Native Muses and National Poetry
Nineteenth-Century Irish-Canadian Poets

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the writing of four Irish-born Canadian poets--Adam Kidd, Standish O'Grady, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and Isabella Valancy Crawford--in the context of Irish cultural nationalism, which arose when Irish writers and politicians attempted to demonstrate that their country not only had a long history of civilization that was distinct from Britain, but also that the Irish, if given religious liberty and prosperity under British rule, would be its most loyal citizens. In delving into their own history, music, literature and culture to vindicate Irish character and to argue that the Irish deserved the same rights awarded to British colonies in the Canadas, Irish-Canadian writers revealed that Irish nationality was the product of diverse ethnic groups, languages, religions and classes. Irish writers in Canada helped to create a literary nationalism that celebrated the liberties and prosperity that the emigrant could enjoy in Canada, and emphasised diversity and tolerance, rather than uniformity or chauvinism. They also helped to establish a Canadian national poetry which celebrated the unique landscape, history and cultures of the country. Moreover, the concept of Irish cultural nationalism influenced Canadian nationalism directly. Irish nationalists had used cultural resistance, including the creation of a national literature, in order to create a united Irish identity across ethnic barriers, and to revive self-respect

and independence among the Irish people as a prelude to their regaining a voice in their own political and economic affairs. The politician and poet Thomas D'Arcy Mcgee applied the cultural programme of Young Ireland, a political and literary nationalist movement of the 1840s, to Canada, arguing that the new nation required a literature of its own, in order to survive being overwhelmed, culturally or politically, by older, powerful countries such as America and Britain. Consequently, the Irish material in Irish-Canadian long poems and lyrics is not a digression, but is essential in understanding how a native Canadian literature evolved in part from the cultural and national sensibilities of these emigrant writers.

Keywords: Nineteenth-Century Canadian Literature, Ireland, Nationalism, Emigration, Thomas Moore, Isaac Weld, Adam Kidd, Standish O'Grady, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Isabella Valancy Crawford, *The Huron Chief*, *The Emigrant*, *Canadian Ballads and Occasional Verses*, *Malcolm's Katie Hugh and Ion*.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory
of my grandfather, Joseph A. Gavan (1903-1991),
who loved to recite Irish and Australian
ballads for his grandchildren.

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> In relation to its size, [Ireland has] lost more of its population through out-migration than did any other major nation. Most young Irish men and women who came into adulthood from 1815, the end of the Napoleonic wars and the effective start of the great outward flood, until the present day, have had something in common: they have considered whether or not to leave Ireland. Over the years most stayed home, but so deeply has the possibility of migrating been woven into the fabric of Irish social life that for most young people staying in Ireland has been just as much a matter of conscious choice as, for others, has been the decision to leave.
>
> Donald Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora* 5

> Yet in many of the longer poems of nineteenth-century Canada the central characters are in fact emigrants from the Old World or migrants in the New.
>
> D.M.R. Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 9

While it is perhaps obvious that Canada and Ireland are linked culturally and emotionally through emigration, there have been few full-length studies that consider the literary debt that Canada owes to Irish emigrants. Canada's literary roots are often seen as primarily English transplants, and its culture as fertilized and shaped by the preoccupations of other ethnic groups, such as the United Empire Loyalists, or the Scots. A few scholars have gone against this trend, to argue that Irish authors such as Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825-1868) played a significant, if not founding role in constructing the idea of a national literature for Canada. That McGee's call for a programmatic creation of a "national literature" for Canada was modelled, as Kathleen O'Donnell

has demonstrated, upon the cultural nationalism of the 1840s revolutionary group Young Ireland is one of the most explicit illustrations of how Irish national sensibilities were imported into Canadian literature. More recently, D.M.R. Bentley has demonstrated the far-reaching influence on Canadian poetry of various literary tourists such as the Dublin-born Isaac Weld (1774-1856) and the Irish Romantic poet Thomas Moore (Bentley, "Isaac Weld and the Continuity of Canadian Poetry" 224; *Mimic Fires* 80). However, no study exists that shows how the continuing influence of Irish national literature contributed to the development of Canadian literary nationalism throughout the nineteenth century.

This thesis, which by no means pretends to be comprehensive, looks at four Irish-born poets who have published long poems, or--in McGee's case--a volume of poems that can be seen as Canadian inasmuch as they created imaginative pictures of the people, geography and cultures of Canada and, in so doing, had a lasting effect on the way in which Canadian readers saw their country. In essence, the four Irish authors in this study--McGee, Adam Kidd (c.1802-1831), Standish O'Grady (fl. 1793-1841), and Isabella Valancy Crawford (c.1850-1887)--wrote Canadian poems in which their identity as emigrants and their identity as writers were inextricably intertwined. Where they came from--Ireland--and the political, economic and

cultural events that explained how they came to be in Canada affected the way in which they interpreted events in their new home, and, more important, determined what hopes and fears they possessed for Canada's future.

It was, in fact, with a view to emigrating that Weld began the tour of the United States and the Canadas that furnished the material for his *Travels through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, during the years 1795, 1796 and 1797* (1799), a book that was "an immediate success," reaching a wide European audience through reprints and translations (Craig, "Issac Weld" 925). Weld's *Travels* was also "a book that had a seminal influence on the poetry written in this country between the turn of the nineteenth-century and the onset of the Confederation period" (Bentley "Issac Weld and the Continuity of Canadian Poetry" 223). Weld was wealthy enough not only to have special reason to fear that the revolutionary conflagrations in France might ignite the powder-keg of discontent among his own less-fortunate compatriots, but also to conduct exploratory travels in North America "for the purpose of examining with his own eyes into the truth of the various accounts which had been given of a flourishing and happy condition of the United States of America, and of ascertaining whether, in case of future emergency, any part of those territories might be looked forward to, as an eligible and agreeable place of abode" (Weld 1: iii; and see

Bentley 224). Repelled by American manners and "slovenly" farming practices, and resistant even to the many charms that he saw in Britain's Canadian colonies (Craig 925), Weld chose not to emigrate, leaving North America in 1797 "without a sigh, and without entertaining the slightest wish to revisit it" (2: 376). Nevertheless, his calculated search for the nearest emergency exit from Ireland demonstrates what Cecil Houston and William J. Smyth have argued is "the importance of pre-Famine events and the voluntary outmigration of those both alert to the worsening economic conditions of pre-Famine Ireland and sufficiently affluent to take evasive action" (8). The first Irish settlers to Canada were not necessarily peasants and revolutionaries fleeing persecution at home, but more often middle- or upper-class emigrants who considered themselves loyal to the British government, and who endorsed many of its political principles.

Weld's work reveals a political bias in favour of Canada over the United States that continued to be reflected in the writing of Irish-Canadian emigrant poets, regardless of class or religion (Bentley 225). While Weld does not dwell at length on the troubles that might prompt an Irishman such as himself to emigrate, his choice of words when praising British administration in Canada calls attention to the faults of British administration in his native land. Most significantly, Weld notes that in the

Canadas, "every religion is tolerated, in the fullest extent of the word, in both provinces, and no disqualifications are imposed on any persons on account of their religious opinions" (1: 370). Unlike in Ireland, where successive conquests had attempted to impose the religions and customs of the conquerors on the conquered, Quebec Catholics were permitted to maintain their religion and their property under the Quebec Act of 1774, and tithes were imposed only on members of the same religion (Weld 1: 364). In passing through the Quebec countryside, Weld paints a bucolic picture of prosperous farms tilled by peaceable, if superstitious, peasants, a country in which

> the eye is entertained with a most pleasing variety of fine landscapes, whilst the mind is equally gratified with the appearance of content and happiness that reigns in the countenances of the inhabitants. Indeed, if a country as fruitful as it is picturesque, a genial and healthy climate, and a tolerable share of civil and religious liberty, can make people happy, none ought to appear more so than the Canadians.... (1: 356-57)

Since contented peasants, moderate prosperity and--as important to a writer critical of republican governments--a "tolerable" amount of civil and religious liberty were among the things lacking in the Ireland of the 1790s, Weld is able to recommend Canada to the prospective emigrant fleeing the troubles of Ireland.

Convinced that the provinces of Canada would become a favoured destination of British emigrants, in that they possessed "that degree of prosperity and consequence, which

their soil, climate and many other natural advantages, have so eminently qualified them for enjoying" (1: 425), Weld nevertheless believed that only good government would prevent Canada from ultimately going the republican route taken by the United States. Desiring to see Canada's destiny set firmly within the British empire, so that it would divert "thousands of valuable citizens" otherwise lost to America, Weld argued that if "governed with mildness and wisdom," by a benevolent British administration, and "allowed to retain such prosperity," the country would remain cheerfully loyal to Britain, "convinced that the great mass of her people were in the possession of as much happiness and liberty as those of the neighbouring country; and that whether she might lose by exposing herself to the horrors of a sanguinary war, she could gain no essential or immediate advantages whatsoever by asserting her own independence" (1: 425-427). In short, Weld saw Canadian colonies, blessed with prosperous farms, loyal British settlers and contented French farmers, and a moderate tolerant government as occupying a happy middle ground between the unbridled liberty of the United States, and the barely-contained religious and class tensions in his native land.

When Weld's *Travels* was published in 1799, the American revolution was becoming a distant memory, but the Irish revolution that he had anxiously anticipated was a very

recent event. Less than a year earlier, in the summer of 1798, an alliance between France and the United Irishmen, a political society that had transformed itself from reformist into radical in the space of less than a decade, resulted in rebellion and bloodshed in Dublin, Wexford, Wicklow, Sligo and Mayo, and to a lesser extent in Down and Antrim in Ulster (Foster 279). (The Dublin uprising was put down in a week, but no doubt caused Weld to feel vindicated in having considered evasive, though expensive, action.) The landing of a French expeditionary force on Irish soil in August 1798 (Foster 280) revealed England's vulnerability to invasion; and so after brutally putting down the rebellion and executing its leaders, the British government abolished the Irish parliament and legislated an Irish-British union that put an end to any Irish hopes of independence for at least a generation. The "horrors of a sanguinary war" (Weld 1: 426) had become a reality for Ireland even as Weld was writing his *Travels*, and the events of 1798 cast a long shadow, not only on writers in Ireland, but also on Kidd, O'Grady, McGee, and, more indirectly, on Crawford.

Weld's neoclassical equation of good government with peace and prosperity was common currency at the time he was writing, and a generation later was given metrical form by O'Grady in *The Emigrant* (1841) where parallels are drawn between the Irish rebellions of 1798 and the Canadian rebellions in 1837. From the vantage point of his self-

imposed exile in Sorel, Lower Canada, O'Grady looks to both Ireland and the Canadas when he observes that the Irish, "if appeased by gentle deeds, or so/ Had never planned their country's overthrow" (*The Emigrant* 1817-18). Such double vision is also a recurring feature in the poetry of other Irish Canadian writers, especially Kidd, who draws parallels between the mistreatment of the Hurons in North America and the denial of rights to the Irish.

While Weld's presence is discernible in *The Emigrant* and *The Huron Chief*, it looms even larger in the work of another influential Irish writer who visited Canada during the pre-Confederation period. With a copy of the *Travels* in hand, Thomas Moore followed in Weld's footsteps, travelling in America and Canada between July and October 1804. And, like Weld, he made unfavourable comparisons between the American and the British colonies. Moore, a Roman Catholic, might be expected to have viewed America as a haven for the same discontented and rebellious people that Weld had been trying to escape in Ireland; indeed, Moore claimed he "went to America with prepossessions by no means unfavourable" (*Poetical Works* 94). In his "Preface" to *Epistles, Odes and Other Poems* (1806), he admits that he

> indulged in many of those illusive ideas, with respect to the purity of the government and the primitive happiness of the people, which I had early imbibed in my native country, where, unfortunately, discontent at home enhances every distant temptation, and the western world has long been looked to as a retreat from real or imaginary oppression; as, in short, the elysian Atlantis,

> where persecuted patriots might find their visions realized and be welcomed by kindred spirits to liberty and repose.
>
> (*Poetical Works* 94)

In this passage, Moore makes fun of the over-inflated praise lavished on American government and institutions, particularly by the French, and implies that perhaps it would have been impossible to fulfil such high ideals about the country as he himself had entertained. Nevertheless, in 1804, Moore probably felt that Ireland's "persecuted patriots" had real, rather than imagined cause to complain, for in the previous year, Moore's Trinity College classmate and close friend, Robert Emmet (1778-1803) had led an unsuccessful insurrection in Dublin, for which he was executed (Thuente 176). Many of Moore's acquaintances were implicated in the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, and Moore later wrote that the harsh punishments meted out to the rebels by the British government left a lasting "impression of horror and indignation...upon [his] mind" (*Memoirs* 1:300-1).

Moore's disillusionment in America no doubt sprang in part from "a Weldean dislike of 'the rude familiarity of the lower orders'" (Bentley 5), as well as from the fact that he encountered "the violence of party spirit....illiberal zeal" and "an equal share of intolerance" (*Poetical Works* 94). Ireland's troubles were widely attributed to similar political ills, and Moore became a lifelong opponent of

religious bigotry, which in Ireland had ensured that the majority of its citizens were deprived of a voice in Ireland's affairs by imposing political disabilities on Catholics and Presbyterians. A similar distrust of party factionalism and sectarianism is prominent in the work of Kidd, O'Grady and McGee, all of whom drew on Moore for inspiration, none more so than Kidd, who dedicated *The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* to the Irish writer as "The Most Popular, Most Powerful and Most Patriotic Poet of the Nineteenth Century" (2). In *The Huron Chief*, Kidd treats the imposition of Christianity, complete with its sectarian and internecine dimensions, on the Huron "Nations" (22) as a form of cultural arrogance perpetrated by an imperialist, invasive European culture. Although Crawford is silent on the subject of Irish party politics, she is also capable in "War," (1879) *Malcolm's Katie* (1884), and *Hugh and Ion*, of corrosively satirical denunciations of the unholy imperial alliance between religion, militarism, and politics worthy of Moore's own satire, "Intolerance" (1809). In this satirical look at Irish and English politics, Moore had condemned the hypocrisy behind sectarian violence perpetrated by "that canting crew" with "blood on their hands, and Scripture on their lips" (*Poetical Works* 138); in "War," Crawford has "Religion raise[] blessing hands" over the extermination of other cultures and other faiths (*Collected Poems* 155).

In portraying the United States as an illusory Eden, Moore's writing may also have coloured the attitudes of later Irish-Canadian poets. Moore had looked to America as a refuge from the faction-fighting and sectarianism that he believed was exclusive to a corrupt, Old-World civilization. His illusions were quickly dispelled, however; once in the United States Moore discovered that the people were not enjoying "primitive happiness" and "purity of the government" but had instead "arrived in maturity in most of the vices, and all the pride of civilization" while retaining none of its "higher and better characteristics" (94). Moore found liberty in the United States, but he believed it was liberty without any sense of control or responsibility--more of a Hobbesian "approximation to savage life," than a Rousseauian state of innocence untainted by civilzation (94).

Very likely inspired by Moore, Kidd compares the United States and Canada, confirming both Moore's assessment of the United States as an "inferno" (*Mimic Fires* 89), and Weld's portrayal of Canada as "a demi paradise" (Bentley, "Isaac Weld" 225). In the context of this tradition, it is significant that the "missionary evils" that transform the pre-lapsarian world of the Hurons, into "hell" in *The Huron Chief* (1375-77), and the raiding parties that exterminate

the Hurons both originate from south of the border.[1] Kidd claims that in America "the poor Indians have been cruelly treated, and driven from their homes and hunting-grounds, by the boasted freemen of the United States" and that "many of the Indian Tribes have emigrated into Canada--and are now prospering, and happily enjoying the manly protection of the British Government" ("Preface" 24-35). If, as I will argue, Kidd's Irish readers were invited to draw comparisons between the history of white mistreatment of Hurons and English misrule in Ireland, then his endorsement of Canada as a refuge for native Americans from the injustices and intolerance characteristic of life in the United States was also a message for emigrants fleeing an earthly hell of poverty and persecution in Ireland. Weld's and Moore's celebration of the Canadian colonies as places in which classes and sects could live together in a peaceful and ordered society looks ahead to Irish-Canadian writers' celebration of the plurality and diversity that could exist within Irish and Canadian nationalist movements.

Moore's idealized depiction of Upper Canada in "Ballad Stanzas" became a literary "signpost directing emigrants away from the United States" (Bentley, "Thomas Moore's

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[1]In a letter to the *Irish Vindicator* on December 11, 1829, Kidd is withering in his contempt for the activities of "the Rev Messrs. [Adolfus Egerton] Ryerson [1803-1882] and Metcalf,*two American Methodist Preachers*" who in their paper *The Christian Guardian* (York) announce with satisfaction the imminent conversion of "the neglected poor of Ireland" and the allegedly benighted inhabitants of Upper Canada alike.

Construction of Upper Canada" 6). The "Ballad Stanzas," moreover, had a particular import for Irish emigrants, with their promise that, "If there's peace to be found in the world, / A heart that was humble might hope for it" in the unspoiled forests of Upper Canada (*Poetical Works* 124). "Ballad Stanzas" presents Upper Canada as "a picturesque paradise of rural retirement and innocent love" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 83), a representation which had aesthetic, if not moral, resonance for Irish-Canadian writers. Not only are the lines, "I heard not a sound/ But the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree" the "point of departure" for Kidd's Huron Chief (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 82),[2] but the belief of the speaker of "Ballad Stanzas" that he could live "in this lone little wood.../ With a maid who was lovely to soul and to eye" (124) is also echoed in Kidd's portrait of the Canadian woods, when the narrator of *The Huron Chief* wishes

> that in this spot alone,
> With one kind heart to dwell forever,
> With one that I could call my own
> Enjoying scenes of bliss together,
> As onward here, from bower to grove,
> No tyrant hand to check our love.
> (28-32)

In modifying Moore's rustic fantasy to portray a retreat beyond the reaches of tyranny, Kidd adds a political

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[2]See *The Huron Chief* 3-5: "I wandered undisturbed and free,/ Nor heard a sound, save wood-doves cooing,/ Or birds that tapped the hollow tree...."

overtone to his desire for a rural love affair, uncomplicated by society's retrictions. Crawford's long poem, *Malcolm's Katie* modifies without entirely subverting these patriarchal, Edenic idylls, by placing Katie in the centre of a family grouping of son, husband, and father, in a setting of "drooping vines" (7: 3) and "rich fresh fields," (7: 5), and transforming the private rural retreat of Moore and Kidd into an inclusive paradise that welcomes "pale starvelings" fleeing Old World poverty and injustice (7: 33).

The interrelated themes of Irish politics and emigration to Canada are developed explicitly by O'Grady and McGee, who question America's claims to be the home of liberty. O'Grady, fearing the importation of "republican" ideas into Lower Canada from France and America, laments in *The Emigrant* that in Lower Canada, "French taught law true liberty restrains" (1151). Forty years after Moore's visit, McGee also discussed the nature of "true liberty" and observed that the United States not only continued to oppress Afro-Americans and decimate its native peoples as it had done in Moore's day (Moore *Letters* 75) but also was, under the auspices of the so-called No-Nothing Party (an anti-immigrant political group), indulging in a hate campaign directed specifically at Irish Catholics. Reporting for the *Boston Pilot* on the anti-Catholic Philadelphia riots of 1844, McGee surveyed the Irish

Catholic churches that had been vandalized and destroyed, and regretfully concluded that America was "a land mocked by the fruits of liberty, which...turn only to ashes" (qtd in Burns 208). Like Moore and Weld before him, McGee turned to Canada with a measure of relief; indeed, in "Freedom's Journey" in *Canadian Ballads* (1858), he gives to his female personification of freedom an experience that recalls Moore's disgust at the American treatment of African Americans in "To the Lord Viscount Forbes," where Moore writes that Americans "strut forth, as patriots, from their negro-marts" yet "dare to boast of liberty" (*Poetical Works* 115). In "Freedom's Journey" the goddess Freedom is given "praise in many a hall," in the United States, but hears at the same time "the Negro's helpless prayer,/ And felt her home could not be there" (*Canadian Ballads* 49).

If the four Irish-Canadian poets shared with Moore (and through him, Weld) a preference for British rule in Canada over republican rule in America, they also shared a deep ambivalence about violence and revolution. No doubt such ambivalence arose in part from an awareness of the complex and contradictory allegiances and identities implicit in their position as writers in Ireland--complexities that were not always resolved by emigration to Britain's Canadian territories. In *The Harp Re-Strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism*, Mary Helen Thuente not only argues that Moore's view of liberty and revolution

was affected by the events of 1798, but also suggests that his writing is indebted to the literary productions of the leaders of the United Irishmen, and the newspapers that supported them. (The publication by the United Irishmen of popular songs based on folk ballads in their *Paddy's Resource* songbooks [1795-1803] was an innovation used by Young Ireland [Thuente 210], and then by McGee in his *Canadian Ballads*). According to Thuente, an "important link between Moore and the United Irishmen is the ambiguity and unresolved tensions, especially about violence, that their songs shared" (187). Norman Vance in *Irish Literature: A Social History* also observes of Moore's poetry that its "tensions and ambivalence...encompass ...without reconciling rebellion and quiescence, hope and despair, atavistic blood-sacrifice and the rational prospect of daylight and liberty" (111). Moore, an outspoken opponent of political corruption and Catholic disabilities in Ireland, nevertheless feared the unbridled destruction that he saw in revolutionary forces, be they Irish, French or American.

A similar tension between rebellion and loyalty is evident in both *The Huron Chief*, where Kidd's faith in the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation is seriously undermined by the white treachery that concludes the poem, and in Kidd's Irish poems, which are torn between condemning British actions in Ireland and trying to advocate both the loyalty and the patriotism of the Irish. Even O'Grady, the

most conservative and anti-revolutionary of the four poets, nevertheless proudly advertises that he (like Moore) was Emmet's classmate, and at times endorses the patriotic principles that prompted both Emmet and the Lower Canadian rebels to lay down their lives. McGee, who left Ireland with a price on his head for his suspected part in the Young Ireland uprising of 1848, later disassociated himself, in his notorious Wexford Speech of 1865, from the revolutionary actions of Young Ireland and "the follies of one and twenty" (qtd. in Burns 207). However, as with Moore, whose "racial sympathies lay with the abused and downtrodden" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 88), McGee's role in both his writing and political activities in Canada was as advocate for the rights of his countrymen, and later as defender of the distinct language and religious rights of all Canadians, and in particular, the French Canadians.

Perhaps the most significant poetic lesson that Irish-Canadian poets imbibed from Moore (and through him, Weld) was a receptivity, to the "small, local details" of a place or region, be it their birthplace in Ireland, or a country with a very different history, landscape, culture, and even language ("Thomas Moore's Construction of Upper Canada" 3). Kidd and O'Grady's poems on Ireland suggest that even before coming to Canada, they were interested in the distinguishing features of their native regions, such as birthplaces of famous poets or musicians, landscapes, ruins

or archaeological sites, myths and legends. As emigrants in Canada, their identity as poets relies greatly on their nostalgic attachment to their homeland, and makes them particularly sensitive to the distinguishing features of their new home. In the collections of poems by Kidd, O'Grady, McGee, and Crawford , poems with Irish subject matter often appear side by side with Canadian poems; Kidd in particular celebrated his "romantic townland of Tullynagee" (*The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* 211n) in his Irish lyrics, while at the same time calling his readers' attention to the imaginative possibilities present through descriptions of the natural world in Canada and through a sympathetic portrait of her native cultures. The Irish emigrants' attachment to the land in Crawford's Irish poems is transformed in *Malcolm's Katie* to a Canadian celebration of settlement whose imaginative power comes from her skilful evocation of locale by using natural imagery and by mythologizing native Canadian culture.

That an Irishman first helped to teach Canadian poets to turn their gaze from the British metropolis and to regard their own natural surroundings and folk culture as a rich source of poetic material is hardly surprising. Moore's own *Irish Melodies* (1808-1834) were born as part of an Irish historical and cultural revival, which was begun in the mid-eighteenth century as an attempt to present a positive image of the Irish to a primarily English audience, and by doing

so argue that the Irish had a right to a voice in the political and economic decisions affecting them. Moore's work in setting new lyrics to traditional Irish songs collected or recovered by Irish antiquarians made him a "literary...forerunner" of Irish literary nationalism, "articulating the expression of Irish identity as it attaches to the land, to its Celtic origins, to a growing body of nationalist experiences and leaders" (Said 236). In Ireland, the claim that Ireland possessed a culture and history distinct from the one imposed by the English metropolis was one way figuratively to "reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land" (Said 226). The creation of a literary identity that promoted local attachment, as well as support for native literature was "one of the first tasks of the culture of resistance" (226)--one that would provide a model for Canada, which, as the nineteenth century progressed, was creating its own cultural identity as part of a redefinition of its relationship with Britain. Canada, like Ireland, was involved in what Said calls "a search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes and (occasionally) heroines, myths, and religions" (214). It is scarcely surprising, then, that Irish Canadian poets not only celebrate the Canadian landscape, history, and local and national heroes and heroines, but also allude to Irish poets, statesmen and heroes in the body of their work and in

copious footnotes. These references, which at first appear digressive, are in fact essential to the poets' creation of a Canadian literary identity.

Irish cultural resistance was one source of romantic nationalism (or cultural nationalism) that helped to define Canadian identity and political aspirations by the creation of a literature that instilled in Canadians a pride in their distinctive geography, their cultures and achievements, and called attention to the lessons that Canadians could learn from their own, rather than English, history. Cultural nationalism encouraged the idea that "the essence of a nation is its distinctive civilization, which is the product of its unique history, culture and geographical profile" (Hutchinson 13). In Ireland, cultural nationalism had been a "movement of moral regeneration," which had begun as a resistance to the effects of British imperialism in Ireland (Hutchinson 13; Said 224). Central to the concept of cultural nationalism are its artists, "who create out of the collective experience of the people, preserved in historical legends, and dramatize their lessons for the present" (14). By demonstrating that the Irish, and later, the Canadians possessed inhabitants, history, myths and legends worthy of song, lyrical and epic poetry, Irish-Canadian writers were part of a revival that used a country's national history and culture to instill civic pride and a sense of independence in its people.

The connection between the distinctiveness of a culture and the concept of national identity is most explicitly made by McGee, whose view of the role of culture and nationality owed much to Young Ireland's awareness of German romanticism, which had advocated a study of folk traditions as a prelude to a revival of literature in the German language in order to create a modern literature with a national voice redolent of the myths and associations preserved in the native language. Young Ireland, and particularly McGee, recognized that a national literature was indebted to "the work of the balladist [and] the antiquary" (*Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century* 247), and that antiquarians had already amassed and preserved much of the literature of Gaelic Ireland, providing creative material for a national poetry in Ireland. In Canada, McGee's view that the artist was the intermediary between a nation's past and its present national identity is evident in his editorials in *The New Era* (Montreal), which tried to establish that a national literature was the prerequisite for a "national life" (17 June, 1857), and to portray the artist as a figure central to civic affairs (26 January 1858).

McGee, who deftly combined the roles of poet, journalist, politician, and even scholar created a specific cultural programme out of impulses that in Kidd's and O'Grady's poetry had been a more intuitive sense of the

important role played by their own culture in the defense of Ireland's rights. By calling Canadians' attention to the colourful history of French, Irish, Scottish and English settlement in Canada, and to the folklore of the native peoples of Canada, McGee asserted repeatedly in his poetry, editorials, and historical writing that a renewal of pride and interest in Irish culture and history had lessons for Canadian nationality. This conviction enabled him to refute arguments that Canada's culture was colonial and derivative. Through the publicizing, in Ireland and Canada, of Irish culture by Moore and later Kidd, O'Grady and McGee, emigrant writers in Canada learned to be receptive to the distinguishing details and features of their own place and cultures, and continued to create a distinctive literary voice based both on local details and history, and on the successful examples of other national literatures, including Irish, German and even American literature. Moreover, in Canada, the Anglo-Irish appropriation of Gaelic culture through the work of Irish revivalists found a parallel in the appropriation of Amerindian legends by a whole range of American and Canadian writers. What McGee's Young Ireland mentor, Charles Gavan Duffy, had said about Anglo-Irish balladeers could be applied to all four of these Irish-Canadian poets trying to adapt Old World, and especially British literary traditions to their New-World experience: "They have taught the native muse to become English in

language without growing un-Irish in character" (*The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* xxii).

By promoting a pride and confidence in native literary productions while at the same time maintaining a willingness to learn from other national literatures, cultural nationalism resisted imperialism's "capacity for separating the individual from his or her own instinctual life, [by] breaking the generative lineaments of the national identity" (Said 237). By emphasizing tolerance and condemning sectarianism, and plurality over nativism in their concept of nationality, Irish-Canadian writers also resisted the separatist, and even totalitarian aspects of nationalism. Their writing skirts what Said calls the dangers of "chauvinism," "xenophobia" and an "authoritarian conception of nationalism" by presenting instead "an intellectual trend within the nationalist consensus that is vitally critical, that refuses the short-term blandishments of separatist and triumphalist slogans in favour of the larger, more generous human realities of community *among* cultures, peoples, and societies" (217). Kidd, for example, gained a sympathy and respect for other cultures through his own struggle to create an Irish identity for himself in the face of negative British conceptions. His participation in Irish cultural nationalism no doubt led to his ready acceptance of the Amerindians' own rights to consider themselves as "nations" (22n).

Throughout the nineteenth century, Irish-Canadian writers produced poems that contained memorable pictures of Canadian life. However, to ignore the Irish context in which these Irish-Canadian poets worked is to lose an opportunity to understand how and where Irish politics and culture lie behind each writer's construction of a Canadian literary identity. O'Grady, in spite of his lack of success, either as farmer or poet in Lower Canada, was nevertheless confident that "This expanded and noble continent will no doubt furnish fit matter for the Muse" (Preface 5). In order to make sense of their experience in the New World all four Irish-Canadian writers called upon what I am calling their Irish Muse--their personal and political experience in Ireland, their ethnic and religious identification, their interpretations of Irish history and their pride in Irish culture--which could guide them in shaping what would otherwise have been an alienating experience in an unknown and sometimes hostile land.

As Irish literary nationalism evolved during the nineteenth century, the Irish Muse presented different faces to these poets. For Kidd, the bardic muse provided a meeting ground for two cultures under threat who found in their oral tales a source of national pride and a means of reconciliation. For O'Grady, the Patriot muse helped him make sense of two revolutions: the Irish rebellions of 1798 and the Lower Canada rebellion of 1837. By using these

rebellions as moral tales, and by becoming an advocate for the culture, wit and eloquence of the Irish, O'Grady attempted to plead for benevolent British government in both Ireland and Canada. For McGee, the national muse invoked a pride in Irish history, culture and language that would give his countrymen a sense of their civic responsibilities; in a country of newly federated provinces who were learning to work together, McGee discovered that the national muse travelled well. McGee's envisioning of a national literature for Canada as the basis for all other civic goals very likely made Crawford's native muse an imaginative possibility. Crawford appears to have shared with McGee the belief that a strong national literary culture gave a nation the ability and confidence to think for itself rather than refer to a distant colonial metropolis. Crawford's faith in cultural nationalism is suggested in her poem, "Canada to England" (*Collected Poems* 236), where a diversity of cultural achievements is not the least of the riches of a new land where "All the infinity of notes which chord/ The diapason of a Nation's voice" and "the music-set/ Flame-brightened step of Art in stately halls" are as important as "The sound of commerce" (*Collected Poems* 237). Nor is the Irish voice lost in Crawford's celebration of Canada's achievements. The belief central to her Irish poems and to *Malcolm's Katie*, that self-sufficiency--and consequently, the liberating ability to determine one's own destiny--is

open to all emigrants is summed up by a successful Irish emigrant, whose declaration that "all men may have the same/ That owns an axe and has a strong right arm!" (*OSP* 224) forms the concluding lines of her one collection of poetry, *Old Spookes' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems* (1884). That this Dublin-born woman was eventually recognized as one of Canada's first poets of stature reflects the success of Irish literary nationalism and Irish-Canadian poets in building a cultural foundation for Canadian writing.

In the ensuing chapters, the four poets whose works helped to create that foundation--Adam Kidd, Standish O'Grady, Thomas D'Arcy McGee and Isabella Valancy Crawford--are examined in the chronological sequence of their appearance in volume form: *The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* (1830) in Chapter One, *The Emigrant* (1841), in Chapter Two, *Canadian Ballads and Occasional Verses* (1858) in Chapter Three, and *Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems* (1884) in Chapter Four. The chapters will also discuss in detail each writer's short lyric poems on Irish subjects. In both the Canadian long poems and the occasional poems, all four writers retain a primarily Irish identity, even as they adapt to, and learn to appreciate the landscapes and the peoples of their new home (something which even O'Grady attempted to do, albeit grudgingly). Each poet regarded his or her own emigration as bound up in Ireland's historical wrongs, and praised those aspects of

benevolent government, religious rights and land laws in Canada that, if applied in Ireland, would have prevented rebellion and bloodshed. However, their identities were not limited to a sense of historical grievance; these writers demonstrate how their understanding of their history and culture informs the way in which they construct both Ireland and Canada in their poetry. In their poetry, Adam Kidd, Standish O'Grady, Thomas D'Arcy McGee and Isabella Valancy Crawford wrote out of the conviction that their identities as Irish writers and their culture were firmly grounded in Irish soil. Emigration, to some extent, uprooted each of these poets, but even their disorientation and nostalgia helped demonstrate that, if a national poetry was to grow in Canada, native-born poets would have to develop an equally firm attachment to the Canadian soil.

Chapter One

"The Traditions of Different Tribes":

Adam Kidd's Bardic Muse

> While o'er the billow's heaving breast
> Our Bark does slowly glide,
> Each lingering look is backward cast,
> Along the curling tide.
> ("My Irish Home" 134)
>
> And there are visions of the past,
> Reflected from our boyhood's prime,
> Where memory's eye is backward cast
> Along the curling brook of time.
> ("Lines Written on Visiting the Falls of the Chaudiere" 141)

Apart from a few colourful and controversial incidents, little is known about the life of Adam Kidd (c.1802-1831), who exchanged life in a dying village in County Derry, in what is now Northern Ireland, for a peripatetic and ultimately short life as an emigrant in the United States, Lower, and Upper Canada (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 155). Poetry and journalism provided a channel for his professional ambitions, after they were thwarted by the Venerable Archdeacon George Jehoshaphat Mountain, who pronounced him an unsuitable candidate for the Anglican ministry in Quebec (Klinck 495). Before his death at twenty-nine, Kidd had travelled in the United States, Quebec, and the Great Lakes of Ontario, published poems and articles in Quebec and Ontario newspapers, and was collecting Native American folklore for a book when he died. Never a man to settle quietly into the English-speaking, Anglican-dominated social

milieu in early 19th century Montreal, Kidd also used his writing to engage in a running battle with the prominent family of Anglican churchmen, the Mountains, and gained at least one "public thrashing" for an unflattering comment about the British consul in New York, James Buchanan, in a footnote to his long poem, *The Huron Chief* (Klinck 497; Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 154-55).

However, when Kidd published *The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* (1830) in Montreal, he gained a far less hostile reception by the local English-language press. The conservative *Montreal Gazette*, which claimed to "greet with pleasure any literary production, dating its birth in the Province," congratulated Kidd upon the volume because it was "devoted to subjects of a local nature" (March 4, 1830). The more radical and pro-Catholic *Irish Vindicator* was equally pleased to support local talent, claiming Kidd's volume as evidence of the "rapid improvement of both literature and taste in Canada" (February 26, 1830). Rather than choose a poem on a Canadian subject, the *Irish Vindicator* reprinted "Ranglawe, the Roving Bard," a lyric which looked back to Tullynagee, the village of Kidd's birth. The *Irish Vindicator*'s choice, which reflects Kidd's own fondness for "backward cast" glances at his birthplace, is not all that uncharacteristic for editors whose intention, after all, was to give Irish Catholics, many of them recent emigrants themselves, a voice in Upper Canada.

Kidd's often melancholy short verses employ a species of Irish nostalgia that, like Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, was not entirely apolitical, in that they corresponded nicely to the *Vindicator*'s stated intention "to be advocates for a suffering and long oppressed people....The sympathy we entertain for our fellow-countrymen in Ireland...we hope will be beneficial not only to them but to our Countrymen in both the Canadas" (December 12, 1828). The *Irish Vindicator* reminded the Irish-Canadian reader of Britain's past abuses in Ireland and advised him to be "ever on watch lest he should again fall into the miserable condition from which he escaped only by the abandonment of the land of his forefathers" (December 12, 1828).

While Kidd never gives a detailed explanation as to why he was forced to abandon the land of his forefathers (a land he cannot refer to but tenderly and nostalgically, even when writing on Canadian subjects), it is instructive to remember that in Kidd's native region, Ulster, the majority of Protestants were tenants, rather than landlords. Property, control of rents, and through them, political influence, were concentrated in the hands of "an oligarchy of landlords, aristocrats, administrators, high-ranking army officers and Church of Ireland bishops" (Campbell 10-11). Moreover, Protestants outside the Established church, such as Presbyterians, were subject to political disabilities similar to those placed on Catholics, and, while it is most

likely that Kidd's family were members of the Established church, since in Canada Kidd had hoped for a career in the Church of England, his position as a small farmer in Ireland meant that he was as vulnerable to financial disasters arising from bad harvests or a rise in rents as his Catholic neighbours. Disaffected Protestants had been leaving Ulster since the 1770s, and it is likely that Kidd was part of the most recent wave of emigrants responding to an agricultural depression that followed the end of the Napoleonic war (Houston and Smith 43).

Kidd may have settled first in the United States as early as 1818 (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 154). If he did, then his reaction to America may be indebted to Moore's, and through him, Weld's assessment of America as a false Eden for disaffected Irish emigrants. In "To Mary, Written from the Banks of the St. Lawrence, Near Cornwall, 1828," Kidd writes:

> AMERICA! Thy boasted charms,
> Are merely fleeting shades of bliss--
> My every onward step alarms--
> Some lurking reptile sleeps in this.
> (165)

However, the disillusionment expressed in "To Mary" may have also arisen when Kidd discovered that "the presiding religio-political order in Lower Canada" (Bentley, intro. xii) was similar to the Ascendancy-ruled society he left behind in Ulster.

Indeed, the stance Kidd takes in his occasional verse

echoes the *Irish Vindicator*'s own focus on Ireland and on the hopes and fears of Irish emigrants to British North America. Given the fact that Kidd's writing received both encouragement and publication in the *Vindicator* and other radical Irish-Canadian newspapers, it is not unreasonable to speculate that Kidd and the Irish papers shared a cultural vocabulary, and that both the sentiments and the symbols that he employs would be readily identified and approved of by the readers of such papers. In these contexts, Kidd's "Other Poems," which to this date have received little critical examination relative to *The Huron Chief*, suggest a highly politicized Kidd, repeatedly using symbols whose significance in Irish nationalist culture and politics had already been well established by the patriotic writers of the eighteenth century, and which were already familiar in the drawing rooms of England and America through Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. While the poems can be viewed as "a 'miscellaneous' grab-bag of occasional pieces" (Bentley, intro. xv), they nevertheless repeat various motifs: the harp, unstrung or restrung, the bardic figure, memorials to artists celebrated or obscure, lost cottages and farms, and a mistily Celtic and nostalgic treatment of Canadian scenery. Examining Kidd's shorter poems illuminates the ways in which *The Huron Chief*, despite its North American setting, links the plight of the Amerindian "indirectly through language and form to...'oppressed Ireland'" (Edwards

376).

Kidd was indeed justified in referring to "Erin's wrongs and Erin's woes" (*HCOP* 153).[1] In his very short lifetime, Ireland was just recovering from the United Irish uprising of 1798, which resulted in the loss of Ireland's independent parliament through the Act of Union with Great Britain in 1800. Moreover, shortly before the publication of *The Huron Chief and Other Poems*, a long battle by the country's Catholics to gain political recognition and equality resulted in partial victory in 1828, as a result of the skilled mobilization of all Irish classes by the famous Irish Catholic statesman, Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847). Kidd's own native region, Ulster, was often at the centre of many of these upheavals. In the last years of the eighteenth century, Ulster suffered disproportionately from sporadic agrarian and sectarian violence, and, according to historian Flann Campbell, "bore the brunt" of the violent intimidation tactics used by English soldiers and Protestant yeomanry in response to civil unrest in 1797 (89). This was followed in 1798 by the United Irishmen's disastrous attempt to make Ireland a republic along French lines. While on a

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[1]See Moore, "Intolerance: A Satire" (1809):

> Oh! turn awhile, and, though the shamrock wreathes
> My homely harp, yet shall the song it breathes
> Of Ireland's slavery, and of Ireland's woes,
> Live, when the memory of her tyrant foes
> Shall but exist, all future knaves to warn
> Embalm'd in hate and canonized by scorn.
>
> (Poetical Works 138)

smaller scale than in the south, insurrections had taken place in Down, Armagh and Tyrone, and had resulted in the execution of the leaders and heavy casualties among their followers. This was followed in 1803, a year after Kidd was born, by the failed rebellion led by Robert Emmet in Dublin, and corresponding insurrections organized by United Irishman Thomas Russell in Down and Antrim. Emmet was hanged and dismembered in Dublin; in Downpatrick, in the north, Russell was "hanged outside the Jail gates and his head cut off" (Campbell 119). Given these events, it was not surprising that "Irishmen never forgot the ghastly details of the pitch caps, mobile gibbets, disembowlings and garrotings at the hands of the roving Protestant yeoman terrorists" or that Emmet's execution "recurred in Irish nightmares for three generations" (Brown 21-22). It is unlikely that Kidd, when writing in *The Huron Chief* of atrocities committed against Amerindians by men "of Christian feeling!" (1638), had entirely forgotten the actions in his own country of men who were not only his compatriots but also fellow-believers.

