us, will you?" he said.
>
> "I won't", I said.

Although it was published some 35 years later, *Shovel Kings* is proof that O'Brien kept to her word. The story is set in north-west London in the late 1990s. It opens with a description of Rafferty in Biddy Mulligan's pub in Kilburn. It is late afternoon on St. Patrick's Day and he is alone at the bar. The narrator informs us that, "he could have been any age, and he seemed like a man on whom a permanent frost had settled. He drank the Guinness slowly, lifting the glass with a measured gravity" (O'Brien 2011: 1). The story then moves between a number of other emblematic Irish migrant locations: the building site, Sunday mass, the sparsely furnished digs and the local Irish community centre. It also alludes to some of the enduring images of post-war navvy life, such as the hiring fair at Cricklewood Broadway and the ogre of the merciless "subbie."[4]

"The camaraderie of the trenches" is something one normally associates with the western front during the First World War. But in *Shovel Kings*, it applies to the teamwork required of navvies to dig trenches and lay pipes and cables for the city's utilities. While Cowley (2001: 197) explains how this "fraternity of the workplace" could sometimes be a constraint on individualism, it nevertheless played an important role in terms of mutual support and solidarity, especially at times of misfortune. Rafferty alludes to this in relation to a fatal accident that takes place on a building site in Hounslow. We learn about the emotional impact of the incident on him and his workmates and their collective efforts to ensure that the cost of transporting the body back to Ireland is not borne by the family. "A collection was taken in the pub to send the remains home" the narrator explains. "Lads gave what they could. A pound was a lot in those days, but several pound notes were slung into the tweed cap that had been thrown onto the counter" (O'Brien 2011: 13). Scenes like this, along with the following homage to the heroism of the Irish navvy with which *Shovel Kings* concludes, firmly situate this story in a distinct subgenre of Irish migrant literature, which I've termed the "navvy narrative" (Murray 2005):

> Under the pavements were the lines of cable that linked the lights of the great streets and the lesser streets of London, as far distant as Kent. I thought of the Shovel Kings, and their names suddenly materialized before me, as in a litany—Haulie, Murph, Moleskin Muggavin, Turnip O'Mara, Whisky Tipp, Oranmore Joe, Teaboy Teddy, Paddy Pancake, Accordion Bill, Rafferty, and countless others, gone to dust (O'Brien 2011: 36).

But *Shovel Kings* is more than simply an elegy to a "lost generation" of London Irishmen. It is also a perceptive insight into the reasons why one of them fails to realise a long-cherished dream of returning to live in Ireland. Although the publication of the story in 2011 predates *The Gathering* by two years, it constitutes an important challenge to the overly optimistic governmental discourse circulated in relation to the initiative. The concept of *The Gathering* was a by-product of the 2009 Global Irish Economic Forum, which was held to address how Ireland would overcome economic recession. It was launched by the Taoiseach in May 2012

and designed to mobilise and persuade members of the Irish diaspora to contribute to the Republic's economic recovery by returning to Ireland in 2013 for a series of government and community supported events. The following statement by the CEO of Fáilte Ireland at the launch was typical of the official rhetoric surrounding the event: "The real power of the Gathering lies in its ability to leverage the efforts of any Irish citizen, community group or indeed any diaspora member to roll up their sleeves and take an active part in mobilising behind an initiative to support our national recovery."[5] However, as Avtar Brah (1996) observes, the relationship between any nation state and its diaspora is more complicated and contested than such efforts to harness diaspora sentiment to national expedience might suggest. Brah's notion of "diaspora space" acknowledges how both those who leave and those who stay are deeply implicated in the social, political and cultural processes and effects of migration. Diaspora space is, she writes, "where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle" (1996: 208). Although Brah is primarily concerned with the experience of the migrant in the location of destination, diaspora space might equally apply to the location of departure and the community that the migrant leaves behind. Brah argues that diaspora space is a "site of immanence" where multiple subject positions are "juxtaposed" and "proclaimed or disavowed" according to historical circumstances (1996: 208). This is particularly significant in regard to *The Gathering*, when "those who left" and "those who stayed put" (to use Brah's terminology) were encouraged not only to reacquaint themselves with their personal and family histories of migration but to actively re-engage with what it means to be Irish by returning to the country (if migrants) or welcoming them home (if not). By reading Brah's notion of diaspora space in this way, each party here is a "subject-in-process" which "consciously and unconsciously replays and resignifies positions in which it is located and invested" (1996: 125). At the centre of this process is the role of narrative. Rather than simply being a vehicle for their expression, narrative, Brah suggests, is an intrinsic part of how diasporic identities are configured and re-configured over time:

> [M]ultiple journeys may configure into one journey via a *confluence of narratives* as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory. It is within this confluence of narrativity that "diasporic community" is differently imagined under different historical circumstances. By this I mean that the identity of the diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life (1996: 183).

In *Shovel Kings*, we have a diasporic narrative which pivots on the unsuccessful return to Ireland by its central protagonist, Rafferty. By doing so, it raises questions about the efficacy of return for migrants who have lived away from their native countries for so long. In the context of *The Gathering*, it provokes further questions about how relevant such an initiative is to the numerous elderly Irish people in Britain, like Rafferty, for whom meaningful return remains an aspiration rather than a reality. Through the character of Rafferty, we not only learn about the hardships that many of his generation of Irish migrants experienced in post-war London, but we also discover the kind of difficulties such individuals confront when they decide to return to their homeland. In particular, the story highlights the dissonance between the eager expectations and the harsh realities of repatriation. The motif of the returnee in Irish culture has long provided the prism through which both positive and negative aspects of Irish society have been refracted. At the opening of *Shovel Kings*, Rafferty is referred to as "the quiet man", in retrospect an ironic reference it seems to Sean Thornton, the idealised returnee in John Ford's (1952) famous film. Rafferty's experience, however, is more analogous to that of James Bryden, who returns to Ireland after 13 years in New York, in George Moore's short story *Homesickness* (1903). Like Bryden, Rafferty ends up torn between two senses of home, neither of which is entirely satisfactory. Through his experience of migration and return, Rafferty is confronted by questions about his sense of national identity and belonging in a more intense way than may have been the case for those individuals who never left Ireland in the first place.[6] By ultimately agreeing to tell the story of his life to the narrator of *Shovel Kings*, Rafferty begins to come to terms with such questions.

"The story of a life", Paul Ricoeur (1988: 246) wrote, "continues to be reconfigured by all the truthful or fictive stories a subject tells about himself or herself. This reconfiguration makes this life itself a cloth woven of stories told." Self-knowledge, Ricoeur contended, is derived from a combination of interpretation (which he termed "refiguration") and aspiration (which he termed "prefiguration"). This is a view supported by Paul John Eakin (1999: 100) who writes, "narrative is not merely a literary form but a mode of phenomenological and cognitive self-experience." Self and story, he says, are, "complementary, mutually constituting aspects of a single process of identity formation" (Eakin 1992: 198). In the following passage, Peter Brooks (1984: 3) elaborates on this position:

> Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed.

Identity, it would seem therefore, cannot exist outside of time and space, and narrative, as an inherently time/space mode of articulation, provides us with the means of expressing and mediating this. According to Ricoeur, fictional as well as factual ingredients and practices are crucial to understanding how personal identities are constituted. In order to illustrate this, he examined the twin components of fact and fiction through history-writing and novel-writing respectively. The manner in which facts and fictions interweave and displace each other within these narrative genres became a central focus of his enquiry. In his three-volume study entitled *Time and Narrative* (1988), Ricoeur argued that narrative and characterisation are closely related not only in literature but also in the relationship between society and the individual. Human life he states is "an activity and a passion in search of a narrative" (Ricoeur 1991b: 29), but we only reach a satisfactory understanding of our identities, he argues, courtesy of interpretive detours through what Richard Kearney terms the

"significations of history and culture, which reside outside our immediate consciousness" (Kearney 1986: 92). If the construction of a narrative identity is an amalgamation of how we see ourselves as individuals on the one hand, and as part of society on the other, then the relationship between the stories we tell about ourselves and those we hear told about others is significant. As Alasdair MacIntyre (1984: 360–61) argues, "I am part of [others' stories], as they are part of mine. The narrative of any life is part of an interlocking set of narratives."

This interlocking between an individual's life and the significant people in it is clearly apparent in *Shovel Kings*. Rafferty's narrative is presented in the series of accounts that he divulges to the narrator of the story, an unnamed Irish female migrant, who finds herself in Biddy Mulligan's prior to a consultation with her psychoanalyst. Even before Rafferty and the woman meet, we discover they have something in common. Apart from being Irish migrants in London, they both have ambivalent feelings about the St Patrick's Day celebrations which are beginning to gather pace around them. The somewhat lacklustre nature of the festivities is signalled by the sprigs of shamrock which look "a little forlorn" as they are passed around the pub (O'Brien 2011: 4). The narrator reads a newspaper report of the weather in New York and recalls how on St Patrick's Day, she had "stood among milling crowds as they cheered floats and bands, feeling curiously alone in the midst of all that celebration" (2011: 2). Rafferty, meanwhile, endures the celebrations taking place in his local pub with "a quiet sufferance" (2011: 3). St Patrick's Day is a festival that has considerable significance for the Irish diaspora, something borne out by the fact that it is celebrated on a larger scale in Irish communities outside of the country than it is in Ireland itself (Cronin and Adair 2002: xvi). This does not, however, necessarily mean that it is fully welcomed by everybody. For Rafferty and the narrator, it is something they consent to as a necessary annual recognition of their status as Irish migrants, but only reluctantly. Research into St Patrick's Day celebrations in London provides some explanation of such attitudes. Marc Scully has observed that, "St. Patrick's Day remains something of a cipher through which Irishness in Ireland and the Irishness of the diaspora are forced to engage with one another at least once a year" (Scully 2012: 120). There are clear echoes here of the aspirations disseminated in much

of the state propaganda about *The Gathering*. One wonders, therefore, if Rafferty and his newly acquired friend might not agree with the sentiments expressed by one of Scully's interviewees who complains that "the raucous kind of paddywhackery element of what passes for Irish culture in this country is not something that appeals to me" (2012: 132).[7]

