How Popular Culture Travels: Cultural Exchanges between Ireland and the United States

Sylvie Mikowski, Yann Philippe

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Dans ce numéro

General Introduction

Sylvie Mikowski & Yann Philippe
University of Reims-CIRLEP

"Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill…
sure it's work all day with no sugar in yer tay…
Drill, ye terriers, drill...
An' work and shwe-a-t.'"

Drilling and Excavating: Recovering the International Circulation of Popular Culture between Ireland and the United States

"Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill," a song popular among Irish-Americans since the end of the 19th century, is deeply embedded, Kathryn Kalinak argues, in the narrative, style and ideological meaning of *The Iron Horse*, the 1924 silent film directed by John Ford about the building of the transcontinental railroad. From a diegetic point of view, it is a work song enabling railroad laborers of both the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific to coordinate "their movements to the rhythms of the song they sing."[1] As such it also facilitates the bonding process of a workforce divided along political, ethnic and racial lines and composed of Union, Confederate, Italian, Irish, and Chinese workers. Repeated thrice, the theme almost serves as musical motif. When the film was released, music composed indeed an integral part of the style and theatrical performance. Through writing, editing, and production "Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill" was incorporated in the *Iron Horse* to the effect that what audiences saw on the screen – from the laborers' movements to the intertitles – was synchronized with the music in theatres.[2] Finally, the song "which both produces and symbolizes cooperation and unity, becomes itself a metaphor for the film's

1. Kathryn Kalinak, *How the West Was Sung: Music in the Westerns of John Ford*, Berkeley, California U.P., https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnx6q (last accesssed 7/11/2020), p. 33.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29-34.

central message of overcoming difference and working together." The film depicts "a nation struggling to redefine itself, asking what it meant to be an American and how to work out the deep divisions in American social life."[3] Through its recognizable Irish-American identity, "Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill" thus also served to underline the singular contribution of one specific ethnic group – of which the film director was a member – to the American crucible[4]. Both in and out of the American mainstream, Irish Americans appeared as symbolic gate-keepers on the threshold of American identity, paving the way for some population groups (Italians) while blocking others (Indian-Americans, African-Americans and Chinese-Americans).

"Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill" exemplifies the easily identifiable circulation of items from one field (music) of popular culture to another (cinema). But the mystery of the song's historical origins underlines both the difficulty and the necessity of examining international cultural circulation. "'Drill, Ye Terriers, Drill' (aka 'Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill' aka 'Drill You Tarriers Drill'), Kalinak concludes, is a song whose historical origins are clouded, and whether or not it is a genuine folk ballad actually sung by railroad workers is an open question". The song was "introduced in New York by the Irish comic singer Thomas Casey in the late 1880s" but "there is some evidence to suggest that "Drill, YeTerriers, Drill" is considerably older than Thomas Casey's published version and was indeed sung by Irish laborers on the transcontinental railroad." It even may have had a British antecedent.[5]

The "study of intercultural transfers," as noted by Thomas Adam, "could, therefore, be compared to an archaeological excavation since the task of the scholar is to unearth connections and influences which have been buried deep under many layers of interpretation and modification."[6] The specific case of popular culture makes this process of excavation even deeper. Not only are intercultural transfers obscured behind processes often identified as national ones, but transfers of popular culture have long been hidden behind mutations of high or legitimate culture. Assessing the twofold difficulty and necessity of the study of circulation of popular culture is the goal of the following lines.

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
4. According to biographer Joseph McBride, Ford's work in the 1920s was enriched by his "growing sense of his ethnic identity" which led him to concentrate "on the themes of forced emigration, assimilation, family, community, history and tradition." See *Searching for John Ford*, Jackson, Mississippi U.P., 2011 (2001), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt12f56j (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 143. Born of Irish immigrant parents, Ford had briefly travelled to Ireland for the first time as an adult in 1921, *ibid.*, p. 136-143; for Ford's first travel as an adolescent to Ireland, p. 51.
5. K. Kalinak, *op. cit.*, p. 27-29.
6. Thomas Adam, "New Ways to Write the History of Western Europe and the United States: The Concept of Intercultural Transfer, *History Compass*, 11 (10), 2013, DOI: 10.1111/hic3.12087, p. 880-892, p. 882.

It is now well established in many academic disciplines, that the nation-state functioned for long as an "analytical cage", to use historian Daniel T. Rodgers' famous phrase. National cultures, as we know, are historical artefacts, and relatively recent ones.[7] Moreover, that academic disciplines originally situated themselves at the centre of a process that was both nation-centered and culturally elitist has also become part of the critical and familiar narrative scholars now hold on the historical origins of their respective fields. "Modern historiography is inextricably linked with the modern nation," summarizes Thomas Bender.[8] In the US, "the modern discipline of history arose, according to Nan Enstad, in the late nineteenth century concurrently with bifurcated notions of culture, and historians pursued a mission to narrate the nation's evolution to higher planes of human achievement in government, economy, and culture. Culture became particularly important when historians searched for a distinctive 'American' ethos that might distinguish it from Europe"[9]. The same could be said about the formation of other academic disciplines in either the US or Ireland. The words of Edward Spiller, a pioneer of American Studies, deeply resonate with those of Ernest A. Boyd, one of the first literary critics of the Irish Renaissance Movement, by their patriotic and normative tones. Spiller remembered in the 1970s the defensive atmosphere that characterized the formative period of American Studies from the 1920 to 1950. Boyd asserted in 1916 that "Irish criticism" was "primarily concerned in establishing a ratio of national literary values for Irish literature"[10]:

> Why, we asked, should we be the exception to all other peoples who boast national cultures? Why should we have a history that the British think of as a dark chapter in the story of the British Empire, graphic arts that are not much more than an eclectic conglomerate, literature and language that are a debasement of a noble Anglo-Saxon heritage? [Spiller][11]

7. B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1990, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781107295582; A-M. Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales : Europe, XVIII^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1999. Christine Chivallon, "Retour sur la 'communauté imaginée' d'Anderson. Essai de clarification théorique d'une notion restée floue", *Raisons politiques*, 27, 2007, DOI: 10.3917/rai.027.0131, p. 131-172.
8. Thomas Bender (ed.), *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, Berkeley, California U.P., 2002, preface, p. vii.
9. Nan Enstad, "Popular Culture", in Karen Halttunen (ed.), *A Companion to American Cultural History*, Malden (MA), Blackwell, DOI: 10.1002/9780470691762.ch24, p. 357.
10. Ernest A. Boyd, *Ireland's literary renaissance*, Maunsel, Dublin, 1916, https://archive.org/details/irelandsliteraryr00boyduoft (last accessed 7/11/2020), "Foreword", p. 8.
11. Robert E. Spiller, "Unity and Diversity in the Study of American Culture: The American Studies Association in Perspective", *American Quarterly*, 25 (5), 1973, DOI: 10.2307/2711699, p. 611-618, p. 612.

> The rise of the Language Movement, and the return to Celtic sources, gave a color and tradition to the new literature unknown to the older exponents of Anglicization or nationalism, and rendered it more akin to the Gaelic than the English genius. […] As a rule, studies of Irish writers, whether articles or monographs, are written from an essentially English point of view. […] The writers have been studied as part of our national literature, and have been estimated accordingly. Their work has been considered solely in so far as it reveals those artistic and racial qualities which constitute the raison d'être of the Celtic Renaissance, and the terms of appreciation are strictly relative to the scope of Anglo-Irish literature. [Boyd][12]

Academic traditions, as others, have longstanding effects. If the contributors to this volume come from various academic fields (either history, literature, Irish or American Studies, musicology) most of them are, however, specialists either of the US or Ireland.[13]

Nevertheless, the necessity of examining international cultural transfers has become more and more pressing. First, for reasons that relate to the organization of knowledge. As Gabriele Lingelbach summarized, "transnational research has been experiencing a significant upswing in the social sciences and humanities in an academic landscape that is becoming more and more international."[14] Scholars "are living today in an increasingly interconnected world, a world in which scholars, politicians and intellectuals fret over the extent and impact of 'globalization' (though no one seems to be sure what, exactly, the term implies)."[15] Historians, for their part, have paid increasing attention to the multiple origins of the globalization process.[16] The calls to denationalize history – US and Irish history – have been numerous and transatlantic, transnational, diasporic, interconnected or global approaches to history have flourished.[17] Culture

12. E. A. Boyd, *op. cit.*, "Foreword", p. 7-9.
13. There are, indeed, few individuals who can claim as Kerby A. Miller to master both Irish and American history.
14. Gabriele Lingelbach, "Intercultural Transfer and Comparative History: The Benefits and Limits of Two Approaches", *Traversea*, 1, 2011, p. 46-59, https://traversea.journal.library.uta.edu/index.php/traversea/article/view/5 (last accessed 4/11/2020), p. 46. The article was originally published in German in 2002.
15. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, "On the Division of Knowledge and the Community of Thought: Culture and International History", in Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher (ed.), *Culture And International History*, New York, Berghahn, 2004 (2003).
16. Among other books see Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalization?*, trans. Patrick Camiller, Cambridge (U.K.)/Malden (MA), Polity, 2000; Antonyx Hopkins (ed.), *Globalization in World History*, London, Pimlico, 2002; Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World: Global Connections and Comparisons, 1780-1914*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004.
17. The *Journal of World History* (https://www.jstor.org/journal/jworldhistory, last accessed 7/11/2020) was established in 1990; the *LaPietra Report* on the internationalization of American History was published in 2000 (www.oah.org/insights/archive/the-lapietra-report-a-report-to-the-profession, last accessed 2/04/2019); Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*, New York, Hill & Wang, 2006; T. Bender (ed.), *Rethinking American History*, *op. cit.*; Akira Iriye & Pierre-Yves Saunier, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, New York, Palgrave McMillan, 2009; A. Irye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*, New York, Palgrave McMillan,

itself has become a privileged vantage point from which to assess the extent of the globalization process.[18]

Another reason to re-evaluate cultural transfers relates to the nature of knowledge itself. The growth of interdisciplinarity – or at least academic pluralism – and of cultural concerns in general has played a major role. In a revealing fashion, the field most concerned with international matters, diplomatic history, has moved beyond its traditional concern with inter-governmental relations and has integrated the cultural approach to the point of sometimes operating a "merger between international history and cultural studies."[19] As underlined by pioneer Akira Irye as early as 1978, scholars now see "international relations as intercultural relations." Thus they have devoted increasing attention to "the importance of networks of people connected through cultural threads."[20] Studies on how works, artists, writers, cultural forms and genres, ideas, and even emotions travelled across the world have become increasingly rich, inspiring and available.[21]

2013; James Belich, John Darwin, Margret Frenz & Chris Wickham (eds.), *The Prospect of Global History*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2016. For an early critique of the insularity of Irish historiography, see for example Michael Laffan, "Insular Attitudes: The Revisionists and Their Critics", in Mairin Ni Dhonnchadha & Theo Dorgan (eds.), *Revising the Rising*, Derry, Field Day, 1991. For later attempts to actuate the move beyond the nation-state approach, see Niall Whelehan, (ed.), *Transnational Perspectives in Modern Irish History*, New York, Routledge, 2014; Angela McCarthy (ed.), *Ireland in the World: Comparative, Transnational, and Personal Perspectives*, New York, Routledge, 2015.

18. Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, London, Sage, 1990; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, Minnesota U.P., 1996; Anthony D. King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, Minneapolis, Minnesota U.P., 1997; Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London, Sage, 1992; David Held *et al.*, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge, Polity, 1999; John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, Cambridge, Polity, 1999; Tracey Skelton & Tim Allen (eds.), *Culture and global change*, London, Routledge, 1999; Tyler Cowen, *Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures*, Princeton, Princeton U.P., 2002; Frank J. Lechner & John Boli, *World Culture: Origins and Consequences*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2002; Ramaswami Harindranath, *Perspectives on Global Culture*, Maidenhead, Open University, 2006; Mary Hawkins, *Global Structures, Local Cultures*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2006; Paul Hopper, *Understanding Cultural Globalization*, Cambridge, Polity, 2007; J. Macgregor Wise, *Cultural Globalization: A User's Guide*, Malden (MA), Blackwell, 2008; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009; Paul Jay, *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*, Ithaca (NY), Cornell U.P., 2010; Laurent Martin & François Chaubet, *Histoire des relations culturelles dans le monde contemporain*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, DOI: 10.3917/arco.chaub.2011.01.

19. J. C. E. Gienow-Hecht (ed.), *Culture And International History*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

20. Iriye, *Global and transnational history*, *op. cit.*, p. 8 and 48.

21. To cite just a few works, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard U.P., 1993; Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s*, Washington (DC), Smithsonian, 1997; Margaret Cohen & Carolyn Dever (eds.), *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel*, Princeton U.P., 2002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fgx2r (last accessed 7/11/2020); Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard U.P., 2004; Rob Kroes & Robert W. Rydell, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: the Americanization of the World, 1869-1922*, Chicago (IL), Chicago U.P., 2005; Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*, Princeton, Princeton U.P., 2010, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sh8v (last accessed 7/11/2020), and chapter 8 ("How Culture Travelled: Going Abroad, c. 1865–1914") of *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789*, New York, Palgrave, McMillan, 2015; Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920*, Chicago, Chicago U.P., 2009.

Recovering, however, the precise circulation of popular culture has not received the same kind of scrutiny as forms of higher culture for two kinds of – symmetrical – reasons. Certain periods (the Cold War) and forms of popular culture (jazz and rock) have indeed inspired detailed and rich studies.[22] Most often, however, the circulation of items of popular culture has been taken for granted or not been studied on its own terms. Among factors, the diversity of the US population and culture, the increasing role of the US superpower in the world economy and diplomacy, and finally the extended availability of mass-produced cultural items, have often led scholars to see the circulation of popular culture as a byproduct of globalization and capitalism, i.e. the Americanization of the world. Seen from above, the circulation of popular culture seemed almost automatic and disappeared behind the generality of the process, as this quotation by Richard Pells suggests:

> It is precisely these foreign influences that have made America's culture so popular for so long in so many places. American culture spread throughout the world because it has habitually drawn on foreign styles and ideas. Americans have then reassembled and repackaged the cultural products they received from abroad, and retransmitted them to the rest of the planet. In effect, Americans have specialized in selling the fantasies and folklore of other people back to them. This is why a global mass culture has come to be identified, however simplistically, with the United States.[23]

Conversely, when considering popular culture, other scholars, working notably in the fields of social history or 19th century cultural history, often embarked, according to Jessica Gienow-Hecht, in an "ongoing search for a distinctively American culture." Discarding cultural imports as attempts made by the American social elite to merely imitate European forms of high-culture, they thereby proceeded to uncover what they defined as a "genuinely American culture": the "richness of a seemingly independent mass culture."[24]

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22. Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, California U.P., 2000, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnxgk (last accessed 7/11/2020); Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany*, New York, Oxford U.P., 1992; Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf, Chapel Hill, North Carolina U.P., 1994; Kasper Maase, *Bravo America: Erkundigungen zur Jugendkultur in der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren*, Hamburg, Junius, 1992; Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, California U.P., 1999, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppwsw (last accessed 7/11/2020).
23. Richard Pells, "From modernism to the movies: The globalization of American culture in the twentieth century", *European Journal of American Culture*, 23 (2), 2004, DOI: 10.1386/ejac.23.2.143/0, p. 143-155, p. 144.
24. J. C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

> As a result, the story of Europe's cultural expansion in the United States remains untold, […] many historians have been reluctant to recast the nation's history in a multinational context where the United States appears as just one among many actors.[25]

This volume is therefore both ambitious and limited in its approach. It does not pretend to offer a new theory or methodology of intercultural transfers at the global level.[26] The focus is narrowed to the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the US. Popular culture is approached through a non-essentialist perspective that goes back at least to Stuart Hall[27] and makes popular culture a "contested terrain", a site of cultural negotiations and conflicts, the result of a never-ended process.[28] Our goal in this respect is to weave together a constantly shifting object of study and various and sometimes diverging streams of research: cultural history and the study of popular culture, the history of nations and global history, immigration, diaspora or ethnic studies and the study of circulating commercial products; the study of cinema, music, television and the internet. By taking into account the international context of cultural nation-building, the volume is an attempt to contribute to a renewed understanding of how the circulation of goods and people reached a momentum at the same time as states were engaged in an-going process of nation-building-deconstructing-and-redefining, in the 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries.[29]

In his most recent study, Christopher Dowd chose, for example, to focus "on the intersection between the assimilation of the Irish into American life and the emergence of an American popular culture", at the turn of the 20th century. In this respect the contribution of popular culture to the shaping of Irish-American identity has, according to Dowd, been neglected. "Often scholarship in the fields of Irish studies and ethnic studies undervalues or ignores entirely popular culture texts and focuses instead on texts considered more serious or literary. The attention paid to

25. *Ibid*., p. 7.
26. For such attempts see Th. Adam, art. cit. and G. Lingelbach, art. cit.
27. Hall famously summarized the problematic definition of popular culture: "This year's radical symbol or slogan will be neutralised into next year's fashion; the year after, it will be the object of a profound cultural nostalgia. Today's rebel folksinger ends up, tomorrow, on the cover of the *Observer* color magazine. The meaning of a cultural symbol is given in part by the social field into which it is incorporated, the practices with which it articulates and is made to resonate. What matters is *not* the intrinsic or historically fixed objects of culture, but the state of play in cultural relations." (S. Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular" (1981), in John Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, London, Pearson Prentice Hall, 1998, p. 442-453, p. 449).
28. See Hall, art. cit.; Todd Gitlin, "Television's Screens: Hegemony in Transition" (1981), in Donald Lazere (ed.), *American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives*, Berkeley, California U.P., 1987, p. 240-265; Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, New York, Verso, 1987; LeRoy Ashby, "Not Necessarily Swill Time: Popular Culture and American History", *OAH Magazine of History*, 24 (2), 2010, DOI: 10.1093/maghis/24.2.7, p. 7-9
29. Blaise Wilfert-Portal, "L'histoire culturelle de l'Europe d'un point de vue transnational", *Revue Sciences/Lettres*, 1, 2013, DOI: 10.4000/rsl.279, p. 2-3.

'high art,' while important, leaves unconsidered the significance of 'low art.' Commercial publications and entertainment affected the daily lives of Americans more frequently and consistently, and perhaps more substantively, than many more highly regarded works of cultural note".[30] We could add that ethnic identities as well as national cultures are always in flux and have been continuously transformed by the cultural exchanges between American, Irish American and Irish individuals, groups and institutions, as the surge in Irish immigration in the 1980s showed.[31] In this respect, the long-lasting singularity of exchanges between the US and Ireland puts the current process of cultural globalization into perspective and calls for it to be questioned.

The Green Atlantic: the Long History of Cultural Exchanges between Ireland and the US

From the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries, Irish people crossed the Atlantic Ocean as colonists, soldiers, indentured servants, farmers, art labourers, priests, or exiles. Exchanges between Ireland and the United States go back to pre-revolutionary times, and the Irish have represented one of the most significant ethnic groups in America, particularly since the early decades of the nineteenth century; between 1820 and 1840, one-third of all immigrants to the United States came from Ireland. This has left long-lasting marks in American culture: many Americans choose to recognize their Irish ancestry as essential to their identity- today some 45 million Americans claim "Irish" as their primary ethnicity. Popular culture in particular, as Christopher Dowd has remarked in his recent book, "has provided opportunities for Irish-Americans (...)", adding that it also proved dangerous in some aspects, "as a powerful vehicle for disseminating and reinforcing ethnic stereotypes"[32]. Conversely, the long tradition of emigration to the USA has in return forged part of Irish identity, and according to David Gleeson, "a transnational perspective is still important for understanding Ireland and its people, both at home and those who left."[33]

Contrary to preconceived ideas about Irish emigrants being for the most part Catholics, the first waves of Irish migrants were for the greatest part Ulster Presbyterians who had grown dissatisfied with their economic

30. Christopher Dowd, *The Irish and the Origins of American Popular Culture*, New York, Routledge, 2018, p. 1.
31. See Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History*, New York, Longman, 2000.
32. Christopher Dowd, *The Irish and the Origins of American popular Culture*, London, Routledge, 2018, p. 4.
33. David T. Gleeson (ed.), *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, Columbia, South Carolina U.P., 2010, p. 7.

and social situation at home, such as disastrous harvests and higher rents; they were also barred from a number of civil and military offices. In 1700-1776 at least 200,000 left Ulster. Convinced that "God had appoynted a Country for them to Dwell in", they left Ireland westward, looking back to it as a mere intermediate stage in their lives or even as a springboard to their "land of Canaan."[34]

The American revolution had an enormous influence on the course of events in Ireland. As reported by historian Kerby A. Miller, "Dublin and Belfast printers began to publish copies of the American state constitution and other American texts"[35]. The Protestant Patriot leader Henry Grattan, who fought for and obtained Irish parliamentary independence from Westminster in 1782, drew analogies between England's oppression of America and the way the English controlled Irish economic and political life. The writings of John Adams and Thomas Paine were familiar to those who wished to free Ireland of the oppressive connection with England. Later, in the 1790s, the more radical United Irishmen – who organized a failed uprising with the help of the French navy – found inspiration in the French revolution but also paid tribute to Washington and his allies, as evidenced by this refrain quoted by Miller:

> "What have you got in your hand?
> –A green bough. Where did it first grow?
> –In America. Where did it bud?
> –In France. Where are you going to plant it?
> –In the Crown of Great Britain."[36]

Even though Miller in *Emigrants and Exiles*, one of the best accounts of Irish mass migration and of Irish American history, demonstrates that there were poor Catholic Irish peasants emigrating to the US before the Famine, it was of course the tragedy of the Great Famine due to the potato blight which created an unprecedented movement of Irish population towards Britain, the United States, Canada and extended as far as Australia. For most of the nineteenth century, emigration as a proportion of population was higher in Ireland than in any other European country, and no other country experienced such sustained depopulation in that period. Between 1845 and 1855, almost 1.5 million Irish people sailed to the United States. In the century after 1820 almost 5 million Irish people emigrated to the United States alone.

34. Quoted in Kerby A. Miller *et al.*, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815*, New York, Oxford U.P., 2003, p. 6.
35. Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles. Ireland and the Exodus to North America*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1985, p. 182.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

The Irish nationalists were quick to explain this exodus by the cruelty of Protestant landlords and the murderous indifference of the British government to the sufferings of the Irish, if not its genocidal intentions: the leader of the Young Ireland movement John Mitchel (1815–75), himself transplanted to the US, famously declared that "The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the Famine."[37]

As a result, Miller explains how Irish emigration came to be seen, on both sides of the Atlantic, as forced exile and banishment rather than as a quest for opportunity and self-improvement, contrary to what had been the case for the Presbyterian emigrants from Ulster. Migration was thus endowed with cultural as well as social and political traits and values. Migrants carried with them to the "New World" various forms of culture and interpreted migration in cultural terms, as the letters and memoirs studied by Miller indicate.[38]

From their beginnings in the New World onwards, most Irish emigrants and their descendants would therefore embrace the nationalist cause, their resentment at having been forced to leave home fuelled by all the hardships, the poverty and the hostility they met with in the host country. Indeed, as Kerby A. Miller reports it, "Irish emigrants were disproportionately concentrated in the lowest paid, least-skilled, and most dangerous and insecure employment".[39] Many Irishmen found employment in canal, railroad or building construction, or as dock labourers. As their numbers swelled, the Irish, like other groups, concentrated in specifically urban occupations – for men, municipal positions such as construction workers, police, and firefighters; for women – who, unlike virtually all other immigrant groups, outnumbered men – overwhelmingly domestic service. As unskilled, poorly-paid workers, the Irish were in competition with free Blacks or even slave labour for the lowest, dirtiest jobs, hence the often suggested parallel established and spread mostly by Irish-American nationalists, between the fate of the Irish and that of the Afro-Americans. Jennifer Nugent Duffy argues that as nineteenth-century Irish immigrants responded to the challenges of life in the United States, they sought to prove their "racial fitness" by adhering to white, middle-class standards of hard work, family, faith, and patriotism, equating these ideals with being "good Paddies".[40] In his well-known book, *How the Irish Became White* (1995), Noel Ignatiev raises the question why the Irish, many of whom

37. John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (1861), Patrick Maume (ed.), Dublin, UCD, 2005, p. 219.
38. For a recent attempt by Kerby A. Miller to analyse Irish emigration culturally, see "Emigrants and Exiles: Irish Cultures and Irish Emigration to North America", in *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration*, Dublin, Field Day, 2008, p. 7-43.
39. K. A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
40. Jennifer Nugent Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy? Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity*, New York, New York U.P., 2014, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg7c7 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 4.

came to America to escape English oppression or poverty and penury, did not make common cause with African Americans, when they were caricatured by *Punch* magazine as the "simian-featured" Irish, and were barred from employment by notices claiming "No Blacks. No Dogs. No Irish".[41] But the Irish were in competition with African Americans for housing, employment, and the tolerance of their neighbours. They knew that every advantage lay in identifying with the white race and readily joined the oppressor class, even though Irish immigrants to the US were undoubtedly confronted to discrimination; however some historians argue that anti-Irish prejudice was more likely to be connected with their putatively "pre-modern" behaviour, their Catholicism, and their supposed threat to the ideas of American republicanism, than with their place on a socially constructed racial hierarchy[42].

As a matter of fact, one consequence of post-famine emigration to the US was that Irish identity came to be identified with Catholicism, whereas Irish America was far more Protestant than Catholic until at least the 1840s. From Know Nothings and "No Irish Need Apply" to fear-mongering against Al Smith and John Kennedy, American Protestants threw every kind of obstacle in the way of the Irish Catholic rise to power, prosperity, and respectability, planting deep feelings of insecurity and inferiority in many Irish-Americans. But at the turn of the twentieth century, as Christopher Dowd argues, "Irish-Americans became an increasingly assimilated group with new social, political, economic, and cultural opportunities open to them"[43], even though negative views of the Irish persisted until late in the twentieth century, as Jennifer Nugent Duffy argues. In her opinion, a consistent racial stereotype of the Irish lingered long after the disappearance of nineteenth century tropes of the assimilated, acquiescent, fully white "Good Paddy" and the negative "Bad Paddy" prone to drink and laziness- propagated by popular culture through the most frequent stereotypes of the "soldier, clown, womanizer and drunkard" as noted by Peter Bischof and Peter Noçon[44]. One of the most famous stereotypes was that of the "Stage Irishman" of nineteenth-century comedy: "He has an atrocious Irish brogue, perpetual jokes, blunders and bulls in speaking and never fails to utter, by way of Hibernian seasoning, some wild screech or oath of Gaelic origin at every third word: he has an unsurpassable gift of blarney and cadges for tips and free drinks. His hair is of a fiery red: he is rosy-cheeked, massive, and whiskey loving [...]."[45]

41. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became white*, New York, Routledge, 1995.
42. Richard Jensen, "'No Irish Need Apply': A Myth of Victimization", *Journal of Social History*, 36 (2), 2002, DOI: 10.1353/jsh.2003.0021, p. 405-429, p. 425-426.
43. C. Dowd, *The Irish and the Origins of American Popular Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
44. Peter Bischof & Peter Noçon, "The Image of the Irish in American Popular Culture", in Wolfgang Zach & Heinz Kosok (eds.), *Literary Interrelation: England, Ireland, and the World*, Tubingen, Narr, 1987, p. 61-62.
45. Quoted in Maureen Waters, *Comic Irishman*, Albany (NY), New York State U.P., 1984, p. 41.

In the early 1870s however, a small bourgeoisie began to emerge in Irish-America, symbolized by the phrase "lace-curtain" Irish, implying a certain conservatism and search for respectability. In order to assert their rights, the new Irish immigrants resorted to three main institutions: the Democratic Party, the Catholic Church, and Irish-American nationalism. The Irish-Americans also gathered in various fraternal associations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Catholic Abstinence Union, the Irish Catholic Benevolent Union, and others with more cultural pursuits such as the American Irish Historical society and the Gaelic League of America. Emigrants grew proud of their public celebrations, such as the St Patrick's Parades. According to Kerby Miller, "By 1923 (…) the long, dark winter of Irish exile in America was over."[46]. No longer could Irishness be seen as a negative marker in modern American society: it became "absorbed into a homogenous white culture"[47], just one piece in the 'salad bowl' of American society. An "almost complete assimilation of the Irish into mainstream American culture" took place. As Margaret Hallissy explains, "No longer worried about being treated badly in non-sectarian institutions, no longer as distrustful of the 'others' as their parents and teachers raised them to be, Irish-Americans (..) typically feel little need to stress their American identity; born and raised in New York or Boston or Chicago, what else can they be but American? This leaves them free to explore the other side of the hyphen, the Irish side".[48]

The flow of Irish emigration to the US was recorded by popular cultural practices both at home and in the host country from the start. For instance, the leave-taking of a person bound for America was embedded in the ritual of departure referred to as "the American wake", a custom which has its origin in the Irish wake, whereby neighbours and friends sit up overnight in the company of a corpse before burial. Within a rural Irish Catholic community, the American Wake was also a farewell for good in a religious sense, as a family member's going to America was implicitly accompanied with fears of their losing their immortal souls through possible conversion to Protestantism. Those who had gone abroad flooded Ireland with letters which made the US look very familiar to those who had stayed behind; and the most important source of information about America for the Irish was "the American letter," a ubiquitous feature of Irish village life from the eighteenth century onwards and a staple of sentimental fiction and illustrations. Irish-Americans did not only send home enormous sums of money but also many presents such as clothes, newspapers, glossy magazines or mail-order catalogues, which became

46. K. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, *op. cit.*, p. 555.
47. Christopher Dowd, *The Construction of Irish Identity in American Literature*, New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 4.
48. Margaret Hallissy, *Reading Irish-American Fiction: the Hyphenated Self*, London, Palgrave, p. 28.

major sources of cultural nourishment for impoverished, deprived rural communities.

The great majority of post-Famine emigrants stayed emotionally attached to the Emerald Isle, which was given expression, for instance, in many a folk song or hymn. Typical of many of these song texts is the depiction of Ireland as an originally ideal or even virginal place, which was destroyed by the Anglo-Norman and English invaders, with its original population driven into starvation or exile. One of the best-known Irish traditional songs, "Skibbereen", can be regarded as providing a pattern underlying many other texts which deal with Irish (Catholic) emigration, be they traditional ones or clad in modern folk or folk rock music:

> O father dear I oft times heard you talk of Erin's isle,
> her lofty scene and her valleys green, her mountains rude and wild.
> They say it is a pretty place wherein a prince might dwell.
> Oh why did you abandon it, the reason to me tell?
> Oh on I loved my native land with energy and pride,
> 'til blight came over on my crops, my sheep and cattle died.
> The rent and taxes were so high, I could not them redeem,
> and that's the cruel reason why I left old Skibbereen.
> Oh it's well I do remember that bleak December day,
> the landlord and the sheriff came to drive us all away.
> They set my roof on fire with their demon yellow spleen,
> and that's another reason why I left old Skibbereen.
> Your mother too, God rest her soul, fell on the snowy ground,
> she fainted in her anguish seeing the desolation round.
> She never rose but passed away from life to mortal dream,
> she found a quiet grave, my boy, in dear old Skibbereen.
> And you were only two years old and feeble was your frame,
> I wrapped you in my co' ta mo' r in the dead of night unseen, I heaved
> a sigh and said goodbye to dear old Skibbereen.[49]

For decades, innumerable songs expressed the migrant's nostalgia of the homeland, in evocative titles such as "Come Back to Erin," "Galway Bay," and "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen". As late as in the 1950s, the famous American crooner Bill Crosby popularized "Dear Old Donegal," a song which promised a strong welcome for the emigrant from "all his friends and neighbours," as well as from his family and "the girl he used to swing down on the garden gate" when he returns.

49. *Revenge for Skibbereen* is defined as an Irish rebel song; first published in *The Irish singer's own book* accredited to Patrick Carpenter a poet native of Skibbereen, in Boston 1880. It was recomposed in June 1889 by May Ostlere, a popular English writer and composer of the time. Source: http://mhm.hud.ac.uk/digitalvictorians/revenge-for-skibbereen (last accessed 18/04/2019).

The relationship between the Irish at home and Irish-Americans became more and more complex through time; as Irish songwriter Bob Geldof put it, "I am Irish and Irish Americans always irritate me. They pretend to be Irish when in fact they are Americans through and through".[50] Irish-American identity was influenced not only by literary giants such as Eugene O'Neill or Francis Scott Fitzgerald but by works found in popular entertainment that reinforced and reproduced ethnic characterizations. American popular culture became impregnated with Irish influence, including in areas such as the American South. An example of this is Margaret Mitchell's 1936 *Gone With the Wind* and its character of Scarlett O'Hara, which according to James P. Cantrell shows that "the Irish have been instrumental in the development of Southern culture."[51] Christopher Dowd for his part has studied the image of the Irish in pulp magazines, stating that "Irish characters dominate much of the fictional terrain created by pulp authors of all backgrounds, even those without Irish heritage."[52] By the end of the Second World War, as Stephanie Rains puts it, "a substantial Irish-American population had no first-hand experience of Ireland, and in particular no experience of post-independence Ireland."[53] Margaret Hallissy for her part claims that what the Americans know about Ireland in the twentieth century is "partial, superficial, fragmentary; they bring to their encounters with Ireland and the Irish bits and pieces of the kind of Irish lore that crossed the Atlantic, the stories the emigrants told, the songs they sang". This led to, as Rains argues, "the production and circulation of narratives and images", among which "the two principal means by which a fabricated image of Ireland became familiar to Irish-Americans and ricocheted on the self-representation of Ireland itself have been film and tourism". [54] American films about Ireland and/or shot in Ireland were produced as early as 1910:*The Lad from Old Ireland*, 1910, *The Colleen Bawn*, 1911, *Far From Erin's Isle*, 1912[55], preceded such box-office hits as *The Irish in US*, 1935, *Angels with Dirty Faces,* 1938, *The Flying Irishman*, 1939, *The Sullivans*, 1944, or again *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, 1949 starring James Cagney. But a quintessential example of the criss-crossing between the constructed image of Ireland meant to feed the nostalgia of those Americans with Irish ancestry and the way the Irish look upon themselves was John Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952), in which John Wayne as Sean Thornton returns to his homeland to find peace and salvation after leaving behind the merciless American city. The film has served as

50. Quoted by Margaret Hallissy, *op. cit.*, epigraph.
51. James P. Cantrell, "Secularization of Irishness in the American South: A Reading of the Novels of Ellen Glasgow and Margaret Mitchell" in Patrick O' Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity,* London/New York, Leicester U.P., 1996, p. 107.
52. C. Dowd, *The Irish and the Origins of American Popular Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
53. Stephanie Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture 1945-2000*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2007, p. 69.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*; Kevin Rockett, "The Irish Migrant and Film", in Ruth Barton (ed.), *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2009, p. 17-44, p. 18-28.

a template for countless similar stories in which the Irish are presented as old-fashioned, anti-materialistic, religious, and, most importantly, communal people who appreciate family and friends far more than money and a career – the antithesis of modernity. What is more, *The Quiet Man* illustrates the theme of the Returned Emigrant, which both Stephanie Rains and Ann Schofield view as an "increasingly prevalent theme in Irish-American culture"[56]. The figure of the Returned Yank offered by Ford's movie represents, according to Ann Schofield, "a site where the tension between modernity and tradition, the politics of nostalgia, and the deep ambivalence the Irish felt about migration reside"[57].

When it was first issued, *The Quiet Man* boosted tourism to Ireland significantly. Since then, Irish stereotypes of traditionalism, conservatism, and communality have continued to underlie much of Irish-American popular culture, either to exploit, criticize, or ridicule them, but also to stimulate cultural and "roots" tourism. Since the late 1950s and its turn towards a market economy, rather than the protectionism which was proper to the immediate post-Independence era, the Irish state has given a critical importance to the development of a tourist industry. Eager to welcome visitors, especially those with an Irish ancestry with well-lined pockets, tourist board promotional material constructed an idyllic Ireland filled with pastel-colored villages and friendly natives, such as were exemplified by John Hinde's postcards of Ireland. According to Stephanie Rains, tourism played a crucial role in modifying what she calls the "modern relationships and identity constructions negotiated between Irish and Irish-American culture."[58] Access to the "home" culture was now possible, she argues, through purchasing it as a commodity, what is more sold by Ireland itself, a process which entailed a certain loss of authenticity. In her opinion, "the 1990s were characterized by an unprecedented surge of interest in Irish culture around the world", of which the most telling example was the dance show *Riverdance*, created by two Irish-American dancers.[59] Numerous commentators of the show have underlined how it not only celebrated the "cross-pollination" between Irish and American cultures, but also displayed all the effects of the commodification of a supposedly authentic, local culture having undergone a process of globalization which precisely deprived it of its authenticity.[60] Alexandra Schein has also noted "a remarkable increase in movies and TV shows featuring Irish-American characters" in the recent past, mentioning movies like 2006 *The Departed* directed by Martin Scorsese or 2007 *P.S. I Love You* based on a

56. S. Rains, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
57. Ann Schofield, "The Returned Yank as Site of Memory in Irish Popular Culture", *Journal of American Studies*, 47 (4), 2013, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24485880 (last accessed 4/11/2020), p. 1175-1195.
58. S. Rains, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
60. Thomas Sullivan, "'Hip to be Irish': ethnicity and Bourdieu's 'Forms of Capital'", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39 (10), 2016, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2016.1142103, p. 1773-1790.

book by Cecelia Ahern, as well as TV shows like 2004-2011 FX *Rescue Me* or HBO's *The Wire* (2002-2008). She remarks that "the popularity of such texts and the conspicuousness of Irish-American characters bespeaks the attraction of Irish-American ethnicity on screen"[61].

This trend was also theorized by Diane Negra in her 2006 collection of essays *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity and Popular Culture*. Negra speaks in her introduction of the "everything and nothing" status of Irishness in early-twenty-first century popular culture, and argues that this identity has become "particularly performative and mobile"[62]. She writes of what she calls the "discursive currency" of Irishness.[63] Her collection of essays was published at a time when Ireland had become a land of hyperbole: it was the most globalized society in the world (according to the journal *Foreign Affairs*); per capita, it had one of highest GDPs in the world, the fastest growth rate in Europe, and so on. The contributors to *The Irish In Us* explore the contradictory complexity of Irishness across an impressive range of cultural practices, from the differing markets for Irish-themed products in the US retail sector (from middle America to white supremacists), to the popularity of Garth Brooks in Ireland, to the significance of red hair. Stephanie Rains for her part analyses the business of genealogical research, which, she argues, can provide us with a way 'of rethinking identity as neither fixed nor essential, nor endlessly fluid and freely self-fashioned, and an always incomplete inventory of the self'[64]. As Chris Morash puts it in his review of Negra's book, "Irish culture is now inextricably – for better or for worse – embedded in global networks of information and mass media, images and sounds. As such, it will not revert back to the more insular culture of earlier decades, which made it possible to sustain an essentialist understanding of identity."[65]

Taking into account the themes and topics dealt with by the contributors in this volume, we have divided the chapters under three headings, the first of which is rather expected because often associated with Irish culture as stated above: "the Circulation of Sounds and Music", the second, "the Circulation of Images" being more related to painting, cinema and television, and the last one, "the Circulation of Memes", opening up a discussion on the newest forms of circulation made possible by the social media.

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61. Alexandra Schein, "A Spiritual Homecoming: Ireland in Contemporary Movies about Irish Americans", *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies*, 12, 2011, DOI: 10.5283/copas.140.
62. Diane Negra, *The Irish in Us. Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture*. Durham/London, Duke U.P., 2006, p. 2.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 1, 6.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 156-157.
65. Chris Morash, Review of *The Irish in Us: Irishness, performativity, and popular culture* in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 29 (3), 2009, DOI: 10.1080/01439680903115903, p. 411-413.

The Circulation of Sounds and Music

Crossing the Atlantic was sometimes a means for an Irish artist to meet a popularity which was more difficult to obtain at home or in Great Britain, thanks to the force of the almost exotic attraction which added extra value to an Irishness that was either real or simply felt. Thus the influence of Dublin born, Anglo-Irish Protestant composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) on the image of Ireland in America, even though rather elusive, as Adele Commins shows it in her chapter, is mostly due to his tactfully naming one of his major works "The Irish Symphony", which earned him a wide reputation as a composer of orchestral music that draws on Irish folk melodies and themes of Irishness. Described by some as "an enthusiastic Irishman", whose many compositions often included reference to his Irish homeland, Stanford was met with a much more favourable reception in America than in England – even if he never actually travelled there. What the American audiences and critics liked in his compositions, Commins argues, was clearly the sense of Irishness they felt in them; although this "lighter" music was precisely what rebuked and annoyed the English, there was a market for it in America. Stanford's music, whose one of the most ferocious critic, Commins explains, was Anglo-Irishman George Bernard Shaw, was popular and critically well received in America, once removed from the entangled Anglo-Irish identity politics of the time. This particular case shows two interesting points for our perspective. First, the circulation across the Atlantic of a given product could manifestly alter its status in the hierarchical culture of the time. Second, the music of Stanford is a good example of how inclusion in what we could define as middlebrow culture (although Commins does not explicitly use the term), especially when connected to a confused national identity (Irish, English?) could at times function as an autonomous cultural sphere or as a channel between highbrow culture and more popular forms of culture.[66]

The issue of the commodification of Ireland's local culture, especially regarding its circulation in the US, and whether this entailed a loss of authenticity or not, is central to Daithí Kearney's analysis of the 1976 tour to America of the traditional Irish step dance company and National Folk Theatre of Ireland, Siamsa Tíre. The chapter aims at highlighting "the importance of the company in understanding music, tourism and glocalisation in Ireland", even though the company never reached the fame of *Riverdance*. Kearney quotes Moloney's argument that: "Irish step dancing has, for over a century, been one of the most visible aspects of Irish

66. On the use of the "middlebrow" category, see Lise Jaillant, *Modernism, Middlebrow and the Literary Canon: The Modern Library Series, 1917–1955*, London, Pickering, 2014, "Introduction: 'Good Taste in Reading'", p. 1-18.

culture in Ireland and one of the most consciously projected forms of ethnic cultural identity among the Irish in America". Kearney analyses the various reasons for the success and popularity of the tour: he mentions the simplicity of the narrative, the extra touch of authenticity added by the presence of reputed dancers, the use of traditional dance music and airs. One of his conclusions is that "*Siamsa* is undoubtedly a romanticised representation of Irish country life", but that it "undoubtedly played a role in the reimagining of Irish identity in America and a re-evaluation of Irish folk culture in Ireland in the 1970s".

Timothy Heron's chapter deals with an entirely different type of music which did not care much for orthodoxies– or nationalist feelings for that matter: punk rock music. It also shows the influence of American popular culture in Ireland. Heron's work highlights the development of a local branch of punk in Northern Ireland at the period of the Troubles, with many young people starting bands such as the Undertones, RUDI, Stiff Little Fingers, the Outcasts among others, and he means to show here that "Northern Ireland punk rock was significantly influenced by the USA and more precisely by the American teenage myth". American popular music in particular was an object of mass consumption which could take on different meanings when experienced and produced in a very different cultural context. Contrary to their English counterparts, in Northern Ireland punk groups seemed to embrace rather than reject Americanness. Thematically, Northern punk groups seemed preoccupied by teenage themes, the most famous example being undoubtedly the Undertones' hit song "Teenage Kicks". By giving teenage songs a punk treatment, by parodying and performing them in a context which contrasted so sharply with the mythical suburban America which had inspired them, Northern Irish punks created a dissonance, a sense of dislocation: "They knew that this was something out of their reach, so in their songs they imagined a teenage world which was both familiar and foreign, both real and imaginary, a liminal space where they could concentrate on being teenagers and deal with adolescent problems, such as crushes, sex and growing up."

The Circulation of Images

If Northern Irish punks fed on and distorted the syrupy images of adolescent love afforded by American pop music, the 19th century painter Erskine Nicol for his part can be said to have peddled sentimental images of the Irish to the American public, as he made the depicting of stereotyped Irishness his hallmark. Amélie Dochy has attempted to retrace how Nicol's paintings crossed the Atlantic, and she found that it was mainly British art dealers who brought them over. In her chapter she also accounts

for the success of such paintings as *Paying the Rent* – bought by William H. Vanderbilt of New York, who later had it exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art between 1886 and 1903 – by the fact that it illustrates the difficult relationships between Irish tenants and their Anglo-Irish landlords. That subject would have been very popular with Irish emigrants to the US, many of whom held the Protestant landlords responsible for the tragedy of the Famine. Dochy imagines in this regard that a number of Irish emigrants who lived in the area of Philadelphia must have visited the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 (for which entrance the price to pay was only 50 cents), and seen Nicol's paintings exhibited there. The circulation of Nicol's paintings through the American continent was also facilitated by their reproduction as coloured lithographs which could be purchased at affordable prices. As many as four thousand copies of the same picture could be reproduced thanks to that technique. Contrary to what happened in Britain where his paintings rather served to entertain a stereotyped, degrading view of the Irish, according to Dochy the reception of Nicol's paintings in the US "tended to enhance Irish grievances through the motifs of rural life and its social tensions, poverty caused by colonisation and emigration."

The circulation of stereotypes about the Irish is also the underlying assumption about the recent American TV drama *Ray Donovan*, broadcast by Showtime since 2013, and which constitutes a new avatar of the "Boston crime drama", which according to blogger Mark Ryall "utilises Irishness as a morally corrupt representation of white ethnicity"[67]. As seen through the eyes of a French specialist of Irish Studies, several markers of Irish ethnic stereotyping may be noted in the series, such as the presence of a bragging, irresponsible, and altogether destructive father; the lingering presence in her sons' memories of a dead mother who was obviously victimized by her husband, and of a drug-addict sister who finally committed suicide. Typical of an Irish background is also the centrality of family in the protagonists' lives, as well as the source of the traumas each of them suffers from. Even though Ray and his two brothers have not quite caved in to the temptation of a criminal life as a means of survival, violence and deviancy are part of their daily experience. This is especially true of the main character Ray, who is employed as a "fixer" by a Hollywood lawyer, that is to say is paid to make use of his muscle to set things straight in his rich and famous clients' lives. However, the job is one way for Ray to provide for his family, thus responding to the model of the good, hard-working Paddy so often depicted in movies and television. The Good Paddy/Bad Paddy duality inherent to the stereotype of Irishness such as it circulates in American popular culture, is given a new twist in *Ray Donovan* by the reference to the sex scandals recently revealed within the Catholic

67. http://whybother.ie/the-departed-and-the-boston-crime-drama (last accessed 5/09/2019).

Church, the Donovan brothers having been abused by a priest when they were boys. The traditional portrayal of the Irish as being morally corrupt if only because of their Catholicism is thus confirmed, together with the idea that Irish ethnicity is a shameful burden which needs to be cleansed and perhaps altogether eliminated. The series plays with the audience's ambivalent sympathies for the cunning charm of the devious, destructive father or for his brutish, taciturn, but caring son – both parts being played by non-Irish actors, thus casting even greater doubt on the authenticity of the Irish experience represented.

American television and film have made great use of Irishness in the past and continue to do so, but Irish television has also learned from US popular culture, as evidenced by the very successful RTÈ series *Love/Hate* (2010-2014) which was often compared to David Simon's HBO series *The Wire* (2002-2008). But in her paper Flore Coulouma tackles the influence of American culture from a wider perspective, which is that of globalization, especially applied to urban landscapes: she claims that the Irish series, located in Dublin in the same way as *The Wire* is firmly rooted in Baltimore, foregrounds the growing anonymity of the neo-liberal, post-industrial, globalized city, where all signs of connection with the natural world have been gradually erased, and where violence prevails. *Love/Hate* is unusual in that it turns Dublin and its suburbia into "a generic space of global violence": the visual portrait of the city the series affords is an integral part of its narrative of urban violence. Coulouma discusses the notions of home and place, arguing that even though the series is indeed located in Dublin, its main themes are placelessness and uprootedness, using the Irish capital as an emblem for the generic neo-liberal Western big city, drawing another parallel with the American series *The Wire* in which drug-trafficking is set up against the ideology of global, late capitalism. According to Coulouma, "*Love/Hate* shares *The Wire*'s realistic aesthetics, and most importantly, its pessimistic representation of the city as both the cause and symptom of a self-destructive society".