That so many United Irishmen were either born or had established themselves in Kidd's home province attests to the fact that the province was traditionally "the more Protestant, open, and liberal part of the island" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 155). The Presbyterian community in Ulster, although it was divided into conservative and liberal wings by the time Kidd was born (Campbell 137), had a tradition of

anti-authoritarianism, and a defense of individual rights, particularly in matters of conscience (Campbell 13-14). Ulster also had a history of Protestant agitation for Catholic emancipation, that continued in Kidd's youth with open support from the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster, which was eventually divided over the issue (O'Ferral 167). While not consistently sympathetic to the Catholics, the United Irishmen believed that sectarian conflict among Irishmen was not an inevitability, but had been encouraged as part of a divide-and-rule policy by both the English and the minority ruling class in Ireland, who had the most to lose if the majority of the Irish small farmers, artisans, and middle class combined politically against them (Campbell 49, 84-85). One of the most frequent themes of United Irish ballads was the evils of sectarianism. In his pamphlet *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland* (1795), Tone suggested that Ireland was poor, backward and oppressed because England had been able to take advantage of Ireland's "intestine divisions" (Campbell 48-49). Tone's ballad "Ierne United" (1792) also condemned the "domestic dissensions" (Thuente 237) that had sundered Irishmen and hindered peace and prosperity in Ireland. Kidd's journalism and poetry in Canada suggest that he may have imbibed, during his formative years in Ireland, a mixture of resentments, ideals and cultural propaganda brewed by the United Irishmen and the French Revolution, and liberal

Protestants who supported at least some dismantling of Ascendancy rule in Ireland.

Paradoxically, The United Irish uprising may also have had a conservative influence on Kidd, whose poetry is highly ambivalent concerning rebellion. In addressing a Canadian audience, Kidd attempts, as did *The Vindicator*, to be a spokesperson for "oppressed Ireland" and show, in the light of the unwritten British constitution's own assertions, the reasonableness of Ireland's demands. Malcolm Brown in *The Politics of Irish Literature* notes that Irish political writing of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century was rarely restricted to an Irish audience: "English good opinion was courted through the invention of a specialized mode of indirect address which presumed to be a high-minded dialogue on Ireland between Irishmen, but was really designed to be overheard abroad by hesitant English well wishers....They [the Irish] understood the power of England too well to suppose that a disorganized hysterical rage could ever prevail against it" (36). Some tendency towards a restrained and moderate debate on Irish affairs can be seen in the journalism of the *Irish Vindicator*, which continually appealed to "the Guardian God of the British constitution" and claimed that "No man knows better the value of a just government than an Irishman" (December 12, 1828). Kidd, who in his own journalism often showed a certain skill at unrestrained invective towards those who

disagreed with him, was conciliatory and formal in many of his occasional poems, which either appealed to British statesmen by name, or praised them for any action seen to benefit Ireland.

Kidd's ambivalent attitude towards Britain is revealed in the tensions within his poems' structure, as if the narrator is torn between making a rational appeal for Ireland's rights, and an emotional condemnation of Britain's actions in Ireland. In "The Hibernian Solitary," the emigrant-narrator's remembrance of his home is interrupted by a spasm of grief, which the speaker fights to repress:

> Yes, Heaven has proved severe--what have I said?
> Oh! Heaven forgive--nor let my anguish keen
> Inspire one thought rebellious 'gainst thy throne.
> (211)

Kidd is also ambivalent about earthly rebellion. In the shorter poem, "Cathleen," the narrator's sympathy for a dispossessed countrywoman causes him to break off his narrative to answer charges that by referring to British oppression in Ireland, his "pen, too oft, has freely strayed from...allegiance" to "England's king," and resolves in future "to restrain its open willingness,/ And check its *blamed* impetuosity" (173). If what Bentley has called Kidd's "radical and oppression-hating" poetry is indeed normally characterized by "an orientation towards openness in landscape, freedom in love, and unconstrainedness in thought or action" (xxi-xxiii), then his resolve in this

instance to "check" the freedoms which his "straying" and rebellious pen has taken in speaking out against the circumstances that forced Cathleen (a highly suggestive name, given that Cathleen ni Houlihan is one of the female personifications of Ireland) to emigrate suggests that he writes out of an awareness of the consequences of actual historical rebellions that have taken place and failed in Ireland. At the same time, the poem warns that the severe British clampdowns on constitutional freedoms in Ireland inevitably distort natural and human impulses towards justice and freedom:

> Deep, deep, unseen like Bakou's[2] ardent fire,
> Lie all the sympathies that merit praise
> In man's proud breast, till sadly once he sees--

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[2]In *Lalla Rookh*, Moore mentions "BADKU" or Baku, a city on the border of present-day Azerbaijan in the context of a rebellion against the Caliph, led by the false prophet, Mokanna. Among the discontented peoples who rush to Mokanna's banner are the persecuted Zoroastrians, of whom Moore writes:

> From BADKU, and those fountains of blue flame
> That burn into the CASPIAN, fierce they came,
> Careless for what or whom the blow was sped,
> So vengeance triumph'd and their tyrants bled.
> (*Poetical Works* 377, 85-97)

See also, "The Fire Worshippers" in *Lalla Rookh:*

> No--she has sons, that never--never--
> Will stoop to be the Moslem's slaves,
> While heav'n has light or earth has graves;--
> Spirits of fire, that brood not long,
> But flash resentment back for wrong;
> And hearts where, slow but deep, the seeds
> Of vengeance ripen into deeds....
> (*Poetical Works* 413, 57-63)

The reader is invited to draw her own parallels between Iran and Ireland.

> Too true an image of his country's fate
> The child of impulse weep, and drag the chain--
> Then all the soft emotions of his heart--
> As spirits flash resentment on the foe--
> Quick swell to rage--he strikes, and takes revenge.
> (174)

The threat of a sudden eruption of violence is not resolved in the poem. Instead, the poet offers shelter and fellowship for Cathleen in Canada until "the shell of joy has once proclaimed/ *Loved Erin free*." Kidd, as an advocate for dispossessed Irish emigrants in Canada, calls attention to his country's plight, and notes that Britain runs the risk of future rebellion if she ignores Ireland's complaints. Like Moore, Kidd is ambivalent about Irish rebellion although he sympathizes with the rebels' motivations. Kidd uses his role as poet to become an advocate for Ireland's rights, in the belief that literature itself is the best way to inspire sympathy for Cathleen, and for "Erin," and thus help win their freedom. This could imply that Kidd, in addressing a Canadian audience as a spokesperson for "oppressed Ireland," wishes to demonstrate the reasonableness of Ireland's demands for the same freedoms offered to the Irish in British North America.

For writers such as Kidd, Canada in the eighteen twenties provided a precedent for Irish people desiring religious freedom in their own country. The eighteenth-century debate about the rights of Catholics had not taken place in an Irish vacuum, but took into account events in Britain, America and the Canadas. In the late eighteenth

century, "the establishment of Catholicism in what was now... Canada" through the Quebec Act was a proposal alarming to conservative supporters of the established Church in Ireland. Conservatives viewed "the coming together of democracy and separation (as in the states)" as something which "might be read as sanctioning the establishment of Irish Catholicism in some nightmarish future; yet, with the example of Canada in mind, one did not even have to postulate either political separation or a remote futurist timetable" (McCormack 103). Rather than view Canada as a nightmare scenario, liberal Protestants, including Weld and presumably Kidd, saw Canada as a positive example of how religious freedom could lead to peace and prosperity in Ireland.

In a letter to the *Irish Vindicator* in January 1828, Kidd applauds *The Quebec Mercury*'s editor, who supported Catholic Emancipation, in terms which suggest that Kidd favoured a moderate, rational and enlightened defense of rights over revolution:

> The editor of the Mercury comes forward with language dignified, noble and manly... which of itself is sufficient to place him on the list where the names of such mighty worthies as FOX, PITT, BURKE, AND GRATTAN appear in the bright halo of grateful veneration. (126)

It is interesting that the names which Kidd cites as defenders of "the blessings of equal privileges to every individual who adores God, and stands erect in the dignity of manhood" (126) are eighteenth-century thinkers and

politicians whose thought owed much to the Enlightenment. (Some of these men, history notes, granted very limited concessions to Catholics, not on principles of equality and fraternity, but on the grounds of political expediency.) Edmund Burke had argued that liberal measures to relieve Catholics of political disabilities would make them see that loyalty to the English government was in their own interests (Jenkins 60). Fears of revolution in 1792 had prompted William Pitt to pass the Catholic Relief Bill, admitting Catholics to the professions and the universities as well as granting them a limited political franchise (Brown 20). Charles Fox, an English lord, was a radical Whig politician who sided with Irish patriots such as Henry Grattan (1746-1820),[3] the founder of "Grattan's Parliament," who won legislative independence for Ireland and who was a champion of Catholic relief and a noted orator (Foster 171). Kidd appears to be following a rhetorical trend set by eighteenth-century nationalists, who "wooed each generation of the Protestant Ascendancy, winning over many

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[3]See Moore, "Intolerance: A Satire:"

> Such was the spirit, gently, grandly bright,
> That fill'd, of Fox! thy peaceful soul with light...
> The mighty sphere of thy transparent mind
> Embrac'd the world, and breath'd for all mankind.
> Last of the great, farewell!--yet *not* the last--
> Though Britain's sunshine hour with thee be past,
> Ierne still one ray of glory gives,
> And feels but half thy loss while Grattan lives.
>
> (*Poetical Works* 139)

In "Corruption: an Epistle," Moore was less complimentary than Kidd towards Pitt.

distinguished personalities, but without ever softening the mass itself" (Brown 36). It is likely that Kidd sees Burke, Pitt, Fox and Grattan as eloquent voices of reason in an age characterized in Ireland by a distinct lack of this virtue; he reminds his reader that "we are now advancing in the Nineteenth century, and only turn, with dislike and horror, to look back at the pernicious effects already gone by, and which were produced by the unfeeling Demon of persecution" (127).

It is not simply the ideas or actions of Irish Protestants and English Whigs that link them in "the bright halo of grateful veneration," but also the way in which they are memorably expressed, providing "dignified, noble and manly" refutations that could be recalled and employed by subsequent writers and agitators against invested privilege. If Kidd believed that eloquence was a quality worthy of "veneration" and remembrance, he also shared with rhetoricians of the Emancipation movement the concept that respect awarded to privilege was short-lived, and that oblivion was the fittest revenge for short-sighted defenders of the status quo. In 1827, on the occasion of the death of the Duke of York, who had been a patron of Orange Lodges (Campbell 83) and the royal figurehead for conservative opposition to Emancipation in both Ireland and England, the Catholic politician Richard Sheil noted:

> the pomp of death will for a few nights fill the gilded apartments in which his body will lie in

> state....The bell of St. Paul's will toll, and London--rich luxurious Babylonic London--will start at the recollection that even kings must die....The heir to the three kingdoms will be in a week forgotten. We, too, shall forget; but let us, before we forget, forgive him.
> (qtd. in O'Ferrall 153)

In Kidd's two published monodies, defenders of freedom, whether they be poets like Lord Byron or pro-Emancipation politicians such as George Canning, received epitaphs from Kidd that implied their fame would rest on the examples of their art or action rather than on "pomp" or monuments.

Kidd's treatment of monuments may owe something to Joseph Priestly's *Lectures on History* and its discussion of the relationship between "Visible monuments" and "Historical Poems." Like Priestly, Kidd in his commemorative work views poems as superior to monuments, because they are not subject to physical decay (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 140). In "Monody, To the Shade of Lord Byron," whose body had been denied burial in Westminster Abbey, Kidd rejects the "sculpted grandeur" and "grey towers" of Westminster because they signify privilege, rather than merit:

> Are trifling fops, whose highest powers
> Were spent in fashion's giddy round,
> Deemed worthier of those reverend towers
> For rest upon that sacred ground?
> (138-39)

Moreover, Kidd reasons that physical monuments are devalued, if they are substitutes for the type of lasting fame which Byron is assured. Kidd takes his revenge on "the haughty Dean" of Westminster, who

> ...shall be forgot
> Nor known beyond his life's short span--
> His mem'ry with himself shall rot,
> Unmourned, unwept by muse or man.
> (137-38)

Byron, in contrast, will be a "deathless shade," whose name will be kept alive because a grateful Greek nation will "invoke" it continually in recognition that Byron died in defense of Greek nationalism. As well, Byron's actions and writing will be incorporated into a literary posterity that encompasses past and future: "Midst bards of old she'll mix thy name....And future bards, in songs, will give/ Thy memory to posterity" (140).

Kidd, whose writings defended the dispossessed Huron and Mohawk nations in North America, appeared to find in Byron, who did not restrict his efforts to the welfare of his own nation, a poetic role model. Nevertheless, Kidd also looked for defenders of Irish aspirations specifically. He found one in George Canning (1770-1827), a moderate Tory Prime Minister, whose father was Irish. Kidd's reasons for choosing to commemorate Canning are complex. Canning, like Pitt, had advocated Irish union with Britain in 1800 to protect the western flank of the Empire, but also argued that the resulting security against the French would finally enable the Irish to "receive 'the real, inspiriting and enlivening sunshine of English liberty'" that he felt had so far been denied them by sectarian discrimination in pre-union Ireland (Jenkins 20). As Prime Minister, Canning

formed a Tory-Whig coalition government, but the alliance's Emancipation bill for Catholics was defeated in 1825. Nevertheless, until his death in 1827, Canning continued to keep the Catholic emancipation question in the forefront of Parliamentary affairs, in the face of royal opposition from George IV and the Duke of York.

In his "Monody to the Memory of the Right Hon. George Canning," Kidd portrays Canning as a statesman to whom "nations where liberty stands now confest" are indebted, through Canning's recognition of independent European states, including Greece. After reminding the reader of Canning's Irish ancestry in a footnote, the poem implies that Canning's actions have given Ireland renewed hope that Britain will live up to its claim to be a defender of liberty:

> Yet, her prayers shall be heard--for her KING he is just
> And the land of Fitzgerald soon flourish again
> 'Mong the nations of earth--whilst low in the dust
> Oppression shall struggle and gnaw her own chain.
> (203)

The other name mentioned in this stanza is significant. By referring to Ireland as "the land of Fitzgerald," Kidd alludes to Lord Edward Fitzgerald (whose biography Moore published in 1831), an Irish Protestant nobleman with French revolutionary leanings who was killed in the 1798 uprising. While Kidd insists that the king, George IV, is "just," an allusion to a United Irish martyr may be intended to remind Britain of past Irish rebellions should the king

be too hesitant in exercising that justice.

Kidd is aware of national distinctions even in the way that he portrays the two countries' tributes to Canning. "Albion"--that is, England--commemorates Canning with a monument, or a "spot that bears now inscribed her loved patriot's name." Ireland, in contrast, chooses to commemorate Canning with song: "the death note" and the fact that Canning's action's "have touched every chord that vibrates on mankind" (202) link his achievements to Bryon's poetic achievements, and also suggest that the "posterity" created for Canning by poets such as Kidd will be a more lasting remembrance than a monument. Equally central to both poems is the relationship between posterity and the role of the poet. In particular, Kidd's use of the term "bard" to describe the medium through which Byron's fame would be preserved is interesting in the context of eighteenth-century usage of the word in Ireland. The Gaelic bardic tradition had not entirely died out in Ireland, and was considered a living link between past and present, preserving the history of a country or region. In July 1760, the Irish poet Oliver Goldsmith had published an article, "The History of Carolan, the Last Irish Bard" in the *British Magazine*, which called attention to the patriotic implications of the bard's role among the Irish:

> Irish Bards, in particular, are still held in great veneration among them; those traditional heralds are invited to every funeral, in order to fill up the

> intervals of the howl with their songs and harps. In these they rehearse the actions of the ancestors of the deceased, bewail the bondage of the country under the English government....
>
> (qtd. in Thuente 49)

To commemorate both the statesman and poet who had attempted to defend the liberty of Greece and Ireland, Kidd adopted the bardic tradition, using his Monodies or death-songs to link the memories and past exploits of these men with Ireland's present-day oppression. By using their memories to inspire actions of patriots in the future, Kidd seems aware as well of the nationalistic overtones of his role, in which the bard could be considered "the champion of national liberty" (Thuente 28).

The patriotic rhetoric that Kidd has fashioned out of his diverse memorials to politicians and artists was stretched to include artists who have no immediately perceptible link to Irish national causes. In "A Fugitive Garland, To Be Strewn on the Strange Grave of George F. Cooke, the 'Irish Roscius'," Kidd uses a visit to the neglected or vandalized grave of a celebrated actor to muse on the relationship between fame, merit, and nationalism. George Cooke (1756-1812), a tragedian, was a contemporary of the famous English actor James Kemble, and well-known to the English stage. Cooke toured America, died there, and was interred, first in the Stranger's Vault in New York, and then, in 1821 in St. Paul's churchyard in New York (Wilmeth

280). His tomb became a popular destination of pilgrimages for actors, and--since Kidd visited there before 1829--other artists. The monument was constructed of soft dolomite, which has required refurbishment on many occasions (Wilmeth 281), and its condition may have accounted for Kidd's description of it as having been deliberately vandalized. Kidd's statement that the monument was "exposed to such wreck and abuse as some foul hands have already inflicted" (181n), fits in well with the general sentiments expressed in Kidd's poems on the relationship between physical monuments and fame.

Kidd's contemplation of "the Demon-defaced line/ That bears, oh Cooke! thy much insulted name!" again recalls not only the decay to which all monuments are prone but also the narrow-minded bigotry in the treatment of Byron's remains by conservative churchmen, including Kidd's nemesis the "Mountain-demon" or George Jehoshapat Mountain (796). Cooke's lifetime habits of womanizing and alcoholism (Wilmeth 244), and his death in a strange country also link him to Byron; it is possible that their human failings obscured, in petty minds, the true merit of both men. Nevertheless, Kidd claims that Cooke's fame allows him to stand out among "the unknown dead, who sleep around--unmourned--and long forgot," and concludes:

> There is a pyramid to thee--and such
> As pale-faced envy never can come near
>
> That pyramid is Fame's--and her great hand

> Displays the banner Genius o'er thee hung,
> When, in obedience to her high command
> Nations were captives to thy magic tongue!
> (181)

Once again, as with Byron and Canning, Kidd cites eloquence and his influence on "nations" as the source of Cooke's posterity. More important, while Cooke's epitaph reads, "Three Kingdoms Claim His Birth" (Wilmeth 10), Kidd unequivocally claims Cooke for Ireland. He also puts in a good word for his own home county in his hopes that "some spirit...will safely to that Isle thy bones convey/ Where first the *mountain*-breeze of life was given" (emphasis added), and in his statement that he has removed a shamrock plant from the gravesite and transplanted it "to my own temporary abode, and shall finally plant it on the green summit of the flowery mantled Slievegallin, in the country of Derry" (182n).

It was not entirely necessary for Kidd to claim Cooke for his home region, since in his own assessment, Derry had furnished a landscape and a history, both monumental and poetic, that could readily supply creative materials for the poet. While Byron, Canning and Cooke alike are commemorated in terms that place them in a distinctive Irish context, Kidd's other occasional pieces feature monuments to native Irish poets that couple the themes of departed poetic genius and past glories with the woes of Kidd's contemporary Ireland. Kidd's strong attachment to his own region, and his "native village, in the romantic townland of *Tullinagee*,

in the country of Londonderry" (210-11n) is evident, even in his Canadian poems. Writing from the "shores of St. Lawrence" in "To Mary," Kidd can only exclaim,

> O! Give me back my own green hills,
> And humble cot on Branno's side,
> Whence flow the deep Pierian rills,
> That haste to meet Bann's glassy tide....
> (165)

The fact that Kidd's poetry frequently contains references to his own geography is emphasised by the pen-name, *Slievegallin*, that he adopts in "To Mary" and his journalism--a name taken from a mountain in Derry, Slievegallion.

Kidd's poetry also suggests that he is aware that Ulster was "the most Gaelic of all the Irish provinces before the plantations" (Campbell 8). A large proportion of the population still spoke Irish, re-emphasising the fact that Protestant culture in Ireland was a thin veneer over an older culture, the ruins and remains of which were "tangible evidence of the region's cultural origins--ring forts, tumuli, ogham stones and dolmens, which went back to the dawn of Celtic history" (Campbell 8). Kidd's interest in both the archaeological remains left by earlier Irish civilizations, and the living oral and musical traditions that were by his day approaching extinction is demonstrated in his Irish lyrics, and prefigures his interest and receptivity to the "anthropological or archaeological site[s]" (Bentley, intro. xviii) and the oral traditions of

a pre-European culture in Canada.

In Derry, Kidd is intimately acquainted with the histories and the culture of which the gravesites and ruins in his country are the most visible evidence, and that prefigure the burial sites, "hill[s]" and "pyre[s]" of the Hurons in *The Huron Chief* (24, 76). In transforming monuments into poetic subjects, he couples the themes of departed poetic genius and past glories with the woes of Kidd's contemporary Ireland. In poems such as "The Hibernian Solitary," "Slievegallin fair" is significant because it has become a "mountain renowned in song" by local "bards"; and thus has a history behind it, just as "that famed Fort, the pride of Tullinagee," which Kidd, in a footnote attributes to the Vikings, is a further reminder of "mighty days gone by" (209-10).

"Ranglawe the Roving Bard" and "Apostrophe to the Harp of Dennis Hampson" share with "My Brother's Grave" the use of the gravesite as an opportunity to meditate on the inadequacies of the present, and the sense that the past glories of Ireland will inspire future poets. In "My Brother's Grave," Kidd meditates on an abandoned village churchyard that recalls Goldsmith's Auburn:

> For Ruin has long marked the spot
> Where DEZERTLIN once proudly rose--
> But now neglected, and forgot,
> 'Midst Erin's wrongs, and Erin's woes.
> (153)

The "ruins" in this case are not those of a prehistoric

civilization, but a reminder of a once prosperous village, and of the economic and political disasters that prompted Kidd to emigrate.

When the subject of Kidd's musing is a poet, then the links between the past, represented by monuments to dead poets, and the future become more explicit. In "Ranglawe, the Roving Bard,"[4] the role of the poet was to remind his listeners of Erin's "long faded glory"; once he is gone, "every chord slumbers sadly forsaken," on his harp. However, Kidd leaves open the possibility that

> Some true kindred spirit may yet wake its tone
> And touch with pure finger the soul-breathing numbers
> That liberty kindles in hearts like our own.
> (201)

Once again, Kidd calls attention to the role of the bard as a contemporary tradition; in reminding his readers of past genius, he hopes to inspire future creative efforts that in time will instill a desire for "liberty" in future bards.

Ranglawe's grave, like Cooke's, has its attendant greenery, being covered with heather, shamrock, and daisy, here as native plants, and not lonely "exotics." If Kidd's description of Ranglawe's gravesite can be seen as corresponding to Cooke's, then the recollection for the poet of such sites in his native Ireland appears to offer an

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[4]Kidd writes that, "...there are few of the Irish people to whom the writings and character of RANGLEAWE (Francis Dowling) are not well known" (201). There is an entry for Francis Dowling in D.J. O'Donoughue's *Irish Poets* (1919); however it states merely that Dowling was a poet in the North of Ireland mentioned by Adam Kidd in *The Huron Chief*.

imaginative spur for dispersed Irish emigrants. Where Cooke in America must suffer the indignity of "demon defaced" tombstone as well as reputation, Ranglawe's grave is tended faithfully by "the smiling daughters of Erin," and not only reminds Kidd and other Irish people of a thriving Irish culture that existed before sectarian squabbles and foreign domination, but also looks forward to a more peaceful and liberated future when Ireland will be free of "the Demon of Party" (201).

The gravesite of the Derry musician Dennis Hampson is given even more respect and recognition, having "a marble slab, with a suitable inscription" placed over it by none other than Sidney Owenson, Lady Morgan (167), the novelist and friend of Moore, who had mentioned Hampson in her novel *The Wild Irish Girl*. "Dennis Hampson" was very likely the Irish harpist Denis Hempson (c. 1695-1808), one of the most famous musicians to attend the Belfast Harp Festival, which had been arranged by the antiquarian and music collector Edward Bunting in July 1792. The festival "brought together ten leading harpists from eight counties, five of them from Ulster"; a later commentator called them "a race of men then nearly extinct, and now gone for ever" (Campbell 55). Hempson's advanced age linked him with an entirely different historical epoch of nationalist aspirations; he was even reputed "to have once played in Scotland for Bonnie Prince Charlie" (Campbell 56). In a note to his poem, Kidd also

notes that Hempson was "the last of the wandering minstrels" and had survived into Kidd's boyhood, dying "in his own little cottage, on the shores of Magilligan [a lake near Tullynagee], in 1808, at the advanced age of 115 years." As in "Ranglawe," the harp is portrayed as the "true emblem of Erin--now hushed in the hall" (168).

Hempson nevertheless provides an important bardic role model for Kidd. Thuente notes that the organizers of the 1792 harper's festival

> claimed that the harpers who had performed were only "partial representatives of the ancient bards," who had been at once poet, musician, historian, and philosopher, because only music had survived among contemporary harpers. The United Irishmen were clearly ready to assume the missing roles of poet, historian, and philosopher, and to create words for the traditional melodies.
>
> (57)

In "Apostrophe to the Harp," Kidd memorializes Hempson as the last living link to a culture "now but living in story." In assuming the "missing role" of the poet by re-stringing the harp--albeit only to allow Slievegallin's "zephyrs" to play upon it--Kidd also adapts the lost Gaelic tradition for his own patriotic purposes, which is to remind the Irish of their cultural history "Till Freedom, to Erin, her anthem restore" (168).

These sentiments, and the emblems by which Kidd repeatedly expresses them should not be immediately dismissed by the modern reader, who may be all too familiar with the shamrock-harp-round-tower aesthetic probably only

encouraged today by manufacturers of parian china. While these symbols were starting to be overused even in Kidd's own time, his Irish poems nevertheless employ them within a regionalism that is at once stylized and particular, mentioning place names and physical features that Kidd would have known, and celebrating local writers whose work, Kidd feels, expresses the aspirations of the nation as a whole. Both Hempson and Ranglawe are portrayed in Kidd's poems as having been living links with a native Irish culture daily threatened on many fronts. Given Kidd's belief that his own region has a rich poetic tradition, it is not surprising that he makes a testy reply to the critic who claims it absurd that Kidd has graced his river Bann with "Pierian rills" in "To Mary,"[5] or that, upon arrival in Canada, he showed a sensitivity to the relationship between venerated burial sites and the--often marginalized--cultures they signify. The Huron Chief, Skenandow, at once the hero of the Hurons' songs and the repository of a vast oral

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[5]"I would ask Mr. Q. did he ever hear of such an author as one Alex. Pope? In the works of that poet, he will find two lines which may be of infinite service to him--

'A little learning is a dang'rous thing,
Drink *deep* or *taste* not the Pierian spring.'

Who is there that is properly acquainted with the term Pierian, would ever have thought of censuring any writer for applying it to the rills of *Erin*? of Erin, that sacred land of *song*--Erin in whose bosom an Ossian, a Hampson, a Goldsmith, and a Moore, were nurtured--whose halls have reechoed with the oratory of a Grattan a Phillips, and an O'Connell. Who is there, I ask, that ever yet knew the poetical acceptation of the word Pierian, that could have read these very lines without feeling his bosom burning as he read them? (*Irish Vindicator* June 15, 1830)

tradition, is given a final resting place whose description has origins in the burial sites of the guardians of Kidd's own native culture. Moreover, Kidd gives the Huron grave its own appropriate native emblems:

> SKENANDOW fell!--and calmly sleeps
> By ERIE's darkling groves of pine,
> Where gently now the wild grape creeps,
> As if to guard the holy shrine--
> Nor shall his name be e'er forgot--
> But future bards, in songs of grief,
> Will sadly tell of that lone spot
> Where rests the noble HURON CHIEF!
> (1651-58)

Bentley points out that Kidd associates the wild grape, an "unconstrained and indigenous plant," with Skenandow and with the openness in thought and structure which the poem in general celebrates (xxx). Its inclusion also suggests Kidd's receptivity to the natural details of his surroundings, whether in Ireland or in Canada; while he will not forget the "heath-bell" nodding over the grave of Ranglawe, he also celebrates the native wild-cherry on the shores of Lake Ontario, even as he transplants colonies of fairies "from Scotland's hills, and Erin's green" to the "romantic" scenery of Upper Canada in "Verses Written on Visiting the Sand-Banks on the Shores of Lake Ontario, near Hallowell, 1828" (*HCOP* 145-47).

Kidd's ability to transport a regional awareness to Canada has implications for the way in which he views Amerindian cultures in his poetry, in that his "resistance to entrapment and enclosure," his "hinterland orientation"

and "the urge towards freedom and openness" are indebted in part to his valorization of his own region--in many ways a marginalized area and culture within both Ireland and the British empire. When it describes Irish antiquities and "bards," Kidd's verse also reflects cultural trends in early nineteenth-century Ireland that provided the imaginative background for Irish nationalist movements--including Catholic Emancipation--and also dovetailed neatly into the wider European romantic movements. Poetry attributed to the Celtic bard Ossian, which had gained wide popularity through the Scottish-born poet James Macpherson's adaptation of older Celtic poems and tales, was one of the main literary sources that fuelled new antiquarian research in Ireland as well as Anglo-Irish interest in early Irish poetry.

That Kidd adapts Macpherson's translation of *Ossian* for an epigraph to *The Huron Chief and Other Poems* suggests he did not concern himself too deeply with the controversies that raged over the authenticity of Macpherson's translations almost as soon as they were published in 1760. In fact, Fiona Stafford's biographical sketch of Macpherson in "'Tales of the Times of Old': The Legacy of Macpherson's *Ossian*" suggests similarities in the historical and cultural circumstances of Macpherson's Scotland and Kidd's Ulster:

> It is not surprising that James Macpherson should have perceived his native culture as being in danger of extinction, and thus his subsequent efforts to preserve the disappearing remnants of

> the oral tradition should be seen in the contemporary context. Macpherson's collection of the old heroic poetry was, at least in part, an attempt to repair the damage sustained as a result of the Forty-Five...the aftermath of the [Jacobite] Rebellion heightened Macpherson's awareness of the vulnerability of his culture. (44-45)

For Kidd, whose own boyhood memories were of famous bards who carried their native culture to the grave, Macpherson's example was an instructive one. Nor was Kidd blind to the parallels between Scottish, Irish, and Amerindian folklore. In a footnote to *The Huron Chief*, Kidd recounts that "during my visit to [an] old Chief...he willingly furnished me with an account of the distinguished warriors, and the traditions of different tribes, which are still fresh in his memory, and are handed down from father to son, with the same precision, interest and admiration, that the Tales and exploits of Ossian and his heroes are circulated in their original purity, to this day, among the Irish" (673n).

Ossian also had an important influence on how European cultures began to view their own early culture, as well as the "savage" cultures of North America. Initially regarded as a genuine historical document (Rubel 49), *Ossian* challenged one of the prevailing theories of social development current in the second half of the eighteenth century, "the 'four stages theory' of social development" (*Mimic Fires 30*). Civilization, according to this theory, progressed from "savage" hunter societies, (characterized by

ferocity, cruelty and a lust for revenge [Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 44-45]), to "barbaric" societies based on herding, through to agricultural and trading societies that provided an existence beyond mere subsistence, as well as the leisure required to cultivate intellectual, technological and artistic pursuits (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 31-32). However, Stafford notes that, "in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe, the need for an alternative to the polite urban society of the Enlightenment was very real" (50); and Ossian challenged the four-stages assumptions about modern society:

> As anxieties about the corruption and decay of Western civilization grew, so the Rousseauan ideal of the Noble Savage began to gain ground. *Ossian* was the perfect text, because it had all the virtues of the 'natural' (i.e. uncorrupted) age, but none of the inconvenient barbarity that so often seemed to accompany 'primitive' people. (50-51)

An alternative model to the classical and artificial poetry of mid-eighteenth-century England, Ossian, who was viewed as a sort of northern Homer, shared with the Greek poet "literary qualities...of passion, wildness, energy, simplicity...natural genius...highly metaphorical language" (Stafford 45). In addition to offering an alternative view of primitive cultures, the eloquence and behaviour of Ossian's poets and heroes

> stressed only the brighter side of savage life....Ossian offered an image of the character of the would-be natural man, simple and straightforward, sentimental and fair, not cunning or brutal, and though not religious as yet,

> nevertheless behaving as if he somehow already knew what sort of moral norms a Protestant ecclesiastic would preach from the pulpit in his customary Sunday sermon
>
> (Rubel 49-52).

Macpherson's more extravagant claims for Ossian's Scottish genealogy, and the superiority of ancient Scottish culture over that of the Irish may have caused "irritation" among Irish scholars and thus served as a "catalyst" in Irish cultural nationalism by "stimulating new research and therefore appreciation of a native tradition that might otherwise have been neglected or even lost" (Stafford 42). For the Irish, Ossian also provided confirmation of the civility and eloquence of the early Celts, providing a cultural background in which the Irish could take pride. The scholar Henry Brooke addressed his countrymen in this vein in a prospectus for an abandoned history of Ireland in 1793: "I shall shew to the most prejudiced and incredulous, that your ancestors were deep in learning, pious in their religion, wise in their institutions, just in their laws, and continued, for many ages, the most generous and valiant people that lived upon the face of the earth" (qtd. in Thuente 83-84). Brooke's daughter Charlotte (1740-1793), born in the west Ulster county of Cavan, became one of the most influential antiquaries of the eighteenth century. Her *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789), based on translations from the Irish, was the first anthology of Irish verse ever issued (Campbell 57; Thuente 85). Brooke's work was a

departure from the Protestant attitude of disdain for Gaelic culture in that she argued that "the productions of our Irish bards exhibit a glow of cultivated genius,--a spirit of elevated heroism,--sentiments of pure honour...and manners of a degree of refinement, totally astonishing, at a period when the rest of Europe was nearly sunk in barbarism" (qtd. in Thuente 85). Moreover, Brooke, like Macpherson, collected oral accounts of the Irish sagas from her Gaelic neighbours, which proved that the bardic tradition was not entirely extinguished in Ireland. Kidd's interest in the tales of Ranglawe, the music of Hampson and the folklore of his region in Ulster was no doubt engendered by a flourishing antiquarian revival that was well in place by the time he was born.

According to the cultural historian John Hutchinson, Irish interest in "the heroic and 'natural' world of the ancient Celtic inhabitants of the British Isles" that had been portrayed by Macpherson's *Ossian* went beyond the "dual revulsion both against the class conflict of 'over-civilized' societies and the sectarian divisions produced by the imposition of state religions" that had been the European response to *Ossian*. In Ireland, "this had a pointed political significance, implying a turning away from contemporary *English* civilization and the bitter religious identities of the recent Irish past" (Hutchinson 56). Antiquarians' insistence that the Irish had originally been

a peaceful, pious, law abiding, and above all, non-sectarian society could be used to powerful rhetorical effect in literature, and was done so in Ulster in the ballads of the United Irishmen. The moderate United Irishman William Drennan (1754-1820), a Presbyterian physician and poet who translated Irish songs for Bunting's collection, is a figure who is particularly relevant to Kidd's cultural and political background. Drennan's father, a Presbyterian minister in Belfast, had been a friend of "the Father of the Scottish Enlightenment," the Shaftesburian philosopher Francis Hutcheson (Vance 76-77). Drennan's work reflects a convergence of ideas generated by the Enlightenment, the antiquarian revival, and a political nationalism based on a deep suspicion of established or state religions, which was evident in many of his ballads and lyrics (Vance 95).

Drennan's ballad, "Erin" (1797), probably his most well-known and anthologized piece, not only contributed the phrase, "the Emerald Isle" to the arsenal of sentimental and patriotic synonyms for Ireland, but also gave Moore his famous line, "the cold chain of silence" in "Dear Harp of My Country" (Vance 86-87). "Erin" is primarily a call for an end to religious bigotry, and owes much of its imagery and its sense of Irish history to the work of antiquarian scholars, like Brooke, Charles O'Conor (1710-91), and Sylvester O'Halloran, whose writing had portrayed the early years of the Irish nation as a "holy island--insula

sacra....that had not only withstood conquest by the Ancient Romans and the Anglo-Normans, but which had also...made a major contribution to British civilization" (Hutchinson 55-56). In the opening lines of "Erin," Drennan paints an Edenic picture of Ireland after Creation, rising from "the dark-swelling flood" (qtd in Thuente 239-241). Ireland is initially independent of England: "proudly insular" and "in her sun, in her soil, in her station, thrice blest/ With back turn'd to Britain, her face to the West." However, as in Tone's ballad, "Ierne United," bigotry and religious war destroy both harmony and prosperity in Ireland:

> O, sons of green Erin! lament o'er the time
> When religion was--war, and our country--a crime,
> When men, in God's image, inverted his plan,
> And moulded their God to the image of man.
>
> ....When with pale for the body, and pale for the soul,
> Church and state join'd in compact to conquer the whole;
> And while Shannon ran red with Milesian blood,
> Ey'd each other askance, and pronounc'd it was good!
> (qtd in Thuente 239-41)

Drennan also views sectarian divisions imposed by the Established church in Ireland as artificial barriers or "pales," recalling the walls that the original Anglo-Norman settlers built around their enclaves after the conquest of Ireland. The ability of the invaders to turn Irishmen against each other in the "int'rest of state" also perpetuates these divisions, making "the stranger--a friend, and the native--a foe" (240).

The "Milesian blood" that flows in the ensuing

religious warfare is a reference to a Celtic warrior race popularly believed to be the ancestors of the Irish Celts (Hutchinson 124). Drennan's depiction of Irish civilization before English invasion reverses the assumption present in English writing from Edmund Spencer onwards, that the sectarian strife and rebellion of the Irish was a result of their savage and vengeful nature, and that they required the "civilizing" influence of the British. Instead, Drennan argues that it was the introduction of religious disabilities by the English that set Irishmen against each other and so invokes his countrymen to look back before sectarian divisions, and "Drive the demon of Bigotry home to his den,/ And where Britain made brutes, now let Erin make men!"

Drennan's attempt to bring together Irish citizens of all classes and creeds under the banner of the United Irishmen was informed by "the spirit of enlightened rationalism rather than martyrdom" (Vance 90). A moderate who withdrew from the United Irishmen when it began to advocate the violent overthrow of the British government, Drennan included in "Erin" an injunction against violence or revenge:

> Yet, oh! when you're up, and they down, let them live,
> Then yield them that mercy that they did not give.
> Arm of Erin! prove strong; but be gentle as brave
> And, uplifted to strike, still be ready to save;
> Nor one feeling of vengeance presume to defile
> The cause, or the men, of the EMERALD ISLE.

Drennan's injunction against revenge was ultimately ignored by the United Irishmen, but the sentiments which he originally published in 1797 appeared very up to date, when Montreal readers encountered Drennan's poem, published without acknowledgement in the *Irish Vindicator* in December, 1828. At that time, the editors of the *Vindicator* believed that Daniel O'Connell, the leader of the Catholic emancipation movement, was on the verge of achieving a peaceful revolution, by uniting all classes of Catholics and enforcing strict organization and discipline among the majority of the Irish peasantry.

If in the unlikely event that Kidd was unacquainted with Drennan's ballad while growing up in Derry (it was reprinted continually in the decades following the 1798 uprising), then he may still have encountered it in the *Irish Vindicator*. On December 12, 1828, a week before printing Drennan's ballad, and the week that Kidd's "Ranglawe" appeared, the *Irish Vindicator* published O'Connell's 30 September 1828 speech, "To the Honest and Worthy People of Tipperary," and in its editorial concluded that O'Connell was "conducting the Catholics of Ireland to the heaven of their long-expected wishes." That he was doing so by abjuring violence, and forbidding his followers to respond to provocation by Protestant sectarian organizations or to join violent organizations themselves, agreed with the *Irish Vindicator*'s own desire to portray the

Catholic cause as a peaceful and constitutional one. Neither Drennan's moderation nor O'Connell's request in his Tipperary speech that Irishmen "forgive one another," were lost on Kidd. In an open letter published in the *Irish Vindicator* on 20 January 1829, Kidd defends Emancipation, and takes to task the editor of the *Quebec Authority Gazette* for his opposition to the granting of religious rights to Catholics:

> ...does it not then become the duty of every well disposed individual, to endeavour to correct the errors of a corrupted heart, when its effects are likely to contaminate the principles of the unthinking and the unguarded? Man is naturally kind to his fellow creature, unless poisoned by prejudice, by bigotry and ignorance. The Indian who enjoys the bounties of his wild inheritance, contends not for superiority over the brothers of his tribe--every man stands on an equal footing, until he has signalized himself by some noble achievement, which entitles him to distinction; and then, as a matter of right, he becomes the elevated of his nation. Here, Sir, for your salutary improvement, I now advise you to peruse *Colden, Schoolcraft, and Heckewelder*, and then tell me if you do not feel ashamed of your imaginary superiority, and of your right to disqualify your fellow-subjects, on account of their religious profession: I say, to disqualify men, whose magnanimous and noble spirits have proved, in every emergency, that they are, and ever have been, the unshaken defenders of the British Throne, and still love to rally round their King, with hearts as firm as their Island rock, that braves the fury of the ocean.