Apart from their somewhat forced inclusion in this grand narrative of national identity, Rafferty and the narrator have something else in common. They both have personal stories to tell: the narrator to her analyst and Rafferty (as he gradually accedes to her befriendment over the coming months) to the narrator. We are not party to the content of the narrator's therapy sessions: it remains an unarticulated but implied confessional frame of reference within which a series of three key accounts by Rafferty are situated.[8] The first of these disclosures is about Rafferty's arrival in London in the late 1950s, his search for employment and his problematic relationship with his father. The second is about the death of his mother, how he misses her funeral due to a drinking binge and his subsequent descent into alcoholism and vagrancy. The final story is about his relationship with Grania, a young woman he falls in love with, but with whom he finds he is ultimately unable to settle down. Within each of these stories a number of other stories are embedded. In the first one, this happens in a linear fashion with a string of anecdotes about the larger-than-life individuals that Rafferty worked with on the buildings. In the second story, when Rafferty discloses his problems with drinking, we read an account by his friend Madge of a diary entry she wrote about the recent death of her husband from alcoholism, something she imparts to Rafferty, resulting in his eventual reform of his own drinking habits. Finally, in the third story we learn about how Rafferty becomes enthralled by tales told by his partner Grania and how she in turn learnt them from the old people of her village back in Ireland. At each stage of the story cycle, therefore, the embeddedness of the narratives recounted becomes increasingly apparent. In the first stage, we have a linear sequence of anecdotes, in the second, a story within a story and in the final stage stories within a story within a story.

This final stage is particularly interesting because it highlights the transmission of storytelling skills. The sequence of transmission takes place from the old people of Grania's home village to Grania herself, to

Rafferty and finally to the narrator who is responsible for the frame story we are told as readers. William Trevor (1989: ix) once wrote, "Stories of one kind or another have a way of pressing themselves into Irish conversation, both as entertainment and as a form of communication." The following quotation exemplifies how Grania's stories play this role in her relationship with Rafferty:

> He recalled standing outside her digs till one or two in the morning, hearing her soft voice as she bewitched him with stories. Listening to her was like being transported. Her father was a tailor who also had a pub and grocery, where people drank, mulled over the latest piece of gossip. She herself preferred when one of the old people, from up the country, happened to come in and tell stories of the long ago (O'Brien 2011: 28).

As Ricoeur (1991a: 131) reminds us, we "re-interpret the narrative identity that constitutes us in the light of stories handed down to us by our culture." In *Shovel Kings*, stories of various kinds help create a web of such personal associations for Rafferty. Not only are they vehicles for his liaisons with the narrator and Grania, but they also elucidate his relationship with his mother and father and his pivotal encounter with Madge. Furthermore, narrative plays a formative role in other aspects of Rafferty's life. His heroic aspirations as a young man are mediated through his love for a cowboy novel by Zane Grey (1912), which sows the seeds of his wanderlust and eventual migration. Years later, his hope of return to Ireland is ignited by hearing the Irish ballad *The Galway Shawl* played on the pub jukebox.[9]

Rafferty's return, when it does come in the late 1990s, sets the scene for an encounter between old and new Ireland. The former navvy secures a job looking after the elderly relative of a successful building contractor. Courtesy of a fellow migrant, who unlike himself had made good abroad, Rafferty is able to realise the dream of return he had always cherished. However, he discovers that he has returned to a country he no longer recognises. "Even when he went to the pub, Rafferty didn't feel at home" the narrator informs us. "It was noisy and brash, young people coming and going, no quiet corner to brood in" (O'Brien 2011: 34). Rafferty also discovers that no one is interested in his tales about his life in London. To

his dismay, he discovers that they have no purchase at a time when the historical pattern of Irish migration had seemingly ended with the birth of the Celtic Tiger. In preparation for her novel, Edna O'Brien conducted a number of interviews with elderly Irish men in community centres in Kilburn and Camden. This was a technique that Timothy O'Grady used for his novel *I Could Read the Sky,* an equally elegiac but more impressionistic account of an elderly Irish navvy in London adjusting to a sense of displacement at the end of his working life. At approximately the same time as O'Brien's novel is set, the social science researcher Gerard Leavey conducted a series of similar interviews in north London (Leavey et al. 2004). Leavey found that returning to live in Ireland was considered by most of his informants to be "an implausible hope" and for many of them, "rapidly changing values and behaviour in Ireland" contributed to their rejection of return as an option (Leavey et al. 2004: 776). They also "expressed a sense of regret tinged with resentment that they were excluded from this 'new prosperous Ireland' and poorly rewarded for the sacrifices they had made" (Leavey et al. 2004: 773). Rafferty's experience of return would appear to vindicate these views as well as the following analysis of the phenomenon by Eric Olsson and Russell King (2008: 260):

> Narratives have the power to move people back to their homeland since the "narrative of return" is both a grand narrative of most, if not quite all, diasporic communities, and an individual narrative fueled by the transformation of this return metanarrative into a personal project constructed in the heart and mind of each aspiring returnee. What results is a form of migration or spatial mobility that remains rather hard to categorize or label—not quite return migration, often not a "reintegration" of "repatriates", and not always a "resettlement" in the homeland.

Such aspirations constitute, in Ricoeur's terms, a form of prefigured narrative identity, which he insists must ultimately be reconciled to the historical realities within which all individuals are positioned. The precarious interaction that takes place in such circumstances between facts and fictions are evident in a warning that Salman Rushdie (1982: 10) expressed about an equivalent experience in the context of his own homeland:

> if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.

"Irelands of the mind," to paraphrase Rushdie, find fruition in this way through the stories and anecdotes that Irish migrants trade with each other. For Rafferty, a somewhat retrospective and idealised notion of his homeland is partly what has sustained him during his many years abroad. But, closely allied to this, is a more immediate and ethnic sense of Irishness borne of his migrant experience in London.

It is clear that even before his departure for Ireland, Rafferty is already experiencing a nostalgic longing for place. But, rather than the homeland he is about to return to, he idealises a particular London building site where he worked as a navvy and describes an impromptu party that he and his workmates held at the close of a working day, recalling "a winter evening, the glow of the fire, the leaping flames of red and blue, dancing in that London wasteland, as if in some Roman amphitheatre" (O'Brien 2011: 33). The building site here is transformed in Rafferty's memory from a place of routine toil to one of celebration and spontaneity. The reference to the amphitheatre indicates how it has become an arena for a collective performance of diasporic identity, a common trope of the "navvy narrative" which is echoed in both Keane's *The Contractors* (1993: 171–8) and *I Could Read the Sky* (O'Grady and Pyke 1997: 125). Camden Town, the neighbourhood where Rafferty first arrived as a green 15-year-old, also retrospectively acquires the status of a surrogate homeland:

> I always (he said, quite shyly) missed Camden. Camden was where I first came, and though I cried my eyes out in the beginning and walked those hopeless sullen streets, it was where I had put roots down. The odd thing was that you can be attached to a place, or a person, you don't particularly like, and he put it down to mankind's addiction to habit (O'Brien 2011: 16–17).

Camden Town and Kilburn are iconic locations in the Irish migrant imaginary. But, due to socio-economic changes in London in 1980s and 1990s, the former had lost most of the vestiges of this status by the turn

of the century. Perhaps, this was why Rafferty had retreated to the latter, which even then remained a recognisably Irish neighbourhood. A similar example of his internal migrant exile is apparent en route back from a car-boot sale on the outskirts of London. He stops off with the narrator for a drink at a pub in an unfamiliar part of town. Although it is an Irish pub, it is located in a strongly multicultural area of London where they are told that the Irish are "no longer in the majority" (O'Brien 2011: 26). Both of them are initially apprehensive, but this is soon dispelled once the music starts: "Tapping one foot, Rafferty listened, listening so intently he seemed to be hearing it there and then, and also hearing it from a great distance, rousing tunes that ushered him back to the neon purlieu of the Galtymore Dance Hall in Cricklewood" (O'Brien 2011: 27). On this occasion, Cricklewood is subject to Rafferty's nostalgic longings. This is somewhat ironic given that it is only a mile up the road from Kilburn, where he had experienced a similar sense of displacement from Camden Town. Actual physical distance and geography, therefore, appear to be irrelevant to Rafferty's sense of displacement. When the barman in Biddy Mulligan's remarks that "exile is in the mind and there's no cure for that" one realises that this might be Rafferty's fate. Not only is he suspended between Ireland and England, but even within London he is torn between his attachments to different Irish neighbourhoods. One of the values of *Shovel Kings*, and stories like it, is that they invite us into the mindset of the migrant, encouraging us to empathise with their aspirations and their attendant disillusionments. Return to Ireland for Rafferty is a failure, but as a consequence he acquires a clearer understanding of himself as a migrant than he had before. He realises that his relationship with home is inextricably bound up with the fact that he has lived most of his life as a migrant in London rather than in Ireland. His sense of Irishness, therefore, is a diasporic one, but his full appreciation of this is only possible through narrative, in his case storytelling. During his aborted return to Ireland, he discovers how not at home he feels when no one there is interested in his stories of London. Conversely, when he is back in London and befriended by a fellow Irish migrant, he discovers someone who recognises the value of his stories and enables him to articulate a profound sense of displacement. Narrative, in other words, provides a cognitive conduit for Rafferty to realise an identity, albeit fractured, in the interstices between his past life and present circumstances.