The Circulation of Memes

The circulation of images, ideas, stereotypes and representations has been given an unprecedented dimension by the development of the social media: according to French philosopher Michel Serres, the development of Internet and of social media has introduced a third anthropological era, after the invention of writing and that of printing. Two of the contributors in this volume, Anne Goarzin and Robert Johnson, examine some aspects of these new forms of circulation between Ireland and the United States, under the shape of what is now called "memes". But Anne Goarzin

warns us that what is called the "new" media tends to convey the same type of images and representations of Ireland and the Irish as before. She also argues that the opposite binary notions of the near and the distant, the familiar and the unfamiliar, home and abroad, which underpinned the feelings of nostalgia expressed by the Irish who had emigrated to the USA, have now become blurred by the Internet which enables ideas, people and objects to be located nowhere in particular. Likewise, the reality of the world is receding behind its virtual representations, so that we are no longer able to apprehend it outside images. We have moved from a movement of circulation – of people, ideas, objects – to what Hito Steyel has called circulationism, which "is not about the art of making an image, but of post-producing, launching, and accelerating it". Goarzin proceeds to examine a number of "memes" circulating on the web and based on Irish characters or Irishisms, and to show that they continue to spread, albeit in an ironical way, the stereotypes attached to "Paddywhackery", even though they are sometimes circulated by the Irish themselves, who like to play with their image to the eyes of the others. This includes a photograph of the Obamas drinking beer in a pub during their visit to Ireland. This hint at the old cliché of the Irish being heavy drinkers is slightly allayed, Goarzin suggests, by the presence of Michelle Obama, which in her opinion, creates a feminized version of the relationship between Ireland and the US, which she also recognizes in a famous gif displaying a "cute cat" wearing an Irish hat. This "cutification" of Irishness", to use cultural critic Sianne Ngai's expression, is close to an "objectification", even though its repetition also makes it "suavely vacuous". The "circulationism" of images of Irishness today through the social media, in the shape of memes and gifs, therefore tends to stick to old images and stereotypes, even though rendered meaningless by their multiplication, and basically just meant to provide pleasure and fun.

Undoubtedly more problematic in the moral sense is the type of meme alluded to by Robert Johnson in his own chapter: what he calls the "meme of Irish slavery". He is referring to the idea, widely circulated on the World Wide Web, that the Irish were slaves in the same way as Africans were, an idea which as Johnson argues has been spread ever since the 17th century, in the aftermath of Cromwell's invasion of Ireland and the transportation of Irish rebels to Barbados but was given an unprecedented echo since it started circulating as meme on the social media. What makes the idea even more widely shared today, and the moral issues it entails more acute, is on the one hand, Johnson argues, the development of what is now called "public history" and on the other hand of course, the social media which multiply the opportunities for the meme to spread. Johnson discusses the reasons why the situation of the Irish, even though they were undoubtedly colonized and ill-treated by the British, can in no respect be compared to that of the Africans, for the mere reason that the enslavement

of Blacks was unique in the history of the Western world. Johnson also points at the tendency among Irish historians and politicians to present the Irish as "The Most Oppressed People in the World". Even though there is some benefit to draw from such a status, such as compassion and sympathy, this deprecatory self-image, Johnson argues, was in the past necessarily detrimental to the development of the country. Another thorny issue raised by this last chapter in the volume is the way the memes proliferating on the social media and conveying wrong, inaccurate, biased, and pernicious views of history can be stopped and contradicted. This shows the extent to which circulation does not necessarily entail better understanding and acceptance of who the Others are – as is evidenced by some of the chapters in this volume – but on the contrary participates to the growth and spread of stereotypes, racial antagonism, and heinous discourses: today, the idea of circulation is also synonymous with the spread of fake news, and the near impossibility of stopping them.

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Watchmen on the Walls of Music Across the Atlantic: Reception of Charles Villiers Stanford and his Music in the American Press

Dr Adèle Commins
Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland

Introduction

Irish born composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) is a central figure in the British Musical Renaissance. Often considered only in the context of his work in England, with occasional references to his Irish birthplace, the reception of Stanford's music in America provides fresh perspectives on the composer and his music. Such a study also highlights the circulation of culture between Ireland, England and the USA at the start of the twentieth century and the importance of national identity in a cosmopolitan society of many diasporas. Although he never visited America, the reception of Stanford's music and reviews in the American media highlight the cultural (mis)understanding that existed and the evolving identities in both American and British society at the turn of the twentieth century.

This article presents a brief introduction to Stanford and focuses on a proposed visit to America in 1914, the reception of some of his musical output as reflected in the media in America at the turn of the twentieth century and the significance of Stanford's national identity for American audiences. Two works are significant when considering the reception of Stanford's music in America: his comic opera *Shamus O'Brien* and the "Irish" Symphony. Stanford's "Irish" Symphony (1887) provides a significant case study for examining and understanding the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the USA during the *fin de siècle* with an

emphasis on constructing identities and negotiating Irishness in a post-colonial and diasporic context. For the purposes of this paper I have decided to omit an examination of *Shamus O'Brien*, although there is passing reference to this work and related source material.[1]

The methodology for this article primarily involves archival and newspaper research drawing upon a large collection of American newspapers. Such quotation from an extensive range of newspaper reviews allows for an evaluation of American musical tastes by assessing the opinions of the music critics of the time, while also providing a thorough review of the critical reception of Stanford's music in America. Newspapers, traditionally have been viewed as calendars, as windows or mirrors of society.[2] However, these views can often be biased. Music criticism was important in shaping musical history in the nineteenth century, and newspapers, pamphlets and journals were a central medium for the expression of artistic ideas with numerous music journalists giving clear and vivid accounts of musical events. Critics played a crucial role in the reception history of a composer and his music. In the case of Stanford's works considered herein, such an understanding must be developed utilising the journalist as "surrogate for actual attendance at performances".[3] Meirion Hughes has noted that critical opinions and journalistic opinion helped shape the opinions of the public.[4] The use of such a methodology is not without challenges. As noted by theatre critic Jocelyn Clarke, such reviews are not an exact science, are written in a short period of time for a particular audience and rarely reflect considered reflection.[5] Thus, an examination of this source material must be balanced with further musicological analysis through an examination of the score and, where possible, performances and recordings, all informed by the recent literature concerning Stanford,[6] the British Musical Renaissance,[7] and the performance of Western Art Music in

1. The study of the American reception of *Shamus O'Brien* goes beyond the scope of this article and will be the focus of a later article. Initial findings on the reception of *Shamus O'Brien* was the subject of a conference paper: Adèle Commins, "The Reception of Charles Villiers Stanford and his Music in America", Paper Read at the *14th Annual Conference of the Society for Musicology in Ireland*, St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Dublin, 2016.
2. Rosamond McGuinness, "How to Read a Newspapers", *Revue de Musicologie*, 84 (2), DOI: 10.2307/947379, 1998, p. 290.
3. Patrick Lonergan, "Druid Theatre's *Leenane Trilogy* on tour: 1996–2001", in Nicholas Grene & Chris Morash (eds.), *Irish Theatre on Tour: Irish Theatrical Diaspora Series,* Dublin, Carysfort, 2005, http://hdl.handle.net/10379/5445 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 208.
4. The term watchmen on the walls was first used by Fuller-Maitland to describe the role of the critic. See John Alexander Fuller-Maitland, *The Musician's Pilgrimage: A Study in Artistic Development*, London, Smith, Elder, & Co., 1899, p. x. It was subsequently taken up by Meirion Hughes in his study entitled *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press: 1850–1914: Watchmen of Music,* Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002.
5. Jocelyn Clarke, "(Un)Critical Conditions", in Eamonn Jordan (ed.), *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre*, Peter Lang, 2000.
6. Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2002; Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002; Adèle Commins, "From Child Prodigy to Conservative Professor?: Reception Issues of Charles Villiers Stanford", *Maynooth Musicology: Postgraduate Journal*, 1, http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/9455 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 28-58; and A. Commins, *op. cit*., 2012.
7. Meirion Hughes & Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music*, New York, Manchester U.P., 2001.

America at the turn of the twentieth century.[8] Despite the growing interest in Stanford scholarship, detailed accounts of Stanford and his music in America are limited. While acknowledging the potential bias of reviews, the coverage of performances of Stanford's music in America is important and relevant to Stanford scholars today. Newspaper reviews play an important role in the development of a narrative for a work's reception.[9] Therefore, the survey of newspaper coverage of Stanford facilitates a critical examination of performances of Stanford's music in America and helps ascertain the tastes of American audiences at that time, while also considering the cultural context.

Although there has been a renewed interest in Stanford and his music with notable studies completed in recent decades,[10] there has been an over reliance on perceptions of his music in the English press with some reference to European and Irish commentaries. While acknowledging that most performances of his music took place in England and that he was based in England, there is a need to consider reception of Stanford and his music in America in order to present a more full and accurate account of the reception of Stanford and his music on both sides of the Atlantic. Although Stanford never travelled to America, examinations of newspaper articles demonstrate a strong interest in his music with significant performances of his music undertaken in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Noteworthy themes are evident upon examination of the variety of writings in the American press, many of which lead back to considerations of his nationality or the perception of Irishness in some of his works.

There was a developing negativity towards Stanford's music in England from performers, conductors and the press in the late nineteenth century up until his death in 1924 and posthumously, and his music featured less regularly on concert programmes. In contrast, it is clear from the research presented in this article that Stanford's music was performed regularly and well received in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The late 1880s through to the 1920s witnessed

8. Catherine Ferris, 'The Use of Newspapers as a Source for Musicological Research: A Case Study of Dublin Musical Life 1840–1844', unpublished PhD, Maynooth, National University of Ireland, 2011 is a useful study on newspaper research (http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/2577, last accessed 7/11/2020).
9. Other writers have examined the role of newspapers in the reception history of a composer and their music. See for example Rachel Cowgill, '"Hence, base intruder, hence': Rejection and Assimilation in the Early English Reception of Mozart's Requiem", in Rachel Cowgill & Julian Rushton (eds.), *Europe, Empire and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, p. 9–28; and Leanne Langley, "Agency and Change: Berlioz in Britain, 1870–1920", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 132 (2), 2007, DOI: 10.1093/jrma/fkm008, p. 306–348.
10. J. Dibble, *op. cit.*; P. Rodmell, *op. cit.*; Adèle Commins, *Charles Villiers Stanford's Preludes for Piano op. 163 and op. 179: A Musicological Retrospective*, unpublished PhD, Maynooth, National University of Ireland, 2012, http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/6997 (last accessed 7/11/2020).

numerous references to Stanford's music in concert listings in America with both contrasting and similar perceptions of Stanford by American critics to their English peers. The first two decades of the twentieth century saw a real impetus in an increased presence of mentions of Stanford's music in the American press. Given that so much focus has been given to the role which Stanford and his music played in England there is a need to acknowledge the spread of his music across the Atlantic and recognise the importance placed on him as an Irish composer in America. Despite initial success with the performance of his "Irish" Symphony in England and across Europe, with favourable comments about many of his Irish infused compositions,[11] reception of these compositions, like many of his other works, did not continue in England at the turn of the century. Given the decline in interest in his music in England at that time it is worth turning our attention to American perceptions of his music as Stanford reflects the growing globalisation of music and transatlantic consumption of culture.

By stepping outside of the British and Irish cultural sphere, an examination of Stanford through an American perspective removes some of the political and colonial readings of his music but, as this paper demonstrates, the issue of a composers' identity remains central to the promotion and reception of much music in America.[12] This is not surprising given that it is a period when concerts of national music, featuring the work of composers such as the Czech Antonin *Dvořák* (1841–1904)[13] and Norwegian Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) are popular in an America still developing its own post-colonial identity. Indeed, highlighting Stanford's national identity, one writer in 1903 noted that 'Arthur Sullivan's nationalism is not as pronounced as is that of his colleague, Dr Stanford. The latter is an enthusiastic Irishman.'[14] Simultaneously, in theatre circles, discussions on the role of national theatres were taking place, and the Abbey Theatre's first tour to America including works such as John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* took place in 1911, receiving differing receptions from regular American theatregoers and the Irish immigré sector.[15] Thus, America provides a different context in which to appreciate Stanford's music and critically reflect on the reception narratives presented in the press.

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11. P. Rodmell, *op. cit.*; J. Dibble, *op. cit*.
12. For a more in depth discussion about national and nationalist music see Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*, Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio, 2014.
13. Irish musicologist Harry White develops a comparison of Stanford and Dvořák in his examination of art music and ethnicity in *The Progress of Music in Ireland*, Dublin, Four Courts, 2005, p. 68-86.
14. Anon., "Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Music Festivals in Canada – Prizes at a Welsh Eisteddfod – Notes and Programmes", *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 April 1903, https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83030214/1903-04-19/ed-1/?sp=25 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 9.
15. Christopher Fitz-Simon, *The Abbey Theatre, Ireland's National Theatre: The First 100 Years*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2003, p. 42; John P. Harrington, "The Abbey in America: The Real Thing", in Nicholas Grene & Chris Morash (eds.), *op. cit*., p. 35–50.

Changes in Stanford's compositional practice during this period are also notable and Stanford recognised the advantage of composing music to which audiences could easily relate but also continued to compose for a variety of contexts and audiences. While this duality demonstrates his ability to market himself as a composer, he suffered for this at the hands of critics who were more concerned with the compositional design of the music. His music was, by then, termed traditional,[16] while his dedication to the work of his predecessor, German composer Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), affected public perceptions of his music.[17] Claims that Stanford was too much an academic were laid down in the later decades of the nineteenth century and unfortunately, it has proved difficult to dispel these beliefs.[18] It was difficult for a Victorian composer to be taken seriously in England and Stanford's conservative and traditional views on composition would not have helped dismiss the opinions of the critics which played a defining role in the reception history of his music. The critic Francis Hueffer was a known Wagner enthusiast and in his role at the *Times* he "denied him [Stanford] the highest praise" on account of his interest in the music of Brahms and he found Stanford's work to be too academic.[19] Hueffer not only found fault with Stanford's style of composition, but he had little faith in the work which had been undertaken by national composers during the British Musical Renaissance.[20] Although Joseph Bennett who worked at the *Daily Telegraph* had named Stanford as one of five composers who had "the immediate future of English music in their hands" and the responsibility to "conserve everything distinctly English [and] reject modern and unproven theories", he believed that Stanford was too coldly academic and lacking emotion and was often dismissive about Stanford's compositions.[21] However, Hughes points out that "as Bennett increasingly became dismayed with contemporary trends in music, he learned to ignore Stanford's academicism and appreciate the solid conservative (Schumann-Brahms) values enshrined in his work".[22]

16. In this instance, the term "traditional" refers to Stanford's approach to composition and commitment to a Germanic art music tradition rather than the genre of Irish traditional music with which Stanford is also sometimes associated.
17. In a similar vein, Sterndale Bennett, who had been Professor of Music at Cambridge University (1856-1875), was perceived as an inferior imitator of Mendelssohn in England. See Geoffrey Bush, "Sterndale Bennett: The Solo Piano Works", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association,* 91, 1965, www.jstor.org/stable/765967 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 85–97, p. 85. See for example Henry Davey, *History of English Music*, London, J. Curwen, 1895, p. 449. He noted that "as none of them [Stanford, Parry and Mackenzie] has invented an original style it is not necessary to examine their works."
18. Shaw frequently referred to Stanford as "Professor" Stanford in his reviews of Stanford's music. See G. B. Shaw, *Music in London 1890–1894*, 3 vols, London, Constable & Co., 1932, p. 203–204 and G. B. Shaw, *Music in London,* London, Constable & Co., 1949, p. 303–308.
19. M. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 25. Despite respecting the technical aspects of his music, the lack of expressive and dramatic power consigned it to the second rate.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 27. For further information on Hueffer's views on English music see *ibid.*, p. 25–30.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 47–49.
22. In his review of Stanford's Sixth Symphony he commented that it was "pleasant to meet with a modern composition so sane as this". See Anon., "Article", *Daily Telegraph,* 19 January 1906 cited in M. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Introducing Charles Villiers Stanford / Stanford in Context

Born into a Protestant family in 1852 in Dublin, Ireland Stanford was afforded a rich musical education. Stanford's father, John Stanford, who himself was a fine bass and cellist and had been instrumental in the founding of the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1848, regularly performed in a range of performing groups,[23] while Stanford's mother was noted as a "distinguished amateur pianist".[24] Professional visiting musicians often called to the Stanford home which was a popular venue for salon music making. Stanford had numerous opportunities to hear many of Dublin's finest musicians from that time including Joseph Robinson[25] and Robert Prescott Stewart,[26] and all of this exposure to music from a young age was to have a formative influence on his future musical direction. It is no surprise then that amidst the rich cultural experiences in the Stanford household that Stanford would begin music lessons from an early age. Through his privileged background, Stanford's father's experience in musical circles in the city would certainly have ensured that he received the best possible training. Some of his piano teachers had studied with Ignaz Moscheles[27] in Leipzig or London and they ensured that Stanford had a thorough grounding in piano technique while exposing him to a range of 'standard' repertoire. Indeed, their European experiences would have added an extra dimension to Stanford's formative years in Dublin.

Leaving Ireland in 1870 Stanford enrolled as a student of classics at Cambridge University and was soon assimilated into musical life at the University. It was here that he quickly came to the attention of English audiences through his work as organist, performer, conductor and composer, and he was soon in demand in many of these roles early in his career. During his early period in England he travelled to the continent, taking composition and piano lessons with eminent teachers Carl Reinecke, Robert Papperitz and Frederick Kiel in Leipzig and Berlin and soaked

23. John Stanford's success as a musician in Dublin was well-documented by the press during his lifetime and he had taken main parts in many productions in Dublin. See for example Anon., "Article", *Saunders Newsletter*, 10 December 1947, p. 2; Anon., "Article", *Saunders Newsletter*, 18 February 1848, p. 2; Anon., "Article", *Saunders Newsletter,* 18 April 1948, p. 2; Anon., "Article", *Orchestra*, 12 December 1963, p. 166; and Anon., "Article", *Dublin Daily Express,* 20 July 1880, p. 2.
24. See Annie Patterson, "Eminent Dublin Musicians: Miss Margaret O'Hea", *Weekly Irish Times,* 10 November 1900, p. 3.
25. Joseph Robinson (1815–1898) conducted the Ancient Concerts until 1863. He sang in the Dublin cathedral choirs and played in the Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra. He was a teacher at the RIAM from 1856 to 1876 and conductor of the Dublin Musical Society from 1876 to 1888.
26. Sir Robert Prescott Stewart (1825–1894) was an organist, conductor, teacher and composer. He was appointed Professor of Music in Trinity College Dublin in 1861, and in 1871 he was made a professor at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He was knighted in 1872.
27. Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870) was a pianist and composer. By the age of twenty he was one of Vienna's most popular pianists and his career as a virtuoso had begun. He taught piano in London and Leipzig and wrote a variety of works for solo piano in addition to some chamber works.

up all of the musical experiences available to him during these periods.[28] This period of private tuition nurtured an appreciation of Germanic compositional practices and styles. For Stanford "the spirit of adventure was abroad."[29] Indeed, Stanford was the first Irish composer to study music abroad, having left Ireland in 1870, while others stayed in Ireland to develop the tradition of art music in the country.[30] Being based abroad would offer him greater exposure for his music and potential work as conductor, composer and teacher.

Stanford was Irish by birth but his Irishness is distinctively different from the predominant nationalist or republican imagination of Irishness. Rather, as musicologist Harry White notes, he is a different shade within Britishness; and holding unionist beliefs, [31] growing up in an Anglo-Irish family at a time when Dublin was a city of the British Empire.[32] Edmund Hunt notes that the "Irishness" of certain composers "was often seen as part of a regional British identity"[33] and this, to some extent, allows Stanford to assume a dual identity, alternating between "Irish" and "British" as and when it suited. Stanford's association with Ireland was altered when he left Dublin in 1870. He soon earned a reputation as musical director, composer, musician, accompanist and conductor. Stanford settled into English musical life earning appointments as Professor of Music at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music, London and as conductor and musical director of notable choirs and orchestras and he was knighted in 1902.

A prolific composer of over two hundred works spanning a variety of genres, including church music, chamber, solo instrumental, vocal, operatic and symphonic works, Stanford was known as one of the leading figures of the British Musical Renaissance.[34] Like many of his contemporaries

28. Carl Reinecke (1824–1910) was a German composer, conductor and pianist. He held a number of eminent positions in Germany including the directorship of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Professor of Composition and Piano at the Leipzig Conservatory. Benjamin Robert Papperitz (1826–1903) was a German-born teacher of organ and piano. Having studied music at the Leipzig Conservatory he was appointed teacher of harmony there in 1851. Friedrich Kiel (1821–1885) was a German conductor, composer and violinist. In Berlin he worked at the Hochschule für Musik. Stanford's period of instruction in Leipzig and Berlin was from 1874 to 1876.
29. Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, London, Edward Arnold, 1935, p. 38.
30. Axel Klein, "Irish Composers and Foreign Education", in Patrick F. Devine & Harry White (eds.), *Irish Musical Studies V: The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings: Part 1*, Dublin, Four Courts, 1996, p. 271.
31. Harry White describes Stanford as "a committed unionist", noting the complexity of understanding Irishness in either ethnic or nationalist, or indeed musical, terms. *The Progress of Music in Ireland*, Dublin, Four Courts, 2005, p. 80.
32. Joseph John Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918: From the Great Famine to Independent Ireland*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 2008.
33. Edmund Hunt, "'A National School of Music Such as the World has Never Seen': Re-appropriating the Early Twentieth Century into a Chronology of Irish Composition" in John O'Flynn and Mark Fitzgerald (eds.), *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond*, Surrey, Ashgate, 2014, http://www.open-access.bcu.ac.uk/9355 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 53–68, p. 61.
34. The British Musical Renaissance refers to the period from around 1880 until after World War I. See Jurgen Schaarwachter, "Chasing a Myth and a Legend: 'The British Musical Renaissance'

including Hubert Parry (1848–1918) and Alexander Mackenzie (1847–1935), Stanford was recognised as an important figure in his role as pedagogue and composer but his music quickly went out of fashion in the early decades of the twentieth century. Stanford suffered at the hands of critics, with many expressing very harsh sentiments about his music. The next generation of younger British composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) and Gustav Holst (1874–1934) took over as the noted composers in England who received the important commissions and whose works were programmed at venues across England and who drew inspiration from and were involved in the English folksong revival.[35] In contrast with most English-born composers, with the notable exception of Ernest J. Moeran (1894–1950),[36] a number of Stanford's compositions include reference to his Irish homeland. These works include his Irish Rhapsodies, "Irish" Symphony, Four Irish Dances for solo piano, Six Irish Fantasies for Violin and Piano, Six Irish Sketches for Violin and Piano, An Irish Concertino, *Phaudrig Crohoore, Shamus O'Brien,* arrangements of folk melodies and many songs which had references to Ireland in the title or text.[37] Although he was dismissed for his interest in and use of Irish music by James Culwick, Stanford was seen as an ambassador for Irish music in England as well as Ireland.[38] Stanford also edited *The Complete Collection of Irish Music* by George Petrie, a seminal figure in the Irish antiquarian movement for the preservation of Irish folk music.[39] Critics in Ireland critically reviewed the publication and a Father Brennan, of Killarney stated that "the result [of appointing Stanford as editor of the collection] proved that they were extremely unfortunate in their choice".[40] An anonymous critic in *The Irish Musical Monthly* criticised Stanford for including English airs in the Petrie Collection and condemned him for not having recognised airs which were already in the volume but under a different title.[41] Despite the scholarly undertaking, in a letter to Alfred

in a 'Land without Music", *The Musical Times*, 149, 2008, DOI: 10.2307/25434554, p. 53–60; see also M. Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, op. cit*., 2002.

35. Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*, Manchester, Manchester U.P., 1993; Richard Sykes, "The Evolution of Englishness in the English Folksong Revival, 1890–1914", *Folk Music Journal,* 6 (4), 1993, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4522437 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 446–490.
36. Jeremy Dibble, *Elgar and his British Contemporaries*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 2004.
37. Stanford's collections of folk songs include Charles Villiers Stanford, *Songs of Old Ireland: A Collection of Fifty Irish Melodies*, London, Boosey & Hawkes, 1882; Charles Villiers Stanford & Alfred Perceval Graves, *Irish Songs and Ballads,* London, Novello, 1893; Thomas Moore & Charles Villiers Stanford, *Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore: The Original Airs Restored and Arranged for the Voice,* London, Boosey & Co.,1895; and Charles Villiers Stanford & Alfred Perceval Graves, *Songs of Erin: A Collection of Fifth Irish Folk Songs*, op. 76, London, Boosey & Co., 1901.
38. See M. Murphy, "Nation, Race and Empire in Stanford's Irish Works: Music in the Discourse of British Imperialist Culture", in Richard Pine (ed.), *Music in Ireland 1848–1998*, Dublin, Mercier, 1998, p. 46–55.
39. Charles Villiers Stanford, *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as noted by G. Petrie, Edited from the Original Manuscripts*, London, Boosey & Co. for the Irish Literary Society, 1903–1905.
40. See Anon., "The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music", *The Irish Musical Monthly*, 1 (12), 1903, p. 133.
41. Anon., "The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music", *The Irish Musical Monthly*, 11, 1902, p. 93– 95, Anon., "The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music", *The*

Perceval Graves, Stanford confided to his Irish friend that "Dublin has invariably shown me such a cold shoulder" when he offered the manuscript to the Irish Academy.[42] Although not always to every musician's liking, Stanford's interest in the editing of Irish music ensured that there were collections of Irish airs available to musicians at home and abroad; thus ensuring the spread of Irish music. From newspaper archival research it is clear that the Petrie collection and other collections of folk songs edited by Stanford were available to performers in America as works from these collections featured regularly in concerts and were attributed to Stanford in the programme listings.

To this day Stanford is also celebrated in a different way as a composer of Church music, primarily performed in the Anglican Church services in England and Ireland, and as a composer of orchestral music that draws on Irish folk melodies and themes of Irishness. However, Stanford's Irishness and potential role as a national composer continues to be debated, due in part to his religious and political beliefs.[43] Other nationalist composers reflect similar complexities in the formation of nation states and the relationship between nationalism and musical output. The difficulties with Stanford's identity in an Irish context mirror and contrast sharply with those of Jean Sibelius (1865–1957). Widely acknowledged and celebrated as Finland's national composer, Sibelius was a Swedish speaker who composed much of his music in a Russian style during a period of Russian rule, composing little after Finnish independence.[44] Unlike some other contemporaneous Anglo-Irish protestant figures, Stanford did not engage

Irish Musical Monthly, 1, 1903, p. 121 and Anon., "The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music", *The Irish Musical Monthly*, 1, 1903, p. 133. Greene had also acknowledged some shortcomings in the collection. See H. Greene, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

42. See letter from Stanford to Graves, 16 February 1912 in Dibble, *op. cit*., p. 369.

43. Stanford's Irishness has been explored in detail by writers such as Harry White, Michael Murphy, Axel Klein, Joseph Ryan, Liam MacCóil and Edmund Hunt. See E. Hunt, *op. cit.,* p. 62; M. Murphy, *op. cit.,* p. 46–55; Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770–1970*, Cork, Cork U.P., 1998; Harry White, *The Progress of Music in Ireland,* Dublin, Four Courts, 2005, p. 68–86; Joseph Ryan, "Nationalism and Irish Music", in Gerard Gillen & Harry White (eds.), *Irish Musical Studies: Music and Irish Cultural History,* Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1995, III, p. 101–115; Axel Klein, "An Old Eminence Among Musical Nations, Nationalism and the Case for a Musical History in Ireland", in Tomi Mäkelä (ed.), *Music and Nationalism in 20th Century Great Britain and Finland,* Hamburg, Von Bockel, 1997, p. 233–243; Liam Mac Cóil, *An Chláirseach Agus an Choróin: Seacht gCeolsiansa Stanford,* Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe, Leabhar Breac, 2010. Other writings include Elgy Gillespie, "Charles Villiers Stanford 1852–1924: Brilliant Dublin Boyhood, Cantankerous London Old Age," *History Ireland,* 12 (3), 2003, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27725149 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 24–27; Kevin O'Connell, "Stanford and the Gods of Modern Music", *The Musical Times,* 146, 1890, 2005, DOI: 10.2307/30044067, p. 33–44; Aaron C. Keebaugh, *Victorian and Musician Charles Villiers Stanford's Symphonies in Context*, unpublished MM, University of Florida, 2004, http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0007003/keebaugh_a.pdf (last accessed 7/11/2020); Adèle Commins, "An Irishman in an English Musical Garden: Perceptions of Stanford's Piano Music," *Sonus*, 2012 (submitted version: eprints.dkit.ie/id/eprint/255, last accessed 5/11/2020); Jonathan Paul White, *The Symphonies of Charles Villiers Stanford: Constructing a National Identity*, Unpublished PhD, University of Oxford, 2014 (https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:6d16fac7-bb70-4ba9-bf0e-17c0a9f26ce5, last accessed 5/11/2020); A. Commins, *op. cit.*, 2008.

44. Glenda Dawn Goss, *Sibelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland*, Chicago, Chicago U.P., 2009.

with the Irish language[45] and is not presented as a national composer in the mode of Sibelius.

Stanford lived through a critical period of Anglo-Irish relations. The British Empire is at its height, ruling over 412 million people in 1913, representing 23% of the world's population at the time.[46] Ireland, devastated by the Great Hunger of the 1840s, had witnessed numerous armed revolutions, notably in 1798, 1867 and 1916. From the 1870s, there was an emerging cultural revolution in Ireland, including the formation of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language in 1876 and the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884.[47] Maude Gonne and W.B. Yeats are moving towards an Irish literary revival, which includes the founding of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899 and the Irish National Theatre Society in 1903, which led to the establishment of the Abbey Theatre in 1904.[48] In the period prior to the 1916 Rising, there is a cultural revolution that seeks to imagine Ireland and Irishness, often in contrast with Britishness.

The Irish diaspora was already significant in many parts of the world and prominent in American society.[49] Many asserted a strong Irish identity that was linked with emigration and revolution, but would also reject some of the cultural representations of Ireland that came from "the old country" and designed as "national culture".[50] Contemporaneously, Terry Moylan points to songs being written in Ireland and around the world relating to Irish revolution and culture.[51] In spite of Hoover's assertions[52] and the reference to Irishness in his compositions, it is questionable whether Stanford belongs to a cultural revolution underpinned by a sense of nationalism or whether as highlighted in this article, his music becomes meaningful for that diaspora in America during that period. Placing the appearance of Stanford's music in America in context, 1887 is the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee leading to celebrations of Empire in Britain and

45. For example, White cites the example of Douglas Hyde (1860–1949) who led an Irish language movement and later became President of Ireland. H. White, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 109; H. White, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 85.
46. Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millenial Perspective*, Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2001, DOI: 10.1787/9789264104143-en.
47. Joseph John Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918: From the Great Famine to Independent Ireland*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 2008.
48. Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre, 1899–1999: Form and Pressure*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2003; Adrian Woods Frazier, *Behind the Scenes: Yeats, Homiman and the Struggle for the Abbey Theatre*, Berkeley, California U.P., 1990.
49. For an in-depth study of the Irish diaspora in America see Marion Casey & J.J. Lee (eds.), *Making the Irish America: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, New York, New York U.P., 2007.
50. Christopher Fitz-Simon notes how, for example, *The Playboy of the Western World*, presented an Ireland that some Irish emigrants would rather forget. C. Fitz-Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
51. Terry Moylan, *The Indignant Muse: Poetry and Songs of the Irish Revolution, 1887–1926*, Dublin, Lilliput, 2016.
52. Jean Marie Hoover, "Constructing Ireland: Culture and Politics in Stanford's 'Shamus O'Brien'", in Jeremy Dibble & Bennett Zon (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002, II, p. 126–136.

the Broadway theatre district in New York is developed during the 1880s, exemplifying changes in the consumption of popular culture in America.

Although Stanford had left Ireland for Cambridge in 1870, he continued to visit his family and friends during the 1870s and 1880s.[53] However, after his parents died there are fewer records of his visits to Ireland.[54] In a letter to his friend Francis Jenkinson he confided: "now all my links to the old country and blessed family are practically gone".[55] This summation summarises perfectly the situation Stanford found himself in as a voluntary exile working in England and trying to forge a reputation for himself in his adopted country, while also demonstrating traits of his national character in his compositions. Confusion over Stanford's identity as an Irishman or Englishman is evident in America, although there is notable difference in the reception of his music on both sides of the Atlantic.

Stanford (almost) in America

A significant aspect of this paper is that Stanford himself, despite an invitation to do so, never visited America, due in part to the outbreak of World War I. In 1914, Stanford was to travel to Yale University to accept an honorary doctorate. Composer Horatio Parker was instrumental in arranging the honour for Stanford at Yale. This prestigious invitation may have been due to the positive reception of Stanford's music in America over the preceding three decades. It could also be read, however, in a less flattering way for the Irishman. Stanford had been instrumental in securing an honorary doctorate for Parker at one of England's most prestigious institutions, Cambridge University in 1902, and Parker may have felt it appropriate to return the same favour to Stanford. The excitement about travelling to America is clearly evident in Stanford's letters to Parker - and Stanford requested that his new piano concerto be performed at the concert: "Your charming and very tempting letter arrived this morning. It is too tempting to resist".[56] To coincide with this visit to Yale, Carl Stoeckel, the President of the Norfolk Festival in Connecticut, invited Stanford to conduct a concert of his own music including the premiere of his Second

53. On 11 April 1891 Stanford appeared at the Instrumental Club, Merrion Row, Dublin performing as part of a string trio. Stanford's Piano Trio no.1 op. 35 in E flat was performed with the help of Werner and Rudersdorff while a Trio of Mozart and a Sextet by Brahms were also included in the programme.
54. John Stanford died on 17 July 1889 while Mary Stanford died on 1 January 1892. An aunt who had lived with his mother had died earlier in mid-December 1891 while another aunt died only days previously on 27 December 1891.
55. Letter from Stanford to Jenkinson, 1 January 1892, in Rodmell, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
56. Letter from Stanford to Parker, 12 November 1914, Yale University. The correspondence between Stanford and Parker from 1901 is housed as MSS 32 in "The Horatio Parker Papers" at the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University. Correspondence from Stanford to Parker is contained in Box no. 27 and correspondence from Parker to Stanford is contained in Box no. 26.

Piano Concerto. Stanford had sought success in America and may have been tactful in achieving this. Stanford had dedicated the Piano Concerto to "Two Friends on either side of the Atlantic", one being Carl Stoeckel. The other dedicatee was Stanford's great friend Robert Finnie McEwen.

The invitation to travel to America was important for two reasons: not only was he going to receive an honorary doctorate from Yale University, but also the concerto would finally be premiered in America under his own direction in June 1915, a coup for any composer. To conduct one of his works in America was the next step for Stanford in ensuring continued interest in his work, while also raising the profile of the English school of composition across the Atlantic. Unfortunately, Stanford's dreams were not fully realised, as his journey to America had to be cancelled when the Lusitania was torpedoed off Kinsale on May 7, eight days before his departure date. Stanford and his wife, Jennie, both had their passages booked on the Lusitania for May 15. Stanford was very disappointed and was subsequently too nervous to travel. According to the Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union, the committee:

> […] sent a message to Sir Charles Villiers Stanford suggesting that he postpone his visit to Norfolk until June 1916. This action met with the approval of Sir Charles and an announcement was made that he would not be present at the June festival in 1915. There was natural and widespread disappointment, and many critics and campers prophesied that our festival had been deprived of the principal interest.[57]

The performance of the concerto still went ahead on 3 June 1915 with Harold Bauer as soloist but Stanford neither received his honorary doctorate nor the opportunity to conduct his work in America, both of which would have been a great source of disappointment.[58] The concert programme provides insights into musical tastes and attitudes at the time; the other works included in the first part of the concert alongside Stanford's concerto were Schubert's Symphony No.1 in B minor and Bizet's Carmen.

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57. See *Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union*, Norfolk Historical Society and Museum. I am indebted to The Norfolk Historical Society and Museum, Norfolk, Connecticut for furnishing me with a copy of the original programme from the American premiere of the concerto along with a copy of the *Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union* and newspaper cuttings from the era. The MS number for the programme in the Norfolk Historical Society and Museum is 8–4–661.
58. The performance of the piano concerto was reported on in the *Musical Times:* Julius Harrison, "Stanford's New Pianoforte Concerto" *The Musical Times*, 56, 1915, p. 478–479. Some errors pertain to this concert: Harrison believed that the conductor for the concert was one Arthus Ness but the inside cover of the full orchestral score to the work states that the conductor was Arthur Mees. Additionally, Rodmell, *op. cit.,* Appendix One, p. 21 incorrectly states that the American performance took place on 22 November 1915, while on page 287 he gives the correct date of the concert.

The success of the concert in America was confirmed in a cable message received from Stoeckel: "highly successful; beautiful rendition; ovation for you in spirit; congratulations".[59] Many American newspapers commented favourably on Stanford's skill as a composer in the work but also hinted at his traditional approach and described the work as "academic". Although Mr H.E. Krehbiel, who reviewed the performance for the *New York Tribune,* pointed out these traditionally formalistic elements it did not appear to concern him. In his mind the value of the work rested in the audience's delight in the performance:

> Mr Harold Bauer had prepared the solo part with care, and played it with complete devotion. The orchestra under Arthur Ness [Mees] did its duty fully, and the audience found the work greatly to its taste and liking, for one thing, because it was to its understanding, and strove straightforwardly and consistently to express pure musical beauty […]. Good sound music, all of it, with a spirit that proceeded from Schumann. Most admirable pianistic it is throughout, and scored with a Master hand. Our Musical Hotspurs will decry it as smugly academic, but it has a clean musical face. It knows its purpose, and achieves it.[60]

The writer in the *New York Times* also commented on Stanford's compositional skill: "Sir Charles Stanford […] is conservative rather than modern. His pianoforte concerto is also skilfully and effectively written, both for soloist and orchestra: but it is not notable for novelty of substance or great imaginative power".[61] According to Cecil Forsyth, a student and friend of Stanford's who was also present at the concert "the work was received with tremendous enthusiasm".[62]

The writer for *Musical America*, believed that "it is a work which will doubtless be heard elsewhere and ought to be heard at concerts of all our leading orchestras next season", while the *New York Sun* commented on different aspects of the writing and believed that "the concerto as a whole makes a pleasing impression".[63] Unfortunately, Stanford's piano concerto does not appear to have made a lasting impression on American audiences. American writers noted Stanford's Irishness in the work and a writer in the *New York Sun* in 1915 wrote that "the last movement is openly Irish,

59. See Anon., "Occasional Notes" *The Musical Times*, 56, 1915, p. 399–400, p. 400.
60. Anon., "Sir Charles Stanford's New Pianoforte Concert", art. cit., p. 478–479.
61. Anon., "Music Festival Ends in Success: Litchfield County Choral Union Gives New Compositions at Norfolk", *New York Times,* 6 June 1915, p. 17.
62. Anon., "Sir Charles Stanford's New Pianoforte Concerto" art. cit., p. 478–479.
63. See *Musical America* and *New York Sun* review in *Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union*, Norfolk Historical Society and Museum.

and its color may lead to the christening of the composition as the 'Irish piano concerto' by the author of the 'Irish' Symphony."[64]

This report – to put it mildly – is a little far-fetched. The "Irish" Symphony very clearly uses native folk songs as the basis for the work, as do the composer's Irish Rhapsodies. The concerto, however, does not warrant the epitaph "Irish Piano Concerto", as only one movement in the work approaches an Irish sound. The opening of *Kitty of the Cows,* from *Songs of Erin* op.76 bears a close resemblance to bars 2–3 of the opening theme in the third movement of Stanford's Piano Concerto, while the heroic sound of this final movement, with its march-like rhythm and successive accents on the first beat of the bar in a block chord texture, resembles the opening music of *Phaudrig Crohoore* op. 62, a choral ballad by Stanford which was completed in 1895. English composer Herbert Howells has noted: "[Stanford] turns his face to the west [and] fills his mind with the thematic cut-and-thrust of melody and rhythm innately Irish."[65] The delight demonstrated by the audience may be, in part, due to the sense of Irishness in the work. It is clear that it was the Irishness of Stanford's music which appealed to American audiences and critiques used this quality to raise public reception of the work, while the composer's orthodox methods would also have been a selling point as America was also conservative in his attitudes towards composition. According to the *New York Times:*

> Sir Charles is an Irishman who has often used delightfully the characteristic effect of the Irish folk-tunes, with which, in one way or another, he has had much to do, and has worked with both a patriotic and musical interest. In this concerto he has done so only in the last movement, in which there is a characteristic rhythmic vigour and incisiveness and an unmistakable turn of tunefulness that clearly show their origin.[66]

Consequently, Krehbiel's statement in the *New York Tribune,* namely that there was no sense of nationalism in this work, is not palpable.[67]

Stanford's Irishness contributed to public interest in his music in America. As one would expect, his use of native folk music in some of his compositions appealed to audiences in America and although some other works received sporadic performances across the Atlantic, it seems likely that his music may not have made the same impact on American

64. See *New York Sun* review in *Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union*, Norfolk Historical Society and Museum.
65. Herbert Howells, "Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924): An Address at His Centenary", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 79 (1952), https://www.jstor.org/stable/766209 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 19–31, p. 30.
66. Anon., "Music Festival Ends in Success: Litchfield County Choral Union Gives New Compositions at Norfolk", art. cit.
67. Anon., "Sir Charles Stanford's New Pianoforte Concerto", art. cit., p. 478–479, p. 478.

audiences were it not for his inclusion of Irish melodies in his works. It appears that the Irishness in Stanford's compositional output helped the promotion of his music abroad; as noted by Krehbiel there was a market for this "lighter" music in America. Although this part of his compositional output appealed to audiences in America for a time, this departure from more serious music seems to have altered public opinion of him in England.

Despite the disappointment surrounding his inability to travel and losing out on the honorary doctorate, one must assume that Stanford was delighted with the success of his piano concerto in America. As he had been unable to attend and hear the performance he did all in his power to organise an English premiere. Stanford's proposed visit to Yale to receive his honorary doctorate and the performance of the concerto in Norfolk were reported in the *Musical Times* in England.[68] Both Stanford's intended trip and subsequently his inability to travel received attention in the American press, indicating interest in the composer and his music.[69] The performance was later referred to in an article on the Norfolk Festival by Krehbiel which provides a very detailed account of Stanford's Irish music. The newspaper also includes a copy of the cover page of Stanford's Fifth Irish Rhapsody outlining the dedication on the work and also a separate image detailing the folk tunes used in the piece.[70] Such accounts appear to have raised the profile of the work in England and a performance seemed more hopeful.

Reception and Criticism of Stanford's Music in North America (1888–1924)

The American press provides valuable insights into perceptions of Stanford's music at that time in America, a country in which he had not made the same contribution to society as he had done in England through his work as conductor, musical director, composer and pedagogue. His reputation there was built upon writings about his music and the promotion of his works by notable musicians in America. Furthermore, reviews and accounts of Stanford's music in the American press provide an interesting view of American perceptions of Irish music at this time. An examination of articles in the American press allows us to reflect upon how Stanford, an Irish-born composer working in England, was identified in America by audiences and critics alike.

68. *Ibid.*
69. See for example, *New York Sun,* 1915, review in *Report of the Music Committee of the Litchfield County Choral Union*, Norfolk Historical Society and Museum.
70. H.E. Krehbiel, "New Music Composed for The Norfolk Festival", *New York Tribune*, 3 June 1917, p. z.

What is particularly interesting is the regularity of references to Stanford and his music in the American press, particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, considering that his reputation in England was being overshadowed by the younger generation of composers. By comparison, there are fewer references to upcoming performances of his music or lengthy reviews of performances of his compositions at notable venues in England in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Removed from the socio-musical sphere in England dominated by both the politics of identity and the desire to create or pioneer a new English school of composition that would move away from Germanic traditions, Stanford's music remains popular and worthy of performance, being critically well received in America. While numerous references appear in Church listings to his Services and *Te Deum*, in a secular context, it was clearly his Irish infused compositions which attracted greatest attention and which may have been deemed to have most popular appeal. Those works infused with Irish folk music which feature most prominently include his comic opera *Shamus O'Brien*, the "Irish" Symphony, *Phaudrig Croohore* and his arrangements of folk melodies. Other works received some attention in the press including his Serenade in G which was performed from manuscript at the third concert of the New York Philharmonic Series on 19 January 1884.[71]

It appears that the first substantial references to Stanford's music in American newspapers occur in the late 1880s, with some drawing on articles published in the English press. One example featured an excerpt from George Bernard Shaw's criticism of the "Irish" Symphony in the English publication *World* in the *New York Times* in 1893.[72] Although Stanford continued to receive some positive criticism in the press in the twentieth century, it is clear that the ghost of George Bernard Shaw's brief period as music critic in England tainted his fellow Irishman's reputation in musical circles in England. Stanford's most cruel critic was his fellow Irishman, Shaw.[73] Outspoken and always striving for musical perfection, he based "his judgments not only on his remarkable musical knowledge, but on the extent to which he had enjoyed a performance."[74] Although Shaw was disliked by many musicians, he "was adored by his general readers" as

71. See Anon., "The Philharmonic Rehearsal", *New York Times,* 19 January 1884, p. 4. The reviewer did not seem inspired by the work, referring to it as a "Suite" and he believed that the work was not "overburdened with ideas". Although he appeared impressed by the composer's handling of the orchestra, he believed that the instrumentation was "wanting in colour".
72. Anon., "Gossip of Concert Hall and Opera House. The Pianist, His Piano and His Harps – A Few Remarks to Show How the Wheels Go Around – the Return of Mme. Materna, the Famous Wagner Singer – Phases of the Wagner Controversy – Kneisel as a Conductor – Villiers Stanford Irish Symphony", *New York Times*, 21 May 1893, p. 13.
73. George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was an Irish dramatist who also worked as a critic. In that role he wrote under the pseudonym "Corno di Bassetto". Some of the magazines and journals which he worked for included *The Pall Mall Gazette, The Star* and *The World.*
74. Eugene Gates, "The Music Criticism and Aesthetics of George Bernard Shaw", *Journal of Aesthetic Education,* 35, 2001, DOI: 10.2307/3333610, p. 63–71.

he made music criticism comprehensible to all.[75] More significant to this study is Shaw's tendency to parrot public perceptions at the time.[76] Irvine sums up Shaw and the effect of his methods of criticism in 1946:

> He is the malignant personal enemy of every fallible musician. Usually he punishes quite impartially, but not always […] His professed attitude is relativistic and pragmatic. Shaw writes for immediate effect, in a gay and passionate effort to make audiences insist on better music, and musicians and composers produce it. He coddles, bullies, lauds, insults, gadflying everybody to do his best. In short he tries, not to put the whole truth in all its facets upon paper, but to drive fragmentary and partial truth into the heads of his readers by all sorts of exaggeration and special pleading.[77]

Shaw's damning criticism of Stanford proved a crucial turning point in Stanford reception in the nineteenth century.[78] While Shaw's criticism was entertaining for readers of his articles, his negative criticism served to highlight issues relating to Stanford and his music: his academicism, his reliance on traditional means of composition and his Irishness. These aspects of his compositional style, however, were not the main focus of the critics in America.