Kidd not only seems aware of the changing attitudes towards the Irish which had been brought about in part by antiquarian writing, but was also aware that the ongoing research into Amerindian culture also had political implications, which he applied to his defense of religious

rights. In this context, Kidd's letter, an otherwise rambling and digressive defense of religious freedom, equality and Catholic rights, reveals the point at which his interest in his own culture and that of the Amerindians intersect. His allusion to "*Colden, Schoolcraft, and Heckewelder,*"[6] missionaries and explorers whose descriptions of native Americans and their folklore--if not always accurate--did much to dispel the concept of the Amerindians as vengeful and bloodthirsty savages, suggests that at this point he was already contemplating a portrait of the Amerindian peoples that does for their reputation what the works of Irish antiquarians and writers had done for the Irish.

It should not come as a surprise, then, that the narrator of *The Huron Chief* is himself not only a folklorist of sorts, but also one who is sensitive to the parallels between his own nation and the dispossessed Huron nation. Kidd's Ossianic epigraph should alert the reader to the parallels that he wishes to draw between what has happened

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[6]Cadwallader Colden (1688-1766) published *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada* in 1727, John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder (1743-1823) "was a Moravian missionary" and very sympathetic to the plight and culture of the Delawares and Mohegans (Bentley, Explanatory Notes 74-75). Henry Rowe Schoolcraft published *Travels...from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River* (1821), from which Kidd took the legend of the native woman Tapooka, whose misadventures provides the romantic-sub-plot of *The Huron Chief* (Bentley 78). All of these writers were quoted extensively by James Buchanan in his *Sketches*, from which Kidd borrows heavily in *The Huron Chief*.

to the Huron nation and Ireland. In adapting Macpherson's verses to read: "Where are our Chiefs of old? Where our Heroes of mighty name?/ The fields of their battles are silent--scarce their mossy tombs remain!" Kidd calls attention to the fading ruins left behind by Amerindian cultures in America. However, if their tombs are nearly obliterated, their stories live; it is through an oral account of their history of oppression under the Europeans that the narrator comes to a gradual understanding of the Huron culture.

The plot of *The Huron Chief*, on which Kidd hangs extensive footnotes on the history of European contact with Amerindians, is relatively slight. A narrator, "straying" in what he thinks are untenanted woods, first hears the song of an Indian woman mourning her husband, "the glory and pride of the nation" who has "died bravely defending the Indian's shore" from white invasion (67-68). The narrator then encounters Skenandow, the Huron Chief of the title, who invites him to spend the night in his village. The narrator then travels to other villages with a young guide, "a journey during which the narrator...hears an oral history of the 'glories of the Huron race' from the late seventeenth century to 'this very date in life'" (Bentley, intro. xxvi). (It is an understatement to say that this period is also a significant and difficult epoch for the Irish, encompassing the Reformation, William III's victory over the Catholic

James II, the Penal laws, sectarian strife, rebellion, and eventually, Catholic Emancipation). In addition to hearing about the Huron's "glories," the narrator receives an unvaryingly tragic and bloody account of European betrayal of Amerindian tribes, which then is enacted in front of his eyes during a Huron wedding, when an ambush party of "Christian" whites slaughters the bride, the groom, and a large portion of the guests.

The relationship of the narrator to the Hurons is itself complex. A member of the same race that is persecuting America's native peoples so that "the remaining Nations are daily dwindling away, and in a few years hence will scarcely leave a memorial to perpetuate their names, as the once mighty rulers of the vast American regions" (27-30), the narrator comes to identify the Huron "nation" with the nation of Ireland, another obvious victim of "Europe's crimes and Europe's errors" (1078). The invocation of Ossian at this point sets the poem in an older context of Christianity displacing Pagan cultures, and prepares the reader for the tensions between the European poet/narrator of *The Huron Chief* and his Amerindian subjects. One variation of the Ossian legend is that Ossian, after a lengthy stay with the *Sidhe* in *Tir na nOg*, returns to Ireland as a very old man, where he encounters Saint Patrick, the representative of the Christian culture which has supplanted his own (Nutt 23). Kidd, or the poem's

European narrator, is placed in a position similar to that of the earlier Christian appropriator when he encounters the Huron Chief of the title, "a hoary Chief, whom age delays on" (134-35). Skenandow, the Huron Chief of the title, may have derived his name from a historical Huron chief, Skenandoa, who Kidd claims was born in 1696 (Bentley, Explanatory Notes 77), and was reported to be still living in 1816. If he is the main model for Kidd's Huron chief, then his extreme old age (which recalls that of the Derry bard Dennis Hampson) would put him in the position of being the only living link with an older Huron tradition as yet unacculturated by white influence. An encounter with such a unique individual would place Kidd's poet-narrator in the position of St. Patrick, who felt it necessary to set down in writing the pagan, Celtic culture at its point of obliteration. Kidd's poet-narrator also draws on the oral tradition of the Hurons to create his poem, after he discovers that the earlier "glories of the Huron race" are still carried in the heads of "remnant of the Nation," and a young man of the tribe is able to "well recount[] every name/ On mem'ry's page--stamped in succession" from historical past to present date (670-76).

As Kidd develops the themes in *The Huron Chief*, the initial freedom he sees in the Canadian wilderness scenes is modified by his encounter with the Hurons, and his gradual understanding that their historical oppression is similar to

the oppression that the narrator wishes to escape by leaving Ireland. This parallel is perhaps most obviously seen in the corresponding language which Kidd and Skenandow use, during some of what Kidd portrays as the poem's most innocent and sublime moments. During their first encounter, the Huron Chief points out, politely, that the narrator is trespassing on Indian territory, and places this initial trespass in the historical context of white offence. The narrator in defence, claims he is "not the Indian's foe--no hostile hand I bear to thee:/ My bosom feels for others' woe." As subsequent events in the poem illustrate, the writer's status as Irish emigrant has also involved a degree of "woe," which is expressed more fully when the narrator is invited to take part in the village festivities (and during the dances conceives what society of his time considered a "foolish, wayward inclination" for an Indian woman). His newly-discovered affection makes him suddenly recall his

> ...boy-hood's days,
> When o'er Slievegallin's mantled braes,
> Ere thought, or reason, took command
> I strayed with heart as light as feather
> Or raised my rude, unguarded hand
> To slay the bee lodged in the heather.
> (494-98)

Kidd's loss of what he calls these "joys so stainless", due in part to time's passage, but also to his emigration from Derry, is mirrored in a nostalgic lament of the aged chief, who in reflecting that "Time's hand lies heavy....And ruin seems almost complete" recalls that in his "boy-hood's

cheerful hour/ Through these green woods I've loved to stray,/ and chase the bee from leaf to flower,/ Or with the little Chipmunk play" (600-4). The poem's linking of a specific site--Slievegallin--in Kidd's home country with the Chief's former territories in North America are emphatic enough to display Kidd's ready sympathy with the chief's recollection of the events of dispossession that have left him with what he calls "the remnant of my tribe" in old age (613).

Another parallel in image and language between Kidd's exile poems and *The Huron Chief* is his use of the legendary and ill-fated Indian beauty, Tapooka, whom the Hurons believe has committed suicide, rather than break a vow to her lover and marry an "aged chief" (285). (Kidd adapts this legend from an anecdote of Schoolcraft, rather than from any authentic Huron myth [Bentley, Explanatory Notes 78]). Kidd later notes that the Indians compared everything that was beautiful to

> the unfortunate TA-POO-KA.... She was the idol of the Nation--every young heart worshipped her. (821n)

As a national paradigm, Tapooka recalls Kidd's lyric, "Cathleen," as well as the Irish *aisling* tradition, in which a vision of Ireland appears to the poet in the form of a beautiful woman, representing Ireland's past and future glories, or as a careworn, tattered woman, representing the oppression of the present. Kidd describes Cathleen as

having been marked by her dispossession and emigration:

> A sun more fierce than ever yet has flung
> Its scorching beams upon her own green hills,
> And tinged her brow with deep Canadian die--
> To me she told the story of her woes
> And hopes of other times, which never more
> Can wake one spark of joy in her dark soul.
> (172)

While Tapooka's exile has been brought about through romantic, rather than political "woes," Kidd also describes her as having lost through sadness much of her legendary beauty, so that "Her faded form so blighted seemed..." (1009). Kidd is also sensitive to Tapooka's feelings during her long sojourn among an alien tribe, by describing it in language that would also be appropriate to Kidd's own sense of homesickness:

> In this neat cabin of the Chief,
> Whose wife and daughters gave relief
> She quietly remained till now--
> Nor seldom ever further taking
> Her footsteps, than that mountain's brow,
> Her evening visits lonely making,
> Because it looked so like the same,
> On Huron's banks from whence she came.
> (1011-18)

Kidd, for whom every hill in Canada seemed to recall his beloved Slievegallin, describes Tapooka's nostalgia as a similar attachment to familiar landscapes.

Kidd does not content himself with merely making allusions to a lost Eden for Irish and Huron alike, but, through the poem's romantic subplot, in which the re-united lovers are killed at the point of wedded bliss by an ambush party of white Christians, makes both narrator and reader

witness an actual enactment of the "woe" (1370) which has so far been confined to footnotes. The fact that the white intrusion comes at a point where Kidd has commented upon the clumsy or downright malicious ministrations to the Indians by itinerant missionaries who have not taken the time or trouble to understand the culture they have undertaken to convert, seems to point again to Kidd's understanding of the damage which sectarianism, above all other of Europe's faults, has wrought on the two societies. In one footnote, Kidd quotes the complaints of the native peoples against Europeans in terms which echo Drennan's portrait of the introduction of sectarian strife into Ireland: "We and our kindred tribes...lived in peace and harmony with each other, before the white people came into this country--our Council-house extended far to the north and far to the south. In the middle of it we would meet from all parts to smoke the pipe of peace together" (1080n).

If Kidd's *Huron Chief* is informed by Drennan's portrait of Ireland, then the sectarian dimension of the Huron Chief makes sense in the context of both Irish and Huron society. Like the Milesians referred to by Drennan, the Hurons are primarily a warrior society (Hutchinson 124). As Kidd observes in a footnote, "Nothing seems to afford the Indian so much pleasure as the relation of his noble exploits in war. The young men gather round the old warriors, and listen to their stories with all the delight of a proud

enthusiasm" (1234n). However, Kidd is also at pains to challenge the stereotype of native peoples as bloodthirsty or vengeful "savages." As in Ireland, where the exploits of the warriors in Celtic sagas helped fuel a revival in national pride, the Huron also use "noble exploits" to instill a sense of pride in their history among the young. Moreover, the "warriors" who are given preeminence in *The Huron Chief* are Skenandow, of course, but also Tecumseh (1768-1813) and the Mingo chief Logan, who were distinguished, not only by their prowess as warriors, but by their loyalty to the British and the Americans, respectively. Kidd considers Logan's "vengeance" on the whites as justified, after his "wives and children all" (729) were murdered by the American "Colonel Cresap and his Christian followers whom [Logan] had long befriended" (736n).

Kidd's continual repetition of the phrase "Christians" in connection with encounters between Amerindian tribes and Europeans has the unsettling effect of making the word synonymous with betrayal by the end of the poem. Kidd implies, like Drennan, that the supposedly Christian, European invaders merely used religion as a pretext for robbing indigenous peoples of their lands, "as under the name of that religion, and from those who professed it,...[the Amerindians] experienced all their wrongs and sufferings" (1255n). Where Drennan portrayed Ireland's

invaders as having "inverted [God's] plan,/ And moulded their God to the image of man," Kidd cites a number of authorities to demonstrate the natural civility and generosity of the native peoples of North America, and then suggests that any violence or vengeance attributed to them has been taught by Europeans. He describes the whites' corruption of the principles of Christianity in sectarian terms that would customarily have more familiar implications for Irish than Huron society:

> It is a foul--unholy crime,
> Stamped on the open page of time--
> To plunder Nature's humble child
> Of all the gifts for him intended
> And scattered through his forest wild,
> Till Christian charity extended
> Her bounteous hand, and made him know,
> For bliss exchanged--a real woe!
>
> The missionary evils brought
> By those who first Religion taught
> Forgive the phrase--had more of hell--
> And all the crimes with it connected--
> Than ever yet were known to dwell
> With those oft called the *lost*--neglected--
> The barb'rous Indian--Savage race--
> The outcasts of the human race!
> (1371-78)

In continually denouncing the harmful effects of "jarring *Creeds-men*" who destroyed the "social tie of friendship," and "in Religion's pathway threw/ sectarian seeds, which rankly grew" (1250-53),[7] Kidd aligns himself, not only with

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[7]See also Moore's "Intolerance: a Satire" for a similar condemnation of Britain's exploitation of Ireland's sectarian strife:

> Thy heart would burn--yes even thy Pittite heart
> Would burn to think that such a blooming part
> Of the world's garden, rich in nature's charms,

Drennan, but through him "with Rousseau and Shaftesbury...in his belief that man is innately good, that proof of his innate moral sense resides in his ability to respond sympathetically to his fellow man and to live harmoniously in the natural world" (Bentley intro. xxiii).

Kidd, in contrasting the Huron's scenes of bliss," which follow "nought but nature's plan" (333), to "Europe's Pomp" (319), compares the freedom and instinctive justice enjoyed by the Hurons to that enjoyed by the Irish peoples before the introduction by their conquerors of plantations, penal laws and enclosures--pales for body and soul:

> While every prospect rising to the view,
> Half tells the joys our happier fathers knew,
> Before the plans of art had come between,
> And made of beauty's shades a barren scene.
> Oh happy home! Where naught but nature's plan
> Is felt, and practised, by contented man...
> No half-taught Nobel, from the Charter-school,
> Whose wealth, and vanity, are sure to rule,
> Can here disturb that peace,that tranquil good,
> Which cheers the freeman of the bount'ous wood.
> (329-40)

While this passage could refer, in general terms, to the state of man before civilization, the words Kidd chooses have nuances that align Huron history with post-conquest Irish history, a wearily recounted record of confiscation

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> And fill'd with social souls and vigorous arms
> Should be the victim of that canting crew,
> So smooth, so godly,--yet so devilish too;
> Who, arm'd at once with prayer-books and with whips
> Blood on their hands, and Scripture on their lips,
> Tyrants by creed, and torturers by text,
> Make *this* life hell, in honour of the next!
> (*Poetical Works* 138)

and enclosures that transformed the "happier fathers" of the Irish from "freem[e]n" into serfs.

The nationalist aspirations in Ireland, expressed through a desire for religious freedom and harmony between sects that had been envisioned by Drennan, popularized by Moore, and pursued by O'Connell, are also echoed in Kidd's development of his Amerindian heroes, who throughout the poem are portrayed as using their deadly skills in "defensive war" only (191). After the white ambush and warfare that turns the "comic" resolution of the Huron wedding into tragedy (Bentley, intro. xxvii), the young men of the tribe debate with the Huron elders the fate of three captured whites, who are now "fast pinioned to that bas-wood tree/ To wait the tomahawk's aimed blow" (1460-61). The debate moves, it might not be too fanciful to surmise, from the revolutionary and self-immolating arguments of the United Irishmen to O'Connell's more conciliatory and constitutional aims. Arguing that the shades of Tapooka and Alkwanwaugh, the murdered Amerindian lovers, demand an offering of white blood,

> each youth's keen eloquence,
> his Nation's evils would recount--
> Whose soul would be her bold defence,
> Or, perish in that Nation's fall,
> When ruin had encircled all.
> (1526-30)

Nevertheless, the narrator recounts that when the young warriors' rage "subsided to a partial rest" (1532), the elders, including Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief and hero of

the 1812 war[8]

> In most affecting words, appealings,
> Said--Hurons, spare! give, give consent--
> Pardon these whites--they may repent....
>
> TECUMSEH spoke the words of peace
> With full persuasion, to release
> The captive foe.--He would not shed
> A tyrant's blood, when conquered--standing
> In chains, like those who bend the head
> In sadness here--with grief commanding
> The finer feelings of the heart,
> To let them now unhurt depart.
>
> (1536-54)

After reminding the captive white men of the repeated betrayals of treaties, marked by ceremonies including the planting of "the tree of peace" and the "chain"--this time of friendship, rather than captivity--Skenandow releases the white men, "an act which symbolically reasserts the significance of the tree as a metaphor of 'peace' (427n.) rather than destruction, 'liberty' (1596) rather than bondage" (Bentley, intro. xxix).

As in his Irish poems and journalism, Kidd emphasises the relationship between eloquence and the restoration of

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[8]In *Mimic Fires*, Bentley discusses another literary treatment of Tecumseh: [In *Tecumseh*] John Richardson's portrait of the chief has "to overcome...his own perception of the Native peoples as ignoble savages" characterized by "the two emotions that, according to the four stages theory, characterized all people in the savage state," including an unquenchable desire for revenge." However, Richardson also notes that Tecumseh demonstrated mercy "when he prevented the massacre of captured Americans at Fort Meigs, an act of "humanity...[that was] long remembered and...contributed to his reputation among whites" (144). Kidd of course, in characterising the Native peoples as noble savages, emphasises their innate mercy and morality through Tecumseh's and Skenandow's eloquent appeal to his countrymen to "forgive" the captured whites.

peace in *The Huron Chief*. Drennan and subsequent would-be advocates of Irish rights also recounted Irish protestations of loyalty in the context of a long history of British wrongs. O'Connell's Tipperary speech, with its expressive appeals to his followers and opponents to "forgive one another," likely made an impression on Kidd, who later included O'Connell in a list of distinguished Irish orators (*Irish Vindicator*, June 15, 1830). Furthermore, while Kidd was writing *The Huron Chief* it may not be unacceptable to speculate that O'Connell's much-quoted conclusion may have been ringing in his ears:

> We will plant in our Native Land the Constitutional Tree of Liberty. That noble tree will prosper and flourish in our Green and Fertile Country. It will extend its protecting branches all over this lovely island. Beneath its sweet and sacred shade, the universal People of Ireland, Catholics and Protestants, and Presbyterians, and Dissenters of every Class, will sit in peace and unison and tranquillity.
> (qtd. in the *Vindicator* 12 Dec. 1828)

In this passage, O'Connell transforms the Tree of Liberty--originally a symbol of republican France that had been adopted by the United Irishmen--into a symbol of the type of constitutional liberty that would grant Catholics equal access to the rights enshrined in British law. Kidd, through his studies of Amerindian legend and culture (filtered as it was through the writings of white missionaries and explorers such as Heckewelder, Colden, Schoolcraft and Buchanan), must have been delighted to happen upon the symbol of the peace-tree which would have so

many metaphoric associations for an Irish audience as well.

That O'Connell's emancipation movement was also grounded upon the historical experience, especially "the sense of historical injustice which centred principally on the 'broken' Treaty of Limerick (1691)" (O'Ferrall 26) seems to suggest a further link between Kidd's portrayal of the Indians and his observation, from afar, of Catholic Emancipation. The eloquence of the Amerindian elders, especially Tecumseh, who "possessed the very essence of persuasion" (1547n.) seems to echo the "oratory" of O'Connell; it is very likely that Kidd is attuned to even the most fortuitous similarities in the rhetoric of both cultures. What complicates any parallel drawn between Kidd's sympathies for the Huron culture, and his approval of the move towards Catholic emancipation, is the poem's tragic ending, in which Skenandow is killed in one final example of white, Christian betrayal. Since much of the energy and sympathy of the poem appears to derive from Kidd's own sense of dispossession and his denunciation of the long history of European maltreatment of the Amerindians, and since, from a satirical point of view, Kidd's guiding star throughout the poem is Juvenal, rather than Horace, the movement of the poem seems necessarily one towards bitterness and tragedy.

Kidd's need to expose the self-serving and hypocritical sectarian rhetoric which he sees as not only the root of Huron dispossession but also his own, is unresolved by

Kidd's observation that after years of mistreatment, "Many of the Indian Tribes have emigrated into Canada--and are now prospering, and happily enjoying the manly protection of the British Government" (33-35). Kidd himself seems to project any resolution of the problems that have forced him to leave Ireland into an imaginative future, which may be facilitated in part by his appropriation, or more properly, his imaginative uncovering of the legends of the Hurons and the Irish. When listening to the stories that collectively comprise the Huron's oral tradition, "their deeds of war, and feats of glory,/ Till we had heard their rise and fall," Kidd reflects that contemplation of these legends "must unfold a saddened story,/ To a wiser--happier--age/ Traced on some future poet's page" (1022-26). If Kidd's attempt to elicit sympathy and understanding by showing the Huron's patient forgiveness of wrongs and their eloquent defence of their rights might lead his readers to become an audience more sympathetic to Irish complaints, then Kidd may have been attempting to fulfil what he saw was the principal role of the "bard" in establishing an imaginative and constructive connection between past and future glories.

Chapter Two

The Reluctant Emigrant: Standish O'Grady's Patriot Muse

> Indeed, absence, however fatal to some affections of the heart, rather strengthens our love for the land where we were born; and Ireland is the country, of all others, which an exile from it must remember with most enthusiasm. Those few darker and less amiable traits with which bigotry and misrule have stained her character, and which are too apt to disgust us upon a nearer intercourse, become softened at a distance, or altogether invisible; and nothing is remembered but her virtues and her misfortunes--the zeal with which she has always loved liberty, and the barbarous policy which has always withheld it from her--the ease with which her generous spirit might be conciliated, and the cruel ingenuity which has been exerted to "wring her into undutifulness."
>
> Thomas Moore, "Letter on Music" 147

> "To O'Grady, to be 'Canadian' meant little more than to be an exile from Ireland...."
>
> Brian Trehearne, Introduction xxix

On May 22, 1836, five years after Kidd's death, Standish O'Grady Bennett (fl. 1793-1841) arrived at the port of Quebec on board the *Ocean* (Trehearne, intro x). According to Brian Trehearne's plausible biographical sketch of the poet, Standish O'Grady[1] left Waterford, County Cork for

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[1] There is no evidence that Standish O'Grady is an ancestor of Standish James O'Grady (1846-1928), the author of the *History of Ireland: Heroic Period*, whom R.F. Foster calls the "Father of the Irish literary revival." Trehearne's research into O'Grady's background provides strong evidence that his family name was Bennett, that he was an indirect descendant of the prominent Irish family the O'Gradys of Kilballyowen, and adopted the O'Grady surname. Trehearne also argues convincingly that O'Grady was not a clergyman, but received tithes as a "lay impropriator"--a private citizen who through the patronage of a member of the aristocracy, was the recipient of tithe revenue transferred

Quebec, arriving in May, 1836 (Trehearne, intro. i). A member of the minor gentry, whose income depended upon the impropriation of Church of Ireland tithes, O'Grady departed Ireland in "late middle age," after coordinated Irish agrarian protests[2] made it impossible for him to collect this income, and when moves towards Catholic emancipation undermined the very system of privileges that had enabled O'Grady and his class to justify such impropriations. Understandably, O'Grady imported to Canada a very different attitude towards the presiding religious and political communities in both countries than had Kidd. Nevertheless, it is upon the Irish historical events which led to his emigration that O'Grady repeatedly dwells in *The Emigrant*.

The first of a projected four cantos (which O'Grady never completed) was published by John Lovell in 1841, and reprinted for the author in Montreal in 1842 (Trehearne,

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from a Church of Ireland parish (Trehearne xviii-xxiii).

[2]The historian R.F. Foster notes that "the early nineteenth century saw the proliferation of rural protest movements, the 'banditti' or 'Whiteboys' of contemporary accounts, who can be categorized, often according to locality, as Whitefeet, Threshers, Terry Alts, Rockites, Carders, Caravats, Shanavests or Ribbonnmen...." According to Foster, the 1830s, the decade when O'Grady decided to leave Ireland, saw an escalation of Agrarian violence, "with what amounted to episodic warfare over the payment of Church tithes; though methods of collection had been adapted by a Composition Act in 1823, the system still burdened non-Church of Ireland members in a spectacularly inequitable way, and mobilized a wide cross-section of resentful opinion" (292). That O'Grady found himself on the wrong side of the tide of resentful opinion has made it difficult for him to find sympathetic readers to this day.

intro. lxxii), and is "the first [Canadian] long poem to concern itself principally with emigration" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 188). Given the impact that pre-Famine emigration had upon both Canada and Ireland in the first decades of the nineteenth century, O'Grady's particular obsession is not all that surprising. In the years between 1825 and 1845, nearly 450,000 Irish left for British North America alone (Houston and Smyth 21). That the movement--within a single generation--of such a large number of Irish men and women had far reaching effects on both Ireland and Canada is obvious. "In these critical years, rural settlement was initiated and, in central and eastern Canada, largely completed. During this settlement phase some of the best agricultural land in the country was appropriated, and the Irish far outnumbered arriving English and Scots and clearly established the pre-Famine era as definitive in the formation of Canadian Irish communities" (Houston and Smyth 23).

In view of the significant impact that the Irish had upon the settlement of Canada, O'Grady might be expected to have celebrated the Irish emigrant contribution in the same way that Alexander McLachlan later commemorated Scottish settlers in his *Emigrant* (1861). Instead, the struggles and satisfactions of settlement are barely touched upon in *The Emigrant*, and almost never in a positive light. The poem instead focuses upon the emigrating Irish as solitary

individuals whose isolation becomes an emblem of their inability to survive in the New World. Rather than emphasise the benefits of settlement in Canada, O'Grady dwells time and again upon the evils which he and his fellow emigrants have been forced to flee in Ireland. In contrast to Kidd, a younger and more impoverished man who saw the poetic and political potentials of Canada, O'Grady does not feel that the "locality" in which he settled presented many subjects that would "engage that attention and effort of genius which might otherwise awake something of more engaging matter at the moment" (Preface 5-6). Nor does he feel that the bright future of the New World will light the way for an oppressed Ireland. Quite the opposite: O'Grady sees Ireland as a country with a brilliant future behind it. Even when dealing with Canadian experiences and subject matter, O'Grady never really succeeds in tearing his "parting gaze" away from Cape Clear, the last visible part of Ireland mentioned in the poem's opening lines (5-6). In order to understand fully the preoccupations to which this rather sprawling and encyclopedic poem owes any shape it may have, readers must also fix their gaze on Ireland, particularly upon the political upheavals which led to Ireland's union with Britain in 1800. For the most part, *The Emigrant* depicts emigration as a particularly Irish political, economic and social problem, and in this context, O'Grady's writing seems informed by many conventions of

contemporary debate. For O'Grady, this debate is caught up in the wider issue of Ireland's relationship to Britain and its expanding empire, and the poem and its many footnotes show evidence of O'Grady's working towards a definition of Irish national character and goals within this relationship. Finally, when describing his personal plight and Irish emigration in general, O'Grady introduces an interestingly dissident voice into early Canadian portrayals of colonization and empire building.

For O'Grady, emigration to Canada is seen as a symptom of the collapse of the system that gave him both identity and support. He shares this view with contemporary observers in Ireland, for whom the mass migrations of 1825 onwards evoked a complex series of responses. For the emigrants themselves, the decision to leave Ireland was primarily an economic one, in response to the collapse of agricultural prosperity following the end of the Napoleonic war in 1815 (Houston and Smyth 20). British administrators both promoted emigration as a means of relieving the high unemployment and economic depression in Ireland and England in the eighteen-twenties, and as a way of stocking Lower and Upper Canada with people loyal to Britain, as security against American encroachment (Jenkins 126). These two ideas were not necessarily seen as complementary; the social unrest and religious makeup of Ireland complicated the

emigration issue.

The publication of the fifth edition of Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1817) coincided with increased emigration and helped "to undermine the old notion that the exportation of people would fatally weaken the nation" (Jenkins 126). Nevertheless, there were some social critics in Ireland and England who challenged Malthus' views that poverty and social unrest could be blamed upon over-population. Such critics attributed much of Ireland's misery, not to over-population, but to the large proportion of subsistence agriculture in the country, and to the lack of any real capital investment or improvement of tenant-held properties. Moreover, it was not the poor who were most likely to contemplate the long, hazardous and expensive journey across the Atlantic. In the absence of a comprehensive plan of state-assisted emigration (not implemented on a large scale until the late eighteen-twenties) (Jenkins 259-61), the only people who were able to consider the expenses of a transatlantic journey and subsequent land purchases were moderately well-off farmers (Houston and Smyth 71). Not surprisingly, the majority of these were Protestants, who were traditionally "more prone to respond to...disruptions by emigrating. More of them had the means, and geographical mobility was more significant in their recent traditions" (Houston and Smyth 45). Protestants also happened to be the very class that British

administrators viewed as essential to the social and economic well-being of Ireland. Consequently, a mass migration primarily made up of those owning capital and sympathetic to the prevailing government caused a great deal of concern in Britain. For instance, Prime Minister Robert Peel's confidence in emigration as

> a remedy for Ireland's ills was shaken by the evidence that most of those making their own way to North America came from the Protestant population of the northern counties. He was loath to lose persons he regarded as both loyal and industrious. Unwilling to ban their departure, even when they were 'mechanics and artificers' and therefore subject to restrictions, he was still keen to divert them to Canada.
>
> (Jenkins 127)

In view of the variety of ideological responses to the causes of widespread poverty and social unrest in Ireland and Britain, it is not surprising that emigration became in itself a politically charged issue. Proponents of emigration could offer it as a solution to social and economic ills. Alternately, it could become a weapon in the hands of social reformers and conservative Irishmen alike, seeing it as symptomatic of a disintegrating moral or social fabric. This complexity is reflected in O'Grady's ambivalence when discussing emigration from Ireland. When parts of the poem dealing with emigration are accepted as facets of the larger issues surrounding emigration from Ireland, the assessment that the poem lacks "decisive structural entities" becomes less pressing, and the poet's inherent contradictions more explicable. O'Grady's "turn and turnabout travelogue"

(Trehearne, intro. xxix), while "appropriate for a poet caught...between two cultures," can also be rationalized--at least initially--by the poet's desire to include and examine the various arguments for and against emigration.

It is very likely that much of O'Grady's information on the pros and cons of emigration came from emigrant guidebooks, which were readily available at the time that he departed for Canada. D.M.R. Bentley calls attention to the similarities between O'Grady's treatment of emigration and several emigrant guidebooks. *The Emigrant's Informant, a Guide to Upper Canada* by a Canadian Settler, "concentrates particularly on the social and political problems of Ireland" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 192). Likewise, O'Grady's poem and its notes detail very precisely the various abuses, revolts and disasters of Irish political life from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, as well as the circumstances behind his own decision to leave. In several footnotes to the poem, he enumerates the breakdown of the tithe system upon which he depended, and criticises the government's failure to choose, out of the myriad social upheavals affecting Ireland, O'Grady's financial problems as its first priority:

> I myself was among the sufferers;
> disgusted with the government, and
> unable to exist at home, I sailed for
> America, with a small competency, and
> abandoned the tithe question altogether.
> (Notes 71)

The consequences of mass emigration were perhaps even

more widely publicized through reviews of emigrant guidebooks in periodicals such as the *Dublin University Magazine*. Added to these were the reports made public by House of Commons select committees and editorials on every aspect of Irish society that touched upon the issue of emigration. If O'Grady indeed modelled his poem upon the information contained in "travelogue[s]" and "emigration guide book[s]" (Trehearne, intro. xxvii), then he would likely see it as part of his role to assimilate and order the various and sometimes conflicting discussions of the issue of emigration, and in particular, how they touched upon his own situation.

The issue of overpopulation, to which O'Grady alludes in *The Emigrant*, is one of several sometimes contradictory ideas jostling for space in the poem. In his Preface, O'Grady initially refers to emigrants as "our redundant population," a Malthusian concept shared by many, including the editors of *Dublin University Magazine*, who observed, "we have a redundant population--a stagnation of the life-blood of our prosperity" ("The Canadas and Emigration"). Nevertheless, O'Grady appears to refute both Malthus and his own Preface within the body of the poem, by suggesting instead that almost all emigrants could be supported at home:

> Ye mighty pause!, and since a world ye claim,
> Won by *Ierne's host,* whose sons sustain
> Thy name all glorious, aid thy generous race,

> Who bade thy proudest banners rest in peace.
> Still canst thou aid thy nation's strength secure
> Nor spurn the humble annals of thy poor;
> Thy desert tracts can all their wants supply,
> Link nature's bonds and then a world defy.
> Give Erin's sons that boon they humbly crave,
> And form a fond alliance with the brave,
> Your generous sons, with no degenerate pride,
> Will hail the act, just government abide;
> With fond affection (angry thoughts repressed:)
> and help the hand gave happiness its rest.
> (61-74)

Like Kidd, who repeatedly emphasised Irish loyalty over rebelliousness, O'Grady not only implies that Ireland could support its "redundant population" under an enlightened and benevolent British administration, but also suggests that losing people whose valour and loyalty had in the past helped increase Britain's empire, will indeed "fatally undermine the nation." In this passage, O'Grady's belief that "desert tracts" or Irish waste lands could be cultivated was a popular notion held by Irish reformers and the British government alike. As early as 1819, Brian Jenkins notes, one select committee observing Ireland "had estimated that two million acres of bogland could be reclaimed and a further one and one-half million acres of remote lands opened up by roads." This strengthened further the arguments of social activists who knew that "to attribute the heartrending plight of the Irish peasantry to rack-rents, vestry assessments or cesses, grand jury jobs and the exorbitant demands of tithe proctors, was to controvert Malthus and sound a clarion call for remedial

action" (Jenkins 175).

O'Grady's support of land reform as an alternative to emigration is contrasted to the examples of landlord abuses and excesses that weakened the tenant farmer's hold on the land and in turn threatened the Irish economy. He criticises such Irish-made inequities as "terms from year to year,/ No tenures now and *tithe laws more severe,*" which affected the security of a farmer's hold on his land and its improvements, as well as "poor laws" which, in the wake of the other abuses, merely serve to confirm the transformation of a once-productive population into "*beggars to the state*" (404-7). To further his argument that Ireland's population could be supported if agricultural tenure and farming practices were improved, he portrays in an endnote "the fertility of the soil [as] bearing a perfect analogy to its prolific inhabitants" (101) while discussing at the same time the misery into which current abuses have plunged the Irish peasant in the midst of a rich and fertile land.

It appears that while O'Grady was attuned to the various political debates arising from social reform and empire building, his desire to assess each of these arguments within his poem meant that he was unable to prevent his discussion of emigration from sometimes swivelling back and forth between differing opinions. Nevertheless, in reading some contemporary discussions of emigration, one can find an overarching sectarian theme that

helps the modern reader sort out O'Grady's preoccupations. In reading *The Emigrant* in the context of opinions published in conservative, Protestant journals of the time, O'Grady's views about emigration and settlement in Lower Canada appear more resolved, for in such journals emigration is seen to be a predominantly Protestant response to Irish civil unrest, as much a reaction against newly fledged Catholic political and national awareness, as against uncongenial economic conditions.

The period in which O'Grady emigrated "saw a predominantly Protestant emigration from a land which" as a result of Catholic emancipation and tithe reform "no longer privileged them utterly over their Catholic neighbours" (Trehearne, Notes 128). This state of affairs exacerbated the isolation and downright paranoia already felt by Protestants, particularly in the South of Ireland, where

> Protestant settlements were rarely contiguous but were formed of isolated pockets of better-off tenant farmers and the commercial classes in towns. Constructed under artificial conditions and in a period of economic prosperity, these Protestant enclaves felt the full impact of the nineteenth century's economic recession. Their inhabitants also lived as minorities among Catholic neighbours, whose hostility had peaked in the sectarian and political bitterness of the 1790s. Their power and position were under threat, and like their counterparts in Ulster their response included emigration.
>
> (Houston and Smyth 46)

The resulting mass emigration drew many alarmed commentaries from observers of the "still increasing stream of emigration among the lower order of Protestants," such as

those writing for the *Dublin University Magazine*:

> The whole body are in motion, agitated like the leaves of the forest in the wind, and give promise of an emigration, unexampled in the history of the civilized world--a whole people, two millions of souls, loosened from their native soil, bursting every link that bound them to home and to country, and transplanting themselves and their little ones to far distant lands, there to seek that independence--security--happiness, which never could be theirs amid the distractions of their native land!
> ("Emigration of the Protestants of Ireland", 2)

In his own emphasis on sundered ties and lost loyalties, it appears to be this particular diaspora of the "lower order of Protestants" to which O'Grady refers in the opening of his poem:

> From peaceful homes and habitations
> spurned,
> From fond connections, aged parents mourned,
> From dear society, now friends no more,
> To cheer their wanderings on a distant shore,
> From all those tender ties on friendship wait.
> From links that bind and *fortify* a *state*,
> Behold proud Erin's sons promiscuous spread....
> (41-47)

While dwelling on the "sentimental" aspects of emigration (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 193), and the severing of bonds of family and *amour patriae*, the words that O'Grady chooses to emphasise (at least typographically) are the bonds upon which the security of a country depends. The ominous notes that are struck almost upon departure and that resonate throughout the poem are ones that at once herald both future disasters for individual emigrants such as O'Grady, and the poet's unease at what such emigration portends for Ireland as a whole.

The *Dublin University Magazine* article alerted its already uneasy conservative and Protestant readers to some of the obvious effects of large-scale emigration, not the least of which was "the effect of the emigration of so great a number of farmers and small capitalists upon the amount of farming capital in the country....The emigrants are almost universally the most monied portion of the population; they all have some capital, more or less, which has been employed here in farming purposes..." (2). More than the loss of capital, however, Protestants feared the increased loss of influence of a group that had for three centuries viewed itself as a garrison of civilized values in the midst of a hostile native populace, engendering "that feeling of distrust and sense of insecurity, which the removal of such numbers creates among those who are necessitated to remain" (2). O'Grady also cites fear of organized violence and intimidation as a motive for departure in *The Emigrant*:

> Land of my fathers! green and fertile
> soil!
> Ill fated spot, now rapt in endless broil,
> Thy bigot sons, thy democrats for thee,
> Have sealed thy ruin and thy misery
> The night assassins, instigating band
> There prowl for murder with each Rockite hand!
> (1750-55)

When he discusses Irish agrarian violence--such as the actions of "Captain Rock," the mythical leader of one Catholic organization that was successful in intimidating tithe-collectors--O'Grady's personal grievances begin to colour his more generalized emigration narrative, thus tying

his own plight to that of the "chill peasant," or desperate Protestant tenant farmer.[3] "For deeds like these, bad government at home,/ With stern disgust I left my stately dome,/ In far sought climes, more happy thence to roam" (1756-58).

In referring to agrarian protesters, O'Grady is following the example of some contemporary reviews and articles of the time, which gave an overview of the type of unrest that justified Protestant emigration even in the face of the perceived moral and economic void it left in Ireland. In the *Dublin University Magazine*, the reviewer of Martin Doyle's matter-of-fact portrait of emigration in *Hints of Emigration to Upper Canada, especially addressed to the lower classes of Great Britain and Ireland* read his own sectarian anxieties into Doyle's discussion of suitable emigrants in order to include concerns about what they perceived to be a symptom of growing lawlessness related to enfranchising (and thus emboldening) a once-chastened native population:

> *We* do not wish to diminish the population by emigration, but we wish to send those men, who by their steady adherence to their principles, have brought on them the anger of the midnight legislator, beyond the reach of the bullet or the

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[3]According to Edward Brynn, organized refusal to pay tithes, or actual intimidation of tithe-owners to either accept a lower payment or waive tithes altogether was common in the period in which O'Grady was writing. It is not entirely unlikely that O'Grady himself experienced threats of violence before deciding to take his chances in the New World

> steel. We are unwilling to rob the landlord of his tenant, but we wish to give security to the Protestant farmer, who in his present state is liable to be made a bankrupt, having his barns and his corn stacks made a midnight signal and a token to the country that the laws and vengeance and justice sleep. We would not deprive the farmer of his comfortable subsistence; but we are willing to make ready a habitation every whit as snug for him, who in disgust, despair, and perhaps bodily fear, is anxious to try that land which has ever been a shelter to the needy.
>
> ("The Canadas and Emigration" 1)

While agrarian tactics on the part of Catholic tenants, whether of passive resistance or active intimidation, were less centrally-organized or widespread than the Protestant minority of the time believed, there were documented cases of violence or intimidation against tenants, landowners, and tithe-holders such as O'Grady, rumours of which were enough to impel disaffected farmers to emigrate. "For some years this system has been carried to a fearful extent; so that our people are beaten at fairs and markets, and exposed at all times to the open hostility, as well as the secret enmity of the native and Popish population, insomuch that it would be impossible, even had they no other evils to contend against, for them to remain in the country," the alarmist (and bigoted) *Dublin University Magazine* editors were prompted to note (1).

Such passages appear to show the extent to which O'Grady may have ordered both his thoughts on Irish emigration and his own personal experience on the issues raised in the myriad emigrant guide books and by their

reviewers. Like the editors of the *Dublin University Magazine*, O'Grady justifies the emigration of both Protestant and tenant farmers by suggesting that in some cases it was the only means of security open to them. However, he also considers the advice contained in books such as Martin Doyle's *Hints*, which was reprinted in Dublin in 1832 and reviewed in the *Dublin University Magazine*. Martin Doyle argues:

> I do not want to strip the country of its population--the landlords of their tenantry--or the snug farmer of his comfortable subsistence, by urging any wild or doubtful speculation. I am for letting "well enough alone," or if it is to be bettered, let it be at *home*; but I am very desirous to rescue from overwhelming distress, those who struggle without succeeding, paupers in everything but in health and strength, in able bodies and willing minds.
>
> (2)

While insisting in his Preface, "let none imagine me an enemy to emigration; nothing, from my heart, do I desire more," O'Grady also includes in his notes a disclaimer similar to Doyle's against reckless speculation and abandonment of Ireland. "The exaggerated accounts from America are much to be censured....This new world is a lottery, as in all human affairs there are blanks and prizes, and for the most part more of the former than the latter" (26). Echoing Doyle, O'Grady admonishes those who have the means to improve their lot by staying where they

are, to "best engage your husbandry at home" (1108).