Immense social, political and cultural changes took place in Ireland in the mid-1990s. Not only did it become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, but as the Peace Process gathered pace, the country began to blossom with a new-found sense of artistic and cultural confidence. Whilst all of these developments were positive and welcome, they nevertheless resulted in an inevitable and sometimes challenging reassessment of what it meant to be Irish, both at home and abroad.[10] For Rafferty's generation of Irish migrants, this was perplexing. While they were away, the country they had left in the 1950s and 1960s had been transformed. This is only fully comprehended by Rafferty when he returns to Ireland and witnesses such changes first hand. The experience is deeply disturbing and effectively ruptures his sense of belonging to his homeland. Once he is back in London, storytelling provides him with the emotional and psychological cypher he requires to overcome this. It enables him to enunciate hitherto unarticulated memories and feelings. In the course of telling the narrator the story of his life, Rafferty expresses a sense of migrant identity, even if this is not something he would necessarily have fully acknowledged as such.

Rather like migration itself, Rafferty's stories are a form of transportation, albeit a virtual one. Courtesy of his testimonies, the narrator (his listener) and we as readers travel with him across time and place. First, he takes us to London and then to Ireland of the late 1990s; then subsequently to London and Ireland of the late 1950s and 1960s. For Rafferty, such narrative journeys become the very texture of his migrant experience and identity, weaving a web of "narrative diaspora space" across two countries and across his adopted city.[11] In the process, he learns, painfully, that when a person decides to migrate, they must forego forever the luxury of a settled sense of home. This is precisely why, for migrants, stories are so important. In 1951, Theodor Adorno wrote, "For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live."[12] What is notable about *Shovel Kings* is that this applies as much to the oral tradition of storytelling as to its literary equivalent. By creating the character of Rafferty, O'Brien has illuminated an occluded narrative in the history of Irish migration. Rafferty's life may not be the success story of Dan Murray in *The Contractors*, nor is it animated by the heroic feats of physical prowess found in the navvy ballad tradition, but it is undoubtedly

more representative of the majority of Irish male migrants' experiences in London at this time than either of these. Rafferty not only has to come to terms with the changes that take place in his personal life but developments in Irish life more generally whilst he has been abroad. Through his stories, we see how (in Paul Ricoeur's terms) a personal sense of identity evolves over time in response to life events and the broader narratives generated through history and culture. Likewise, at a time when the presentation of Irishness in state-sponsored initiatives has promoted a sense of seamlessness between Ireland and its communities abroad, *Shovel Kings* reveals striking dissonances in this relationship. If Brah's notion of diaspora space reveals the tendency of metanarratives to assert overdetermined notions of the migration experience, then *Shovel Kings* likewise illustrates how, rather than being unambiguous and cohesive, migrant identities are formed within contested narratives of nation, location and return. The significance of this, in the wake of *The Gathering*, is not only evident for Rafferty and his real-life peers but also for Irish society more generally.

Notes

1. This scarcity is also the case for Irish nurses, a popular choice of occupation for Irish women in Britain at this time. See Tony Murray (2017).
2. Both of these songs were written by Dominic Behan in the early 1960s and recorded by The Dubliners in 1966 and 1983 respectively.
3. For an example of such a figure from an earlier era, see the character of Moleskin Joe in Patrick MacGill's (1914) *Children of the Dead End: The Autobiography of a Navvy*.
4. The "subbie" (i.e. subcontractor) often had a reputation for exploiting his workforce. See Cowley (2001: 194–5).
5. Press release by Fáilte Ireland, 11 May 2012, available at: http://www.failteireland.ie/Footer/Media-Centre/Taoiseach-Tanaiste-launch-The-Gathering-Ireland-20.aspx (accessed 5 January 2016).
6. For an analysis of Rafferty's sense of displacement through the work of Julia Kristeva, see Jeanette Roberts Shumaker (2014).
7. See also John Nagle (2002).

8. Another possible frame-of-reference is Holy Confession which, given his relationship with Roman Catholicism, one can assume Rafferty was probably practicing. See O'Brien (2011: 9).
9. It is possible that O'Brien may have intended to make an ironic allusion here to the great wandering Irish bard, Antoine Ó Raifteirí.
10. One of the unforeseen consequences of Ireland's economic growth was that fact that it became a nation of net immigration rather than net emigration as migrants from countries such as Poland and Nigeria radically altered the social profile of the country's cities and towns.
11. For an explanation of the concept of "narrative diaspora space," see Tony Murray (2012: 13).
12. See Adorno (1991: 51).

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11

"Coeval but Out of Kilter": Diaspora, Modernity and "Authenticity" in Irish Emigrant Worker Writing

Michael Pierse

> My ancestors were immigrants and revolutionaries from the Emerald Isle […] There was an uprising in each generation in Ireland, and forefathers of mine were in every one of them. The awareness of being Irish came to us as small children, through plaintive songs and heroic story […] As children, we drew in a burning hatred of British rule with our mother's milk […] Before I was ten, I knew of the great heroes, Robert Emmet, Wolfe Tone, Michael Davitt, Parnell, and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (Flynn 1973: 23).

So wrote the Bronx-based trade union radical Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. A "Wobblies" (Industrial Workers of the World) leader, immortalised in song as *The Rebel Girl*,[1] Flynn professed that the seeds of her own unyielding opposition to twentieth-century capitalism germinated in the clash of Irish postcolonial memory and American industrial modernity. This confluence, she claimed, ignited the passionate hatred of

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injustice and exploitation for which she became renowned and which led one commentator to dub her the "East Side Joan of Arc."[2] Here an imagined "Emerald Isle" and its pantheon of "great heroes" in the struggle against the British Empire in Ireland cultivate radical politics in the United States. In this memory recalled in 1955, Flynn conjures a version of Irish authenticity radically different to that portrayed, for example, in John Ford's near-contemporary film, *The Quiet Man* (1952), in which Irish-American Sean Thornton (played by John Wayne) returns to Ireland from the USA to reclaim his family's land. Ford's film depicts an Irishness more rustic than rebellious, in which Sean pacifies his own "rebel girl", Mary Kate (played by Maureen O'Hara); in the film's iconic kiss scene, her initial rumbustiousness quickly yields to his American-accented charms. As Lance Pettitt notes, *The Quiet Man* "stressed the convivial, communal and idyllic aspects of Irish rural life" (Pettitt 2000: 80). This marketably quaint Ireland was wildly popular in both Ireland and America,[3] and Ford's idyllic Emerald Isle has echoed much more frequently since than Flynn's intractable socialism and her vision of Ireland as the instigator of American political unrest. While Mary Kate appeared in cinemas across the world in the 1950s, Flynn appeared in courts and ended up in jail, from January 1955 till May 1957, found guilty under the Smith Act (1940) for her alleged sedition. The gaping divide instanced here, between Irelands imagined in, by or for America, points to the heterogeneity of Irish diasporic experiences and memories of home. But the popularity of Ford's portrayal over Flynn's also suggests processes of historiographical selection and silencing. These processes are no doubt partly related to the capacity of the Irish, as white emigrants, over a long period, to become full-fledged members of the dominant ethnic groupings in Australia, Britain and, most notably, America. "Irish migration is, then, crucially bound up in a narrative of assimilation and citizenship […] a story of civic and ethical modernization" (Lloyd 2013: para. 13), as David Lloyd elaborates. The meeting of Mary Kate, as a product of picturesque rural backwardness, and Sean, as an erstwhile product of that backwardness who, transformed by modern America, dramatically rejects the primitive dowry system in Ireland, arguably buttresses that "dominant story of the Irish diaspora […] that it has participated in both the building and the culture of modernity,

redeeming the successive catastrophes of Irish history in the larger project of a progressive human history" (Lloyd 2013: para. 20). Mary Kate's fate is transformed through Sean's intervention. As Brandon French (1978: 17) observed, theirs is

> a marriage of conservative and progressive elements … Mary Kate's battle for status in her marriage—not merely to have but to *be* something of her own—challenges the bases of conventional marriage, just as her behaviour in general defies conventional femininity … Her break with convention is epitomized at the end of the film when Mary Kate tosses away the stick which an old woman gave Sean to keep his wife in line.

The light-hearted rendering belies a serious message. Irish-American modernity returns home to help correct some of Ireland's more outdated and barbaric traditions; Irish backwardness paradoxically reassures the integrated Irish diaspora that it has "made it" abroad. Flynn, in contrast, proffered that the legacy of progressive anti-imperialism in Ireland was playing its part in civilising capitalist America.

Histories like Flynn's, of Irish diasporic workers' clashes with capitalism in its major centres of activity, occupied less space than they might have in *The Gathering*'s strategic framing of Ireland's past in 2013. One particularly controversial decision that year, by an organisation charged with marketing Ireland to its diaspora, suggested the extent to which radical labour histories were in fact problematic for *The Gathering*. In March, Dublin's St. Patrick's Day organisers decided to refuse from the city's annual parade a pageant float that commemorated the 1913 Lockout in that event's centenary year. Macnas, a well-regarded street-performance company, had put two design proposals for a Lockout-themed float to the city's St. Patrick's Day festival organisers. Both were flatly denied. Macnas co-founder Páraic Breathnach branded this denial "cultural censorship" (Maguire, *The Sunday Times*, 17 March 2013), and labour historian Pádraig Yeates claimed that the organisers "didn't shoot down the ideas on the grounds of aesthetics or design"; "to actually say, 'No thanks, trade unions or workers are not part of our mission,' says a lot about the parade" (ibid.). A statement released by the St. Patrick's Festival countered these views:

> The application didn't pass the first stage of submissions because it didn't reflect the theme of the Gathering. Stage-one applications are judged on artistic vision. They were given feedback on the artistic direction and invited to resubmit if they could meet the criteria a little more, which they didn't do (ibid.).