The inclusion of writings by European critics in American newspapers is not dissimilar to a practice in the nineteenth century when American critics quoted the words of Eduard Hanslick in their articles on the music of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811–1886) in America. At that time in England, reviews of Stanford's music were numerous and featured prominently in English newspapers as many of his compositions were performed to great acclaim across England and Europe. Indeed, his

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75. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
76. While Shaw has been commended for his writings as a music critic, an anonymous critic writing in 1923 gives an interesting alternative account of Shaw's work in this role, noting that 'nobody takes Shaw seriously these days. He can be depended upon to take the opposite of any popular idea or ideal. He dotes on controversy for controversy's sake and takes the limelight by doing a double somersault for the delectation of the crowd. He is the arch buffoon of letters, the infant terrible of parlor politics and though age has slowed down his passion it has not in any perceptible degree sweetened his temper or broadened his tolerance'. 'Shaw scolds the Writing Craft' *Arts and Decorations* XIII (March 1923), p. 87 in George S. Barber, "Shaw's Contribution to Music Criticism", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America,* 72 (5), 1957, DOI: 10.2307/460376, p. 1005–1017, p. 1006.
77. William Irvine, "G.B. Shaw's Musical Criticism", *Musical Quarterly*, 32 (3), 1946, https://www.jstor.org/stable/739194 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 319–332.
78. Holroyd suggests that the rivalry between the two Irishmen may have stemmed from personal reasons. Stewart, Stanford's organ teacher, had successfully exposed Vandaleur Lee – Shaw's mother's singing teacher – as an imposter in Dublin which inevitably led to Lee's exile from Dublin. Holroyd believed that Shaw's review of Stanford's symphony "reads as a quintessential exposition of Shaw's twenty years of experience in England, in which he reacted violently to a genteel cultured classic piety of English composers dulled by university education and established religion". See Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw: 1856–1898: The Search for Love*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1988, I, p. 48–49. Shaw had acknowledged the influence which Vandaleur Lee had on the Shaw household. In 1876 Shaw moved to London to join his mother and Lee. See also See Holroyd, *op. cit.* in Dibble, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

work as conductor and pedagogue was also beginning to be recognised in the press with many references to his work in these capacities also. It was the performance of Stanford's "Irish" Symphony in America, however, which appears to mark the beginning of American audiences' exposure to his music. Completed in April 1887, it was soon championed by Hans Richter and Hans von Bülow in London and Germany while the Symphony Society included the work at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on 27 and 28 January 1888.[79] Two movements of the work had been programmed earlier in the month in the Brooklyn Academy of Music under the direction of Damrosch and the critic noted that "if the two movements from this symphony, heard for the first time in this country last night, are good samples of the entire work, it is to be hoped that Mr Stanford's compositions will soon be given here in its entirety."[80]

In England, Stanford had featured in series of biographical sketches of composers, two notable examples being *The Musical Times* and *The Strand Magazine*. Such lengthy accounts, many of which included photographs, demonstrated the reputation which he had built up as a composer, conductor and pedagogue in England and served to inform audiences about his successes.[81] While certainly not as long as those in English newspapers, it is interesting to note that Stanford was featured on a number of occasions in American newspapers, including news of his death and obituary. Like the English examples, photographs of the composer were included.[82] Indeed, Krehbiel wrote a lengthy summary of Stanford's article "Some Thoughts Concerning Folksong and Nationality". Krehbiel's publication was timely as it also announced Stanford's intended visit to America the following month and it also demonstrated Krehbiel's keen interest in Stanford and his music.[83] Such coverage helped inform the American public about Stanford as a composer. However, these newspaper articles can also lead to confusion over his identity as an Irish Protestant Unionist, which differed from the dominant Irish Catholic Nationalist identity which was popularised in America in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising.[84]

79. Anon., "Fifth Concert of the Symphony Society", *The Sun*, 29 January 1888, p. 2 and Anon., "Music. Stanford's Irish Symphony", *New York Daily Tribune*, 28 January 1888, p. 5.
80. Anon., "Music – The Drama at the Brooklyn Academy of Music", *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1888, p. 4.
81. See for example, Richard Aldrich, "Sir Charles Stanford's Entertaining Sketches of Some Distinguished Musicians – A Composer's Reminiscences", *New York Times*, 21 February 1915, p. 3. Here Aldrich provides a synopsis of Stanford's career, while summarising some of his reminiscences in Stanford's autobiography.
82. See for example, Anon., "Musical Comment, Grief as a Writer for Orchestra, The Pianoforte Concerto and Chamber Music, A miniaturist Latter Day Decay, An Irish Nationalist in Music", *New York Tribune, an Illustrated Supplement,* August 1897, p. 16 and Anon., "Charles Villiers Stanford. Reviver of Ireland's National Music", *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 March 1900, p. 12.
83. H.E. Krehbiel, "Folksong and Music's Future. Sir Charles Villiers Stanford on Germany's Decay – Irish Tunes and Beethoven", *New York Tribune*, 2 May 1915, p. 3.
84. Damien Murray, "Ethnic Identities and Diasporic Sensibilities: Transnational Irish-American Nationalism in Boston after World War I", Éire-Ireland, 46 (3-4), DOI: 10.1353/eir.2011.0018, p. 102–131.

The American press regularly published accounts of Stanford's recent engagements and performances of his music in England and Ireland, demonstrating the awareness of European culture amongst American audiences. On occasion these accounts were taken from the *Times* in London (with some articles noting "FROM LONDON"). For example, reports of the performance of *The Canterbury Pilgrims* in Dublin and London[85] and *Much Ado About Nothing* at Covent Garden were included,[86] while the concert Stanford conducted entirely of his own works in Berlin featured in the *New York Herald*.[87] A number of the American premieres were noted, including *Verdun* in 1918.[88] American newspapers also made reference to letters which Stanford wrote to the *Times* in relation to the establishment of a national opera in England.[89] The setting of the tune by Stanford for the new bells at St Mary-le-Bow received coverage in a number of newspapers.[90] The conferring of an honorary doctorate on him by Oxford University in 1883 was reported on in *Buffalo New York Daily Courier*,[91] while his appointment as first President of the "*Feis Ceoil"* in Ireland was also noted.[92] Such references indicate an awareness that American audiences had in relation to Stanford's music in Europe and his role in the musical life of both England and Ireland.

As noted earlier, different composers benefited from various critics' treatment of their music. While some critics wrote objectively in their assessment of a composer's music, many reporters were subjective in their writings; some exaggerated their writings for the amusement of the reader, while other composers suffered at the hands of critics as those may have had their own personal preferences of taste. It is clear from a study of music criticism in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that some critics promoted composers for personal reasons. Fuller-Maitland, who worked as music critic at the *Times* from 1889 until 1911, was one of Stanford's oldest friends, having played duets with him during Stanford's early years at Cambridge in the 1870s. Fuller-Maitland also

85. Anon., "Article", *Richmond Dispatch,* 2 September 1884, p. 2 and B.B. Young, "Article", *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 May 1884, p. 11.
86. See for example, Anon., "The Foreign Stage London", *New York Dramatic Mirror,* 15 June 1901 p. 15; Anon., "Article", *San Francisco Call*, 16 June 1901, p. 18; Anon., "First New Opera of Covent Garden. Dr C Villiers Stanford's 'Much Ado About Nothing' Novelty in London Season", *New York Herald*, 31 May 1901, p.9 and Anon., "Shakespearian Opera. Production at Covent Garden of 'Much Ado About Nothing'", *New York Daily Tribune*, 31 May 1901, p. 6.
87. Anon., "Cable Brevities", *The New York Herald*, 15 January 1889, p. 7.
88. Anon., "Philharmonic Society", *New York Tribune*, 13 October 1918, p. 4.
89. Anon., "Article", *New York Evening Post*, 25 March 1899, p. 28 and Anon., "Article", *The Record Union*, 16 April 1899, p. 7. This was earlier reported in Anon., "Article", *Kansas City Journal*, 9 April 1909, p. 17.
90. Anon., "Whittington Chime Rings", *The Minneapolis Journal*, 10 November 1905, p. 25; Anon., "Article", *The Rice Belt Journal,* March 1906, n.p.; Anon., "Bow Bells to be Rehung", *The San Francisco Call*, 24 September 1905, p. 53 and Anon., "The Old Bow Bells of London Town", *The Evening Star,* November 1905, p. 3.
91. Anon., "Musical Matters", *Buffalo New York Daily Courier*, 8 September 1883, n.p.
92. Anon., "A Fair Doctor of Music. Annie Patterson, Secretary of the Great Irish Feis in Dublin", *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*, 10 November 1895, p. 7. See also Anon., "Irish Musical Festival From The London Daily News", *New York Times*, 31 March 1895, n.p.

worked as critic at the *Guardian* and *Pall Mall Gazette* for a time. During Fuller-Maitland's period as music critic at the *Times* Stanford's music received positive commentary; indeed, Hughes commented that Stanford "came in for the most extravagant praise".[93] In Fuller-Maitland's opinion "Stanford is musical counterpart to Tennyson."[94] Although this comparison was drawn in relation to Stanford's "special poetic affinities", the very placing of Stanford as a parallel to Tennyson who was well respected in poetic circles in England as well as holding the post of Poet Laureate bears testimony to Fuller-Maitland's view of him.[95] Enthusiasm for both Parry and Stanford's music is evident in his reviews and it was clear that Fuller-Maitland used his position with "the most widely-read and influential newspaper" to promote two men whom he considered to be "the leading spirits in the renaissance of British music".[96]

Although many of the reviews written about performances of Stanford's music in America bear no signature, knowledge of who was writing, in particular newspapers, makes it possible to ascertain who were the public champions and promoters of his music. On account of the great number of reviews of his music by eminent critics, such as Richard Aldrich, Henry Krehbiel and W.J. Henderson, both of whom were music critics for the *New York Times,* while Henderson also contributed to the *New York Sun*, this provides an opportunity to examine the themes that emerge in their writings which are worthy of consideration here. According to Richard Aldrich, Henry Krehbiel from the *New York Tribune* "was the leading musical critic of America; and, indeed, it is not too much to say that he had set musical criticism in the United States on a plane that it had never occupied before, in respect of technical knowledge, breadth, and penetration of view, critical faculty and power of expression."[97] Indeed, Krehbiel was highly influential as a critic. It is noteworthy, therefore, that Krehbiel was positive in his assessment of Stanford's music and writings. Unlike some composers who were acquaintances of critics of their music, for example in the case of Elgar and Volbach, it is unlikely that Stanford had met his American critics.

93. M. Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
94. J.A. Fuller-Maitland, *The Music of Parry and Stanford, an Essay in Comparative Criticism,* Cambridge, W. Heffer & Sons., 1934, p. 11.
95. This comparison was similar to an opinion held by a critic writing in *The Irish Times* after Stanford's death in which the writer proclaimed that Stanford 'was to musical Ireland what Mr W. B. Yeats is to literary Ireland. See Anon., "A Great Musician: Death of Sir Charles Stanford", *The Irish Times*, 31 March 1924, p. 6.
96. See M. Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, op. cit.,* p. 8 and J.A. Fuller-Maitland, *The Music of Parry and Stanford, op. cit.*, p. 11. On the other hand Fuller-Maitland showed antipathy towards Fredereic Cowen while Henry Lunn, critic with *The Musical Times,* was often critical of Arthur Sullivan. For more information regarding critics and their treatment of composers in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see M. Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press op. cit.*, p. 1–103.
97. Richard Aldrich, "Henry Edward Krehbiel", *Music and Letters,* 4 (3), 1923, https://www.jstor.org/stable/726960 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 266.

Stanford's "Irish" Symphony

Stanford completed his "Irish" Symphony in 1887 and Richter gave the English premiere of the work in St James's Hall on 27 June 1887. Initial reception of the work was positive as the composer's use of Irish folk music appealed to audiences.[98] The success of this composition may have encouraged Stanford to develop his interest in the folk-music of his native land, hoping that it would win him favour with audiences and critics alike. It was Richter and von Bülow who brought Stanford's "Irish" Symphony to European audiences with performances in Hamburg, Berlin and Amsterdam in 1888.[99] On the strength of a successful performance of the symphony at Berlin in 1888, the Berlin Philharmonic invited Stanford to conduct a repeat performance of the work the day after the Berlin premiere.[100] Despite its initial successes, in his review of the "Irish" Symphony George Bernard Shaw noted that "the symphony, as a musical form, is stone dead".[101] Stanford's "Irish" Symphony featured regularly in America. It was highly significant that a symphony by an Irish composer reached American audiences so soon after its completion. The symphony was regularly performed under the direction of both Frank and Walter Damrosch and was frequently included in the programmes of the Philharmonic Society.[102]

Public rehearsals of the "Irish" Symphony were held on 27 and 28 January 1888 by the Symphony Society at the Metropolitan Opera House for a performance on 28 January 1888. Although some elements of the programme were criticised, Stanford's "Irish" Symphony was noted as being "full of character, [...] rich in melody and excellently made".[103] Another critic commented that the performance of the work was a novelty.[104]

98. Anon., "Mr Stanford's New Symphony", *The Times*, 1 July 1887, p. 4.
99. Von Bülow conducted the symphony at the Stadttheatre on 26 January 1888 in Hamburg while Willem Kes conducted the work in Amsterdam on 3 November 1888. On the strength of the performance at Hamburg the composer was invited to conduct the work in a programme which included the music of Wagner, Brahms, Beethoven and Goldmark.
100. It appears that von Bülow stood aside to allow Stanford conduct his own work. See Anon., "Dr Stanford's "Irish" Symphony in Germany", *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 29 (541), 1888, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3360380 (last accessed 7/11/2020), p. 154–155. This article reviews the performance of the "Irish" Symphony in Berlin in February 1888.
101. George Bernard Shaw, "The Second Richter Concert This Season", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 May 1888. This is cited in Dan Laurence (ed.), *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism in Three Volumes*, II, London, Bodley Head, 1981, p. 515. Harry White perpetuates a critical reception of this work a century later when writing "This work, of all Stanford's compositions, perhaps most easily illustrates his untroubled juxtaposition of Brahmsian pastiche and the arrangement of traditional airs", *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 196.
102. Frank Damrosch (1859–1937) was a German-born conductor, organist and teacher working in America. He worked at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and was director of the New York Institute of Musical Art. Walter Damrosch (1862–1950) was also a German-born conductor working in America. He was director of the New York Symphony Orchestra and conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and Symphony Society in New York. Damrosch was also a composer, noted for his songs and operas.
103. Anon., "The Symphony Society", *New York Times,* 28 January 1888, p. 4.
104. Anon., "Fifth Concert of the Symphony Society", art. cit., p. 2.

Although this writer commented that the work was "pleasant and musicianly", they noted that it was "not impressive."[105] They did, however, attest that Stanford "was as well qualified certainly as any English composer of today to utilize his material to his best advantage. There is, therefore, no lack of dignity and merit in his work." He acknowledged that the effect "might be improved by more lightness in the performance." After the initial successful performances of the work in the decade after its completion, it appeared to lose favour with American audiences. However, owing to the work of the Damrosch brothers and Gustav Mahler, the symphony appeared more frequently in programmes in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Walter Damrosch conducted a performance of the symphony at Carnegie Hall in November 1907 with the New York Symphony Orchestra.[106] Frank Damrosch conducted the symphony on 28 March 1908 at the Sixth Symphony Concert for Young People at Carnegie Hall while Mahler revived the work in February 1911 with the New York Philharmonic Society. Walter Damrosch also conducted the work on 6 January 1912 and 17 November 1912 at Carnegie Hall and Madison Square respectively.[107]

Damrosch obviously recognised the appeal the "Irish" Symphony had for audiences of the time and programmed the symphony on at least three occasions in the Young People's Symphony Concerts at the beginning of the twentieth century. Three such concerts took place on 28 March 1908 (Carnegie Hall), in February 1912 (Brooklyn) and on 25 February 1917 (Carnegie Hall). Characteristically, Stanford's work headed the programme of the Symphony Society of New York concert with the New York Symphony Orchestra at the Century Theatre on St Patrick's Day (17 March) 1912.[108] Interestingly, the second half of the concerts consisted of excerpts from Wagner's "Die Meistersinger". The concert was reported on favourably in *The Evening World* with the critic noting that the work has always "been received with favor", and that it was "redolent with the sentiment, the sadness and the rollicking humor of old Erin."[109] The symphony was also included in an Irish Musical Festival which took place under the direction of Victor Herbert at Carnegie Hall on 23 March 1913. This performance took place on Easter Sunday.[110] The symphony was performed

105. *Ibid.*
106. Anon., "Article", *New York Tribune*, 18 November 1907, p. 6.
107. Anon., "Irish Tunes Please Big Carnegie Audience", *The Matthews Journal*, November 1912, n.p., and Anon., "Music Here and There" *New York Times*, 10 November 1912, n.p.
108. This concert was announced in Anon., "Music Here and There", *New York Times*, 17 March 1912, p. x7; Anon., "Article", *The Sun,* 10 March 1902, p. 9 and reviewed in Anon., "Sunday Afternoon Music, Irish Symphony and Negro Overture – Griswold's Fine Singing", *New York Times*, 18 March 1912, n.p. in which the writer commented on its "real beauty, the felicitous use the Irish composer has made of Irish themes, and the success with which he has made the music expressive of the Gaelic spirit, by turns merry and pathetic."
109. Sylvester Rawling, "Damrosch Remembers Erin's Day", *The Evening World*, 18 March 1912, p. 22.
110. See Anon., "Article", *New York Times,* 16 March 1913, p. x9 and Anon., "Article", *The Sun*, 16 March 1913, p. 10.

at a concert for the 69th Regiment Relief at the Manhattan Opera House on 24 September 1916 and a performance of the symphony took place at the Aeolian Hall on 21 January 1917.[111] An Irish Night organised with the help of the Irish Music Society in the Lewisohn Stadium City College on 15 August 1921 included two movements from the symphony in its programme. Reviews of the "Irish" Symphony were often very detailed, one example being the notice of the performance in January 1888 in which readers were given an analytical overview of each movement. This article also refers to the performance under the direction of Richter in London and notes that "the symphony answers most strikingly to the characterization of Irish music to be found in Dr Norman McLeod's Notebook."[112]

Association with prominent conductors helped to raise profile of Stanford's "Irish" Symphony. In advertisements and reviews of the work, the names Richter, von Bülow and Mahler were often noted as conductors and exponents of the works.[113] Positive reviews of the symphony were given in the *New York Times* and *New York Tribune* ensuring continued interest in the work in America.[114] Aldrich found it surprising that the work was not more frequently performed, while Krehbiel commented on the ever growing admiration for the work.

On the whole, statements in relation to Stanford's skill as a composer were mostly positive. Stanford's proficiency as a composer is celebrated in reviews of his "Irish" Symphony, which comment on his skilful treatment of folk tunes. Indeed a critic in the *New York Times* writing in 1911 noted "it is rather surprising that its merits and certain qualities that might well make it popular in the best sense have not gained it more frequent repetition."[115] Following a performance of the "Irish" Symphony conducted by Mahler in 1911, a writer in the *New York Times*, commented on Stanford's "resourcefulness of accomplished musicianship" and the scholarly methods "employed to make the most of the extremely interesting material."[116] Other reviews contained some perceptive comments in relation to his compositional style. The *New York Times* critic believed the work to be "charming, of sustained interest, and made with much dexterity and skill in the manipulation of its material".[117] Aldrich noted that "he writes skilfully,

111. This performance was reviewed favourably by Krehbiel: H.E. Krehbiel, "Irish Symphony Brings Message. Damrosch Orchestra Stirs Hearers with Villiers Stanford Work", *New York Tribune*, 22 January 1917, p. 9.
112. Anon., "Music. Stanford's Irish Symphony", art. cit., p. 5.
113. See for example Anon., "The Philharmonic Society", *New York Times*, 26 February 1911, p. x7; Anon., "Sunday Afternoon Music", art. cit., p. 11; Anon., "Sunday Filled with Orchestral Music", *New York Times*, 18 November 1912, p. 11.
114. See for example Richard Aldrich, "The New York Symphony. Concert of Irish, Welsh and Norwegian Composer's Music", *New York Times*, 18 November 1907, p. 7 and H.E. Krehbiel, "Irish Symphony Brings Message", art. cit., p. 9.
115. Anon., "The Philharmonic Society: A Programme of Music by British and American Composers", *New York Times*, 15 February 1911, n.p.
116. *Ibid.*
117. Richard Aldrich., "The New York Symphony", art. cit., p. 7.

often charmingly, for orchestra."[118] In a review of the "Irish" Symphony in the *New York Times* Aldrich noted that "it is not great music, nor wholly original in style, but it is charming, of sustained interest and made with much dexterity and skill in the manipulation of its material."[119] Aldrich does note, however, that Stanford "does not always quite know when to stop and that at least the first three movements are extended considerably beyond the point where his material yields him profitable results."[120] His tendency to prolixity is noted in the second movement of the "Irish" Symphony where the second theme "is prolonged to the point of monotony".[121] While some American writers hinted at his traditional and conservative approach and described his work as "academic", this criticism of his writing did not appear to overly concern them and was not the central focus of their critiques, unlike their English counterparts.

Despite these seemingly negative criticisms, audiences in America rated the work on a par with Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique Symphony* and Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, an important achievement for a composer of the "English School".[122] A concert held at Carnegie Hall on 6 January 1912, which was devoted entirely to the music of British and American composers, included two movements of the "Irish" Symphony. Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* was the only other British orchestral work performed. Such programming bears testament to the American reputation which Stanford had earned for himself as a composer of note.

The Importance and Perception of Stanford's National Identity in America

A writer in the *New York Tribune* in 1897 noted that "in symphony, opera and ballad Dr Stanford has done work which places his name high among the refined nationalists in music",[123] and his music was compared to that of *Dvořák* and Grieg. It is not unusual for critics in other countries to focus on national elements in one's music. In the case of Sibelius, for example, Tomi Mäkelä has noted that German reception of Sibelius' music emphasises "the Nordic elements, Finnish nature and the character of the Finnish people as a source of inspiration for Sibelius's music", despite Sibelius himself being a cosmopolitan individual.[124] This may also

118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. Anon., "Philharmonic Society", art. cit., p. x7.
123. Anon., "Musical Comment, Grief as a Writer for Orchestra", art. cit., p. 16.
124. Tomi Mäkelä, "Towards a Theory of Internationalism, Europeanism, National and 'Co-Nationalism' in 20th Century Music" in Tomi Mäkelä (ed.), *Music and Nationalism in 20th Century Great Britain and Finland*, Hamburg, 1997, p. 175.

have a negative impact on the appreciation of a composer. Mäkelä comments, "Instead of being regarded as an individual artist on his own terms, Sibelius attracted superficial nationalist headlines from an early stage".[125] The emphasis that American critics placed on Stanford's identity as an Irish composer was possibly an attempt at writing to an increasingly middle-class Irish American community and potentially limited an appreciation of the totality of Stanford's compositional output and the complexity of his national identity.

The concept of portraying or representing a national identity through music is prominent in America during this period. An examination of reviews of performances of Stanford's works in America from the 1880s through to 1920 has revealed that a large number of his works were performed in a variety of venues and pioneering conductors such as Walter Damrosch and Gustav Mahler generated interest in his music. Works performed included sacred music, his arrangements of folk songs, art songs, choral, organ and orchestral works. Of his output it was his "Irish" works which clearly had the most popular appeal. The performance context of his "Irish" Symphony reveals much about the reception and interpretation of his music; on one occasion Mahler chose the symphony for inclusion in a programme to demonstrate nationalism in music.[126] Given the prominence of Stanford's music in concerts which celebrated Irish music and its inclusion in popular Sunday afternoon concerts suggests that American audiences believed that Stanford was among the best representative of this at the time in order to promote Irish music.

Shaped by the complexities of Irish society, Irish identity in America was similarly divided and difficult.[127] Following an initial wave of primarily Protestant migrants from Ireland, many Irish Catholics had emigrated to America in the second half of the nineteenth century and numerous societies were founded which acted as meeting points for Irish-Americans. The emergence of Irish American newspapers, the presence of academics engaged in the study of the Irish language and Irish history, and the foundation of societies that promoted the Irish language, as well as music and dance led to a strong awareness of heritage and identity amongst an Irish American community.[128] While Irish emigrants of both nationalist

125. *Ibid*., p. 173.
126. Anon., "Sunday Filled With Orchestra Music", art. cit., p. 11.
127. J.J. Lee, "Introduction: Interpreting Irish America", in Marion Casey & J.J. Lee (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 1-62.
128. Many Irish American newspapers from the 1850s onwards included Irish related articles. Indeed, in 1888, one journal gave a list of 44 newspapers nation-wide which were involved in promoting Irish. Many academics promoted the Irish language and Celtic departments were founded in universities. Many societies were founded with the aim of promoting the Irish language and they organized music classes as well as Irish classes. Some also give lectures on historical topics relating to Ireland. The publication *An Gaodhal* was popular among those with an interest in the Irish language and they encouraged people to embrace the language and the activities of their past. There were a substantial number of native Irish speakers in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century which is not surprising given the large

and unionist beliefs expressed an Irish identity in America, Scheer argues: "as political tensions increased, most people chose to ally themselves with individual national identities, Irish or English; but some went on believing in a United Kingdom".[129] Thus, unlike in Ireland where Stanford is often neglected by the dominant cultural nationalism that defines Irishness, he is perhaps a more acceptable "Irish" figure in America, where the Irishness of his music commands more attention than his political or religious beliefs.

By the 1880s, Irish musical culture was already a significant element of American musical life.[130] Aside from the folk music traditions of the mainly working classes, Thomas Moore's parlour repertoire was aimed at the middle classes.[131] It is that audience for which Stanford is probably most relevant. It is interesting to note that Moore drew from the collections of folk music by Edward Bunting, a contemporary of George Petrie, whose collection Stanford later edited. Stanford edited a collection of *Moore's Melodies* in 1895. Like Moore, Stanford is reinterpreting older Irish traditions and presenting them within the frames of a middle-class aesthetic. Moore's music featured prominently in the minds of the middle class with many familiar with a number of his melodies. Stanford's works which draw on Irish themes and melodies put him in a similar category to Moore in America. The large number of concerts featuring Irish musicians and Irish repertoire is testament to the strong interest in Irish culture in America. A number of concerts featured the Irish tenor John McCormack[132] and Irish culture was prominent on the vaudeville stage.[133] Considering the impact which his Irish themed works made on audiences in America and the focus on his contribution to the use of folk song and his arrangements, it is not surprising that Stanford was referred to as a nationalistic composer. Stanford's arrangements from both the Petrie Collection and *Moore's Melodies* restored were often performed

number of emigrants living in America and although these numbers were decreasing by the 1920s with most emigrants realizing that a knowledge of English was more beneficial to them in their daily lives in their new home, An awareness of their history and heritage was certainly prevalent among the Irish American community. Stanford's "Irish" music would certainly have been of interest to Irish Americans.

129. Christopher Scheer, "For the Sake of the Union: The Nation in Stanford's Fourth Irish Rhapsody", in Rachel Cowgill & Julian Rushton (eds.), *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, p. 160.
130. Nicholas Carolan, *A Harvest Saved: Francis O'Neill and Irish Music in Chicago*, Cork, Ossian Publications Ltd., 1997; Rebecca S. Miller, "Irish Traditional Music in the United States", in Marion Casey & J.J. Lee (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 411–416.
131. Sean Williams, "Irish Music Revivals Through Generations of Diaspora", in Rachel Cowgill & Julian Rushton (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Revival and Post-Revival Music-Cultures*, London, Oxford U.P., 2014, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765034.013.024, p. 596–615.
132. See for example, Anon., "Irish Tunes Please: Big Carnegie Audience", *The Mathews Journal,* November 1912, n.p. which reports on a performance by John McCormack at Carnegie Hall in which McCormack performed in a concert which also included Stanford's "Irish" Symphony. See also Anon., "Music Here and There", *New York Times,* 10 November 1912, n.p. which advertises the concert of 17 November 1912.
133. Robert W. Snyder, 'The Irish and Vaudeville' in Marion Casey & J.J. Lee (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 406–410.

in concerts in America.[134] Concerts of Irish music were also popular and the *Washington Herald* reports on a concert of national music of Ireland hosted by the Friday Morning Club which included a paper read along with illustrations of songs and a performance of Stanford's *Irish Fantasie Jig* op. 54 no. 3.[135]

Stanford's popularity in America may be due in part to an emphasis there on his Irish identity and the growing and upwardly mobile Irish community in America in the late nineteenth century. However, he retains a dual identity here also and, at times, Stanford is also referred to as a composer of the English School with reference to him as "a noted English musician",[136] or well-known English composer,[137] particularly in the case of church listings. He was also noted as "one of the most serious, dignified and ambitious of England's composers",[138] "a noted English musician" and the "distinguished English composer".[139] Young writing for the *Salt Lake Herald* noted that Stanford was "by far the most promising of the young English composers".[140]

While Stanford's music was regularly chosen for inclusion in programmes of English music in America, references to him as an Irish composer in America are more frequent. Stanford is repeatedly referred to as an Irish composer with articles referring to him as a "distinguished Irish composer",[141] "an Irish composer of deserved prominence",[142] and an "eminent Irish composer"[143], "the noted Irish composer",[144] and an "Irish composer long connected with Cambridge University".[145] Krehbiel comments that "Sir Charles Stanford is as thoroughly Irish that he finds Irish influences in quarters in which they have never been suggested before."[146] He also notes that Stanford "is an Irishman of the most admirable type and stands without a peer as a representative of the music of his native land."[147]

134. One such concert was reported on in Anon., "A Concert of Irish Music at the Academy – Plays Elsewhere", *Buffalo Courier,* 13 May 1889, p. 6. His arrangement of *My Love's an Arbutus* featured regularly in concert listings.
135. Anon., "Article", *Washington Herald*, 19 March 1911, p. 6.
136. See for example Anon., "Article", *Wilton CT Bulletin*, 1895, n. p.
137. Anon., "A Week's Musical Topics. Gossip of the Opera House and the Concert Hall. Programme of Music in this City – What the Composers are Doing Here and Abroad – Stanford's Music for Tennyson's 'Becket', Rubinstein as Conductor", *New York Times,* 19 February 1893, n. p.
138. Anon., "Music, Stanford's Irish Symphony", *New York Daily Tribune*, 23 January 1888, n. p.
139. Anon., "Philharmonic Society", *New York Tribune*, 13 October 1918, p. 4.
140. B.B. Young, "Article", *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 May 1884, p. 11.
141. Anon., "Musical Comment, Grief as a Writer for Orchestra", art. cit., p. 16. See also Anon., "Damrosch Remembers Erin's Day", *The Evening World*, 18 March 1912, p. 22.
142. Anon., "Fifth Concert of the Symphony Society", art. cit., p. 2.
143. Anon., "Famous Ballads of the Irish Bards", *Elmira NY Morning Telegram*, 18 October 1903, n. p.
144. Anon., "Sir C V Stanford, Noted Irish Composer, Dead", *Albany NY Evening Journal*, 29 March 1924, p. 13.
145. Anon., "Opera in London", *The New York Herald*, 2 May 1884, p. 7.
146. H.E. Krehbiel, "Folksongs and Music's Future", art. cit., p. 3.
147. *Ibid.*

The inconsistent presentation of Stanford as Irish or English in the musical press illustrates a number of interpretations that are relevant to understanding the transatlantic cultural flow at the start of the twentieth century. There is a lack of understanding as to Stanford's nationality or a belief that composers inherit the nationality of the country in which they reside. One reference which notes Stanford as "English or rather Irish musician",[148] demonstrates that there was confusion over his perceived identity in some quarters. Interestingly the *San Francisco Call* noted that it was an Englishman who wrote *Shamus O'Brien,* the only Irish opera ever written that amounts to anything.[149] Such confusion in American newspapers echoes comments made by recent writers including Axel Klein who have noted that Stanford was too Irish for the English, too English for the Irish and too German for both.[150] Despite the presentation of Stanford's perceived dual identity in the American press it does appear that his link to Ireland is felt more strongly, particularly considering the significant emphasis placed on his work with the folk music of Ireland. One writer noted Stanford has "written music as an Irishman who knew the musical treasures of his native isle; and in this symphony he has produced one of the finest of 'national' works in the larger forms."[151] Krehbiel believed the second movement of the "Irish" Symphony to be "the finest monument to the spirit of Celtic folksong which artistic music has produced."[152]

Few of Stanford's more "serious" compositions which represent his Germanic influences featured prominently in America. Rather, one of the greatest triumphs for Stanford in the America press is the recognition of his work with Irish folksongs. Aldrich notes that "he has done more with this material in an artistic form than anyone else"[153] and he "has done more than any other since Moore to revive the national music of his country",[154] while it was noted that he was "famous for his invaluable work in arranging Irish ballads".[155] Stanford's use of Irish folklorism in his music clearly appealed to the Irish living in America. Despite the confusion over his perceived identity in some quarters, given the popularity of his Irish infused compositions at this time, the critics undoubtedly believed that Stanford was appealing to a growing middle class of Irish descent.

While Stanford's academicism was noted by critics in English publications such as Shaw, it was Stanford's Irishness which appears to have

148. Anon., "The Foreign Stage. London", art. cit., p. 15.
149. Anon., "Article", *San Francisco Call*, 6 February 1898, p. 27.
150. Axel Klein, *Irish Classical Recordings: A Discography of Irish Art Music*, Westport, Greenwood, 2001, p. 145.
151. Anon., "The Philharmonic Society: A Programme of Music by British and American Composers", art. cit., n. p.
152. H.E. Krehbiel, "Irish Symphony Brings Message", art. cit., p. 9.
153. Richard Aldrich, "The New York Symphony", art. cit., p. 7.
154. Anon., "Ireland. Record of the Most Important of the Recent Events Culled from Exchanges", *Kentucky Irish America*, March 1900, n. p.
155. Anon., "Famous Ballads of the Irish Bards", art. cit., n. p.

secured a strong position for him in America among American audiences, conductors and critics. Another notable difference between English and American criticism at that time is the lack of emphasis placed on Stanford's place in the British Musical Renaissance in American newspapers. By the turn of the twentieth century Stanford had to struggle for his place among composers in England with continued reference to this in the press. Instead, American critics placed greater emphasis on the perception of Stanford as an Irish composer with much praise for his skilful handling and treatment of folk melodies in his compositions. However, increasing consciousness of nationalism in cultural politics appealed to different sections of society, perhaps similar to the emergence of the Irish tenor as "the paramount sonic representation of the Irish 'civilised homeland'".[156] Critics in America noted that Stanford's "Irish" Symphony was one of three symphonies, including those by Tchaikovsky and *Dvořák*, favoured by American audiences, highlighted by the choices submitted by American audiences for a special "request" programme to be given by the Philharmonic Society in 1911.[157] The construction of Stanford as a nationalistic composer may have made Stanford more relevant to an Irish readership. Writings in the American press underline perceptions of Stanford and Irish music and the continued reference to those works by Stanford with an Irish flavour and a suggestion to christen his second Piano concerto as the "Irish Piano Concerto" highlights that they believed that Stanford epitomised Irishness, which may have reflected opinions of his music. Stanford's music obviously made some impact in America; in 1919 the writer in the *New York Tribune* called for a performance of his recently completed opera *The Travelling Companion*.[158] Stanford was aware of his declining reputation in England. It is not evident if Stanford was aware of the interest being shown in his music in America. Extant correspondence from that period does not include reference to America, save for the correspondence with Horatio Parker in relation to his proposed visit to Yale in 1915. It is unfortunate if Stanford was not aware of the positive reception of his music in America.

Many commentators reflect on Stanford's identity as a composer but few have reached clear conclusions.[159] Perhaps it is because there are no easy answers. Rather than providing clarity, examining the reception of Stanford's music in America further complicates the issue but this may in turn highlight the potential for Stanford's music to simultaneously reach and be appreciated by different audiences who construct identities and interpretations based on their own cultural and political baggage. All at once, Stanford's music becomes, for his audiences, a symbol

156. Williams, *op. cit*., p. 605.
157. Anon., "Philharmonic Society", *New York Times*, 26 Feb 1911, p. x7.
158. Anon., "Article", *New York Tribune*, 31 August 1919, p. 5.
159. E. Hunt, *op. cit.*; H. White, *op. cit.*; J. Dibble, *op. cit.*; P. Rodmell, *op. cit.*; J. White, *op. cit*.

of nationalism and unionism, reflecting the work of an English, British and Irish composer, who is simultaneously critiqued, celebrated and criticised for an over-reliance on German or Brahmsian approaches and the use of Irish folk melodies for international audiences enjoying a diversity of sounds implicated with identities of nationhood. Such dichotomies resonate with O'Flynn's concerns with the Irishness of Irish music over a century later and could inform the dialectic on articulations of Irish music in the present.[160]

Conclusion

Motherway reminds us that "globalizing processes are present through Irish cultural history, namely in relation to the spread of Christianity, British colonization, and mass emigration".[161] Stanford's reception in America and in particular reviews of his "Irish" Symphony may be critically examined through the lens of globalisation and the exchange of cultural artefacts across the Atlantic. Placing Stanford's music in this context provides new perspectives through which to critique his musical output and the impact of his compositional practice beyond what has already been considered. The dichotomies evident in Stanford's own identity, his use of folk melodies, and portrayal of Irish characters, challenge simplistic analyses of Irish cultural identity on both sides of the Atlantic.

At the turn of the century, English critics were much harsher in their interpretation of Stanford's music as traditional and academic. While American critics include some similar views, it does not become the prime focus of their writings. While a number of newspapers include only short references to Stanford and his music, with coverage in some papers appearing shortly after more substantial reviews in larger newspapers in America such as the *New York Times*, or indeed reproducing content from leading English newspapers such as the *Times*, they are a useful source in order to demonstrate the spread of appreciation for Stanford's music across the country. The level of interest in Stanford and his music in American newspapers displays that there was interest among the readership in Stanford and they covered a range of matters relating to Stanford. American audiences were thus informed on various aspects of Stanford's career and activities, including both the accolades and challenges that he faced. Whether coverage in the American press relates to his Irishness or Britishness is unclear, and the inconsistencies of the references to his identity betray

160. John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, p. 199.
161. Susan Motherway, *The Globalization of Irish Traditional Song Performance*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2013, p. 1.

a confusion or lack of relevance for the readership. Ostensibly, the main concern is what is fashionable in America at that time.[162]

Stanford is ascribed various identities in the reviews of the American press. A critical evaluation of this inconsistency helps us to understand more about how his music was received and the importance of European national identities in the America at the start of the twentieth century. Although scholars agree on his unionist affiliation and political beliefs, it would appear that his audience, particularly in America, were not as assured or, perhaps, heard the "Irishness" of his music as an assertion of national and therefore nationalist identity. In some instances, it may be that particular audiences or promoters, such as Irish organisations, appropriated his music for political purposes. The performance of Stanford's works in America must be understood in the context of competing and incomplete national identities in Ireland and a post-colonial and diasporic context in America.

An examination of American criticism has highlighted both similarities and distinct differences to criticism of Stanford's music in English newspapers at this time. Despite numerous contradictions between writers in England, on the whole most American critics were supportive of his music, and while they pointed to deficiencies in the music, the themes highlighted in their reviews were often similar. The space afforded to reviews of some of Stanford's works is also significant and it is well known that the fate of some compositions can depend on the opinions of critics, especially those held in high regard, Aldrich and Henderson being two notable examples.

Despite the main focus of this paper on newspapers in the state of New York, examinations of other newspapers have demonstrated that Stanford's music received attention in a variety of publications across America. American critics ensured that his music was promoted and audiences informed about his life. The examination of the reviews of his music, coupled with the prominence given to some works in programmes, has allowed for an evaluation of American musical tastes at this time by assessing and analysing opinions of critics writing in pertinent newspapers and provides for new insights into reception studies of the composer and provides insights into the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the USA during that period.

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162. The use of the English language for his comic opera *Shamus O'Brien* may also be relevant in the context of American tastes and attitudes to opera at this time.

From Tralee to Times Square: Bringing Irish folk theatre to Broadway

Dr Daithí Kearney
Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland

Introduction

America has been a significant (market)place for Irish traditional music throughout the twentieth century to the present. From the early recordings of Michael Coleman and his contemporaries in the 1920s through the emergence of the Clancy Brothers in the 1960s to the leading roles of Michael Flatley and Jean Butler in the 1994 production *Riverdance*, musical developments on both sides of the Atlantic have been interlinked and two-directional.[1] The Irish American audience continues to be an important market for touring Irish performers with significant Irish music festivals in America presenting many leading Irish music groups each year.

In this paper, I focus on a tour by an Irish folk theatre group in the 1970s that entered spaces beyond the normal diasporic spaces but appealed primarily to an Irish American audience in spaces of popular culture. In 1976 a group of amateur musicians, singers and dancers travelled from Co. Kerry in the south west of Ireland to America where, amongst other venues, they performed at the Palace Theatre, Times Square, Broadway. The production by Siamsa Tíre, The National Folk Theatre of Ireland, entitled *Siamsa* (pronounced Shee-am-sa), presented aspects of Irish rural life in the early twentieth century through music, song, dance and mime. Through archival research focusing on newspapers in tandem with oral

1. Paul F. Wells and Sally K. Sommers-Smith, "Irish Music and Musicians in the United States: An Introduction", *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 4 (4), 2010, DOI: 10.1017/S1752196310000349, p. 395-400.

histories developed from the memories of some of those involved in the tour, I provide insights on the cultural distance between Ireland and the USA in the 1970s despite the existence of a large Irish diaspora. In particular I critique the representations of Irishness presented and the degree of acceptability of these to both Irish and American audiences. Furthermore, the reflections of cast members, particularly the children, highlight the differences in popular culture in terms of everyday life experiences and celebrity culture.

A growing body of literature informs a critical reflection of the work of Siamsa Tíre and in particular the 1976 tour to America, and highlights the importance of the company in understanding music, tourism and glocalisation in Ireland. There has been an increase in research on Siamsa Tíre in recent years, much of which focuses on dance. Catherine Foley, whose PhD research focused on the dance traditions of North Kerry, included a chapter on Siamsa Tíre in her book on Irish dance traditions.[2] Sharon Phelan, who also examined traditional dance practices of this area in her PhD, also included Siamsa Tíre in her book, *Dance in Ireland*.[3] While Helen Brennan's history of Irish dance makes barely passing reference to Siamsa Tíre,[4] Mulrooney,[5] Wulff[6] and Shapiro's[7] engagement with the debates surrounding dance in Ireland is much more aware of the role and work of the company and the traditions and contemporary practice from which it draws inspiration. Kearney has examined the company from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage, folklore and folklorisation, and tourism.[8] While much of this work focuses on Siamsa Tíre as an expression of folk or traditional culture, it is worth noting that Diane Theodores, dance critic with the *Irish Times*, interpreted Siamsa Tíre as being at the cutting edge of Irish dance theatre, developing something new.[9] The process of heritagisation and the development of a thriving tourism sector in the south west of Ireland, through which large audiences were attracted to

2. Catherine Foley, "Irish Traditional Step Dancing in North Kerry: A Contextual and Structural Analysis", unpublished PhD thesis, London, Laban Centre for Movement and Dance at Goldsmith's College. Catherine Foley, *Step Dancing in Ireland: Culture and History*, London, Routledge, 2013.
3. Sharon Phelan, *Dance in Ireland: Steps, Stages and Stories*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars, 2014.
4. Helen Brennan, *The Story of Irish Dance*, Dingle, Brandon, 1999.
5. Deirdre Mulrooney, *Irish Moves: An Illustrated History Of Dance And Physical Theatre in Ireland*, Dublin, Liffey, 2006.
6. Helena Wulff, *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland,* vol. 1. Oxford, New York, Bergahn, 2007.
7. Sherry Shapiro (ed.), *Dance in a World of Change: Reflections on Globalization and Cultural Difference*, Leeds, Human Kinetics, 2008.
8. Daithí Kearney, "The evolution of Irish folk theatre", in *Sharing Cultures – Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Intangible Heritage*, Lisbon, Green Lines Institute, 2013a, https://eprints.dkit.ie/338 (last accessed 8/11/2020); Daithí Kearney, "Revisiting Samhain: Two Directions on a Theme", in Conor Caldwell & Eamon Byers (eds.), *New Crops, Old Fields: Reimagining Irish Folklore*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2006, https://eprints.dkit.ie/614 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 99-124; Daithí Kearney, "Reliving Island Life: Staging Stories of the Blasket Islands", *Estudios Irlandeses* 12 (2), 2017, DOI: 10.24162/EI2017-7587, p. 73-90.
9. Diane Theodores, "A dance critic in Ireland", *Dance Chronicle*, 19 (2), 1996, DOI: 10.1080/01472529608569241, p. 191-211.

view performances by the company, also place Siamsa Tíre at the forefront of Irish popular culture in Ireland in the 1970s. Furthermore, their performances on Broadway and other large theatres at a time when many ethnic folk dance troupes were also entering these spaces, locate the company in popular culture in America at the same time.[10] The work of Ruth Barton[11] and Diane Negra[12] on Irish cinema is also informative, particularly in relation to the similarity of themes and tropes presented and their reception in America. Indeed Barton notes that 'the rural past has dominated representations of Irish history'[13] while Negra comments on the types of American audiences that typically consume Irish related commodities.[14] Despite being a theatre company, Siamsa Tíre is largely absent from the discourse on Irish theatre and comparisons with some other theatre companies, such as the Abbey Theatre herein, are of only limited value.

The development of scholarly enquiry into the *Riverdance* phenomenon[15] provides relevant themes and further underlines the importance of critically examining Siamsa Tíre in the context of popular culture, for "Siamsa Tíre can be said to have played an important indirect role in the genesis of *Riverdance*"[16] and, in the 1970s was challenging notions or constructions of Irish identity in music in American popular culture. The study of the 1976 tour by Siamsa Tíre to America can present perspectives on the circulation of culture between Ireland and America and the impact that this had on Irish traditional music, song, dance and theatre.

10. Articles in Chicago newspapers indicated that Mayor Daly, who held a reception for the cast of Siamsa in Chicago, also entertained Mexican and Polish groups and delegates on the same day. See also Anthony Shay, *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Companies, Representation, and Power*, Middletown (CT), Wesleyan U.P., 2002.
11. Ruth Barton, *Irish National Cinema*, London, Routledge, 2004.
12. Diane Negra (ed.), *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Pop Culture*, Durham, Duke U.P., 2006.
13. R. Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
14. D. Negra, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
15. Anthony McCann and Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain, "Riverdance—The Show by John McColgan, Michael Flatley, Mary Morrow; Lord of the Dance by John Reid, Michael Flatley, Bill Tennant, David Mallet, Andy Picheta", *Ethnomusicology*, 46 (2), 2002, DOI: 10.2307/852800, p. 366-369; Adrian Scahill, "Riverdance: Representing Irish Traditional Music", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 13 (2), 2009, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25660880 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p.70-76; Harry White, "Riverdance: Irish Identity and the Musical Artwork", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 13 (2), 2009, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25660879 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 63-69; James Flannery, "The Music of Riverdance", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 13 (2), 2009, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25660878 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 56-63; Frank Hall, "Ceol Traidisíunta: Traditional Music: Your Mr. Joyce Is a Fine Man, but Have You Seen 'Riverdance'?", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 1 (3), 1997, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20557432 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 134-142; Natasha Casey, "Riverdance: The Importance of Being Irish American", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 6 (4), 2002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20557823 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 9-25.
16. Barra Ó Cinnéide, *Riverdance: The Phenomenon*, Dublin, Blackhall, 2002, p. 51; Bill Whelan, interview with author, Dublin, 9 August 2017; See also H. Wulff, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 110.

Background and Context

Siamsa Tíre, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, developed from local initiatives in North Kerry in the south west of Ireland during the 1960s. Led by a young priest, Fr Pat Ahern (b.1935) from Moyvane, Co. Kerry, who later became the first Artistic Director of the Company, the group brought together the talents of a community of musicians, singers and dancers to perform shows inspired by folk culture and customs in their native Kerry. Buoyed by subsequent success in Dublin, where observers compared them to the Moysiev Dance Company, they received support in particular from stakeholders in the growing tourism sector and began a series of summer performances in Co. Kerry in 1968, which continue to the present.[17] In 1972, Ahern and architect Patrick O'Sullivan, wrote a document entitled *Plan for the Fostering of Irish Folk Theatre*,[18] which laid out plans for a dedicated theatre building to be located in the town of Tralee, two training centres located in the north and west of the county, and a professional cast, amongst other things. This document led to the foundation of Siamsa Tíre in 1974 and paved the way for the tour to America in September 1976. Echoing the philosophy of Johan Von Herder (1744-1803) espousing the use of local-as-national,[19] Siamsa Tíre presented a local folk culture under the banner of The National Folk Theatre of Ireland.

It is widely considered that Irish traditional music went through a period of revival from the 1950s to the 1970s.[20] The perceived revival was based on a number of factors including the growth of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ), an organisation founded in 1951 to encourage participation in Irish traditional music, song and dance and which established a network of competitions and branches that facilitated teaching.[21] The growth of cultural tourism in the west of Ireland is also an important factor.[22] In many instances, new and often urban contexts for the performance of and participation in Irish traditional music were created that were removed from the rural homesteads of the early twentieth century.[23]

17. D. Kearney, *op. cit.,* 2013a. Daithí Kearney, "Siamsa Tíre: The National Folk Theatre of Ireland", in *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, Dublin, UCD Press, 2013b, p. 933-934. C. Foley, *op. cit*., 2013.
18. Pat Ahern & Patrick O'Sullivan and Partners, Architects, *A Plan for Fostering the Growth of Traditional Irish Folk Culture*, Unpublished, 1972.
19. Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*, Madison, Wisconsin U.P., 1997.
20. Gearóid Ó hAlmhuráin, *A Short History of Irish Traditional Music*, Dublin, O'Brien, 2017.
21. Edward O. Henry, "Institutions for the promotion of indigenous music: the case for Ireland's Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann", *Ethnomusicology,* 33 (1), 1989, DOI: 10.2307/852170, p. 67-95; Rachel C. Fleming "Resisting cultural standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the revitalization of traditional music in Ireland", *Journal of Folklore Research,* 41 (2), 2004, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3814592 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 227-257.
22. Geraldine Cotter, *Transforming Tradition: Irish Traditional Music in Ennis, County Clare 1950-1980*, Ennis, Self-published, 2016, p. 122-133; Gearóid Ó hAlmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2016, p. 195.
23. Daithí Kearney, "(Re)locating Irish traditional music: Urbanising rural traditions", *Chimera*, 22, 2007, p. 181-196.