Like Doyle, O'Grady argues in favour of emigration for the strong but near-destitute. To "the forsaken poor" (1127), O'Grady advises, "bring hither *strength* your arms will best supply/ and gain that wealth your countrymen deny" (1128-29). In order to achieve this, he gives advice to the "lower orders" of emigrants, advice that recalls Doyle's warning to emigrants about the expenditures of setting up a business in the New World, noting that it is only when "a man has a large family of sons, [that] he can wield a large capital in business and to very good purpose" (2). O'Grady suggests,

> It is not money, no mistaken thought,
> By labour here, your sustenance is bought
> A useless land a useless tract remains;
> Till strength and labour turn it into gains,
> Your generous sons their own estate must raise,
> Ere fortune smiles on scenes of other days.
> (1132-37)

For people not so blessed, particularly "a poor person with a large helpless family," one of O'Grady's copious endnotes recommends they "remain patiently at home for a few years, under whatever privations, and look to future times when their families are more advanced, to succeed in America" (82).[4]

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[4]Bentley notes that, "No doubt this advice stems in great measure from O'Grady's personal experience in Sorel and elsewhere, but it also echoes in substance and wording the advice contained in several emigrant guides of the thirties, most notably...William Hickey's *Hints on Emigration to Upper Canada; Especially Addressed to the Lower Classes in Great Britain and Ireland* (1831)." Since

It is interesting to note that when O'Grady views emigration as an abstract issue to be discussed in a detached and balanced way, he appears to take on the role of adviser to the same classes of emigrant singled out by Doyle. When addressing "those of an higher order," presumably emigrants in a similar social and financial position as himself (Trehearne 184), O'Grady suggests that those "who can subsist themselves genteelly at home, should never venture to this side the Atlantic" (82). Certainly, when O'Grady considers his own plight, he is in a particularly anomalous position, since his social background and his solitary role will prevent him from benefitting from the advice contained in *The Emigrant*. Upon debarkation in Quebec, O'Grady immediately "differentiat[es] himself from the other emigrants on the *Ocean*" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 197). While they proceed to farms and homesteads where presumably they will win through strength and hard work what the emigrant guides claim they were denied at home (although O'Grady is never entirely convinced of this, as will be demonstrated below), O'Grady merely begins an exile devoid of everything but an absence of specific civil strife:

> Whilst I a cheerless wanderer seek to
> find
> Some peaceful spot, sequester'd from mankind,
> There in secluded loneliness to dwell
> And bid the world's gay residents farewell.

---

this work is "principally a compilation from other authors," Martin Doyle's advice may well have found its way into this source, as well.

(947-50)

In spite of his--to some extent--measured assessment of the arguments put forth in various guide books available at the time of his departure from Ireland, O'Grady can never quite incorporate his own experience into the accepted view of emigration. This colours his view of his own situation, which he is unable to see as anything other than exile from Ireland to a country which will prove to have civil strife equal to that which he has fled. Moreover, in the poem, even the "lower orders" who, in addition to strength, have the advantage of possessing less sense of their own consequence and lower expectations than a member of O'Grady's class, never manage more than mere subsistence in O'Grady's vision of Lower Canada. Given Canada's hazards, which O'Grady carefully and vividly describes throughout the poem, the emigrant is to be considered lucky if mere subsistence is the worst that happens to him.

The contrast between Ireland, a fertile land embellished with a genteel Irish society, and Lower Canada, which at best provides a "tolerable" subsistence (Preface, 20), becomes one of the controlling themes in *The Emigrant*. O'Grady discusses the varying levels of refinement in Canadian and Irish society, since the poem ranges from portraits of the Irish peasant, to the French Canadians and Amerindians, to O'Grady's own class of genteel Protestants. Unlike Kidd's more Rousseauian depiction of Amerindians,

O'Grady views them more as "barbarians" and as "rude Indians" either hunting in areas unsettled by Europeans, or living on the margins of European settlements in Quebec (1026, 1055). O'Grady's definition of civilized and savage behaviour is conditioned by arguments and rhetoric that had evolved in Ireland over the previous century, and which were used often to rationalize disparate levels of prosperity and social conditions by drawing comparisons between the Irish, Catholic poor, and the Amerindian inhabitants of the New World. It was common for Irish and English historians alike to account for the distressing situation of the Irish poor by attributing it to indolence and a decided lack of enthusiasm for even the basic points of good husbandry and housekeeping. Moreover, from the mid-eighteenth century until O'Grady's time, historians found it very easy to draw parallels between the native Irish and native Americans (Leerssen 335).[5]

It is probably worth pointing out that in nineteenth-century portrayals of Catholic peasants, the degree to which they were judged capable of the refinements of civilization was in inverse proportion to their perceived threat in the wake of efforts to liberalize or abolish the penal

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[5] In his *History of Ireland* (1763), Irish historian Ferdinando Warner observed of the native Irish that "they are so far from being civilized, especially in villages distant from cities, and where the English manners have not prevailed, that their habitations, furniture and apparel are as sordid as those of the savages in America" (qtd in Leerssen, 335).

restrictions upon them. In "Emigration of the Protestants of Ireland," the authors demonize a class that is beginning to flex its political muscles by drawing sharp distinctions between what they perceived to be a beleaguered Protestant tenantry and its violent, uncivilized Catholic counterpart: "The industrious and steady settler of America is not more different from the wild and restless Indian of its native forests than are these two classes of the peasantry of Ireland" ("Emigration of the Protestants of Ireland" 4). Furthermore, the *Dublin University Magazine* argues that the demise of long-term leases which had previously favoured Protestant farmers settled among Catholics leaves them handicapped in competition with Catholic peasants whose very lack of refinement gives them an advantage, observing that while "The Protestant [who] requires decent clothing, good feeding, and a certain portion of education for his family" cannot necessarily pay the same rents as "the Romanist, [who], on the other hand, merely calculates whether he shall be able to make the rent....for he is very easy as to the quality of education for his family, and is most philosophically careless about cleanliness, and everything that savours of external decency and comfort, he is enabled to live on a much smaller expenditure" (4).

In ascribing poverty to native Irish fecklessness, this account in no way considers the real inequities behind the Irish peasant's precarious subsistence economy that was to

collapse so catastrophically into the famine of the next decade. However, by drawing contrasts between different standards of civilization, conservative, Protestant observers were able to rationalize their own position in Ireland, and also find convenient historical analogues in New World settlement. When writing about emigration, O'Grady's Irish contemporaries saw settlement in Canada as an opportunity to spread British refinement and civilization:

> the policy which guided the settlement of the Roman colonies, has also appeared in all those, which are remarkable in any manner for their greatness or rising importance. It was not merely the reduction, *vi et armis*, of an enemy, but the engrafting on the conquered the manners, laws, customs and language of the victors, carried and used in the newly acquired territory by the hordes which that great nation poured forth; we can trace this same policy fulminating statutes against the Irish dress and language--the same policy has converted the Cape colony, from a mere Dutch settlement, into a country, in its laws and customs, essentially British.
> ("The Canadas and Emigration," 288-89)

This passage (though expressing confidence in the powers of imperialist assimilation not borne out by history) uses the example of the Tudor plantations in Ireland as a measurement by which both Irish and Amerindian societies will be subdued and modified in the present.

While O'Grady uses similar standards to judge levels of civilization to which the Irish, the French Canadians and the native peoples have attained respectively, he differs in some significant ways from the observers in the *Dublin*

University Magazine. Like conservative historians before him, O'Grady draws parallels between Amerindian and Irish habits, observing in his notes that, "were an Indian divested of his forest an Irish hut might serve him as a model for mud architecture" (100). However, O'Grady is more likely to compare the rebellious Irish of recent memory, and the equally rebellious followers of Louis Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), the Quebec *Patriote* leader in the rebellion of 1837. Many Irish-Canadians took part in this rebellion as well, the most prominent of whom was Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, the editor of the *Vindicator*, the paper that had supported Kidd's poetic endeavours (Slattery 48). Moreover, "in the years leading up to the Rebellion of 1837, Daniell O'Connell exercised an extraordinary influence on the French Canadians" (Slattery 50). For O'Grady, the Canadian rebellions place him in a situation similar to that of the beleaguered Protestant communities after the rebellions of 1790s. Papineau's popular uprising brought home to O'Grady, an Anglo-Irish settler in Lower Canada, the fact that he was isolated by both religion and language; in his Preface, O'Grady suggests that Lower Canada is suitable only for "the French Canadians, who agree well among each other, and best subsist on a tolerable diet. The Upper Province is by far a more desirable emporium for our redundant population; a corresponding scenery, a mutual intercourse and fellow-feeling for each other, will at all

times render them more familiar, and less estranged, in a country so similar to their own" (20-23).

It is not stretching credibility to suggest that O'Grady felt parallels between Canada and his situation among the disaffected Catholic Irish tenantry at home. Moreover, French Canadians in general are revealed to be as rude and fractious as the native Irish, and, like the Whiteboys and Captain Rock (agrarian organizations active in the 1830s), Papineau's followers are depicted as being equally likely to make midnight calls upon isolated farmers:

> The vile assassins stalk their midnight round,
> The bowknife glitters in the rankling wound,
> Ghastly and pale in shrouds of midnight's shade,
> They silent stalk or mix in lonely glade;
> There point the steel, the well known objects take,
> Exult the while and many a bosom break.
> (1433-38)

It is the French Canadians, and the political upheavals that they initiated in the 1830s, for whom O'Grady reserves his contempt. O'Grady portrays them as an "unlettered race" who "plot rebellion, eager to the fray" and if left to their own devices would meet the same end as the Kilkenny cats in O'Grady's Irish proverb who fight until there is nothing left but their two tails (93). O'Grady is indeed willing to leave the French alone, having little faith in the civilizing mission of emigration. For him, the conquered--whether Irish, French, or Amerindian--remain a separate and sullen entity, held in check by superior strength motivated by "ambition's sway", but never capable of secure

containment:

> Each subject chastened by the conqueror's hand
> Decrees submission in a foreign land;
> Revolting times uncertain prospects bring,
> To sink a state or elevate a king....
> (961-64)

One reason perhaps that O'Grady comes to different conclusions than other Irish conservative observers, while using the same historical parallels, is that he may have felt that the poet's role was to portray Irish society's failings in order to illustrate general political and moral precepts. This perhaps explains why, in spite of unequivocally condemning the types of rebellion engaged in by the French Canadian *patriote* leader Louis-Joseph Papineau, O'Grady is more ambivalent about earlier Irish rebellions.

While as a property-holding member of the Protestant Ascendancy, O'Grady was terrified of the consequences of violent uprisings. He not only romanticizes the leader of the 1803 rebellion, Robert Emmett, but also sympathizes with the misguided individuals who pay with their lives for Papineau's ambitions. In both Ireland and Canada alike, O'Grady sees rebellion as arising from the failings of each country's appointed leaders to maintain, through benevolent government, the prosperity which leads to harmony and order. He complains to Irish leaders that the rebellious Irish, "if appeased by gentle deeds, or so/ Had never planned their country's overthrow" (1817-18), and castigates the Canadian

governor, the second Earl of Gosford, who "resigned on the eve of the Rebellions of 1837" (Trehearne 179).

Moreover, O'Grady's observations of the impoverished and neglected conditions of the Irish peasant do not extend to the *Dublin University Magazine*'s extreme of blaming the victims of an exploitative tenure system. Again, he is aware of the link between public morality and poverty; consequently, he is marginally more sympathetic than the editors of the *Dublin University Magazine*, citing "hapless situation[s]" and "hunger" as elements that would prompt "these wretches [to] strive to emigrate....for true it is, let what will happen, an Irish peasant has been steeled to such adversity there is no change or clime which he will not endure, and which is not preferable to the unenviable situation he maintains amongst his most unfeeling and exalted neighbours" (101). In calling attention to the breakdown of an order that would imply a reciprocal respect and support between the meanest peasant and the more "exalted" class of landlords, O'Grady still manages to present a stereotypical picture of Irish peasant life, with its jumble of inmates and farm animals under one squalid roof. However, by presenting this picture, not through his own eyes, but through those of "the excited traveller," O'Grady appears here to be alluding to the type of social criticism and reform that was often presented through the accounts of travellers to Ireland, who did indeed register

their surprise at the backwardness of farming practices, or the obscene juxtaposition of wealth and squalor that could apparently be encountered in the Irish countryside (100). In this note at least, O'Grady appears to be aligning himself with more sympathetic observers of Ireland's poor, who attributed Irish agrarian unrest, and what they saw as a state of "civilized barbarity," to social injustice in which the Irish peasants were "left to contrast their condition with that of overgrown wealth" (Jenkins 174-75).

While O'Grady's notes often proceed by chain of association rather than a carefully thought out logic, the next topic to which he strays in Note 38 is a portrait of the "demoralization" of Ireland by elections which, before the repeal of forty shilling suffrage, featured the bribery of small farmholders by "wealthy innovators" (101). This seems to be in keeping with O'Grady's Tory sympathies, and his suspicion throughout the poem of reckless expenditure and speculation on both sides of the Atlantic in which older ties of patrician responsibility for the poor peasant were broken, leading to the types of gaps between wealthy and poor that stimulated both sectarian and civil unrest and discontent.

Of the consequences of this type of economy divorced from its moral obligations, O'Grady observes in his poem that it drives the poor to the type of desperate acts that have disturbed Ireland:

> Enriched, who deals the sparkling treasures round,
> Where want is felt, with fostering hand is found,
> Nor hoards his wealth as he his hateful store,
> Who brings fresh frauds and usury to his door;
> To purchase crimes, and guilt too oft we see,
> Wrung from the wretch of hapless poverty;
> Whose need, a stimulus too ill supplied,
> Admits each vice and spreads contagion wide.
> (1222-29)

A conservative "in the Burke tradition," O'Grady also makes connections between the plight of Irish emigrants and the Amerindian to illustrate his distrust of a preoccupation with wealth and luxury that, instead of ensuring stability in society, leads to enmity between the classes. Unlike Kidd, O'Grady considers the "rude Indian[s]" as "savages"; however, in contrast to the democratic inhabitants of Canada, the Amerindians at least know their place, regulated by "nature's law," an "Undevious rule

> ...that guides each social band,
> To act obedient to their chief's command.
> Where none abandoned, none that tie forsakes
> Which binds that link our modern virtue breaks
> There tyrant man extends no despot rule,
> Nor seeks new worlds for conquest and control.
> (975-80)

As a conservative member of the Church of Ireland, O'Grady would also be interested in the lessons that Irish society could derive from native traditions. It is interesting to note that in at least one instance, an analogy to Amerindian practices was drawn in defense of the Protestant ascendancy, by one of O'Grady's contemporaries. George Knox, arguing for the ascendancy to be recognized by the British, stated, "...the Protestant Ascendancy is a vital principle of our

existence....History, tradition, education, prejudice, habit, and instinct, root it in our minds, and there is as little danger that an Irish Protestant should disregard it, as that an American savage should discard the principle of self-defence." Of "Knox's unexpected analogy of Amerindian principles of self defence," historiographer W.J. McCormack notes that it "only makes sense as a reference to a famously non-literate society, wholly lacking in written documents. Assuming such a society to be governed by history and/or instinct, he could imply a similarly immemorial status for Protestant ascendancy in Ireland" (McCormack 119-20). O'Grady, equally ready to defend the privileges held by the O'Grady family, "the antiquity of which family remains immemorial" (Notes 86), uses the example of Amerindians ruled by "natural law" to support the traditions behind property laws in Ireland.

This is one of the more significant points where O'Grady departs from the attitudes towards both civilization and settlement held by contemporary commentaries and guidebooks regarding emigration. Whereas the writers of "Emigration of the Protestants of Ireland" see a continuity between the role that both the North American colonist and the original Protestant planters in Ireland perform in disseminating civilization amongst a hostile and feckless native population, O'Grady is less confident. So greatly is the concept of emigration intertwined with O'Grady's sense

of a breakdown of traditional morals and property rights in Ireland that Canada is seen as a unrelentingly hostile place to both native and newcomer alike. In an endnote, he complains of the "unsupportable" winters in Canada, adding that "there are certain days even the very Indians will not face the frigidity of the climate" (101). When discussing what first appears to be a description of the traditional occupations of the Amerindians, hunting in the North, he cannot help but allude, parenthetically, to his own situation as exile when he describes "the big sun [who] emits his polar ray,/ Like friends once warm though now far far away" (1046-47). Moreover, the reader soon discovers that the native trappers are in the service, not simply of "hard necessity," but also of European speculation, which "tempt[s] with gold the savage heart to go/ where life scarce warms to brave such scenes of woe" (1088-91).

Having observed that these same natives have also "mix[ed] in war" and can claim some credit for "British Conquests" (1095), O'Grady then goes on to deplore the same necessity, ambition, greed and "exaggerated accounts" (Notes 101) that lure the equally faithful, "sons of Erin's virtuous land" to "perish 'neath the northern light" (1097-1123). By contrasting the emigrants' "necessity" with the type of speculative greed sustained by "false pride/ That breathes on far fetched luxuries" (1087-88), O'Grady appears to imply that the desperate circumstances in Ireland which

he has detailed throughout the poem are easily taken advantage of by would-be empire builders.

O'Grady's past experiences in Ireland and his conservative outlook and morals also affect the way he views Canadian politics. O'Grady has a Burkean horror of revolutions, at least those which "look to modern France," such as the 1837 uprising led by Louis-Joseph Papineau. In fact, in describing Papineau's rebellion, where, "the guilty rebel plods in foul debate/ To raise a ruin on a well formed state" (1371-72), O'Grady appears to allude specifically to Burke's "Reflections on the Recent Revolution in France":

> Your constitution, it is true, whilst you were out of possession, suffered waste and dilapidation, but you possessed in some parts the wall, and, in all, the foundations, of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations....Their pioneers have gone before them, and demolished and laid everything level at their feet.
>
> (Burke 33-36)

While aware of social injustice brought about by ambition or greed, O'Grady nevertheless supports slow, gradual change, supported by tradition and secure property laws. In discussing with nostalgia a more stable time--Ireland under Hanoverian rule--O'Grady uses terms similar to those employed by Burke in support of unwritten laws protecting property and the security of inheritance of both property and privilege:

> When word was sacred, hence no mystic flaw
> And honour bright, promulgated the law;
> When word was deed, and kind successors found
> A sacred trust, by obligations bound;

> No local scribe, so technical to tell
> Where scarce one scrivener was known to dwell;
> Yet all prescribed and faithful to the fact,
> In simple language, bound them to the act.
> (11-18)

O'Grady echoes Burke in valorizing a past society whose conduct relied upon honour and unwritten tradition, and where each succeeding generation's rights of property--including, presumably, O'Grady's right to tithes--was protected by "prescription" or custom. O'Grady implies that the advantage of a system such as this (apart from leaving scant pickings for O'Grady's despised attorneys or "scribes") was that classes were bound to each other by tradition and not by words whose meanings were subject to the whims of "quibbles" and "wits" (28).

O'Grady even regards the Act of Union, which on January 1, 1801 transferred administration of Irish affairs to the British Parliament (Trehearne 137), as an innovation that not only breaks with tradition by taking power out of the hands of a landed Protestant gentry, but also as a means of serving individual ambition and greed. The language O'Grady uses to describe one of the union's principal engineers, John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare (Trehearne 142) is rife with images of commercial speculation and social climbing:

> Clare sold his Isle for stipulated rank,
> And thus metamorphosed a *palace* to a *bank*;
> His new raised pomp still raised a Bedford's sneer,
> An upstart Lawyer, Chancellor and Peer....
> (430-33)

"Stipulated" suggests what to O'Grady would be an unseemly

haggling for a title, the price for which was the surrender of Ireland in order to satisfy Fitzgibbon's personal ambition. The contempt--effectively conveyed through repeated plosives--shown for transformation of the Irish parliament buildings into a bank is not figurative fancy on O'Grady's part but historical fact; the present Bank of Ireland continues to use the former Parliament buildings to this day, in accordance with the British government's decision at the time of union to transform them in such a way that they could never be converted back to their original use. Moreover, Clare's "new raised pomp" on the rubble of O'Grady's beloved parliament looks ominously forward to the Canadian rebels' similar establishment of chaos upon the ruins of order later in the poem.

O'Grady's snobbishness in his assessment of Clare is modified somewhat by an endnote, where he observes that Clare "begged his learning, which was no disgrace; yet led him to the most unpopular events" (72). Contrasted to the story of Clare are more positive rags-to-riches stories concerning the rise to power and esteem of men born without the advantage of an illustrious parentage, including Viscount Guillamore of the O'Gradys, who rose from "relatively humble roots" in the minor gentry to become a Chief Baron of the Exchequer. (Trehearne, intro. xx). Lord Avenmore (later Baron Yelverton), another Chief Baron of the Exchequer, begins life as an "orphan wanderer" of

"obscure...lineage," who also begs his learning as a sizar in Trinity College, that is, a student who paid reduced fees (88). In each of these tales O'Grady seems intent on proving the relationship between merit and a titled aristocracy, who O'Grady portrays not as hidebound by tradition, but as willing to dispense with lineage when faced with obvious ability, as in the case of Avenmore. In his attack on Lord Clare, O'Grady implies that no title purchased off the rack will ameliorate a base personality; Clare is given "the complete picture of himself" by disdainful colleagues in the British Parliament, and ultimately takes the snub to heart, becoming, in O'Grady's words, "a self judged felon, penitent too late" (434).

Unfortunately for O'Grady, the void made by Clare's rout is too readily filled by other opportunists, both in the English Parliament, and in an Ireland controlled by "agents," "bailiffs," and "attornies," the last a class for which O'Grady continually reserves his most bilious outpourings. But O'Grady condemns especially "absentees," that is, landlords who live abroad and "spend their produce, yet they know not where." The poet appears to find these "ennobled spendthrifts" particularly contemptible because they do not accept the moral responsibilities that their titles and nobility entail. In the course of an invocation to divine Providence, O'Grady returns to castigating those who allow both wealth and power to slip through their

fingers to rest in what he considers to be less meritorious hands:

> By fortune favoured, worldly lords we see,
> Unmindful centre every bliss from thee;
> No thoughts save wealth, save equipage and state,
> No nobler attributes to make them great;
> A gilded mock, all ignorance and pride,
> By folly fired, by wisdom ill supplied,
> How versed the knave whose thrifty means record
> The cunning projects that increased his hoard
> By menial stealth from thoughtless youth who keeps
> An ill got treasure and the wealth he heaps;
> Whilst ruined spendthrifts view in upstart pride,
> The wretch that revels by their wealth supplied.
> (1333-44)

This little cautionary tale, in which a low-born "upstart" usurps the riches and consequently the influence from irresponsible gentry reflects O'Grady's recurrent theme, that privilege, riches and power carry obligations, which, if disregarded, have repercussions throughout Irish society.[6]

O'Grady also uses "rags to riches" and "riches to rags" tales to order his ideas about life in Canada. One such cautionary tale, that of Albert and Sylvia, even forms a bridge between the two worlds. One could argue that it is not simply a standard plot of unrequited love that compels Sylvia to elope, but that she, like O'Grady, has been driven out of Ireland by an "ill-mannered pack" of pseudo-nobility

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[6]O'Grady as a titheholder might very well feel himself justified in castigating extravagant landowners, whose own financial straits in the post-war recession led them not only to put financial pressure on their tenants, but also to re-direct tenant discontent towards titheholders such as O'Grady (Brynn 238-239).

that have gained ascendancy over both Sylvia's father and the island. In fact, the language that describes the false suitor Gifford's "modern pomp and pride of pageantry" echoes O'Grady's moral assessment of Clare, who also has little to recommend him but his title.

Once in Canada, both O'Grady and Sylvia learn through bitter experience that flight to the New World is not a retreat to an Eden that recalls "the good old times" when everyone knew his or her place in Ireland, but an entirely unexpected and alien experience where both O'Grady's moral precepts and the relationship between merit and just deserts become completely inapplicable:

> Tread not this soil where equal rights they scan,
> And none in birth exceeds his fellow man;
> Here all is liberty and few scarce known,
> Beyond that private circle of their own;
> Yet yield to honour no sad sacrifice,
> Nor fear to fall nor emulous to rise....
> (1142-47)

As O'Grady has emphasized before, brute strength is the measure of merit in the New World; in his notes he again refers to reversals of fortune and usurpation, when he warns "your half gentry" that "a little capital will soon be expended--the labourer will ultimately become the purchaser of their lands, should they be imprudent enough to buy any" (82). The very harshness of life in Canada appears to conspire in the type of democratic overthrow of merit which O'Grady feared so much back in Ireland. The story of Albert and Sylvia is certainly one of the most detailed and

poignant examples of the type of reversal of fortunes O'Grady records. At the end of the poem Sylvia is a widow with seven small children, poorly clad and housed, in a situation hardly better than that of the most desperate Irish peasant. Trehearne notes the similarity between "Sylvia's mud hovel and the Irish hovels described in O'Grady's Note 38," and observes that the parallel "reflects, unconsciously..., [O'Grady's] ultimate fixation on his Irish experience" (175). Trehearne also sees a moral in the cautionary tale, but it is a condemnation of "filial disobedience and romantic wilfulness" (177) However, given the opprobrium that O'Grady consistently directs towards "upstarts," and the fact that there is no place in Ireland for the meritorious but obscure Alfred "of noble birth" (549), this cautionary tale may be read to confirm O'Grady's view that emigration and failure in Canada merely set the seal on the breakdown of morals and tradition in Ireland.

O'Grady's obsession with Ireland's failure to maintain a moral and political order that lives up to his Burkean standards appears to have its roots in historical and cultural events that developed prior to the Act of Union in 1800. O'Grady's fixation in *The Emigrant* upon this particular Act, his political views outlined in the poem, and the scrapbag of historical and cultural allusions which he packs into his lengthy endnotes all gain illumination when set beside the Irish Patriot movement of the eighteenth

century. Conservative in nature, and primarily Anglo-Irish in origin, this movement both preceded and in some ways evolved into the romantic nationalism of the nineteenth century.

In *Mere Irish and Fior-Ghael*, Joseph Leerssen claims that the Patriot movement's origins cannot be defined by modern concepts informed by nineteenth-century nationalism; "patriotism was rather a form of political philanthropy: a desire to contribute to the public benefit, to live up to one's responsibilities as a citizen by contributing actively to the improvement of society--of the *state*, as a political and economic entity...(Leerssen 300). The Irish Patriot movement rose when "occasionally, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy asserted interests that contravened those of the constituents of the British parliament" in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Leerssen 296-97). Encompassing the ideas of writers and thinkers such as Swift and Berkeley, Irish patriots saw disassociation from traditional Tory-Whig factionalism and a call for "virtue in public affairs" (Leerssen 122) as a way to distinguishing Irish interests from those of England. Patriot "virtue" was translated into public and political actions such as a refusal to accept bribes, a reaction against "jobbing" or place seeking, and a more responsible attitude to public office, as well as economic proposals to support Irish manufacture. Absentee landlords, those who "spend their

produce they know not where," were, not surprisingly, a popular target for the Patriots (Leerssen 306).

Towards the end of the century, Patriot ideas took political form, culminating in Grattan's parliament in 1782 (Henry Grattan is one of the few politicians for whom O'Grady has unreserved admiration in *The Emigrant*). However, the eventual failure of the Patriot movement to become truly nationalist lay in its political inability to accept the granting of full rights for all the Irish population. While espousing liberty and "public virtue," Grattan's parliament in reality continued to carry on traditional "jobbing" and factionalism. Grattan's advocacy of complete emancipation was hampered by the English government's restrictions on the Irish parliament; moreover "the Patriot party was caught in its own moderation during the increasing political tensions of the 1790s" (Leerssen 355). Comprised for the most part of loyal, albeit discontented, Anglo-Irish subjects, the Irish parliament saw many of its nationalist objectives pass into the more radical hands of the United Irishmen, who "could take up the idea of a national transcendence of religious and social-economic divisions, and argue that idea out with more radical consistency than the Ascendancy Patriots" (Leerssen 356). The United Irish rebellion of 1798 confirmed the failure of the Patriots to establish a moderate movement that would unite the interests of the Ascendancy and

Catholic population of the island. Radical responses on behalf of Irish republicans and harsh reactions by the British in turn eventually meant that "the Patriot ideal of a conciliated Ireland with citizens working disinterestedly for the public good eventually died a painful death. The dissolution of the Irish parliament, and...the parliamentary union with Great Britain in 1800, erased the very forum in which Irish patriotism had unfolded its activities" (Leerssen, 356).

While overall *The Emigrant* is a poem conservative in both style and content, it nevertheless expresses many of the more liberal sentiments and opinions voiced by the Patriots, particularly a call for public offices to be filled by responsible and able men, rather than "cringing placemen" (358). O'Grady makes his own plea for mutual respect and conciliation among all citizens of Ireland when he denounces Ireland's "bigot sons," and claims, "let each sectarian argue for the best/ Yet all agree the monitor's the breast" (1353-54). Yet at the same time, O'Grady's own defense of his right to tithes which were imposed on tenants regardless of religion suggests that he shared the same debilitating conflicts between his sense of privilege and his wish for conciliation that made the Patriots an ineffective political body.

O'Grady's emotional association with the very term "patriot" (of which he finds Papineau's *patriotes* a

particularly nasty echo) may explain his own personal revulsion and disillusionment following the 1798 uprising. According to O'Grady's notes, while the Patriot parliament under Grattan was supposedly orchestrating the relief and reconciliation of the Irish people, the Irish people themselves "were for the most part in a state of heartless rebellion" (72). O'Grady came to view Britain's abolition of the Irish Parliament as inevitable when faced with a worse alternative of actual French invasion, or "French-taught" republicanism in Ireland.

Grattan's Parliament remains in the poem one of the few political institutions that O'Grady portrays in an unequivocally positive light; however, its dissolution is used repeatedly by O'Grady to highlight the destruction of its ideals in a less agreeable present. The repetition of key phrases when discussing an idealized Ireland of O'Grady's youth suggests that O'Grady blames his own ill-fated decision to emigrate upon the country's perversion of Patriot ideals. The poem's opening lines portray Ireland of the present as:

> Land of my fathers, oft too rudely swayed
> By new raised patriots, and their sons betrayed
> How changed from virtues of the good old times
> (7-9).

Later, when discussing the "gloomy prospects" of "Accruing rack-rents...attornies...absentees," O'Grady again idealizes an earlier Ireland, but this time it is the Ireland of

Grattan's parliament:

> How changed the scene from those of other times
> When proudest patriots knew no foreign climes,
> And in our senate envied statesmen clung,
> To hear persuasion from a Grattan's tongue....
> Those days are gone when Irish hearts would cheer
> A Burke, A Bushe, a Ponsonby once dear
> Who midst the torrent bore the thunder's shock
> Where cringing placemen shuddered as they spoke;
> Then Ireland famed for words, and deeds of arms,
> Securely stood nor feared a world's alarms--
> With allied strength, no *vassals* to a *throne*
> And sought no brighter laurels than their own--
> In vain we plead, thy patriot voice is crushed,
> Thy minstrels' chords, thine harp itself is
> hushed.
>
> (349-64)

The passage describing Grattan's parliament closes in almost Ossianic gloom as Irish patriots (including O'Grady) disperse to "foreign climes," and the "patriot voice is crushed." O'Grady implies that, with the dissolution of Grattan's Parliament, Ireland lost not simply its independence but more precisely, the voices of skilful and disinterested speakers who could, through the power of words rather than violence, defend Ireland's well-being to Britain and the world beyond.

As the Patriot ideals are replaced, through O'Grady's experience of emigration, with the debased values of *patriotes*, the poem's descriptive symmetry highlights the perversion of these ideals by self-interested "demagogues." O'Grady's horror of violent revolution, which would indiscriminately pull down the traditions that governed a peaceful society, makes him cling to British rule as the one touchstone of "true liberty," which he sees embodied--

briefly--in Grattan's Parliament and Patriot ideals. The eloquence of Irish patriots is parodied by torrents of *patriote* logorrhea. The "glib-tongued Patriot Papineau['s]" "vast orations flow," not in response to real injustices that O'Grady believes taxed the Irish Patriots, but in "fancied ill" (1373-74) Eventually, Papineau is unmasked by his own actions, and like Clare is stricken with self-knowledge. Even while assistance from America makes *Patriote* victory a possibility, Papineau unaccountably abandons his followers and "absconds" on his own accord, suddenly seeing himself as "a self-thought fugitive, and self-made slave" (1423).

It is interesting that O'Grady attributes the eventual suppression of the rebellion to the type of conciliation which had failed in a Patriot parliament in Ireland. Like Kidd, O'Grady emphasises the magnanimity that Amerindian soldiers demonstrated during the War of 1812, and in a scene that owes more to O'Grady's imagination than facts, has Papineau's followers taken prisoner by Amerindians, who under British command become in their turn merciful "conquerors" who refuse to kill their captives (1480-85; Trehearne 166). In a endnote to the conflict, O'Grady himself composes a brief ballad in honour of the Glengarry Volunteers, a milita made up of Irish, English, and Scottish soldiers. Moreover, O'Grady's song borrows from early Irish nationalist ballads the theme of "The Thistle, Shamrock,

Rose uniting"[7] under the banner of "Brave Britons" (83-84). O'Grady stops short of crowing about the British suppression of the rebellion. This is most evident in the sympathy he expresses for Papineau's dead followers and their bereaved families; "he can feel simultaneous contempt for the fact of rebellion and admiration for the courage and patriotism that encouraged young men to join it" (Trehearne 165). In describing these virtues, the poem seems to borrow lustre from O'Grady's Patriot values, especially when he describes "The dimpled cheek, the rosy smile expressed/ The Patriot fire that warmed the valorous breast" (1407-8). In recounting sentimental incidents that depict the individual tragedies in the wake of the rebellion, O'Grady is reminded of and extends his sympathy to the leader of an earlier, ill-conceived Irish rebellion, his sometime classmate Robert Emmett.[8]

One other aspect of *The Emigrant* that illuminates O'Grady's Patriot background is his frequent allusion to

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[7]At least one Irish ballad precedes O'Grady's use of this image: in "The Social Thistle and the Shamrock" United Irishman Henry Joy McCracken writes, "the Thistle, and the Shamrock, entwine the Olive Tree" (Thuente 242-243).

[8]O'Grady's sympathy for Emmet arises partly from his admiration of his "genius" even when it is in service of a "mistaken" cause (1527), and partly from O'Grady's undisguised pleasure in having such a famous (or notorious) man for a "class-fellow" (Note 30, 84). It is interesting to note that in spite of being a classmate of Emmet's at Trinity, O'Grady mistakenly puts Emmet at the head of the 1798 United Irishmen uprising, not the 1803 rebellion.

Irish culture. Coinciding with, and in fact supported by the Patriot movement was a resurgence of pride in national *Irish* identity as distinct from the larger British state. One manifestation of this renewed interest in Irish culture was a mid-eighteenth-century call "to create a literature distinguishing itself by its *couleur locale* from the "mainstream" English literature" in which "Ireland's 'natural beauties' and 'the genius of its inhabitants' rose in close conjunction with each other" (Leerssen 352). O'Grady seemed willing to follow this directive in celebrating the distinctiveness of both Irish and Canadian society. The subject matter of *The Emigrant* did not really allow for lengthy descriptions of Irish scenery; however, O'Grady made up for this in his endnotes, such as in his history of Baron Yelverton[9]:

> It chanced in these days a celebrated teacher named Buckly resided near a romantic village in Ireland, which in ancient days withstood the innovations of Cromwell; remarkable for its strength, this fortress withstood his most unavailing efforts, and was then known to be the seat of Government, and who at this day can visit the ruins of Kilmallock, divested of that national sensation which will not awaken something of reverence when he beholds the emblazoned escutcheons of those who fell to defend the fame of their then city? Here was a richness of scenery calculated to engross and inspire the dormant faculties of these who required some natural impulse to actuate the mind. The surrounding loveliness of the landscape crowding

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[9]It is probably not a coincidence that O'Grady chooses to celebrate the childhood scenes of Barry Yelverton (1742-83) was also "instrumental in pressing the constitutional legislation of 1782," and a prominent Patriot (Foster 246).

> on the imagination of our itinerant, seemed to arrest his fancy, and this he deemed a most fortunate retreat, enabled, amidst the magnificence of its scenery, to behold nature in all its pride and art, itself so powerfully displayed even amidst the dilapidating remnants of human greatness.
>
> (88)

While this account appears to be a standard picturesque passage with its attendant ruins, and the Augustan conventions of nature being an equally effective teacher to the landscape's human inhabitants (Trehearne, intro. xxv), O'Grady's focus upon "the ruins of Kilmallock" (which O'Grady sees as the site of an earlier seat of Irish government destroyed by British interference) creates a sense of patriotism, or "national sensation" through its combination of beauty and historical recollection. His reference to Cromwell, which could in other hands be a symbol of the triumph of Protestantism over a Catholic populace becomes--ironically--a historical example that anticipates Irish Patriot ideals, that is, of Irishmen bravely resisting English dominance. The ruins not only add picturesque appeal to the scene, but also do work as a representation of the "genius" of the people who fell bravely in one of Irish history's many lost causes. However, the ruins' recollection of past defeats also adds an elegiac tone to the passage, which is appropriate to a poem that sees much of Irish history as a prelude to O'Grady's ill-starred emigration.

O'Grady also tries to capture the local colour of a

region to his descriptions of Canada. In his Preface, he initially finds fault with "the locality of subjects [he] had to treat on" and laments that a much "greater display of objects have not presented themselves, to engage that attention and effort of genius which might otherwise awake something of more engaging matter..." (4-7). As Trehearne observes, "Canada is realized most forcibly in the poem in its landscape" (intro., xliii), the uniqueness of which O'Grady manages to portray effectively in a number of places. However, when faced with a conventionally "picturesque" respite on the Ile d'Orléans, O'Grady resorts to Irish history and culture to add a human "genius" to a newer landscape whose own legends appear inaccessible to him. (O'Grady lacks the sensibility for appreciating other cultures that came more easily to Kidd). Instead, O'Grady muses on the effect that a Canadian landscape might have had on Irish artists:

> Well might a Nagle's soul awake to this,
> Inspired by harmony's ne'er fading bliss;
> Rise from his sainted Isle, where most deplored
> To crown the pleasures of such festive board;
> But he is gone, in other times that pled,
> The grace the tone the harmony is fled
> And Ned with all his jocund powers is dead.
> He that could raise to extacy the soul
> As fabled Orpheus by a like control,
> Awake the veteran's fame or yet impart
> Love's soothing passions to the tender heart;
> As thou Fitzpatrick, once the darling rage,
> Who charmed a modern Monarch on our stage,
> Or thou O'Connor, of harmonic soul,
> Or Sullivan, thou who now eclipse the whole,
> Yet shall a Nagle's strain their fame survive,
> Whilst dulcet notes true melody can give.
> (816-32)

Like Kidd, who celebrated the harpists and itinerant poets who added renown to his birthplace, O'Grady also celebrates famous artists from his region in this passage. It is important to note that these "bards" are not poets, but actual pipers who performed in O'Grady's day; his depiction of Irish culture has more immediate and concrete embodiment in these men.[10] Many, including Nagle and O'Connor, were

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[10]O'Grady's own notes make it clear that the artists mentioned in this passage are Irish pipers by profession, and not poets. According to Irish musicologist Sean Donnelly, who has generously shared his research on early nineteenth-century pipers with me, the Union, or *Uillean*, pipes were at a high stage of popularity during the times to which O'Grady alludes. "Between 1780 and 1810 the pipes were being improved in a fairly rapid manner....it was the pipers themselves who claimed the credit" for any innovations, which may explain O'Grady's distinguishing Nagle for having "modified the Irish pipes."

While many pipers were indigent blind boys trained on the pipes to secure them a living, Donnelly notes that there were "quite a number" of "gentlemen pipers", who would have been well-born amateur players, "and the evidence suggests that most of them played as well as professionals." The information O'Grady gives of one piper playing for the local hunting club, and the fact that many pipers had noblemen, and even bishops for patrons (Donnelly 85), may suggest that O'Grady chose to valorize this particular class of artists precisely for their connections to the Irish gentry, both Catholic and Protestant. A poem published in Cork in 1817 even makes a tantalizing reference to "O'Grady, that fam'd piping Knight" (Donnelly 93), but unfortunately there appears to be no other information on this O'Grady to fuel speculation about Standish the piper-poet.