The rationale and processes involved in the refusal were thus somewhat disputed, though clearly the invocation of *The Gathering*'s "theme", and the perceived failure to "reflect" it, indicated a tension between labour histories and touristic strategies. According to the official final report on *The Gathering*, its core aim was to motivate members of the "diaspora, as well as those with an affinity for Ireland, to come to Ireland to celebrate the best of Irish culture, arts, sports, music and heritage" (Miley 2013: 8). Why had the Lockout centenary not merited a significant part in this celebration of Ireland's "best"; was there a reason it might not attract those with "an affinity for Ireland", or Ireland as they imagine it? Was St Patrick's Day in Dublin to be merely about what Lloyd diagnoses as a chief malaise of neoliberal Ireland: "the narcissistically pleasurable afterglow of an Irishness evacuated of content and conflict and therefore as universally consumable as processed cheese" (Lloyd 2013: para. 16)? None of these questions are easily answered. It is noteworthy that a book celebrating *The Gathering*, launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny on 1 October 2013, would end with a reflection by the well-known left-wing visual artist Robert Ballagh entitled "1913 Lockout Remembered" (2013: 244–5). In it, underneath a reproduction of a panel from his "1913 Lockout Tapestry" collaboration with Cathy Henderson, Ballagh reminds us that "2013 is a very important year, not just because of *The Gathering*, but because it marks the 100th anniversary of the 1913 Lockout" (245). The significant place of this final piece in the reflection book would seem to have made some concession to Yeates' complaint above.

But the failure overall to adequately recognise the importance of the Lockout centenary as part of *The Gathering*'s events was marked, and seems especially odd, from a historical perspective, given the Irish diaspora's significant role in working-class struggles in Ireland, Britain and America. Tim Pat Coogan (2000: 312) points to John J. Sweeney's observation that in the USA "most trade union leaders at the turn of the

[twentieth] century were Irish"; he proceeds to enumerate some of those various leaders "taken from a list which, if given in full, would fill this page." A parallel phenomenon is evident in Britain: James Larkin and James Connolly, whose radical politics were forged in a British-Irish context, are at the apex of a long tradition of Irish involvement in British labour struggles, and of the British-born first-generation Irish who brought their socialism back to Ireland. From Chartism on, Irish activists—notably "Bronterre" O'Brien, Feargus O'Connor, and Francis Davis—are relatively extensive in British trade unionism. As Joan Allen (2016: 35) notes in a recent essay on Irish nationalism and the rise of British Labour, by "the early years of the twentieth century a significant percentage of Irish workers in Britain came to privilege their proletarian solidarities at the local level and to regard the nascent Labour Party as best positioned to defend their day-to-day interests." This focus on the local and quotidian cannot, however, be taken simplistically as evidence of a merely parochial turn; nor indeed can the history of labour activity among Irish emigrant workers be taken as confirmation of universally or straightforwardly leftist inclinations in their ranks. What can be observed, for example in radical diasporic Irish writers of this era, like Robert Tressell, Patrick MacGill and, somewhat later, James Hanley, as we shall see below, is that the Irish diasporic engagement with and within the British working class and left political traditions is exceptionally indebted to its experience in a complex transnational context. That context is surely central to Irish diaspora history, meriting a more significant place than it has heretofore occupied in Ireland's diaspora-facing celebrations of Irishness. The often harshly critical perspective of these writers on both Britain and Ireland, however, perhaps illustrates something of why the history of Irish labour politics plays such a small part in those celebrations.

An "Out of Kilter" Irish

Irish immigrant labour agitation is inseparable, as Flynn suggested, from Irish colonial experience. This experience was, as Lloyd (2014: 21) argues, indelibly marked by social, economic and cultural shock:

> The [nineteenth-century] attempt to impose an "orderly geometry" modelled on English agricultural practice over the Irish landscape and to reshape the "confusion" of Irish space was at one and the same time an assault on the collective customs of the clachan, the attempt to eradicate the recalcitrant culture, its "throughother" spatiality sustained in ways virtually invisible to colonial reason.

The experience and cultural memory of this attempted "eradication" left the Irish "coeval but out of kilter with the imposed disciplines of modernization" (ibid.: 22), repeatedly productive of "non-modern" (Lloyd 1999: 17) responses. "Out-of-kilter" structures of feeling caused by the shock of capitalism and the experience of displacement lent themselves (though not universally) to formations of alterity and radicalism. "The study of Irish labour migrations […] suggests that the Irish were continually involved in the production of and struggle for radical alternatives to the capitalist colonialism by which they were displaced" (Lloyd 2013: para. 21). This politics is one deeply implicated with the very quality of being unmoored. As Lloyd (2013: para. 4) argues,

> Between the memory of the trauma of departure and the impact of a racialization that denies or limits access to citizenship in the state of arrival, a diasporic community is reconstituted in the transvaluation *elsewhere* of the meaning and possibility of home […] More significantly, however, they are shaped by something that is distinctive of neither homeland nor the state of settlement—namely, the historical experience of movement itself.

In this context, diasporic communities therefore "reconstitute their cultural formations dynamically in relation to a conception of home that is not identical either with that home or, especially, with the desire to return home" (Lloyd 2013: para. 6). Movement, displacement and liminality engender estrangement, from both the place of arrival and the place of origin, and in the postcolonial experience of oppression, this estrangement is intensified by the recalcitrance of the "non-modern." Flynn's profound cultural memory is not so much a memory of belonging to "home", as a belonging to a tradition of separatism and sedition in which the very idea of home was continually under threat. Her memory of Ireland was, then, the expression of multiple experiences of displacement.

Macnas' 2013 focus on an iconic conflict in Irish labour history was arguably, from a historical perspective, quite appropriate to *The Gathering* and its putative aim to "draw back people (tourists) from the Irish Diaspora overseas" (Griffin and Ging 2013: 213), given how central workers' struggles have been to the Irish diaspora, and how the Lockout represented both an iconic event in the history of Irish labour struggle—and a key generative moment in a period of political militancy that led to Ireland's most sustained period of decolonising insurgency (1916–1923). The refusal of the Lockout float suggested tensions and anxieties in Irish diasporic experience that problematise *The Gathering*. Additionally, if many Irish emigrant leftists derived and passed on a deep sense of injustice forged in the crises of colonial Ireland, and carried that impulse into struggles with capitalist exploitation elsewhere, the backward glance at home was not always kindly or nostalgic. The Irish emigrant experience facilitated acutely critical perspectives on emigrant destinations but also on Ireland, and in particular on the power of the Catholic Church in Ireland. As I will argue below, the sense of being unmoored, or of "movement" as Lloyd has it above, facilitated the radically alternative critical insights that characterise much Irish working-class emigrant literature and set that literature against both destination and homeplace. The remainder of this chapter explores Patrick MacGill's *Children of the Dead End* (1914), Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914) and James Hanley's *The Furys* (1935), and how they evince both the out-of-kilter-ness of the Irish emigrant in capitalist Britain and the ways in which that disjuncture produces radical perspectives on home.

MacGill's "Historical Event": Writing the Despised Navvy

As Owen Dudley Edwards (1986: 82) observed, "the incredible success" of MacGill's first novel is "a historical event": "How did the despised, outcast navvies suddenly produce a bestseller?" But if MacGill's *Children of the Dead End* is, due to its popularity and provenance, a historical triumph, it is also as importantly a novel that engages matters of historiog-

raphy and epistemology in complex and challenging ways. Pivotal to *Children*, a work replete with anxieties about identity, culture and modernity, is the progress (or perhaps regress) of a subaltern Irish subjectivity within the fractured and alienating world of early twentieth-century capitalist Britain. Here Lloyd's key themes of the "non-modern", the "out of kilter" and "movement" are central to a searing critique of modern capitalism. But central too is MacGill's criticism of the Ireland that Dermod Flynn, his protagonist, has left behind.

MacGill was born in 1889 and grew up in Mullanamore, near Glenties, Co. Donegal—the "Glenmornan" of his novels. He experienced extreme childhood poverty, and as an autobiographical fiction, *Children* recalls MacGill's hiring as an indentured agricultural labourer (or "slave" (34), as he terms it) in Co. Tyrone at the age of twelve years, and his later journeys to Scotland and eventually England for work. Dermod toils in various, temporary agricultural and navvying jobs, always "tramping" (47) nomadically, roaming through Glasgow, Kinlochleven and across the Scottish countryside, eking out a precarious existence on the verge of starvation. But if much of *Children* is about a youth's difficult journey into a frightening and fragmented world, it is also a novel of formation, a *bildungsroman*, or more specifically, a *künstlerroman*: a novel of artistic coming-of-age. Here a tension emerges between content and form—between the "formation" such novels tend to culminate in and, by contrast, the formlessness of the emigrant navvy's precarious and unpredictable existence. This tension defines the book and its performative challenge to ideologies of modernisation.

As Nancy Armstrong (2006: 8) illustrates of late-Victorian novels, "to become an individual […] the subject must still surmount the limits of an assigned social position", if also "channel the energy of individualism toward socially productive ends", producing a "subject necessarily divided against itself." As M. Keith Booker (1997: 142) argues of the *bildungsroman*,

> the genre by its very nature emphasizes the growth of the individual subject, but the successful culmination of this growth, especially in the English version, is typically defined as an integration into society and as the attainment of an ability to play by the rules imposed by that society.