It is these rural settings, recognised by Ahern as being in danger of disappearing, that Siamsa Tíre sought to represent on stage. The "revival" arguably placed aspects of Irish traditional music in the realm of popular culture through the development of new performance contexts, the success of Seán Ó Riada's film soundtrack for *Mise Éire*, and the emergence of fusion bands such as the Horslips.[24]

In the context of the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the USA, the American-based Irish group the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem are also significant.[25] Motherway asserts: "By adapting the performance practice of the American Folk Movement, the Clancy Brothers presented a form of global conjuncture with Irish politics and international minority rights".[26] The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem had a significant influence on the evolution of Irish traditional music and song in Ireland, and in particular groups such as The Dubliners, who emerged from an urban traditional music scene to achieve chart success. In Tralee, the local community was engaging in new musical forms and showbands were popular.[27] As a theatre company doing something new with old traditions, Siamsa Tíre was embarking on a very different cultural mission that was no less connected to a globalised network. Ahern is engaged in glocalisation[28] through which he utilises local cultural heritage to respond to global interest in cultural difference. Rather than a rejection of globalising trends, Siamsa Tíre is part of a culture that is increasingly aware of its value in a global world and begins to appreciate what it can contribute to a global world and, in doing so, engages audiences through commercial activity including tourism and touring.

The 1960s was also a key period in the development of cultural tourism in Ireland with increasing numbers of American tourists visiting Ireland.[29] Tourism connected Ireland and the USA in a new way, almost reversing the direction of cultural influences caused by emigration. However, while Irish people still emigrated from Ireland to settle in America, tourism was largely one-way from America to Ireland during this period. The production *Siamsa* was developed from shorter productions in

24. Scott Reiss, "Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon" in Martin Stokes & Philip Bohlman (eds.), *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, New York, Scarecrow, 2003, p. 145-170, p. 153.
25. John Glatt, *The Chieftains: The Authorized Biography*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 53; Gearóid Ó hAlmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2016, p. 192.
26. Susan Motherway, *The Globalisation of Irish Traditional Song Performance*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 9.
27. In a national context, "By 1965, showbands dominated the live music scene with hundreds criss-crossing the country to fill engagements in thousands of rural and urban ballrooms". Noel McLaughlin & Martin McLoone, *Rock and popular music in Ireland: before and after U2*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2012, p. 22.
28. Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity", *Global Modernities*, 2, 1995, DOI: 10.4135/9781446250563.n2, p. 25-45.
29. G. Cotter, *op. cit.*, p. 122-133.

1960s that were developed for stage and television and by 1976 was already an integral part of the local tourism product in Kerry,[30] attracting large audiences including Americans who sought a romanticised representation of "home".

The performances of Siamsa Tíre are shaped by both the cultural traditions inherited by the cast and their response to the world of cultural change in which they are living. There is a process of retraditionalisation, outlined by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin as symbolically or practically strengthening "a sense of identity or cultural specificity weakened by the disenchantment of modernity […] to cater for segments of the market particularly favourable to traditional products".[31] In its presentation of Irish folk culture in America during the 1976 tour, Siamsa Tíre, operates at the borderline. The company presents an innovative art form that responds to its present with recourse to the past at a critical juncture in Irish history being shaped by globalisation and does so to foreign audiences seeking out Irish culture. As Bhabha notes,

> The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.[32]

Siamsa challenges the decline of Irish rural folk culture in the face of globalisation by bringing it to the global stage in an act of translation and insurgency that, for the cast of the production, is immediately relevant to their everyday lives.

There is a danger in bringing *Siamsa* to America that the audiences and critics will reshape the representation of culture by the company. Reflecting on the experience of the Abbey Theatre in America, John Harrington states:

> As in many other cultural, political, and economic matters, America has been a favoured trade partner with Ireland in theatre. For many, the history of transatlantic cultural commerce represents Irish artists

30. Catherine E. Foley, "Cultural Tourism, Meitheal, and Re-presentation of Heritage: Traditional Step Dancing and Siamsa Tíre, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland", *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 47, 2015, DOI: 10.5921/yeartradmusi.47.2015.0141, p. 141-160.
31. Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, "The national and the local – practices of de- and re-traditionalization", *FF Networks*, 28, 2005, p. 10-13, p. 16-18.
32. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 10.

> and America hosts at their mercenary worst: Irish performance standards eroded by the influence of American 'entertainment', and American commodification of an artistic heritage.[33]

An important aspect of the *Siamsa* production was that it was not developed specifically for an American audience nor changed for performances in America. For example, McCarthy points to the success over the preceding decade of *Fiddler on the Roof*,[34] which was also concerned with an ethnic group with explicit references to tradition and change.[35] *Siamsa* remains the same as that which was developed and performed in Kerry over the preceding decade and American audiences witnessed the same production as audiences in Ireland. Indeed Nicky McAuliffe told me that it did not matter whether it was Broadway or Abbeydorney, a small rural village in Co. Kerry, they did their thing and probably never realised how truly significant it was.[36] There is a desire amongst both the promoters for a sense of authenticity in the product they will present alongside a consciousness of the commodification of culture and the market demand in larger American theatres. In many ways, the promoters' desires and the subsequent response of audiences and critics may be read through what Aileen Dillane interprets as *ersatz* nostalgia based on the work of Arjun Appadurai.[37] What the American audiences for *Siamsa* seek and respond to is "nostalgia without memory",[38] but for the cast, many have immediate experience of the lifestyle and culture that they are performing on stage.

Tours by Irish groups to the USA helped attract some of these tourists to Ireland and are, to some extent, a counterbalance to the influx of American tourists to Ireland. While Siamsa Tíre sought to preserve the traditions of their locality, they were doing so by connecting with a global audience and in the context of a broader cultural revival and

33. John P. Harrington, "The Abbey in America: The Real Thing", in Nicholas Grene & Chris Morash (eds.), *Irish Theatre on Tour*, Dublin, Carysfort, 2005, p. 35-50, p. 35.
34. Joseph Stein, Aleichem Sholem, Jerry Bock & Harnick Sheldon, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Crown, 1964.
35. *Fiddler on the Roof* was revived on Broadway in December 1976, and ran for 176 performances at the Winter Garden Theatre. Mark Slobin & Richard Spottswood, "David Medoff: A Case Study in Interethnic Popular Culture", *American Music*, 3 (3), 1985, DOI: 10.2307/3051470, p. 261-276, provide further insights into the negotiation of Jewish identity on the American stage. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett also engages with the representation of Jewish culture in America which provides interesting comparison for this study.
36. Interview, Nicky McAulliffe and Michael O'Shea, Tralee, 16 May 2016.
37. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, Minnesota U.P., 1995. Moving beyond Appadurai's theorisation of consuming nostalgia in order to experience nostalgia or recover what you never had in the first place, themes or rural life in *Siamsa* appeared to have resonated with audiences from a range of ethnic audiences in urban America. While the media did focus on Irish aspects of the performance, with reference to authenticity, nostalgia and the complexity of competing or unexpected representations of Irishness, they are appreciated and critiqued in relation to ethnic performing groups from other cultures. For a more recent examination of authenticity and representation in Irish traditional music in America see Aileen Dillane, "Nostalgic Songlines and the Performance of Irish Identity", *Bealoideas: The Journal Of The Folklore Of Ireland Society*, 81, 2013, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24862815 (last accessed 5/11/20), p. 19-36.
38. A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 30.

commodification of traditional music. The development of Siamsa Tíre is contemporaneous with the development of *Seisiún*[39] and *Scoraíocht*[40] performances by CCÉ, which Ahern, in turn, influenced. Cotter recognises the development of *seisiún* as a "response to a growth in tourism in the region".[41] Writing about County Clare, she notes "Shannon Airport, Shannon Development and key figures such as Brendan O'Regan and Niall Behan were part of a strategic cultural-economic plan that revamped Irishness for the tourist market, while at the same time raising the profile of Irish traditional music and staged shows locally".[42] Brendan O'Regan was a crucial figure in the early success of Siamsa Tíre and North Kerry was located in the same economic region as County Clare, which at that time was developing Bunratty Castle and Folk Park amongst other attractions.[43] There is a symbiotic relationship between the growth of Shannon Airport and an increase in visitor numbers and the development of cultural initiatives in the region.[44] While experiencing success in Ireland, it was also important for the flow of cultural displays to reach audiences in the USA, necessitating the touring of Irish groups to America. Motherway notes that: "From the 1970s onwards, artists based at home addressed a global audience that was supported by the diaspora and enabled by the communications revolution".[45] New contexts for Irish traditional music were also developed amongst diasporic communities, particularly in England and America.[46] Indeed CCÉ embarked on their first tour of the USA in 1972, for which Ahern was the producer, although he did not travel with the group. Dancer Patricia Hanafin also travelled on a subsequent tour to the USA with the organisation, as did Siamsa musicians Nicky and Anne McAulliffe.[47]

Commenting on the "rise and rise of traditional music, both as living practice and commercial enterprise, from the volunteerism of *Comhaltas*

39. *Seisiún* refer in this instance to a series of staged performances or Irish traditional music, song and dance, usually taking place during the summer months, by local groups affiliated to the national organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.
40. *Scoraíocht* was a form of short stage show on a theme that incorporated Irish traditional music, song a dance with a simple theme and reference to aspects of Irish life or local heritage.
41. G. Cotter, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 122-133.
44. Brian Callanan, *Ireland's Shannon story: leaders, visions, and networks: a case study of local and regional development*, Irish Academic Press, 2000.
45. S. Motherway, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 9.
46. Susan Gedutis, *See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance*, Boston (MA), Northeastern U.P., 2004; Reg Hall, *Irish Music and Dance in London 1870-1970*, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sussex, 1994; Mick Moloney, "Ceol traidisiúnta: Traditional Music: Irish Dance Bands in America", *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 2 (3), 1998, https://ww.jstor.org/stable/20557537 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 127-137; Sean Williams, "Irish Music Revivals Through Generations of Diaspora", in Caroline Bithell & Juniper Hill (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2014, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765034.013.024, p. 598-617.
47. It is worth noting that many more members of Siamsa Tíre would participate in national and international tours with CCÉ in subsequent decades and, at the time of the tour by Siamsa Tíre to America, Labhrás Ó Murchú, Árd Stiurtheoir (Director General) of CCÉ was on the board of Siamsa Tíre.

Ceolóirí Éireann in the early 1950s through to the phenomenal success and influence of traditional music's contemporary derivatives, notably *Riverdance* in the 1990s", Fitzgerald and O'Flynn note "cultural developments in any milieu are linked to the social, economic and political factors that obtain in that period".[48] Changes in Irish political policy and trade meant Irish society was increasingly influenced by international factors during this period. Ó hAlmhuráin states, "Audacious consumerism, American popular music, and countercultural politics were key vectors of global cultural flows in the 1960s and 1970s".[49] Ahern's 1972 plan explicitly makes reference to joining the EEC and the challenge presented to the preservation of a distinctive Irish folk culture. The plan and subsequent tour take place at a moment in time when the commodification of Irish culture, and Irish traditional music more particularly, is being realised in a variety of contexts. It is in the 1970s that ensembles or "supergroups" such as The Chieftains, The Bothy Band, Dé Dannan and Planxty became commercially successful. These groups brought their music to and influenced audiences all over the world.[50] The Chieftains, formed in 1965, did not become full time professionals until 1975, having first toured America in 1972.[51] While The Chieftains made an impact in terms of the soundscape of Irish traditional music in Ireland and internationally through concert performances, the medium of theatre brought Siamsa Tíre to a different audience with a broader cultural message. Neither vaudeville nor an instrumental "supergroup", the performances by Siamsa Tíre in the USA in the 1970s both challenged and reinforced some stereotypical notions of Irish identity, particularly in the context of music and song, by introducing audiences to less popular and more localised aspects of Irish cultural traditions through the medium of theatre.

Many national and ethnic identities were explicitly presented on the American stage in the 1970s with a focus on dance.[52] The importance of dance for understanding the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the USA is highlighted by Moloney who states: "Irish step dancing has, for over a century, been one of the most visible aspects of Irish culture in Ireland and one of the most consciously projected forms of ethnic cultural identity among the Irish in America".[53] Contemplating the role of folk dance companies in the promotion of nationalism or national identities, Shay writes: "The value of utilizing folk dance for the representation of an entire nation emanates from the common public view

48. Mark Fitzgerald & John O'Flynn, *Music and identity in Ireland and beyond*, London, Routledge, 2016, p. 12.
49. G. Ó hAlmhráin, *op. cit.,* 2016, p. 189.
50. S. Williams, *op. cit*., 2014, p. 611.
51. John Glatt, *The Chieftains: The Authorized Biography*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 83; Bill Meek. *Paddy Moloney and the Chieftains*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1987.
52. A. Shay, *op. cit.*, 2002.
53. Mick Moloney, J'aime Morrison & Colin Quigley (eds.), *Close to the Floor: Irish Dance from the Boreen to Broadway*, Madison, Wisconsin U.P., 2009, p. 1.

that these dances emerge from some primordial source of the nation's purest and most authentic values, and that folk dances, music, and costumes are timeless and date from some prehistoric period".[54] The dance forms used by Siamsa Tíre in their performances come from the folk traditions and were used for entertainment in local social contexts. Writing in the 1950s, Walter Terry states:

> The bright and prideful dances of Spain, the physically graceful and spiritually profound symbolisms of India's classical dance, the movement poetry of Japan and many other forms of national dance arts have enriched our stages. They are not international forms, such as the classical ballet; not contemporary forms, such as modern dance; not the fruit of individual genius, although the individual may and does contribute to their vocabularies of action. These are ethnic dances created over the centuries or millennia by a race, by a people, and they are best divided into two parts, although the two frequently overlap: folk dances, which are designed primarily for participation, and ethnologic dances, art dances built for performing by the highly gifted in theaters, in temples, in cabarets.[55]

Although Siamsa Tíre presented much more than dance, the local dance traditions of North Kerry are a key component of the company's production. Consideration must also be given to the music and song, as well as the development of simple narratives on stage. In the context of this article, the story of the tour and the memories of the cast also shed light on the circulation of culture between Ireland and the USA during the 1970s.

Constructing the Story

My methodology for this research has involved the collection of oral histories through meetings and interviews with cast members and others involved at the time. These inform the interpretation of archival and newspaper research, aided by the personal archive of director Pat Ahern. Dermod McCarthy, who collaborated with Ahern on the organisation of the tour, also kept materials including a report to the board written immediately preceding the tour.[56] The presence of *Irish Independent* journalist Desmond Rushe on the tour ensures that there is much extant media coverage in Irish newspaper sources as regular reports were published in the

54. A. Shay, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 6.
55. Walter Terry, *The dance in America*, New York, Harper & Row, 1956, p. 187.
56. Dermod McCarthy, *Siamsa U.S. Tour: Report by Tour Co-Ordinator*, unpublished Report, 10 September 1976.

Irish Independent during the period of the tour, some of which referred to reviews in American newspapers, to which I have also turned. My positionality in the context of this research is important. While not born at the time of the tour, I became part of the company in the early 1990s. Even prior to that, my dance teacher was Patricia Hanafin, the choreographer for the original production; my paternal grandfather came from the same village, Moyvane, as Ahern; I learned from, performed with and was directed by various members of that cast. Their memories are part of a narrative that I heard retold in my youth and which inform a critical reflection of the tour in the context of the circulation and understanding of popular culture between Ireland and the USA in the 1970s.

The study of Siamsa Tíre moves beyond traditional scholarly research into Irish traditional music and beyond the paradigms of ethnomusicology to address in part concerns and calls expressed by musicologists Nicholas Cook[57] and Harry White[58] who promote a reception history of Irish traditional music to augment the existing scholarship. Cook emphasises the inclusivity of a reception based approach, which underpins part of this research, while I also consider the substance of the work itself. However, moving beyond musicological and ethnomusicological approaches, I also engage with ethnochoreology.[59] Recognising that "Dance is a big part of what Siamsa Tíre does", Artistic Director Jonathon Kelliher also notes that "dance is not our main thing" with music and song also part of the ethos.[60] For Kelliher, "showing off the dance, or the song, is secondary to getting into the story".[61] Siamsa Tíre is a theatre company and this research also draws upon theatre studies, particularly the representations of Irishness in Irish theatre and the reception of Irish theatre abroad. My examination of Siamsa Tíre in a global rather than Irish context may address a concern raised by White, taking the research beyond the "aggressive strain of internal debate as to the very nature of traditional music itself" and place it in a wider context "so that the cultural reception of traditional music in Ireland might begin to acknowledge its strong correlative status in relation to ethnic projects elsewhere".[62] To this end, I critique *Siamsa* in the context of other folk dance and folk theatre companies and critically assess the creative product and reception thereof by international audiences in comparison with similar modes of entertainment from other cultures.

57. Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1998, DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192853820.001.0001.
58. Harry White, "The Invention of Ethnicity: Traditional Music and the Modulations of Irish Culture", *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, p. 373-385.
59. C. Foley, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 4.
60. Cited in D. Mulrooney, *op. cit.,* 2006, p. 247, 254.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
62. H. White, *op. cit.*, 2014, p. 282.

Adding an additional layer of understanding, similar to ethnomusicologist Timothy Cooley's examination of festivals,[63] I move beyond the content of the staged presentations and the reception as presented in media reports, to examine the frame, considering in particular the actions and experiences of the community that created and performed these presentations. As Mick Moloney concludes in his study of Irish musicians on vaudeville, the life stories of the performers provide valuable insights into both the development of theatre and social history.[64] While the production represents aspects of Irish folk culture presented to an American audience, the experiences of the cast reflect differences in culture between Ireland and the USA at that point in time. While there is an appreciation of how processes of globalisation and American culture were influencing social and cultural change in Ireland, America is not "the puppeteer of a world system of images", rather "one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes".[65] Informed by Homi K. Bhabha's critical engagement with the location of culture,[66] the experiences of the cast are contrasted with the cultural expectations of a diaspora whose imagination of Irishness, with an embedded quest for authenticity, differs to that which is presented in *Siamsa*. As Williams writes, for the diaspora any sense of authenticity in Irishness is a moving target, "coloured by generational interests, needs and priorities".[67] This paper engages with that understanding and quest through a critique of cultural circulation between Ireland and the US and an examination of the reception of the performance of Irish folk culture.

From Ballymac to Broadway

Siamsóirí na Ríochta were a theatre group formed in Kerry in the mid-1960s. They performed regularly in Tralee and also on occasion in Dublin, where they performed in the Peacock and Abbey Theatre, through which they came to the attention of a number of important supporters. Performing in Dublin provided them with experiences beyond the local and highlighted their potential to engage audiences outside of Kerry. It also brought the amateur cast into a professional world of theatre. Dancer Jimmy Smith, at the time a barber in Tralee, remembers travelling to Dublin for six weeks and "rehearsing like a professional company".[68] Similarly, singer Mary Deady wrote at the time, "We enjoyed meeting

63. Timothy J. Cooley, "Folk Festival as Modern Ritual in the Polish Tatra Mountains", *The World of Music*, 41 (3), https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699291 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 31-55.
64. Mick Moloney, *Irish Music on the American Stage*, Cork, University College, 1993.
65. A. Appadurai, *op. cit.,* 1995, p. 31.
66. H. K. Bhabha, *op. cit.,* 1994.
67. S. Willliams, *op. cit.,* 2014, p. 598.
68. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.

people like Martin Dempsey and Máire Ní Néill. It was quite an experience to work with professionals. The Siamsóirí provided the singing and dancing. We mimed the scenes while the Abbey actors played the speaking roles".[69] As well as encountering professional performers, the group also gained the attention of audiences, which contained stakeholders who had interests in supporting the development of the company. With the support of his Bishop, Éamonn Casey, Pat Ahern developed a plan for the development of a national folk theatre. One of the results of this was the founding of a National Folk Theatre Company, Siamsa Tíre, in 1974. Shortly afterwards they toured Germany where they received the European Folk Art Award in 1975.[70]

As a National Folk Theatre, the next step was for Siamsa Tíre to perform more on international stages. Upon hearing about an invitation extended from the American Revolution Bi-centennial Administration to the Irish Government to select Irish groups to participate in the anniversary, Siamsa Tíre made an approach to the Cultural Relations Committee of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in the autumn of 1975. Mr Con Howard, Secretary of the Committee, advised Fr Dermod McCarthy that an application for funding would be enhanced if accompanied by a schedule of proposed dates and venues for performances. Both Pat Ahern and Dermod McCarthy sought out theatrical promoters in the USA and, on the advice of the Assistant Director of the International Theatre Institute of the United States, chose the Brannigan-Eisler Performing Arts International.

Tour co-coordinator Dermod McCarthy met with Messrs Brannigan and Eisler in New York and organised for them to see the RADHARC film *Bímís ag Rince*,[71] which documented the building of Teach Siamsa in Finuge and the founding of the National Folk Theatre. While they agreed to take on the production upon seeing the documentary and meeting McCarthy, they first wished to come to Ireland to experience and witness what Siamsa Tíre was. During that trip, they had the opportunity to attend a performance of the production and were also brought to see the training centres at Finuge and Carraig,[72] putting the production in the context of a larger cultural movement.

By 1976 the cast of *Siamsa* was well established and consistent. They were drawn from a relatively small geographical spread and a number of

69. Máire Ní Dhaoda, "Leathanach na nÓg", *Treoir*, 2 (3), 1970, p. 4.
70. C. Foley, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 206.
71. Radharc, Documentary, *Bímís ag Rince – Siamsa Tíre*, first broadcast on RTÉ, 30/03/1975.
72. As part of the 1972 plan for the development of folk theatre, Ahern proposed a number of training centres modelled on traditional farm houses in the region. The first of these was opened in 1974 in Finuge, a small village in north Kerry between the towns of Tralee and Listowel. The second, opened a short time later, was located in the townland of Carraig in the west Kerry Gaeltacht, an area where the Irish language is the primary language.

the cast were related to each other. Many of them had experience of performing beyond the company but they remained amateurs with a variety of professions outside of music and performance. For some, like Mike Shea and Jimmy Smith, they were leaving wives at home with young children. Seán Ahern had to organise his farm: "People thought I was mad but I got a farm manager in and he managed the cows and things for me. And my father was alive at that time".[73] While performing in the evenings in Tralee was manageable, travelling to America for a month would prove to be a greater challenge. However, it is the presence of this particular community cast that adds to the sense of authenticity of Siamsa Tíre.

One of the biggest challenges facing the company was the ability to sell to American audiences. McCarthy remembers the feeling that at that time Irish people in America were not renowned for attending the theatre.[74] Nonetheless, Irish themed performances were not unknown and *The Plough and the Stars* was produced by the Abbey Theatre at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1976 while the Chieftains also performed at Carnegie Hall in 1976. The nature of the American tour by Siamsa Tíre required promotion and entrepreneurship including the creation of promotional material and album.[75] It also required significant support from other stakeholders. In his report to the board of Siamsa Tíre ahead of the tour, Dermod McCarthy wrote:

> From the very outset, I felt it of paramount importance that we provide new publicity material on SIAMSA. In particular I felt that we needed a colour souvenir brochure on the performers and the production, and an LP record of the music and songs in the show. Apart from being essential in the work of promotion for the American tour both of these would be long-term on-going assets for the Company.[76]

McCarthy's report highlights the importance of planning for a future beyond the tour but also highlights the infancy of Siamsa Tíre as a company in a professional arts context. A series of photographs were taken in the Ash Theatre on 16 January 1976 and journalist Frank Delaney wrote a text for a brochure. Delaney waived his fee and Brian Fox of Bord Fáilte provided financial support for the design costs of the brochure, designed by Willie Van Veizen. Four major Irish companies – Shannon Development, Aer Lingus, the Irish Tourist Board in North America, and Irish Distillers – agreed to take full page advertisements in the book. The LP, *SIAMSA*, was recorded at Teach Siamsa, Finuge from the 7-9 May 1976 and subsequently released on the REX label, a subsidiary of the Decca Corporation.

73. Interview, Listowel, 17 May 2016.
74. Interview, Dublin, 22 April 2016.
75. *Siamsa* Cast Recording. Rex Records LP#SPR-1016.
76. D. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, 1976, p. 2.

It was voted 'Record of the Week' on RTÉ during the week commencing 30 August 1976 and was circulated in the USA as part of the promotion for the tour. Cast member Catherine Spangler remembers that the company sold out of LPs during the American tour and more had to be pressed in America.[77]

A number of events helped increase the profile of the tour at home. The American Ambassador, Walter Curley, and Cultural Officer Joseph Keane, held a reception at the US Embassy in Dublin on 27 July 1976 where details of the tour were publically announced and the LP and brochure launched. The reception was featured in both Irish and American newspapers. *Irish Independent* journalist Desmond Rushe joined the tour, his expenses covered as part of the tour's budget. Throughout the tour he wrote regular articles for publication in Ireland. The articles helped develop a sense of excitement about the tour in Tralee at a time when access to telephones was limited and letters took some days to reach their destination.

Despite all of the planning and efforts of all involved, there were further challenges for Siamsa Tíre. At one point, McCarthy received a message from America indicating that the tour was to be cancelled due to poor advance ticket sales. McCarthy and Ahern both engaged directly in promoting the tour, in part by travelling to America and performing in a number of spaces where they met with the diaspora. Furthermore, the Minister for the Gaeltacht Tom O'Donnell was pivotal in securing funding for the tour when difficulties arose. In America, Siamsa Tíre successfully attracted an audience of diverse ethnic backgrounds and did not depend on the Irish diaspora, which was crucial to the tour's success. The challenge of engaging with the Irish diaspora was not helped by the divided nature of this community and the complexity of Irish American identities and politics. The Irish diaspora in America consists of different generations whose memories, real or inherited, differed. As Rushe wrote in the *Irish Independent:*

> Compared with the Italians, the Poles, the Germans and others, the lack of ethnic identity on the part of the Irish is incredible. Everywhere one goes – or almost everywhere – one hears of divisions, of jealousies, of rival organisations scoring off one another and of individuals more interested in boosting their egos or feathering their nests than in giving practical expression to their alleged interest in Ireland.[78]

77. Interview, Tralee, 27 January 2017.
78. Des Rushe, "Incredible Lack of Ethnic Identity", *Irish Independent*, 28 September 1976.

Rushe highlights divisions amongst an Irish diaspora in America that may not have been visible to people in Ireland but are crucial to understanding the circulation of culture between the two countries and the reception of Siamsa Tíre in the US.

To assist the promotion of the tour in the US, Siamsa Tíre enlisted the services of American based publicist Daniel Langan. He arranged a number of opportunities in the various cities the cast performed in. He remembers:

> The tour began in Chicago where an appearance by three cast members on the highly regarded Studs Terkel program carried by the National Public Radio network brought Siamsa to the attention of listeners throughout the nation and more importantly to the cities the troupe would visit. It also had immediate results with people from Milwaukee Wisconsin and the Twin Cities of Minnesota (Minneapolis and St. Paul) who went to Chicago to attend performances.[79]

With all of this effort behind the scenes to get the company to America and sell tickets for the performances, the focus turned to the show itself.

On Stage – Dance, Song, Music and Mime

The initial material for the performances was developed from memories of the founding artistic director, Pat Ahern, which involved various tasks and social aspects common in rural north Kerry in the early twentieth century. A fiddle player himself with a strong interest in the Irish song tradition, Ahern combined music, song and dance with theatricalised representations of Irish rural life. The programme informs us that the production follows the cycle of the year and there is a timelessness that suggests the everyday nature of many of the activities including feeding the animals and making the butter. There is an education value for those not familiar with Irish life and the folkways and customs of a generation who are now entering old age. The show included various scenes that represented the activities of Irish rural life in the early twentieth century. Characters endeavour to milk a cow and make butter in a churn, dance with daisy trains and in imitation of chickens. The traditions of Christmas such as the lighting of the Christmas candle and the wren boys featured. It is from the memories of people such as Pat Ahern that scenes and dances

79. Personal correspondence, 23 June 2016.

using flails, recalling the visit of the shoemaker and the skills of thatching and making rope were initially developed. In this production, these activities are seamlessly interwoven as vignettes in a continuously moving performance that included music, song, dance, mime and comedy.

The thatched cottage was a central symbol in *Siamsa* and for Siamsa Tíre more generally and a thatched cottage was the main component of the set. It was modelled on the typical thatched cottage that would have been a familiar sight in the Irish landscape in the nineteenth century and features in iconic art from the early twentieth century by artists such as Paul Henry. As geographer Catherine Nash notes, "the isolated rural cottage represented the realization, both in the physical fabric of the landscape and in the moral and spiritual domain, of the ideal form of Irish society. Its depiction in Irish landscape painting participated in the construction of Irish identity and the gender identities on which it relied. Representation of landscape in early twentieth-century Ireland was coded with meaning".[80] There are semblances of "the myth of the West", a representation of a rural Ireland promoted by writers such as Yeats and Synge and found in the art of Paul Henry, later evoked in films such as Robert O'Flathery's *Man of Aran* (1934).[81] In America, Williams recognises that the stone cottage, the weeping mother and the sweet cailín were simulacra of generic and idealised rural, nineteenth century European settings.[82] In her examination of Irish harping in the mid-twentieth century, Helen Lawlor also notes the evocation and depiction of an Irish whitewashed context in the images for Mary O'Hara's early recordings from the 1950s, which were popular in both Ireland and America.[83] Audiences experienced life both inside and outside of the cottage in *Siamsa*. While the first half portrayed numerous farm tasks, including milking cows and making butter, the second half focused on pastimes and entertainment as the cast gathered around the open fire.

Echoing the romanticised imagery of the cottage and the romanticisation of rural work is the sense of continuous fun and laughter in the community being represented. "The fun in the village motif is a common denominator for many of the choreographies of state folk ensembles, and even more so among amateur companies. […] This simplistic and romantic depiction of village life where even work is a game – a hangover from nineteenth-century images of peasants – stands in stark contrast to the grim reality of village life in Eastern Europe and the Middle East".[84]

80. Catherine Nash, "Remapping and renaming: new cartographies of identity, gender and landscape in Ireland", *Feminist Review*, 44, 1993, DOI: 10.2307/1395194, p. 39-57.
81. Patrick J. Duffy, "Writing Ireland" in Brian Graham, *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 64-84. p. 67.
82. William Williams, *Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920*, Urbana, Illinois U.P., 1996, p. 116.
83. Helen Lawlor, *Irish Harping, 1900-2010*, Dublin, Four Courts, 2012, p. 152.
84. A. Shay, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 9

Although Siamsa Tíre may be understood as more than a dance company,[85] the desire of the company to engage with the theatre as a form did not mean that they developed complex plots, narratives or characterisations as was the case in other Irish drama and, to a certain extent, this is one of the attractions of the company for audiences. Writing in relation to a 1988 tour to New York by the Abbey Theatre with Tom McIntyre's *The Great Hunger*, Harrington notes that "American audiences demanded uplifting versions on stage of the land of their increasingly distant ancestry."[86] It was this sense of happiness and positivity that roused audiences to their feet, but could also draw negative comments from the critics.

The professionalism of the touring company was important in gaining a positive reaction from audiences and critics.[87] Despite being an amateur cast, dancer Jimmy Smith recalls:

> We were very well rehearsed and we knew exactly what we were doing. And we had to make it look as if it was our first time doing it […] We had a great thing on stage that we'd create our own entertainment within the show on stage. So everything was new to us […] we'd always find something to smile about naturally without making it false […] it was never an act.[88]

It was the gradual filtering of material by friends under the direction of Pat Ahern that helped refine the production. Ahern states: "So much of what happened was spontaneous; it was latent within them, they were not trained actors in a formal sense."[89] Trained professionally or otherwise, the cast of Siamsa Tíre had inherited rich traditions and cultural heritage and they were proud to present these, on and off stage under the guidance of Ahern.

One of the best received aspects of the show was the appearance of two older north Kerry dancers. Seán Ahern remembers "They enjoyed Jerry Nolan and John McCarthy. They were mad for those two people… They had a divil may care attitude when they went out on stage. They

85. C. Foley, *op. cit*., 2013, p. 200.
86. J. Harrington, *op. cit*., 2005, p. 46.
87. A number of the cast had experience of performing beyond the company. Seán Ahern was renowned for his performances with the Brosna Céilí Band, which also featured musicians Nicky and Anne McAulliffe. Patricia Hanafin had previously toured to America with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, as had the McAulliffes. Another member, Aidan O'Carroll, was late departing for the American tour with Siamsa Tíre as he was completing his final examinations in music at University College Cork; he received news of his first class honours results while in America. O'Carroll was also part of a group, Macalla, with his sister Margaret, and fellow cast members Mary Deady and Michael O'Shea. While in America, they were offered an opportunity to record and remain in the US for an extended period. Due to various circumstances and family commitments in Ireland, this did not happen, although a recording was made.
88. Interview, Jimmy Smith, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
89. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.

didn't give a damn."[90] This attitude also gave a sense of spontaneity[91] and Foley notes how: "The participation of the older traditional step dancers in the shows provided an 'authenticity' to the show while also assisting to validate the work of the National Folk Theatre."[92] Foley also notes that "it elevated the status of these step dancers within their respective communities and brought the younger generation of actors in contact with them, bridging the gap between these different generations."[93] The sense of recognising the authenticity of the material that Siamsa Tíre was presenting predates the tour itself and is inherent in Ahern's 1972 plan. Interrogating the concept of authenticity in an urban American setting, Dillane explores "competing notions of Irishness"[94] as imagined and realised through musical encounters stating:

> what constitutes the Irishness of a sound structure seems to have more to do with who is performing and receiving the music and their particular identification with it, and what they say about it, and less to do with form and content itself.[95]

As Williams asserts in relation to the Irish diaspora in America[96] but equally important for the still developing folk theatre company at home in Ireland, a connection to idealised "authentic" channels such as master performers reinforces the perceived value of what is being presented and performed.

The stories from cast members, particularly relating to McCarthy and Nolan, highlight the existence of a first person authenticity in which the artists "speak the truth of their own situation", simultaneous with third person authenticity in which "they speak the truth of their own culture, thereby representing (present) others."[97] Like Seán Ahern, Jerry Nolan (1915-1984) was a farmer from Dromurhur, Moyvane, a small village in North Kerry. He left school around the age of fourteen to work on the farm and though he never formally attended a school of dance, he learned from dancing masters and local step dancers including Jeremiah Molyneaux, Joe Vaughan, Paddy White and Jack Lyons, all important dancers in the narrative of Siamsa Tíre. Nolan performed at local house dances, crossroads or platform dances[98] and concerts, as well as participated in the Wren[99] each year.

90. Interview, Listowel, 17 May 2016.
91. Ahern in C. Foley, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 209-210.
92. C. Foley, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 210.
93. *Ibid.*
94. A. Dillane, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 23.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
96. S. Williams, *op. cit.*, 2014, p. 601.
97. Allan Moore, "Authenticity as Authentication", *Popular Music*, 21 (1), 2002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/853683 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 209-223, p. 209.
98. Crossroads or platform dances.
99. The Day of the Wren on St. Stephen's Day, see C. Foley, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 114.

John McCarthy (1921-1991) from Clashmealcon, Causeway, had spent some time in London and America before returning to Ireland to farm in Miltown and retiring to Listowel and Lisselton. A pupil of the North Kerry dancing master Jeremiah Molyneaux, Foley notes, "as was the custom with these dance masters, the school was held for the duration of six weeks in the locality."[100] Foley also adds, "John attended two further dancing schools in the locality. One was again taught by Molyneaux, his second dance course in the area, and the second was taught by Molyneaux's pupil, Liam Ó Duinín."[101] At home, John danced at crossroads and platform dances in the locality or in farmers' houses after a day's threshing. During his time in America during the 1960s, John "attended the Irish clubs in New York and performed some of his traditional step dances there".[102] John's obituary in *The Kerryman*[103] recalls "Both he and the late Jerry Nolan of Listowel performed with Siamsa before 1,200 people in the Palace Theatre in Broadway during a US tour in 1976. John and Jerry put on such a dazzling performance that the audience stood and cheered and clapped them on a night they looked back on with awe and delight."[104]

The other two principal dancers were Patricia Hanafin and Jimmy Smith who learned from Irene Gould who, in turn, learned from Phil Cahill who learned from Molyneaux. There is a sense of tradition whereby a style is passed from one generation to the next. Pat Ahern himself learned from Molyneaux, as did McCarthy and Nolan, but neither Patricia nor Jimmy met Molyneaux. Many of the other cast members such as Catherine Hurley, Catherine Spangler and Aidan O'Carroll learned their dancing from Patricia,[105] who is listed as the choreographer for the production.[106] Collectively these step dancers, joined by the rest of the cast for larger dance numbers, represented a local tradition that could engage an audience beyond its typical milieu as it transformed as a cultural form that changed through the twentieth century from a "substantially amateur and voluntary leisure activity to a professional and commercial enterprise".[107] Challenging what American audiences might expect, the programme for the American tour states: "the dances in SIAMSA may come as something of a surprise to people who expect traditional Irish dances to be ordered and staid, sedate and predictable. The rigidity is something which has been imposed in more recent generations of Irish dancing schools and is fine for

100. C. Foley, *op. cit*., 2012, p. 238.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
103. *The Kerryman*, 28 June 1991.
104. John died after performing as the dancing master in the opening run of *Ding Dong Dederó* during the first season at the new Siamsa Tíre Theatre and Arts Centre in Tralee.
105. Interview with Patricia Nolan, Tralee, 28 June 2016; Aidan O'Carroll, Tralee, 29 June 2016; Catherine Spangler, Tralee, 27 January 2017.
106. Dan Dietz, *The Complete Book of 1940s Broadway Musicals*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 326.
107. Barbara O'Connor, *The Irish Dancing: Cultural Politics and Identities, 1900–2000*, Cork, Cork U.P., 2013, p. 125.

the teaching of the disciplines. But the truly traditional dances, the ethnic ones, are full of freedom and lively expression."[108] This freedom of expression is evident nearly two decades later in *Riverdance*, when Irish dance became one of the most successful cultural expressions of Irishness in a global context and featured Irish-American dancers in the lead roles.[109]

Singing was also a key element of the production. Mary Deady and Seán Ahern were viewed as stars, fulfilling the roles of solo singers as soprano and tenor respectively, combining the traditional *sean-nós* tradition with the bel canto style more common in popular culture.[110] Liam Heaslip and Sean O'Mahony are also listed as solo singers but, as with the dancing, many more also perform as singers. Mary Deady is an accomplished soprano and was a familiar character to an American audience who may have been familiar with the stereotypical Irish singing cailín as epitomised by Mary O'Hara and utilised in the Irish Tourist Board campaigns of the 1950s.[111] The overlap between some of the vocal repertoire sung in the Siamsa Tíre production and that of O'Hara's early Irish language offerings including "Aililiú Na Gamnha" and "Dilín O Deamhas" from *Songs of Erin* (1957) and «Lúibín Ó Lúth» from *Mary O'Hara's Ireland* (1973). However, there is no reference to O'Hara at any point in either the press or in the reflections of the cast and despite O'Hara's success, it would appear that audiences for and critics of *Siamsa* were not familiar with this repertoire or did not make reference to it.

In contrast to Deady, Seán Ahern (and Liam Heaslip) represent a figure who sits between the Irish tenor, epitomised by John McCormack and Frank Patterson, and the sean nós singer, perhaps best epitomised in an American context by Joe Heaney. Williams and Ó Laoire state:

> The Irish tenor, as both man and image, enjoyed considerable popularity in literary works, media, and professional work as a performer, all of which represent commercial success through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The traditional rural singer, on the other hand, has been much less visible in literature, the international media industry, or on the professional stage.[112]

The solo singers in *Siamsa* reflect a Munster style of singing in the Irish language.[113] Williams and Ó Laoire's deconstruction of the relationship between song, identity and culture highlights other critical issues

108. SIAMSA, Souvenir programme, Siamsa Tíre, 1976.
109. B. Ó Cinnéide, *op. cit*., 2002.
110. Sean Williams & Lillis Ó Laoire, *Bright Star of the West: Joe Heaney, Irish Song-Man*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2011, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195321180.001.0001, p. 147.
111. H. Lawlor, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 46.
112. S. Williams & L. Ó Laoire, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 140.
113. For more see Seán Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, Portlaoise, Dolmen, 1982; Sean Williams, *Focus: Irish Traditional Music*, New York, Taylor & Francis, 2009.

relating to gender identities, authenticity, marketing and consumption of Irish song traditions.

It is important to also note that some of the song repertoire presented by Siamsa Tíre was arranged for SATB choir, a novel and very different approach at a time when the Irish song traditions were considered in terms of solo singing and ballad groups. In considering the "revival" of Irish traditional music, Scott Reiss notes the impact of an international folk revival on the popularity of Irish traditional music, including the concept of singing Irish songs in harmony.[114] With roots in local church choir activities, many of the cast were engaged in harmony singing in different contexts and this was further developed by Ahern who arranged choral arrangements of Irish songs for the company. The cast would also perform these choral arrangements at parties and other functions.

The use of Irish traditional dance music and airs was another aspect of the shows. The musicians for the tour were part of a community of musicians in north Kerry and west Limerick who were engaged in music-making on a regular basis in public houses, for céilís (social dances), on radio and at festivals and competitions. Unlike other concert-like settings for the performance of Irish traditional music, song and dance, the musicians were viewed as part of the cast and appeared on stage with the actors, singers and dancers. The musicians were part of the community, both in terms of the onstage narrative and off stage recreation and there was some doubling of roles. It is worth noting that, owing to the strength of union rules in American theatres, orchestras would still be hired for performances but would sit quietly in the pit playing cards.[115] The production featured the uilleann pipes, tin whistle, harp, fiddle, button accordion, bodhrán and bones and the souvenir programme contained descriptions and information on some of these instruments.

Siamsa had a very simple narrative and relied more on the music, song and dance as entertainment rather than plot. Humour is a very important aspect of the Siamsa Tíre production and Seán Ahern notes how some of the material, particularly the comic material, came about through improvisation on the stage. Pat Ahern also reflects on the importance of humour to engage audiences and recounts how audiences from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds reacted to humorous incidents on stage, often involving comedian Seán O'Mahony. He remembers "Laughter was Seánie's great gift and everybody identified with it."[116] Like so many other aspects of the tour, Seánie's ability to generate laughter was not confined to the stage and he is an integral character in the story

114. Scott Reiss, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
115. Interview with Pierce & Liam Heaslip, Tralee, 29 June 2016.
116. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.

of the tour. It would appear that the sense of humour was not lost on audiences or indeed the stage hands who enjoyed the performances.[117] The use of mime and gesture helped communicate with the audience unfamiliar with the Irish language and internationalised the folk theatre form.

Reaction and Reception

The 1976 tour of America brought the company to the stages of very significant theatres and included sold out performances in the Palace Theatre on Broadway. Newspaper research and interviews with people involved at the time highlight how the production presented by the company challenged American perceptions of Irish traditional music, song and dance at the time. By bringing these traditions onto the American theatre stage, in contrast with the smaller concert venues used by other groups, Siamsa Tíre introduced many aspects of the traditions to new audiences. These audiences included members of the Irish diaspora in America but, at a time when numerous ethnic performing groups were touring America,[118] also included people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The success of the tour lies largely in its reception on Broadway. At a time when the Chieftains were performing for a single night at Carnegie Hall, Siamsa Tíre sold out a full week at the Palace. Rushe in the *Irish Independent* wrote:

> Siamsa has conquered Broadway, the most challenging theatrical testing ground in America, if not in the world. The Irish folk group opened at the 1,800-seat Palace Theatre on Monday night to a full and receptive audience. It was given a standing ovation at the end and now it has been given the warmest of endorsements by that most influential of critics, Clive Barnes of the *New York Times*.[119]

The significance of the Barnes review is not lost on the cast and they remember the night that it was read out at an after party. The quote itself was used for many years afterwards in the publicity for the performances in Tralee and elsewhere.

It wasn't just the critics that responded favourably. Dancer Jimmy Smith remembers: "You'd come out of the theatres at night and they'd be looking for your autograph."[120] For Seán Ahern, seeing the queues of people

117. Interview, Pat Ahern, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
118. See A. Shay, *op. cit.*, 2002.
119. 30 September 1976.
120. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.

looking for tickets stretching around the block at the Palace Theatre was the highlight of the tour for many of the cast.[121] Reflecting on audiences drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and ethnicities, McCarthy remembers that "each scene brought about a murmuration throughout the audience as the older generation recognised and then explained to younger companions that this was how it was when they were young."[122] For Ahern, this is the universality of folk culture that he believes is the most important element and motivation for preserving and presenting the folk. It also reflects Appadurai's concept of "nostalgia without memory" as audience relate to an idealised rural past that is not limited to a particular national identity.[123]

From a musicologist's perspective, one of the interesting aspects of the reception is the contrast with other forms of entertainment identified as Irish at that time in America. Dermod McCarthy told me:

> They didn't know what to expect. Some people wanted Danny Boy and thought that was what they were coming to see. But then it dawned on them that this was a different product. This was the real tradition and not the stage Irish that they had become accustomed to.[124]

The representation of Irishness in the US through music was not new. Williams notes the popularity of Moore's *Melodies* and minstrel shows and vaudeville during the nineteenth century and their role in the representation of Irishness, which ranged from nostalgia to caricature.[125] In other contexts, the music of Irish-born composer Charles Villiers Stanford was positioned alongside other "nationalistic" composers such as Grieg and *Dvořák*.[126] As O'Connor notes, by the end of the nineteenth century, Irish-American audiences were turning to Tin Pan Alley whose "songsmiths churned out thousands of 'Oirish'[127] numbers from the quaint to the downright sentimental".[128] As she goes on to note, "a song like 'I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen' or 'Irish Eyes', written in America by songwriters with no access to or knowledge of Irish music, came to represent

121. Interview, 17 May 2016.
122. Interview, Dublin, 22 April 2016.
123. A. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 30.
124. Interview, Dublin, 22 April 2016.
125. S. Williams, *op. cit.*, 2014, p. 609.
126. Adèle Commins, "Watchmen on the Walls of Music Across the Atlantic: Reception of Charles Villiers Stanford and his Music in the American Press", in same issue (DOI: 10.34929/imaginaires.vi22.5).
127. A comic derivative of the word "Irish" that is often applied in a pejorative sense. See also Aileen Dillane, "Nostalgic Songlines and the Performance of Irish Identity", *Bealoideas: The Journal Of The Folklore Of Ireland Society*, 81, 2013, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24862815 (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 19-36; Fintan Vallely, "The Apollos of shamrockery: Traditional musics in the modern age", in M. Stokes & P. V. Bohlman (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 201.
128. N. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 47.

not only Irish music but also Irishness."[129] Some of this repertoire entered popular music contexts in the 1940s and 1950s through recordings by popular artists such as Bing Crosby.[130] Writing about the 1960s, Williams and Ó Laoire similarly acknowledge that the "Irish American song repertoire had taken on its own hybrid character at that point, perhaps most significantly symbolized by now familiar chestnuts such as 'Mother Machree' and 'Danny Boy', sentimental songs that were standard party pieces for the east coast Irish-American community, which were consumed by immigrants of all stripes."[131] Writing about the 1990s in Chicago, Aileen Dillane presents a similar cultural expectation associated with such songs amongst part of the Irish-American community.[132]

One of the challenges faced by Siamsa Tíre was the difference in understanding the Irishness of songs amongst an American audience. Richard Christiansen of the *Chicago Daily News* wrote "The songs, even though sung in Gaelic, are readily understood thanks to broad mime and props. They are, too, enchantingly different from what most Americans know as Irish music."[133] This echoes an anecdote from Dermod McCarthy who remembers walking in front of two theatre goers in Chicago who, while impressed, were overheard to say "It's a pity there are no Irish songs, and why does it have to be in Gaelic". Indeed there were many references to the Siamsa performances as an alternative to "Danny Boy".[134] William Gale opened his review in Boston stating "An Irish music and dance show without one *Danny Boy* or 'Irish leprechaun' doesn't seem possible today when commercialized 'Irish' music is everywhere but at the Shubert Theater here the National Folk Theatre of Ireland is presenting a charming, lovely and in many ways authentic evening of true Irish music and dance."[135] Jim Gallagher of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote "Persons who think Irish music means 'Danny Boy', and the other mawkish ditties that pollute the airways on St. Patrick's Day, are in for a pleasant surprise."[136] Similarly Daniel Webster states "The Irish tenor and those patented sentimental songs are not what Irish folk culture is about at all",[137] although Gale notes "Perhaps the best parts of the evening are the choir singing of the children

129. *Ibid*., p. 48.
130. See A. Dillane, *op. cit*., 2013, p. 25.
131. S. Williams & L. Ó Laoire, *op. cit*., 2011, p. 202.
132. A. Dillane, *op. cit*., 2013.
133. Richard Christiansen, *Chicago Daily News*, cited in Desmond Rushe "Standing Ovation for Siamsa", *Irish Independent*, 17 September 1976.
134. Written in 1910 by Englishman Fredrick Weatherly (1848-1929) to the tune "The Londonderry Air", collected by George Petrie for his 1855 publication, "Danny Boy" is the subject of a number of studies including Anne G. Gilchrist, "A new light upon the Londonderry Air", in *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1 (3), 1934, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4521039 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p.115-121; Hugh Shields, "New Dates for an Old Song 1766-1803", *Long room* (Journal of the Library of Trinity College), 18-19, 1979, https://www.itma.ie/digital-library/text/new-dates-for-old-songs (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 34-41.
135. William K. Gale, "A Lovely Night in Ireland", *The Providence Journal, Massachusetts Edition*, 6 October 1976.
136. Jim Gallagher, "Warmth of Siamsa Needs No Translation", *Chicago Tribune*.
137. Daniel Webster, "From Ireland: Gentleness", *Philadelphia Inquirer*, cited in Des Rushe, "Incredible Lack of Ethnic Identity", *Irish Independent,* 28 September 1976.

and the work of tenor Ahearn. He sings with that lovely and seemingly effortless grace hat has made Irish tenors popular around the world".[138]

Siamsa Tíre were presenting an altogether different form of Irish musical culture directly from rural Ireland that perhaps resonated more with audiences less familiar with Irish culture but for whom memories of a rural way of life lingered. Remembering her experiences and informed by a life lived in America, Mary Deady wrote:

> *Siamsa* at the time was completely unique. Never before had Irish music, mime, song and dance been interwoven and presented as theatre and Irish Americans and general theatre goers came away with a much better sense of what Irish music, song and dance was all about. *Siamsa* gave the audience a much richer and authentic version of our culture and I know that some Irish Americans were so proud of seeing it presented so theatrically, movingly and intelligently. Our tour here in the US, coincided with shows such as the Ballet Folklorico of Mexico and Russian folk theatre groups as well and we were considered to be very much on a par with them.[139]

The construction of a sense of "authenticity" in relation to the *Siamsa* production is evident on both sides of the Atlantic. Writing about the release of the Siamsa LP prior to the tour, with simultaneous reference to romanticised aspects of Irish rural life such as frolicking lambs and turf smoke and an acknowledgement of commercial potential and profit, Rushe writes about the company's authenticity as folk entertainment:

> it is important that Siamsa gets maximum exposure. And particularly here in Ireland where the marvellously rich cultural heritage it seeks to preserve and promote is under threat from a grossly tatty, false, commercial and insensitive non-culture important from the world's ad-mass bargain basements.[140]

Rushe's Irish perspectives are echoed by those in the American press. Writing in the *Chicago Daily News*, Dorothy Samachuan states:

> Ethnic troupes are frequent visitors to Chicago and we've become accustomed to flashy sequined costumes and high-flying terpsichorean derringdo. But Siamsa (pronounced Shee-am-sah and meaning merrymaking) doesn't fit into that mould. Siamsa attempts to give us an authentic picture of Irish country life of the past – its customs, its work and its play. In its friendly, unpretentiously charming way,

138. W. Gale, *op. cit.*, 1976.
139. Personal communication, 23 June 2016.
140. "Authentic Folk Entertainment", *Irish Independent*, 30 July 1976.