The Nagle to whom O'Grady refers is almost certainly "Ned [Edward] Nagle the gentleman piper," who died at his brother's estate, Glannamore [O'Grady's note calls it Glanmore], in 1816 (Historical Notices of Co. Cork III, 1913, Donnelly, 96). There was a Kearns or Kieran or Kyran Fitzpatrick, a blind piper who played before George IV (not George III), and also impressed another member of royalty, Prince Hermann Von Puckler-Muskan, a German, who described Fitzpatrick in his *Tour in England, Ireland and France* (1832). There seems to be no historical evidence for O'Grady's story of the abduction of a piper named

from O'Grady's own county, affording him another way of engrafting Irish local colour on a Canadian scene. Local pipers were often celebrated by foreign travellers to Ireland as part of the "colour" of a region. (Perhaps O'Grady is thinking of this tradition, even though he needs, like the Captain in his anecdote, to abduct them--or at least their shades--when he heads to the New World). The Patriots' belief that local artists represented the *genius* of Ireland may also be at the back of O'Grady's mind when he exhibits them as indications of a rich and distinctively Irish culture. Certainly in his notes, O'Grady is preoccupied with the respectability of pipers such as Edward Nagle, who, like O'Grady, appears to have been a minor member of a "most respectable and ancient family of the county Cork" (77). Kearns Fitzpatrick may also be mentioned from a similar motive in that his reputation gained foreign as well as local acclaim because he performed in front of nobility and was "the most illustrious Irish piper of his day" (77). The fact that O'Grady invokes Irish pipers, dead and living, to embellish his Canadian description would no doubt appeal to Patriot sensibilities, since his invocation

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O'Sullivan; he could have been one of many Kerry pipers of that name who were well known in the early nineteenth century. While O'Grady provides no information on the O'Connor referred to in the poem, the only prominent piper with that surname in O'Grady's lifetime was a Patrick O'Connor (d. 1818), who was educated in Limerick, Co. Cork (Donnelly 85). While O'Connor was acclaimed in his time, his "memory seems to have rapidly faded in the years after his death," in all minds except that of Standish O'Grady.

allows him to lead the conversation round to a disquisition of national identities in general.

O'Grady's celebration of the pipers of Ireland also fits in with views held by contemporary antiquarians that the uillean pipes were "an adequate substitute for the Irish harp, which was then all but moribund," and the pipers a living tradition that had taken over from the gaelic bards and "the old harpers" (Donnelly 87)[11]. O'Grady himself appears to consider this when he claims that the "tuneful pipe surpass[es] the trembling lyre," and muses,

> Harp of our Isle! and thou fair Scotia's reed,
> That oft led on to many a martial deed,
> Why slumber thou, alike thy veterans gone,
> Whilst Scotia's Pipe still leads to victory on?
> Proud, generous Harp!....
> I love to hear thine own melodious lays;
> Though memory clouds the scenes of happier days
> Yet if there be a world, and that there is,
> Where weary mortals still repose in bliss,
> As erst in Tara's hall divinely presst,
> There Harp of my country's Warriors rest!
> (855-65)

In the end, O'Grady's tone, as he assesses both the living and the past culture of Ireland, is a melancholy one, since it reminds him, not only of the eclipse of values that he shared with the defunct Patriots, but also of his own severance from these cultural ties. Where Kidd's awareness

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[11]Donnelly also notes that "harpers were more common in the north of Ireland and pipers in the south" a distinction which gave credence to "the famous mythological division of Ireland into two halves" (Donnelly 87). Even in choosing the type of musician to celebrate, O'Grady seems to show a heightened sensitivity to the culture and legends of his region.

of the richness of Irish culture made him receptive to the landscapes and legends of Canada, O'Grady's fixation on his own culture does not translate into an appreciation of the New World.

O'Grady's interest in the kindred culture of Scotland, which sometimes almost amounts to rivalry, again reflects larger nationalist and Patriot concerns. By the mid-eighteenth century, contacts were being established at Trinity College between Gaelic scholars, who were links with the rapidly-fading bardic tradition, and Anglo-Irish scholars (Leerssen 370). Even O'Grady may have developed an interest in antiquarianism during his student days at Trinity, although no more than a passing knowledge of Irish itself can be adduced from his notes. Leerssen suggests that Patriot motives were behind much of the Anglo-Irish interest in Gaelic culture; the politician Henry Flood tried to found a chair in philology through a bequest, and the antiquarian Charlotte Brooke saw her translations "as a Patriot endeavour in the service of her country: hoping to instill some appreciation for native Gaelic culture among the lettered Irish, and, hence, to raise Ireland and its culture in the British estimate" (Leerssen 363).

One of the catalysts for Anglo-Irish interest in Gaelic antiquity was the controversy surrounding Macpherson's Ossian. Since Ossian gave proof of the civilized and lettered qualities of the early Celts, Irish antiquarians

had an interest in claiming this poetry for their own nation:

> the ownership of Ossian/Oisin is explicitly a matter of national honour: Macpherson's kidnap of Oisin is an attack on..."the esteem which mankind conceives" of Ireland--in other words, the image of Ireland abroad....
>
> (Leerssen 346)

O'Grady's own notes appear to carry on this rivalry in order to vindicate Irish culture in the New World. To illustrate that the Irish, with proper handling, would have remained "A faithful people and a virtuous land" (1816), O'Grady presents a translation of an Ossianic fragment as "an uncontroverted display of Irish talent and affection, as evinced by these original poems, even from the most remote ages of Irish history" (Notes 95) in order to refute any charges that contemporary uprisings were evidence of Irish backwardness or lack of civilization. At the same time he scornfully notes the orthographic distinctions in "the tale of Derdri (not Dartula)--a name so modified by the author of Ossian"--effectively putting Macpherson and the Scots in their place (95). Significantly, O'Grady chooses a translation by the Irish antiquarian Theophilus O'Flanagan, a Catholic scholar at Trinity whose "unobtrusive influence spread widely through Irish antiquarianism," and who showed his own Patriot leanings by the fact that he "dedicated his translation to none other than Henry Grattan" (Leerssen 425).

O'Grady's continual desire to place before the reader's

eyes tokens of "Irish talent and affection" serves not only to continue to argue Ireland's case before a British and a colonial audience, but also, as Trehearne has noted, to "contribute to his sense of distinctiveness and power" and "his need for such distinction" in the face of an emigration to a country that has so far denied him any sense of consequence. Trehearne has discussed the poem as "a singularly unliterary product, a work conceived in an isolation that was not only physical and spiritual but cultural as well" (intro. lviii). However, while the poem has few allusions to other literary sources, it abounds with anecdotes and suggests that O'Grady carried away with him a strong oral and musical tradition. This tradition, more than a literary one, is particularly indispensable to O'Grady in affirming the character of the Irish. The wit of John Philpot Curran, who became canonized in the view of Patriot supporters (Leerssen 374), is discussed in yet another lengthy footnote, for example (68-70). As well, O'Grady gives himself many chances to demonstrate, not only his genteel connections, but his personal talents; he transforms the "Irish Blunder," or Irish bull expected by his listeners into a display of Irish wit, and he advertises his own skill in setting his ballads to "perfectly original" music that he has composed himself (Notes 71, 83).

If the form of *The Emigrant* and its copious footnotes is, in the end, an aesthetic failure, O'Grady's emigrant

experience is still more than a simple summing up of the complex and disorienting political events shaping both Ireland and Canada at the time. Ireland's sometimes violent movement towards democracy and Canada's own disturbances in the 1830s invite parallels to be drawn, even by observers less fixated on the Irish experience" than O'Grady had been (Trehearne 175). It was not merely O'Grady's temperament that led him to question the wisdom of exchanging life in Ireland, where a small privileged minority was surrounded by an impoverished and restless populace who spoke a different language, with life in a country in which the well-born settler was surrounded by an equally restless populace who spoke a different language. The poem is more significantly complicated by O'Grady's ambivalence about his Irish countrymen, both Protestant and Catholic, his liberal, Patriot leanings and his dependence upon privilege. As well, it appears that his disillusionment with Patriot politicians' inabilities to come to terms with these same complexities colours his moral interpretation of both Irish and Canadian events. Consequently, the reader cannot attempt to read this work solely as a Canadian poem, by glossing over its vast and anecdotal footnotes in favour of preserving small Canadian "vignettes" of wilderness or settler's lives. The political and cultural events that culminated in O'Grady's decision to emigrate are the final focus of the poem and provide all of its overarching themes.

O'Grady, in the end, was unable to take his own advice to travel light, but instead needed to include a vast amount of cultural baggage to sustain him in his isolation in the New World.

Chapter Three

From Irish Nationalist to "Prophet of Canadian Literature": Thomas D'Arcy McGee's National Muse

> It is often said, in scorn or jest, of us emigrants (and the phrase was so meant by the man who wrote it) that "he left his country for his country's good." Well, I accept the sense and overlook the sneer, and I say of these...that they left their country for the good of all mankind, including their native land. They left it, but they took its lessons with them; they left it to discover truths and to cultivate affections honourable to the race and true to the sacred cause of right and justice.
> -Thomas D'Arcy McGee, "Scottish Poets" 103

> "What poets they shall read and love, is no unimportant question; very much the contrary."--Gavan Duffy, *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* xxix

If Standish O'Grady wrote down his thoughts on the outcome of the 1837 rebellions, which saw some of the rebels inexplicably transformed into respectable members of parliament (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 212), they have not (perhaps fortunately) been preserved for posterity. As observed in the last chapter, O'Grady portrayed Papineau's rebellion as arising from the same type of self-interested political jobbery and demagoguery which in Ireland had resulted rebellion, followed by the hated Act of Union and the dissolution of Ireland's independent parliament. Irish nationalists younger than O'Grady watched the events of 1837 with an interest approaching exhilaration, however. Young

Ireland, the most prominent and organized group of Irish nationalists of the 1840s, viewed the Canadian rebellions as moving towards the kind of independence only dreamed of by Grattan and the Patriots. As Thomas Davis, writing in The *Nation*, commented when discussing the Canadian rebellions:

> "Sister Ireland, my chains are breaking. Why sleepest thou, oh! my sister...? England's strength is Canada's ruin--England's weakness is Canada's victory. This, Irishmen, is one of the lessons taught us also by the revolution in Canada--mark, learn and digest it! Tis the utterance of such a voice as this to which your fathers listened, believed and became free."
> (*Nation* 12 November 1842)

For Young Ireland, then supporting Daniel O'Connell's campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union, a joint legislature with responsible government won by the newly unified Upper and Lower Canada "was an improvement on the Irish parliament of 1782, which Repeal would restore" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 211). The example of the Canadian rebellions fuelled Irish nationalist desires for political control of Irish affairs. In turn, Ireland's latest attempt to forge a distinct nationality was not confined to the island, but had effects on Canada as an incipient nation. One member of Young Ireland was Thomas D'Arcy McGee, an Irish emigrant who was to become a Canadian statesman and the writer whom Carl Ballstadt has called the "prophet of Canadian literature" (Ballstadt 85). In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Canada was deeply indebted to McGee's application of Young Ireland's literary

theories, in which a national literature was viewed as the means of cementing together disparate groups and confirming their identity as one people.

Before discussing the relationship between nationalism and literature in Canada, it would be helpful to look at the development of Irish nationalism in the 1830s and '40s. Prior to the emergence of Young Ireland, attempts to create a national identity had been restricted by class and racial boundaries in Ireland. Both the Patriots and the United Irishmen failed to transcend these boundaries, or to reconcile the conflicting political aims of the different classes and sects to whom they appealed. The first significant attempts to create a national Irish identity that transcended class or religious barriers arose "among Irish Protestants who, as recent 'settlers', had a weak ethnic identity that formed gradually out of a series of conflicts, between native Catholics on the one hand and metropolitan Britain on the other" (Hutchinson 46). This type of nationalism was limited to educated Irishmen, mostly numbered among the Ascendancy Protestants and upper-class Catholics, primarily because it was "elitist, constructed from written records," and consequently "had little hold on the popular consciousness" (Hutchinson 46-47). Adam Kidd and Standish O'Grady, when they applied what they had learned from United Irish and Patriot literary movements to Canadian life, remained spokesmen for Protestant Ireland

(although Kidd's liberal principles of religious tolerance made him more receptive to other cultures). Prior to the appearance of Young Ireland on the political and literary stage, much Irish literature continued to be written with an English audience in mind, as a means of demonstrating Irish loyalty in order to gain political rights. Young Ireland, in contrast to the Patriots, used literature to popularize a history and culture they believed was shared by all classes and religions in Ireland, and as a means of demonstrating to an Irish audience, Catholic or Protestant, that they had more in common with each other than with Britain. Politically, Young Ireland was committed to using literature to educate the Irish about their own history and culture in order to create a unified Irish identity across class and ethnic barriers, and to inspire Irish patriotism as a prerequisite to liberation. As Gavan Duffy, one of the Young Ireland founders, recalled in his memoirs, "The first and hardest step was to revive self-reliance and self-respect, which the system...had nearly extinguished in the mass of the people. The next, to familiarize them with rights and duties long in abeyance" (Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History* 152).

Politically, Young Ireland had as difficult a time as either the Patriots or the United Irishmen in attempting to create a successful secular political nationalism. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Young Ireland's cultural

achievements--especially its Library of Ireland series, which included Duffy's *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* and McGee's *The Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century*--were more successful than its political aims. While Young Ireland was both a political and cultural movement, it was the cultural and educational aims that McGee applied in Canada, having disassociated himself from many of the political goals of Young Ireland after he was forced into political exile in North America in 1848. Most significant for Canadian literary nationalism were McGee's convictions, expressed in his Canadian journalism, poetry and public addresses, that in Canada "there could be no nationality without a Canadian literature" (Ballstadt 86). The activities that McGee cites as essential to the assembling of a "mental outfit" ("The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" 1) for the new country--public education, historical and professional societies, colleges, Canadian journals and presses--are precisely the kinds of cultural equipment with which Young Ireland tried to create a national identity for Ireland that would inspire and motivate all its citizens. It is therefore worth enquiring a little further into the origins, backgrounds, and cultural programme of Young Ireland.

The youthful and enthusiastic writers and professionals who formed Young Ireland had spotted a political and cultural void in Irish society, after nationalist forces

allied with O'Connell's emancipation movement lost momentum in the 1830s, partly because many of O'Connell's followers were disillusioned when he allied himself with English Whigs in Parliament (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 10). In 1842, Thomas Davis, a twenty-seven year old barrister, met with Charles Gavan Duffy, a twenty-four year old journalist and John Dillon, a lawyer, also aged twenty seven. Through a happy coincidence, this group happened to reflect Ireland's political and religious makeup; its members came from different classes as well as different regions of Ireland, and represented Ireland's main religions.

Duffy was brought up among the Catholic minority of Ulster, Davis came from a wealthy Protestant family of mixed Welsh and Irish background that had settled in Munster, and Dillon from a middle-class Catholic family in Connaught with connections to the United Irishmen (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 13). In the spring of 1842, the three men met to discuss the founding of "a jointly owned weekly newspaper to promote their country's affairs more vigorously" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 14-17). The first issue of *The Nation* appeared in October of the same year, with Duffy as its editor. One of the primary aims of *The Nation* was to promote a secular national identity that would also unite the Irish people across regional and religious barriers (Duffy, *Young Ireland* 80). The motto of *The Nation* was, "To create and foster public opinion in Ireland and make it racy

of the soil" (Duffy, *Young Ireland* 80).[1] Young Ireland fulfilled its motto by attempting, in the words of Gavan Duffy, to "revive self-reliance and self respect" (*Young Ireland* 152) by publicizing Irish points of view on both local and foreign affairs in its paper. As well, from its inception, the paper encouraged submissions of poetry. Through Duffy's journalistic experience in the North, he had "discovered the value of patriotic verse in consciousness raising," and put it to work for the movement by converting the traditional songs of faction fighters into "a call for unity against the invader" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 32). His early attempts at ballad writing inspired Davis, who "set out to create a more popular version of [Thomas] Moore's poetry for the masses" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 33). Davis produced ballads that became nationalist standbys, such as "A Nation Once Again" and the "Lament for the Death of Owen Roe O'Neill," about an early Irish leader allegedly assassinated by the English. By 1843, the *Nation* editors had amassed enough poetry to issue a separate publication, *The Spirit of the Nation*, which was

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[1]The nation's motto, "To create and foster public opinion and make it racy of the soil" was taken from a parliamentary speech by Stephen Woulfe, an Irish lawyer (O'Donnell 49). The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers several definitions of "racy." The usage "chiefly used with reference to Ireland," is, of course, "racy of the soil: characteristic of a certain country or people;" however, other connotations of the word may lie behind Woulfe's use of the phrase, including "a distinctive quality or vigour of character or intellect," which were qualities of national character which Young Ireland felt were confirmed and promoted in their patriotic verse.

a popular success (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 33). The *Nation* followed the strategy that had worked well for the United Irishmen, of setting nationalist poems to traditional tunes (Thuente 200), thus grounding its goals in the aspect of Irish culture that many believed best reflected Ireland's unique character--its music.

By the time that the twenty-year old McGee joined *The Nation* in 1846, he was already a published poet and author, whose pen was dedicated to "National subjects" (Slattery 6). Born in Carlingford, County Louth[2] in 1825, McGee spent part of his childhood in Wexford and emigrated to Boston at the age of seventeen, where he had embarked upon a precocious journalism career, quickly becoming editor of *The Boston Pilot*, and gaining compliments from Daniel O'Connell for his editorials. He returned to Ireland in 1845, initially planning to study towards an arts degree at Trinity. Instead, he joined the liberal Irish paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, and was sent to London as its parliamentary reporter. Fonder of Irish history and nationalist activities than English politics, McGee lost his job when the *Freeman*'s editor decided he was spending too much of his working time reading old Irish manuscripts in

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[2]McGee's father's family claimed descent from Ulster Protestants--soldiers who had settled in Ireland after 1642. His maternal grandfather joined the United Irishmen in 1798 and was imprisoned and ruined as a result; family ties to Wexford, "which still preserved bitter memories of sectarian carnage in 1798" perhaps helped to give McGee an insight into the complexities of Irish history and identity (Vance 155).

the British Museum and contributing articles to *The Nation* (Skelton 32; Slattery 10). Duffy soon found an excellent channel for McGee's enthusiasm. At the time when McGee returned to Ireland, according to Duffy, who clearly viewed British imperialism as an attempt to eradicate the culture of the conquered, "All external symbols of nationality were nearly as effectually banished from Dublin as they were banished from Warsaw under the Cossack, or from Venice under the Austrian" (Davis, *Young Ireland* 67). McGee's ballads and prose histories were soon part of Young Ireland's programme of restoring Irish culture through the "education of their countrymen in literature and history and beauty of Irish music" (Skelton 34). McGee's ballads appeared in *The Nation*, which also commissioned him to write two books, *The Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century* (1846) and *A Memoir of the Life and Conquests of Art McMurrough* (1847), which refuted the assumption that outside of English conquest, Ireland had no history or literary culture of its own worthy of serious consideration.

To understand the cultural programme into which McGee was initiated in 1845, and which he later imported to Canada, it is necessary to look at both Irish and European cultural precedents for Young Ireland. While its aims were mostly populist, Young Ireland was indebted to the work of Irish academics and antiquarians. While many scholars had, in the wake of the 1798 rebellion, distanced themselves from

any overt political interpretations of their work (Leerssen 375), this work was nevertheless continuing in the eighteen-thirties and was soon appropriated once again by Protestant and Catholic nationalists alike. The conservative *Dublin University Magazine*, for instance, was founded in 1830 as an attempt "to recapture for the Protestant landlords the leadership of the Irish nation" (Hutchinson 90). As with the *Nation*, the magazine attempted to educate the Protestant upper classes; a revival of interest in Irish history, music and poetry "provided a means by which to attach the Ascendancy firmly to the Irish soil" (Hutchinson 90). Among its contributors was Samuel Ferguson, who sought to "instil in his fellow Protestants a pride in their Irish descent," by translating pre-christian Celtic epics, which were later to inspire Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival. While a dedicated "patriotic unionist" (Hutchinson 90), Ferguson nevertheless opposed Ireland's administration from a distant centre in London, and was consequently in sympathy with many of Young Ireland's aims, including repealing the Act of Union and encouraging the cultural regeneration of Ireland (Skelton 141). Interestingly, he singled out McGee as "foremost of the Young Ireland poets," surpassing even Davis (Skelton 48).

Both Ferguson's work and the patriotic verse promoted by the more revolutionary *Nation* were indebted to the work of a group of artists, writers and scholars headed by George

Petrie (1790-1866), a painter who organized or revived many cultural societies, including the Royal Irish Academy (Hutchinson 80). As an artist, Petrie believed that the Irish landscape he painted expressed the character of the Irish people "through its contrasting lights and shades which is so well exhibited in our exquisite and strongly-marked national music" (qtd in Hutchinson 81). His research into the histories of the bronze-age monuments and ruins of castles and monasteries in his paintings led him to an interest in archaeology and the promotion of museums and libraries to publicize Ireland's cultural past (Skelton 41). He was assisted in this work by the Irish translator Eugene O'Curry (1796-1862) and the historian John O'Donovan (1809-1861), who catalogued and translated early Irish manuscripts, and began the uncompleted Statistical Survey of Ireland which had attempted an exhaustive historical survey of place names, topography, social history and archaeological remains (Hutchinson 83-86).[3] The goal of this extensive and exhaustive work was twofold: "to achieve an exact *scientific* reconstruction of the Irish past, and, secondly, a deeper *moral* imperative to recover all aspects of the Irish experience as a coherent identity in space and time, and to recreate it as a living reality in the present" (Hutchinson 87). This project had political consequences,

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[3]Isaac Weld undertook the *Statistical Survey of the County of Roscommon* for the Royal Dublin Society in 1832.

as Davis himself was aware when he wrote that these antiquarians' work was as powerful as anything done by "political nationalists....Their writings, their patronage, their talk was of Ireland; yet it hardly occurred to them that the ideal would flow into the practical, or that they, with their dread of agitation, were forwarding a revolution" ("Ballad History of Ireland" 193). Ultimately, these scholars' researches encouraged "a rejection of British hegemony over Irish life" by once again emphasising the civilized nature of Ireland before its conquest by "the invading Normans and their British successors" (Hutchinson 80-81).

Looking back on Petrie's revival, from a perspective of nearly thirty years in Canada, McGee chose to commemorate in verse the work of Petrie's associates, O'Curry and O'Donovan (Skelton 42; Vance 158). While the careful, dry, and even pedantic recording and restoration of old annals and chronicles might not be the most promising subject for poetry, McGee saw this primarily scholarly activity as the foundation upon which a national identity could be built, be it Irish or Canadian. In his unattractively titled, "The Dead Antiquary, O'Donovan," and in "Eugene O'Curry," McGee emphasises the patriot motivations of these scholars. While dedicated to a factual and scientific appraisal of Celtic Ireland, O'Donovan nevertheless corrects old bardic "errors...with gentle hand" rather than allow "reason in her

high career" to "overturn or trample down/ Beyond repair" any Irish chronicle of civilization before the Norman invasion. Since much of O'Donovan's activity was in reaction to dismissive eighteenth-century scholars,[4] who "ruthlessly appl[ied] scientific methods and an 'enlightened' scepticism to any history not based on the authentic documents of the period" (Hutchinson 84), McGee shows himself to be highly informed and sensitive to the nature of O'Donovan's recovery of Irish history, and its political value.

While scholarly, O'Donovan's work nevertheless is pure patriotism; he is

> The foremost of the immortal band
> Who vow'd their lives to fatherland;
> Whose works remain
> To attest how constant, how sublime
> The warfare was they waged with time;
> How great the gain!....
> O'er all low limits still his mind
> Soar'd Catholic and unconfined,
> From malice free;
> On Irish soil he only saw
> One state, one people, and one law,
> One destiny!

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[4]In the mid-eighteenth century, much initial scholarship was done by "small groups of enthusiastic amateurs--clergymen, Trinity College dons, lawyers and country gentlemen" (Hutchinson 55). The best known of these, perhaps, was Colonel Vallancy, whose rather fanciful speculations on the origins of the Irish were discredited by later writers, including Thomas Davis ("Irish Antiquities" 88). In 1790, *The Antiquities of Ireland*, published by the Rev. Edward Ledwich went to the other extreme, "appearing to relegate to the realm of fable any account of civilization in Ireland, pagan or religious, predating the arrival of the Normans" (Hutchinson 84). The nationalist aspect of nineteenth-century scholarship came partly from a reaction to Ledwich's dismissal of so much of Irish history.

(*Poems* 448-54)

Like Kidd's writing on monuments, McGee's poem plays with the idea of the relationship between "the monumental arctic stone/ Of ages wreck'd" and patriotic poetry, which is the only secure means of preserving the history and meaning that monuments signify. "The patriotic antiquarian endeavour to secure national possessions from the ravages of time is paralleled in the writing of commemorative elegy" (Vance 158).

In "Eugene O'Curry," scholars are more than patriots; they are elevated to the same status as Ireland's heroes: "champions fallen in the fight,/ And scholars known in peaceful shade" (Sadlier 457). In fact, the work of scholars, who wage war against oblivion and decay, has more profound and far-reaching effects than military defence, a theme which McGee would later elaborate in the preface of his *Canadian Ballads*, when he writes, "it is, indeed, glorious to die in battle in defence of our homes or altars; but not less glorious is it to live to...preserve the traditions of our country" (vii-viii). O'Curry is given the status of *"Ollamh,"* an ancient Irish office which "joined the influence of a great philosopher to the authority of a great monarch" (Hutchinson 58). In using the very details of early Irish life uncovered by O'Curry and O'Donovan to construct his tributes to these men, McGee acknowledges the

debt of Ireland and of its poets to them for a national identity. These two poems show McGee's own familiarity with the work of the scholars who preceded Young Ireland, as well as his astuteness in recognizing their important contribution. McGee's view that scholarly and artistic activities are the foundation upon which a civic-spirited national pride is built was a belief central to successful cultural nationalist movements:

> Since this [national] identity can only be grasped as a living whole...it cannot be codified. It can only be understood genetically and intuitively as a *gestalt*. For this reason, its proponents are not politicians or legislators but are above all historical scholars and artists who form cultural and academic societies, designed to recover this creative force in all its dimensions with verisimilitude and project it to the members of the nation.
>
> (Hutchinson 14)

Nevertheless, in dwelling on the nation's history, Young Ireland was not merely an introspective movement. Its founders, particularly Davis, looked abroad, not only for images of themselves reflected back by Europe, but also to gain an understanding of other national literatures. Interest in the culture and philosophy of France (watched so closely by would-be republicans in the 1780s in Ireland) gradually gave way to the romantic nationalism promoted in Germany at the turn of the century. O'Donnell notes of *The Nation* that "the cultural element in the paper was a repercussion of contemporary advanced European thought" (47); from their writing it is clear that many Young

Irelanders, including McGee, found European, and in particular French and German models, for their literary nationalism. The noted Young Ireland poet James Clarence Mangan "steeped himself in German literature and philosophy at an early age," contributing translation and articles on German literature to many Irish periodicals, including the *Dublin University Magazine* (O'Neill 97). While he left no written account of his travels, many of Davis's biographers agree that Davis made a continental tour in the late 1830s (Hutchinson 97), and mastered French and German sufficiently to gain "experience of other countries, literary or physical," that helped to "integrate Davis's incipient nationalism" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 19).

At least one French historian, Augustin Thierry (1795-1856), was an important model for Davis and Young Ireland. Davis discussed Thierry's treatment of the character of the Irish people (1820), in an essay published in *The Nation* on 26 November, 1842 (Thuente 213). Thierry's "attractively presented history of the common people" moulded Davis's philosophy of history, and consequently inspired much of the historical writing published by Young Ireland's Library of Ireland series (Davis, *Young Ireland* 240-241). Davis's own history writing was perhaps inspired by Thierry's sympathetic portrait of the United Irishmen, whose movement had been held up as an example of Irish barbarism by writers such as Sir Richard Musgrave (Thuente 203). Davis' view of

history, influenced in part by Thierry, affected Young Ireland's literary nationalism. "Davis considered national history in much the same category as national poetry" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 240). He argued, "Exact history is needful, not only as the best school of politics, but as the purifier and protector of tradition, the basis of fiction, and the arsenal of the song writer." For Davis, "the problem was to write the history of the Irish people, using new sources, as opposed to the history of their rulers" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 240).

In contradicting the "history of their rulers," or, in Thierry's words illuminating events until now only viewed "confusedly at the bottom of the histories of the European monarchies" (*Nation* 26 November, 1842), Davis had found a nationalist tactic whose anti-imperial implications would be used even by the more conservative McGee.[5] Davis did not

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[5] McGee's participation in Canadian government, and his support for its place in the empire was not a complete political about-face. In Young Ireland, McGee was a "close associate" of Charles Gavan Duffy; according to Richard Davis, they both worked to "inhibit democratic excesses likely to frighten the gentry" during the Irish Confederation of 1847. As well, McGee agreed with William Smith O'Brien, a Young Ireland member from the Ascendancy, that Ireland should preserve the "'golden link' with the crown, if possible" (*Young Ireland Movement* 136). While they often criticized British abuses in its colonies and its wars with India and Afghanistan, Young Irelanders' attitudes towards British Imperialism were often ambivalent. "The trend of *Nation* articles was against participation" (Young Ireland Movement 206); however, Young Irelanders were not insensible to the benefits of participation in colonial activities, including emigration. William Smith O'Brien a member of the British Parliament, kept before its attention the "glorious contribution of the Irish to empire," just as McGee reminded

confine his historical writing to Irish subjects, but criticized the action of England in its colonies abroad. In an essay on India, "Davis analyzed the British seizure...not from the viewpoint of a superior civilization overcoming barbarians, but from that of traditional native cultures themselves" (Davis, *Young Ireland Movement* 241). McGee also employed these tactics in his histories, from the time of his earliest writing for the Library of Ireland, until his return to America after Young Ireland's failed insurrection in 1848. Like Davis, McGee focuses on English conquest from the point of view of Irish resisters in *History of the Life and Conquests of Art McMurrough*, which rewrites Richard II's campaign in Ireland. McGee's interest in recovering the histories of people marginalized in the literature of their conquerors is evident in his preface, in which McGee claims, "History is the grand court of Posterity. To it the calumniated in life and the hunted unto death, appeal" (x). In such passages, McGee's language echoes Davis' appreciation of Thierry, who, Davis said, "raises his voice for the defeated, the dead, the free" (*Nation*, 26 November, 1842). In spite of the obvious propagandistic aims of such writing, McGee nevertheless claims that its authority rests on factual accuracy and objectivity: "Ignorance...is censurable in historians; but when, unknowing facts, they

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his compatriots of their participation in his writings in America (207).

dogmatically lay down suppositions in their place, making up in assurance what they fall short of in research, there is no condemnation too heavy for their offence" (x).

Even after its demise, Young Ireland's attitude towards historiography continued to influence McGee's own writing. The purpose of the Library of Ireland series was, McGee wrote, "to make long neglected names familiar to the lips of Irishmen...to reverse the influence of the arrogant spirit and false philosophy of English-written books on Ireland; and to teach all their readers that the Irish nation was, in its essence and intellect, different from the English" (*Art McMurrough*, intro. i). Like Davis, McGee portrays imperial activities in an equally ambivalent fashion; he simultaneously calls attention to Irish participation in building British and American empires while exonerating them of responsibility for its uglier activities. In 1855 he wrote of the Irish emigrant in America:

> He has no cause to be ashamed of his predecessors here. If they have founded no exclusive *New Ireland*, the blood of no exterminated tribe rises in judgement against them; if they were sole proprietors of no province, neither have they to answer for enslaving the African....We can look History in the face; and putting our hands upon any part of the fabric of the state, we can say, as a people, *This* was *partly* our work.
> (*Catholic History of North America* 134)

Young Ireland had continually questioned the role of history in politics, as well as history's relationship to literature. When McGee imported Young Ireland's sense of historiography to North America, and ultimately, Canada, it

had repercussions for his view of emigration and nationality. By uncovering the roles of the Irish, whom he believed had been marginalized in conventional histories of North America, so that they were at the centre of his narrative, McGee was well on the way to constructing a vision of a nation with as many different points of view as its fabric was the work of many different hands.

In his early historical writing, McGee establishes a moral high ground for the Irish people based precisely on their invisibility in the blood-stained annals of New World conquest. This strategy is likely indebted to Davis' condemnation of British imperial activities abroad. If Ireland was indeed different "in essence and intellect" from England, then a slavish imitation of English actions, and even of its successes, would merely be evidence of Ireland's cultural inferiority and provincialism. Firmly rejecting the economic success of Britain as a model for Ireland (Young Ireland portrayed England as being in "moral peril" due to the destruction of its rural classes through industrialization [Hutchinson 105]), Young Ireland looked abroad, particularly to Germany, for both economic and historical models[6].

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[6]McGee's criticisms of the urban slums of American cities was preceded by Davis' criticism of English industrialization, which depopulated rural areas and led to "bitter class-divisions, crime vice and drunkenness" (Hutchinson 103). Davis suggested that Ireland introduce the "Prussian model, a rural-based system of peasant proprietors", or develop Ireland's national resources without relying on the massive

Davis' possible visit to Germany in 1839 appears to have resulted in "a conversion experience under the impact of Lessing, Fichte and Schlegel" (Hutchinson 97). By importing German ideas to Ireland, "Davis set up echoes which still reverberated when Yeats and his circle at the end of the century set about doing for Ireland what Goethe in his day had done for Germany" (O'Neill 89). This importation of German cultural nationalism appears to have had far-reaching effects in terms of setting up an effective resistance against British cultural imperialism. Edward Said views the "cultural nationalism" of Young Ireland members such as "[the poet James Clarence] Mangan, Ferguson, and Davis" as setting the stage for the type of literary decolonization later undertaken by Yeats in "another, more challenging way" ("Yeats and Decolonization" 69). Certainly, German ideas continued to have an influence on McGee, who frequently appeals to Schlegel in both his Irish and in his Canadian writing on national literature.

In the late eighteenth century, Germany's intellectuals had rejected French cultural dominance, and French classicism in poetry and drama (Eichner 24), turning instead to populist movements and folk traditions to rejuvenate its culture. The writings of the German scholar and historian Johannes Gottlieb von Herder (1744-1803) gave birth to renewed interest in the poetry of early cultures,

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industrialization of Britain.

particularly "primitive" Celtic and Germanic poetry, as well as the folk songs of Germany. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Herder was interested in the Scottish poet Macpherson's "translations" of Ossian as examples of primitive poetry (Colum 40). Herder's work had a direct influence on poets such as Goethe, Schiller, and on Karl Friedrich Schlegel (1767-1829). Herder's vision of nationality based not on "race" but on organic distinctions arising from the climate, soil, and history which shaped a culture, may possibly be echoed in the writings of Duffy and of McGee. Herder also considered poetry, particularly "a nation's earliest most spontaneous poetry the true voice of the nation" (O'Neill 101).

The relationship among poetry, a nation's history, and a nation's character was made more explicit in Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern (1822). For Schlegel, an original and national literature was the primary way in which a nation's identity and self-image was projected:

> ...literature appears in all its reach and comprehension, as the epitome of all the intellectual capabilities and progressive improvements of mankind. If we look back to the history of our species, and observe what circumstances have given to any one nation the greatest advantages over others, we shall not, I think, hesitate to admit, that there is nothing so necessary to the whole improvement, or rather to the whole intellectual existence of a nation, as the possession of a plentiful store of those national recollections and associations, which are lost in a great measure during the dark ages of infant society, but which forms the great object

> of the poetical art to perpetuate and adorn. Such national recollections, the noblest inheritance which a people can possess, bestow an advantage which no other riches can supply; for when a people are exalted in their feelings and ennobled in their own estimation, by the consciousness that they have been illustrious in ages that are gone by--that these recollections come down to them from a remote and a heroic ancestry,--in a word, that they have a *national poetry* of their own, we are willing to acknowledge that their pride is reasonable, and they are raised in our eyes by the same circumstances which gives them elevation in their own.
> (*Lectures on the History of Poetry, Ancient and Modern* 9)

Schlegel's *Lectures* emphasises the ways in which a national poetry could educate a people about their past and inspire a patriotic pride that would motivate their current civic duties: a concept that was eagerly taken up by Young Ireland. In addition, Young Ireland, who believed that they had to involve all classes of Irish in order to revive "national recollections" of a past obliterated or obscured by Britain's imperial and cultural domination, may have also heeded Schlegel's call for an integration of the various classes and callings of society. In the introduction to his lectures, Schlegel had written that "A separation...between the men of letters and the courtly society, and again between both of these and the common people, is destructive of all national character. It is necessary that the different natural circumstances and situations of the various classes of mankind, should, in a certain degree, work together, before we can either attain or enjoy excellence in the productions of mind" (*Lectures* 4). This

injunction may be seen as an influence, both in the *Nation* and the *National Library of Ireland*. The aim of both publications was to create a unified political opposition to England through a popular Irish culture with roots in the folk-traditions of Ireland. The repercussions of this programme can still be heard in McGee's Canadian cultural manifesto, "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion," in which he views cooperation among writers, politicians, churchmen, and the professions as a means of educating Canadians as to the patriotic duties implicit in their new nationality.

The advances of German culture in the past century were in themselves an educational example for Young Ireland. By the 1840s, many Irish journals, including the *Dublin University Magazine*, were taking an interest in German literature. However, "a more fruitful channel" for German ideas into Irish nationalism was the *Nation's* use of the achievements of German writers as models for Irish literature (O'Neill 89). Writing in *The Nation*, John Mitchell claimed, "History, metaphysics, aesthetics, criticism, prose fiction, dramatic, didactic, and lyric poetry, in all, Germany has *in one century* succeeded. What cheering fact to all humanity--but especially to an infant nation--shines this fact! [sic]" (qtd in O'Neill 101). Germany's progress was cheering indeed for a country that was dominated politically and culturally by the English, and whose recent history of engaging England's professional and

well-equipped army on its own terms resulted in monotonously bloody conclusions. To declare that comparisons with England were meaningless and to turn towards Germany for new models went no small way towards restoring Ireland's battered self-esteem.

The connections Davis, Duffy, and McGee draw between national history and poetry also likely have their roots in Schlegel's writing. National poetry, according to Schlegel, is what preserves the record and culture of a people from "oblivion." Nations may

> transmit to posterity the memory of their influence and the fame of their conquests; and yet we scarcely hold the narrative to be worthy of our attention unless the spirit of the nation[7] has been such as to communicate its interests to those undertakings and those incidents which at best occupy but too great a space in the history of the world....This national consciousness, expressing itself in works of narrative and illustration, is HISTORY.
>
> (*Lectures* 9)

The writing of history and poetry are constantly bound together in the *Nation*'s cultural programme. Davis appears to have had this union in mind when he claimed that Ireland could not become a nation "without a knowledge of the country's history and of the propensities of good and ill of the people" (*Essays and Poems* 83). McGee's mentor Duffy claimed, "A people without native poetry are naked to a multitude of evil influences" (*The Ballad Poetry of Ireland*

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[7]It is not beyond the realm of possibility that their reading of Schlegel influenced Young Ireland's decision to call their ballad collection *The Spirit of the Nation*.

xxiii). For both Young Ireland and German nationalist writers, poetry contained a nation's heritage; consequently poetry was important "for the record of the past contained in it" (Wilson 29), which was expressed through "the loftiest expression to which language could aspire." In short, poetry was the "summation of the national soul" (Wilson 29). Davis, who often paraphrased Schlegel (Colum 260), asserted that "A country without its national poetry proves its hopeless dulness or its utter provincialism. National poetry is the very flower of the soul, the greatest evidence for its health, the greatest evidence of its beauty. It binds us to the land by its condensed and gemlike history" ("Ballad History of Ireland" 194).

McGee's mentor, Gavan Duffy, makes explicit the connection between the German and Irish literary movements, in his Introduction to *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, when he writes:

> In Ireland literary men must be content with a limited celebrity and moderate reward, that they might endeavour to do for their country what Scott had done for Scotland, and what Schiller and Goethe had done for Germany. Why should not the Barrow and the Bann be as famous as the Clyde? Why should not the majestic Shannon, or the wild Blackwater, which rivals the Rhine in beauty, rival it also in fame? The work had begun and must be continued, till the beautiful face of Ireland, like the face of Undine, was illuminated with the soul of poetry.
>
> (*Four Years of Irish History* 73)

The writers Duffy cites did not merely imitate the poetry of the past, but adapted its lessons according to the current

needs of the country. In *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, Duffy distinguishes the volume's modern contents from "the old Bardic Songs of the country" and "the Street Ballads common in the mouths of the people" (i). While the ancient writings of Ireland, "which no translation could entirely spoil....are substantial witnesses of a distinct civilization," they cannot serve as sole examples for a regeneration of Irish culture. Instead, the modern Irish ballad, a form unknown to "Celtic Ireland" (O'Donnell 83), "has borrowed from...these sources; but the main body of the collection is gathered from another class, chastened and elevated by modern art, but equally indigenous, and equally marked with a distinct native character" (i). The class to which Duffy refers was the Anglo-Irish, whom, he insisted, had a language "as easily discriminated from London English as the dialect of Saxon spoken in the Lowlands of Scotland....It is a dialect fired with the restless imagination, and coloured with the strong passions of our nation....They have taught the native muse to become English in language without growing un-Irish in character" (xxii). As exemplars, Duffy believed that Anglo-Irish ballads were desirable for their elevated content, unlike common street ballads, which he considered vulgar and often "nonsense" (xviii). They also provided Young Ireland with a means of including Protestant Irish culture in a nationalism that transcended religious and linguistic barriers.