This tendency creates a homology between ideology under capitalism and form in literature: coming of age is often about coming to conformist "success." In MacGill, however, Dermod's trajectory runs askew. Dermod's literary career, like his creator's, begins with simple poetry depicting the lives of wandering labourers. He then progresses, through some initial flirtations with journalism, to discovery by a Fleet Street newspaper, which catapults the erstwhile navvy to a reporting job in London and his first, awkward contacts with bourgeois life. Here MacGill tantalises: we anticipate the archetypal coming-of-age culmination; the novel hints at the ascent of a David Copperfield (of Charles Dickens' eponymous 1850 novel) or a Pip (from his *Great Expectations,* 1861). Dermod's later refusal of this proffered *formation* of the metropole, rejecting his tentative attainment of middle-class respectability, is therefore something of a surprise. When commissioned by his editor to write articles depicting striking coal miners as drunken profligates, Dermod refuses to comply, thereby spurning professional success in London in favour of a return to poverty-ridden Glasgow. Here the out-of-kilter emigrant's alienation from the norms of the metropole—symbolised, for example, by his comic fumbling with the alien conventions of cutlery in a London restaurant, or his incomprehension at the cynical duplicity, masquerading as sophistication, of a fellow journalist (276–84)—estranges the metropole. Dermod will not "play by the rules."

Here lies also one of the crucial discrepancies between fact and fiction in *Children*: MacGill, like Dermod, had achieved success as a journalist, but in contrast progressed beyond it to a post at the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, which was surely, for a humble navvy, more unbelievable than anything in his fiction. But this triumph of integration would also open a social chasm between MacGill and his erstwhile labouring friends. It is therefore doubly significant that Dermod, by contrast, rebuffs the professional success that his creator embraced, favouring a return to working-class life. In this context, the novel can also be viewed, not merely as a fantasy of rejection, but also as a wish-fulfilling avowal of the writer's commitment to his community, to the subaltern-hood of tramps and navvies from which his writing emerged.

Dermod and his fellow navvies are repeatedly othered and anathematised, shunned "as lepers are shunned", "shunned and despised by all

men, and foul in the eyes of all women" (153, 154). While we might suspect exaggeration in Bryan Giemza's comparisons between *Children* and the American slave narrative—a sense of solidarity that Giemza (Giemza 2003: 2; after Noel Ignatiev) terms a "common culture of the lowly"—Dermod's "vagrant ways" undoubtedly leave him outcast and othered, like "an Ishmaelite, who without raising my hand against every man, had every man's hand against me" (221, 173–3). His subalternity is not just a racial identity, but one common to the Irish immigrants and their fellows in the lower reaches of the British working class, for "men like Moleskin"—a Scot—"and myself are trodden underfoot, that others may enjoy the fruit of centuries of enlightenment" (174). The rational, Enlightenment project is, ironically, dependent on the barbaric oppression of nomadic "gentlemen knights of the gravelled way" (151).

But Dermod nonetheless senses a certain wisdom in this lowliness and "the contentment of a man who knows that he can fall no lower" (114). A dispute Moleskin has with a ploughman, who believes himself a step above the itinerant navvies, is instructive in terms of Dermod's refusal of orthodoxy. His vagabond companion, Moleskin Joe, who, as Edwards (1986: 77) asserts, "embodies the virtue of the vagrant who will never be anything else", questions the ploughman's acceptance of the conventional ideal of the family: "You marry a wench and set up a beggarly house […] nothin' before both of you but the grave or the workhouse. If you are as clever a cadger as me why do you suffer all this?" (162) The ploughman responds, tellingly, "because I'm a decent man" (162), though Dermod tells Moleskin that the English worker is merely blind to his own slavery:

> The pig has its grunt, the bull its bellow, the cock its crow, and the plougher his boasted decency. To each his crow, grunt, boast, or bellow, and to all their ignorance. It is impossible to argue against ignorance, Moleskin. It is proof against sarcasm and satire and is blind to its own failings (162).

The pair both ultimately agree that "decency" has lost the argument.

Mainstream ideologies of decency are continually challenged in the novel, which suggests that the nomadic, rootless experience of the migrant

worker produces a freedom from orthodoxy that deconstructs ideological commonplaces in Britain. But it does so in Ireland too. In Donegal, for instance, the unfairness of a landlord alone occupying a single carriage on a train, while other occupants are crammed uncomfortably into the rest of it, is questioned by a young Dermod as he leaves home to work as a farm labourer in Tyrone: "Why is there only one man in there, while twenty of us are crammed in here?" he asks. "Sure, ye know nothin", another boy answers: "That man's a gintleman" (30). Again, conventional ideologies and their watchwords ("decency," "gentlemanliness") are deconstructed. Dermod reasons that the very condition of his exclusion, his nomadic propertylessness, is humanising, precisely because of its distance from social norms. He writes of homelessness, "my house for so long has been the wide world, that I can afford to look leniently on all other inmates, animal or human. Four walls coffin the human sympathies" (166). When Dermod suggestively breaks a wealthy family's dining-room window, simply to shatter the picture of opulent Victorian homeliness inside (121), MacGill hints that he, as author, is simultaneously shattering the invisible ideologies that exclude subaltern alternatives.

MacGill resisted the temptation to idealise peripheral Ireland, and this sparked claims of betrayal. Seamus Deane (1985: 12) noted of MacGill's depiction of Donegal,

> The people he refers to were the subject of—not the audience for—his work. The 10,000 copies of *Children of the Dead End* were not sold in Donegal in 1914. They were sold in Britain and the USA. Their popularity derived from the sense they gave of a hidden world exposed, one of the many "organic communities" which evoked nostalgia […] The reaction of the community exposed by this kind of writing was hostile. It felt that its privacy had been betrayed from the inside.

Chief among MacGill's attacks on the Ireland of his youth is his caustic depiction of the tyranny of a local priest, who colludes in the exploitation of Donegal peasants by gombeen man Farley McKeown, and imposes crippling taxes on his parishioners in order to build his lavish home, causing families such as Dermod's to struggle desperately and

send their children abroad for work. Dermod's family is incredulous when they learn that the priest "is spending three hundred gold sovereigns in making a lava-thury", which they imagine "is a place for keeping holy water" (22). Dermod's brother, Dan, dies because the family cannot afford a doctor, even as they fearfully pay the priest's taxes lest he condemn them with one of his "curses." It is hard to imagine that the mistaken identification of a lavatory as a receptacle for holy water is anything other than a sardonic comment on the priest's desecration of his vocation.

MacGill, then, represents a communal sub-culture that is out of kilter with both the capitalism he encounters in Britain and the corruptions he experiences at home. He and the navvies refuse social norms. They sing a song of Two-shift Mullholland's, the *Bold Navvy Man*, ironically dubbed his "magnum opus", which attests to their anti-improvement counter-culture: "I'll drink and drink whene'er I can, the drouth is sure to come / And I will love till lusty life runs out its mortal span" (236). And when he returns from London, Dermod's old navvy pals lament that he has in fact become tainted by the journalistic profession. Journalism entails betrayal, Moleskin suggests: "I read some of your writin's to the men in Burn's at Greenock, and some of the lodgers said that you were stuck up and priggish" (290). Moleskin jokingly brands Dermod "Pontius Pilate" (289); "them sort of fellows that wear white collars and are always washing themselves. I never could trust them, Flynn" (292). In embracing this marginality, this recalcitrant outgroup identity, MacGill estranges the orthodoxy of the "decent." His portrayal of Dermod envisions the nomadic poor as the source of a radically counter-hegemonic wisdom, or "the margin as a space of radical openness" as bell hooks (1990: 145) might term it. As Ian Haywood argues, "the hero reverts to a decentred, marginalized, fluctuating position; an unfixed, floating social signifier […] he is unplaceable, economically and aesthetically. His relation to property and marriage, those twin pillars of classic realism, is completely antithetical" (Haywood 1997: 35). Here the conventional terminus for the *bildungsroman* hero, in "integration" and "play[ing] by the rules", is repudiated by the non-modern navvy.

Tressell's Oblique Irishness in the English "Painter's Bible"

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, also released in 1914, is a very different work. Robert Tressell's novel has been in print throughout the century since, gaining enormous popularity and a cult following, dubbed by some the "Painter's Bible." It differs from *Children*, in depicting a far more static working class, with far greater pessimism, and in a much more diverse assemblage of literary styles. But again there are salient correspondences with Lloyd's "out-of-kilter" Irish. In Tressell's novel, the decent men of working-class Mugsborough, like MacGill's ploughman, largely accept the "reality" they encounter in various ideological forms. Unlike Dermod, who rejects the newspaper industry from the inside, Tressell's workers mostly accept unquestioningly what they read in newspapers such as the *Daily Obscurer*, *Weekly Ananias* and the *Chloroform*. They also largely obey instruction from the local captains of industry, such as the villainous Messers Sweater, Grinder and Rushton, who control local business, the council chamber and instruction at the Sunday schools. Tressell's mingling of social-realist depictions of working-class life in Mugsborough (a fictionalised Hastings, England), with didactic passages of blatant authorial intervention, barely altered copies of news stories and unrealistic, cartoonish caricatures of the town's capitalists and politicians, unsettles and decentres the authority of the text's authorial voice along with the assumed mimetic function of realism. This decentring of narrative orthodoxies is required in any thoroughgoing analysis of what is taken for granted in British society, the novel suggests: the power of ideology to shape "reality" is repeatedly emphasised, and Tressell, like MacGill, suggests that what is "decent" and "normal" reproduces social stagnation and political impotence. Such a conclusion inheres in his depiction of the virtuous but largely useless councillor, Dr Weakling, who "unfortunately"

> was also a respectable man. When he saw something going forwards that he did not think was right, he protested and voted against it and then—he collapsed! There was nothing of the low agitator about *him*. As for the Brigands, they laughed at his protests and his vote did not matter (200).