> Siamsa succeeds well enough to make a native homesick and an outsider want to know more about it.[141]

Being relevant to both the diaspora and other ethnic groups is a significant element of Siamsa Tíre's success in the US. However, describing Siamsa Tíre as authentic is not unproblematic and there are elements that are undoubtedly innovative and original and aspects of what was being presented belonged to a past that had already been replaced by technological advances in agricultural practices in Ireland. Nevertheless, Samachuan's review is an endorsement of Ahern's efforts to generate an interest in Irish folk culture and also highlights the role of "national" or "ethnic" groups in America in the 1970s, some of whom were judged to be pushing commercial gain through the commodification of culture. O'Flynn relates the idea of authenticity to a number of dialectical relationships in constructions of Irishness and music including "the binary oppositions of commercial/real, traditional/innovative, urban/rural, and Irish/'Irishy'."[142] An extended study of the work of Siamsa Tíre would undoubtedly highlight the existence of both sides of these dichotomies in the productions of the company and the commercial success of the 1976 tour to America is also an important aspect of this story.

For critics accustomed to reviewing groups such as Moysiev and Ballet Folklorico, Siamsa Tíre presented an Irish alternative. Bill Kaufman in *The Boston Globe* commends Ahern "for avoiding the slick format used by similar folk groups, because in Siamsa he has a company whose very simplicity and innocence is not only charming, but also true to the fold values that it celebrates".[143] Rita Katz Farrell in *Wilmington Sunday News Journal* similarly writes: "There is nothing urbane or sophisticated about the entertainment the National Folk theatre has brought us; rather, it is a pastoral glimpse at a simple and sweet culture where concern for the basic human value is expressed in the most rudimentary style of music and dance…The National Folk theatre provides an evening of enchantment on its own grass-roots terms".[144] Siamsa Tire's success is potentially due to the role of nostalgia amongst the metropolitan audiences. As Kilroy notes: "Within the metropolitan centres there is always a nostalgia for cultures which are untouched, untainted by the ennui, the busyness, the crowdedness of the centre".[145] For the cast of *Siamsa*, America was also a contrast with home, perhaps epitomised by stories about watching the lanes of traffic which contrasted so much with the quiet country lanes of rural north

141. Dorothy Samachuan, "Siamsa Troupe Trips with Irish Folk Charm", *Chicago Daily News*, 15 September 1976.
142. John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music,* Surrey, Ashgate, 2009, p. 174.
143. Bill Kaufman, "Love for the Motherland Through Irish Eyes", *The Boston Globe.*
144. Rita Katz Farrell, "Irish Dancers Show the Soul of Decency of the Ould Sod", *Wilmington Sunday News Journal.*
145. Thomas Kilroy, "A Generation of Playwrights", in Eamonn Jordan (ed.) *Theatre Stuff: critical essays on contemporary Irish theatre,* Dublin, Carysfort, 2000, p. 6.

Kerry.[146] However, Gale writes, "If I have any criticism of Siamsa, it is that there is too much of a pastoral recreation. We are given the lilt and loveliness of the old Irish countryside, but at times it seems a bit too pristine, too bloodless. Things could not have been all that fine".[147] *Siamsa* is undoubtedly a romanticised representation of Irish country life and unapologietically so.

While Boris Weinturb focused on how Siamsa was preserving the culture of the Gaeltachts, explaining in his article what the Gaeltacht was,[148] some of the reviews betrayed an ignorance about aspects of Irish culture. For example Bess Winakor of the *Chicago Sun-Times* had difficulty understanding some of the proceedings and described the tin whistle as "a recorder-like instrument". Not all reviews were entirely positive. While Bess Winakor finds "two acts of Irish music grow monotonous" and going to see Siamsa without a working knowledge of the Irish language, "is like going to an opera without a libretto".[149] Nonetheless, Di Nardo writes, "Although my Gaelic is a bit rusty, it's not hard to follow the first act, dawn to bonfire, with love songs, lively dances and ensemble numbers"[150] and Jim Gallagher of the *Chicago Tribune* comments "you don't even have to be Irish to appreciate it".[151] Thus, despite the significant and continuous emigration from Ireland to America, there is a disjuncture between what Siamsa Tíre presented and what audiences expected in America but also a relevance for audiences who did not share an Irish heritage.

Differences in Everyday Lives

The reviews and oral histories indicate significant differences between the everyday lives of the Irish cast and their American audiences. Although Motherway notes: "The opening up of the Irish economy in the 1960s led to a decade of prosperity […] mirrored by a rise in consumerism, the return of emigrants, an increase in exposure to outside media, and a rising standard of living",[152] there are significant cultural divides between Ireland and the USA in the 1970s, highlighted by the recollections of the cast members. Much of what was experienced by the cast on the tour was far removed from what any of them had previously experienced in Ireland.

146. Liam Heaslip remembers Jerry Nolan commenting on the lanes of traffic trying to comprehend the quantity of people and where they were all going. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
147. W. Gale, art. cit., 1976.
148. Boris Weintraub, "Irish Folk Theatre Preserving a Tradition", *The Washington Standard*, 27 September 1976.
149. Bess Winakor, "Gaelic Musicians, Dancers are Monotonously Merry", *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 September 1976, p. 145.
150. Tony Di Nardo "Siamsa is Window on Life in Old Kerry", *The Washington Post*, 24 September 1976, p. 37.
151. Jim Gallagher, "Warmth of Siamsa Needs No Translation", *Chicago Tribune*.
152. S. Motherway, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 8.

They experienced a lifestyle and commodities heretofore only familiar through film and television.

The cultural differences between Ireland and the USA at the time are perhaps most evident in the memories of those who were children at the time. For Oliver Hurley it was the smell of coffee, the experience of big theatres and meeting cousins for the first time.[153] For Pierce Heaslip it was the taste of cheesecake which was an exotic experience on the tour.[154] In terms of food, Catherine Spangler points to corn-on-the-cob and candy corns.[155] There are other novelties also including air conditioning and roller blinds, which they encountered in their hotel rooms, photograph booths and shopping in big supermarkets unlike anything they had encountered in Ireland at that time.

The sense of encountering celebrity culture is also significant. A number of the cast met Mohamed Ali near Central Park on 29 September, the night after he had fought Ken Norton in Madison Square Garden. Ali stopped and spoke to the small group of Irish adults and children, commenting on his 1972 interview with Cathal O'Shannon on the night before his fight against Al 'Blue' Lewis in the ring at Croke Park, which became one of RTÉ's landmark interviews. Pierce remembers that none of the group had a camera with which to capture the moment. Indeed photographs from the tour are limited.

Meeting Ali exemplified how, in America, this group from Ireland were encountering a world of celebrity that was in stark contrast to their own experiences. Indeed, prior to leaving, Liam Heaslip was asked about the trip in a chip shop in Tralee and, when he mentioned that they would be performing in the Palace Theatre, there was a sense of wonder at the achievement. At the Palace, *Siamsa* would follow a successful run by the Oscar Award winning actress Shirley MacLaine, which was released as a live album recorded on 19 August 1976.[156] In 1976 MacLaine received another Academy Award nomination and appeared on television in two major shows, placing her to the forefront of American popular culture.[157] In the dressing room, further links with celebrities were encountered on the walls including a signature on the wall "Yul Brynner was here". Best known for his role in the film *The King and I*, Brynner performed the role of Ulysses in the production *Home, Sweet Homer*, which ran at

153. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
154. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
155. Interview, Fenit, 27 January 2017.
156. *Live at the Palace*, Columbia PC34223.
157. Playbill, *Shirley MacLaine* Palace Theatre Broadway, http://www.playbill.com/production/shirley-maclaine-palace-theatre-vault-0000013063 (last accessed 20/10/2017). Dan Dietz, *The Complete Book of 1940s Broadway Musicals*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 292.

the Palace Theatre until January 1976.[158] Beneath this the inimitable Sean O'Mahony wrote "Sean O'Mahony was too??".[159] Reflecting on the experience, Catherine Spangler stated "We were real stars to be in these dressing rooms".[160]

These anecdotes highlight both the cultural divide and the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and America in the 1970s and reflect the audience comments relating to Danny Boy. They are in stark contrast with contemporary Ireland and Motherway's assertion that "by 2001, Ireland featured as one of the most globalized countries in the world in relation to economic activity, travel and tourism, communications and technology".[161] In 1976, America remained a distant place that many travelled to from Ireland knowing that they were unlikely to return to see their families again. A number of the touring cast did meet with relatives. Some of the children spent time with relatives and this was also important for their families at home.[162]

Coming Home and Moving On

After nearly five weeks in America, the cast of Siamsa Tíre returned home, despite potential offers to stay longer. They returned to daily life, returning to school and to work. Some of the cast recollect the bus stopping at the end of the road near the village of Moyvane for dancer Jerry Nolan to get off and walk back to his farmhouse. There would be further newspaper articles in the Irish media celebrating their success and a civic reception in Tralee and the memories and stories would be shared by future generations who went on to perform with the production.

Siamsa Tíre travelled to the USA for the first time at a time when there were numerous other "national" or "ethnic" groups also touring there and presenting their national and ethnic music, song and dance. The USA is a "land of opportunity" and Shay notes: "Foreign touring was also a major factor in financing these companies. While the issue of representation of the nation remained the most important factor, the hard currency earned by some of these companies was considerable. Moiseyev, Ballet Folklorico, and Bayanihan in particular had major annual tours that earned sizeable incomes".[163] Finances were not the motivation behind the Siamsa tour and indeed there was difficulty securing the necessary funding. Before coming

158. Michelangelo Capua, *Yul Brynner: A Biography*, McFarland, 2006, p. 174.
159. Interview, Liam Haeslip, Tralee, 29 June 2016.
160. Interview, Fenit, 27 January 2017.
161. S. Motherway, *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 2.
162. Interview, Oliver Hurley, Tralee, 17 May 2016; Catherine Spangler, Fenit, 27 January 2017.
163. A. Shay, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 54.

home, they declined opportunities for an extended run on Broadway and would not return to the US for a further eight years. The success and reception of their performances challenge the belief that authenticity and commercialism are binary opposites.[164]

Siamsa Tíre would not enjoy the commercial success later experienced by *Riverdance* but continued to evolve in Kerry, embarking on sporadic international tours. When the company returned to America in the 1980s, they performed in smaller venues, often connected with universities, rather than the major venues of the first tour. To the present, the company remains rooted in North Kerry, inextricably bound to the local traditions while simultaneously seeking to develop and "move forward without stagnating".[165] Reflecting on the success of the 1976 tour, Seán Ahern says "It spurred it on, to know would we be carried again. We enjoyed it so much we'd have loved to have stayed there. We would have been over and back to America".[166]

In her unpublished history of dance in Ireland, *Irish Times* dance correspondent Carolyn Swift noted that Irish dancing was acclaimed worldwide long before *Riverdance* owing to the success of Siamsa Tíre and the work of Pat Ahern.[167] In 1976, Siamsa Tíre had not yet begun exploring the potential of developing the North Kerry dancing traditions through collaboration with other forms of dance but in the years after the 1976 tour, Siamsa Tíre continued to perform in Ireland and internationally. The reception of their work was both positive and negative as this reception became entwined in a wider debate about how Ireland should and could be represented.

Conclusion

Siamsa Tíre, The National Folk Theatre of Ireland, has not received the attention necessary to understand its role in the development of the traditional arts in Ireland and the perception of Irish traditional music, song and dance internationally. The successful 1976 tour to America, during which they wowed audiences and critics, including performances in

164. Timothy Taylor, "Afterword: Gaelicer Than Though"', in M. Stokes & P. Bohlman (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 275-284.
165. Jonathon Kelliher, cited in D. Mulrooney, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 252.
166. Interview, Listowel, 17 May 2016.
167. Cited in D. Mulrooney, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 227. John O'Flynn, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 39, also notes: "*Riverdance* was certainly not the first of its kind. It did, however, more than any cultural product before it, suggest an explicit link between ethnic and economic ideas of Irish national identity, signalling an era in which Irishness could (unashamedly) be regarded as an exportable form of cultural and economic capital."

The Palace Theatre on Broadway, is a significant example of this. The challenge of going on tour and the associated promotion, the reaction of the audiences and critics and the stories and memories of the cast reflect a period of change in the circulation of popular culture between Ireland and the USA. It is not only relevant in the context of understanding this circulation in the context of an Irish diaspora in the US but also the reception of Irish culture amongst a broader, ethnically diverse, American society. Influenced by international dance and theatrical groups in a globalising world, Siamsa Tíre were a local response that, only a few years after its foundation, embarked upon this ground-breaking tour. Although a theatre company, they must be understood in the context of both international dance companies and Irish traditional music ensembles of the 1970s that were engaged in the wider "revival" of the traditions, although also during a continuing decline of the Irish language and the industrialisation of rural life in Ireland.

The bi-focal approach examining Siamsa Tíre through a critical consideration of both the oral histories of the Irish performers and the reaction of the American audiences as represented in the media provides two sides of a complicated narrative that enhance understanding of both Irish and American culture at this point in time. The theatre piece and repertoire that it includes is only part of a broader narrative that is reliant on understanding context and provokes questions relating to authenticity. Many of the cast have told me of how they were themselves on stage; many had come from this culture – indeed Seán Ahern and Jerry Nolan were two farmers who had left their cows to bring this culture to their American cousins. By doing so, they brought the culture of North Kerry to a new, international audience and challenged the perceptions and stereotypes that had developed and evolved amongst the diaspora. Furthermore, they brought home with them experiences of American popular culture that had already begun influencing the culture of Kerry by that time.

Siamsa Tíre undoubtedly played a role in the reimagining of Irish identity in America and a re-evaluation of Irish folk culture in Ireland in the 1970s. The evolution of Siamsa Tíre was also shaped by the American experience and the reception they received. When speaking of identity, Cook reminds us that "national identity is by no means the only kind of identity that music helps to construct".[168] The US tour also impacted on the development of a community of practice in Kerry that survives to the present. The oral histories and lifelong friendships of many of those involved in Siamsa Tíre highlight the bond of solidarity that was created through the act of engaging in and creating performance. Seán Ahern told

168. N. Cook, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 5.

me: “Meeting the gang every night when we went in… We had great auld craic. There was always an auld joke […].”[169] Reflecting on the 1976 tour to America, Jimmy Smith says, “It changed my life, changed all of our lives.”[170]

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169. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.
170. Interview, Tralee, 17 May 2016.

Teenager in Love: Northern Ireland Punk Rock and the American Teenage Myth

Timothy A. Heron
University of Strasbourg

In his book about Derry punk rock group the Undertones, published in 2016, bass player Mick Bradley tells how after signing a contract with Sire records in London in 1978, the head of the company Seymour Stein offered to take some of the young band members out for dinner to celebrate. As Bradley recounts: "Baker Street is not short of decent eating houses but I only had one place in mind. If Sire [records] were paying, I was going to have a Big Mac, french [*sic*] fries and Coke"[1]. Out of all the available options, they picked McDonald's. This was not some punk statement pitting junk food against fine dining. Some of the band members had read about McDonald's in the rock magazine *NME* and for these teenagers from Derry, where there wasn't so much as an Indian restaurant, eating at McDonald's – which had only been introduced in London in 1974 – was the height of exoticism. This anecdote betrays the fascination that America held for the Undertones, but it was by no means limited to them. Indeed, Northern Ireland punk rock was significantly influenced by the USA and more precisely by the American teenage myth.

Punk is notoriously hard to define; it is a both a subculture[2] and a complex cultural phenomenon which spanned several decades and several media: music of course, but also fashion, the visual arts, the alternative press, etc. Punk rock was an aggressive, fast and minimalist genre of popular music which partly arose as a reaction against contemporary popular music which was perceived as being too commercial and unexciting or too pretentious and removed from the fan. It emerged in London in 1976 then

1. Michael Bradley, *Teenage Kicks: My Life as an Undertone*, Omnibus, 2016, p. 86.
2. Use of the term "subculture" is not uncontroversial within the field of cultural studies, but we use the concept as it is defined by Paul Hodkinson, who addresses much of the criticism that has been directed against it. According to his definition, a subculture must respond to four different criteria: *identity*, *commitment*, *consistent distinctiveness* and *autonomy*. See Paul Hodkinson, *Goth: Identity, Style, and Subculture*, New York, Berg, 2002, p. 29.

made its way to Northern Ireland much as it did in the cities and regions of Britain: through John Peel's late night radio BBC One programme, music papers (*NME*, *Sounds*, *Melody Maker*), sensationalist reports in tabloids, siblings or friends coming back from a visit in Britain, and from the summer of 1977 the appearance of a few punk rock or new wave bands on *Top of the Pops* on the BBC. At a time when the "Troubles" and the 1975 Miami Showband massacre[3] discouraged many international bands from visiting Northern Ireland, a vibrant local scene soon emerged, with many young people starting bands such as the Undertones, RUDI, Stiff Little Fingers, the Outcasts and scores of others. Elsewhere, I have written about how the punk scene emerged in Northern Ireland despite the lack of a proper infrastructure for rock music, thanks in part to punks' adoption of "do it yourself" or DIY practises; I have focussed on how, why and to what extent the punk subculture facilitated the transgression of sectarian, class and gender barriers[4]. In the present article I will concentrate on punk rock – the music genre – rather than punk as a youth subculture, and I will argue that the style of punk rock that developed in Northern Ireland during the first wave of punk – from 1976 to the end of the decade – was partly influenced by pop music and particularly the aesthetics associated with the American myth of the teenager. I will thus focus on music groups rather than on the practises of individuals.

One of the main attractions of punk rock was not only the raw, raucous music, but also the fact that it enabled the exploration of a whole new range of themes by anyone able and willing to start a band. Indeed, according to John Mullen, "Punk seemed to open the gates to dealing with a much wider variety of themes in popular song, with a particular emphasis on the gritty"[5]. This was due to punk's irreverent, iconoclastic nature, but also to its emphasis on what would become known as the "do it yourself" ethic: even people with little means or experience could create a fanzine or make music. For the first time in years, young people were able to voice their own views to an audience made up of people their own age. So what did Northern Ireland punks choose to express? During the course of my research for my PhD thesis[6], I decided to classify songs from the first wave of Northern Ireland punk (1976-1983) in order to determine their main thematic concerns. After analysing over two hundred songs, I found that over a third of them tackle various social and political issues;

3. On 31 July 1975 three members of the popular Miami Showband were gunned down by the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force on their way back to Dublin and the other two were injured in a sectarian attack. The incident shocked opinion north and south of the border.
4. See for instance Timothy A. Heron, "'Alternative Ulster': Punk and the Construction of Everyday Life during the Northern Ireland Conflict", *Imaginaires*, 19, 2015 and "'We're Only Monsters': Punk Bodies and the Grotesque in 1970s Northern Ireland", *Études Irlandaises*, 42 (1), 2017, DOI: 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.5162.
5. John Mullen, "UK Popular Music and Society in the 1970s", *Revue française de civilisation britannique*, 2016, 11 (3), DOI: 10.4000/rfcb.1695.
6. Timothy A. Heron, "'Alternative Ulster': Punk in Northern Ireland (1976-1983)", Diss. University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, unpublished, 2017, TEL: 2017REIML004.

a quarter deal with romantic and sexual relationships; and ten percent are concerned with aspects of teenage pop culture.[7] Among the songs dealing with social and political issues, only a fifth revolve around the "Troubles" (six percent of all songs). The band most associated with this stance is Belfast's Stiff Little Fingers[8], but others addressed the conflict too, notably Ruefrex, the most clearly political and most actively antisectarian of all the first wave punk bands[9]. Most of the other Northern Irish groups avoided singing explicitly about the "Troubles" and instead focussed on the same themes as bands from Britain: antisocial and violent behaviour, international (rather than local) politics, and life within the punk subculture. These bands, though they were numerous, are largely unknown today outside the Northern Ireland punk subculture, but they were of crucial importance as they enabled the local scene to flourish by regularly playing concerts at venues not only in Belfast or Derry city centre, but all across the region. More surprisingly for punk, perhaps, is the large number of songs which deal with romantic and sexual relationships. In *Sounds* magazine in 1977, rock journalist Vivien Goldman said about the punk scene that "No one's singing love songs any more, but that ain't conviction, that's fashion". And yet Northern Ireland punk groups devoted a significant number of their songs to issues such as love, desire, rejection, and break-ups – adolescent themes which were combined with a melodic sound later known as "pop punk". Teenage fantasies are not the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of punk rock and are more readily associated with more blatantly commercial genres of popular music. "Teenager" was a concept used in the UK to describe mostly working class young people on the threshold between childhood and adulthood – a liminal stage of life, when they were no longer at school but had not yet fully integrated the world of adults, which implied getting a job and, especially in Ireland, getting married. If "youth" was a 1960s ideological concept associated with middle-class students, the counterculture and thus a degree of political awareness, "teenager" was a 1950s concept associated with a specific style of conspicuous consumption which stressed leisure

7. Concerning the social and political issues and songs about personal relationships, these proportions come close to the findings of rock journalist and academic Dave Laing's own classification of early British punk, in his seminal 1985 book *One Chord Wonders*.
8. The songs from the band's first singles, "Suspect Device / Wasted Life" (Rigid Digits, 1978) constitute some of the most explicit attacks on paramilitarism in the Northern Ireland popular music repertoire; however, after the release of that single, the band rarely again criticised paramilitaries in such an explicit manner. Most of the songs that followed, and especially those which appeared on their 1979 debut album *Inflammable Material* (Rough Trade) made heavy use of conflict-related iconography, while actually dealing with unrelated issues. This reliance on "radical chic" was part of a conscious strategy to break into the overseas market – and it worked. However, Stiff Little Fingers' success came at a price: for a long time, the band was resented by punks in Northern Ireland who objected to the use of the "Troubles" as a marketing tool.
9. Ruefrex put into practice the antisectarianism they preached: they played not only in the "neutral" venues of Belfast town centre or in the safety of their own Protestant community, but all over the region, including republican neighbourhoods of Belfast such as Ardoyne, the Falls or Turf Lodge.

and pleasure[10]. For the first time in history, a whole class of adolescents had a certain amount of disposable income as well as time to spend it. This opened up a new and lucrative market, but it also led to concerns from both sides of the political spectrum about idleness and deviance. Moreover, "teenager" was originally an American construct and teenagers were associated with American culture, practices and vices, which was frowned upon in some quarters, not least in conservative Ireland, north and south. Indeed, the teenager was "an ideological vehicle which... stood as a symbol of America's bold march into a new age of hedonistic and leisure-oriented consumption. The myths of abundant teenage fun epitomised the ideals of the American consumer lifestyle"[11]. Postwar Britain and to a certain degree Ireland saw the emergence of highly visible youth subcultures associated with American or American-inspired music: the teddy boys, the rockers, the mods, the skinheads, and later the hippies, all drew inspiration from US culture (though in varying degrees). In the words of Simon Frith, "the American Dream became an inextricable part of mass cultural fantasies"[12], especially for teenagers: "for the British the very idea of the teenager was American. British teenagers were recognized by their American music, their American idols, their American dreams". This was also true in Ireland. Teenagers across Britain and Ireland thus "became part of a mass culture that went beyond neighbourhood or class concerns"[13]. In Northern Ireland this meant that teenagers from nationalist or loyalist backgrounds could have similar tastes in music and film and shared patterns of consumption, to such an extent that in Derry in the 1960s for example, before the onset of the "Troubles", young people from both sides of the city would meet up in the same cafés, dance halls and cinemas, and friendships were forged[14]. Though the effects of the supposed "Americanization" of culture were sometimes deplored, both in Britain and in Ireland, "for many young people in Britain [and Ireland] American culture represented a force of liberation against the grey certainties of British [and Irish] everyday life"[15]. In 1970s Northern Ireland, American music was circulated through *Top of the Pops* on the BBC and chart countdowns on the radio, but the showbands[16] still played an important role, as did the many youth club discos which played chart singles. American acts were still present in the UK charts in the late 1970s. British

10. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock'n'roll,* New York, Pantheon, 1981, p. 181-196.
11. Bill Osgerby, "The teenage aesthetic and genealogies of American punk", *Punk rock, so what? The cultural legacy of punk*, 1999, reprint, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 158.
12. S. Frith, *op. cit*., p. 46.
13. *Ibid*., p. 184-185.
14. Desmond Bell, *Acts of Union Youth Culture and Sectarianism in Northern Ireland*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, p. 144-147.
15. John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, Harlow, Pearson Longman, 2011, p. 8.
16. Half way between variety entertainers and modern pop groups, showbands were groups of musicians who toured Ireland's dance halls and played covers of international pop hits in such a way that they were not perceived as transgressing traditional values (Nuala 127). Their heyday was the 1950s and 1960s but their popularity endured well into the 1970s.

acts were slightly more dominant, but the myth of America was no longer tied to America itself; this was made clear by the success of continental European or international bands like Abba, Boney M, or Pussycat, which distilled Americanness. The America which was celebrated in lyrics or by the adoption of genres of music which originated in the US was a mythical America – America as an object of consumption. Thus American popular culture – and in the context of popular music, American pop sounds and tropes – could take on different meanings when experienced and produced in a very different cultural context[17].

However, what is the link between the American concept of the teenager and punk rock? Was punk not about "London burning" (the Clash) and "Anarchy in the UK" (the Sex Pistols) rather than about the US? At a first glance, European punk seemed to reject American culture altogether. The Clash, after all, could sing "I'm so bored with the USA" and the Sex Pistols seemed to spurn the discourse of romance associated with the myth of the teenager. However, in Northern Ireland – apart from Derry band the Rip Offs' song "Stuff the USA" – punk groups seemed to embrace rather than reject Americanness. Gerry Smyth associates the Undertones' "Teenage Kicks" with 1950s American rock'n'roll, and sees the song as "a rejection of the dominant discourses of contemporary British punk"[18] while Roland Link, the biographer of Stiff Little Fingers, argues that the Northern Irish "version of punk rock contained little of the negative, elitist, violent, arrogant and nihilistic aspects of some of its mainland counterparts"[19], perhaps because a proto-punk pub rock scene had developed in the region in relative isolation. However, despite the British punk rock scene's stress on existential and aesthetic revolt, British punk and the scenes it influenced elsewhere bear a more ambiguous relationship to pop music than is sometimes assumed, as Bill Osgerby has argued for American punk. While punk is not often associated with teenage pop, Osgerby demonstrates that there was in fact a strain of pop-inflected music running through the genre right from the start. American bands like the New York Dolls, the Dictators, the Ramones and Blondie, he argues, were influenced by bubblegum pop and the related myth of the American teenager: "A mythologised version of American adolescent life, 'the teenager' encapsulated the consumer society's hedonistic fantasies of unbridled leisure, pleasure and carefree fun – a set of images and stereotypes that 70s punk both relished and lampooned"[20]. This strain of American punk, Osgerby asserts, was

17. S. Frith, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
18. Gerry Smyth, *Noisy Island: A Short History of Irish Popular Music*, Cork, Ireland, Cork U.P., 2005, p. 59.
19. Link Roland, *Kicking Up a Racket: The Story of Stiff Little Fingers, 1977-1983*, Belfast, Appletree, 2009, p. 68.
20. B. Osgerby, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

> grounded in an encounter with the mythologies and icons that had come to surround *teenage* suburban life. American punk elaborated a tongue-in-cheek pastiche of drive-in movies, high-school proms, beach parties and the whole iconography of carefree 'teenage kicks'. Here, the kitsch emblems of post-war America's consumer-culture were simultaneously parodied and celebrated[21].

Osgerby is speaking about the impact of the myth in the US, but it also had its importance in the punk scenes that emerged in Europe, whether in Ireland, Britain or even France. Punk rock as it arose in Europe was heavily influenced by US bands – Iggy Pop and the Stooges, the New York Dolls and especially the Ramones. Malcolm McLaren, before managing the Sex Pistols, briefly worked with the New York Dolls. Moreover, British and Irish punk rockers were also indebted to British pub rock and glam rock, genres which, partly as a reaction against what was perceived as the pretentiousness of *prog* rock, the distance of arena rock, and the politicisation of leisure by the 1960s counterculture, looked back to the excitement and lack of obvious political concern of 1950s American rock'n'roll[22]. Both pub and glam rock laid the emphasis on teenage leisure and pleasure. T. Rex ("Teenage Dream"), Roxy Music ("Virginia Plain": "You're so sheer, you're so chic / Teenage rebel of the week"), David Bowie ("Starman") and acts such as Gary Glitter, Alvin Stardust, Sweet, Mud, and Suzi Quatro all celebrated and lampooned teenage myths. At least two of Northern Ireland's earliest punk bands, the Undertones and RUDI, started out by playing covers of glam rock. British pub rock bands like Eddie and the Hot Rods and Dr Feelgood played a raw brand of American-inspired rhythm & blues. Significantly, both acts played in Northern Ireland in 1976, and inspired young people who would later become punks to start their own groups. Punk rock as a genre added cynicism and an extra dose of rebelliousness to the *insouciance* and irreverence of these genres. However, top-charting pop music also played a role in propagating teenage tropes as it was the most readily accessible form of popular music and was thus unavoidable. The last of the big bubblegum pop bands, the Bay City Rollers, had in Northern Ireland as elsewhere a huge following, and played there in 1976: local power pop punk band the Starjets opened for them and for the Glitter band in 1976, before turning to pop punk. Bubblegum pop, described by Osgerby as "deftly executed pop hits distinguished by a pumping dance beat and simple but catchy chorus hooks and instrumental riffs"[23] provided great material for punk musicians who had few music-making skills. The Sex Pistols' guitarist Glen Matlock has explained

21. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
22. Malcolm McLaren considered that Billy Fury – one of Britain's earliest rock'n'roll stars – was more important to popular music than Bob Dylan.
23. B. Osgerby, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

how he lifted the opening hook of "Pretty Vacant" off Abba's "SOS".[24] Furthermore, punk rock, like pop or the teenage-orientated rock'n'roll of the 1950s, favoured the single over the album.

Whether teenage musical and thematic tropes made their way into Northern Irish punk directly through American artists, or through the adoption and adaptation of American genres by British and Irish musicians, they were seized upon, consciously or not, by the young punks who started bands. Many English bands also drew at least some of their inspiration from American-style teenage pop: the Damned, Generation X, Penetration and the Buzzcocks. However, almost all of the first-wave punk bands in Northern Ireland tended to have a more pop-inflected sound than their English counterparts. As Greg Cowan, the singer of the Outcasts, the Northern band with the toughest reputation, has said: "we were all power pop, but we didn't know".[25] In the early days of punk rock it was difficult for young people in Northern Ireland to find out what the music sounded like, because of the limited availability of punk rock records. Thematically, Northern punk groups seemed preoccupied by teenage themes. The most famous example is undoubtedly the Undertones "Teenage Kicks", but adolescent concerns and even the word *teenager* itself appears again and again in the lyrics of a large number of songs from the Northern punk scene: "Teenager in Love" by the Idiots; "Teenage Love Song" by P45; "Teenage Rebel" by Strike, "Teenagers" by the Sect, "The Teen Age" by Victim, "Just Another Teenage Rebel", by the Outcasts, etc. In "Lipstick Heroes", the Androids refer to the New York Dolls as "Teenage heartthrob" and in the song "Number one" by RUDI, Brian Young sings "I wanna be a teenage dream". One of the creators of the fanzine *Alternative Ulster* said about RUDI that "their songs documented exactly what it was like to be a teenager at the time and the subject matter therefore revolved around alcohol, glue, jealousy, girls and trouble with the police. Although I don't remember the one about homework!".[26] This quote can be applied to a large number of Northern Ireland punk groups. It is also interesting to note some of the songs which were covered by these bands: RUDI covered "Yummy Yummy Yummy" by American bubblegum pop band Ohio Express, and the Idiots produced a punk version of "Teenager in Love", an American song originally written by Doc Pomus & Mort Shuman, first for Dion & the Belmonts (1958) but which here references the 1972 cover by American teen idol Donny Osmond.[27] "Teenager in Love" was, in the words of collector and amateur punk historian Sean O'Neill, "a song which practically

24. David Simpson, "Glen Matlock: 'No matter what we do, nothing will equate to the Sex Pistols'", *The Guardian*, 11 April 2014.
25. Greg Cowan, Personal interview, Belfast, 2 July 2014.
26. Sean O'Neill and Guy Trelford, *It Makes You Want to Spit: The Definitive Guide to Punk in Northern Ireland*, Dublin, Reekus, 2003, p. 22.
27. The song was also covered by Connie Stevens on *The Muppet Show* in 1976 (which was produced in Britain by ITV at the time).

every Belfast punk band at the time had a go at"[28]. British punk is sometimes seen as bringing forth a sense of the local because singers often held on to or adopted local accents (John Lydon, Joe Strummer, Pete Shelley). However, this was not the case for everyone: in Northern Ireland most punk singers tried to put on an American accent – but usually failed. Often, the voice is neither American nor Northern Irish, but belongs to a space in between. Thus, in covers like "Yummy Yummy Yummy" or "Teenager in Love", the meaning of the songs is displaced both by the genre (punk rock) and by the local accent which unintentionally breaks through.

But what does it mean to produce a punk cover of a late 1960s American bubblegum pop band in Northern Ireland? As Gerry Smyth has stated for the Undertones, "Teenage Kicks' *reiterates* the teenage lust/love scenario from early rock'n'roll, and *re-interprets* it in the light of new technological and ideological developments".[29] By giving teenage songs a punk treatment, whether by covering pop standards or by parodying and performing them in a context which contrasted so sharply with the mythical suburban America which had inspired them, Northern Irish punks created a dissonance, a sense of dislocation. The irony of punks singing love songs in a conflict-ridden society with few economic prospects betrays the fact that despite their affiliation with a subculture which was reputed for its suspicion of romance and of commercial culture, these young people actually aspired for a life of "unbridled leisure, pleasure and carefree fun".[30] They knew that this was something out of their reach, so in their songs they imagined a teenage world which was both familiar and foreign, both real and imaginary, a liminal space where they could concentrate on being teenagers and deal with adolescent problems, such as crushes, sex and growing up. America and teenage pop provided a mythical language they could use to navigate their own adolescent years and emotional landscape in Northern Ireland. John O'Neill of the Undertones said in a 1978 *Alternative Ulster* interview: "We really have to make the best out of situations in Derry & N. Ireland to find something to write about that doesn't sound too contrived (*eg*: straight politics). Our music has to [reflect] *our* everyday life or else it just isn't honest". This is significant because it means that the "Troubles" are not considered to be the determining feature of their everyday life but the backdrop to it. Feargal Sharkey of the Undertones famously said: "People used to ask early on why we didn't write songs about the Troubles: we were doing our best to escape from it".[31] However, the interviews I carried out during research for my PhD thesis seem to indicate that it wasn't the violence of the conflict that young people in Derry, Belfast or elsewhere wanted to escape so much as

28. "Strike", *Spit Records*, http://www.spitrecords.co.uk/strike.htm (last accessed 24/02/2018).
29. G. Smyth, *op. cit.*, p.59.
30. *Ibid.,* p. 156.
31. John Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock*, London, Faber & Faber, 2005, p. 619.

its effects: lack of opportunities and boredom. In this regard the difference of experiences between young people living in towns and cities in the north of Ireland, the south of Ireland and those in Britain is arguably a difference of degree rather than of kind. Nevertheless, the desire to escape was very real. It is made explicit in "Teenage Love Song" by the pop punk/power pop band P45, in which the frontman sings: "You gotta get yourself out of this hole". But this proves impossible: "we're stuck here in this city". The question which is repeated during the chorus – "Why play another, just any other teenage love song?" – receives an answer in the last verse. "So now we're stuck here in this city / But when the bright light shines/ Well people don't - don't like feeling lonesome / So keep on playing time after time". More than simply celebrating pleasure and leisure in song, the teenage pop punk of the Northern Ireland scene had the added value of acting as a self-fulfilling prophecy: it created the opportunities for "unbridled leisure, pleasure and carefree fun" that didn't exist there in the first place, partly thanks to punk's emphasis on DIY. Northern Ireland in the 1970s was hardly a permissive society, and has been described as "probably the most Christian society in the western world except for the Republic of Ireland"; even among young people, social attitudes tended to be conservative: in 1978 Northern Irish male teenagers were much more likely to frown on pre-marital sex than their English peers, for instance.[32] Punk by contrast facilitated the creation of spaces where young people could escape the moral conservatism and sectarian politics of their communities and have a good time, whether by enjoying shows in cross-community settings, consuming alcohol and drugs, or engaging in sex. This is unsurprising: after all, with 1970s punk, as Jon Savage has said, "there was this all-consuming concentration on the now"[33]. But this was more than mere escapism – or rather escapism itself does not preclude a critique of the status quo. Simon Frith has argued that "rock has been used simultaneously as form of self-indulgence and individual escape *and* as a source of solidarity and active dissatisfaction' and that punk rock in particular derived its 'cultural significance [...] not from its articulation of unemployment but from its exploration of the aesthetics of proletarian play"[34]. Punks in Northern Ireland, through their adoption of the aesthetics of American teenage pop culture and its focus on pleasure, emphasised and celebrated leisure perhaps even more so than their contemporaries elsewhere. If we agree with Frith that punk articulated a leisure critique of the work ethic,[35] in the context of the "Troubles" it can be seen as having provided a leisure critique of the status quo. Singing about girls, love and the woes of adolescence rather than about the conflict, and doing so in spaces shared by young Catholics and Protestants alike, can be seen as a way of resisting or

32. Ed Cairns, *Caught in Crossfire: Children and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, Belfast, Appletree, 1987, p. 72-76.
33. Johan Kugelberg & Jon Savage (eds.), *Punk: An Aesthetic*, New York, Rizzoli, 2012, p. 149.
34. S. Frith, *op. cit.*, p. 265-267.
35. *Ibid.,* p. 267.

at least of delegitimizing the process of cultural reproduction of both communities. As Jon Savage has said, "punk was nothing less than the latest rearing up of the teenage id";[36] and the teenage id was clearly influenced by America: "the Americans colonized our subconscious".[37] If punk rock brought to Northern Ireland the excitement needed to entice young people from diverse backgrounds out of their neighbourhoods and encourage them to pick up a guitar and start a band, it was the first wave of punk's focus on sounds and tropes linked to the American myth of the teenager rather than on overtly political themes which enabled them to maintain a degree of cross-community solidarity.

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36. J. Kugelberg & J. Savage, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
37. Wim Wenders quoted in S. Frith, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Representing the Irish in the United States: The Circulation of Erskine Nicol's Popular Artworks in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Amélie Dochy
University of Toulouse II

Erskine Nicol (1825-1904) was a Scottish painter whose pictures were mainly devoted to the representations of Ireland and the Irish, as can be seen with *The Legacy* also called *Good News*, which today is preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston. Nicol became popular in the United Kingdom in the 1850s: his artworks were sold and exhibited in Great Britain as well as in Ireland, and they were also shown in the United States or in France thanks to the international networks set up by British art dealers in the nineteenth century.

Indeed, the British art market had utterly changed, a transformation marked by the booming of independent art galleries[1]. Such an evolution contributed to develop the commerce of British artworks abroad, and in particular in the United States. In the nineteenth century, American art collectors were fond of European paintings, an interest which was much to the benefit of British art sellers, who were looking for customers all around the world, and more precisely in British territories or ex-colonies, the United States having declared their independence in 1776.

But this newly acquired independence – the Revolutionary War being ended in 1783 by the Treaty of Paris – did not break up all ties between the

1. "Great Britain's art market took shape in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the relaxation of laws restricting the importation of pictures, the development of a system of auction sales, and the emergence of the independent art dealer. […] As the market grew in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, dealers increasingly traded in contemporary British art". Pamela Fletcher, "Creating The French Gallery: Ernest Gambart and the Rise of the Commercial Art Gallery in Mid-Victorian London", *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 6 (1), 2007, http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring07/143-creating-the-french-gallery-ernest-gambart-and-the-rise-of-the-commercial-art-gallery-in-mid-victorian-london (last accessed 5/11/2020) p. 1-27, p. 2.

U.S.A. and the U.K., as many Americans never forgot their British ancestry. Hence, seventy years later, in the 1850s, British artworks were coveted by the wealthiest – who could buy original paintings – and also by the members of the working class, who indulged a growing passion for engravings. How did art merchants use this fondness to sell the artworks of British artists such as Erskine Nicol? Did they have the power to make an artwork popular?

To answer these questions, this article will examine the way in which Erskine Nicol's paintings were made popular among American collectors thanks to the networks of British art dealers. This will lead to an examination of the key role played by international exhibitions which gave both visibility and value to Nicol's pictures in the United States. Such events allowed a great number of visitors to admire works of art, and it is interesting to observe how representatives of all social classes were keen on the painter's images of Ireland and the Irish, considering that American editors printed copies of them in the thousands for the American market.

Buying Erskine Nicol's Irish Pictures in America

The fact that British art dealers had customers on the East Coast of the United States can be guessed from the presence of Nicol's paintings in the collections of individuals such as A. T. Stewart, who had bought for himself *A Disputed Boundary* (1869)[2], an oil on canvas that his contemporaries estimated at 10,000 dollars.[3] This is the reason why, as early as 1858, *The Art Journal* noted the popularity of Nicol on the other side of the Atlantic: "[Nicol's] sketches of Irish life and character are even more popular in the United States and in Canada, than in his own country."[4] This observation might have been a little exaggerated, since Nicol was undeniably more famous in the United Kingdom than in America, but it remains that his genre paintings were very appreciated over there.

In the United States, these private collectors often accepted to exhibit their own paintings to the general public during temporary exhibitions. In New York, for example, the Vanderbilt family had acquired Nicol's painting called *Paying the Rent* by 1885, as confirmed by a journalist of the *New York Times*.[5] A few years later, another painting by Nicol, *Looking Out for a Safe Investment* (1876), entered their collection. This picture was lent by the

2. "An American Millionaire's Gallery", *The Art Journal*, London, 1 May 1887, p. 156.
3. "The Art Gallery; A List of Pictures in Mr Stewart's Collection", *The New York Times*, 12 April 1876, p. 8.
4. "The Royal Scottish Academy", *The Art Journal*, 1 April 1858, p. 100.
5. "His Art Treasures", *The New York Times*, 9 December 1885, p. 2.

family to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, along with many other artworks from their private collection, between 1902 and 1920.[6]

Similarly, the collection of an American art lover called Fales comprised a painting by Nicol entitled *A Partial Eclipse of the Moon*, which had already been exposed in Dundee in 1873, and which was shown in New York in 1881, where it was commented by a journalist of *The New York Times*: "*A Partial Eclipse of the Moon*, by Erskine Nicol, is one of the gems of the collection; the coaxing hand and seductive face of the cheerful wife, and the discontented scowl of the man, tell their story in lines of exquisite beauty and finish."[7]

The circulation of Nicol's canvasses in American private collections was made possible thanks to the international networks of some British art dealers. These dealers did not hesitate to circulate the artworks in their possession in order to exhibit them regularly in different sale rooms, in Great Britain or in foreign countries, going as far as America or Australia.[8] The exhibition rooms showing the paintings played a crucial role in their sales, and this accounts for the multiplication of such commercial galleries in the middle of the nineteenth century. The circulation of Nicol's works in this kind of exhibitions must have given more value and popularity to his production because the more expensive his paintings were, the more fashionable he was. It would then be interesting to focus on the identity of these merchants who invested in Nicol's artworks, in order to better understand how they could influence their exchange value.

Nicol's works circulated in the private galleries of several sellers, such as Arthur Tooth, who had opened his own shop in London in 1866. Tooth had begun his career as an art dealer in 1842, the year when his father, Charles Tooth, had created the company "Tooth & Sons." The London business was quickly made prosperous, which allowed the son to open some more commercial galleries in New York, as well as in Paris.[9] Thomas Bayer and John Page believe that, from the 1870s onwards, Tooth had become one of the most reputable dealers in the English capital.[10] He mainly invested in paintings made by the British artists of his time whose production was frequently exhibited at the Royal Academy and he bought numerous pictures directly from Erskine Nicol.[11]

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6. Winifred Eva Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, Arno, 1974, p. 192.
7. "The Fales Collection; Quaint Relics and Rich Art Works; Brief Description of the Exhibition", *The New York Evening Express*, 25 October 1881, np.
8. Robert Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction: Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israëls and Ary Scheffer*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam U.P., 2007, p. 216.
9. Thomas Bayer & John M. Page, "Arthur Tooth: A London Dealer in the Spotlight, 1870-71", *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 9 (1), 2010, http://19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/spring10/arthur-tooth (last accessed 5/11/2020), p. 1-24, p. 2-3.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 3-4.