Young Ireland adopted the ballad form as one which had historical and cultural significance for Irish expression. However, in order to inspire patriotic sentiments in young contemporary writers, Duffy advised them to look at earlier examples of ballads, conveniently collected for them in *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, much as Herder had furnished older ballads for younger German romantic poets:

> In Germany modern ballads accomplish the same end to a profounder extent. When Burger, Goethe, and Schiller taught the native muse to renounce foreign models and become German in spirit and form, an intellectual revolution commenced, which has influenced Europe no less widely than the political revolution of France. Many who never heard the name of Goethe, multitudes to whom German is a locked-up treasure, have shared this influence. Let us hope that our native ballads also will herald the happy coming of a native literature. They are not agents unworthy of such an end....The world-famous German ballads were suggested by the same models, and if, like them, *our* ballads frequently exceed the originals in force and variety as they naturally do in artistic effects, it is all that was possible to accomplish.
>
> (*The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* xxvii-xxix)

As a form of early poetry accessible to rural Ireland through folk-tradition, the ballad had qualities of "home and homely associations, which, elevated and spiritualized, becomes love of country" (xxiv). Duffy writes that his ballad collection is comprised of works that he felt reflected the distinctive voice of Ireland, or in his words were again "racy of the soil," whether they be written by urbane Anglo-Irishmen or by uneducated peasantry. These last examples he calls "rude ballads, with nearly all the

faults of their class," but which "have also a natural unpremeditated beauty essentially their own." The ballads written by Young Ireland contributors for *The Nation* emulated the qualities in Duffy's collection, in an attempt to capture the same spontaneity of style (O'Donnell 79). Moreover, there is evidence that many of the Young Ireland poets, including McGee, tried to re-create an earlier Gaelic flavour in their writing by deliberately adapting rules of old Irish poetry, including specific meters, assonance, rhyme, and alliteration, to verse in English (O'Donnell 87-90).

Young Ireland's choice of the ballad as best suited to assert Ireland's distinctive native character had other aesthetic and philosophical consequences for Young Ireland, and, ultimately, McGee in Canada. Young Ireland's goal was to motivate and educate the middle and lower classes, by replacing fading Gaelic traditions with a new popular national culture, using the idioms of the older culture to create something "rougher and bolder" containing "narrative, popular idiom and local colour" (Davis *Young Ireland* 239). Davis also saw Irish music, upon which ballads drew so much of their power, as one of the best means of motivating what was good in the Irish people. In their view, basing Irish patriotic and political verse on a form to which Irish people had already emotional and historical ties, meant that poetry, in its capacity to do good, achieved almost

religious significance. Herder, and followers such as Schlegel, suggested that the early poetry of a nation was inextricably bound with ritual and religion (Berlin 194); for Schlegel, "poetry assumes a symbolic significance by expressing the relationship between the artist and the Godhead" (Anchor 315). Duffy sees the modern ballad's links with this earlier form of poetry as giving Young Ireland's political direction of the Irish people its moral force:

> What poets they shall read and love, is no unimportant question; very much the contrary. Poetry has been named the "sister of religion," a presumptuous title; but it is impossible to deny that it often lies like a quickening compost at the root of faith and morals....Even among the most cultivated men, and in the most artificial state of society, Poetry is an honoured ally of the Law and the Pulpit.
> (*The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* xxix-xxx).

If this concept holds for more advanced and "artificial societies" (for whom in England and Germany the ballad had fertilized a culture grown too abstract and philosophical), Duffy implies, then Ireland, which for historical reasons has kept closer associations with a simpler rural society, should be particularly receptive to poetry's generative qualities.

Supported by the German nationalists' assertion that the diversity of nations was part of a divine plan and so should be nurtured and protected, both Young Ireland and McGee continued to focus on literature that revealed the distinctiveness of their respective countries. However, this programme of cultural nationalism was cut short in

Ireland, when in the course of events practical political problems commanded Young Ireland's energy and attention. 1848 was a year of revolutions in Europe; inspired particularly by the example of the Paris barricades, even the most conservative members of Young Ireland were convinced that the Irish people were ready to be led to independence by them. With an eye to current events, as well as events of the past decade, in which several countries--including Canada--had successfully won self determination, Duffy had written, "all over the world--from the frozen swamps of Canada, to the rich corn fields of Sicily--in Italy, in Denmark, in Prussia, and in glorious France, men are up for their rights" (qtd in Davis, *Young Ireland* 148). The Irish famine which began in 1845 had united Irish parties across class and sectarian lines by hardening their attitudes against what they saw to be British mismanagement of the country. However, by 1847 O'Connell's death had led to schisms in the parties behind Repeal, which provided an opportunity for more radical Young Irelanders to come to the forefront of their organization (Hutchinson 110). Unfortunately, the popularity of revolutionary sentiments expressed in Young Ireland ballads did not translate into support for open rebellion. Young Irelanders greatly overestimated the peasantry, who were weakened and demoralized by famine, and the clergy, who had noticed that the revolutionary examples provided by

"glorious France" included shooting the Archbishop of Paris (Hutchinson 110-111). In the summer of 1848, Irish revolutionary activities were poorly organized and sporadic. Their conclusion in a shootout in a Ballingary cabbage patch provided Young Ireland's opponents with ample material for farce and derision in the months to come (Davis, *Young Ireland* 148).

The failed revolution marked the final dissolution of Young Ireland. McGee, who had travelled through Ireland and Scotland drumming up support for the revolution, was charged with treason, but escaped to America disguised as a priest; several of his colleagues resorted to similar methods, including cross-dressing, to elude the authorities (Davis, *Young Ireland* 165). Of those who were arrested, three, including William Smith O'Brien, were sentenced to death, but later transported to Australia instead. Duffy was imprisoned, but the jury failed to convict him of high treason (Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History* 755). As with McGee, Duffy's eventual emigration led to a successful colonial political career--in his case, as premier of Victoria in Australia, a destination possibly determined in part by his preconceptions of the "frozen swamps" of "snowy Canada" (*Four Years of Irish History* 72). The historian Richard Davis claims that, in spite of its failure to achieve immediate political goals, Young Ireland's destruction did have regenerative qualities of its own.

"The movement burned brightly in the writings and subsequent deeds of its members," including McGee. "The leading Young Irelanders whose rebellion had egregiously failed demonstrated remarkable ability and resource abroad. Their fitness for government was amply proved" (*Young Ireland* 166-168). Most members of Young Ireland, Davis observes, remained faithful to the movement's original political agenda. McGee did remain faithful to young Ireland's revolutionary aims; his subsequent work in America and then Canada convinced him of the superiority of British constitutional politics as they were implemented in Canada and led him to condemn Fenian activities in America. As well, he ably served these ideals in Canada, first as an independent member of the Quebec legislature, as a cabinet minister under John A. Macdonald, and later as a member of the Canadian Parliament, until his death at the hands of a Fenian assassin in 1868 (Slattery 81, Davis, *Young Ireland* 167-168).

McGee's subsequent experience of American and British North American government helped to determine his path of evolution from Irish to Canadian nationalist. While politics came to absorb much of his energy in Canada, McGee's writing retains the literary theories of Young Ireland. Upon arrival in America in 1848, he returned to his first career as journalist, setting up newspapers in Boston and then New York. He came to America just in time to observe the great

influx of Famine emigrants, and the cultural assumptions he had imbibed through Young Ireland were challenged by the political and social obstacles that his compatriots had to face in the United States, including prejudice against Catholics fostered by organizations such as the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party (Phelan 97-98).

Young Ireland had reasoned that in spite of their impoverishment and oppression in Ireland, the Irish peasants had possessed a rich culture, connected to and strengthened by the unique folklore and history of their regions. The experience of the poorer class of emigrants in America seemed to illustrate Herder's observations about historical diasporas. To Herder, "emigration sometimes leads to enfeeblement, lack of vital force, the flattening out of human beings, and a sad uniformity," once emigrants are deprived of the connections to the soil in which they were raised (Berlin 177). McGee was also concerned that, freed from the close observation and moral strictures of village life, and from the influence of clergy, Irish peasantry became degraded and exploited in America (Phelan 143-144). In his preface to the *History of the Attempts to Establish the Protestant Reformation in Ireland* (1853), McGee portrayed the Irish in America as cut adrift from both the physical reminders of their history, and their spiritual roots:

> Here are no wayside crosses, or empty belfries, no Cromwellian breaches, no soil fruitful of

> traditions, to keep alive in their souls the story of their heroic and orthodox ancestors. For the monuments and memorials that abound in Erin, this little book is the only substitute I can offer them.
>
> (Preface i)

McGee's histories, written for his countrymen scattered in America, continued the Young Ireland programme of creating a written culture based on the Irish heritage. Works such as *A History of the Irish Settlers in North America* (1855), and *The Catholic History of North America* (1855) no doubt continued what the German nationalists had inspired Young Ireland to do: keep alive a sense of identity and patriotic pride in a cultural or ethnic group.

Frequent invitations to speak in Canada gave McGee an opportunity to tour Irish communities; and he was impressed with their orderliness, industry and prosperity. McGee emigrated to Montreal in 1857 (Phelan 148), and before long, set up another newspaper, *The New Era*, which ran for a year, until McGee exchanged the role of journalist for that of member of the Quebec provincial legislature (Ballstadt 85-86). In Canada, McGee decided to do for the incipient nation what he had tried to do for his countrymen in America. According to Carl Ballstadt, *The New Era* had an influence disproportionate to its short life. McGee wrote a series of editorials which made "a very significant contribution to the quest for a Canadian literature in Pre-confederation days" (86). *The New Era* was also a departure for McGee in that from its inception it looked beyond the concerns of the

Irish community to foresee a larger confederation of British American colonies. Whether or not McGee's rapid transformation into a Canadian nationalist arose from his disillusionment with American republicanism, as T.J Snell has suggested (Snell 37), it is evident that he had envisioned a Canadian nationality well before Confederation came into being. On January 26, 1858, McGee outlined his concept of the Canadian nation to answer objections that his representation of a mainly Irish constituency conflicted with his "advocating Canadian nationality," in his editorial, "An Exception Answered":

> We find no inconsistency in our theory on these points. Should the nationality we desire draw near in a short time, distinct *Irishism*, like every other *ism* founded on race, will gradually dissolve in it as drift ice does in the gulf stream. But till the larger element surrounds the lesser, we only bow to the necessities of our day, as well as obey the promptings of honour and conscience, in considering first and foremost our own race and our own friends.....We believe the fragments of all old nationalities are and ought to be politically absorbed in the new, but we believe the new patriotism itself must perform the part of solvent, and by its genial and generous atmosphere mould the materials already existing on the soil. These may be by events transmuted into native forms, but they cannot be de-characterized by any abstract reasoning or preliminary setting forth of the mere grounds of change.

In spite of his expressed hope that someday all emigrant nationalities, including the Irish, would be subsumed in a new Canadian identity, he is not asking emigrants to abandon their own cultural identities. The "honour and conscience" of emigrants would never allow for such a thing; and

besides, such inborn patriotism would be better channelled into the new nation. This view may have been influenced in part by McGee's experience of the United States, where the absence of a "genial and generous atmosphere" and the presence of strong nativist prejudices had ensured that "the Irish are still an alien population, camped but not settled in America, with foreign hopes and aspirations unshared by the people among whom they live" ("The Irish Position in British and In Republican North America" 6).

Nationality for McGee continued to be a concept distinct from race, as it had been for Young Ireland. Davis in his review of Thierry had objected to that writer's dependence upon "a too exclusive notice of the distinctions arising from race," and had asserted that Irish nationality attempted to "sink the distinctions of blood as well as sect. The Milesian, the Dane, the Norman, the Welshman, the Scotchman and the Saxon, naturalized here, must combine, regardless of their blood" (*Nation* 3 December, 1842). McGee argues for a similar naturalization on Canadian soil: he maintains that the "genial and generous" effects of patriotism will build a sense of Canadian pride and distinction upon the accomplishments of the civilizations who combined to settle Canada, but the end result will be a purely Canadian product. In "Who Reads a Canadian Book?", published in the July 25, 1857 issue of *The New Era*, McGee again asserts that it is through a combination of

nationalities that Canada, like Ireland, receives its distinct character: "If...we desire to see a Canadian nationality freely developed, borrowing energy from the American, grace from the Frenchman, and power from the Briton, we cannot too soon begin to construct a Grand Trunk of thought, which will be a background to the system we desire to inaugurate."

Even McGee's vision of assimilation rebels against bland uniformity, or "de-characterization," and keeps before it always the concept of the organic distinctions existing among nations. The literary editorials in *The New Era* continually kept two ideas in public view: first, that a patriotic literature was the reagent that would transmute Irish, Scots, English and French emigrants into Canadians, and second, that the examples of other national literatures would educate Canadians about the nature of cultural distinctiveness as a first step towards Canadian patriotism. In these ways, *The New Era* attempted on Canadian soil a similar systematic exploration of culture, history and literature that Davis and Duffy had employed in *The Nation*.

In a manner that recalls Davis' editorials on India, Afghanistan and Canada in *The Nation*, McGee's method is "to find historical analogues to the Canadian condition" (Ballstadt 87). Citing historical examples of other countries, McGee continually refutes the argument that

Canada was too young a nation to have a literature of its own. Carl Ballstadt argues that McGee preceded (and possibly inspired) E.H. Dewart's influential "Introductory Essay" to *Selections from Canadian Poets* (1864), which also dismisses the idea that Canadians must first acquire the developed institutions of older countries such as Britain before they could develop a national literature (Ballstadt 87). Dewart, while admitting that "a colonial position...is not favourable to the growth of an indigenous literature," nevertheless asserts:

> a national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character. It is not merely the record of a country's mental progress: it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy. It may be fairly questioned, whether the whole range of history presents the spectacle of a people firmly united politically, without the subtle but powerful cement of a patriotic literature.
>
> ("Introductory Essay" ix).

In "Who Reads a Canadian Book?", McGee looks to other "colonial" literatures to find encouraging parallels to the Canadian situation. He points to:

> the train of song, all the grave and stately company of the Muses,--the Olympian procession which the Greek colonies could boast, when they were even younger than these Provinces now are. To human intellect and human will, no height which man has once scaled is inaccessible.

McGee is not advocating that Canada imitate the literature of Greece, but like Schlegel, is arguing that Canada can be inspired by studying the example of cultures which had achieved original literatures. Schlegel had also asserted

in his *Lectures* that "Every nation need only go back to its own original and most ancient poetry and myth. The nearer this source is arrived at and the more deeply it is tapped, the more conspicuous will those features be that are common to all nations. The national literatures, like the nations themselves, approximate one another in their origins" (*Lectures* qtd in Eichner 119). As will be illustrated in his *Canadian Ballads*, McGee believed that it is the early history of a nation that provides powerful and vivid subjects for poetry.

It is evident from his editorials in *The New Era* that McGee was acquainted with Schlegel's studies of Oriental poetry, for instance, and he cited Schlegel when drawing analogies of great literatures arising from colonial civilizations. In his June 17, 1857 editorial, "A National Literature for Canada," McGee possibly paraphrases Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern* when he asserts, "No literature, no national life--this is an irreversible law....Literature is the vital atmosphere of nationality. Without that all-pervading, indefinite, exquisite element, national life--public life--must perish and rot." He then proceeds to demolish popular conceptions that Canada was uncongenial to the cultivation of an intellectual life. Countries which had fewer material and historical advantages than Canada had created national literatures:

> No two races ever came so bare of letters into history, as the Saracens and the Saxons. The first followers of Mahomet had none of that antique horde of Indian poetry and theology, which even a Schlegel's powers were incompetent to enumerate....The Saxons, except, perhaps, some rude war chaunts, were, of all the Germans, the least rich in literature. It is even said by Bede--their first bright light,--that they imported their alphabet out of Ireland. Yet, in a thousand years, behold their accumulation of mental wealth, which no shipwreck can reach until the round earth itself is stranded on the shoreless seas of eternity!

In this passage McGee's point (apart from a brief promotion of Irish culture at English expense), appears to be that the possession of a national literature, a "mental" rather than material wealth, is a precondition of national greatness. Even the prosperous, successful and powerful imperial forces of McGee's time, America and Britain, needed national poets and thinkers to inspire with patriotism their merchants, explorers and soldiers, according to McGee.

Moreover, McGee argued that great national literatures could be found in countries less prominent on the imperial stage than Great Britain. Many such "historic precedents" can be found in the cultures of "Northern Europe," he argues, countries with a climate similar to the Canadas, which were congenial to "indoor labour of the brain" (Ballstadt 87). In "A National Literature For Canada," McGee noted that:

> Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland have their literature: rich in poetry, in history, in eloquence, and, as well becomes the North, in astronomical discovery. Cannot Newfoundland yield topics to the poet, or a new Urania to another

> Tycho Brahe? Cannot Canadian story supply the material for chronicles, equal in interest to those of Snorro, or to poetry as characteristic as "Frithiof's Saga?" Has not Longfellow gone for his noblest theme to the Basin of Minas, and the old Acadian life?
>
> (*New Era* 17 June, 1857)

McGee's "favourite analogue is Scandinavia," according to Ballstadt; certainly its early sagas had inspired modern poets in the way that Ireland's ballads had promoted a national and patriotic identity. However, McGee reserves his last word for the achievements of Young Ireland in his conclusion to this editorial. Having illustrated the necessity for a national literature, and shown how it has arisen in countries with histories similar to Canada, he exhorts the "educated men of Canada" to "*make* your public," giving the work of Young Ireland as a positive example:

> An era is not made in literature--still less is a new literature made--without self-devotion and self-sacrifice. We have seen an era made in Irish literature, and we speak from experience; for we were an humble pupil of the men who made it.

For McGee, the simple fact that a national literature had been made in Ireland and in Germany in a relatively short period was not enough to guarantee that the same could happen in Canada without the "self-devotion and self-sacrifice" of both artists and leaders. That the nation exacted such patriotic dues from its artists suggests that McGee was not oblivious to "the obstacles in the way of the creation of a Canadian literature" (Ballstadt 87). The type of patriotism that would make the Canadian public desire

Confederation depended upon their shared sense that Canada possessed a flourishing culture in common; and McGee saw this culture threatened by a colonial mentality that valorized the cultural flowerings of America and Britain, while neglecting the home-grown plant.

McGee, the product of a country that had for so long seen its culture overshadowed by the imperial designs of its larger neighbour, warned Canadians of the danger of being overly influenced by the cultures of Britain or America. In "Who Reads a Canadian Book?" (25 July, 1857) McGee decried the absence of a native literature in Canada, and warned Canadians about the consequences of such a cultural void in "Protection for Canadian Literature" :

> Every country, every nationality, every people, must create and foster a National Literature, if it is their wish to preserve a distinct individuality from other nations. If precautions are not taken to secure this end, the distinctive character and features of a people must disappear: they cannot survive the storms of time and the rude blasts of civil commotion.
>
> (*New Era* 24 April, 1858)

McGee believed that "the remedy" for an embattled Canadian sense of nationality "lies in the hands of the public men of the country, and is much more important than some people would fain make us believe." The view that Canada was not yet mature enough to support its own literature was "a false idea, imported from beyond the seas....It is to be found in the mouths of cockneys who speak disdainfully of the 'Colonies'; of persons who cannot see the importance of

possessing a national literature; and of others who do not wish to see it" ("Protection for Canadian Literature").

Because of its very insidiousness, McGee perceived cultural imperialism as the main threat to Canadian culture, and he consistently saw its source in America. While T.G. Snell claims that McGee dwelt with "almost monotonous frequency" on the States "as an armed and threatening enemy" (Snell 38), in his *New Era* editorials, the main threat to Canada's culture came, not from military invasion, but from a slavish enthusiasm for publications from across the border. "Take a thousand of the most intelligent of our citizens, and you will find that Boston books and Boston utterances sway the minds of one-half of them," he later claimed in "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" (3). The lack of an independent Canadian publishing industry left Canada open to the American market, and threatened to "Massachusett-ize the Canadian mind," McGee argued in "Who Reads a Canadian Book?" Moreover, McGee shared with other Canadian nationalists the "strong" British North American view that "the United States, its ideas and its way of life, had long represented the antithesis of what British North America was meant to be" (Snell 36). If, as McGee repeatedly argued in his editorials, nationality is founded upon "the distinctive characters and features of a people," then the greatest threat to Canadian culture was the unquestioning adoption of American principles, whether

political or literary.

Significantly, McGee often refers to French Canada when he requires an example of an ethnic group that has successfully preserved its own culture on Canadian soil. French Canadians not only "vigilantly guard the line, against Republican aggression," but have "preserved their language, their religion, and their social life, against all attempts at Anglican assimilation." McGee believes that the co-existence on the same soil of two distinct cultures is possible: "is it too much for the descendants of the first inhabitants to claim one [province]...for their own language?....To live in outward peace with a distinct people, while daily planning their obliteration from the map, as a people, is not honourable dealing."[8] In arguing for the preservation of Quebec culture, its language, and for its right to educate children in French-Canadians' own religion, McGee is also making a plea for Canadian culture as a whole. In "The Future of Canada" McGee rejects the concept of implementing a State religion or State-controlled

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[8]Slattery notes that, "When McGee recognized 'two nations' in Canada, his description was just as controversial then as it would be now. Here McGee was speaking of a 'nation' in its racial character as the French use it, rather than the legal sense which is more current in English. But the dispute over this phrase has never been eased through succeeding generations by overlooking its different implications in the two languages" (79). While the substitution of "culture and religion" for "racial" make McGee's contentions no less controversial today, they are in keeping with his complex perspectives on a cultures existing within nations, whose resistance against assimilation is a form of decolonization.

education in Canada. State education, he claims, "can lead only to the Americanization of the future inhabitants of Canada West. The only active annexationist now in the country is the Rev. Mr. Ryerson. Let him educate one generation on the Boston and New York system and our statesmen need not trouble themselves further about the future....I reject the system as fatal to the highest development of the faculties, as sacrificing to a vicious theory of uniformity, the freshness and originality of the growing age" (*New Era* 22 October, 1857).

If the *New Era* worked out in theory the means to inspire Canadian patriotism through literature, McGee's *Canadian Ballads* (1858) was a practical demonstration of these principles. While faithful to the literary theories of Young Ireland, McGee's *Canadian Ballads* also reflected continued English interest in the ballad, fuelled by *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 264). McGee's friend, the Scottish-born Alexander McLachlan, had already used the ballad form to good effect in demonstrating that poetry was a living tradition among the "common people" of both Scotland and Canada (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 250) in his poetry in the 1850s. Moreover, McGee's collection of ballads could be seen as answering a call put out by the Irish-born Thomas McQueen in 1856, in a review article published in *The Weekly British Whig* on December 11, 1856:

> The first Earl of Chatham, we think, said, "Give me the making of a country's ballads and I care not who make her Laws," and there is much meaning and much truth in the saying. But the ballads would require to be well made--made to the point--made in the country and on the country, and embodying such tales, legends, scenes, feats, and customs and occurrences as would truly represent the country and secure the prejudices, feelings and sympathies of her people. Surely there is sufficient variety in Canada and Canadian life, to afford material for national poetry....
> (qtd in Bentley, Intro., *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* xlix)

McGee's *Canadian Ballads* were indeed "made to the point"--that is, they were part of his cultural programme, in which literature would be grounded in the popular idioms of the country, and would hold a mirror up to the new nation, giving its inhabitants a true reflection of the landscape, history, heroes and heroine, that should excite their attachments and sympathies.

That his *Canadian Ballads* had a didactic purpose is evident in McGee's preface, where, after a few modest disclaimers of any pretension to poetic greatness, he offers the poems to "the young people of Canada." To the man he considered his own teacher, Gavan Duffy, McGee dedicates the *Canadian Ballads* "in memory of old times." Like Duffy, who "had shown his particular concern for the younger Irish writers" when he wrote that his collection of Irish ballads would go some way towards "forming their taste" and encouraging further study of their homeland (O'Donnell 154), McGee in his collection has a decidedly didactic aim. The poems are published "as an attempt to show...that by those

who are blessed with the divine gift of poesy, many worthy themes may be found, without quitting their own country" (*Canadian Ballads* vii).

McGee also alludes to past times with Young Ireland in "To A Friend in Australia," where once again McGee views poetry as a means of preserving for posterity patriotic actions--including the creation of a national literature--in order to instill in readers a sense of national pride. In his preface, McGee writes of patriotic poets that "the civic virtue they celebrated has, in turn, immortalized their own names." In "To A Friend in Australia," the poet elegizes the memories of Young Ireland and Ireland itself, the land from whom his comrades have been scattered by emigration and political exile. While McGee longs for "one week amid the emerald fields/ Where the Avoca sings the song of Moore," he also emphasises poetry's ability to call dead incidents back to life; "For ever in fair memory there must live,/ The bright, unclouded picture of the Past" (53).

Nevertheless, McGee's principal aim in *Canadian Ballads* is to uncover and revive the memory of incidents that have contributed to the founding of the Canadian nation. In case some of the Canadian historical subjects McGee has chosen, such as "The Launch of the Griffin," are too obscure for his readers, McGee dutifully includes comprehensive footnotes to the poems, with authoritative references from George Warburton's *The Conquest of Canada*

(1849), Bancroft's *History of the Colonization of America*, and eyewitness accounts of Recollet missionaries (*Canadian Ballads* 59-60). McGee appears here to be following Davis' mandate for historical poetry, which used scholarly sources to provide a voice of authority while simultaneously stocking "the arsenal of the song writer" (*Young Ireland* 240).

McGee does not limit himself to Canadian historic or patriotic subjects, however. As with Adam Kidd and Standish O'Grady, poets whose work was informed by Irish tastes and Irish culture, McGee's poems and footnotes frequently look back to Irish subjects. His "Home-Sick Stanzas," for instance, show an emigrant melancholy that rivals O'Grady's most bitter passages, and like O'Grady's, their autobiographical element gives an immediate sense of the emigrant state of mind:

> I felt a weight where'er I went--
> I felt a void within my brain
> My day hopes and my dreams were blent
> With sable threads of mental pain;
> My eye delighted not to look
> On forest old or rapids grand;
> The stranger's pride I scarce could brook
> My heart was in my own dear land.
>
> (68)

McGee, however, does not share O'Grady's inability to identify himself with the new culture into which he has entered. Where O'Grady had used Irish themes and Irish subject matter, primarily to justify the actions of Irish Patriots, McGee's Irish poems have a wider didactic aim.

Poems such as "Apostrophe to the Boyne," commemorating the historic conflict between Jacobite and Williamite forces in 1690 for example, provide a short lesson in historical interpretation: McGee claims that they "are here inserted as an evidence of what the author at the time of writing considered, and still continues to consider, the true spirit in which the events referred to in them ought alone to be remembered by natives of Ireland, whether at home or abroad. In this light he would fain hope they may be acceptable to the general reader in Canada" (*Canadian Ballads* 65). McGee here follows Duffy's original technique of transforming a subject dear to faction fighters into a nationalist anthem. The "true spirit" that McGee hopes the "general reader in Canada" will extract from the poem is one of reconciliation: "Our pact is made, for brotherhood and union,/ For equal laws to class and communion--/ Our wounds to stanch--our land to liberate" (57). Accepted in the context of the *New Era* editorials that were published in the same period as these ballads, the mixture of Irish and Canadian subjects is not inconsistent with the nationalist aims outlined in McGee's Preface. If patriotism indeed would "mould the materials already existing on the soil," and "transmut[e] them into native forms," then poems that express emigrants' attachment to their birthplace were one way to inspire McGee's young audience to find corresponding sentiments of their own.

McGee not only expresses sentiments of patriotism using Irish voices, but also depicts Canadian history through the voices of different cultures portrayed as existing side by side, each making its own contribution to the whole. This is most explicit in "An International Song," which recalls the drinking songs that Thuente claims played a conspicuous role in the patriotic publications of the United Irishmen (143), and that celebrates the military actions of "Wolfe, Montcalm, Montgomery" (52). The former two French and English adversaries on "Abram's gloried plain" need no further identification, but the last, General Richard Montgomery, was an Irish-born commander of American forces who succeeded in occupying Montreal in 1775 (Slattery 46). A reader may detect a contradiction in the commemoration of Montgomery by a man who was to later pay with his life for subsequent criticisms of Irish-led invasions from the United States. However, McGee, who praised Montgomery in *A History of the Irish Settlers in North America*, obviously felt that Montgomery's devotion to the cause of his adopted country entitled him to be listed in a drinking song in which "the Brave Man's Memory" is toasted, regardless of his allegiances, providing his actions were motivated by patriotism:

> There is one Brotherhood on Earth
> Whereto brave men belong by birth,
> And he who will not honor one,
> Wherever found--himself is none--.
> (51)

The ballad is also "international" in the sense that it illustrates, in a pithy and concise way, the various threads contributing to Canadian history: French, English, Irish *and* American.

Kathleen O'Donnell has noted that the poems which celebrate Canadian exploration also honour men of different nationalities; "Jacques Cartier," "The Death of Hudson" and "Sebastian Cabot to His Lady" "would appeal to the national pride of Canadians and cause them to unite in praise of Canadian heroes of different origins" (162). Several of McGee's poems have French-Canadian subjects, such as "Along the Line," and "Our Ladye of the Snow," which underlines the inborn charity, nobility and piety of the French Canadians, another cultural group which, like the Irish, Canadian nationalists and imperialists were uneasily trying to incorporate into their vision of Canadian nationality. McGee, and later nationalist poets and historians, such as Wilfred Campbell and George Wrong, who believed that the French Canadians and the English had a shared bloodline, emphasised the Norman ancestors of the French Canadians (Berger 131). As well, McGee seems to have attempted to quell the English speaking Canadians' suspicions of the French Canadians that often arose from anti-Catholic sentiments (see Berger 134-35).

In his *The New Era* editorial "The Future of Canada," McGee couches his support for a distinct French-Canadian

culture in terms of their demonstrated loyalty to the British crown in repelling, through the actions of French Canadian *seigneurs* such as de Salaberry, "Republican invasions" in 1812. In his ballad, "Along the Line," it is "Men of the old Norman stamp" who hold the border against American invasion. Where O'Grady had portrayed McGee's French-Canadian co-religionists as inveterate revolutionaries and republicans, McGee in his ballads shows them as aristocratic heroes and missionaries. Since they are portrayed in "Along the Line" as the defenders of a system that both O'Grady and McGee valued, this ballad makes a nice Irish-Canadian counterbalance to O'Grady's similar celebration of loyal Scottish soldiers' defense of Canada during the War of 1812 in his ballad, "The Glengarry Volunteers."

In a ballad collection that upholds cultural distinctions among nations, and is "devoted to ideas of difference between Canada and the United States" (Ballstadt 92), McGee cannot resist contrasting Canadian society to that of the American republic. "Along the Line" not only celebrates the loyalty of French Canadians, but calls its readers' attention to values that McGee wishes to instill in current Canadian society, especially "ideas of freedom [and] individuality" (92). Again recalling early Young Ireland ideology, and specifically, his exoneration of Ireland from the enslavement of "Afric's sons," McGee contrasts the

failings of a powerful imperial force with Canadian virtues:

> Wealth and pride may rear their crests,
> Beyond the line! beyond the line
> They bring no terror to our breasts,
> Along the line! along the line!
> We have never bought or sold
> Afric's sons with Mexic's gold,
> Conscience arms the free and bold,
> Along the line! Along the line!
> (*Canadian Ballads* 47)

McGee implies that love of freedom is a national characteristic that determined the actions of the Canadian participants in the war of 1812. In "Freedom's Journey," McGee elaborates the sense that Canada has remained closer to the ideals of a free society than have the States. Here, Freedom is personified as "a nursling of the North,/ Rock'd in the arms of stormy pines" (49), and who is repelled by the hypocrisy of a country that praises liberty and yet enslaves Afro-Americans. The values which the goddess Freedom upholds in the poem are shaped by the climate and landscape itself. McGee, in adopting Canada's reputedly harsh climate as a further means of distinguishing Canada from its neighbour to the south, was adding his voice to a chorus of Canadian nationalists, such as R.G. Haliburton,[9] who believed that "the descendants of Northern races" who settled in Canada were more likely to "preserve their vigour and cherish their institutions of liberty" than countries who had the geographic misfortune to lie south of the forty-

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[9]See R.G. Haliburton, *The Men of the North and Their Place in History: A Lecture delivered before the Montreal Literary Club, March 31st, 1869*. Montreal, 1869.

ninth parallel (Berger 53). "The hardy, kindly North," in McGee's view, cannot help but turn out strong, individualistic inhabitants who are able to turn their backs on the tinselly attractions of the States. In his role as poet, McGee attempts to delineate the particular character of the Canadian people, based on history and climate, giving literary expression to the potential he believes already exists in the nation.

That Canada had potential, and was a nation not unworthy of the attention of famous poets from outside the country, is demonstrated in McGee's lyric, "Thomas Moore at St. Anne's." In his notes to this poem, McGee writes,

> It may not be amiss to remark, that, to this flying visit of Moore's which occupied him only from the 22nd of July, 1804, when he reached Chippewa, till the 10th of October, when he sailed from Halifax for England, we are indebted not only for the Boat-song, but "the Wood-pecker," and the ballad "Written on passing Dead-man's Island," poems which must certainly be included in any future Canadian Anthology.
>
> (63)

In keeping with the didactic aims of the *Canadian Ballads*, McGee does not feel it is inappropriate to point out "the moral" to would-be "Poets of the land"--that Moore had to travel half a world to find poetic material that is in the back yards, so to speak, of Canadian poets:

> So, while our boat glides swift along,
> Behold! from shore there looketh forth
> The tree that bears the fruit of song--
> The Laurel tree that loves the North.

McGee once again asserts that Canada's climate and character

are particularly suited to poetry, which he implies thrives in a northern climate. Moore's composition, "when he was but six weeks in this country" of "two of the most national songs, which, if we are ever to be a nation we can possess" ("Thomas Moore" 71), is an example of what can be achieved by a writer who has reached the status of national poet. "Every one of Moore's songs seem [sic] to be as national in term and character of thought as it is exquisite in melody," McGee maintains (71). In "Thomas Moore at Ste. Anne's," Moore's particular talent is a receptivity to the essential character expressed through the music and rhythms of a nation's life; in Canada, though he is "from the farther shore," Moore nevertheless "framed as he went his solemn song/ And set it by the boatman's oar." A similar sensitivity, McGee implies, will be required by any native-born national poet, if he is to put the national character into verse.

Moore had been both a political hero and a literary model for McGee (Vance 156), even if Davis and Duffy often found the tone of the *Irish Melodies* too refined and upper-class to be used as a model for populist verse. McGee in the *Canadian Ballads* seems to aim for a tone that, like many of the Young Ireland ballads, is "rougher and bolder," incorporating, as did Young Ireland ballads, "narrative, popular idiom and local colour" (*Young Ireland* 239). O'Donnell notes that he did this sometimes by "giving a

Canadian air to his poetry by sometimes using a French or Indian word." McGee's approving descriptions of Catholic missions to the Amerindians show that, unlike Kidd, he was not terribly concerned with the effects of a different kind of cultural and religious imperialism on the indigenous nations of Canada (although McGee deplores the extermination of Amerindians that attended North American settlement). Both poets nevertheless adopted the ballad form as an antidote to more "artificial" forms of poetry. McGee does portray (albeit with less finesse sometimes than Kidd) the untutored, but concrete, expressive, and metaphorical concept of God held by so-called "primitive" peoples in "The Arctic Indian's Faith":

> The spirit of earth and sky;--
> who hears with the *Wapiti's* eager ear
> His poor red children's cry.
> Whose whisper we note in every breeze
> That stirs the birch canoe--
> Who hangs the reindeer moss on the trees
> For the food of the *Cariboo*.
>
> (30)

In using Amerindian terms, French-Canadian legends, and Canadian history, McGee demonstrates in his poems that he has found an idiom more suitable to the character of Canadians than the more polished, refined and abstract works from English or American presses.

McGee's belief that the Canadian provinces already possessed the materials to inspire a national poet are demonstrated in the Preface and in the poems of *Canadian Ballads*:

> That we shall one day be a great northern nation, and develope [sic] within ourselves that best fruit of nationality, a new and lasting literature, is the firm belief, at least of those to whom this volume is mainly addressed. And here I would remind them, that, of all the forms of patriotism, a wise, public-spirited patriotism in literature, is not the least admirable....From Homer's age to that of Scott, Moore, and Beranger[10], Patriotism has been the passion of the noblest succession of sweet singers the world ever saw--and the civic virtue they celebrated has, in turn, immortalized their own names.
>
> (iii)

McGee's faith in poetry's ability to express the essence of a nation and thus inspire patriotism informs his literary criticism. It is perhaps not surprising that many of his addresses on the national poetry of other countries were delivered to benevolent or cultural associations formed by emigrants, such as the St. Patrick's Literary Association, or the St. Andrew's society.

In talks such as "Ireland's Place in the Literature and History of the Empire" (1864) and his St. Andrew's day lectures on Scottish poets (1865, 1866), McGee often drew upon the implicit patriotic attachments of emigrants to their homeland to illustrate the potential of a national literature in Canada. McGee reminds his audience,

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[10]Pierre Jean de Beranger (1780-1857), was a French poet and writer of popular songs and lyrical ballads, which often satirized the monarch and reactionary clergy. He was "known among ordinary people" as well as literary circles. He was elected to the French democratic parliament formed after the revolutions of 1848 (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). In citing Beranger in this article, McGee appears to acknowledge the radical potential of such national poetry, in spite of his own conservative politics.

"assembled under the auspices of an Irish Society, in a city which must hereafter become a familiar name throughout the Empire as one of the fixed seats of colonial self-government" of Canadian aspirations:

> In British America, hoping to found an intellectual as well as a political province of the empire--an intellectual province contributing to the mental defences and mental commerce of the Empire--we are especially interested that the principal entries of the great account of the progress of our race in intelligence and achievement should be carefully kept and correctly summed up; that no province should be deprived of the lustre which belongs to it....
> ("Ireland's Place in the Literature and History of the Empire" 78)

In these addresses, McGee did not see a conflict between espousing a distinct national literature for Canada, and arguing for Canada to maintain constitutional links with Britain. This view was in keeping with the growing enthusiasm in Canada for a continuing constitutional link with Great Britain after Confederation; its proponents, notes the historian Carl Berger, "believed imperial unity compatible with Canadian nationality" and "interpreted Canadian history, character, and destiny" in order to justify an imperial federation with Great Britain that would strengthen Canada's ability to determine its national interests in the face of American imperial might, and even give Canada a voice in British foreign policy (Berger 3). Imperialism and nationalism, in this context, were not in opposition to each other; Canadian imperial federation was becoming in McGee's time particularly attractive to Canadian

writers, politicians, and intellectuals who believed that Canada could come to be a powerful voice in imperial affairs (Davies 19).

The finest writers of Scotland and Ireland had, in McGee's view, enriched the culture of the British empire by their distinctive voices: "It is impossible, I think, to deny--and I am sure no right-minded English, Irish, or Scotchman will deny--that mental relation has been one of mutual benefits and a fair barter of mental wealth." Duffy had said of Anglo-Irish writers, that their writing in English had a voice as distinct as that of the lowland Scots. McGee, in arguing for Irish literature's contribution to the English language, echoes Duffy's earlier assertions of distinct voices existing within English. McGee notes:

> The English and the Scotch may, and no doubt do possess certain powers or qualities in a greater degree than the Irish, but on the other hand, the Irish mind is not without its special resources and idiosyncrasies. It is the union of these qualities in their comprehensive variety, which has made what we commonly call English literature so wonderfully rich in all its departments. I for one cannot regret, in view of the present state of the world, dear as is the old Gaelic tongue, and all its fond traditions, that all Ireland at least speaks one language, and inherits one common repository of ideas and principles with all England and all Scotland.
>
> (*A Collection of Speeches and Addresses* 87)

While he argued elsewhere for a distinct Canadian literature, McGee draws his audience's attention to its relationship to other literatures in English in this

lecture. English writing, he maintains, derives its strength and variety from the co-existence of different national voices. It "resembles in this respect the literatures of Greece and Rome; it is the product of many provinces the two chief of which are Scotland and Ireland; wherein, also, as I have already said, may we not hope for honourable mention, hereafter, of British America?" (78).

McGee continued the Young Ireland interest in Scottish literature, which had also received favourable attention from German critics. In his lecture, "The Poets of Scotland," McGee distinguished Scottish national literature in that it was neither narrow, nor "weakly and vainly cosmopolitan," as were, significantly, followers of the Enlightenment, "like David Hume and some of his school" (96). True national poetry, implied McGee, was readily accessible and invaluable to readers of other cultures:

> the rest of us who are not Scotch feel that we have our share--a large share--both in the lives and works of these universal geniuses. They were no village bards of sweet but circumscribed faculties of song; their inspiration was kindled, indeed, on the home hearth, but its effulgence shone afar....
>
> ("The Poets of Scotland" 96)

Carl Ballstadt has argued that "McGee consistently urged that Canadians look abroad in a cosmopolitan spirit to learn from all nations what is useful to the development of culture on Canadian soil and applicable to Canadian needs." McGee would probably have accepted this assessment, but would have rejected the term, "cosmopolitan." Inasmuch as

McGee wishes Canadians to avoid a narrow provincialism or a "bigoted, one-sided nationality," his idea of cultural nationalism is in opposition to the Enlightenment view of the nation as "a cosmopolitan rationalist conception...that looks forward ultimately to a common humanity transcending cultural differences" (Hutchinson 12). One of the more significant concepts which McGee had learned from German critics and Young Ireland writers and brought to Canada was this turning away from the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, in which rationalism, uniformity and abstraction were favoured over variety (see *Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century* 244). In its place was a respect for the lessons drawn from different cultures which Young Irelanders repeatedly termed "catholicity," by which they meant "universally accessible, of interest to all" (*OED*), a term with overtones of tolerance or broad-mindedness that were not unattractive to an organization trying to overcome sectarian and class barriers. Nationalism in Ireland had been faced with religious, racial and class barriers; the concept of catholicity had made this collection of conflicting political and religious views into a strength. McGee in Canada recognized "the varied ethnic nature of Canada" in his call for a cultural nationalism based on the virtues of "justice and courtesy, and magnanimity" (Ballstadt 91, "Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" 18).