Being conventional risks being inconsequential, Tressell submits. Again like MacGill, he expresses contempt for what is characterised as bestial in the English working class, "a community composed for the most part of ignorant semi-imbeciles, slaves, slave-drivers and psalm-singing hypocrites" (196). For both writers, their sense of distancing from their adopted home's social codes is profound.

Tressell, however, was liminal in a way that MacGill was not. Born in 1870 to a well-connected Protestant Ascendancy father, Samuel Croker, and a working-class Dublin woman, Mary Ann Noonan, whom Croker kept as a mistress, Tressell was the unlikely offspring of two social extremes. His father was an absentee landlord, and as Marion Walls (2008: 105) notes, "given the anger of the diatribes on landlordism and absentee landlords in the novel, together with Tressell's sympathy with the Irish nationalist movement, it would appear that he came to see his own family as colluding with colonialism." Tressell, then, was the product of an unusual cradling:

> On the paternal side […] heir to instances of religious intolerance, colonial conquest, the land question, and racial politics—in short, the history of the oppressor in Ireland. In contrast, he was brought up by a mother who was native Irish, Catholic, and, as such, one of a marginalised and colonised group (Walls 2008: 106).

That this "illegitimate" boy rejected his link to the Anglo-Irish indicates his very conscious identification with the Catholic poor from which his mother hailed. When he emigrated, first to South Africa, Tressell became active in the Transvaal 1798 Commemoration Committee and took part in its United Irishmen Centenary Parade of 1898. His pseudonym, "Tressell", after the painter's trestle table, nods to his profession as a house painter, but also signals how he would conceive his role as a writer—as a support for the working class. Here we again observe the intersection of an anti-imperialist sensibility from Ireland and the class politics felt most intensely by the migrant Irish worker abroad:

> While not always present in an overt sense, his Irish background and South African experience work as skeleton and "mood", underpinning his per-

> sonal, ideological, and literary career. Tressell's perception of class is from the viewpoint of a colonial subject, with roots in the ideology of a particular form of Irish nationalism, which in turn was inspired by French revolutionary ideals. Tressell's daughter, Kathleen, writes that he was "fond of Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet", the leaders of the United Irish rebellions (Walls 2008: 106).

Walls is correct in identifying both the "mood" of postcolonial subalternhood and its confinement, largely, to the subtext of Tressell's mammoth text. She even suggests that Tressell's fictional town, Mugsborough, might be read more figuratively—beyond its common understanding as a direct reference to Hastings—as a representation of the colony. She notes too Tressell's focus on racism in the novel, his excoriation of imperialist mindsets, and we might add his habitual disdain for the perceived widespread ignorance of the English working class. His protagonist Owen's incandescence when encountering the Malthusian logic of a fellow English worker that "the greatest cause of poverty is hover-population" (18) drips with anti-imperial rage:

> "Is over-population the cause of poverty in Ireland? Within the last fifty years the population of Ireland has been reduced by more than half. Four millions of people have been exterminated by famine or got rid of by emigration, but they haven't got rid of poverty. P'raps you think that half the people in this country ought to be exterminated as well." Here Owen was seized by a violent fit of coughing, and resumed his seat (19).

As in MacGill, the flaw common to this borough's "mugs" is their failure to comprehend how their society relies on the paradox of their imagined inclusion and actual exclusion. One passage is particularly illustrative in this regard. As a number of workers sit and converse in a bar, two of those in more advanced states of inebriation, whom Tressell names the Semi-Drunk and Besotted Wretch, are tolerated by the pub's landlord as they entertain their fellows with games of "rings" and "shove-ha'penny" (188–9). Meanwhile, the assembled company become increasingly drunk, culminating in one of them putting a patriotic song, "The Boys of

the Bulldog Breed" (190), playing on the polyphone in the bar. Unsteady on his feet, the Semi-Drunk sings the chorus:

> They may build their ships, my lads,
> And try to play the game,
> But they can't build the boys of the Bulldog breed,
> Wot made ole Hingland's – (190)

His profession of patriotism is cut short when the landlord realises that the Semi-Drunk now has no money left, his singing suddenly sufficient excuse to eject him from the premises. Here Tressell links English patriotic fervour with the exploitation of its working class: while the Semi-Drunk can swell the landlord's coffers, he remains within the bar—or allegorically, the nation. But his jingoism is acidly ironised when he runs out of money: the nation includes only those on whom it profits—their patriotism illusory, its assumption of "horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1991: 50) bogus. On their way home from the pub, the rest of the men mistake the Semi-Drunk, whom they find crawling on the road, for an animal, his state of exception and abjection underlined.

We can read the passage above as not only decrying the jingoism of the English working class, but more broadly challenging the interpellative powers of ideologies that bind the poor to the rich. Tressell apparently once "told his daughter, Kathleen, that nothing would change in Ireland until it 'got rid of the whiskey and the priests'" (Walls 2008: 111) and his profound denunciations of religion (and alcoholism) throughout *The Ragged* suggests the extent to which migration also perhaps facilitated critical insights on problems at home. The clergy's collection of funds from the poor, in order to "defray the expenses of a month's holiday in the South of France" (175) recalls MacGill's depiction of a grasping Donegal priest, and no doubt broaches concerns deeply rooted in Irish postcolonial, as much as English working-class, contexts. If the encounter with capitalism in the metropole, then, could be challenged in new and subversive ways by Irish migrants recalcitrant to its norms and thus, as Lloyd suggests, apt to embrace alternatives, it could also open their eyes to tyranny back home. It is in Scotland, freed from the influences of the Church, that MacGill begins to question the rule of the

priest. It is in another colony, South Africa, that we see the first evidence of Tressell's republican secularism, and it is in England that he writes his influential diatribes against organised religion and Empire.

Hanley's Gelton: A Diaspora at Sea

James Hanley is another Irish diaspora writer in Britain whose work presents both a condemnation of English capitalism and a bitter backward glance at home. Hanley, born in 1897, was prolific in his publication of short stories, autobiographical writing and novels, along with some forays into theatre, radio and television. His upbringing in a working-class, seafaring Irish-Liverpudlian family informs much of this considerable *oeuvre*, among it his novel *The Furys* (1935), the first of a series of semi-autobiographical works that chart the struggles of an Irish Catholic family in Liverpool. The novel has had a lasting impact in Britain, as evidenced by its serialisation by BBC Radio 4 in February 2001, though it is little known in Ireland. In *The Furys*, Hanley, like MacGill and Tressell, identifies deep disenchantment among the Irish emigrant working class with the cruel living conditions in their adopted home. He also excoriates organised religion's ideological power in Ireland and among its diaspora. Movement and rootlessness return as key themes: here the Fury family's history of work at sea acts as a metaphor for their cultural adriftness and in-betweenness—a sense that neither Ireland nor Britain is a hospitable place for the poor. Peter Fury, around whom the novel's various sub-plots rotate, is a disgraced young seminarian whose scandalous relations with local women, near his former college in Cork, cause his expulsion and return to Liverpool: his "failure"—a word repeated with great frequency in the book. This "failure" is emblematic of broader perceived failures in Irish emigrant experience: the Irish emigrant working class fails both to reconcile itself to life in its adopted home and in its bid to remain faithful to the orthodoxies it has left behind, Peter dismissing his religious vocation as "a pure cod" (350). Peter's mother, the ever-suffering materfamilias Mrs Fury, invests her hope in roseate thoughts of having a son in the priesthood, only to find that she has pushed her religious devotion too forcefully on an unwilling subject. His rejection of religion and Ireland,

and his further scandalous affair with his brother's wife in Liverpool, compounds Peter's sin and shatters Mrs Fury's dreams, and with them the dream of faith and fatherland his vocation seems to represent. His journey from seminarian to seaman in the novel seems to allegorise the loosening ties of home on the Irish diaspora. In Hanley the second-generation Irish-English have accommodated themselves to behaviours and morals their parents find repugnant.

Mrs Fury's mute father, the elderly and infirm Belfastman Mr Mangan, who watches the turmoil in the Fury household in stony-eyed silence, comes to symbolise also a spectral, ancestral mockery of the family's fragmentation and hybridity, its existence in a liminal cultural space that is neither fully English nor authentically Irish—at least in the Manichean terms Mrs Fury would understand. Her husband, Denny, an increasingly bewildered, unmoored man, who "floated about [Liverpool] like a cork upon water" (28), is contrasted with and feels intensely the fixity and judgement he interprets in his father-in-law's penetrating stare. When the Furys' daughter Maureen refuses Denny's fatherly commands, he resents that the patriarchal certainties of the past are fragmenting daily in a family utterly intractable to his designs, and it is as if Ireland is watching and mocking him from a chair in the family's kitchen: "He even fancied that Mr. Mangan found a sort of malicious glee in this overpowering daughter of his as he watched her, day in and day out, weigh down all opposition" (31). Denny views his family's impoverishment, caused by his wife's determination to fund Peter's education in Ireland, as a "fetter" (33), suggesting metonymically the fetter of Irish Catholicism for the emigrant—something that MacGill had emphasised in the endless requests from Dermod's mother in Donegal for more money for the priest. Just as Dermod celebrates the refusal of fixity that his and Moleskin's nomadic lifestyle entails, for Denny and his seafaring son Anthony, the no-place of the sea becomes a refuge. Anthony is "glad to be at sea", away from the "invisible and insidious poison" that his mother and her fixation on Irish Catholic respectability represent (35). Mrs Fury's clinging to her father "as to a rock" (42) evinces the emigrant's fixation on an imagined but lost solidity, her obsession with Peter's vocation—part of "the oddest relationship [that] existed between mother and son" (58–9)—representing a doomed insistence on faithfulness to their fading Irishness. Just as the

family comes to seem "a bunch of strangers" (62) to Denny, Ireland becomes shockingly estranged too; Peter, like Ireland, and like the mute past represented by his grandfather, becomes "like a stranger" (126). If a significant portion of the novel centres around an industrial dispute and the family's struggles within it, here the emigrant is out of kilter not only with British capitalism but also with Irish social norms.