Tooth seemed to have developed an interest in Nicol's canvasses from the 1860s because his London gallery already exhibited two of his works in 1868.[12] In 1886, the dealer was selling from his exhibition the painting called *Under a Cloud* (1876), which had been presented at the Royal Academy eight years earlier, in 1878. The exhibition set up by Tooth in 1886 was well received, as evidenced by the comment published in *The Illustrated London News*:

> Mr Tooth relies chiefly upon foreign artists to provide attractions which may compete on equal terms with the more purely national exhibitions of the season; and it must be admitted that taste and judgment have presided over the selection brought together. […] Mr Nicol's *Under a Cloud* […] may be advantageously contrasted with Mr Faed's *Alone* […], for probably both pictures were painted at least ten years ago, and add to our regret that the former artist has been unable to pursue an art for which he was specially gifted.[13]

It is true that by the 1880s, Nicol painted less pictures in oil than before, which was probably due to health issues. Besides, it is likely that the first works by Nicol that Tooth had exhibited in this gallery had been bought directly to the artist. Bayer and Page demonstrated that Tooth had bought almost half his stock to painters themselves, at least in 1870 and 1871.[14] Considering that this practice was particularly profitable for this merchant, he must have favored these direct purchases when he started his business. Indeed, the paintings bought directly to artists were much less expensive than if he had bought them in an auction house.

Yet, Arthur Tooth could also spend extravagant amounts of money to obtain paintings by Nicol which were sold by auctioneers. In 1891, he disbursed 409 pounds for *Waiting at the Crossroads* (1868), sold by Christie's in London[15], after a real match against a New York merchant, as is reported in *The Scotsman*:

> *The Crossroads*, by Erskine Nicol, A. R. A, a fine work, which after a sharp competition was secured by Mr Arthur Tooth for 390 gs., the under bidder being Mr Carmer, a well-known New York dealer.[16]

This anecdote brings to light the value given to Nicol's production by art merchants in the 1890s, which must have encouraged Arthur Tooth to

12. "Mr Tooth's Third Winter Exhibition", *The Art Journal*, London, 1 December 1868, p. 284.
13. "The Spring Exhibitions", *Illustrated London News*, London, 3 April 1886, p. 345.
14. Th. Bayer & J. Page, art. cit., p. 6.
15. Algernon Graves, *Art Sales from Early in the Eighteenth Century to Early in the Twentieth Century*, London, Graves, 1818-1921, 3 vols., 1921, vol. 2, p. 286; "Art Sales", *The Times*, London, 13 April 1891, p. 13.
16. "Sale of Water-colours and Modern Pictures", *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, 13 April 1891, p. 3.

go on with his investments.[17] This was how Nicol's paintings could be seen in the different private galleries that Tooth possessed to attract art lovers, especially in New York, where there was an obvious interest for images illustrating the social and political tensions in Ireland.

Indeed, the protagonist waiting for his coach at the centre of the painting is isolated from the other characters by his posture and attitude, something which did not escape the attention of the art critics of the time, who identified him as "unmistakably English".[18] It is true that the painter suggests that this haughty visitor is not Irish: he has come to Ireland for hunting, as can be guessed from the birds which are tied by his gamekeeper. The young man is seated at his feet, on the left, and behind him stands an old beggar, extending her hand. To the right is seated an Irish piper, so that the triangular composition expresses the domination of the Englishman over the Irish characters, who all depend on this foreigner's money. Such a situation echoed the social order of Ireland's predominantly rural economy, where land was owned by a class of often absentee landlords, who seldom cared about those who worked and lived on it. Such a reception of *Waiting at the Crossroads* can be explained by the understanding of the Famine as a consequence of the maladministration of Irish land by Anglo-Irish landlords, an interpretation which was deeply-ingrained among the Irish who settled in America in the middle of the nineteenth century.

17. In 1897, he offered 165 guineas to possess *The Price of the Pig* (1864, 38 x 48 cm), sold at Christie's, in London. In 1902 he bought *In Doubt* (undated) for 975 dollars during an auction in New York which was held in the Waldorf-Astoria to sell the collection of an American art dealer named S. P. Avery Junior. "Sale of Pictures", *The Scotsman*, 22 March 1897, p. 8; "Avery Art Collection Sale", *The New York Times*, 21 March 1902, p. 6.
18. "Royal Scottish Academy's Exhibition; First Notice", *The Scotsman*, 18 February 1869, p. 6.

Fig. 1 – Erskine Nicol, *Waiting at the Crossroads*, oil painting, 71 x 105 cm, 1868. Reproduced with the kind authorisation of the Frick Library, New York[19]

Thus, when Tooth chose to buy this painting, he was probably aware that the motif would strike a chord in America, where the picture could be sold through multiple networks. Tooth's choice of setting up his business in London allowed him to be at the heart of the British art trade, as indicated by Anne Helmreich: "The model of networks is highly relevant for how objects were able to travel in […] galleries".[20] Galleries run by these merchants were indeed linked by common commercial interests. Not far from Tooth's exhibition in London could be found other sellers who appreciated Nicol's work, such as Thomas McLean, who opened his own commercial gallery towards 1865 at n°7, Haymarket.[21] There, he showed pictures like *Squaring Accounts* in 1876[22] and he owned many other works by Nicol, such as *Waiting for an Answer* (1862)[23], *The New Boots* (1866)[24] or *Paying the Rent*, which he bought for an exceptional

19. I would like to thank Suz Massen and Elizabeth Lane, who both work at the Frick Library in New York, for their generous help in my research about Erskine Nicol's paintings entitled *Waiting at the Crossroads* and *A Disputed Boundary*.
20. Anne Helmreich, "Traversing Objects: The London Art Market at the turn of the Twentieth Century", in Charlotte Gould & Sophie Mesplède (eds.), *Marketing Art in the British Isles*, Farnham/Burlington, Ashgate, 2012, p. 135-146, p. 140.
21. About McLean's gallery, read the following page (last accessed 24/03/2014): http://learn.bowdoin.edu/fletcher/london-gallery/data/pages/as600.html.
22. "Mr McLean's Gallery, Haymarket", *The Art Journal*, London, 1 June 1876, p. 180.
23. McLean bought this oil on canvas measuring 46 x 66 cm at Christie's in London on 20 May 1888, for 189 pounds (lot 263). The picture came from the collection of James Patry Graves, *Art Sales*, vol. 2, p. 286.
24. This oil on canvas from 1866 (58 x 45 cm) belonged to David Price and was auctioned at Christie's in London on 2 April 1892 (lot 96). McLean got it for 200 guineas (or 210 pounds). Roberts, William, *Memorials of Christie's: A Record of Art Sales from 1766 to 1896*, London, G. Bell, 1897, 2 vols., vol. 2, p. 180; Graves, *Art Sales*, vol. 2, p. 284-288, p. 286.

amount of money in 1869, that is to say two years after its presentation at the international exposition of 1867 in Paris.[25] After McLean's purchase, the work appeared on the American market in the 1870s and it joined the collection of Franklin O'Day, an inhabitant of Saint Louis who, according to one of his contemporaries, bought it for 10,000 dollars, and sold it later to William H. Vanderbilt of New York.[26] Wishing to make his collection known to other New Yorkers, Vanderbilt had *Paying the Rent* exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art between 1886 and 1903. Later on, it was bought by Helen C. Merritt, of Los Angeles.[27] The story of this painting suggests that McLean contributed to the circulation of the artwork in the United States where its price increased over time.

On 18 April 1945, it was auctioned at Parke & Bernet, in New York, where a customer obtained it for 1,500 dollars (lot 157), and then, on the first of January 1980, it was sold at Butterfield's, in San Francisco (lot 34) for 28,000 dollars.[28] Therefore, the fact that this oil on canvas travelled between the United Kingdom and the United States doubtlessly contributed to raise its value, which leads us to question the links between Nicol's popularity and the circulation of his artworks in international exhibitions.

The International Circulation of Artworks: a Key Challenge

Nicol's paintings were exhibited in a certain number of vast exhibitions which were called "universal expositions", originally designed to put forward the major innovations developed in each country. But in the 1850s, fine arts were included in such exhibitions and Nicol had his first paintings presented in a universal exposition in Paris in 1867. Then, it was mainly at the end of the century that his paintings could be seen in such fairs on the other side of the Atlantic.

For instance, it was in 1881 that American visitors of the Chicago Interstate Industrial Exhibition had a chance to discover *An Irish Merrymaking*.[29] Six years later, the same event happened again in Chicago

25. McLean succeeded in buying this work at an auction on 8 May 1869, at Christie's (London) for a little over 1,102 pounds (lot 102). The other pictures by Nicol which circulated in the private collection of McLean were *Precautionary Measure* (unknown date), *Signing the New Lease* (1868), *The Lease Refused* (1863, 56 x 43 cm), *His Legal Adviser* (1876, the version measuring 78 x 109 cm) and a second version of the painting called *The Day after the Fair* (1860, 25.5 x 33 cm). Graves. Art Sales, p. 285-286.
26. J. Thomas Scharf, "Mr Day", *History of Saint Louis City and County, From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day*, *Including Biographical Sketches of Representative Men*, Philadelphia, Everts, 1883, 2 vols., vol. 2, p. 1297-1298, p. 1298.
27. Information sent on 21 April 2014 by Janell Snape who works at Bonhams' in San Francisco. I am very grateful for her long-lasting help in my research.
28. Information sent by Janell Snape.
29. Kirsten M. Jensen, "The American Salon: The Art Gallery at the Interstate Industrial Exposition: 1873-1890", Phd dissertation, New York, City University, 2007, 2 vols., vol. 2,

and George Seney, a New Yorker, lent the painting by Nicol called *Bashful*.[30] George Seney had already lent another painting by Nicol, that is to say *Always Tell the Truth* (n°78), for the Louisville Industrial Exhibition (Kentucky) of 1883, where art lovers could also observe *An Irish Merrymaking* (n°130), then owned by Joseph W. Bates. The fact that *An Irish Merrymaking* appeared again at Louisville indicates that it was probably well received when it was displayed two years earlier in Chicago, in 1881. So, in the United States, industrial expositions favoured an interest in Nicol's paintings, since they circulated from exhibition to exhibition.

The details and truth of Nicol's Irish scenes were also praised in 1876, a year when an Irish painting by the Scottish artist was selected for the Philadelphia Centennial.[31] The oil in question was *Paying the Rent*[32], a scene belonging to the tragicomedy which had already been displayed in Paris in 1867. The painting put forward the difficult relationships between landlords and tenants in Ireland, so that it exemplified an aspect of Irish history, which probably accounts for this choice by the selection committee of the Philadelphia Centennial.

Fig. 2 – Erskine Nicol, *Paying the Rent*, oil on canvas, 122 x 166 cm, 1866, private collection, USA. © Amélie Dochy.

p. 379.

30. Jensen. p. 477.
31. Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia*, Lexington, Kentucky U.P., 2002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt130hm4w (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. x-xi.
32. United States Centennial Commission, *Official Catalogue of the International Exhibition, Seventh and Revised Edition*, Philadelphia, J. R. Nagle, 1876, second part: "Art Gallery, Annexes and Outdoor Works of Art", DOI: 10.5479/sil.418823.39088007071319, p. 38.

Actually, the American public was probably more sensitive to the situation of Irish peasants depicted in the canvas than to its humorous effects, as can be guessed from the important number of Irish immigrants who came to Philadelphia and who settled there from the seventeenth century onwards, with record figures being reached in the nineteenth century since, in 1850, there were 72,312 people born in Ireland in Philadelphia County while, in 1860, they were 95,458.[33]

The majority of these immigrants came from rural areas severely hit by the Famine (and noticeably by the Great Famine between 1846 and 1852), but also by the evictions which led to the depopulation of Irish agricultural lands throughout the century. In Philadelphia, they mainly settled in the working-class districts where Black Americans already lived[34] and they were generally hired in the industrial neighbourhood of Kensington and Southwark where they worked in the textile factories or in the construction of new means of transportation such as the canal or the railway.[35]

Considering that the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition was open to everyone and that the entrance ticket only cost 50 cents[36], even workers with low income could visit it. Amongst them, there must have been people of Irish origin who were interested in the land of their ancestors and who came into the sections of the exhibit devoted to Ireland. Driven by a form of nostalgia, these American visitors probably saw the peasants painted in *Paying the Rent* as characters with which they could easily identify since many of them, or members of their own family, might have been faced with similar economic troubles.[37]

Therefore, the iconography of Ireland imagined by Nicol was circulated in American exhibitions which were visited by all strata of society. Thus the most humble art lovers interested in Ireland could see these pictures and later on, they could even acquire their reproductions, as they were widely circulated in the United States.

33. Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience*, Philadelphia, Temple U.P., 1973, p. 29.
34. D. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 18-21.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 31-33.
36. The Libray Companion of Philadelphia, "The Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, PA", https://lcpimages.org/centennial (last accessed 8/11/2020).
37. Dennis Clark explains that in the middle of the 18th century, Irish migrants who hoped to settle in Philadelphia were sometimes withheld in Ireland by their landlords to whom they owed money; they thus prevented the boats with their indebted tenants on board to set sail for America. D. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Reproduction, Circulation and the Value of Irish Pictures by Nicol in America

According to Walter Benjamin, the mechanical reproduction of art is an issue in itself, because it causes the original artwork to lose its "aura". Benjamin defines the aura of an artwork as its "*hic and nunc*", meaning that an authentic painting is necessarily related to a precise place and an exact moment in time, which makes it unique[38]. According to Benjamin, reproducing an artwork is undermining its authority, its historical value and the relationship that the onlooker may entertain with it. For the philosopher, it is mass culture which is responsible for this degradation.[39] Reproduction would then be the result of a demand by a mass public trying to appropriate a work of art, even if this appropriation makes it lose its authenticity. It is true that in Nicol's time, art became more accessible since a greater number of collectors were likely to buy artworks or their reproductions:

> Public interest in art kept pace with the expansion of art reproduction. The culture of the Enlightenment, pursued by a motley collection of societies, journals, reading circles, exhibitions and other cultural institutions, had brought increasing numbers of people into contact with art. […]. The visual arts, literature and music were no longer the preserve of a small cultural elite […]. Reading prose and poetry, playing a musical instrument and collecting art in reproduction literally brought the arts into many people's homes.[40]

38. "In even the most perfect of reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place. […] The here and now of the original underlies the concept of its authenticity […]. Technological reproduction can place the copy of the original in situations which the original itself cannot attain. […] These changed circumstances may leave the artwork's other properties untouched, but they certainly devalue the here and now of the artwork. And although this can apply not only to art but (say) to a landscape moving past the spectator in a film, in the work of art this process touches on […] authenticity. The authenticity of a thing is the quintessence of all that is transmissible in it from its origin on, ranging from physical duration to the historical testimony relating to it. […] And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object". Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, edited by Michael William Jennings, Brigid Levin Doherty & Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge, Harvard U.P., 2008 (1939), p. 21-22.

39. "What, then, is the aura? A strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be. To follow with the eye […] a mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts its shadow on the beholder is to breathe the aura of those mountains, of that branch. In the light of this description, we can readily grasp the social basis of the aura's present decay […]. Namely: *the desire of the present-day masses to 'get closer' to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing's uniqueness by assimilating it as a reproduction*. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at close range in a […] reproduction. And the reproduction, as offered by illustrated magazines and newsreels, differs unmistakably from the image", in W. Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Italics are in the original text.

40. Robert Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction: Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israëls and Ary Scheffer*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam U.P., 2007, p. 16.

The fact that paintings were hung on the walls of Nicol's contemporaries was nothing new because, for a very long time, the wealthiest art lovers embellished their dwellings with large pictures. On the contrary, the emergence of buyers belonging to the middle class or even the working class was a recent phenomenon. They also started to decorate their homes with original paintings or their reproductions: from the middle of the century onwards, there were collector's items affordable for almost everyone. If, as we have seen, the popularity of an artist can be estimated according to the prices paid by rich collectors for his original artworks whenever they are offered for sale, especially at auctions, it can also be observed that in the eyes of a wider public, the value of a painting can be evaluated thanks to the number of its reproductions.

Nicol worked with the most influent print-sellers of his time, such as Henry Graves (1806-1892), whose business was active in London between 1827 and 1926.[41] The editor spotted the most popular paintings during the exhibitions of the Royal Academy and the Royal Scottish Academy and, as soon as he realised the first successes of the painter within the Scottish gallery, he launched the reproduction of several of his pictures, which was a very expensive process. As reminded by *The Art Journal* in 1850, it was an investment that had to pay back:

> The print-publisher must be a man of taste and judgement, as well as a capitalist, to select such works as are adapted for engraving, and such as will be able to afford him a return for the large sums invested in bringing them out.[42]

Nevertheless, Henry Graves did not wait until the moment when Nicol was made internationally famous to launch reproductions of his canvasses depicting Ireland. He ordered a copy of two paintings called *Outward Bound* and *Homeward Bound* to Thomas Herbert Maguire (1821-1895), who had to engrave these two full-length portraits, the first showing a ragged migrant on an Irish quay, staring at a poster advertising a ship line to New York, while in the second, the same protagonist could be seen neat and well-dressed pondering on an American dock in front of another poster promoting "the fast sailing barque Washington" about to leave for Dublin. The copies were published on the 24th of May 1854, both in London and in New York, thanks to Graves' collaboration with the American editor Williams, Stevens & Williams.[43]

41. F. M. O'Donoghue, "Graves, Henry", in Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. London & New York, Macmillan & Smith, 1885-1904, 63 vols, and three supplements, 1901, Supplement II, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1901_supplement/Graves,_Henry (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 346-347.
42. "The Publications of Mr Alderman Moon", *The Art Journal*, London, 1 January 1850, p. 30, quoted by R. Verhoogt, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
43. A great number of pictures by Nicol were reproduced thanks to lithography. The technique consisted in drawing the work on a limestone with an oily pen. Then, some acid was applied

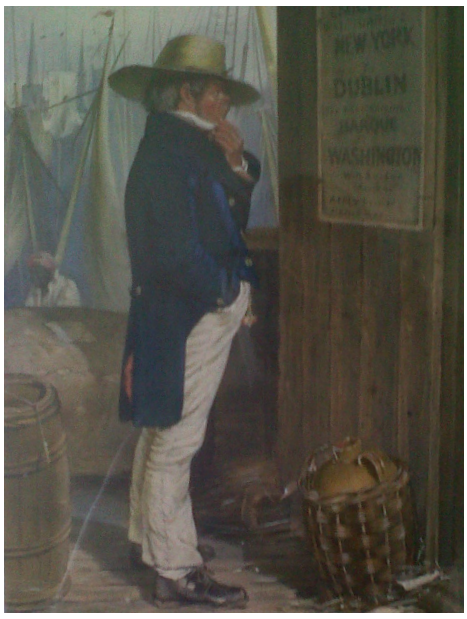

Fig. 3 (L) – *Outward Bound*, coloured lithograph engraved by T. H. Maguire after Nicol's painting, 34 x 27,6 cm, 24 May 1854, London / New York. © Amélie Dochy.
Fig. 4 (R) – *Homeward Bound*, coloured lithograph engraved by T. H. Maguire after Nicol's painting, 34 x 26 cm, 24 May 1854, London / New York. © Amélie Dochy.

In the next year, Graves continued to have reproductions of Nicol's pictures printed in the American city, noticeably when he asked John Robert Dicksee (1817-1905) to realise a lithograph of *The Flower of Connemara*, a picture by Nicol dated 1855. The final copies – showing a dreamy boy bent over an embankment with a few mushrooms and a hat placed to his left – were printed in London and New York on 27 August 1855.[44] Then, in 1856, Graves had the colour lithographs of *Homeward Bound* and *Outward Bound* reprinted, which demonstrates their success. As the litographs were not numbered, it is impossible to know how many copies were printed exactly, but according to Verhoogt, the technique used to make lithographs could produce up to thirty or forty thousand examples because the lithographic limestone was a highly resistant surface.[45]

to the stone to erode all the zones which were not protected by grease and this process was eventually stopped by the use of a moistened sponge rubbed over the surface. Some ink could then be applied with a roller over the lines which had not been attacked by the acid. The last step was to press the stone over a sheet of paper. Such a technique allowed to make black and white lithographs, but it was also possible to produce coloured versions with a successive application of colours on the stone. Gérard Denizeau, *Vocabulaire des arts visuels du XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Minerve, 2004, p. 97.

44. I am grateful to Ronan Teevan, of Caxton's, a print seller in Ireland, as he gave me all this information by email on 15 August 2012.

45. R. Verhoogt, *op. cit.*, p. 44, 84.

Usually, such reproductions were sold for a little more than ten shillings[46], a modest amount which confirms that lithographs were addressed to collectors of little means, who could not afford to buy originals. As a result, their purchases were often made "by default". For Wilfrid Meynell, these art lovers were extremely keen on Nicol's artworks:

> Such art as Mr Nicol can never fail to be highly popular […]. If any proof were needed, it can be found in the eagerness to possess engravings from his pictures which is shown by the same class of collectors who, not in a position to acquire the pictures themselves, gather together and highly prize the replicas in black and white of the works of such masters as Wilkie and Webster[47].

Here, Meynell clarifies that collectors who "prized" the reproductions of Nicol's pictures also bought copies of other genre paintings, and especially those of David Wilkie or Thomas Webster (1800-1886). This suggests that there also were art lovers who were specialised in the collection of engravings. Across all strata of society, these collectors gathered copies and classified them according to their topic, genre, artist or period[48] and from the popularity of Nicol's Irish pictures and engravings on the American market, it can be guessed that some of them treasured representations of Ireland as a form of remembrance of their Irish heritage.

The fact that art dealers or a renowned editor like Graves had faith in Nicol had an impact on the young artist's popularity, because his engravings already circulated in the English capital when he experienced his first successes at the Royal Academy in 1857. In addition, Henry Graves was not the only editor to reproduce and circulate copies of Nicol's works[49], which suggests that it was a profitable business for several of them, even in the United States. Other editors overseas were interested in Nicol's production because of its reproducibility, such as the French company Goupil or the New Yorker Knoedler & Co. The latter also invested in scenes of Irish life depicted by Nicol, such as *His Legal Adviser*, illustrating the feeling of perplexity and surprise of a lawyer listening to the worries of his angry client who dramatises the cause of his troubles with an eloquent gesture of his right hand, pointing at some invisible enemy. Such a challenging

46. These engravings could be bought at Cowleson's Gallery, on Lothian Street, for a little over 10 shillings. "Specific Articles for Sale", *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, 9 August 1905, p. 11.
47. Wilfrid Meynell, *Some Modern Artists and their Works*, London/Paris/New York, Cassell, 1883, p. 150.
48. R. Verhoogt, *op. cit.*, p. 213, 249.
49. Michael Knoedler was involved in various partnerships to publish prints in New York, but he was also personally interested in Nicol's works. In 1910, he bought *Collecting his Thoughts* (1865) and *Yours to Command* (1865). "Butler Paintings Sold for $264,835", *The New York Times*, 8 January 1910, p. 2. The French editor Goupil, whose publishing house had a branch in New York and who was Michael Knoedler's former employer, had also purchased a painting by Nicol called *Paddy's Mark* between 1869 and 1874 (information from the Paul Mellon Centre).

attitude was doubtlessly enjoyed by the American public, who was fond of stories illustrating rebellion against undue authority.

Fig. 5 – *His Legal Adviser*, black and white engraving by Victor Gustave Lhuillier after Nicol' s painting, 35 x 46 cm, published by L. H. Lefèvre in London and Knoedler & Co. in New York, 18 November 1882, private collection. © Amélie Dochy.

To the contemporaries who saw the picture at the Royal Academy in London, there was no doubt that the scene was located in Ireland as *The Illustrated London News* remarked on the "hibernically humorous" aspect of the picture[50], and then on the "anxious consultation" of this "Irish squireen".[51] The ensuing engraving, published simultaneously in London and in New York on 18 November 1882 was equally well-received, according to the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, which found its "silvery tone" particularly "charming"[52], or the *Art Journal,* judging it as "admirably etched" and predicting that "if the plate only attain[ed] to the popularity which the picture achieved when in the Academy [in London], no doubt the publisher [would] be well satisfied."[53] The journalist's prophecy turned true,

50. "The Royal Academy", *Illustrated London News*, 5 May 1877, p. 419.
51. "The Royal Academy; Second Notice", *Illustrated London News*, 12 May 1877, p. 450.
52. "The Huddersfield Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition", *The Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, Huddersfield (West Yorkshire, England), 7 July 1883, p. 8.
53. "New Etchings and books", *The Art Journal*, London, 1 February 1883, p. 164.

as is demonstrated by the fact that later on, Knoedler and Co. launched other reproductions of Nicol's works such as *The First Catch,* engraved by W. H. Simmons and published in 1892 with the help of the print-sellers F. J. Pilgeram and L. H. Lefèvre.[54] These associates had taken on Ernest Gambart's business, and they had financed prints based on Nicol's paintings in the 1870s.

It was not so rare that paintings by Nicol, as well as their reproductions, travelled into the United States because in 1880, the engraving called *The Trio*, published in New York by Cassell in the *Magazine of Art* prompted *The New York Times* to write the following comment: "We have had in the United States quite a number of Mr Nicoll's [*sic*] paintings, which have been fully appreciated." Moreover, for the journalist of *The New York Times*, *The Trio* was the "leading illustration"[55] of the magazine, a compliment which was confirmed in the daily three years later, when this image was published again in another book edited in New York[56].

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It can be concluded that the reproductions of Nicol's pictures sold well and that they contributed to the popularity of the artist, without any questioning of the authenticity of such copies by the painter's contemporaries. In the context of the nineteenth century, it could even be said that these reproductions participated in the construction of the "aura" of Nicol's paintings since they allowed his production to become famous across various sections of society and in different geographical places which could be as remote from his homeland as the United States.

Reproduced in the thousands, Nicol's iconography of Ireland circulated around the world and constructed an image of this country in the collective imagination. His contemporaries were so familiar with his pictures of Ireland that reality reminded them of Nicol's paintings, in the image of this Scottish traveller who came to the United States in 1866 and who wrote, as he discovered the town of Richmond in Virginia:

> The steam whistle now sounds […] and we see Richmond, before us with its tall spires and conspicuous square Capitol. At the wharf, there was such a scene as would have delighted the eye of Erskine Nicol. It was literally hanging with darkies in every conceivable sort of dress – coats, belonging to all periods of the century; and hats, still

54. Erskine Nicol, *The First Catch*, engraved by William Henry Simmons, 75 x 59 cm, London, Pilgeram & Lefèvre, New York, Knoedler & Co, 1892.
55. "New Books", *The New York Times*, 11 December 1880, p. 7.
56. "The frontispiece of [*Some Modern Artists*] is a capital etching by Lalauze from *The Trio*, a painting by Erskine Nicol, A. R. A. In Nicoll [*sic*] we find a British artist of great humor and the highest skill". "Holiday Books", *The New York Times*, 10 December 1883, p. 3.

> more incongruous, adorned the outer man of these gentry. They were mostly touters for the hotels or hack-drivers; and the bawling and general excitement they manifested was ten times worse than a combination of the scene enacted daily at Greenock quay and the Tower of London[57].

Although the author's patronising tone is quite shocking for today's reader, this testimony sent to Edinburgh's newspaper *The Scotsman* reveals the ways of seeing of that time. The Scotsman's feelings as he first glimpsed African Americans on the quays of Richmond resulted from the racial prejudices of his time: in the eyes of that visitor, the Blacks and the Irish were inferior in terms of civilisation, a belief which was not necessarily shared by Eskine Nicol, especially at the end of his life. Yet, at the beginning of his career, he did resort to degrading stereotypes of the Irish to produce a number of humorous images and caricatures for the British public which were not intended for the American market and which nourished anti-Irish prejudices in Scotland.

On the contrary, Nicol's images circulating on the American market tended to enhance Irish grievances through the motifs of rural life and its social tensions, poverty caused by colonisation and emigration. By selecting the pictures they showed in their galleries according to a clever division of their markets, art merchants managed to use their customers' beliefs, fears and hopes to make their pictures popular. While in Great Britain, Nicol's iconography could consolidate an image of despondency and chaos, in American exhibitions, it could offer a more hopeful vision, based on the bravery and resilience of Irish migrants. This shows that whether positively or negatively, Nicol influenced the way Irish identity was perceived in the nineteenth century so that elements of popular culture such as pictures, engravings and prints had the power to fashion the collective imagination.

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57. "A Visit to Richmond", *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, 4 June 1866, p. 3.

Ray Donovan: Irishness in American Popular Culture Today

Sylvie Mikowski
University of Reims

Ray Donovan is a series created by Ann Biderman and co-produced with Mark Gordon and Bryan Zuriff, which started to be broadcast by Showtime in 2013, winning a Golden Globe award for best supporting actor for Jon Voigt and several nominations in various competitions, including for its leading actor Liev Schreiber, and which has run for six seasons so far. The story pitch is exposed in the very first episode of season 1 of the series and revolves around Ray's Irish- American, South Boston background, as the eponymous title emphasises. Ray Donovan was pulled out of South Boston and relocated in Los Angeles by a substitute father, a Jewish celebrity lawyer played by Elliot Gould, who has trained him to become a "fixer". In other words, his job is to make use of any illegal means, such as blackmailing, extortion, beatings, etc., to make sure that his rich and famous Hollywood clients get away with whatever bad situation they have put themselves in, such as waking up with a dead girl in their beds, or having pictures of them in compromising postures circulating on the Internet. Ray, a man of (very) few words and fewer smiles, who was trained as a boxer from the earliest age by his father, thus converts his considerable inborn amount of rage, anger and hardly contained violence into a worthwhile occupation which enables him to provide the best for his wife, Abbie and his two children Conor and Bridget. Yet, his success remains fragile, and he is still on the make, having still some way to go to rise to an equal footing with his clients and his boss, as his wife reminds him all the time, complaining about their home in Calabasas, which is not the right neighbourhood to live in, or nagging Ray to use all the pull he can in order to enrol their daughter in the most selective Los Angeles private school.

In other words, Ray aims at living the Hollywood dream thanks to which, as Liev Schreiber puts it in a promotional video on the Showtime

website, everyone can re-invent oneself. For we discover right away that Ray is an exile, or even a fugitive, from a troubled past linked to his Catholic, Irish-American Boston background. His move to the West Coast followed a scheme he devised so as to frame his father Mickey, played by Jon Voigt, for a crime he did not actually commit; as a result, Mickey, whose name is an almost self-conscious hint to the stereotype of the Irish Mick, was locked up for twenty years in a Massachusetts prison. When episode one begins, we see Mickey leave the penitentiary and head straight to a local church in Boston where he hunts out the parish priest and shoots him point blank, before flying over to Los Angeles to be reunited with his family. That family is exposed in the following scene (ep.1, 23:20), and proves right away to be completely dysfunctional. The youngest, Brendan, nicknamed Bunchy, was molested by a priest when he was a child and since then has been suffering from what Ray calls "issues", against which we see him struggling for much of the series. While expecting to receive compensation money for the assault he was a victim of, he attends support groups, in order to help him fight against depression, alcoholism. He is nagged by the fear of being a paedophile himself. The other brother Terry got Parkinson as a result of the blows received in boxing. We gather that Ray, according to a long tradition in film and popular culture of conflating Irish masculinity with brotherly solidarity, has been looking after his brothers for ages – taking them away from Boston, buying the gym for them, supporting his alcoholic brother, helping them both out of any difficult situation they could find themselves in, a pattern which is repeated from season to season. In season 1, Ray also discovers that he has a Black half-brother, which introduces a half-ironic half-serious hint at Irish racism, another stereotype to which the series bows to. But the worst piece of news that Ray hears at the beginning of season 1 is of his father's return to Los Angeles, since he has bred a long-lasting hatred for him. As a matter of fact, Ray holds his father responsible for all the woes he, his brothers and his sister had to endure in their youth: their devout Catholic mother's marital unhappiness, followed by her premature death: his sister's drug-addiction and suicide, but most of all the failure to protect them from the sexual abuse they were the of victims as boys at the hands of the local priest. Mickey was then too busy with his own criminal schemes, and either ignored his children's distress or even worse, dismissed it as trivial and of no consequence.

Ray Donovan can then be considered as a new avatar of popular films or series staging one or several Irish-American characters, a subgenre which has been well documented by Diane Negra[1], Ruth Barton[2]

1. Diane Negra (ed.), *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture*, Durham (NC), Duke U.P., 2006.
2. Ruth Barton (ed.), *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2009; *Acting Irish in Hollywood: From Fitzgerald to Farrell*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press 2006.

or Stephanie Rains[3], and which according to them has tended to waver between a representation of the "bad Paddy", and of the "good Paddy". The former is characterised by violence, criminality and deviancy, in the tradition inaugurated by the 1930s James Cagney type of gangster films, subsequently rekindled in the 1980s and 1990s by the Northern Ireland Troubles, whereas the latter is honest, hard-working and devoted to his family and creed. Recently however, as Diane Negra has observed, a new wave of films and TV series has tended to revert to the initial stereotype of the Irish gangster, among which she mentions 2006 Martin Scorsese's *The Departed*[4], 2006 series *Brotherhood*[5], 2007 *The Black Donnellys*[6], and even more recently 2015 Scott Cooper's film *Black Mass*[7], starring Johnny Depp and Benedict Cumberbatch. *Black Mass*, like *The Departed*, is based upon the story of Whitey Bulger, the brother of a state senator and the most infamous violent criminal in the history of South Boston, who became an FBI informant to take down a Mafia family. The prevalence of such movies based on male, white, Irish, either cop or gangster and mostly Boston-born protagonists, has led to the creation of a new sub-category of films labelled "the Boston crime drama", which according to blogger Mark Ryall[8] "utilises Irishness as a morally corrupt representation of white ethnicity". As Diane Negra puts it, *The Departed* employs the ethnic Otherness of the Irish-American "as a kind of light camouflage [to] manifest an anger that would be less sanctioned if directly articulated as an expression of straightforward Americanness"[9].

In parallel, the depiction of Irish America on screen and TV has been inseparable from the representation of Catholicism, but this representation too has changed over the times: according to Anthony Burke Smith, the iconic representation of the priest as American hero in 1944 *Going my Way*, starring Bing Crosby as Father Chuck O'Malley "overturned the long-standing stereotypes of Catholic authority".[10] But the 1981 Ulu Grosbard's movie *True Confessions* starring Robert de Niro as a corrupt Irish priest, on the contrary "repudiated the older Irish Catholic America", according to Timothy Meagher, who further argues that "depicted for thirty or forty years as pictures of innocence, guardians of morality, and/or exemplars of patriotism in movies like *Going My Way*, Irish American

3. Stephanie Rains, *The Irish American in Popular Culture, 1945-2000*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2007.
4. *The Departed*, dir. Martin Scorsese, Warner Bros, 2006.
5. *Brotherhood*, produced by Blake Masters, Showtime Television, 2006-2008.
6. *The Black Donnellys*, produced by Scott Corwon and Paul Haggis, NBC Television, 2007.
7. *Black Mass*, dir. Scott Cooper, Warner Bros, 2015.
8. http://whybother.ie/the-departed-and-the-boston-crime-drama (last accessed 5/09/2019).
9. Diane Negra, "Irishness, Anger and Masculinity in Recent Film and Television", in R. Barton (ed.), *Screening Irish America*, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
10. Anthony Burke Smyth, "America's favorite Priest, *Going My Way*, 1944" in Colleen McDannell (ed.), *Catholics in the Movies*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2008, p. 108.

Catholics were now showing up largely as cynical cops, corrupt politicians, nationalists zealots, or hypocritical priests."[11]

It seems to me that *Ray Donovan*, by combining a narrative of sexual abuse at the hands of the Catholic clergy with elements of the classic Boston crime drama, together with a portrayal of Irish masculinity in crisis, complicates the representation of Irish-Americans either as a consoling ethnic category embodying whiteness and innocence, or as a figure of Otherness impossible to control and assimilate in mainstream Americanness.

Indeed, as can already be gathered from the summary above, *Ray Donovan* navigates between two sets of contradictory stereotypes regarding Irish-Americans, one extolling the virtues of the traditional Irish family, with the hard-working, devoted, protective father caring for his own and struggling to provide them with the best the American dream can provide ; the other, depicting the Irish as violent, drunkards and criminals, with the aggravating fact of their being also corrupt and infected by a sexually deviant Catholic clergy.

On the one hand, the Donovans are typical Irish hooligans, who present a dangerous mixture of criminality, brutality, addictions and degeneracy. Abbie, Ray Donovan's wife, comes from a family of Boston pub-owners, whom in one episode she asks Ray to rescue as we gather they have drunk themselves into bankruptcy. Bunchy and Terry suffer from incurable diseases, one from a kind of mental retardation, the other from Parkinson disease. The gym setting that we see right from episode one helps also connects the Donovans to a long tradition of boxing films centred around Irish-American characters, from 1935 Lloyd Bacon's *The Irish in Us* starring James Cagney as a boxing promoter to Clint Eastwood's 2004 *Million Dollar Baby*. Boxing films themselves have an ambivalent significance regarding ethnic stereotyping as they stage racial minorities such as Afro-Americans, Italians or Irish as possessing a kind of natural, innate, almost animal-like physical strength and violence (a representation which Martin Scorsese stretched to a limit in his 1981 *Raging Bull*), which the sport allows them to release and channel ; on the other hand, boxing is viewed as a means to climb the social ladder, to reach success and assimilation. In this regard, Ray is a kind of upgraded fist fighter, a boxer in a black (Armani?) suit, who uses his physical strength, viewed as a kind of ethnic marker, to climb his way into the world of the rich and famous, symbolised by Hollywood.

11. Timothy J. Meagher, "Cops, Priests and the Decline of Irish America", *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Boxing is also a way of course of affirming masculinity and the attraction of the series relies much on the actor Liev Schreiber's imposing physical presence, as opposed to his waif-like, red-headed wife Abby played by Paula Malcomson, who in accordance with a Scarlet O'Hara type of prejudices about Irish women, is endowed with a fiery temper, stands up to defend her own material interests, can sometimes be devious and disloyal towards her husband, is fiercely protective of her children, and can say "F.. you" in the face of anybody without showing any fear. However Abby is only a housewife and plays a minor role in the story – she even altogether disappears in season 5 – in accordance with the marginalisation of female characters in recent Irish-American film and TV drama, as noticed by Stephanie Rains when she underlines "the clear absence of Irish (or, for the most part, Irish-American) women from narrative representations of any kind" in this kind of films.[12]

Another typically masculine issue in the series *Ray Donovan* is the father and son conflict, around which much of the plot revolves and which constitutes yet another ethnic marker that harks back to an age-old tradition in Irish literature and folklore. This would include the involuntary murder of his own son by the great mythological hero Cuchulainn, the mythologised murder of his father by J.M. Synge's Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), the search for a substitute father in the person of the Jewish Leopold Bloom by a confused Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the heinous relationships between fathers and sons in John McGahern's stories: as a matter of fact, Irish fathers through literature and culture have often been represented either as tyrannical and brutal, or irresponsible, inadequate and altogether obnoxious. In 1926 *Juno and the Paycock*, Sean O'Casey already featured the working-class Irish father as a boastful, self-aggrandising, escapist idle drunk who spent his time "sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!"[13] That deprecatory image of the Irish father has crossed the oceans, as reflected by the character of Mickey Donovan, who has a knack for causing trouble to his sons and embroiling them in either illegal or life-threatening situations, while contriving to warrant maximum enjoyment for himself – we often see him dancing, sniffing cocaine, or having sex – generally in a completely lawless and violent manner, such as peddling drugs, selling prostitutes, or robbing a bank. What's more, he always gets away with whatever crime he commits and keeps reappearing in his sons' lives unscathed, when they thought they had finally managed to get rid of him. Ray, in particular, repeatedly endeavours to have him either arrested or killed, in an effort to achieve the parricide presented as a desirable goal in Synge's play mentioned above.

12. S. Rains, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
13. Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock*.

We may wonder to what extent the pervasive, enduring negativity attached to the figure of the Irish or Irish-American father, especially in popular culture, should be related to the obsession with a shameful, violent and troubled past which cannot be erased or forgotten, and which keeps resurfacing in the present, so prevailing in Irish culture and history. Through times, the sins of Irish fathers and forefathers have kept reappearing and jeopardising the children's present and future lives, as was especially the case for the Northern Ireland Troubles, in which events dating back to the 16th and 17th century were relentlessly rehashed in order to fuel sectarian hatred, with the effect of compromising the existence of the future generations. In this regard, Stephanie Raines shows that the Troubles engendered new perceptions of Irish masculinity through American film and TV series, in which the IRA gunman was regarded as a kind of dangerous sociopath.[14]

However, in *The Irish in Us*: *Irishness, Performativity and Popular Culture*, which was published in 2006, Diane Negra argued that, contrary to those rather deprecatory representations, Irishness in the early years of the 21st century became a form of discursive currency, with the United States playing "a key-role in producing and consuming the authenticity of Irishness".[15] At the time, Negra pointed out how Irishness, "once a socially stigmatized ethnic category", was turned into "an ethnic code for reinstating social values perceived to be lost in millennial American culture".[16] In a chapter called "Irishness, Innocence and American Identity Politics before and after September 11", Diane Negra also contended that the combination of Celtic tigerism and the role played by Irish-American policemen and firefighters on the occasion of 9/11 all contributed to further construct an image of the Irish as what she called a "consoling ethnic category", endowed with virtues of authenticity, working-class resilience and courage, drawing from "a cultural reservoir of associations between Irishness and innocence."[17] However, in a later article called "Irishness, anger and masculinity in recent Film and Television", Negra noted a "hardening" of Irishness in a new wave of representations, as if "Irishness had entered a "dark phase".[18]

It seems to me that *Ray Donovan* displays the signs of a further hardening and darkness attached to Irishness, and that one of the most direct causes of this new twist in the long tradition of representing the Irish in American popular film or television must be found in the revelations of numerous sex scandals among the Catholic clergy which took place over the last decade. These scandals were of foremost importance in

14. S. Rains, *op. cit.*, p. 172-173.
15. D. Negra, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
18. D. Negra, art. cit., p. 281-295.

Ireland, but also occurred in the United States, often involving clerics of Irish descent, and were widely publicised by the media. Television and the media indeed played a central role not only in the disclosure of the scandals but also in forcing governments and the judicial system to take legal action against the clergy both in Ireland and in the United States. Many TV shows or films in Ireland or Britain first aimed at documenting the sex crimes themselves and focused attention on the offenders, as well as on the active role played by the church as an institution in concealing the facts and protecting the criminals. In Ireland, several programmes aired on TV, such as RTE's 1999 *States of Fear,* TV3's 1999 *Stolen Lives*, RTE's 2002 *Cardinal Secrets* and BBC's 2002 *Suing the Pope*, all contributed in alerting public opinion and forcing the state authorities to take some legal action. In the USA, the revelations regarding sex abuse in the Catholic clergy were also widely reported by the media, initially by the press and particularly by the 2002 series of articles published by the *Boston Globe*, as is so precisely illustrated by Tom McCarthy's 2015 Oscar-winning film *Spotlight*. However, *Spotlight* was preceded by other international films denouncing the bad treatments and physical abuse prevailing in some Irish Catholic institutions, especially aimed at women and children, such as Peter Mullan's 2002 *The Magdalene Sisters* and Stephen Frears' 2013 *Philomena*, which shows that the scandals inspired authors of fiction as well as reporters or documentary film-makers.

The dramatic undertones of the reported cases of child abuse, involving as they did such universal concerns as faith, trust, authority, the protection of childhood, sexual drives, etc., inevitably found significant echoes in film and popular culture. Television in particular, with its squads of showrunners, writers and producers, always on the lookout for new topics, based on emerging patterns of social, sexual and moral behaviour or new developments in the socio-political context, turned the revelations into material for films and drama. The fact that the scandals involving the Catholic church in Ireland were so widespread and of such an appalling nature– what with the discovery of a mass-tomb containing the remains of hundreds of children in a Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, the disclosure of the ill-treatments suffered by single mothers in the Magdalen Laundries, all institutions run by the Church, besides the innumerable cases of child-abuse committed by priests–necessarily had an impact on the representation of Irishness in the popular imagination. This was compounded in the USA by the prevailing number of clerics of Irish descent among the American Catholic Church, who were also grievously involved in the scandals–as was further exposed recently in Philadelphia. These facts have engendered renewed representations of Irish-Americans, both as agents and as victims of the scandals, in film and television drama.

Among them, *Ray Donovan* suggests that the sex scandals in the Catholic Church have added a new dimension to the idea that the Irish suffer from the burden of the past mentioned above; what's more, the toxic legacy inherited from the fathers or the father-figures is in the context embodied by a religion which was always looked upon with suspicion, if not downright horror, by the Protestants, first in Europe and later in the United States. The revelations of the sex crimes in the Catholic clergy and the secrecy around the deviant priests maintained by the hierarchy at the highest level were bound to rekindle old prejudices against Catholics in a mainly Protestant country, which flourished until late in the 20th century and the election of the first Catholic Irish American President John F. Kennedy, whose grandfather had been a "ward boss" for the Democratic Party, that is to say someone in charge of "fixing" things somehow in the manner of Ray Donovan, if less violently. The long history of anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States was recently recalled by many American newspapers on the occasion of Pope Francis's visit to the States in September 2017, about which they frequently quoted historian John Tracy Ellis's view that anti-Catholicism was "the deepest bias in the history of the American people".[19] Examples of this bias abound in popular culture and film, such as illustrated in Martin Scorsese's 2003 film *Gangs of New York*, which stages the feud between the clan of the Natives against the Irish immigrants in the Five Points area. From earliest times, Irish Catholicism was considered a threat to the integrity of American identity, because it was associated with backwardness, superstition and corruption; what's more, the common Protestant abuse of the Pope as "the whore of Babylon" points to the sexual connotations attached to anti-Catholic prejudices. This was already the case in English and Irish gothic and sensationalist novels of the eighteenth century, a form of literature which was in its time an expression of popular culture. Critics of the genre agree that Catholicism plays an active role in most gothic novels, often situated in monasteries or convents and staging lecherous, depraved monks and nuns, often indulging in same-sex relationships. That recently revived representation of Catholic priests as lecherous, deviant, corrupting and corrupt finds a good example in episode 10, season 1 of *Ray Donovan* in which Bunchy has stalked his former assailant, a priest who now lives under a different name in another parish. Bunchy has brought him back to the gym after wounding him with a bullet; he and Terry have called Ray for help as usual, but the three brothers are at a loss as to what to do with the priest; they at least want to force him to own up his guilt and to ask Bunchy to forgive him. But the whimpering priest keeps denying he did anything wrong and when he finally confesses the abuse tries to belittle his responsibility by claiming that he suffered from a kind of psychological disease for which he has since been treated. The climax of the scene

19. John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism*, Chicago, Chicago U.P., 1969, https://books.google.fr/books?id=WLYc80eu1u0C (last accessed 8/1//2020), p. 151.

happens when Ray finally decides to drive him to the hospital and the priest refuses, afraid that Ray may kill him instead, as we understand that Ray was probably his victim too. This disclosure of Ray's most secret, intimate wound infuriates Ray who eventually shoots him dead. The pathos of this long tragic scene in which the brothers discuss the dilemma of killing the priest or forgiving him highlights the ambiguity at the heart of Ray's characterisation: on the one hand he acts out the righteous protector of his family, and like his brothers tries to cling to old-fashioned virtues of loyalty, honesty, respect, compassion and forgiveness. On the other hand, his soul has been irremediably damaged by the combined destructive forces of a criminal, irresponsible Irish father, and a corrupt, devious Catholic priest, and as a result his load of anger and violence has become uncontrollable. What's more, the Catholic church is in the scene and others presented as being manipulative, entwining its parishioners in a vicious circle of shame, guilt, anger, self-destruction and thirst for revenge. While Terry for instance has kept his faith and fears the damnation of his soul, and is even ready to offer himself in sacrifice to save the rest of his family, Ray in a later episode falls prey to the manipulative attempts on the part of a priest to get him to own up his crimes under the guise of the secrecy of confession.