The moderate nationalism to which McGee had devoted

himself in Canada came out of his experience of the intellectual and cultural forces behind Irish nationalism, his participation in revolution, and the opportunity to compare life for his countrymen in a republican state and a crown colony. Just a few months after Confederation, McGee seems to have summed up many of his convictions in his November 4, 1867 speech delivered before the Montreal Literary club, "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion." The purpose of the speech, McGee said, was "to consider now, on the eve of our first Dominion Parliament, with what intellectual forces and appliances, with what quantity and kind of mental common stock, we are about to set up for ourselves a distinct national existence in North America" (2). Politically, much of what McGee had worked for had passed; nevertheless, he admitted that many of the cultural goals which he had set as essential to a new nation had not been achieved. McGee gives an account of the institutions, professional and cultural societies in place on Canadian soil, but concludes that "we have as yet but few possessions in this sort that we can call our own. We have not produced in our Colonial era any thinker of the reputation of Jonathan Edwards or Benjamin Franklin....The only sustained poems we have of which the scenes are laid within the dominion are both by Americans" (14-15). McGee does not despair, however, but rather asserts that Canada is more in need of intellectual than material wealth, when he says,

"dream not, that great cities are built by stone-masons" (3). He implies that Canada can still develop a national literature by following a programme similar to that of Young Ireland. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Ireland had few national cultural symbols; nevertheless important scholarly and archaeological work was carried on by scholars such as Petrie, O'Donovan and Currie, which had formed the groundwork for Young Ireland's creative revolution. McGee notes that a similar groundwork is being laid by Canadian scholars, including Henry J. Morgan, who had carefully inventoried Canada's published work in *Bibliotheca Canadensis* (1867).

In addition to possessing the same scholarly foundations that had fuelled Ireland's national literary movement, Canada--like Young Ireland--has the example of Germany:

> About a century ago an eminent French writer raised a doubt as to whether any German could be a literary man. Not, indeed, to answer that, but many others [sic], arose as a golden cloud that gifted succession of poets, critics, and scholars, whose works have placed the German language in the vanguard of every department of human thought. (15)

To answer a similar question, "who reads a Canadian book?" McGee notes the dearth of native publications, and suggests that critics exercise some indulgence towards Canadian literature: "I trust every such book will be received by our public less censoriously than is sometimes the case" (16). This is not, McGee argues, because Canada must continue its

dependent colonial mentality, but because literary activity, however tentative and "novice," is still better than what McGee calls "dependence upon foreign thought." Moreover, he argues that "the books that are made elsewhere, even in England, are not always the best fitted for us; they do not always run on the same mental gauge, nor connect with our trains of thought" (17).

McGee does not imply that Canadians must turn away from all other literatures. What he suggests is that in addition to foreign reading material, Canada must also have a native literature--however rudimentary--that is sensitive to the needs that arise from a distinct physical and mental climate, and which addresses its particular problems and desires. American literature had risen from such a need for cultural resistance, and had "assert[ed] the mental independence of America as against England" (17). However, McGee warns Canada against following this example to extremes:

> ...the growth of the literary States must be to the increase of the universal literary Republic. But when nationalism stunts the growth, and embitters the generous spirit which alone can produce generous and enduring fruits of literature, then it becomes a curse rather than a gain to the people among whom it may find favour, and to every other people who may have relations with such a bigoted, one sided nationality. (18)

McGee suggests a balance between a narrow provincialism in Canadian thought--brought about if a quest for intellectual independence leads to an indiscriminate rejection of other

cultures and ideas--and an unquestioning imitation of works from England or America.

McGee's attempt to strike this balance comes from the experience of Young Ireland's cultural programme. Like Duffy, McGee believes that what Canadians "shall read and love is no unimportant question; very much the contrary" (xxix) For McGee, who like Duffy viewed poetry as a "sister to religion" (*The Ballad Poetry of Ireland* xxix), "mental culture must become more and more to many classes what religion alone once was" (18). He calls on "the educated young men of Canada" to "hold their own, and their own soil, sacrificing nothing of their originality; but rejecting nothing, nor yet accepting anything, merely because it comes out of an older, or richer, or greater country" (19). In short, McGee directs Canadian readers' attentions "to the study of the inner life of other nations, not to inspire them with a weak affectation of imitating foreign models, but rather with a wholesome and hearty zeal for doing something in their own right, on their own soil" (20). McGee's experience of Young Ireland's cultural programme, which delved into its own multi-voiced history, and which interrogated the literatures of other nations as to the nature of a people's soul, is readily applied in his quest for a Canadian nationality that was "thoughtful and true; national in its preferences, but catholic in its sympathies; gravitating inward, not outward; ready to learn

from every other people on the condition, that the lesson when learned has been worth acquiring" (2).

McGee's own contributions, both political and cultural, to Canadian nationalism were publicly recognized when his assassination on April 7, 1868 brought forth a national outcry that united any Canadians divided by his sometimes controversial politics. Even before his assassination, he had been recognized as a national figure; his untimely death turned him into "a minor folk-hero in Canadian history" (Snell 33). McGee's reputation today, however, does not rest on his writing. While his orations were always exceptional, and often brilliant, McGee's ballads, by any stretch of a generously inclined imagination, cannot be considered great Canadian poetry. Many nevertheless had a popular appeal past the turn of the century (a stanza from McGee's "The Celts" recently turned up in a lavishly illustrated Irish date-book, which suggests that his writing still evokes a marketable national sensibility).[11] Nevertheless, his literary theories articulated possibilities for Canadian literature which remained influential.

The most immediate influence of McGee's theories of national literature was upon a patriotic organization of politicians, scholars and literary men, "Canada First,"

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[11]*The Irish Birthday Book*. ed. Fleur Robertson. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1994.

formed shortly after McGee's funeral, by William A. Foster, Henry J. Morgan, George T. Denison, Robert G. Haliberton and the poet Charles Mair. The group continued, after McGee's death, to explore the relationship between literature and nationality, encouraging Canadian patriotism through education (O'Donnell 146). While the organization was short-lived, McGee's views that Canadians could only gain a sense of their unified patriotic duties through understanding the country's character were repeated. Foster wrote in 1890 that "the political machine must have a motive power; where shall we seek that power if not in the national character?" (*Canada First* 35).

Nicholas Flood Davin, another Irish Canadian poet--whose cultural history, *The Irishman in Canada* (1877), was written to counter the invisibility of the Irish in imperial conceptions of Canada, and to point out that "scarcely anybody in England knows anything of Canadian history" (Preface v)--later claimed "that literature was the life-blood of a people" (Bailey 410). This concept became increasingly common in Canadian criticism after Confederation (Altfest 252). Critics continued to argue for the "special role" that literature played in the nation's development (Beckow 5), an idea which McGee had put forth in *The New Era*. In "From the Watch-Towers of Patriotism: Theories of Literary Growth in English Canada, 1864-1914," Stephen Beckow noted how prevalent this idea continued to be

in nineteenth-century theories of literary development:

> The young Canadian, wrote [Graeme Mercer] Adam, who wished to 'light the flame of his patriotism' had only to turn to the nation's poetry. Along the same lines, Lawrence Johnston Burpee held that a "strong and wholesome native literature" constituted one of the major influences 'shaping the course of the young Canadian Dominion...toward a true and virile manhood.' Canadians, concerned with the necessity of forging a distinctive and strong 'national character,' looked to literature to isolate the best in the country's populace and situation, influence Canadians to exploit their national potential for greatness, and illuminate the choices to be made to achieve this promised greatness. To the literary philosophers, then, the support of literature carried all the force of a sacred duty.
>
> (5)

The belief that poetry was a "sacred duty," an idea likely transmitted from the German romantics to Young Ireland, and from McGee to Canada in his editorials in the 1850s, was accepted as a matter of fact, particularly as more Canadian writers "began to experiment with alternatives to the established relationship between England and Canada" after confederation (Altfest 82). In "Canada" (1886), Charles G.D. Roberts exhorted Canadians to assert their independence from British influence, while at the same time referring to the Irish, Scots, and English as cultures which had combined to give Canada a distinct national identity:

> The Saxon force, the Celtic fire
> These are thy manhood's heritage!
> Why rest with babes and slaves? Seek higher
> The place of race and age.
> (*Selected Poetry* 29).

As late as 1886, the Young Ireland sentiments of pride in

cultural distinctiveness, and the concept of strength through diversity and coexistence found faint echoes in the writing of poets such as Charles G.D. Roberts, who in the 1880s was a fervent advocate of Canadian independence through a "Young Canada" movement.

The optimism of much of McGee's vision of future Canadian culture was not always apparent in the views of writers in the decades following McGee's assassination. In general, Canadian critics continued to write about those aspects of Canadian life which were "detrimental to literary culture and literary production" (Beckow 3). Poets after McGee continued to deplore the public apathy, provincialism and even philistinism, which made it difficult for writers to devote their time to serious literature without starving. McGee, as a recognized public figure, had a more privileged position than many poets or critics when he made his pronouncements on Canadian literary nationalism. Nevertheless, his views of Canada as a political entity were inextricable from his literary theory, in the same way that Young Ireland had felt it needed to call into being a form of Irish culture that would instruct their countrymen as to the nature of their civil and patriotic duties. Canadian literature, like nationalism, in the view of some critics and theorists, "was an act of consciousness"; Karen Altfest has determined that in Canada, "for much of the nineteenth century, literature had preceded nationalism; writers had

shown Canadians how things should be" (272). McGee, drawing upon past Irish cultural nationalism, used literature to prophesy the future greatness of his adopted Northern nation.

Chapter Four

"Dear lines that map the nation out upon the world":

Isabella Valancy Crawford's Native Muse

> ...so the settler finds
> His solitary footsteps beaten out
> With the quick rush of panting, human waves
> Upheav'd by throbs of angry poverty,
> And driven by keen blasts of hunger, from
> Their native strands--so stern, so dark, so dear!
> *Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story* 2:199-204

> ...many of them suffer much privation before they reap the benefit of their independence. Were it not for the hope and the certain prospect of bettering their condition ultimately, they would sink under what they have to endure, but this thought buoys them up. They do not fear an old age of want and pauperism; the present evils must yield to industry and perseverance; they think also for their children; and the trials of the present time are lost in pleasing anticipations for the future.
> (Catharine Parr Trail, *The Backwoods of Canada* 87)

In the years immediately following Confederation, Thomas D'Arcy McGee prophesied that a national literature for Canada would be created by an emerging class of "educated men" whose writing and scholarship would first create a Canadian reading public, and then furnish it with the intellectual food necessary to sustain the new nation. As example and encouragement, he had called the attention of Canadians to the hard work and devotion which, he said, had "seen an era made in Irish literature" ("A National Literature for Canada" *New Era* 17 June 1857). McGee may have secretly flattered himself that the first Canadian poet of national stature would emerge from the literary ranks of his own countrymen. If he had not been assassinated in

1868, he would have seen part of his prediction fulfilled, for it was indeed an Irish-born poet who was one of the earliest writers to give Canada an original voice. Perhaps McGee should be excused for not foreseeing that one of Canada's first significant poets would be a woman, the Dublin-born Isabella Valancy Crawford (ca.1850-1887).

Having come to Canada with her family as a young child in around 1858, Crawford spent "the formative years of a child's life" in Paisley, "a little Ontario village just emerging from the bush" (Hale 2). Material success in the New World eluded the Crawfords, no doubt owing to the fecklessness of her father, a doctor of dubious qualifications and honesty who was, according to contemporary accounts, "a heavy drinker, but very clever if sober" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 272, Livesay 164). While, not surprisingly, Dr. Stephen Crawford was unable to make a successful living in Paisley, the family apparently associated with "some of the finest English, Irish and Scotch" families (qtd. in Livesay 162), and therefore never suffered from the disorienting cultural isolation that poor Standish O'Grady had made the central theme of his own Canadian writing. According to her first biographer, Katherine Hale, it was the family's "fatal love of beauty" that prompted their move to another village, this time to the "romantic rather than a prosperous village" of Lakefield, in the Kawartha Lakes district (3); however,

later biographers suggest that it may have been the embezzlement of funds by Crawford's father that necessitated their decampment (see Bentley, intro. xii). In Lakefield, Isabella may very likely have come into the social circle of the prominent literary family, the Stricklands, the best known of whom was Catharine Parr Traill, whose success as a botanist and writer, and whose accounts of settlers' life and of clearing the forests for farms, may have been a model for Crawford's writing (Bentley, intro. xiii). When her father died in 1875, leaving the family nearly destitute, Crawford wrote poetry, novels and short stories to help support her mother and her one surviving sister. The family moved to Toronto around 1876, possibly so that Crawford could benefit from living in the cultural, commercial and literary capital of Canada West, near the newspapers in which she had been publishing verse since at least 1874 (Bentley, intro. xiii).

That the one book published in Crawford's lifetime, *Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems* (1884) "practically fell dead from the press" (Hale 113) illustrates the difficulties that both McGee and less optimistic prognosticators who followed him foresaw for Canadian literary nationalism in the years following Confederation. Nevertheless, Crawford's small book escaped complete oblivion, being noticed in widely-read Canadian newspapers such as the *Globe* and the Toronto *Evening*

Telegram, as well as "more-or-less favourably reviewed by a number of prestigious British periodicals" such as *The Spectator* and *The Illustrated London News* (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 273; Dunn 154). *Old Spookses' Pass* also garnered encouragement from the former Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin (1826-1902), himself of Irish origin, who wrote to Crawford: "It is time now that Canada should have a literature of its own, and I am glad to think that you have so nobly shown the way" (qtd. in Hale 11).

In addition to publishing her one volume at her own expense, Crawford contributed regularly to Toronto newspapers, especially the *Evening Telegram*[1] which seemed to recognize that her poems far outshone those of most of her now-forgotten fellow-contributors (Burns 35). After her premature death from heart disease in 1887, her literary reputation rested for many years upon *Old Spookes' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems* and her *Collected Poems*, edited by J.W. Garvin in 1905 (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 272). Ultimately, Crawford received posthumous notice in Ireland in 1918 when the Dublin-based *Irish Booklover*, reviewing

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[1]In the years 1879-1887, Crawford published many of her poems in the *Evening Telegram* "at about two-week intervals" (Burns 34). The *Telegram* was edited by J. Ross Robertson, "a politically independent philosophical liberal in the tradition of John Stuart Mill." The paper endorsed "neither Liberal nor Conservative Party doctrines" and "attempted to maintain a rational, independent and pragmatic approach to issues, its editorial position usually spanning the middle way between John A. MacDonald on the right and George Brown on the left" (Burns 35).

Garvin's anthology, *Canadian Poets*, quoted an excerpt from *Malcolm's Katie* as an example of Irish-Canadian poetic talent.[2] Perhaps it was in these ways that Crawford most fulfilled McGee's earlier hopes for Canadian literature, by producing original writing that could earn positive notice outside the country on its own merits.

Crawford's poems on Irish and Canadian subjects celebrate the achievements of Irish-Canadians, and in doing so address nationalist issues of interest to both countries. The *Evening Telegram* regularly published her poems, beginning in 1879; and not surprisingly, poems such as "Erin's Warning," "A Hungry Day," "Mavourneen," and "My Irish Love" appear in the paper during a time when the *Evening Telegram* was regularly observing and commenting on Irish affairs. Ireland was also the subject of countless essays and editorials in Canadian magazines and newspapers, which observed and commented on Irish nationalist

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[2] "Canadian Poets" appeared in the *Irish Booklover* in February 1918: "In a volume of poems entitled 'Canadian Poets' by John W. Garvin and published by McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, Toronto, price $2.50, selections are given from the work of 52 writers....Four of these were born in Ireland and four others are of Irish descent. A few notes on these writers will, I believe, be of interest to the readers of the 'Irish Book Lover.'"

The *Irish Book Lover* then gives a short biographical sketch of Crawford, and quotes the following lines from *Malcolm's Katie*:

> O, Love will build his lily walls,
> And Love his pearly roof will rear,--
> On cloud or land, or mist or sea--
> Love's solid land is everywhere!

aspirations, whether expressed through agitation for Home Rule or for land reform. Canadians seemed to find many points of comparison between Irish politics and their own, for "Irish interest in imperial constitutional developments was to a certain extent reciprocated in the already self-governing dominions, where there was some sympathy with the Irish cause, some identification of common interests and aspirations" (Jeffery 6). In the late 1870s and early 80s, Canadians were still learning from Irish literary and political movements; and it was beginning to be apparent that Ireland was observing and interpreting Canadian events as well.

One point at which Irish and Canadian interests intersected was the issue of emigration. While the stream of post-famine emigrants had been reduced to a relative trickle by the time Crawford began publishing her poetry,[3] Canadians could point to thriving Irish communities in Canada and comment on the role the Irish had played in developing the new nation and in strengthening the British Empire. In 1877, the Irish-born poet and politician, Nicholas Flood Davin, had published *The Irishman in Canada* (which in a way continued the celebration of Irish emigrants that McGee had begun when he published *A History of Irish*

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[3] Canada was the destination of 7 per cent of Irish emigrants between 1876 and 1921; between 1825 and 1841, more Irish had emigrated to Canada than the United States (Foster 356; Akenson 258).

Settlers in North America, from the Earliest Period to the Census of 1850 in 1851) with the aim of calling attention to Irish-Canadian achievements in Canada. Not only were the Irish-Canadians in danger of becoming invisible in English descriptions of Canada, according to Davin, but they were "too much ignored" by the Irish themselves (Preface v-vi). Following the publication of Davin's history, and perhaps partly because of it, Canadian commentators took increasing interest in Irish history, current political events, as well as the history of Irish emigration to Canada.

Articles in Canadian nationalist magazines such as *Rose-Belford's Monthly* called attention to the fact that Canada continued to be indebted to its Irish emigrants. In his essay, "The Last Days of the Irish Parliament," which appeared in *Rose-Belford's* in 1879, S.W. Young saw the Irish as

> helping to carry forward into the world the battle-flag of civilization and ordered freedom, helping to build up in the broad and yet unpeopled valleys and plains of America, Canada and Australia, new communities rich and powerful through the application of the same principles of law-abiding self government, industrial activity and international honesty, which have been the architects of her own political edifice so stately, so beautiful and so enduring.
>
> (10-11)

Young believed that the Irish not only helped in populating the empty spaces of the New World, but were also bringing with them a culture and a political tradition of equal merit to that of the Scots and English settlers. Moreover, rather

than see the Irish as lawless and rebellious, Young believed that their history was that of a people who had strived to gain constitutional freedoms and responsibility for their own affairs. Such self-sufficiency and independence were precisely the qualities that Canadians prized in their settlers.

In her poems concerning Ireland, Crawford was also preoccupied with the ways in which both Canadian and Irish national identity, and the Canadian and Irish position in the British Empire were linked to emigration. However, since Crawford left Ireland at the age of six, the literary depiction of Ireland is necessarily less grounded in actual experience of the country, than is the case with Kidd, O'Grady, or McGee. Crawford's creative reconstruction of Ireland in her poetry would have to be based more on family recollection, ballads and literature than her own memories. Her writing contains no eulogies to specific regions of Ireland, as does Kidd's and O'Grady's poetry; nor are there the autobiographical portraits of emigrant or exile like those at the centre of O'Grady's, and even McGee's writing. There is, nevertheless, a body of Irish poems sufficiently large to suggest that for Crawford, the Irish voice is not simply part of a repertoire of literary ventriloquism (although in poems such as "Old Spookses' Pass," "The Rowan Tree," and "The Camp of Souls" she does attempt to create an image of Canada based on diverse voices that arise from

Irish, French, American and Scottish dialect poems, and the re-telling of Nordic and Amerindian legends).

Nevertheless, the experience of Irish emigrants is at the forefront of several of Crawford's occasional poems. Her celebration of the achievements of Irish settlers began, inauspiciously enough, with an attempt at comic verse entitled "Erin to Her Grandson, Ned Hanlan" published in the *Evening Telegram* on 25 June, 1879. Even this trifle links Canadian national pride with Irish nationalism by commemorating the victory of Edward ("Ned") Hanlan (1855-1908), a rower who won the American Centennial Regatta in 1876, and the Canadian rowing championship in 1877. The son of Irish emigrants, Hanlan was Canada's first sports superstar, a status that was confirmed in 1879 by his victory over the English champion William Elliot on a 3 1/2 mile stretch of the Tyne (Bruce Kidd 437-40). The edifying spectacle of a colonial beating the English at their own sport was, predictably, the excuse for much patriotic self-congratulation, and Hanlan "remained a symbol of muscular nationalism for years" (Bruce Kidd 439). Hanlan's achievement also occasioned some exhilaratingly bad poetry from proud Canadians such as W.H.C. Kerr, a barrister who on July 1, 1879, published at his own expense "An Epinikian Ode" replete with Olympian references and praise for the "broad Dominion" that has reared athletes "girded with North-star vigour" (*Edward Hanlan: A Lay of Young Canada*).

Crawford to her credit maintains a lighter touch. The narrator of her poem, Erin, is a garrulous old lady who sits on an Irish beach singing Hanlan's praises in a thick stage-Irish brogue. Erin--traditionally the female personification of Ireland--reminds Hanlan, "now that Canada's said out her say," that, while he may be Canada's chosen son for the moment, he is also Erin's grandson, since he is of Irish parentage. That Erin takes credit for Hanlan's triumph may be a response to the fact that at the time of Hanlan's English victory, two other nations--Canada and England--were congratulating themselves for producing him. In the preface to his ode on Hanlan, Kerr quotes the *Newcastle Chronicle* which acknowledges that its native son "has been beaten by a better man," but consoled itself nevertheless:

> We must be content with rejoicing at the fact that the conqueror, although born beyond the Atlantic, is of the same race as ourselves and is a citizen of the same vast empire.
>
> (qtd in Kerr 16)

Moreover, where Kerr had claimed that Canada's seas, lakes and rivers had "nurtured" Hanlan's talent, Crawford's Erin claims that his extraordinary abilities spring from an hereditary Irish affinity with the ocean. It turns out that some years earlier, Neptune had asked Erin's advice on an appropriate gift for the new nation, an occasion which did not elicit the most distinguished verse from Crawford:

> She's a ripe, handsome colleen an' promises well

She's the grip of the hand for the humblest
peasant
So I've just come across on this bit of a swell
To tell you I'm going to make her a present.

Erin and Neptune at length decide to appoint a "freshwater Neptune to reign" over Canada's great lakes; the mantle descends upon the infant Ned, living on Toronto Island. Crawford managed to transform national jubilation over a sports victory into a specific celebration of the Irish in Canada. For sharing her wealth with peasants from the Old World, Canada is rewarded through the achievements of the emigrants' sons, who bring honour to both the new nation and the land of their forefathers.

"Erin to her Grandson" looks ahead to Irish success in Canada; however, Crawford's poetry also looks back to Ireland and her historical wrongs. As a writer born in Ireland, Crawford herself was only too aware of the history of British attempts to "civilize" the Irish through confiscation, war, and famine; in fact, her family left Ireland less than a decade after the end of the Great Famine of the 1840s. When Crawford addressed the current problems of Ireland in "Erin's Warning" (1879), "A Hungry Day" (1881) and "Mavourneen" (1882), it was in a more serious frame of mind. That the publication of many of these poems coincides with a serious Irish famine in 1879, the Irish Land War of 1879-1882, and the ongoing attempts of both Charles Stewart Parnell and Gladstone's government to win Home Rule for

Ireland is neither coincidental nor irrelevant to Crawford's view of Canadian nationality. The Irish Land League struggle of 1879-1882, the period in which Crawford's Irish poems were written, was a crucial time for Irish politics that saw the emergence of a new form of "militant constitutional nationalism" arise in Ireland, under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) (Bew 5). Parnell, an Irish Protestant landlord, presided over the Land League, an uneasy alliance between the Irish Political Brotherhood (more commonly known as the Fenians) whose goal was the armed overthrow of British rule in Ireland, and the more conservative Irish nationalists whose goal was self-government for Ireland within the existing British imperial framework. What these two disparate groups shared was the belief that land reform was a means of forwarding Irish nationalist goals.[4] In the context of land reform and Home Rule agitation, moral issues of who owned, who worked on, and who profited from the land took on a national significance as in the form of the Land League, through a combination of "open agrarian agitation, parliamentary action, and revolutionary conspiracy," which helped to

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[4]Fenians were confident that their "full demands for the abolition of landlordism" would never be met, justifying "a struggle for nationalist revolution with mass peasant backing" while Parnell hoped to gain from the English parliament sufficient land reforms to reconcile Irish peasants and landlords, which would "bring the landlords into the nationalist ranks and thus greatly strengthen the demand for Home Rule" (Bew 226).

initiate a "transfer of the greater part of Ireland from the landlord to the peasant class," and ultimately "weakened Britain's moral hold on Ireland" (Bew 5).

Events in Ireland in this period appeared to support the theory that Irish political violence was directly related to the levels of general prosperity in Ireland. In the early 1870s, "there was a growth of stability and prosperity in most parts of rural Ireland" (Bew 45); however, the onset of an agricultural depression in Britain and Ireland, combined with a series of crop failures resulting in famine in parts of Ireland, led to a resurgence of agrarian violence. In "Erin's Warning," published in the Toronto *Evening Telegram* on 7 March 1881 (which Burns notes was the anniversary of Parnell's speech in Toronto [35]), Crawford explicitly shows the parallels between poverty and civil unrest. At the same time, the poem shows a deep ambiguity about Ireland's current position in the Empire, an ambiguity which reveals Crawford's "sympathy for Irish nationalism in deep conflict with her concern over the rising level of violence and terrorism in Ireland" (Burns 42). Crawford's concern about an unjust system of land tenure in Ireland and her aversion to agrarian violence sounds very familiar to a reader of O'Grady's poetry, in which similar issues are juxtaposed. O'Grady dwelt at length on the sufferings of the "chill peasant" (333) but portrayed equally vividly the horrors of Captain Rock's

"night assassins" (1754). In Crawford's poem, Ireland is a fertile, wealthy country, but Erin is portrayed--possibly in reference to absentee landlords--as a enslaved mother whose wealth is spent outside the country rather than in feeding her own people:

> At my knee my starvelings lay,
> Jewels crowned my captive head--
> Hearken, God, I might not sell
> One to buy my children bread!
> (*Collected Poems* 81)

While the reader is asked to sympathise with Ireland's famine-stricken children in "Erin's Warning," the poem nevertheless condemns organized violence on behalf of Irish secret societies, portraying such violence as "the lurid glare of flames/ by the secret torches spread"--images that recall O'Grady's "vile assassins" who "stalk their midnight round" (1433). Erin asks the members of secret agrarian societies,

> Could I mount my throne again
> Sun-like placed in freedom's air
> Hearkening as the nations say:
> "Midnight murders placed her there"?
> Could my sunburst proudly float
> Glorious o'er my ancient land,
> Were its mighty folds let loose
> By the dark assassin's hand?
> (*Collected Poems* 81-82)

The portrayal of civil unrest in Ireland as a series of midnight visits, assassinations and arson was becoming by this time a form of literary shorthand for depicting Irish political discontent and instability. The alliance of Fenians and the Irish Land League in this period came to be

associated in the popular Irish and English imagination with secret agrarian societies and their tactics--cattle-maiming, haystack-burning and assassinations. While actual violence was relatively low during the early 1880s, the Land League added threats of "implicit violence" to its main tactic of the mass rent boycotts (Foster 406). Moreover, unrelated events such as the gruesome Phoenix Park murders in May, 1882, and agrarian violence by organizations not connected with the Land League, helped contribute to the conception in Britain and abroad, that, whether owing to widespread poverty, bad government, or agitation by political opportunists, Ireland was on the brink of anarchy.

Most Canadians, who, after an attempted invasion by American-based Fenians in 1867, had concluded that Fenian liberation rhetoric translated into raids on the smokehouses and chicken-coops of Canadian border farms, were likely to show little sympathy with Fenian calls for the violent overthrow of British rule in Ireland. "Erin's Warning" refuses to consider the possibility that Irish national interests may justify terrorist tactics, and, in fact, goes as far as to suggest that this type of violence would actually endanger Ireland's identity as a nation. In phrases recalling McGee's poems on Ireland, and through them, Petrie's scholarship, Erin reminds her "sons" of Ireland's "Golden days" when "in my kings', my warriors' souls/ Valour lit his purest flame," and claims:

> If ye may not break my chains,
> Fearless-fronted, true and brave,
> Spotless as thy sires were,
> Then let Erin live a slave!
> (*Collected Poems* 81)

The current generation's "sires" may have been the men who, in Grattan's time, had managed to wring from Britain their short-lived parliament, without threats of violence. Since even as a "slave," Erin claims that she may be "conquered but unshamed," Crawford implies that a reign of terror is a price too high to pay for Irish freedom. McGee had insisted that Ireland must distinguish itself "in essence and in intellect" from England (Preface *Art McMurrough*), and later had claimed that Ireland, for all its travails at the hands of the British government, could nevertheless "look history in the face" (*Catholic History of North America* 134), because it did not follow the example of other empires in enslaving the African or Amerindian. In "Erin's Warning," the example of Erin's passive endurance and her pride, even in captivity, is portrayed as more desirable than indiscriminate destruction or violence.

In arguing against sectarian or terrorist violence, Crawford does not apologize for the actions that have caused famine in Ireland. Nor does she consider famine as inevitable--a sentiment shared by Irish reformers and liberal observers in Canada. An editorial in the *Evening Telegram* on 6 October, 1879, links violent acts such as the shooting of landlords' agents to the need for land reform.

In addition to organizing public meetings, demonstrations, and the mass withholding of rent in Ireland, the Land League, formed in 1879, took up the moral issues behind ownership of the land, and attempted to bring into legislation changes that would guarantee tenants a fair rent, continuous occupation of their holdings, and a share in the wealth derived from any improvements they made to the land. These issues were publicized on Parnell's speaking tour of North America in 1880, and no doubt gained a wide audience in Toronto, where Parnell gave a speech in March, 1880, which was reported in the *Evening Telegram* (Burns 40). In earlier speeches in England, Parnell had claimed that "most of the present value of the land had been created by the tenants" (Bew 20); in Toronto he was reported to have told his audience that the crisis in Ireland arose from the "inequitable system of land tenure which prevailed there, and the only remedy was for those who tilled the ground and improved it to own it" (*Evening Telegram* 8 March, 1880).

Canadian observers of the Irish situation also dwelled upon what one writer termed the "gross existing injustices" concerning land tenure in Ireland (Curran 179). In "The Irish Land Question," published in *Rose Belford's Monthly* in February 1880, John Curran, like Parnell, asserted "that the tenants have made all the improvements, fencing, draining and erecting all dwelling and office houses, that are now found on the estates" (179). Furthermore, some landlords'

practice of issuing, semi-annually, six-month notices to quit, in order "to keep tenants in their grasp," meant that "the occupiers are...not for a day out of suspense," and consequently kept in "a moral thraldom that is most degrading" (179). In spite of this, Curran claimed, the demand for land reforms arose "not out of a desire on the part of tenants to dispossess their landlords. What they do desire, and what seems reasonable is, that they be protected in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour" (179). Like Curran, and other Canadian commentators on the Irish situation, Crawford also linked the concept of human dignity and independence to a moral right for a labourer to be the primary beneficiary of his own hard work.

The fruitless labour of the typical Irish peasant is the focus of "A Hungry Day" (1881) and "Mavourneen" (1882), in which Crawford alludes to past Irish famines to underline the flaws in the current system of land proprietorship in Ireland. In "A Hungry Day," first published in the *Evening Telegram* on 15 February, 1881, the Irish peasant narrator's stage-Irish brogue masks a fairly sophisticated and eloquent assessment of the Irish land question that acknowledges many of the points made by the Land League, and, earlier, by John Stuart Mill. The famine snapped, catastrophically, the slender thread of subsistence upon which the fate of a large

portion of farmers and labourers hung. Echoing Mill[5], the narrator of "A Hungry Day" claims:

> No facthory chimblys shmoked agin the sky,
> No mines yawned on the hills so full an' rich;
> A man whose praties failed had nought to do
> But fold his hands an' die down in a ditch.
> (*Collected Poems* 307)

In "A Hungry Day," famine exposes not only the weaknesses in the Irish economic system, but also the moral implications of its flaws. The Irish emigrant narrator, living in the midst of a fertile land and a wealthy empire, watches his wife die of starvation so that their children "may eat their fill," and muses,

> If we wor haythens in a furrin land,
> Not in a country grand in Christian pride,
> Faith, then a man might have the face to say
> Twas of stharvation me poor Sheila died
> But when the parish docthor come at last
> .....
> She's gone, he says, and drew a solemn frown:
> I fear, my man, she's dead" "Of what?" says I.
> He coughed, and says "She's let her system down!"
> (*Collected Poems* 307)

The narrator portrays Ireland as abandoned by all who should have a moral responsibility in her well-being, whether landlords or the Disraeli, the latter of whom at the time of

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[5]In *Ireland and England* (1868) Mill notes that "When the agricultural population are but a fraction of the entire people; when the commercial and manufacturing development leaves a large opening for the children of the agriculturists to seek and find subsistence elsewhere than on the soil; a bad tenure of land, although always mischievous, can in some measure be borne with. But when a people have no means of sustenance but the land, the conditions on which the land can be occupied and support derived from it, are all in all" (14-15).

the 1879 famine appeared more occupied by wars in Britain's distant eastern empire than by events across the Irish Sea. In an editorial of 2 October, 1879, the *Evening Telegram* had noted that if Britain had "paid one-tenth as much attention to bettering the condition of the Irish peasantry as it has paid to the semi-savages of Afghanistan and Zululand, the evil would be remedied by this time."[6]

The doctor's embarrassed refusal to admit that the emigrant's wife has died of starvation not only denies her sacrifice, but also reflects the wider reaction to the series of famines in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century. In a century devoted, in Christopher Morash's words, to the idea of the sanctification of progress, in which, "like a regal, theocratic juggernaut, the metanarrative of steady, inevitable human improvement pushed all other structures for ordering events in time beyond the discursive pale into the realm of the barbarian," famine-stricken Ireland "was decidedly an 'enemy' of progress, and was therefore to be treated as such--reconnoitred, negotiated with, and if necessary, attacked" (Morash 15-16). Crawford resisted this view of Irish famine victims, as did Irish nationalists and Canadian critics of Britain's

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[6]Spencer T. Hall, an English industrialist, expressing his incredulity on being shown "one vast grave" outside Limerick in 1849, marvelled that, "instead of being in some far-off primitive land, I was in reality within twenty four hours' ride of home and among citizens of the same nation!" (qtd. in Christopher Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* 16).

imperial policy in Ireland. The fact that the Irish narrator in Crawford's poem dreams of self-sufficiency undermines the view that, through indolence or ignorance, Irish famine victims were "enemies of progress," something which the parish doctor's diagnosis insinuates. The ability to own land in "A Hungry Day," and not the character of the Irish, is what makes the difference between starvation and success. By focusing on the social structure that perpetuates poverty in Ireland, Crawford refutes any implication that the Irish have brought the calamity of famine upon themselves.

For the Irish family in "A Hungry Day," the evils of famine are remedied by emigration to Canada, where (in theory at least) the Irish emigrant, regardless of class or sect, could become the owner, and not merely the tenant of land--a fact which became the lynch pin in Crawford's exploration of Canadian national identity. Crawford was not alone in contrasting the difficulties of the Irish tenant with the benefits enjoyed by the Canadian small farmer. The question of who was to profit from the clearing and tilling of land became the defining point of national difference for many Canadian commentators on the Irish Land Question. In an anti-Fenian editorial entitled "Ho! For Canada" (26 November, 1879), the *Evening Telegram* alludes to Parnell's activities for the Land League, and claims that, contrary to Fenian propaganda, the Irish in Canada are not oppressed by

British rule:

> The Canadians do not oppress the Irish in their midst. Irish holders of leases in Canada are not, as a rule, evicted in the dead of winter for no cause, and Irish orators are not borne to jail in Canada for advising their countrymen not to pay extortionate rents. On the contrary, Irishmen in Canada are allowed the most extraordinary privileges such as are permitted to them nowhere else in the world.

"Ho! for Canada" repeats the sentiments of earlier *Telegram* editorials in its insistence that Irish rebellions were fuelled by discontent, and so is confident that the Fenians would find little support among prospering, and thus loyal, Irish settlers in Canada. In "Ned Hanlan," Crawford implied that the Irish repaid Canadian generosity by becoming outstanding citizens. In the *Evening Telegram* editorials, the Irish also vindicate both their own character and that of Canada, through their success as Canadian settlers.

Two years before the "Ho! for Canada" editorial, Nicholas Flood Davin (1843-1901) had also argued that the Irish in Canada had prospered and thrived, where they had starved in their native land. The Irish-born poet and Manitoba politician was an eloquent exponent of the limitless space and opportunities available to Irish emigrants, especially in Canada's newly opened western territories. He attributed Irish success to the peace and prosperity made possible by Canada's fertile lands and seemingly inexhaustible resources:

> Whoever studies the history of Ireland, not in what are called popular histories and student's

> manuals, but in contemporary documents, will learn that the great bone of contention, from age to age, was not religion, nor form of government, but the land. Here, land can be no apple of discord. Ireland, nay, the three kingdoms, might be drowned in one of our lakes. We have, too, outlived the age of plunder and confiscation, and never can any difficulty arise on this score in a country where we open up provinces as men in the Old World would make a paddock.
>
> (4)

Crawford's description of Canada's generous allotments of inexpensive land, as well as the famine experiences she describes in "A Hungry Day," could be an imaginative elaboration of the eyewitness accounts of the Great Famine that Davin included in *The Irishman in Canada*. In order to describe the contrast between Irish poverty and Canadian prosperity, Davin presented the testimony of

> A peasant, Mr. McGraa, who is now a rich farmer in Bentinck, who worked in Ireland for a miserable pittance breaking stones, who worked afterwards on Grosse Isle, writes to me in bad spelling, but vigorous language, that you would have thought the poor people were the ghosts of Irish emigrants, not the emigrants themselves.
>
> (541)

In "A Hungry Day " the case for emigration and rural settlement is set out in a dialogue between the narrator--who has survived famine (and, presumably, the horrors of Grosse Isle)--and a successful former emigrant, who marvels that in Canada it is possible to possess "a hundred acres--us as never owned/ Land big enough to make a lark a sod" (308). The "hundred acres" of which the Irish emigrant is so proud may refer to the land grants of one quarter-section, or 160 acres obtainable from the Canadian and

provincial governments.[7]

In contrast to the Irish tenant-farmer, who could neither possess the land he worked upon nor have a right to benefit from the improvements made on it, the Canadian small farmer was not only able to take advantage of free government grants of land, but also--because of the stipulation that his permanent title to the land depended upon bringing it into "perfect cultivation" within three years--had a very powerful incentive to improve his holding (*Canada: A Memorial Volume* 54-55). The former emigrant's example encourages the narrator of "A Hungry Day" to "Kape up [his] heart" (309), since the hard work ahead of him will eventually result in "Plenty...smilin' by [his] own dear dure [door]" (309). The initial tragedy of "A Hungry Day" even gives way to a comic resolution, through the marriage of the emigrant's daughter who "wears/ A

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[7]Any person, male or female, who is the sole head of a family, or any male who has obtained the age of eighteen years, is entitled, on making application before the Local Agent of his district, in which the land he desires to be entered for is situated, and paying an office fee of ten dollars, to obtain homestead entry for any quantity of land not exceeding one quarter-section, or 160 acres, of the class of land open to such entry. This entry entitles the holder to occupy and cultivate the land to the exclusion of any other person, the title remaining in the Crown until the issue of patent for the land....The settler, on proving that he has resided on and cultivated the land for which he has homestead entry during three years from the date of perfecting his entry, is entitled to a patent from the Crown for the same, provided he is a British subject by birth or naturalization....
(*Canada: A Memorial Volume*. Montreal: E.B. Biggar, 1889. 54-55).

swateheart's little shinin' goulden ring" (309), an event that anticipates the marriage in *Malcolm's Katie*, another poem in which the ability to own land is "the polish'd diamond pivot on which spins/ The Wheel of Difference" (1: 86) between Canadian and Old World society. The conclusion of "A Hungry Day" summarizes the implications of this difference for national self-definition: the Irish narrator claims that in Canada, unlike in Ireland, "all men may have the same/ That owns an axe an' has a strong right arm!" (*Collected Poems* 309). Not coincidentally, "A Hungry Day" is the last poem in Crawford's published volume *Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems*. That Crawford gives the book's final pronouncement on Canada to a successful Irish emigrant shows how much her sense of Canadian nationality is bound up in her portrait of the opportunities it has afforded to her Irish compatriots.