A repeated trope in *The Furys* is Denny's fear of the public gaze. He frequently refuses to leave his house by the front door, ducking instead down entries and laneways in order to avoid being seen by his mainly Irish neighbours. This behaviour suggests both the oppressive, judgemental burden of Irishness and the potentially enveloping freedom and anonymity of English streets, chiming with similar sentiments in MacGill. However, Denny's repeated fear of crowds is also a fear of being subsumed by the metropole, its "oncoming sea" (88). When he and Mrs Fury visit a local music hall, Denny pointedly eschews any notion of incipient Englishness, his temporary escape to the lavatory in order to avoid standing for the British national anthem signalling, like Dermod's stone thrown through a Victorian family's window or Tressell's satire on British jingoism, his refusal of national norms. Capitalist Britain is anathematised in the book, in Hanley's depiction of harsh and hazardous labour, and the Furys' struggles with moneylenders, or more viscerally and symbolically, in the repugnant stink of the local factory, its ubiquitous "most disgusting smell" (114). But Hanley refuses to counterpoise this with romanticised images of Ireland, or even hopes of socialist solidarity. If the strike with which the action of the novel culminates might have allowed a more utopian vision of social transformation, its representation as a chaotic disintegration of social norms and proprieties is depressingly grim. The "all-embracing octopus" of the crowd, recalling MacGill's and Tressell's depictions of a bestial English working class, is a "fickle" "herd of animals", "a monster without any aim or sense of proportion—a headless monster" (261, 273, 272). The city mirrors the chaos in the home, where the Fury family, as Patrick Williams (2007: 46, 47) notes, is "divided against itself at every level"; "the alienation of the family members from one another is a mirror of relations in society at large […] Personal contact appears limited, superficial and undesired; neighbours are interfering, workmates tedious." Hanley reflects a modernity in which

rapid change and loosening morality have ruptured any sense of social stability. Williams notes the continual and often sudden shifts in perspectives among characters in the novel, a performative device used "to discourage any secure reader position" (2007: 47). There is also a "move away from geographical and historical specificity" (ibid.: 53)—the strike, for example, is never detailed enough to be identified with a real historical event. This adriftness, evident in both content and form in *The Furys,* prompts Williams (ibid.: 54) to identify an allegorical criticism of the perpetual crisis of capitalism:

> For Walter Benjamin, modernity is characterized by discontinuity, fragmentation and shock, and his description of allegory is of a mode particularly suited to the contemporary world and our experience of it. Allegory for Benjamin is a mode of fragments, "the privileged mode of our own time, a clumsy deciphering of meaning from moment to moment, the painful attempt to restore a continuity to heterogenous diconnected [sic] instants." These, plus Benjamin's paradoxical notion of progress as catastrophe, typify life under contemporary capitalism as experienced by Hanley's characters.

If, as John Fordham (2002: 127) argues, "Hanley's *Furys* projects the unfallen world of pre-capitalist Ireland as a 'fantasm' whose limitations are defined by the 'Real' of working-class Gelton", for Hanley's emigrant Irish, neither the fantasy nor the reality provide a convincing "home." But being hybrid and unmoored nonetheless provides a space for alterity—albeit a space that shrinks as the emigrants habituate to their dismal surroundings. As the Furys' daughter Maureen tells her Irish aunt, "One gets used to everything here in time. As soon as one realizes that it is impossible to get outside of it, the better one settles down" (161). As in MacGill and Tressell, the quality of being out of kilter, by contrast, provides a space in which strident critiques of both Ireland and Britain emerge.

Conclusion

In the three texts explored in this chapter, Irish emigrant experience produces challenges to the calculus of capitalism. But if these perspectives are radically at variance with prevailing norms in intensely industrialised Britain, they are also to varying degrees explicitly and implicitly critical of a devotionally rigid Ireland. In all three, there are no easy solutions to the chaotic experience of emigration. Indeed, all flirt with various degrees of misanthropy and despair. In Hanley, the committed trade unionist Fury son, Desmond, turns out to be utterly cynical and solipsistic, constantly alert to how the union can help him to get "his chance" (465) of obtaining a position as a besuited union officer. Desmond is damning in his disdain for his fellow workers: "Let the bastards vegetate, let them lie in their own muck. They're not interested", he claims; "our real enemies are our own people. Never mind these bloody Capitalists" (384, 487). He recalls here Tressell's socialist proselytiser, Owen, and his disenchanting ruminations of his fellow workers in Hastings: "*They were the enemy.* Those who not only quietly submitted like so many cattle to the existing state of things, but defended it […] *They were the real oppressors*—the men who spoke of themselves as 'The likes of us'" (66). Here, both nod to the Irish diaspora's ambiguous relationship with the working class of its adopted home. Hanley's assessment of the potential to radicalise that working class is grim: as one of *The Furys*' more elusive characters, the anthropologist Professor Titmouse, puts it while observing protesting strikers, "But these, of course, are not revolutionary tactics, merely sporadic pricks of authority"—the strikers' actions "a mixture of cowardice and impudence" (334, 340). MacGill ultimately has his apparently socialist protagonist retreat from the public sphere. Dermod leaves the world of journalism despairing at its bias and his seeming impotence in speaking truth to power: "the office was like a prison; it choked me" (285). Again, little hope is held out for the English working class; the static conventionalism of the ploughman is counterpoised with the unconventional morality of the Scottish and Irish duo who revel in their refusal of social norms. When Dermod caricatures the English worker in the most dismissive of bestialising terms—"the pig has its grunt, the bull

its bellow" (162)—he corresponds with Tressell's depiction of his co-workers as "beasts of burden" (571) and Hanley's of trade union members "vegetat[ing] […] in their own muck." A distancing from the English working class, then, accompanies in each work a defamiliarisation of the norms of English life and, in MacGill, even a mischievous embrace of anti-improvement narratives. All three writers disaffiliate from bourgeois literary preoccupations, their emphatic deconstruction of propriety, "decency" and "respectability", evincing a structure of feeling in which the Irish emigrant poor are apt to reject Empire's discourses of civilisational and modernising improvement. But for all three too there is no simple return to the romanticisation of Ireland in which the Literary Revival at home had overindulged. Their diasporic Irish proletariat is at times deeply embittered, dismissive of any attempted idealisation of a prelapsarian Irish past.

Such depictions of Irish emigrant experience present challenges to the often self-contradictory marketing of Ireland to the Irish diaspora. If, as Colin Graham (2001: 135) contends, for Ireland "authenticity is the paradoxically reversed trace of an Irish future trying to wipe its fingerprints from the scene of the crime", the future-oriented constructions of Irish authenticity by those marketing Ireland ought to be scrutinised for what they "wipe." What are the silences inherent in the conjuncture of historiography and "authenticity" in initiatives like *The Gathering*? What space is there for the Irish diasporic working class, and its critical perspectives on home and abroad? Are their narratives of exclusion and marginality problematic for—even anathema to—the celebration of a homogeneous, sanitised Irishness that St Patrick's Day and *The Gathering* tend to project? If the Irish experience of industrial modernity and its discourses of modernisation was, as Lloyd argues, and as the novels examined here suggest, out of kilter, is it also in tension with an Irish imaginary that tends to efface deeply disenchanting histories of Irish encounters with urban industry, labour struggle and class conflict? MacGill, Tressell and Hanley corroborate Lloyd's (2013: para. 7) assertion that

> the dialectics of diaspora is in a crucial sense a negative dialectics, arriving not at sublation into the nation-state but into a state of suspension that throws ideologies of belonging into question […] Indeed, given that mate-

rial conditions in the homeland induced migration, it is most often the case that the diasporic culture imagines the transformation of the homeland rather than a return to its prior state.

These early twentieth-century writers portray diaspora experiences that offer deeply unsettling and complicated portrayals of belonging, or the lack thereof. But they also offer a paradoxically positive depiction of Irish emigrant marginality, in which dislocation engenders defamiliarisation, through which social ills in Ireland and abroad are viewed through new eyes—and here transformation can be imagined.

Notes

1. The song, fittingly, was written in 1915 by the Swedish-American leftist Joe Hill (whose legend would also give rise to one of the most famous songs of American trade union culture).
2. Theodore Dreiser quoted in Lee and Casey (2006: 491).
3. This was Ford's most commercially successful film to that point. It was nominated for six Oscar awards and won two. As Leonard Engel (2001: 291–2) observes: "Shot on location in Ireland, filled with stars, and emphasizing the theme of family relationships, the film captured the hearts of most of America's movie audience; it may be Ford's most popular movie."

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Epilogue

Johanne Devlin Trew and Michael Pierse

In a recent interview, Denis O'Hearn (Beatty et al. 2016), who has long deployed Wallerstein's (1974) World-System theory in relation to Ireland and its transnational relationships, points to the country's "semiperipheral" status in global affairs as an important dimension in analysing the seismic post-2008 economic shock: "because of its extreme dependence on foreign investment and because of the distortions that creates in the Irish economy and in Irish development prospects" (Beatty et al. 2016: 203). O'Hearn, however, is cautious to add "an asterisk" to this pronouncement; if Ireland is semiperipheral, it is far from merely reactive in terms of its relationship to capitalism's centres of activity: "Peripheral and

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semiperipheral zones are not simply acted upon but are constantly casting and recasting bargains with core states and corporations, in ongoing relationships in which they are less powerful but not powerless" (ibid.).