As a result, we may argue that *Ray Donovan* stages the crisis, and even the breakdown, of Irish-American masculinity induced by the revelations of child sexual abuse at the hand of the Catholic church: both Ray's brothers Bunchy and Terry experience great difficulties in dating women and keeping a girl-friend, with hints at Bunchy's sexual impotence, as confirmed by the following seasons; Ray himself is shown to be in crisis from the start, unable to overcome the demons of the past which keep reappearing under the shape of his incorrigible biological father and of his spiritual father, the Catholic priest. Each season of the series is based on the premise that the balance Ray thinks he has established in his life is jeopardised by his father's misconduct; in season 1, the murder of the priest thus sets the police on his track. Despite all his efforts to protect his family and to live the true American success story, albeit thanks to his physical violence, the Donovans get into trouble all the time. In season 1 for instance, Ray's daughter–named after the suicide sister– dates an Afro-American teenager who gets murdered under her eyes, his wife threatens to leave him after Ray has slept with other women, his son gets involved in fist-fights at school. The past, symbolised by a harmful, radically failing Irish father, undermines Ray's transformative journey from archaic, poverty-ridden, ethnic-centred South Boston to cosmopolitan, postmodern, rich Los Angeles, and the metamorphosis from street thug or prize-fighter to suit-clad, business-like respectable member of the upper class threatens to be overturned and exposed as a sham, like Cinderella's coach which becomes a pumpkin again. As a result, it may be argued that the

character of Ray "plays out the conflicting ethnic traits of purity and innocence versus corruption and brutality […] a splitting of the ethnic inheritance of Irishness" in the words of Ruth Barton in her introduction to the edited book *Screening Irish-America*.[20] Although admittedly Ray is far from pure (he cheats on his wife, drinks far too much, kills and maims with the utmost brutality), he nevertheless stands as the hero of the series, and much of the success of the show relies on the empathy the audience cannot help feeling for him. The revelations of the sex scandals in the church have re-awakened in the popular imagination a number of stereotypes concerning the legacies of Irish ethnicity, presented as a shameful burden which needs to be cleansed and eliminated, which had been overturned by the role played by Irish policemen and firefighters on 9/11, which according to Diane Negra had contributed to changing the image of the Irish into a "consoling ethnic category", an Irish ancestry being then viewed as a matter of pride and nostalgia. What's more, the series gives another twist to traditional views of Irish Catholicism, by showing Ray trying to obtain redemption for the crimes committed by his father and by his priest, instead of staging the figure of a heroic priest. If Ray looks at the pictures of his childhood with a degree of nostalgia in episode one, it is only to try harder to exorcize his past, to get rid of the Catholic church and of his toxic father, in other words to kill the Irish Mick in himself and in his own family- which up to season 5 at least, never happens.

However, one should also insist on the way the series plays with the audience's ambivalent sympathies. The non–Irish actor Jon Voight, once the cowboy turned male prostitute in the anti-American-Dream film *Midnight Cowboy*[21], is one of the big assets of the series, opposing his cunning, charm and resilience to the brutish, taciturn resentment powerfully expressed by Liev Schreiber–who was born in San Francisco from a Jewish mother and a Protestant father– so that the audience hesitates between a full condemnation of the criminal Irish father, and a full embrace of the son's struggle to get rid of him. The duality of the bad-but charming South Boston father and the good-but violent Los Angeles son is perhaps what best epitomises the ambivalence of the representations of Irish-Americans on the screen today, and may explain why there can be no happy ending to the series, in which, as in *Midnight Cowboy,* the American dream remains a bunk for this Irish-American family.

Irishness therefore acts as a powerful pivot in the series, accounting for much of the characters' attitudes and fate; however, the authenticity of the ethnic markers exploited by the authors of *Ray Donovan* is highly questionable. The theme of Irishness, as argued before, was inspired to the non-Irish authors and producers of the series by the wave of revelations

20. R. Barton (ed.), *Screening Irish America*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
21. *Midnight Cowboy*, dir. John Schlesinger, United Artists, 1969.

involving the Catholic Church, which is inseparable–at least, as of today– from Irish identity. The sex scandals, like other events in recent American history, such as the terrorist attacks, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria, the increasing role of social networks in public and political life offer to the authors of popular forms of culture –especially as far as TV series are concerned, because they are so prompt to detect, digest and reflect the latest social evolutions– a fantastic source of dramatic situations, involving conflicted personalities, cases of post-traumatic disorder, family disputes, notwithstanding the interrogations on the characters' wounded sexual identities. Irishness and all the clichés traditionally attached to it– violence, corruption, Catholicism, backwardness– therefore work in *Ray Donovan* like a set of signs meant to be immediately identified by the audience rather than as an actual investigation of what it means to be of Irish descent in America today.

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Sense of self, Sense of Place: The Landscape of Urban Violence in *Love/Hate*

Flore Coulouma
Paris Nanterre University

Introduction

The Irish TV series *Love/Hate* (RTE one, 2010-present)[1] is set in Dublin, and its violent "gangland" plotline inspired *Guardian* reviewer Marc Lawson to call it the "Irish *The Wire*"[2], placing it firmly within an American tradition of television production. Like *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008), *Love/Hate* raises issues of place, space, and identity in a post-industrialised, globalised city.[3] The series is rooted in the specific place of Dublin and part of a broader tradition concerned with urban narratives in the late capitalist era. *Love/Hate* focuses on a small group of characters and differs in that regard from its American counterpart: *The Wire* is an explicit portrait of Baltimore in which the proliferating characters constitute the social, economic and political landscape of the city.[4] *Love/Hate* writer Stuart Carolan, on the other hand, cites his fascination with "gangland", rather than an interest in the city, as his inspiration.[5] Nevertheless, the series offers a striking portrait of Dublin, urban space and nature woven into its story of gang violence. *Love/Hate* is therefore specifically

1. All images in this paper are taken from *Love/Hate Series One*, writ. Stuart Carolan, dir. David Caffrey, RTE 2010, DVD.
2. Marc Lawson, "Is *Love/Hate* Ireland's Answer to *The Wire*?", *The Guardian*, July 24 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2013/jul/24/love-hate-ireland-the-wire? (last accessed 14/04/2015).
3. Frank Moulaertt, Arantxa Rodriguez & Erik Swyngedouw (eds.), *The Globalized City: Economic Restructuring and Social Polarization in European Cities*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2003.
4. "The Wire is not about Jimmy McNulty. Or Avon Barksdale. Or crime. Or punishment (…). It is about the City". David Simon, "Introduction", in Raphael Alvarez (ed.), *The Wire: Truth Be Told*, New York, Pocket, 2004, p. 4.
5. Interview with Stuart Carolan, *Irish Film and Television Network*, 30 September 2010, http://www.iftn.ie/news/?act1=record&aid=73&rid=4283399&tpl=archnews (last accessed 14/04/2015).

Irish in its social, geographical, and narrative setting, but it is also profoundly shaped by American references, thus reflecting the intense and long-lasting cultural exchanges between America and Ireland. In the context of televisual production, this close cultural bond is also one aspect of the global influence of American popular culture on the rest of the world.

From the first episode, Dublin is both recognisable and lacking in the specificities that made Baltimore a unique feature of *The Wire*. *Love/Hate* depicts Dublin as a generic post-modern city and shows how globalised urban society affects our sense of place and identity. The story is set in 2010, in the midst of the Irish financial crisis and in the wake of the 2009 global recession. Darren Treacy comes home to Dublin after spending a year in Spain to evade a gun-possession charge. On the day of his return, his younger brother Robbie comes out of jail, only to be killed in a drive-by shooting. This initial murder draws Darren back into the Dublin criminal underworld. Issues of violence and family are closely related in the narrative and the notions of "safe place" and "home" are challenged from the start. Such notions are in fact considered problematic in contemporary geography, and we first need to examine a few basic definitions before we can analyse the series itself.

My theoretical starting point is the question of place; if ecocriticism is about "the relationship between literature and the physical environment,"[6] then an ecocritical examination of *Love/Hate* must look into the series' representation of its own space and place(s): the city, suburbia, the rural outskirts of Dublin. As its title suggests, *Love/Hate* is about relationships. This also includes the characters' interactions with their environment: Dublin, home, nature, the post-industrial city, all these elements deeply affect the characters' sense of self and influence their reaction to, and use of, violence in the story. What are "space" and "place"? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "space" as "nowhere", merely a physical location made of abstract coordinates; it is, ultimately, "an empty area between things". Place, on the other hand, is "somewhere": it has identity and significance. Humanist geographer Yi Fu Tuan opposes space and place as the abstract and inauthentic versus the authentic and the grounded: place is "humanised space".[7] Our understanding of place involves relational thinking and comparative notions: us versus them, inside versus outside, safe versus threatening, familiar versus strange. Most importantly, as geographer John Agnew has shown, the notion is intricately linked to our *sense of place*, i.e. to our feeling of identity in relation to a place.[8] *Love/Hate* starts with a theme of ambiguous homecoming: Darren comes home to a

6. Cheryll Glotfelty, *The Ecocritical Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Athens (GA), Georgia U.P., 1996, p. xix.
7. Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis, Minnesota U.P., 1977, p. 54.
8. Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004, p. 7.

place that is in fact hostile to him and his family. By questioning place as a positive and constructive part of its characters' identity, *Love/Hate* raises the question of the global city as a generic *non-place*, following anthropologist Marc Augé's analysis of hypermodernity.[9] Like Augé, geographer Edward Relph relates the global flows of postmodern society to the notion of placelessness, denouncing our increasingly inauthentic relation to place in a consumerist society.[10] All these issues will be relevant to *Love/Hate*'s representation of the post-modern city.

How does violence come into the series' representation of place and space? It is indeed a focal point of the narrative: starting with a murder in the first five minutes of the pilot episode, the story unfolds in a world of murders, arson, racketeering, beatings, and even rape (season 3 episode 1). Focusing on the first season, I will examine how the series addresses the geography of gang violence in the city, and how, conversely, its visual representation of space affects its characters' sense of self. I will first analyse the pilot's opening sequence and its defining themes: local and foreign, peace and violence, recognition and identity, nature and the city. I will then examine the series' representation of the city as oppressive space, and the place of nature in the post-modern urban landscape.

Opening Sequence: Urban Violence and Global Society

The series opens with striking contrasts, setting the image of a quiet, wealthy Irish suburb against that of violence, global communication and consumerism. The opening shot gives us a view of a leafy suburban area with fall colors and chirping birds, a stereotype of desirable suburban culture. The panning shot then zooms to reveal a large house, big car and surveillance camera, introducing the themes of money, consumption, and paranoia, and already unsettling the idyllic tone of the street's warm colors and bristling leaves. This ambiguous sense of security is further disrupted by a voice-over telling us, in an American accent, how "to field-strip a Glock."

9. Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1992.
10. Edward C. Relph, "Reflections on *Place and Placelessness*", *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology*, 7 (3), 1996, https://newprairiepress.org/eap/vol7/iss3/1 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 14-15.

Fig. 1 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Opening scene, wealthy suburb

The next shot reveals that the voice comes from a YouTube video playing in the house. From an ecocritical perspective, "Field-strip" is an ironically evocative compound: there is no rural field in *Love/Hate* but hills stripped bare for gangsters to breed killer dogs (season 2). In a compound verb that does not refer to nature but to violence and war, this subtle echo further underlines the problematic place of nature in the gangland narrative. The arresting injunction to field-strip a Glock also constitutes a comment on our global society of violence and consumerism. Glocks are manufactured by an Austrian company and sold worldwide, but mostly symbolise American gun culture;[11] these plastic pistols can be easily assembled and taken apart, do not require special training and are, most importantly, disposable objects of consumption. In this scene, gang-member Nigel, who has just acquired one such weapon, is practicing with the help of a step-by-step video tutorial, in his family house, while his wife and child are playing next door. The video first takes up the whole frame of the shot, before the camera zooms out to reveal Nidge's computer screen. This provides a meta-narrative comment on screens and spectatorship, while symbolising the irruption of global consumption and violence within the privacy of a quiet, Irish family house.

The camera then cuts to the opening credits: a hectic stream of very brief shots layering the many places and narrative strands of the episode – the airport, the prison, a private bedroom, then back to the airport, and so on. Significantly, this sequence starts with several jump-cut views of Nidge's surveillance camera and monitor, to the pulsating beat of an American rap song.

11. Paul M. Barrett, *Glock: The Rise of America's Gun*, New York, Crown, 2012.

Fig. 2 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Surveillance camera

Such a picture raises the question of inside versus outside: Nidge's camera is meant to help keep intruders out, but it also psychologically locks him in. The rap song – "Just a Memory" from the posthumous album by rapper Notorious B.I.G. – finds a visual echo in the prominently displayed Tupac Shakur poster on Nidge's bedroom wall. Both rappers were killed within a few months of each other, and were involved in the notorious East Coast-West Coast rivalry of the 1990s, which again reminds us of the close connection between place, identity and violence. B.I.G.'s song ominously warns us that "You're nobody till somebody kills you." In Nidge's cozy house, the song, poster, video, and handgun contribute – not without a hint of humor – to making Irish suburbia a generic space of global violence. Thus global consumption, violence and the spectacle are the grounding themes of *Love/Hate*'s opening sequence.

The opening credits also importantly introduce the issue of recognition and identity in relation to place. While Nidge is busy field-stripping his newly-bought Glock, Darren Treacy lands at Dublin airport and goes through customs, holding his passport between his teeth. Darren is in an ambivalent position: he must be identified in order to reenter the country – he is, in fact, coming home – but he must not be recognised since he is still on the run from a gun possession charge. The passport shot reminds us of the problematic tensions at stake between identity, place, and legitimacy. By holding his passport between his teeth (picture below), Darren displays a careless attitude towards the symbol and enabler of his belonging, while at the same time aggressively asserting his legitimacy and desire to be back inside the country.

Fig. 3 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Passport scene

While Darren comes home to an oppressive city that will eventually claim his life, his brother Robbie is let out of jail, following a similar assessment of his identity: matching his face with his ID picture on a computer screen. Robbie is then allowed to come out of jail, and prepares to go back to "gangland." These brief opening credits reveal the characters' ambivalent attitudes towards place (their home and their city), and their already constrained freedom of movement in the open space. This leads us to two crucial themes in the early episodes of the series: oppressive space and the place of Nature in the city.

The City as Oppressive Space

Love/Hate's visual portrait of the city is an integral part of its narrative of urban violence. Dublin is visually and aesthetically represented not as a place but as an enclosed, oppressive space. Here I am going back to my initial definition of space as the "empty area between things". In the series, all the characters are burdened with a lack of free movement that translates in the visual set up of their surroundings, the prison cell being the most literal representative of their confinement. This general sense of oppressiveness is primarily conveyed through the repeated use of low-angle shots.

The two pictures below frame the pilot episode: they feature Robbie as he comes out of prison in the opening credits, and Tommy looking down at his friends in the final scene. Both suggest the impossible freedom and tragic fate faced by all the characters. In the first picture, Robbie stands outside, his back to the prison door and to the camera. The low angle follows Robbie's upward gaze to the open sky and its promise of freedom and new beginnings. However, Robbie's perspective at ground level is nonexistent since he stands between a tall fence and the prison wall. In front of him, a solitary tree fails to tower above the surveillance camera, mirroring Robbie's powerlessness and helplessness – they are the only live beings in

the picture. Robbie's first experience of free space is an enclosed parking lot, and this visual restriction of the landscape prefigures his death a few minutes later.

Fig. 4-5 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01 : Oppressiveness and low-angle shots

In the second picture, Tommy stands above his friends Nidge and Darren, as he ponders whether to follow them deeper in the woods. All three characters are coping with the consequences of Robbie's death and with their feelings of guilt and thirst for revenge. This is the final scene of the episode, and in this case, the low angle reveals another kind of helplessness: Darren, Tommy and Nidge find themselves in an ominously enclosed space, with the trees blocking the outside world from view. Tommy, looking down, betrays his fear of being killed and buried there in a hole in the ground (he thinks his friends blame him for Robbie's death); his friends' upward gaze is no more hopeful and only suggests the grim reality of their lives. Low-angle shots usually give greater screen space to the sky, as in the first picture, but the suggestion of open space is deceptive in the series: it is systematically undermined by visions of fences, grids and barriers. Bodies are always fenced-in, voluntarily or involuntarily. While planes cut through the sky and cars speed through the woods outside Dublin, the city itself is made of innumerable fences, effectively trapping the characters, literally and symbolically, so that they become more desperate as they search for a way out.

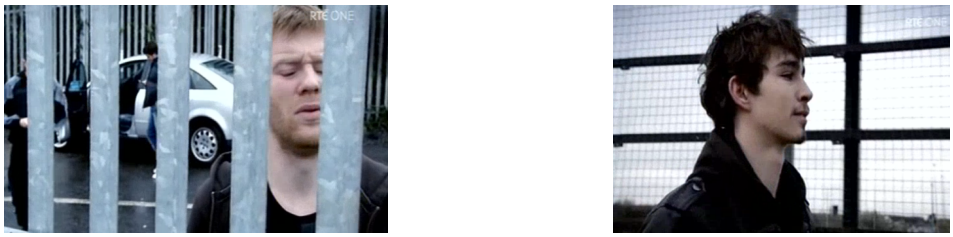

Fig. 6-7 – *Love/Hate*, S01E04 : Grids and cages

Oppressiveness also pervades *Love/Hate* through the recurring theme of surveillance and paranoia introduced in the opening sequence. This brings us back to the question of inside and outside and to the definition of home. In the first and second seasons, gang leader John Boy becomes gradually more paranoid as his illegal schemes catch up with him. His high security, bunker-like modern apartment is complete with

concrete walls, iron doors and surveillance cameras. John Boy is holed up rather than "dwelling", to quote Heidegger's definition of Being-in-the-world: for Heidegger, "Being" means being at home in the world, which implies having a sense of place.[12] John Boy's experience is the opposite of being-at-home: he works outside legality and trades in violent trafficking, and as a result, he cannot feel at home anywhere. He is constantly threatened by other gangs and by the police who search and empty his apartment in the first episode of season 2. John Boy's home is just another prison, and his growing paranoia suggests that his fate is also hopeless; he is murdered by his own people at the end of the second season.

This leads me to the notion of "home" as a quintessential embodiment of place. In humanist geography, the concept of home largely derives from Heidegger's philosophy of dwelling and from Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*. For Bachelard, the home is "a primal space that acts as a first world or first universe that then frames our understandings of all the spaces outside."[13] This classic idea of home as the primordial place of safety, identity and nurture is turned on its head in the series, thus echoing the feminist critics' contention that the idealised notion of home and the domestic does not correspond to the reality of experience for many women.[14] In *Love/Hate*, home is indeed a specifically gendered place: while most of the trafficking takes place outside and is run by men, the gangsters' wives and sisters struggle to maintain a sense of normalcy and peace at home. From the start, home appears as the site of particularly transgressive violence in the series. In episode 2, private homes are under attack and vulnerable to racketeering and physical destruction. In episode 3, a pregnant Rosie is beaten up at home by her jealous boyfriend who claims that "it's my house, not yours" to assert his physical and symbolic domination over her. Rosie loses her baby, and later leaves the country altogether to find a new life in London. In the same episode, former gang member Jimmy is killed in his home in front of his wife and child. The brutal irruption of masked killers in the private house is reminiscent of sectarian violence and the Irish Troubles; together with the threatening of "civilians" outside their homes and the gangsters' own fear of invasion, such scenes forcefully demonstrate that the breakdown of place is directly related to urban violence.

This has crucial consequences on the characters' sense of self. Significantly, the main characters of season 1 seem to have no parents: they have siblings, wives and children, but are cut off from the older generation. Darren and his sister Mary (a single mother with two children) are

12. Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, Berkeley, California U.P., 1997, p. 245-246.
13. T. Cresswell, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
14. Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*, Minneapolis, Minnesota U.P., 1993.

orphans, and they lose their brother Robbie in the first episode. The breakdown of place comes with a parallel loss of genealogical history and depth, in keeping with the characters' mindless consumerism, and despite their otherwise aggressive loyalty to "family" and "blood". Although the series is explicitly set in a specific place (Dublin) at a specific time (now), its overall narrative is one of placelessness and uprootedness. The unique Dublin landscape thus becomes a near-anonymous backdrop to *Love/Hate*'s generic tale of the post-modern, post-industrial city of the Western World.

From the pilot episode and throughout seasons 1 and 2, *Love/Hate* displays generic sites of the post-industrial world: the airport, the multilane motorway, the suburban shopping-centre with its multinational chain stores and endless escalators, the unfinished building site of post-property bubble Ireland, and finally, the "rejuvenated" industrial areas and their post-modern architecture of glass and steel. These elements are prominently featured in the first season and contribute to a generic representation of Dublin, whose older architecture and historical landmarks are relegated to a blurry background. This generic landscape reflects on the notion of "non-places" defined by anthropologist Marc Augé and geographer Edward Relph in their analysis of hypermodernity and global transience. Such "non-places" are equated with consumerism, violence and the time-space compression of global trade.[15] As *The Wire* has shown, drug trafficking is a typical illustration of the neo-liberal ideology of global, late capitalism, and the fast lanes and airports are also a functional part of the gangsters' trade in *Love/Hate*.

With spatial genericity comes disposability and consumption. In the pilot episode, Robbie is killed in a drive-by shooting while his friend Nidge buys himself a shirt at the shopping mall. In episode 3, Nidge flies out to Prague with his friends for a weekend of nightclubbing with prostitutes and a day at the shooting-range; he takes holiday-style "selfies" against this new yet undifferentiated background of global entertainment. Yet despite its recurring theme of international travel, the series' ultimate representative of placelessness and conspicuous consumption is the car rather than the plane. Gang members parade their SUVs through town to flaunt their wealth and assert their domination over the urban space, deriving a sense of immunity from their bubble of steel. At the end of episode 1, Nidge's black SUV zooms out of town and across the countryside; passengers Tommy and Darren barely look at the outside view, a landscape made blurry and unreal by the speeding car. The omnipresence of big cars in the small Dublin streets and outside the city is also another comment – often

15. For a definition of time-space compression, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1990.

made in contemporary Irish literature[16] – on the new, Americanised Irish landscape in which cars have replaced the bicycle as a national symbol of the Irish way of life. In *Love/Hate*, Dublin has become an oppressive bubble of glass and steel, strikingly illustrated in the pilot episode (Fig. 8). In this context, the natural world functions as an anecdotic footnote to the characters' disintegrating sense of place, thus completing the series' chilling portrait of Western urban society as a whole.

Fig. 8 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Bubble of glass landscape

Nature's Place in the Global City

Visually, the series' dominant color is not green, as might be expected for a city that is one of the greenest in Europe in terms of park space. There is no sight of the Phoenix Park in seasons 1 and 2 of the series. Cold, metallic hues dominate: the white, grey and dark steel tones of the post-modern estates eclipse the picturesque, multicolored vision of Dublin's city center. Some landmarks make the city recognizable, such as the Richmond courthouse whose red bricks cut through the urban grey of the first season. Instead of Dublin's numerous parks and trees, our vision of nature in *Love/Hate* is that of a commodified, consumable object fragmented into decorative items flaunting the gangsters' triumphant consumerism. In the first episode, a fish tank in Tommy's apartment illustrates the place of the natural world within the confines of the city, while providing a mirror image of the characters' own lack of freedom in their oppressive urban environment. At Robbie's funeral, and later at Nidge's wedding party, wreaths and flower centerpieces fail to bring humanity to a harsh environment of constant violence and conspicuous wealth. In episode 2, John Boy's modern apartment comes complete with exotic potted plants: as Nidge tells his wife Trish in the first season, it takes a lot of (dirty) money to maintain a nice, decorated house. Like their furniture, the gangsters' plants and pets

16. See for instance Gerard Donovan's short story collection *Country of the Grand*, London, Faber & Faber, 2008.

are signifiers of wealth and, most importantly, they are cut off from their natural habitat. Like the solitary tree on the prison parking lot at the start of episode 1, cut flowers and potted plants represent the irreversible break of urban life from the natural world.

The dehumanising fracture between urban and rural landscape, man-made architecture and the natural environment is in keeping with the characters' claustrophobic loneliness and their seeming lack of family history. Nidge and Trish's wedding in the final episode of season 1 dramatically underlines this spatial and temporal disruption, which locks the characters in an inauthentic bubble of consumerist mimicry. The wedding takes place in Carton House, an 18th century mansion famous for its Georgian parkland and located in Maynooth (it is indeed a luxury hotel and wedding venue in real life). What we see of the park is a blurred background as we follow expensive cars gliding along the driveway. The interior is another (golden) blur as the guests, bride and groom dance towards the altar to a hectic techno beat. Again, exotic flowers complement the golden hue of the house in a bid to impress the guests. The use of historical monuments as wedding venues has become a common tradition in Western societies, and reflects our obsession with "places of memory". This, according to Yi Fu Tuan, betrays our intrinsically inauthentic sense of place: "a truly rooted community may have shrines and monuments, but it is unlikely to have museums and societies for the preservation of the past."[17] In *Love/Hate*, heritage revival and commodified memory only underline the existential void in which the characters are mired. Turning historical sites into objects of consumption completes the divorce between postmodern transience and the urban landscapes of the modern age, still rooted in their wider environment. Instead of a harmonious cohabitation, the series displays the artificiality and lifelessness of commodified nature, as the ephemeral funeral wreaths remind us in episode 1. In the same episode, Mary's traditional semi-detached house, a symbol of stability and familial love, is covered in wood-paneling the colour of Robbie's coffin.

In season 1, nature is shown as lifeless and cut off from its ontological significance. Season 2 opens with an even darker vision, in which nature has become an instrumental backdrop to the dehumanising savagery of gangsters. In the first episode of season 2, newcomer Fran, a mid-level trafficker and loan shark, trains killer dogs outside Dublin. The bare hills surrounding his house are dotted with dead goats, as it is made clear that Fran regularly unleashes his dogs against the hapless herds that graze the fields. Later in the same episode, a dog-fighting scene is shown together with a boxing match in a cross cutting montage, thus dramatically demonstrating how the betting business thrives on dehumanised

17. Y. F. Tuan, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

violence in a consumer's society of the spectacle. In this instance, *Love/Hate*'s representation of nature is one of savagery rather than wilderness: dogs are trained to kill, fields are stripped bare to be used as vacant breeding grounds, and the woods have become a hiding place for dead bodies.

In *Love/Hate*, the savagery of urban violence spills out into nature and makes it another hostile space threatening the characters' mental and physical integrity. One image, however, breaks with the series' grimly realistic aesthetics, in the first episode of season 1.

Fig. 9 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Gothic Landscape

This gothic, romantic view appears for a few seconds, right before the funeral scene, although Robbie's funeral actually takes place in an urban cemetery. It is in fact a recurring shot, also displayed before John Boy's funeral in the final episode of season 2. This brief, haunting vision is a heterotopia, defined by Michel Foucault as a "place of otherness" that lie outside of the normal pace of daily human life. Prison is one such place – a heterotopia of "deviation".[18] *Love/Hate* is a story of social and moral deviation; it is therefore no surprise that prison and the prison cell should be significant elements in the narrative. Foucault also examines cemeteries as peculiar places of otherness; he notes that "during the nineteenth century, the shift of cemeteries toward the suburbs was initiated. The cemeteries then came to constitute, no longer the sacred and immortal heart of the city, but the other city, where each family possesses its dark resting place".[19]

18. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5, 1984, https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 46-49.
19. M. Foucault, art. cit.

Fig. 10 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. At the cemetery

The romantic churchyard then stands in stark contrast with the site of Robbie's burial. It provides a gothic respite in the frenzied narrative of the series, and reminds us of the older, literary and aesthetic tradition of the picturesque, romantic landscape – the very opposite of *Love/Hate*'s mostly realistic aesthetics. It is ultimately a meta-fictional comment on traditional representations of the Irish landscape and their disconnectedness from contemporary urban reality. Robbie's burial takes place in a suburban cemetery where the industrial background and traffic noise block out all sense of meditative contemplation. His untimely death and standardised burial finally denounce post-industrialised society as a whole and its essential destructiveness of natural and human life.

Conclusion

Love/Hate is a story of violence. Its portrayal of Dublin frames its narrative of oppression and destructiveness, and reveals its underlying representation of postmodern urban landscapes on a global scale. To conclude my analysis, let me briefly go back to *The Wire* and to the first of many echoes to that series in *Love/Hate*: the "gangland" newspaper headline in the pilot episode.

Fig. 11 – *Love/Hate*, S01E01. Gangland headline

For keen watchers of *The Wire*, this picture is a clear nod to Baltimore's "Murdaland" graffiti in the series' opening credits. *Love/Hate* was first broadcast in 2010, and is clearly inspired by its predecessor, to which it pays tribute on numerous occasions, not least in casting Aidan Gillen, an alumnus of *The Wire*, as gang leader John Boy in seasons 1 and 2. *Love/Hate* is not *The Wire*, of course, since David Simon's creation is explicitly and primarily a portrait of Baltimore. *Love/Hate* is a character narrative first of all, but it shares *The Wire*'s realistic aesthetics, and most importantly, its pessimistic representation of the city as both the cause and symptom of a self-destructive society: a place in which nature is at best a disposable object of consumption, at worst, the backyard of urban violence. *Love/Hate* raises issues common to *The Wire*'s post-industrialised Baltimore, but rooted "in the trends and tensions of contemporary Irish culture."[20] It can be considered as the second major work in a tradition of realistic urban narratives and social criticism initiated by *The Wire*; the increasing popularity of such a genre is far from belying its intrinsic literary qualities, but rather suggests our growing awareness and concern for social and spatial justice. Like *The Wire*, then, *Love/Hate* is finally about "untethered capitalism run amok, about how power and money actually route themselves in a postmodern [global] city, and ultimately, about why we as an urban people are no longer able to solve our problems or heal our wounds."[21]

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20. M. Lawson, art. cit.
21. Nick Hornby, "David Simon Interview", *The Believer*, 46, 2007, http://www.believermag.com/issues/200708/?read=interview_simon (last accessed 14/04/2015).

Leprechauns, Cute Cats and Tasty Treats: The Circulation of Irish Images in Online Culture

Anne Goarzin
Rennes 2 University – UNIR (EA 4451 CRBC)

This paper focuses on the interaction between popular culture and the new media, which sociologist David Beer notes, "have become central in shaping our everyday lives and in ordering our routine experiences".[1] I also want to heed Beer's warning that the "new media" are not all that new, and to avoid the trap of thinking of them as an "endless pursuit of the new" and of change while one needs to equally "think about continuity as well as change, to think about the historical developments and fixity of the materialities of cultures as well as their reshaping, and to think contextually about media and culture as being a part of much broader social processes and forces".[2] I will thus consider a selection of popular images that circulate on the web, focusing in particular on memes and gifs that hint at a fixity in the way images of Ireland are conveyed through screens – from phones to computers to TV. This will lead me to propose a revised definition of what the circulation of images might involve in what has been termed the "Post-Internet" era.

Images of Ireland are now everywhere. Over recent years, the well-ordered ideological visual narrative of the historical and affective bond that was fostered by emigration, or the political assertiveness of the Irish diaspora in the USA seem to be no longer clearly delineated because its representations circulate online in different, less fixed ways. Indeed, artist and critical theorist Hito Steyerl has argued images are no longer circumscribed:[3]

1. David Beer, *Popular Culture and New Media: The Politics of Circulation*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, DOI: 10.1057/9781137270061, p. 6
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.
3. Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?" in Lauren Cornell & Ed Halter (eds.), *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press, 2015. See also: e-flux journal, 49, 2013, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead (last accessed 7/07/2017), p. 7-8

> The internet is probably not dead. It has rather gone all-out. Or more precisely: it is all over! […] This implies a spatial dimension, but not as one might think. The internet is not everywhere. Even nowadays when networks seem to multiply exponentially, many people have no access to the internet or don't use it at all. And yet, it is expanding in another direction. It has started moving offline. But how does this work?[4]

There is a need here for some theoretical background before moving to illustrations. Hito Steyerl argues that this expansion "offline" has several implications. First, that the image now requires a much broader definition:

> But if images start pouring across screens and invading subject and object matter, the major and quite overlooked consequence is that reality now widely consists of images; or rather, of things, constellations, and processes formerly evident as images. This means one cannot understand reality without understanding cinema, photography, 3D modeling, animation, or other forms of moving or still image. The world is imbued with the shrapnel of former images, as well as images edited, photoshopped, cobbled together from spam and scrap. Reality itself is postproduced and scripted, affect rendered as after-effect. Far from being opposites across an unbridgeable chasm, image and world are in many cases just versions of each other.[5]

The second implication is that we need to move from the simple examination of *how* the image is produced (and circulated) to the notion of postproduction, that is how the images *themselves* serve as means of creation:

> Under these conditions, production morphs into postproduction, meaning the world can be understood but also altered by its tools. The tools of postproduction: editing, color correction, filtering, cutting, and so on are not aimed at achieving representation. They have become means of creation, not only of images but also of the world in their wake. One possible reason: with digital proliferation of all sorts of imagery, suddenly too much world became available. The map, to use the well-known fable by Borges, has not only become equal to the world, but exceeds it by far. A vast quantity of images covers the surface of the world […] in a confusing stack of layers. The map explodes on a material territory, which is increasingly fragmented and also

4. H. Steyerl, art. cit., p. 440.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 444.

> gets entangled with it: in one instance, Google Maps cartography led to near military conflict.[6]

The final move is therefore one from "circulation" to "circulationism":

> What the Soviet avant-garde of the twentieth century called productivism – the claim that art should enter production and the factory – could now be replaced by circulationism. Circulationism is not about the art of making an image, but of post-producing, launching, and accelerating it. It is about the public relations of images across social networks, about advertisement and alienation, and about being as suavely vacuous as possible.[7]

I hereafter propose to locate these paradigm shifts by illustrating them through several examples which will involve leprechauns, cute cats and tasty treats. I will first examine how "Irish jokes" in online culture are overall marked by fixity and have most recently been conveyed in the form of memes that tend to confirm ethnic and cultural stereotypes. Memes can be defined as "free text […], photo, video, audio clip, or animated gif […]"[8] that circulate online. I will then try and make sense of the ubiquitous gif of the "cute kitten" (here in it variation as "cute cat in a green hat") as a vector of a soft, or positive Irishness. And since it is but a short step from cuteness to tastiness, I will attempt to illustrate a wider trend in popular and online culture, which Hito Steyerl describes as follows:

> As the web spills over into a different dimension, image production moves way beyond the confines of specialized fields. It becomes mass postproduction in an age of crowd creativity. Today, almost everyone is an artist. We are pitching, phishing, spamming, chain-liking or mansplaining. We are twitching, tweeting, and toasting as some form of solo relational art, high on dual processing and a smartphone flat rate.[9]

The last section of this paper will attempt to illustrate this trend by examining some YouTube, Buzzfeed or Facts Videos which focus on the tasting of Irish foods by non-Irish millennial Internet users.

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6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Thov Reime, "Memes as Visual Tools for Precise Message Conveying: A Potential in the Future of Online Communication Development", https://www.ntnu.no/documents/10401/1264435841/Design+Theory+Article+-+Final+Article+-+Thov+Reime.pdf (last accessed 6/07/2017), p. 2. An example of free text might be the "Keep Calm and carry on" meme, and "Grumpy cat" is a photo that has become a meme. GIF stands for "Graphic interchange format". It was first developed by CompuServe in 1987 and allows to store multiple images in one file for animation.
9. H. Steyerl, art. cit.

Leprechauns and Postproduced Images

In the early 2000s, the circulation of popular culture online took over from the candid "friendship" chain letters (which used to come in paper form) and mutated into chain e-mail. Back in 2007 or 2008, the following image attachment circulated around St Patrick's Day:[10]

Fig. 1 – Irish virus

This visual parody of a scam e-mail[11] courteously asking the receiver to delete his own files is technically a meme insofar as it replicates a "piece of information that evolves according to the environment, yet maintains a core principle"[12] as the principle here is that of the email virus scam. Yet much like the French "mime" or street performer, while "[pretending] to be in contact with invisible objects [*here the virus or, the web*]' […], the core principle is replication, recreation, or synthesis of something else."[13] In other words, a meme might be characterised as a picture template for telling jokes.

However, ten years after the launch of Google, and at a time when other US-based firms such as Dell were firmly settled in the business landscape of Ireland, the "Irish virus" image comes across as suspiciously tacky. It plays at being a "post-produced" image indebted to the cultural stereotypes which were popular on the web 1.0 – most notably in the shape of "Irish jokes" which circulated via e-mail through computers before the heyday of smartphones. And as such, this real image functions as a *pre*-"Post-Internet" image-object, in that it reflects on the Internet as a tool. As Steyerl writes in a key piece interrogating recent changes in e-culture,

10. http://joyreactor.com/post/318677 (last accessed 10/07/2017).
11. On memes, see https://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/when-does-a-meme-become-art (last accessed 6/07/2017). See also Limor Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press, 2013.
12. T. Reime, art. cit., p. 1. The term was introduced by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 essay *The Selfish Gene*. Reime notes that the meme "is to culture what genes are to biology […] I propose to define a meme as a picture or figure functioning as a template or situational background, to which a specific and related, written content is added." (*ibid.*, p. 2)
13. *Ibid.*

> Image circulation today works by pimping pixels in orbit via strategic sharing of wacky, neo-tribal, and mostly US-American content. Improbable objects, celebrity cat GIFs, and a jumble of unseen anonymous images proliferate and waft through human bodies via Wi-Fi. One could perhaps think of the results as a new and vital form of folk art, that is if one is prepared to completely overhaul one's definition of folk as well as art. A new form of storytelling using emojis and tweeted rape threats is both creating and tearing apart communities loosely linked by shared attention deficit.[14]

With this in mind, let us go back to our virtual leprechaun. It "pimps pixels" (albeit in a rather naive way) by resorting to the image of the St Patrick Day's Irishman-as-drunk-leprechaun, which suggests a certain endearing backwardness as well as an enduring attachment to folkloric images, here confirmed by the use of a rather outmoded font. It also partakes in the "wackiness" of "neo-tribal, and mostly US-American content" referred to by Steyerl. It further conveys an image of the Irish as perceived from outside of Ireland, and predominantly by Americans. However, having heavily invested in Ireland over the boom years, the latter knew well that this "manual virus" was nothing but a concentrate of self-derisive stereotypes bordering on caricature. It most certainly did not reflect the very different truth described by R.F. Foster:

> This illustrates the strange conundrum, whereby Ireland has a greater Gross Domestic Product than Gross National Product – since the former statistic includes all the money made by multinationals such as Hewlett-Packard, Dell and Intel, which then is exported back to the USA, and the latter figure simply adds up what is left for the natives. As the statistics became ever more miraculous in the late 1990s, the distance between these two rising graphs widened accordingly.[15]

If one factors all these elements, this makes the message into an even more improbable hybridised object that is all at once a polite invite, a professional-sounding e-mail message and a visual cliché. It also upholds the idea that the digital economy that furthered Ireland's self-branded "creative economy" was nothing but an Irish joke involving the usual suspects of backwardness (applied to the 21st century area of new technologies); gentle hospitality ("please", "thanks/tanks"); or the oh-so-Irish gift of the gab. All of these stereotypes are conveyed through a request that brims with signs of Irishness similar to the signs of italianity that Roland Barthes recorded

14. Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?", e-flux journal, 49, 2013, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead (last accessed 7/07/2017), p. 7-8
15. R. F. Foster, *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change*, London, Penguin, 2007, p. 9-10.

in his reading of the advertising image by Panzani[16]. To top it all, it bears all the linguistic indicators of "Irishisms" ("that'd be grand"; the eluded [th] in "Tanks", "bejaisus"; and of course the name Paddy O'Hacker).

However, in the context of the economic bust and recession, the whole affirmative enterprise comes across as ironical. Both Claire Lynch and R.F. Foster have pointed out that "From the boom years of Ireland's Celtic Tiger economy, during which the manufacture and development of hardware and software in Ireland thrived, through to various government policies to increase domestic access to web technology, cyberculture has been at the core of Ireland's social and cultural identity."[17] But the "miracle of loaves and fishes" (as Roy Foster dubbed the boom)[18] was not to last, and as a result the leprechaun seems to be commanding us with a sense of humor that defies the harshness of the recession. In a sense, the "leprechaun virus" is a practical joke because this friendly figure, which one might consider to embody the Irish at large, also signifies their self-conscious critical distance about the rise and (mostly) fall of the Celtic Tiger.

It is based on the same principles as the scams that jam email users' inboxes nowadays, from the upbeat announcement that "You have won the sweepstakes" to other classic phishing scams such as the older "Nigerian letter scam". I will allow for a digression here as the scam topic allows me to illustrate how "post-internet" art, which we might characterise as art that focuses on the internet as a creative inspiration and not just as a mere medium, embraces the tools of the internet for creative purposes. *The Rumors of the World* (2014) is a video installation by Franco-Lebanese visual artists Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige which explores the artistic potential of the e-mail scam:

> In the Black Box Gallery, people of various ages and origins, amateur actors, filmed close-up, watch us, speak to us, incarnate a scam, a story. These faces and voices are spread out onto twenty-three screens and one hundred loudspeakers, weaving a network, a visual and virtual architecture that creates an invasive rumor.[19]

16. Roland Barthes, "Rhétorique de l'image", *Communications*, 4 (1), 1964, DOI: 10.3406/comm.1964.1027, p. 40.
17. Claire Lynch, *Cyber Ireland: Text, Image, Culture*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 6-7.
18. R. F. Foster, *op .cit.*, p. 7.
19. Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, *Rumors of the World,* Video installation, 23 screens, 100 loudspeakers, 38 HD films, variable lengths, 2014, http://hadjithomasjoreige.com/the-rumor-of-the-world (last accessed 7/07/2017).

Fig. 2 – Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, exhibition view of "The Rumor of the World," at Villa Arson, *Je dois tout d'abord m'excuser / I must first apologise*, 2014. Courtesy of the artists and In Situ – Fabienne Leclerc

Much as the Irish accent suggested by the leprechaun's message appears comically exaggerated, Hadjithomas and Joreige's installation transforms the formal request of the scam e-mails and dramatises them. They are no longer directed at random users but narrated as confidential stories – until the moment when money is brought in the picture:

> An agreement emerges between the mechanism and the spectator, like it does in theater; one subscribes to the actors' performance rather than reality. These monologues seem credible for an instant until the characters start to mention money, thus dissolving faith and blurring the limit between truth and lie, fiction and documentary. Brought together in the exhibition, from one country and one event to the other, from a story, a face and voice to the next, these tales make up the rumor of the world.[20]

Unlike the leprechaun example however, this piece deliberately takes the e-mail scam one step further by making it into an artistic installation.

20. *Ibid.*

The Potato website lists the following meme as one of Ireland's "10 favorites memes ever."[21]

Fig. 3 – "Irish" meme

An overview of this series of images shows that the meme aims at commenting on popular cultural issues related to Ireland mostly as it seen by Americans and Europeans, (and specifically by the British as former imperial ruler). While it is difficult to locate the exact date when this series of vignettes was created and first circulated, it refers to cultural and political moments that can be traced. First and foremost, the images make incursions into issues related to the economy. They go from suggesting that Ireland squandered EU money in the 1990s and is backward (in the Americans' minds) to stressing symbolically its strong renewed connections with the US, with the image of President Obama's official visit in 2011 and the viral image of him having drinks at a pub in Moneygall, Co. Offaly. They also refer to the violent history of the Troubles (with the IRA bombing campaign of the 1980s in England) and to the globalisation of Irish pop music as reflected by U2's quasi-superheroic visual status. The visual narrative ends with a self-derisive hint at past emigration, now reactivated by the recession. However, the series ends on the vindication of Irishness as a form of resistance to other clichés, especially with the last representing emigrants to Canada in the 19th century. This ironical distance is meant to assert the Irish people's sense of pride as well as their ability to withstand crises in this viral narrative. It is also what allows them to put up with global sniggering at their dispendious tendencies and other cultural clichés about their rurality, their rampant alcoholism (also a metaphor of economic dependency), their vanity or their ingrained

21. http://www.thepotato.ie/2013/01/24-of-the-best-irish-memes-ever (last accessed 7/07/2017).

violence. Interestingly, what is provided here is a collective narrative that, in its broad reliance on stereotypes, is as much of a scam as the "leprechaun scam".

Yet in the meme of the early 2000s, the image of the Obamas at the pub drinking Guinness seems to provide a new take on the celebration of the camaraderie between Ireland and the United States of America.[22]

In the "Irish" meme (Fig. 3) it is as if the picture had been airbrushed to feature FLOTUS Michelle Obama in a "softer", feminised version of the relationship between the US and Ireland at the turn of the 21st century. What the meme suggests is therefore a refashioned narrative of Irish culture provided by the Irish, for themselves and for others on the web. And while the "Irish" meme pokes fun at what the world thinks of the Irish, and at how they view themselves, it is worth noting there is no equivalent version summing up "The French", or "The Americans"[23], which seems to point to a difficulty when it comes to taking in what other nations think of them.

While the question of the feminine in political representation would require more in-depth examination which cannot be carried out here, the ubiquitous "cute kitten" gif allows for relevant insights into it. The original image comes from a YouTube home video[24] introducing us to an adorable kitten acting a fluffy four-legged leprechaun:

Fig. 4 – "St Patrick's Day Leprechaun March" (Still).

Critical theorist Sianne Ngai has argued that "cute objects have no edge to speak of, usually being soft, round, and deeply associated with the

22. The caption reads: "Here's luck to Dear Old Ireland, the cradle of all true and loyal hearts. May her memory ever stay green in the hearts of all sons of Old Erin" (c. 1910): http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/658614022 (retrieved 7/07/2017).
23. The "French" versions speak mostly of frustration at the lack of social acknowledgement on part of the groups that they represent (nurse, civil servant, scientific researcher) and the closest equivalent is a comic meme on "French in the USA", or "Being American".
24. "St Patrick's Dat Leprechaun March", https://www.youtube.com/embed/Xcr2FfRgflE (last accessed 8/07/2017).

infantile and the feminine."[25] It may indeed be tempting to characterize the "cute cat" image as an offshoot of the alleged femininity of the cute in its roundedness and positiveness, but the critic also stresses that such images may expand "from the unequivocally positive […] to the ambiguous or potentially negative [as potential indecency]."[26] She further notes that cuteness is also often identified with a "'twittering' use or style of language, marked as feminine or culturally and nationally other."[27] When it comes to visual cross-overs between Ireland and the US in online culture, long before the days of YouTube videos and their derived cute cat-leprechaun gifs, one may argue that the American animated cartoon character of Betty Boop stands as a touchstone of popular images associated with cuteness. Indeed she is linked to both the positive (childish) and negative (sexual) interpretations of cuteness as well as to the feminine "twittering", all of which seem to endure in the numerous Irishised versions of the character in contemporary online culture. She first appeared on screen as an anthropomorphic poodle in the shape of a vivacious French Poodle girl-dog with floppy dog ears and was cast as the girlfriend of Bimbo the dog[28] – and one might contend here that the image is not radically different from, or less incongruous than the anthropomorphised cute cat/ leprechaun in a green hat.

Fig. 5 – Betty Boop and Bimbo the dog in *Dizzy Dishes*, animation, 1930

Betty Boop would sing the "boop-oop-a-doop Girl song", a scat lyric that was originated by the singer Helen Kane (whose mother was

25. Sianne Ngai, "The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde", *Critical Inquiry*, 31 (4), 2005, DOI: 10.1086/444516, p. 814.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. See https://genxpose.blogspot.fr/2015/04/doggone-it-dogs-go-wild-too.html (retrieved 7/07/2017). "*Dizzy Dishes* premiered on August 9, 1930 and stars Bimbo as a waiter who gets into some trouble. This short is also famous as the first appearance of Bimbo's girlfriend, the as-yet-unnamed Betty Boop. In *Dizzy Dishes*, Bimbo and Betty are both anthropomorphic dogs. Bimbo has big dog ears. His girlfriend Betty is a French Poodle with floppy Poodle ears and a Poodle nose. Bimbo is the star and *Dizzy Dishes* focuses on his bumbling and Betty, who is not even given a name in this cartoon, actually has a very limited appearance for a song and some flirting. […] *Dizzy Dishes* runs 6:10."

American-Irish) in the 1920s. The character only lasted from 1930 to 1939 but it was revived in the 1980s and produced an impressive number of Betty Boop animated gifs online.

Fig. 6 – Irish Betty Boop

As the "Irish cute" Betty Boop was revamped and circulated, it retained what Ngai has described as "the formal properties associated with cuteness – smallness, compactness, softness, simplicity, and pliancy – [which] call forth specific affects: helplessness, pitifulness, and even despondency."[29] Nevertheless, it seems that *The Guide to United States Popular Culture*'s description of the character borders on plain sexism: "a wide-eyed bosomy ingénue scantily clad in a frilly strapless miniskirt, one trim leg sporting a fancy garter."[30] In more recent memes of the Irish Betty Boop too, the "cute" modest outfit suggesting the moral decency of the Irish woman (Fig. 6) seems to have given in to cuteness that is more sexually connoted and which has spread across images of Irish and non-Irish Betty Boops alike. Here, the "diminutive object […] 'has some sort of imposed-upon aspect or mien' – that is, it bears the look of an object not only easily formed but all too easily de-formed under the subject's feelings or attitudes towards it."[31] As Sianne Ngai writes, "cutification" is close to "objectification" and the Betty Boop of recent years has been amply submitted to eye and leg deformation, her malleable body suggesting a move from charmingness to indecency and sexual arousal. This is further emphasized by the "Keep calm" textual meme, which is itself a reference to Churchill's war-time phrase, making the image below a meme inside a meme.[32]

29. S. Ngai, art. cit., p. 816.
30. Ray & Pat Browne, *The Guide to United States Popular Culture,* Bowling Green (OH), Popular, 2001, p. 110.
31. S. Ngai, art. cit., p. 816.
32. http://bettybooppicturesarchive.blogspot.fr/2014/03/betty-boop-keep-calm-and-kiss-me-im.html (last accessed 8/07/2017).

Fig. 7 – "Keep Calm and Kiss Me I'm Irish"

As a rule in online culture, Irishness is an accessory to the woman's sexual agency. More often than not, Irish women in gifs are fairy figures, pin-ups with green tight tops or staged selfies of redhead girls with blue eyes; but such figures are not sexually empowered – as if the very idea of a sexualised Irish woman in online culture, from Maureen O'Hara to Mrs Doyle, was still quite problematic.

Tasty Treats

While the cuddliness of the cat with the green hat can hardly be denied, its repetition over and over as a gif makes it potentially threatening or at least "suavely vacuous"[33], Hito Steyerl suggests. In the gif image, it keeps coming towards us and yet disturbingly never goes anywhere. It should be said that this study of memes would not be thorough without a wink and nod at Grumpy Cat[34]. Yet the reference to the popular feline may not be "suavely vacuous" altogether, for from a theoretical perspective and as a taste concept, cuteness also links in to food, whether it is leprechaun relish or consumable men we are talking about here:

33. H. Steyerl, art. cit., p. 444.
34. For more on viral, commercial-oriented memes, see James Cohen & Thomas Kenny, *Producing New and Digital Media: Your Guide to Savvy Use of the Web*, New York, Focal, 1st edition, 2015, p. 107.

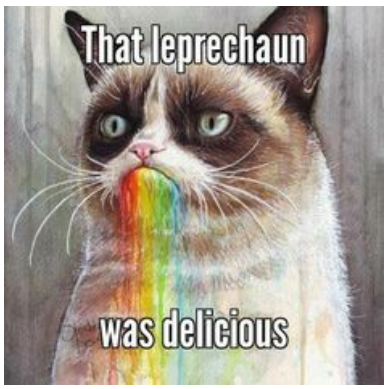

Fig. 8 – Grumpy Cat meme

Ngai suggests in her essay that "[given] all its associations with the pleasures of consumption, including the spectrum of aesthetic experience, running from what Adorno calls 'tasteful savoring' to 'physical devouring' that brings art into an uncomfortable proximity to 'cuisine and pornography', it is fairly easy to understand why critics have actually gone to lengths to avoid the subject of cuteness[…]."[35] It can also be argued that the peculiar face of the diminutive (female) cat with big eyes and rounded softness are non-threatening and the rainbow-colored trace that stands for leprechaun blood does this precisely: personification is avoided, no gaze need be returned and amusement is substituted to embarrassment. These days, it seems that the alternative to the expected cute/tiny leprechaun increasingly are the commodified images of well-known Irish male artists which widely feature on sites such as knowyourmeme.com or giphy.com. The visual stardom of singer Niall Horan from the boys' band One Direction or of Ed Sheeran (complete with sultry looks, guitar, "Galway Girl" and stepdancing) and of model and actor Jamie Dornan (as a serial killer in the TV series *The Fall*[36] or as seducer in the 2015 movie *Fifty Shades of Grey*) are circulated as gifs and memes in which they are endlessly undressing, breaking from sultry pout to sexy smile, or consuming food. What is circulated here is the idea of the sexiness of the men as objects for immediate, lighthearted visual consumption.

Taken to the culinary level, it is also interesting to examine how the notion of taste is now being disseminated online: food has become the subject of many YouTube channels, and it is worth studying how BuzzFeed food videos attempt to convey what is presented as a "real" experience of food tasting through the presentation of regional or national tastes. There is an element of cuteness as the selected foods are often packaged to please, malleable and consumable. But in the end it is not so much the food that

35. S. Ngai, art cit., p. 814.
36. "The Fall" was created and written by Allan Cubitt in 2013, produced by Artists Studio and shown on RTÉ One in the Republic of Ireland and BBC Two in the UK. It stars Gillian Anderson as DSI Stella Gibson and Jamie Dornan as serial killer Paul Spector.

is tasted as the accents of the testers themselves, or their body language as straight or gay couples or as young adults representative of various ethnic groups. Eventually their ability to comment on the culinary merits of the food tasted seems less valuable than their ability to chatter. In addition to this, one may wonder whether the underlying aim of deconstructing food stereotypes may not lead to the elaboration of new clichés regarding gender, or social physical behaviors.

What has made these videos popular is their versatility and the unending possibilities that they offer for a global online culture: there are videos of Irish people tasting American "Twinkies" (the ultimate "cute cake"), of Americans intrigued by Irish snacks (the "cuteness" of the bag of "Taytos") or by the notion of "Saint Patrick's Day food". Of course, there is potential for more specialised variations of this based on the demographics and local population, as in the "Irish people tasting New England treats" video. And as carefully orchestrated short movies both from perspective of ethnicity and gender, these short videos also qualify as memes.

Conclusion

The circulation of images has thus become a circulationism, where images are copied and tampered with. The Irish stereotypes of old seem to rarefy as their multiplication online depletes their potential meaning as signs (Adorno speaks of the "reification of the inert or radically reified object"[37]) but a number of central questions are carefully avoided in the process, most notably concerning issues of gender. But these are not works of art, and art, Adorno says, always runs the risk of being distanced from society, and thus become ineffectual. So while not much is "effectual" in these images of cute kittens, clichéd sexy men, eroticised women and talkative eaters, the very purposelessness of images which are not "for" anything in particular suggests a lack of solemnness and conveys a feeling of pleasure[38]. And indeed, in her study Ngai suggests that "even works with an expression of despair can be lighthearted […] in Beckett's plays the curtain rises the way it rises on the room with the Christmas presents."[39] The circulationalism of images, their repetition and variation thus make for a kind of sociality whereby all users can generate memes that are tweeted and Tumbled in unexpected ways. As a final remark, let us point that an interesting aspect is that online culture conveys overall non-critical and non-political images, thus extracting Ireland from the arena of political action and focusing on inconsequential, or "impotent" images.

37. S. Ngai, art. cit., p. 838.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 839.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 840.

Paradoxically, the movement of visual or textual GIFs tends towards passivity or inertness. Ngai proposes that they make for a kind of "asocial sociality" in that they are

> *least* social (that is, most ineffectual in a society that transforms human relations into thing-like ones and invests material objects with what Jameson calls a 'strangely spiritual' or 'libidinal sheen' but also […] *most* social (in the sense of most visibly bearing this society's imprint or mark)[40].

Still, the ongoing effort on the part of academics to try and make sense of these images attests to the difficulty to accept that such viral images serve no purpose and do nothing. Ethan Zuckerman elaborated on this in his quite serious (although humorously entitled) "Cute Cat Theory Of Digital Activism", where he argues that

> With web 2.0, we've embraced the idea that people are going to share pictures of their cats, and now we build sophisticated tools to make that easier to do. As a result, we're creating a wealth of tech that's extremely helpful for activists. There are twin revolutions going on – the ease of creating content and the ease of sharing it with local and global audiences[41].

Zuckerman outlines the unexpected effects of images that can reach beyond their apparently initial amusing meaning and bear hidden significations. In so doing, he suggests that there is a new field for the study of unexpected, sometimes less academic objects produced by online culture. This also means that there is a need to envision national cultures and their material productions (here, Ireland's) in their relations to a more global speech environment that is now sustained by digital creativity, communication and networks and to examine the political implications of these paradigmatic changes.

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40. *Ibid.*, p. 844 (Quoting Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society"(1967), *Notes to Literature*).
41. Ethan Zuckerman, "Cute Cats to the Rescue? Participatory Media and Political Expression" in Danielle Allen & Jennifer S. Light (eds.), *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age*, Chicago, Chicago UP, 2015 (Author's final manuscript: http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/78899, last accessed 8/11/2020). Designer and Internet theorist An Xio Mina suggests that China represents a speech environment where the only controversial, political speech that's possible is speech that uses image and humor to ensure its spread. Writing in an article that compares speech in Chinese social media to street art, she offers this formulation: "If I understand Zuckerman's Cute Cat Theory correctly, he creates a dichotomy between people who share pictures of their cats and people who engage in political activism. In other words, cute cats and activist messages leverage the same tools, but they're fundamentally different. But with Chinese political memes, the cute cats are the activist message" (in An Xiao Mina, "Social Media Street Art: Censorship, China's Political Memes and the Cute Cat Theory", 2011. See http://anxiaostudio.com/2011/12/28/social-media-street-art-censorship-chinas-political-memes-and-the-cute-cat-theory, last accessed 8/07/2017).

The Irish as Caribbean Slaves? Meme, Internet Meme and Intervention

Robert Johnson
Ludwig Maximilian Universität – Amerika Institut

Introduction

The meme of Irish slavery is not a new phenomenon, but dates back to at least the mid 1600s and the beginning of servitude as a means for the planter class to guarantee labour outputs in their colonies[1], in the context of the complicated Irish relationship to empire, colonisation, colonial labour and slavery.[2] Today's meme is loose on the frontier of human communication on the world wide web in the form of a particular internet meme, with the possibility to infect millions through memetic transfer, the consequences thereof being a widespread dissemination of the idea of the Irish as slaves, at a time of greater cultural conflict in academia as part of conflict among elites,[3] combined with the identification of the idea of Irish slaves as secret or stigmatized knowledge. The primary effect would be to engender sympathy for the colonised, captured or enslaved Irish. When spread as implied suppressed history, this meme also has the effect of undermining currently taught or accepted narratives, and thus those who profess or accept those narratives as well, chipping away at the credibility of the academy, educational institutions, and accepted societal

1. Hilary Beckles & Andrew Downes, "An Economic Formalisation of the Origins of Black Slavery in the British West Indies, 1624–1645", *Social and Economic Studies*, 34 (2), 1985, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27862787 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 1-25; Hilary Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627–1715*, Knoxville, Tennessee U.P., 1989, p. 79-81.
2. Robert Johnson, "What to do about the Irish in the Caribbean", *Caribbean Quarterly*, 64 (3-4), 2018, DOI: 10.1080/00086495.2018.1531554, p. 409-433.
3. Morris P. Fiorina, Samuel J. Abrams & Jeremy Pope, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, Boston, Longman, 2011, p. 7-8

narratives, strengthening a small thread in the web of conspiracy theory culture.

Public History to Popular History

James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton confirm that while "there is no consensus about the definition and boundaries of public history" that it is "The verbs relating to history are what matter: the activity of doing, presenting, or making history in a range of forms for many different purposes and communicating it to multiple audiences or 'publics' is the main characteristic."[4]

Since the beginning of historical professionalization in the 19th century, public history was organized, if at all, through voluntary cooperation of academic institutions and historical societies, as well as preservation organizations and museums. The field as it existed did not lack professionals, but a unified organizational structure did not emerge until the late twentieth century. Starting in the 1970s, the field coalesced and professionalized as one example in the Americas with the National Council on Public History in 1979.[5]

Public history can thus be defined in the main as the spaces, not necessarily physical, where the academy's work can and does converge with the public. In the past, these convergences took place in print media, film and television documentaries, memorials or museums, and the performing arts.[6] That hasn't changed. However, the textual landscape is increasingly digital.[7] Magazines, newspapers, documentaries, and other journalism have been increasingly digitised[8] and are thus far more readily available. This availability has magnified the ability of lay people and non-historian academics such as historical anthropologists to "do" History.

The issue of access and production takes us from the professional public history to the amateur, leisure or popular historian, which itself is a very broad term that can mean working academics and former academics to social activists to lay people with no historical training whatsoever.

4. James B. Gardner & Paula Hamilton, "The Past and Future of Public History: Developments and Challenges", *The Oxford Handbook of Public History,* Oxford U.P., Oxford, 2017, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199766024.013.29, p. 1-2.
5. https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field (last accessed 6/10/2018).
6. Catherine M. Eagan, "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud: Irish Americans, Irish studies, and the Racial Politics of Hibernophilia in 1990s America", *Working papers in Irish Studies*, 99 (1), 1999, p. 12, n. 73.
7. *The Public Historian*, as one example, the magazine of the National Council on Public History, has made available online all of its content from October 1978 to present.
8. Jerome De Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 91.

Old structures of editing, gatekeeping and filtering are bypassed by the freedom to transmit into the ether what the internet provides. Jerome De Groot, working from Dutton, notes that "gatekeepers of knowledge have to modify their practice or be simply ignored."[9]

The old print interfaces have not been completely replaced. They are at heart, content. And content and text obviously still exist. In fact, after the digital turn they are more important than ever. Whereas before the digital age, discussion of content was necessarily either via print media, on television or face to face, today a host site such as a news site or journal site will set up a forum or comments section to allow an instant gratification of the desire to be more than just a passive observer.

Cultural-studies scholars like John Fiske or Henry Jenkins have discussed at length the participatory nature of "active audiences"[10], suggesting that consumers are cognitively and emotionally making sense of the texts of their television entertainment, and in Jenkins' case, actively shaping that content through participation in fandom and a phenomenon he calls 'poaching.'[11] Likewise, the changes wrought by the internet have made the active audience in popular history spaces an incontestable reality. Structurally, even if a content provider foregoes a comments section, internet platforms of all kinds allow the active audience to create small to massive communities without the consent of the original provider. The main identifiable difference between these active audiences is that the popular amateur, lay or armchair history isn't simply consuming history, they are producing historical work, bypassing Dutton's gatekeeper function[12] and possibly influencing millions of users, much faster than the academy can or could react.

On such social media as Reddit and Facebook, the user and their content are also the product. Data gathering to help advertisers better target consumers as well as advertisements based on the data gathered are the main revenue and thus the reason for these platforms' existence. The interface is textual as opposed to graphic, and user accounts are anonymous. Thus the internet provides non-national spaces that are heavily influenced by Anglo-American popular culture, where data transfer takes place. It is a convergence space where content meets users who are sometimes the product themselves

9. *Ibid.*, p. 91; Please also see William H. Dutton "The Internet and Social Transformation: Reconfiguring Access", in William H. Dutton *et al.* (eds.), *Transforming Enterprise: Economic and Social Implications of Information Technology*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2005, https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/6285375 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 341.
10. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers Television Fans & Participatory Culture*, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 23; also see John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, London, Routledge, 2011.
11. H. Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
12. W. Dutton, art. cit., p. 341-342.

In addition to all the other outlets and drains where public history used to converge, these forums and spaces are now part of the popular discourse. Popular history now resides in large part online. Anything goes, and if it doesn't, if the rules become too stultifying, users can go somewhere else and find a place to suit them. Along with the classical museum, public history's more academic offerings, journals, archives, books, movies, television documentaries, digital tours and audio guides, now take the stage with social media, email chain letters, forum discussions and internet memes as a new, dynamic and not unproblematic frontier along the horizon of history. Traversing that frontier are both the meme and the internet meme of Irish slavery.

The Meme

The term meme was coined in the late 1970s by Professor Richard Dawkins as a "unit of cultural transmission".[13] Meme theory is contested, even by those accepting the foundation of memes' existence. A simple definition of a meme is an idea, behaviour, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture: this underpins the term 'going viral.' Ernst Mayr noted in 1997 that meme is "nothing but an unnecessary synonym of the term "concept."[14] However the existence of culturally transmitted units is not in question, but rather their importance and behaviour and the possibility of quantified empirical study.

Meme also has become an internet jargon term meaning an idea passed from user to user on the internet, often in the form of an infographic or an image with text superimposed.[15] We will refer to these picture and text combinations in themselves as internet memes. The meme of Irish Slavery is often spread exactly through these picture and text combinations.[16] Here are some examples[17].

13. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene,* Oxford, Oxford U.P., 1999, p. 192.
14. Ernst Mayr, "The Objects of Selection", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 94 (6), 1997, DOI: 10.1073/pnas.94.6.2091, p. 2091-2094.
15. Michele Knobel & Colin Lankshear, "Online Memes, Affinities, and Cultural Production", in Michele Knobel & Colin Lankshear (eds.), *A New Literacies Sampler*, New York, Peter Lang, 2007, p. 199-228.
16. Robert Johnson, http://imgur.com/a/1M7Eg "Collected Images of the internet meme "Irish Slavery" (last updated 27/06/2017).
17. Fig. 1 to 6 – Unattributed, Irish slaves meme.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

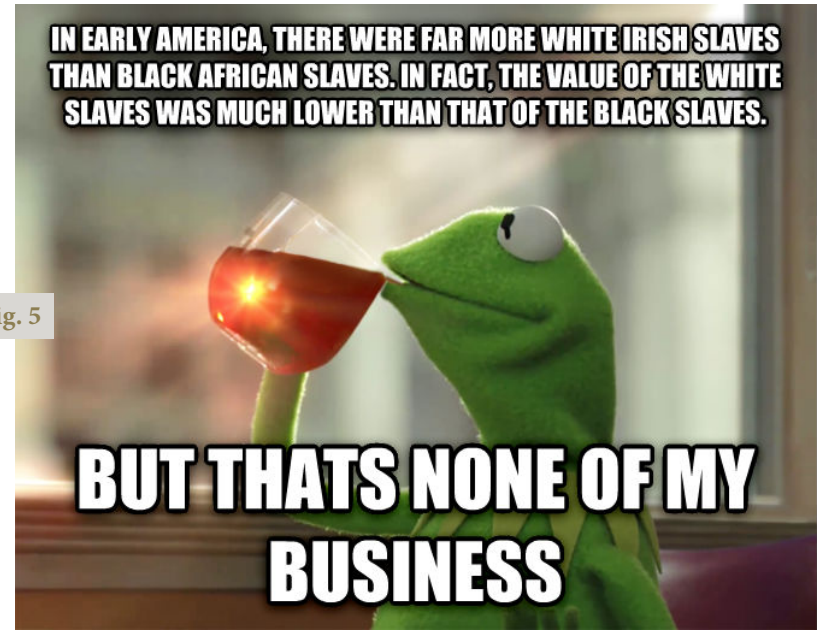

Fig. 5

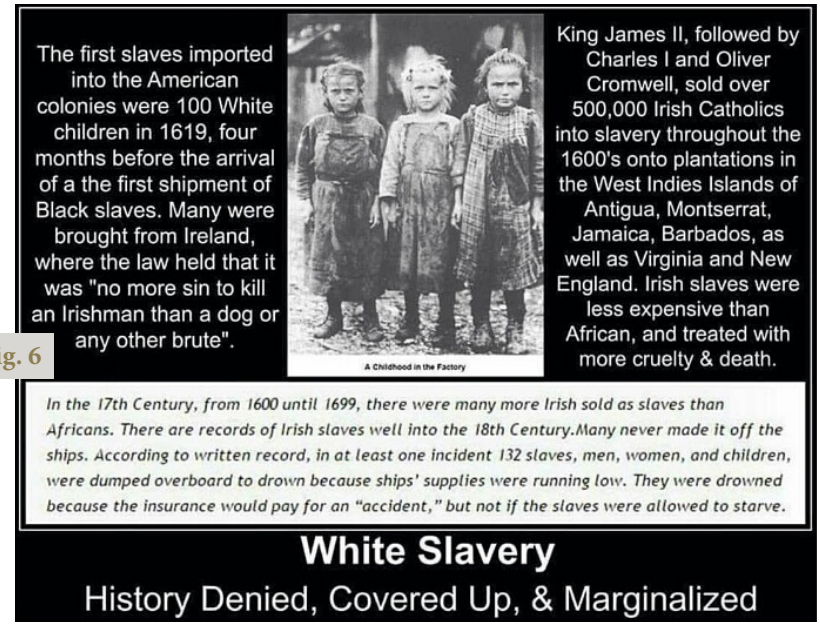

Fig. 6

These images lack original attribution. They are not actually images of Irish slaves. The first image cited below[18] is actually a colorized interpolated version of Lewis Hines' work in the early 20th century to end child labour.[19] The original of this photo hangs in the Luzerne County Pennsylvania Historical Society. Image 6 is also interpolated and also by Lewis Hines. Image 3 was shared from the web by a US state legislator. Image 5 is a composite of Kermit the Frog from Jim Henson's the Muppets. These memes can be constructed from any photo available on the web at a meme generation site. Ready-made memes, made by other prosumers, are also available for download.[20]

The central idea of the meme is that the Irish were slaves, but it often has more detailed implications, such as an equivalence between later Atlantic Chattel slavery and the Irish as an underclass in the Caribbean or the nascent United States.[21]

The people of Ireland were brutally subjugated by Cromwell's Roundheads after a number of revolts in the 17th century. As Cromwell and his occupying generals became increasingly reliant on deporting and permanently exiling their troubles to Barbados rather than outright execution[22], legends of slavery in the Caribbean took hold within the nascent Irish consciousness.[23] Barbados became such a feared and common sentence that the location became a verb whose definition meant to be sent there, never to return.[24]

Post-Restoration, the Irish developed as a people who at the same time were oppressed by and participated in the British Empire.[25] Throughout their post-Cromwellian history[26] resistance or revolutionary movements arose, and the term slavery was used by a number of famous Irish politicians in a manner rhetorically consistent with decolonization and revolution. This is especially true throughout the rocky historical period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which led to the Free State and then the Irish Republic.[27]

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18. *Ibid.*
19. Michael Burgan, *Breaker Boys: How a Photograph Helped End Child Labor*, Mankato (MN), Compass Point, 2012.
20. https://me.me/t/irish-slaves (last accessed 31/10/2018).
21. Please note the text of Fig. 1 and 4.
22. Hilary Beckles, "English Parliamentary Debate on White Slavery in Barbados", *The Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, XXXVI, 1982, p. 345.
23. Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, slavery and anti-slavery. 1612-1865,* Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 2.
24. Thomas Carlyle, *Cromwell's Life and Letters*, Vol. 1, London 1865, p. 541; please also see V. T. Harlow, *A History of Barbados,* London, Clarendon, 1926, p. 295.
25. R. Johnson, art. cit., p. 409-411.
26. Liam Kennedy, *Unhappy the Land: The most oppressed people ever, the Irish?*, Sallins, Merrion, 2016, p. 11-14, more generally also all of chapter 1; please also see L. Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion, and Nationalism in Ireland*, Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, 1996, p. 1-4, p. 217-218.
27. *Ibid.*

"Were the Irish enslaved in the Caribbean or elsewhere as Africans were?" is an important if somewhat complex historical question to ask and answer. The question dovetails into the longstanding historical inquiry[28] concerning the status of British colonial servants prior to and after the codification of slavery into law. John Donoghue refers to servitude scholarship as "…disputatious as any other subfield in the historical discipline"[29] and notes that "Scholarly agreement over the scale and demography of 17th century servant migration has come much more easily than any consensus over whether servant migration was essentially a voluntary process."[30]

If the internet meme means to equate the slave or unfree status of the Irish and Africans, then the answer to the question: "Were the Irish enslaved in the Caribbean or elsewhere as Africans were?" is no.

The Atlantic slave system is considered unique in its inhumanity and harshness.[31] No other group was enslaved in the Atlantic world exactly as Africans were enslaved. The utility of the simple answer though is limited in making comparisons. If the position of Africans in the Atlantic World is almost[32] unique in the history of the institution of slavery in North America then no other system could equate it. Thus the simple answer is a tautology.

That pre-emancipation 19th century iteration of Atlantic chattel slavery was not the only form of slavery contemporaneous with the Atlantic system.[33] Additionally the Irish in the Caribbean were, in the frontier period, like most West Indian servants,[34] enduring a period of what Père Labat called *dure servitude*,[35] and what Hilary McDonald Beckles

28. Peter Wood mentions this debate in an interview for the PBS Documentary *Africans in America* at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1i3024.html (last accessed 8/11/2018).
29. John Donoghue, "Indentured Servitude in the 17th Century English Atlantic: A Brief Survey of the Literature", *History Compass*, 11 (10), 2013, DOI: 10.1111/hic3.12088, p. 894.
30. *Ibid*., p. 895.
31. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/transatlantic-slave-trade (last accessed 31/10/2018); please also see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and citizen. The Negro in the Americas*, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1947, p. 48.
32. Kenneth M. Ames, "Slaves, Chiefs and Labour on the Northern Northwest Coast", *World Archaeology* 33, 1, 2001, https://www.jstor.org/stable/827885 (last accessed 6/11/2020), p. 1–17; William Christie MacLeod, "Debtor and Chattel Slavery in Aboriginal North America.", *American Anthropologist* 27, 3, 1925, https://www.jstor.org/stable/660990 (last accessed 6/11/2020), p. 375.
33. Other examples include The North African slavery of the Barbary States, The propertied elite servants of the Ottoman Empire as well as the lower orders of *kul*, Russia's крепостной крестьянин, hereditary chattel slaves of Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, and different orders of slavery in the Spanish and Portuguese Americas.
34. Carl Bridenbaugh & Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No peace beyond the line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690*, New York, Oxford U.P., 1972, p. 17, 112
35. John Eaden (ed.), *The Memoirs of Père Labat. 1693–1707*, Abington on Thames, Routledge, 2014, p. 143, 233-234. The Eaden translation has been checked against the original by certified translator Mme Severine LePage: Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l'Amerique,*

called "slave-like conditions"[36], noting that many servants experienced or considered their servitude "as a form of enslavement" and that "Irish servants in general experienced servitude as an oppressive labour system in which their condition was nearer slavery than freedom."[37] But these statements notwithstanding, neither Beckles, nor Williams nor Patterson is making the argument the Irish were "slaves in the sense that Blacks were."[38] They don't have to have done so. They don't need to have been slaves to have been horrifically oppressed. Beckles and Williams would both argue and be correct that the inability of the Planter class to horrifically oppress the Irish and other servants fully and permanently in order to squeeze every last labour output of them, is what led to the die off of indentured servitude as the main labour source in the Caribbean and the transition to a permanent slave model. While many Irish were dying in misery in conditions far nearer to slavery than freedom,[39] other Irish people were prospering in the same colonies[40] thus demonstrating the complexity of the issue.

The Irish Condition in the Caribbean Was Not Simple

The Irish were not slaves in the sense that Blacks were. This is the main error of the internet meme and of those who would equate the unfree Irish and unfree Black slaves of a century or more later. If we consider that both groups were enslaved, which could be considered legitimate in a framework using a very general definition of slavery, the utility of the consideration becomes limited because the definition of slavery being used would have to be broad to encompass both conditions. So broad in fact, that any unfree person in the 17th century becomes a slave under such a definition and the word itself ceases to have any real meaning. And there were many unfree people in the Atlantic World and in Europe in the 17th century. The idea that such consideration would blur lines or be dangerous[41] is nonsense. Dangerous and problematic concepts are what academics are supposed to be able to deal with. But there is no way other than forward and there is no work to be done other than to tell the truth, in good faith, so far as we can and do the best and most detailed work

contenant l'histoire naturelle de ces pays, l'origine, les moeurs, la religion & le gouvernement des habitans anciens & modernes. Les guerres & les evenemens singuliers qui y sont arrivez pendant le séjour que l'auteur y a fait. Par le P. Labat, de l'ordre des Frères prêcheurs, Paris, Guillaume Cavelier, 1742, vol. 6, p. 196 and vol. 7, ARK: 12148/bpt6k114024q, p. 359-360.

36. H. Beckles, "A riotous and unruly lot", art. cit., p. 511; H. Beckles, *op. cit*., 1989, p. 8.
37. H. Beckles, "A riotous and unruly lot", art. cit., p. 511.
38. H. Beckles, *op. cit*., p. 6.
39. C. & R. Bridenbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 160; the Bridenbaughs note that death rate among servants was very high.
40. R. Johnson, art. cit. p. 312
41. Donald Akenson, *If the Irish ran the world: Montserrat, 1630-1730*, London, Liverpool U.P., 1997, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7zr1h (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 49, 309.

possible. This highlights and foreshadows some of the academic pushback against the internet meme that is actually factually incorrect and doesn't stand up to scrutiny or source analysis.[42]

As indicated above, the meme of Irish Slavery predates the internet, and even the digital age. The question of exactly how free or unfree the Irish and servants in general were goes back to the beginning of colonisation. In 1659 the English Parliament was petitioned by two labourers who had been convicted in the pro royalist Penruddock uprising of 1655 and sent to Barbados as punishment.[43] The petitioners claimed to have been "sold into slavery" as "chattels" and that they were being bought and sold, still used as payment for debts being "attached as horses and beasts for the debt of their masters, whipped at the whipping post for their master's pleasure and in many other ways made miserable beyond expression or Christian imagination."[44]

The petitioners were not Irish, but English. The reply in parliamentary debate was that the idea that these convicted and exiled Englishmen were slaves was "false and scandalous". That all persons were sent over with a contract of indenture of their own free will, "that the work is hard, but none are sent without their consent…it is not so odious as it is represented to you."[45]

As Michael Guasco noted in 2014:

> Critics characterised indentured servitude as slave-like because servants could be bought and sold. Indentured servants were property, but the idea that human beings could be bought and sold as mere commodities was a disquieting notion in an Atlantic world where Englishmen prided themselves – as Richard Jobson noted in the context of Africa in the 1620s – on their unwillingness to make merchandise of men. That human beings could be bought and sold like chattel horrified many Englishmen.[46]

Thus the meme itself goes back to the roots of colonisation and slavery in the new world. The most current development is not affirmation or denial of Irish slavery, but the speed and reach that it has attained due to the internet's intersection with popular history.

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42. R. Johnson, art. cit. p. 314
43. Thomas Burton, *Parliamentary Diary, 1656–1659*, 4 vols., London, Henry Colburn, 1828, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000769035 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 255-258.
44. *Ibid.*; please also see H. Beckles, "English Parliamentary Debate on White Slavery in Barbados," art. cit., p. 346.
45. T. Burton, *op. cit.* p. 259.
46. Michael Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen: Human Bondage in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania U.P., 2014, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjm8w (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 172-176.

This change in speed is evident in a modern pre-digital age example of the Irish Slaves Meme, from the *New York Times* dated from 1989, which begins as a correction to the minutiae of a previous article.

On July 27, 1989 *The New York Times* published an article on banking fraud in Montserrat. Therein they referred to the Finance and Chief Minister of the island as "a descendant of the early Irish settlers of Montserrat and the African slaves who worked the plantations."[47]

The correction from a private citizen James MacGuire read, "The early Irish in the Caribbean were also slaves, not 'settlers'. They were impressed in the wake of the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland in the mid-17th century and the massive land confiscations and Protestant plantations that followed it."[48]

Robert St. Cyr, President of the Leeward Island Inns, responded to MacGuire's editorial with a letter of his own stating: "The first Irish were deported to Montserrat from the neighbouring St. Kitts and from Virginia in the early 1630s, about a decade before Cromwell invaded Ireland. [...]"[49] This exchange took months. We have no means of referencing who read it. Today it would be near instantaneous and possibly reach millions or be buried in the deluge of information that is the web.

We can see here a division between the meme itself which has existed in one form or another since the 1600s and the internet meme, which could not by definition exist until the informational changes brought on by the World Wide Web.

The wording of the internet meme is necessarily short, due to space concerns, and ignores the complexity of the Irish situation in the Caribbean and the rest of British North America for a quick and thus necessarily unnuanced equivocation of Irish suffering and even captivity with the suffering of later generations of African slaves. As I have written elsewhere: "Social media favours simplicity. This not a simple topic."[50] The texts vary, there are some oft encountered examples "Irish Slaves – What The History Books Will Never Tell You"[51] "White Irish slaves were treated worse than any other race in the U.S. … when was the last time you heard

47. Joseph B. Treaster, "Plymouth Journal; On Tiny Isle of 300 Banks, Enter Scotland Yard", *New York Times,* July 27, 1989, https://nyti.ms/29mgMbz (last accessed 1/11/2017).
48. James MacGuire, "Irish in West Indies Went There as Slaves", *New York Times* 16 August 1989, https://nyti.ms/29rOsAA (last accessed 1/11/2017).
49. Robert St. Cyr, "Irish in Caribbean before Cromwell's Time", 16 September 1989, https://nyti.ms/29yIdxX (last accessed 11/01/2017).
50. R. Johnson, art. cit., p. 58
51. Royce Chrystin, "Irish Slaves – What The History Books Will Never Tell You", 1 November 2017, https://newspunch.com/the-irish-slaves-what-they-will-never-tell-you-in-history (last accessed 31/10/2018).

an Irish bitching [sic] about how the world owes them a living?"[52] "Irish Power- First American Slaves United" "Public Schools don't teach you this - Black Slaves were expensive but Irish slaves were cheap."[53]

The internet meme's stated or intended purposes can be deduced as follows. Firstly to inform the observer of the fact of Irish slavery. Secondly to hook the observer's interest with a novel idea or "secret, suppressed or stigmatized knowledge."[54] Thirdly to establish an equivocation of African Slavery, and Irish Slavery. Fourth to make a further comparison of Irish "success" to Black failure to thrive in North America. Lastly, the internet memes often link to articles with further details.

The links can lead anywhere: to further image collections, to Wikipedia, to books, or to videos. One common thread on the internet leads to an article from Globalresearch.ca, a conspiracy and revisionist website which posted its original version in 2008.[55] The globalreasearch.ca article lists no sources, and is by strict journalistic standards sensational. For our purposes here, the main sin, (and there are many) is that it uses inflated numbers with no evidence to establish that: "There is little question that the Irish experienced the horrors of slavery as much (if not more in the 17th Century) as the Africans did.", and that: "But, if anyone, black or white, believes that slavery was only an African experience, then they've got it completely wrong." Finally stating that "These are the lost slaves; the ones that time and biased history books conveniently forgot."[56] There are two important facets at work here. One, again, the equivocation, or even magnification of Irish suffering over that of Africans in the Atlantic world. The second, more subtle, is the hidden knowledge or revelation that the Atlantic slave narrative as currently known, accepted and taught in schools is a lie or hobbled by the omission of the real truth about the Irish. Who themselves were the first and real (if judged by suffering alone) slaves. It is a gateway to conspiracy theory. In this context, the conspiracy is that not only were the Irish slaves in every sense of the word: they were also more enslaved than the accepted slaves of the normative Atlantic slavery narrative, *i.e.* black slaves, and that history is being suppressed.

One of the most cited books in this context is journalist Sean O'Callaghan's *To Hell or Barbados*[57]. *To Hell or Barbados* was a very

52. Please see the texts of internet meme Fig. 1, 2, 3.
53. Jacob Ogles, "Ray Blacklidge feels backlash to 'Irish slaves' meme", 6 August 2018, http://floridapolitics.com/archives/270842-ray-blacklidge-feels-backlash-to-irish-slaves-meme (last accessed 31/10/2018).
54. Michael Barkun, "Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge", *Diogenes*, 1, 2016, DOI: 10.3917/dio.249.0168, p. 1-7.
55. Martin, John, "The Forgotten White Slaves.", http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-irish-slave-trade-the-forgotten-white-slaves/31076 (last accessed 8/02/2016).
56. *Ibid.*
57. Sean O'Callaghan, *To Hell or Barbados*, Dingle (Ireland), Brandon, 2000.

popular book that confirmed what Nini Rodgers calls fuzzy legends of slavery in Barbados.[58] In confirming these legends in a way that appears legitimate, it supports existing but unsubstantiated slavery narratives in the Diaspora and Irish folk memory and gives foundation to the meme of slavery in the Irish past. This popular book is not only plagued but undone as a reliable source by incomplete scholarship, a certain looseness with citation, and has many inaccuracies numerical and technical.

One important example, with long reaching consequences, on the introductory page says that One historian, the Reverend Aubrey Gwynn, SJ, who did considerable research on the subject in the 1930s, estimated that over 50,000 men, women and children were transported to Barbados and Virginia between 1652– 59."[59]

Aubrey Gwynn actually said the following:

> It would be rash to accept so rhetorical a description at its face value: the number which the author of the MS. gives as having been transported – 50,000 in one year, counting the transportations to the Continent as well as to the West Indies – is certainly an exaggeration, though it may be a fair estimate for the whole period of Commonwealth administration.[60]

Throughout *To Hell or Barbados*, O'Callaghan repeatedly uses that number of 50,000 Irish slaves.[61] Attributed to Gwynn, the number 50,000 turns out to not be based on any kind of reliable framework or evidence.[62] 50,000 Irish men, women and children transported over a period of one, seven or ten years is simply not substantiated anywhere in Gwynn's work, except by O'Callaghan himself. That number has been repeatedly referenced, appearing again and again on the internet in discussions of Irish shipped to Barbados.

Another newer example is journalists and documentarians Don Jordan and Michael Walsh's *White Cargo. The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America.*[63] It is an often cited book on the same subject. While not as inaccurate as O'Callaghan on the numbers, its sourcing is sparse and it takes the word 'slave' and applies it as a single terminology to multiple historical periods and conditions in order to create a

58. Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, slavery and anti-slavery. 1612-1865*, Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 2.
59. S. O'Callaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
60. Aubrey Gwynn, "Cromwell's Policy of Transportation Part II", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 20 (78), 1931, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30094760 (last accessed 8/11/2020), p. 301.
61. S. O'Callaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 85-86.
62. A. Gwynn, art. cit., p. 301.
63. Don Jordan & Michael Walsh, *White cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain's White slaves in America*, New York, New York U.P., 2007.

sensationalised account of all bad to truly horrific unfree working conditions in the early colonial period, which it refers to as 'slavery'. There are other books available as well such as paranormal investigator and journalist Rhetta Akamatsu's 2010 book *The Irish Slaves: Slavery, Indenture and Contract Labor Among Irish Immigrants*[64] or Michael Hoffman's 1993 monograph *They Were White and they were Slaves*.[65] Akamatsu's book shows a distinct lack of academic focus, and Hoffman's book deals with colonial America from a broad racialist and conspiracy theory perspective. There is a short chapter therein on the Irish on the mainland called "Irish slaves."[66]

The internet meme leads to claims that the Irish were more debased and worse treated in a clear attempt to replace accepted narratives of black slavery with those of pre-emptive Irish and thus white slavery. As being a slave is associated with being powerless, debased, humiliated, a thing, dishonoured, alienated, the claim to that status must have some benefit in the present day. What is the incentive to label oneself and one's ancestor's the ultimate victim as opposed to typical national or ethnic statements of strength pride and self- worth? In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Irish politicians had clear use for the idea of resisting slavery as a motivation in rebellion or political reform.[67]

In 1996 Liam Kennedy wrote a scathing critique of the Irish culture's inability to let go of their past injustices and at the same time coined the term 'most oppressed people ever', the (acronym MOPE) in what has been called a great essay hidden behind reams of boring economic history. Most Oppressed People Ever, is a term Kennedy coined as a tool in his efforts to free Ireland from what he saw as the debilitating effects of decades of institutionally taught victimhood, leading to dysfunction, aggressive self-righteousness and ethnic blindness.[68]

Kennedy's version used 'most oppressed people ever' as a pejorative term, rather than one of sympathy or a rallying cry. His aim was to convince or compel his readers and countrymen and women that Ireland was not the most oppressed land ever, and snap out of the fugue of 'poor mouthed victimhood.' His essay is not inarguable, and is methodologically flawed, as it does not deal with Irish history of the seventeenth century, or oppression of Irish women through the centuries by Kennedy's own admission, but it does illustrate that the idea of victimhood and even

64. Rhetta Akamatsu, *The Irish Slaves: Slavery, Indenture and Contract Labor Among Irish Immigrants*, Createspace Independent Pub, 2010.
65. Michael Hoffman, *They Were White and They Were Slaves: The Untold History of the Enslavement of Whites in Early America*, Dresden (NY), Wiswell Ruffin House, 1992.
66. *Ibid*. p. 100.
67. L. Kennedy, *op. cit*., p. 11-14.
68. L. Kennedy, art. cit., p. 217-218.

slavery has been part of Irish history and culture for centuries. This contrasts however with the claims of the internet meme that Irish slavery is suppressed or somehow a secret, and implies that the preferred hosts for the internet meme are not only the Irish.

Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning, two American sociologists, have published findings which strongly suggest that moral culture, which is the sociological term for the prominent means and methods of conflict and social control, is changing in the United States[69] from a culture of dignity which was preceded by a culture of honour,[70] to a culture of victimhood.

> A culture of victimhood is one characterized by concern with status and sensitivity to slight combined with a heavy reliance on third parties. People are intolerant of insults, even if unintentional, and react by bringing them to the attention of authorities or to the public at large. Domination is the main form of deviance[71] and victimization a way of attracting sympathy, so rather than emphasize either their strength or inner worth; the aggrieved emphasize their oppression and social marginalization.[72]

In this kind of culture and analytic framework, victimhood has the benefit of attracting third party support, and could explain the assumption of victim roles in this phenomenon.

Diane Negra and Catherine Eagan both noted separately in *The Irish in Us* "that the Irish memory of suffering is used as a device in American diversity narratives."[73] A 1996 *Village Voice* editorial by noted Irish playwright Lawrence Osbourne noted flatly that the Irish aren't actually black (noting the Irish use of their suffering as a discursive currency and implying a stronger legitimacy to black suffering than Irish) in a non-academic critique of the Irish trying to capitalize on past suffering for a "certain politically correct cachet."[74] Negra and Eagan critique assumedly well off Irish Americans who identify strongly with Irish Famine victims as a means of obtaining a certain politically correct credibility. Negra calls this

69. Bradley Campbell & Jason Manning, "Microaggressions and Moral Cultures", *Comparative Sociology*, 13 (6), 2014, DOI: 10.1163/15691330-12341332, p. 692.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 721. Violence isn't necessary as the individual's dignity does not require violence to preserve itself whereas honour seemingly does. "Members of honor cultures might call attention to offenses against themselves, but only as a way of pressuring the offender to agree to a violent confrontation."
71. *Ibid.*, p. 692–726. Deviance is used throughout in the sociological sense i.e. behaviors that go against social norms, traditions and or even formal rules.
72. *Ibid.* p. 695
73. Diane Negra, "Irishness, performativity, and popular culture", in Diane Negra (ed.), *The Irish in Us*, Durham, Duke U.P., 2006, p. 1, 6; also please see Catherine Eagan, "Still 'Black' and 'Proud': Irish America and Racial Politics of Hibernophilia", *ibid.*, p. 41.
74. Lawrence Osbourne, "The Uses of Eire: How the Irish Made Up a Civilization", *Village Voice*, June 1996, p. 19-23.

cachet, or credibility "discursive currency."[75] This currency is exactly what those who appeal to strong third parties for support are seeking in claiming victimhood status in Campbell and Manning's victimhood culture.[76]

In these contexts, Irish slavery in the form of the internet meme becomes a weaponised narrative and the Irish who did suffer oppression in the colonisation of the Caribbean have been instrumentalized, possibly in an attempt to either gain or deny discursive currency.

The Intervention

Should academics or even lay people intervene in the meme and the internet meme? If so, how? What sort of interventions have already taken place?

There have been articles, by amateur historian and activist Liam Hogan[77] and interviews which cover the same ground.[78] Articles by or with professionals are not numerous, but there is mention of the meme or internet meme in a number of articles.[79] The meme has been touched on in Akenson, and in articles by historical anthropologists.[80]The internet meme has achieved enough resonance to merit fact checking websites to post permanent articles about the provenance thereof.[81] There is a Wikipedia article about the "myth" of Irish slaves that has survived numerous deletion attempts.[82] Major newspaper outlets such as *The New York Times* have run articles claiming to debunk Irish slavery as well.[83] If a search term is worded correctly, Google will answer the query itself at the top of the search. There have been thousands of tweets on the social

75. D. Negra, *op. cit.*, p. 1, 6.
76. B. Campbell, J. Manning, art. cit. p. 695.
77. Liam Hogan, "The Myth of Irish Slaves in the Colonies", https://web.archive.org/web/20150202074032/https://www.academia.edu/9475964/The_Myth_of_Irish_Slaves_in_the_Colonies (last accessed 31/10/2018); this article had 10,000 downloads at the time of its removal from academia.edu; please also see Liam Hogan, "Irish Slaves the Convenient Myth" 14 January 2015, https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/liam-hogan/'irish-slaves'-convenient-myth (last accessed 31/10/2018); and also Liam Hogan, "All of my work on the Irish slaves meme," 27 March 2017, https://medium.com/@Limerick1914/all-of-my-work-on-the-irish-slaves-meme-2015-16-4965e445802a (last accessed 9/11/2018).
78. David M. Perry, "No, the Irish Were Not Slaves Too", 15 March 2018, https://psmag.com/social-justice/the-irish-were-not-slaves (last accessed 31/10/2018)
79. Liam Hogan, Laura McAtackney & Matthew Reilly "The unfree Irish in the Caribbean were indentured servants, not slaves", http://www.thejournal.ie/readme/irish–slaves–myth–2369653–Oct2015 (last accessed 1/11/2017). Please also see L. Stack, art. cit.
80. Jerome S. Handler & Matthew Reilly, "Contesting 'White Slavery' in the Caribbean: Enslaved Africans and European Indentured Servants in Seventeenth-Century Barbados", *New West Indian Guide*, 91, 2017, DOI: 10.1163/22134360-09101056.
81. D. Emery, art. cit.
82. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_slaves_myth (last accessed 31/10/2018).
83. Liam Stack, "Debunking a Myth: The Irish Were Not Slaves, Too", 17 March 2017, https://nyti.ms/2m9MGgB (last accessed 31/10/2018).

media platform Twitter concerning the issue which has its own hashtag.[84] There have been petitions from academics attempting to have other internet articles which have taken up the meme either revised or removed.[85] This pushback has been at least partially successful in causing the Global Research website to preface their article's inaccuracies and provide space for a critique.[86] Other high profile websites have either pulled or amended their articles.[87] Unfortunately though, the pushback has often been contradictory or inaccurate in matters such as servants' and slaves' legal status as property, or arguments on the purchases of their bodies or labour.[88]

There are two aspects of these interventions that are worth noting in conclusion. Firstly, folk narratives are a core part of identity. Catherine Eagan noted that attacking or even amending those narratives concerning the Irish and discursive currency triggered defensive aggression.[89] When the emotional connection to long held folk narratives is threatened by attempts to amend those narratives, defensive anger rather than acceptance can be the result.

If an intervention is attempted, strong evidence to the contrary will not only not weaken the internet meme or meme proper: rather in the case of a long held folk or political belief such as the meme, it will strengthen it. This combined with the assertions of at least some of the internet meme connected articles that the true knowledge of Irish slavery is suppressed and that the truth is being obfuscated or withheld by the establishment, amplifies the backfire effect, and makes intervention a risky position, even if the counter evidence is virtually inarguable.

R. F. Foster concluded his 1983 essay on "History and the Irish Question"[90] wondering why revisionists keep having to fight the narrative of an ideal Ireland in folk memory. As Foster put it, professional Irish historiography turned that corner in 1982 and popular Irish history was taking too far long to follow.[91] It is entirely possible that the strength or emotional attachment that Kennedy has identified as the concept of the Most Oppressed People in the World, which in itself strongly shows a nascent political aspect to the Irish identity, in the context of belief perseverance, could explain this inability of the academia in Ireland to overcome this

84. https://twitter.com/hashtag/irishslaves?lang=en (last accessed 31/10/2018).
85. Liam Hogan, "Open letter to Irish Central, Irish Examiner and Scientific American about their "Irish slaves" disinformation", 8 March 2016, https://medium.com/@Limerick1914/open-letter-to-irish-central-irish-examiner-and-scientific-american-about-their-irish-slaves-3f6cf23b8d7f (last accessed 31/10/2018).
86. J. Martin, art. cit.
87. L. Hogan, "Open Letter to Irish Central", art. cit; the articles listed as removed or amended were from the *Irish Examiner* and *Scientific American* respectively.
88. R. Johnson, art. cit., p. 415-16.
89. C. Eagan, art. cit., p. 2; and C. Eagan, *op. cit.*, p. 41
90. R. F. Foster, "History and the Irish Question", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 33, 1983, DOI: 10.2307/3678995, p. 169–192.
91. *Ibid.*

folk memory. Yet this doesn't explain why, despite the existence of discursive research, there are repetitive inaccuracies and contradictions in the discourse concerning the meme among academics.[92]

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92. R. Johnson, art. cit., p. 424.