While this book has sought to consider the various ways in which Ireland and the Irish have been acted upon by the global, imperial and capitalist forces that have historically and recently impelled emigration, it has moreover focused on the ways in which Ireland, "less powerful but not powerless", negotiates diasporic power relations, particularly in relation to the Irish in Britain and America, "casting and recasting bargains." If Ireland has in recent decades suffered from an "illusion of coreness" (imagining, wrongly in O'Hearn's view, that its economy is more like those of the world's centres of trade than it actually is; Beatty et al. 2016: 204), it has nonetheless been far from "powerless" in its relation to the Irish diaspora located in those centres. That diaspora has granted Ireland access to transatlantic politics and markets on a scale unparalleled by other, similarly sized EU nations. But this relationship is always fraught with contradictions. For example, if accused of "shaking down" (Gabriel Byrne 2012) its diaspora, Ireland is nonetheless also guilty of shaking it off. As several of the chapters in this volume have illustrated, not all sections of the Irish diaspora are equal. Baraniuk has drawn attention to the liminal position of Ulster Scots, Walter to the "dimensions of hiddenness" suffered by the Irish in Britain; Cowley considers the much-derided navvy and Pierse the less-championed histories of labour activism. The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have (dis)engaged with their diaspora communities in a complex matrix of power relations, revenue-generating activities, affective economies and identity ideologies in which political and fiscal expediencies are never peripheral, but in which deeply emotional and profoundly complicated bonds are also core—and in which silences and illusions abound. O'Hearn (in interview with Beatty et al. 2016: 206) calls, after Boaventura de Sousa Santos, for more engagement with a "sociology of absences and emergences" in Irish history and in relation to Ireland's diasporic experience.

As we have sought in this volume to attend to some of the evasions, distortions, dissensions and contradictions that go to the heart of Ireland's transnational relationships, new narratives of Irish migrant experience, including those of immigrants *to* Ireland, are unfolding on a scale that

demands urgent attention. One of those narratives is the recent story of emigrant return, which has again highlighted divisions in the diaspora. By the autumn of 2016, a mixed message emerged in the statistics on returnees: one *Irish Times* article led with a heading, "Number of emigrants returning to live in Ireland jumps 74%", which was somewhat undermined by its sub-heading, "Emigration still high with 31,800 Irish leaving in 12 months to April" (Ciara Kenny, *Irish Times*, 23 August 2016). The Central Statistics Office figures cited in the article had revealed that 21,100 Irish nationals had returned to live in the Republic in the 12 months to April that year, a huge increase on the 12,100 that had returned the previous year. Far more—31,800—had left the country, though this figure was also down significantly on the post-recession peak of 2013, a year in which 50,900 emigrated, many fearing for their future welfare if they were to stay at home. Clearly the recent emigration crisis, comparable to the grimmest years of the 1980s, had ameliorated significantly, the gap between inflow and outflow greatly narrowed, but to what extent have some of the recent commentaries in relation to these hopeful statistics and the general phenomenon of the post-recession, post-*The Gathering* state-diaspora relationship merely tended to repeat the mistakes of the past?

The discussion of problems encountered or apparently caused by returnees is instructive in this regard. A significant body of research over several decades has examined the experience of returnees, noting some of the barriers they face, and most particularly the lack of welcome they are often afforded. As Murray states in this volume, "the motif of the returnee in Irish culture has long provided the prism through which both positive and negative aspects of Irish society have been refracted." Despite the Irish government's recognition of the economic value of returnees, as exemplified by its Christmas 2015 campaign to encourage expatriates back to Ireland (Devlin Trew, this volume), faced with their actual return, they are often represented in the media as a problem, blamed for surging house prices, overcrowded schools and so on when in reality returnees often have to "start from scratch" to access ordinary things like car and health insurance, bank accounts and state benefits.[1] Reporting these obstacles for returnees in a 2016 address to an Oireachtas Committee, Ciarán Staunton, Chairman of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform

reiterated an emotive, long-term complaint regarding this issue: "Who is looking after the 300,000 people who were on the Census in 2006 and disappeared? […] There is a complete lack of empathy from government agencies as to the plight of returning citizens" (RTÉ News 2016).

At the same hearing, Staunton's sentiments were echoed by those of Karen McHugh, the CEO of Safe Home Ireland, an organisation set up in January 2000 to help house and advise older Irish emigrants who are considering returning home. McHugh lamented that "unfortunately for our cohort of over 60s, they want to come back to die and that's quite sad because some don't get back to die. They get back unfortunately to be buried" (RTÉ News 2016). It was striking that for both representatives, respectively—of younger emigrants, who may have been abroad for less than five or six years, and older emigrants, who may have been away for five or six decades—the more rudimentary obstacles in returning home reflected something more than civil service or governmental glitches and oversights; rather, they seemed to suggest, a deeply emotional bond was being breached in the obstacles faced by returnees, corroborating Caitríona Ní Laoire's (2008: 47) finding that "return migrants are in many ways invisible and inaudible in the Irish population", their exclusion hinging on "an imagined boundary between 'Irish in Ireland' and 'Irish abroad'." As for many generations before them, the returning emigrants of twenty-first century Ireland were finding themselves unsettled at the very moment of their arrival "home." This is all the more surprising given the perception that technological and communicational advances have enabled recent migrants to "stay in touch" with family, friends and more general developments back home in ways that previous generations could not have imagined (witness the political activism of emigrants during the 2015 Marriage Equality Campaign (Mackle, this volume)). Furthermore, this estrangement of the returnee contrasts with how the diaspora tourist experience is envisaged and promoted. Much of the analysis in this volume has looked at—and (in the form of *The Gathering*) was prompted by—a focus on how the diaspora-as-tourists encounter Ireland, where Irish authorities, North and South, have been keen to make the consumption of Ireland, its services and products, easy, attractive and even glamorous for those who intend to visit the country.

Here we return to a central concern throughout this book: the ways in which the commercialising drives of diaspora tourism exceed the compassion shown to members of that diaspora in need (see Devlin Trew, and Boyle and Kavanagh, this volume). This skewing has profound effects on how Ireland styles itself culturally and socially. As Thomas Sullivan (2016: 1784) notes, the "recent economic capitalization of Irish culture", supports "the notion that identities can be negotiated, reshaped and refashioned through acts of consumption"—for those holiday-makers with the means to consume. When emigrants return home, however, their cultural capital as Irish seems devalued. Are they "home-comers or newcomers" (Ní Laoire 2008)? These contradictions, between how Ireland views, instrumentally, its most economically empowered diasporas, and how it has often treated those who are returning, or who are vulnerable and living in countries where the Irish don't enjoy a hyphenated, "hip to be Irish" (Sullivan 2016: 1773) cachet, came to the fore during *The Gathering* year and sparked much of our analysis here. Indeed, several chapters in this volume (Cowley, Murray, Pierse, Walter) have sought to disentangle the ways in which, "nostalgia and the iconisation of cultural practices", which are "natural by-products of processes of authentication", function within diaspora experiences where so often "the 'authentic' is equated with the 'traditional'" (Vaughan 2016: 66).

Donald Akenson (1996: 274) wrote some 20 years ago that, "like every ethnic group, the Irish have members who strongly wish to believe certain romantic or inaccurate generalizations about their own past." This volume has explored some of the contexts, both historical and contemporary, in which such generalisations can be probed and complicated. It has asked key questions of Ireland and race (see Kelly), ethno-national identity (Baraniuk; Boyle and Kavanagh; Lambkin; Murray; Devlin Trew; Walter), class (Cowley; Pierse) and gender (Mackle). It has challenged the ways in which Ireland has been framed after *The Gathering*, and it is hoped that it will help inform and prompt further exploration of the experiences of the present-day emigrant, whose diasporic imaginary has barely been considered in scholarship.[2] If, as Enda Delaney writes (2007: 277), "the collective memory of the twentieth-century Irish diaspora centres on economic malaise, despondency and poignant stories of young rural migrants displaced from their local worlds in search of work in the anonymous indus-

trial centres of Great Britain", how will the "collective memory" of the new "Generation Emigration"[3] be characterised? If, as Delaney (2007: 288) argues of the post-war generation, its "complex web of transnational relationships […] lessened the inherent dislocation involved in migration", what of the Skype Generation, for whom technological advances are effecting new possibilities and creating an increasingly rich communicational climate of "co-presence" and "doing family" (Nedelcu and Wyss 2016)? Will the current generation look differently on Ireland; will it have similarly uneven attitudes of anger, ambivalence and nostalgia towards home? And who or what will be blamed for the recent emigration crisis? If the scholarly analysis of previous generations of emigrants has challenged the notion that nearly all were pushed and few chose to emigrate, how will current emigrants characterise, in retrospect, their decision to leave, and to what extent will they weigh cultural and economic factors in that decision (Ryan 2015)? In view of Alexis Fitzgerald's (in the Irish government's *Commission on Emigration and Other Social Problems*, 1955; cited in Delaney 2002: 43) claim that the wave of emigration of the 1950s—in sending tens of thousands of unemployed and disaffected young men and women abroad—had released "social tensions which would otherwise explode", what role did emigration in the 2010s have in the Irish public's notoriously passive response to an unprecedented economic crisis? These and many other questions arrive by way of exploring the various and diverse strands of research that have led to the present volume.

Notes

1. Mark O'Regan, "Return of 1,500 emigrants a week boosts property", *Sunday Independent*, 23 April 2017.
2. However, note the special section on contemporary Irish emigration curated by Mary Hickman and Louise Ryan in the *Irish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 23 (Nov. 2015), especially Ryan's article on the compared experiences of recent emigrants with those of previous generations.
3. "Generation Emigration" is a regular feature of *Irish Times Online*, begun in 2011.

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[1]Note: Page numbers followed by "n" refer to notes.

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