Like the *Evening Telegram*, where Crawford's poems were published regularly from 1879 until her death in 1887 (Burns 34), Crawford continued to monitor and comment on Irish political events. Moreover, her Irish subjects developed themes that would reappear in her Canadian poems. In "Mavourneen," an Irishman's lament for his dead wife and baby that was first published in the *Evening Telegram* on 2 December, 1882, the spectre of famine continues to cast a shadow over an otherwise pastoral Irish landscape of daisies and hawthorns. Here, as in "Erin's Warning," the tragedy of

the famine is again linked to the unjust system of land tenure in Ireland. In its editorial of October 6, 1879, The *Evening Telegram* had accused absentee landlords of spending money outside the country--money that they had wrung from Irish peasant labour. The *Telegram* claimed, "it is not in the Irish nature to appreciate the difference between this state of things and slavery" (6 October 1879). "Mavourneen" chronicles peasant lives of interminable "toil" that can never lead to self-sufficiency and are therefore rendered demeaning and senseless:

> Strong was thy weak hand and tender, Mavourneen,
> Braced it my sinews afresh for my toil--
> Toil, hopeless, drear as dark skies in November--
> Sweat of a freeborn, but serf of the soil.
> (*Collected Poems* 77)

If the poem is a response to contemporary debates about land ownership, and on a moral and philosophical level, about the ultimate purpose of Ireland's land-based wealth, then Crawford may also be alluding in this stanza to the plight of so-called "reclamation tenantry"--that is, the poorest of small-farmers who had not benefitted from Gladstone's initial land reforms in the 1870s. Reclamation tenantry were those small farmers and labourers displaced by earlier clearances after the famine of the 1840s, who were driven to farm barren and waste land on bogs or mountainsides, and then were charged increased rents on the improved value of the land, value which had risen through their own labour. Crawford's poems are more indirect than the *Evening Telegram*

in apportioning blame to landlords, and instead make oblique references to the rights of all "freeborn" men to self-sufficiency, suggesting that emigration to Canada, and not covert conflict in Ireland, provides the best chance of fulfilment and survival for Irish labourers and peasants. By advocating emigration over violence, Crawford suggests that it is by taking the imperial, rather than the republican road, that the labouring poor in Ireland will find survival and prosperity.

Crawford turns away from the social issues behind Irish poverty and emigration to explore the relationship between Irish nationalism and British imperialism in "My Irish Love," which was first printed in the Toronto *Evening Telegram* on 5 December, 1883. What is at first glance a rather conventional, idealized portrait of an Irish noblewoman of the remote past is nevertheless interesting because the narrator is an English suitor. While it would be overstating the matter to suggest that "My Irish Love" is a political allegory, the English knight's praise of his Irish betrothed, who combines in one person the virtues of "Laughter" "Pity" "Modesty" "Courage" "and simple russet Truth" (*Collected Poems* 261), could be read as Crawford's perception of Irish national character, which she portrays as different but nevertheless complementary to English national character. This concept of the interdependent cultural and, by extension, imperial relationship between

Ireland and England, looks back to Matthew Arnold's essay, "On the Study of Celtic Literatures" (1866), and persisted as a concept in the essay by S.W. Young examined earlier, where the hope for a continuing imperial relationship between Ireland and "her great sister" (10) would "put[] Irish mettle into English solidity and temper[] Irish rashness with English phlegm, [so] they may at last take their rightful place as one of the leading and useful nationalities of the world" (11).

Crawford's view of the Irish is less condescending or racist than the characterization of the Celts put forward by Arnold or Young, both of whom envisaged a subordinate role for Ireland in the imperial family. Though Ireland is portrayed as feminine in Crawford's poem (if indeed the Irish lady represents the land on a symbolic level), the predominant quality of the Irish character is gravity, rather than rashness. Consequently the English suitor needs to demonstrate some thought, sensitivity and indeed respect in the manner in which he woos his love; the jewels he offers her have "no tongues to speak between our souls" and so he must search for a symbol that adequately expresses his promise that his "English heart" will be "bound" to the Irish lady (262). The lavish wedding jewels that "were but fitting pages" to the Irish lady's "state," and that symbolize the political union of noble families or even nations, are overshadowed by the lover's sentimental

offering of "a little simple thing,/ A golden heart graved with my name alone,/And round it, twining close, small shamrocks linked/ Of gold, mere gold:--no jewels made it rich" (262). The locket, consisting of an "English heart with Irish shamrocks bound," suggests that any union between England and Ireland must not only recognize a "seal of kindred" ("Canada to England," *Collected Poems* 238), but also respect the differences between the two countries.

In its treatment of marriage, "My Irish Love" recalls the union in Crawford's poem "Canada to England," first published in the Toronto *Mail* in 1874, where Crawford had described the relationship between Canada and England, not as "subtle links/ Of subtle mind binding in close embrace,/ Half-struggling for release, two alien lands,/ But God's own seal of kindred" (*Collected Poems* 238). The bond between Canada and England in turn is the antithesis of the cynical manipulations that so many Irish nationalists believed were behind the Act of Union that had put an end to nationalist self-determination in Ireland in 1800. In "My Irish Love," Crawford appears to share with McGee the concept of cultural nationalism that is characterised by respect for diversity and tolerance--in short, an attitude towards nationality motivated by "'justice and courtesy, and magnanimity'" ("Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" 18).

As D.M.R. Bentley has noticed in his critical edition of *Malcolm's Katie*, the engraved marriage locket in "My

Irish Love" looks ahead to the moment in *Malcolm's Katie* when the hero Max gives Katie a simple silver ring that entwines the lovers' initials, to symbolize "two hearts fast bound together" (5; Bentley, intro. n.50). Crawford's linking of the personal and the political, in "My Irish Love" and "Canada to England," and, more indirectly, in *Malcolm's Katie*, suggests that she shares with Kidd and McGee the sentiment that in Canada, Britain has succeeded in reproducing its ideals of freedom and tolerance, and could even provide a model for the establishment of a similar government in Ireland. If abstract political and economic concerns are reconstructed as family relationships or marriages, then Ireland, as "kindred" to England in an imperial relationship, must be accorded the same rights and privileges upon which the English pride themselves.

The kind of imperial relationship that Crawford envisaged in "My Irish Love" was entirely different from the type of plunder and confiscation that had marred Anglo-Irish relationships since the Middle Ages, and the type of violent expropriation continuing in India, Afghanistan and Africa during Crawford's short creative career. Her poem "War," which appeared in the *Evening Telegram* on 4 August, 1879--five months after her condemnation of terrorist violence in "Erin's Warning"--employs corrosive irony in exposing the unholy alliance of religion and the military in forwarding the interests of commerce, ostensibly "to *civilize* the

world" with "shot and shell" (*Collected Poems* 155). The war cry of this alliance, "For the Lord," disguises the fact that the "Religion" being delivered to "the savage" from the mouth of a cannon is merely a pretext to "Rip up his mines, and from his strands/ Wash out the gold with blood" (155). Like McGee before her, Crawford condemns the type of imperialism built, presumably, on the enslavement of "Afric's sons" and the plundering of "Mexic's gold" (*Canadian Ballads* 48), an imperialism that is the antithesis of the empire of settlement made possible in Canada:

> Beat down the corn, tear up the vine,
> The waters turn to blood;
> And if the wretch for food doth whine,
> Give him his kin for food.
> Ay, strew the dead to saddle-girth
> They make so rich a mold,
> Thou wilt enrich the wasted earth--
> They'll turn to yellow gold.
> (*Collected Poems* 155)

In "War," as in her Irish poems, Crawford focuses on crimes that sunder "kindred" relationships and sever the natural link between a people and the land upon which they depend for subsistence.

Probably begun after Crawford's move to Toronto in 1876 and published in 1884 (Bentley, intro. xii), *Malcolm's Katie* was likely composed at the same time as "War" and Crawford's Irish poems, and shows a similar preoccupation with themes of land ownership and emigration. Canada's wealth, Crawford argues, has been created by settlement and agriculture, and not the type of expansionist or commercial

imperialism in which famine leads to profit that is gained by wringing gold from human suffering. In distinguishing between Canadian society and that of the Old World, *Malcolm's Katie* takes vivid prose descriptions of Canadian settler life by writers such as Traill, and gives them a mythic dimension. Like Kidd, Crawford also defers to native, rather than European images and terminology, especially in her depiction of the seasons, to ground her epic tale of nation building firmly in the Canadian soil.

In *Malcolm's Katie*, Crawford's pioneer hero Max at first appears to view his role as deficient material for literature or epic: he is merely a "Poor soldier of the axe--to bloodless fields/ (Inglorious battles, whether lost or won)..."(1:24-25). Later, when Max valorizes the early efforts of Malcolm and his brother to carve a field out of the forest, Katie reminds him that he has deprecated such activity, and so Max revises his own role:

> "Yet you said such fields
> "Were all inglorious, Katie, wondering, said.
> "Inglorious! Aye, the battle done and won
> "Means not--a throne propp'd up with bleaching bones
> "A country sav'd with smoking seas of blood;
> "A flag torn from the foe with wounds and death;
> "Or Commerce, with her housewife foot upon
> "Colossal bridge of slaughter'd savages,
> "The cross laid on her brawny shoulder, and
> "In one sly, mighty hand her reeking sword,
> "And in the other all the woven cheats
> "From her dishonest looms. Nay, none of these.
> "It means--four walls, perhaps a lowly roof;
> "Kine in a peaceful posture; modest fields;
> "A man and woman standing hand in hand
> "In hale old age, who, looking o'er the land,
> "Say: 'Thank the Lord, it is all mine and thine!'"
> (1:89-108)

Max's diatribe here is against commercial and military imperialism which uses nationalist symbols such as "cross," "throne," "flag" and "country" as a pretext for the confiscation of land and resources from others. Behind Crawford's view of Canadian settlement lay, not only an aversion to current British activities abroad, but perhaps also the Irish perception, influenced by Mill and developed by Parnell and others, that the lands upon which the Irish were reduced to desperate tenants had once been their own, and had been taken from them by English conquest.

It is not surprising, then, that Crawford takes pains to suggest to the reader that the land that Max owns and brings to cultivation is uninhabited by Canada's indigenous peoples (Monkman 133): "For never had the patriarch of the herd/ Seen, limn'd against the farthest rim of light/ Of the low-dipping sky, the plume or bow/ Of the red hunter..." (2:84-87). In extolling Canada's agricultural empire, in which riches have been won through honest hard work rather than the legalized theft of conquest, Crawford again offers emigration as a solution to the social and economic problems of Great Britain, sharing the view of some Canadian nationalists that "it was possible to reproduce in the outer-empire, especially in Canada, a simpler state of society, free from the hectic social pressures and overcrowding of the motherland" (Berger 181). This would resonate with Irish emigrants who agreed with Davin that

fierce competition for land and subsistence had led to economic exploitation, civil unrest and even revolution.

In *Malcolm's Katie*, Crawford implies that crowned heads can continue to rest safely on their shoulders, since the "king[s]" that Max's independence threatens are the "mossy monarchs of the woodland tribes"--that is, the trees he clears to create his farm (2:149-63). Moreover, the peace and prosperity offered by Canada's apparently illimitable space provides a safety valve for Great Britain:

> O, then, to see the troubl'd groaning waves,
> Throb down to peace in kindly, valley beds,
> Their turbid bosoms clearing in the calm
> Of sun-ey'd Plenty--till the stars and moon,
> The blessed sun himself, has leave to shine
> And laugh in their dark hearts!
> (3:199-210)

While emigration to Canada does not change the state of affairs in Ireland, in *Malcolm's Katie* the resulting prosperity and hope it offers ensures that those fleeing poverty and oppression do not bring their social unrest with them.

It is important to notice that in *Malcolm's Katie*, the social structure of England and Ireland is not reconstructed on Canadian soil. Crawford's vision of a society consisting of "the pyramidal family with a self-made man at its apex" (Bentley, *Mimic Fires* 278) is a departure from a society based for the most part upon the power and wealth maintained by a landed aristocracy in Britain. Parnell and the Irish Land League had argued for a peasant proprietorship--that

is, a re-distribution of Irish land to the tenants, with compensation offered to the landlord. In Canada, untenanted lands would neither be tilled by the peasant nor owned by the aristocracy, but would instead be purchased and brought to cultivation by families of small farmers. Benjamin Disraeli in an 1879 speech,[8] reported by the *Evening Telegram* on 3 October, 1879, had noted that "the Dominion of Canada is not in favour of peasant proprietors. What the Dominion of Canada wishes to institute is a great yeoman class." The yeoman, in *Malcolm's Katie* occupying "a middle ground between poverty and monopoly or...brutalized serfs and imperialistic commerce" (Bentley 282), was traditionally viewed as "a freeholder under the rank of a gentleman....a commoner or countryman of respectable standing, especially one who cultivates his own land" (*OED*). In *Malcolm's Katie*, the celebration of a Canadian yeoman class reflects preoccupations prevalent in Irish and Canadian society at the time, especially the ethics behind the idea that those who cultivate the land should have the benefit of the wealth it generates; and that the rightful possession of the land belonged, not to those who confiscated it, but to those who had invested their labour in it.

Crawford's vision of a yeoman class dignified by their independence and hard work rather than by inherited social

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[8]Speech of Lord Beaconsfield to the Royal and Central Bucks. Agricultural Society. Reported in the *Telegram* Oct. 3 1879.

standing anticipates Davin's characterization of the emigrant settler in his introduction to *Homes for Millions*, a collection of essays published in 1891 to promote settlement in the newly-opened Northwest Territories in western Canada. Davin, when he was not figuratively submerging large portions of Great Britain in Canada's great lakes, saw the future of the British Empire as lying "north of the 49th degree of north latitude," and as inseparable from the future success of the immigrants who would occupy it (*Homes for Millions* 4). Like Crawford, he viewed the opening of Canada's Northwest Territories as a liberating opportunity to institute a new class whose merit was linked, not to birth, but to what they could achieve through their own labours:

> We can show you in Quebec and Ontario today men who would have been farm labourers--or small wretched farmers--had they remained at home in Scotland or Ireland, who are millionaires; something of the touch of their native rudeness may linger around them, yet are they on the whole not unworthy 'princes in the land' and ten or a score of years hence we shall see the aspiring, and sober and strong "Hodge" or "Gillie" or "Paddy" of the hour--who can seize its opportunities--become a great man in the Northwest with a free, erect spirit....
>
> (6)

In *Malcolm's Katie*, Crawford shares--or at least partly shares--Davin's faith that the dispossessed labourers of Britain and Europe could become "great men," and more importantly "free...spirit[s]." Katie's father Malcolm Graem, whose impoverished background and gruffness suggest

"a native rudeness," is an example of an emigrant who through his own back-breaking labour has become "a mighty man" (56) and a wealthy one, with "a voice in Council and in Church" (67). Even Max, who feels that success has jaded his stubborn would-be father-in-law, acknowledges that as a young man, Malcolm and his brother

> "Yok'd themselves, side by side, to the new
> plough;
> "Their weaker father, in the grey of life
> "(But rather the wan age of poverty
> "Than many winters), in large, gnarl'd hands
> "The plunging handles held; with might strains
> "They drew the ripping beak through knotted sod
> "Thro' tortuous lanes of blacken'd smoking stumps;
> "And past great flaming brush heaps, sending out
> "Fierce summers, beating on their swollen
> brows....
>
> (1:71-80)

Max emphasises that Malcolm's wealth arises from the fact that his family "OWN'D the rugged soil" (1:86) and could thus enjoy the fruits of their own labour. It is this one "little," but not insignificant "point" (1:84) that distinguishes Malcolm from Old World "serfs" for whom the same intensive labour would be viewed by the civilized world as degrading slavery. Nevertheless, in articulating his own fantasy of pioneer success, Max disdains both wealth gained through military, commercial and imperial methods, and Malcolm's "dear love of wealth and pow'r" (1:87), self-made as it may be. To him, the "woven cheats from [Commerce's] dishonest looms" (1:102-3), and Malcolm's "outspreading circles of increasing gold" (1:111) are two aspects of the same soulless materialism that Max, distinguished as "the

labourer and the lover" (2:149), eschews throughout *Malcolm's Katie*.

Max's more simple dreams of sharing with Katie "four walls, perhaps a lowly roof;/ Kine in a peaceful posture; modest fields (1:104-5), reflect Crawford's unease at the "'rapacious and soulless commercialism' that accompanied nineteenth-century industrial expansion" (Burns 31), and the social implications for Canada should too many of its self-made men become Davin's "millionaires." In America, money made too quickly through land speculation or the gold fields of California led to moral laxity, social instability, and exploitation, at least in the view of Disraeli, who had publicly wondered what would become of Canadian society "if the influx of population were to go on, and these fertile acres placed at their disposal....That population would demand not only sustenance but extravagant sustenance, as always happens for example in California and wherever money was made quickly..."(*Evening Telegram* 3 October 1879). For Disraeli, the population's inevitable desire for "extravagant sustenance" was an argument that England could not forever depend on Canada to export its excess produce; for Crawford, the concept of individual wealth in excess of need meant social inequality and instability. Max, as the "labourer and lover" and Katie's rightful suitor in the poem, occupies a place between mere subsistence and excessive wealth, and links thematically the Irish land

reformers' contention that the cultivator is the proper possessor of the soil with the Canadian dream of the self-made man.

The most serious threat to Katie and Max's vision of self-sufficiency and social equality in a land which welcomes "the quick rush of panting, human waves/ Upheav'd by throbs of angry poverty" (2:210-12) is the poem's rival suitor. Alfred (alarm bells should sound when he is described as "Saxon," a pejorative beloved by Irish political balladeers) represents the Old-World order, the inequities of which had caused so much suffering in Ireland. Max's supercilious rival, who is "reputed [to be] wealthy" (3:56), and whose erudition, appearance, and manners (which can even rise to apparent chivalry, but chivalry in the service of riches, rather than distressed females), not only suggest the aristocratic Englishman imposing the values of the imperial centre on the colonies at the margin, but also both the historic and, in Crawford's view, the current imperial drive to conquer and possess the resources of others. What distinguishes Alfred from Max is that Alfred, like the original English conquerors of Ireland, and like the present landlords of Ireland, declines to live off of the fruits of his own labours. The "Passion" (3:119) that motivates Alfred is not Katie's love, but "love of gold" (3:150) to be gained through "her father's riches" (3:122), which have been accumulated through Malcolm's laborious

clearing of the land, its improvement, and the construction of houses, barns and mills.

That Alfred's designs have implications for Crawford's portrait of imperial relations between Britain and its colonies is suggested through the contrast between Alfred's attitude and the attitude implicit in the symbolism of Max's silver ring, beaten out from the first "wage" of Max's labours and suggesting "two hearts fast bound together" (1:4-6) (see Hughes and Sproxton 55). Unlike the English suitor in "My Irish Love," who seeks a relationship between Ireland and England based on kinship and mutual respect, Alfred's rampant materialism in his pursuit of Katie has more parallels with British imperialism of the late 1870s and early 1880s, which had been condemned in Crawford's Irish poems and in her poem "War." Furthermore, Alfred's ability "to cut words and myths adrift from their traditional contexts and referents and to put them at the service of his own selfish and anti-social purposes--his own will to wealth and power" (Bentley, intro. xxix)--allies him with the forces of military imperialism, which in both Max's condemnation of military conquest and in Crawford's poem, "War," use concepts of religion, civilization and justice merely to further the interests of "Commerce."

If Max's labours with his axe lead to the development of "a nation strong" (4:48), then the concept of manual labour itself is dignified--a sentiment that looks back to

McGee's *Catholic History of America*, which views emigrant labourers as the true builders of a nation. The shanty town that arises from Max's tree-clearing, and which will one day be an established village, also contains dispossessed labourers of Europe whose "pangs" of labour, Crawford implies, will give birth to a just society in the New World (2:220-27). If the prosperity gained through labour will not only prevent the spread of an overblown and unstable wealth, but also lead to the moral development of labourers and nation alike, then it is not surprising that "the pallid clerk" (3:221) and "the lab'rer with train'd muscles" (in whom "the mere look at the familiar soil" calls forth a "joyous anguish") recognize their toil as liberating in that it arises from possessing land they can call, "*Mine own!*" (2:227-29). Their own labour, while freeing them from the inequitable systems they have fled in their "native strands" (2:204), binds them to their new land by a physical and emotional investment in its soil.

Crawford's emphasis on the "pangs" and "anguish" connected with building a settlement in the wilderness suggests that Max is not involved simply in the physical construction of a new civilization, but also in what Bentley calls "a process of inner construction or *Bildung*" brought about through "hard work and intense suffering" (Bentley, intro. xli). That intense suffering is essential to this process is a point Crawford emphasises repeatedly in the

poem, through the lyric intermissions that comment upon the poem's narrative and define the position that Katie's love, and, by extension, "social-souled" compassion, occupy in the poem's treatment of the cultivation of the wilderness. Moreover, it is not overstating the matter to suggest that there are links between Crawford's Irish famine poems and the thematic joining of love, suffering, and progress in *Malcolm's Katie*. When Max had identified himself with the dispossessed at the beginning of the poem, he had not undergone any privation more harsh than an unsympathetic prospective father-in-law. Max's maturity is attributed to his transformation at the hands of "*Sorrow*," the "*Dark matrix...from which the human soul/ Has its last birth*" (4:1-3). This linkage between suffering and maturity at the beginning of Part VI of *Malcolm's Katie* is a reiteration of the lyric that closes Part V, which observes that:

> *...Love's rose doth blow,*
> *Ah, woe! Ah, woe!*
> *Truth with its leaves of snow,*
> *And Pain and Pity grow*
> *With Love's sweet roses on its sapful tree!*
> (5:176-80)

The development of Max's soul, through his suffering at the hands of Alfred, enables his love for Katie to be tempered with "Truth" "Pain" and ultimately, "Pity," and suggests that his narrative of progress will not repeat that of Malcolm, at least in terms of worshipping the "golden calves" of material prosperity for their own sake (Bentley, intro. xxxv). Instead, Max labours to be independent, and

thus worthy of Katie's love, and ensures that his success will be measured in terms of social justice rather than exploitative materialism.

Thematically, Max's suffering described in these terms recalls the virtues of "Truth" and "Pity" with which the Irish bride is dowered in "My Irish Love," and, more important, looks back to "A Hungry Day," where the sacrifice of the emigrant's wife, wasted away by famine to "bones stretched on the mouldy sthraw [sic]," initiates the "kindlin' of a burnin' spark" in the "hunger-bleached, shmall-beatin' heart" of the emigrant, and prompts him to ensure the survival of their children by emigrating to Canada (*Collected Poems* 307-8). Max's own sufferings have left him "gaunt as prairie wolves in famine time/ With long-drawn sickness" (6:122) but nevertheless with a "larger soul" able to "work out its greatness" (6:132-42) in saving Alfred. The story of Max's assumed death comes to light in the autumn, when "the Land had put his ruddy gauntlet on,/ Of harvest gold, to dash in Famine's face" (6:20). Alfred, who reports Max's death to Katie, seems completely unaware of the significance of the phrases he uses when he tells her that "there have grown this gilded summer past/ Grasses and buds from his [Max's] unburied flesh" (6:82-3), a gruesome image certainly, but one that like the death in "A Hungry Day" promises regeneration from suffering.

Max's *bildung* eventually results in harmony between the

rival suitors, as well as a regeneration of Malcolm, who has left his own prosperous farm to move west and acknowledges that life with Katie and Max in "these fresh forests make[s] an old man young" (7:21). The repeated emphasis on renewal from suffering in *Malcolm's Katie* suggests that Crawford sees in Max's development the growth of the New World--potentially a New World paradise, in which Max's triumph over Alfred symbolizes the triumph of harvest over famine, of love over selfish materialism and of a "social-soul'ed" (3: 240) community over an exploitative economy. Once in possession of both compassion and pioneer drive, Old World emigrants will ultimately help create the type of millenarian civilization that Katie envisages at the close of the poem.

While it is Max who has had to undergo the ordeal that leads to the poem's happy conclusion, it is Katie who makes the connection between sacrifice, Max's maturity, and the type of society she hopes will arise from it:

> "Oh Adam had not Max's soul," she said:
> "And these wild woods and plains are fairer far
> "Than Eden's self. O bounteous mothers they!
> "Beck'ning pale starvelings with their fresh, green hands,
> "And with their ashes mellowing the earth,
> "That she may yield her increase willingly.
> "I would not change these wild and rocking woods,
> "Dotted by little homes of unbark'd trees,
> "Where dwell the fleers from the waves of want,--
> "For the smooth sward of selfish Eden bowers
> "Nor--Max for Adam, if I knew my mind."
>
> (7:30-40)

Where Crawford had put the last words of *Old Spookses' Pass,*

Malcolm's Katie and Other Poems in the mouth of an Irish emigrant, Katie has the last word in a poem that also celebrates in its final lines a New World, and, indeed, a New Eden from the perspective of all emigrants fleeing the "waves of want" in the Old World. Katie also speaks of the country in terms that recall the sacrifice of the Irish mother in "A Hungry Day"--who "Died that the weeny ones might eat their fill"-- by praising the "bounteous mothers" whose "ashes" help nourish the earth so that it can sustain the "pale starvelings" who till it. Katie's final speech continues to link Canada to the notion of sacrifice that brings about an understanding of pity and social justice and, by extension, social harmony. Canada, as a country figured "in distinctly female and, in fact, matriarchal terms" (Bentley intro. xxvi) is, after all, able to provide not only subsistence for her children, but also hope and independence, unlike the disempowered mothers in "Erin's Warning" and "A Hungry Day." Rather than be driven into the ground by economic or militaristic exploitation, the "pale starvelings" who come to Canada can realize their own potential through unlocking the fertile possibilities of the land, rather than simply exploiting it.

"September in Toronto--1883," which appeared in the *Evening Telegram* on 15 September, a year before the publication of *Malcolm's Katie*, presents themes of social justice, cultivation of the wilderness, and peace and

prosperity, which Crawford would go on to develop in *Malcolm's Katie*. Crawford was not alone in portraying agricultural wealth as the basis of a just and prosperous society. The members of Canada First had viewed the settler as "an unconscious instrument" of a country's material and cultural advancement (Berger 93). In 1872, the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* had claimed that

> Every acre of wild land cleared by the axe of the woodman, every bushel of grain taken to the rude mill on the creek, every little hoard saved from the fruits of toil, will contribute to the intellectual progress of the generations to come. (qtd in Berger 93)

"September in Toronto" relates cultivation to civilization by presenting a harvest tableau in which a triumphal procession from farmers' fields is accompanied by "Art and Science," and the only captive displayed is "Famine," who "cringes past" (*Collected Poems* 152). It is significant that, in a portrait of a society based on prosperity and not on military conquest, the harvest--that is, the produce of the farmer--is given preeminence, as it makes possible a stable and peaceful environment in which to cultivate the intellectual fruits of Art and Science.

The ongoing battle between harvest and famine is a significant theme in *Hugh and Ion*, Crawford's unfinished narrative poem of 840 lines, parts of which may have been

written simultaneously with *Malcolm's Katie* (Burns 63-64)[9]. Where *Malcolm's Katie* had concluded happily amidst the "wild and rocking woods,/ Dotted by little homes of unbark'd trees" (7: 36-37), *Hugh and Ion* begins in the midst of a materialistic, exploitative city set at the edge of a New World wilderness. Moreover, whereas *Malcolm's Katie* begins with a betrothal, *Hugh and Ion* begins as a woman rejects her lover in favour of a "portly" stockbroker, who lays "all the little light/ Of dull and dreamy eyes--not on his love/ But on...stocks and margins" (37-41). In contrast to Max and other "poor soldiers of the axe" who build up a nation through their labour in *Malcolm's Katie*, the stockbroker in *Hugh and Ion* uses "The licens'd weapons of the world's wild war/ Against large Plenty, where all pitiful,/ She holds to Want the wealth of weighty sheaves" (37-43). In *Hugh and Ion*, Crawford turns her attention to the social and ethical dilemmas that arise when imperial conquest gives way to the legal but still inequitable "war" carried on by unbridled speculation and capitalism. Abstract wealth gained and lost through speculation is contrasted with the tangible weight of sheaves that can feed the hungry, which suggests that

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[9] Alternatively listed as "Narrative II" (Ross 107) or "The Hunters Twain" (Livesay 75), *Hugh and Ion* was not published in Crawford's lifetime. Critics disagree whether it can be termed a poem of Crawford's maturity, written in 1885-86 (Ross 113), or whether it was written simultaneously with *Malcolm's Katie* (Burns 63-64). The narrative fragment was published as *Hugh and Ion* in an edition by Glen Clever (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1977). All citations are from this edition.

Crawford feared that Canada's future progress may translate into a move away from the elegant sufficiency of an agricultural economy towards the type of prosperity that in Ireland had divided classes and created discontent and social instability.

Even the stony Malcolm Graem of *Malcolm's Katie* had "work'd for all" (1:68) he possessed; in contrast, the stockbroker in *Hugh and Ion* thrives in an economic world ruled, not by Love or Christ, but instead by the biblical thief Barabbas,

> ...who can steal
> With such bland gestures, and wise brows bent down
> In plans financial, that the feeble folk
> Stand all at gaze in envy and delight
> Yes--even while he plucks the crusts from lips
> Blue with their torture for it.
>
> (51-56)

As in the Irish poems and in *Malcolm's Katie*, in *Hugh and Ion* Crawford examines the ethics of wealth in terms of whether or not those who have created it are able to enjoy "the fruits of their own labour." As early as 1881, Crawford had seen the city as a site of exploitation for emigrant and native-born labourers alike. In "A Hungry Day," the emigrant farmer heeds the wise council of a countryman to avoid the city with its illusory promises of streets where gold lies "in the very mud that sthuck/ To the ould brogans on a poor man's feet," and where there are "men galore to toil in thim an die" (*Collected Poems* 308-9). While the majority of Irish emigrants in Canada settled on

the land--often very successfully (Houston 339)--the Slabtowns, Corktowns and Cabbagetowns in cities such as Halifax, Montreal and Toronto were a visible reminder of the fate of the Irish urban poor in Canada, and of the unskilled labourer in general. Many emigrants who settled in North American cities in the period of 1847-1856 soon discovered that the desperate competition for subsistence on the land in Ireland translated into equally fierce competition for unskilled jobs on railways, docksides and factories. Some emigrants, at least, "must have seen little difference between what they left and what they came to" (Duncan 31).

Crawford, having written of the post-famine emigrant in "A Hungry Day," may have had the successful Irish emigrant's less fortunate compatriots in mind when writing *Hugh and Ion*. In any case, the landless, whether the Irish economic refugee of the 1850s or the Canadian urban slum-dweller of the 1880s, are conceived as being as dependent upon the caprices of markets and whims of industrialists, as the tenants in Ireland had been upon their landlords. For the urban poor, the New World city, with its "young walls and venerable sins,/ The smell of primal woods upon its air/ The groans of Ancient Famine in its slums" (256-58) was in danger of being merely a continuation of Old World injustice. The exploitative system into which urban slum dwellers are forced in *Hugh and Ion* recalls McGee's condemnation of American slums in *The Irish Position in*

British and in Republican North America (1866), where he writes of unwary emigrants who were seduced by opportunistic "city bosses" into remaining as day-labourers in the city. McGee comments on the irony of

> this strangely contradictory result, that a people who hungered and thirsted for land in Ireland, who struggled for conacre and cabin even to the point of shedding blood, that this same people, when they reached a new world, in which a day's wages saved would purchase an acre of wild land in fee, wilfully concurred, under the lead of bad advisers, to sink into the condition of a miserable town tenantry..."
>
> (7)

The irony that slum dwellers in the "infant city" can cry "'We starve, we starve!'/ While half a world lay fresh/ And teeming, out beyond the city gates!" (206-7) is not lost on Hugh, the poem's spokesman for Hope who finds it equally hard to believe

> That what man calls "a man," should choose to pave
> The city kennels with his juiceless bones
> To lick the city dust with siccous tongue,
> To raven at its flesh marts with fierce eyes,
> And feel the iron soles of rushing feet
> Crush his lean breast, trample his puny babes
> And bring the dark divorce of hunger pangs
> Between all life and him--while prairie breasts
> Mounded, all teeming with the milk of life,
> and forests shouted to his leaden ears
> of food and shelter.
>
> (217-27)

In the "infant city" slums, the landless labourer's only alternative to starvation is to sell his labour for little, or, in some cases, no money at the "flesh marts." Hugh's observation of the dehumanizing effects of city life on its least fortunate inhabitants reflects McGee's concern for

rural Irish emigrants to America, who had been "so suddenly and unpreparedly converted into mere town labourers" (7). Like Katie, who in *Malcolm's Katie* describes the woods that support emigrant labourers as "bounteous mothers...with their ashes mellowing the earth" (7:34), Hugh sees the wilderness in both maternal and regenerative terms, figured as "prairie breasts/ Mounded, all teeming with the milk of life"-- while, ironically, urban labourers starve within sight of their sustenance.

In contrast to the "free erect spirit" that Davin claimed a labourer could become by taking up the challenge of settling the Northwest Territories, the "free Helot" (186) in *Hugh and Ion* is free in name only, and is in actuality enslaved in an economic system that does not reward him fairly for his labour.[10] The sociologist Kevin Duncan noted that in Canada in the nineteenth century, "The Irish labourer...in effect...subsidized the canals and railways because he was consistently underpaid, often cheated and sometimes not paid at all" (Duncan 31). Although the labourers in *Hugh and Ion* are not typed by nationality, their labour--and, indeed, their lives--are swallowed up in dangerous, ill-paid work that was

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[10]See also Crawford's poem, "The Helot":

> Bruteward lash the Helots, hold
> Brain and soul and clay in gyves
> Coin their blood and sweat in gold,
> Build thy cities on their lives....
> (*Collected Poems* 139)

historically taken on by the Irish in North American cities and work camps. Where in "Mavourneen," the "soil" consumed the strength of landless "serf[s]," in *Hugh and Ion*, Hugh witnesses labourers being literally consumed by the "iron tyrants" (285) in factories:

> ....I saw one monster take
> A serf that serv'd it, in its mighty maw
> And comb his sweating flesh sheer from his bones
> With glitt'ring fangs....
> (287-91)

In "A Hungry Day," Crawford apparently believed that it was still possible for new emigrants to avoid the exploitation depicted in *Hugh and Ion*, by taking part in the Canadian dream of settlement, which itself owed much to McGee's continual promotion of rural life for Irish city-dwellers in both American and Canadian cities (Slattery 38). Hugh likewise expresses an almost messianic zeal in promoting the potential of "A fine, full soil--free grants for every soul--/ Pure water--timber--hills for little towns" (731-32) as a solution for urban poverty, just as emigration to rural Canada was one means of salvation for dispossessed Irish peasants.

Hugh shares with McGee and Davin, and with the writers of countless settler's manuals, an optimistic belief that the apparently limitless space and resources of Canada could grant dignity and independence to the poor. In contrast, his more skeptical companion, the artist Ion, introduces a note of instability into Hugh's settlement fantasy. Ion's

bleak world view is ruled by "Despair" which "from the past/ Builds up the dreadful future" (422-23). In reply to Hugh's decision to build a colony in the wilds where the poor can "touch red Plenty's robe," Ion marks out a place for Hugh to build jails, and advises him to "Prepare the wilderness for crime--and Man!" (735; 746). Ion's view could be interpreted as cynical; however it could also be a warning against a facile, utopian vision of Canada that sidesteps what Michael Mays has called "the hard work of shaping the post-colonial state" (18)--work that was well underway in the 1880s as Canada took more and more responsibility for its own affairs.

That Crawford was unable to reconcile the opposing viewpoints of Hugh and Ion is perhaps one reason why the poem remains an unresolved fragment. Crawford had celebrated the achievements of Old World emigrants--and in particular, the Irish emigrant--in her collection, *Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems*. In *Hugh and Ion*, the poverty and exploitation against which the landless emigrant in Ireland struggled, had been transferred to the "slums" of late nineteenth-century Canada. In *Hugh and Ion*, Crawford continues to keep what were originally Irish concerns of land tenure and emigration in sight while seeking an inclusive, generous definition of Canadian nationalism, one that extended the rights to basic subsistence, human dignity and independence, won with

difficulty by the Irish in Canada, to all its citizens.

In outlining the ethics, culture, and government that distinguish Canada from Ireland and England, Crawford's vision of Canada encompasses both personal desires and national aspirations; her vision of public peace and prosperity, which is grounded in the very soil celebrated by emigrant and native settler alike, suggests that she took up the challenge McGee issued (restricted ironically to the "educated young men of the new nation"), to "hold their own, on their own soil, sacrificing nothing of their originality; but rejecting nothing nor yet accepting anything, merely because it comes out of an older, or richer, or greater country" ("The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" 20). Crawford's contribution to Canadian literary nationalism is a complex and equivocal portrait of Canada and its future, with images drawn from English, Canadian, and American literature, natural imagery and native Amerindian mythology, as well as Irish national aspirations. Perhaps McGee would have approved of the Canadian tapestry that Crawford wove out of diverse backgrounds, with Irish culture, politics and experience as the green and orange threads contributing to the larger picture. Or, to borrow a metaphor from McGee, political fragments of Crawford's Irish identity dissolve like ice in "the gulf stream" of Canadian nationality, but are never obliterated entirely.

. . .

Among the fragments of recollections with which Katherine Hale tried to reconstruct the poet's life was a description of some "quaint ornaments" in Crawford's possession, including "a flounce of precious old lace" (Hale 12). If this were, indeed, a treasured piece of *Irish* lace that recalled a very different life (one that James Reaney has imagined as "some Georgian set-up in Dublin," [xii]) from that which the Crawfords encountered in Canada, then the sentimental keepsake which the family preserved through declining fortunes, changes of residence and the deaths of family members could also be a reminder of where they had come from. For the poet, the "precious old lace" could also have been a visual representation of the intricacies of the Irish culture and history from which she derived at least part of her identity and pride. Irish memories may have served a similar sentimental or talismanic purpose for Irish writers in Canada as well as giving them an understanding of their Irish identity that was essential, if they were to help construct a Canadian literary identity for themselves and their readers.

A few years before Crawford began publishing her Irish poems, Davin had written in his Preface to *The Irishman in Canada* that emigrants who wished to distinguish themselves in Canada must not deny their past or their identity: "But let any Irishman who reads these lines ponder what I say:--You can never lose your own respect and keep the respect of

others" (vi-vii). Davin, Crawford, and indeed all the Irish-Canadian poets discussed here had begun constructing their identity--as did nationalists in Ireland--out of a desire to vindicate their national character, and to prevent their history from being marginalized in England's dominant imperial narrative. However, if their identities were first defined in terms of Ireland's historical wrongs, further excavations into their national culture revealed its diversity: they found that they could not construct an exclusive national identity or a national literature limited to one race, religion, culture, or even language.

Each of the Irish-Canadian poets examined in this dissertation wrote out of a sense of exile, and in response to repeated shocks of the new--shocks which were regularly administered by life in an uncharted country. While they often wrote in isolation, Irish-Canadian poets could nevertheless draw upon existing traditions of Irish literature, music, history, and myth, that they shared with their countrymen in both Ireland and Canada. Adam Kidd discovered that oral culture and history could be a site for reconciliation between conflicting and seemingly alien cultures, whether they be "jarring Creeds-men" in Ireland, or Europeans and Amerindians in North America. Standish O'Grady was not so successful in establishing common ground between Canadian and Irish culture, but succeeded in creating, in his unfinished poem, a vivid picture of the

cultural disorientation that must have been experienced by many Irish emigrants in Canada. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, who like Kidd saw Irish culture as a fabric made by many hands, a fabric whose richness was derived from a complex intertwining of cultures, languages and traditions, came to see diversity and plurality as essential to a national culture. McGee's advice to young poets to celebrate the many cultures out of which the Canadian nation was woven enabled the next generation of young writers to use Canadian material with confidence, and may even have made it possible for Crawford to write *Malcolm's Katie*, itself a work "that succeeded to an extraordinary degree in making of the diversity of late nineteenth-century Canadian culture the stuff of enduring art" (Bentley, intro. xlvii). McGee may have also helped set the stage for the celebration of cultural diversity in a Canadian literature that today prides itself on an even wider range of different voices and nationalities. While it could be argued that the Irish voice is simply one strand in a multicultural web, it could also be argued that the Irish muse was an essential element in the creative background of Adam Kidd, Standish O'Grady, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and Isabella Crawford, poets whose work cannot be fully appreciated outside its Irish cultural context.

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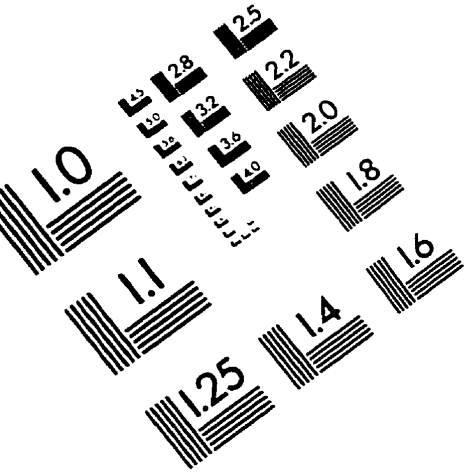

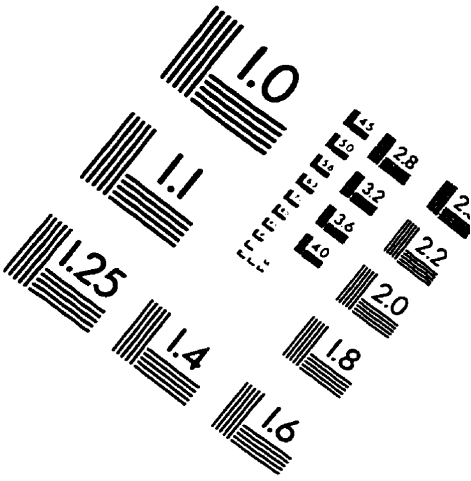

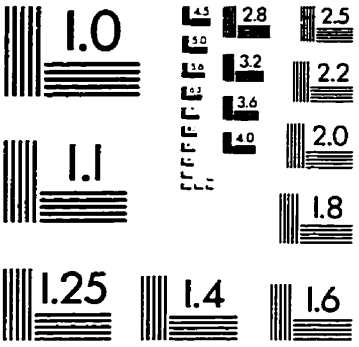

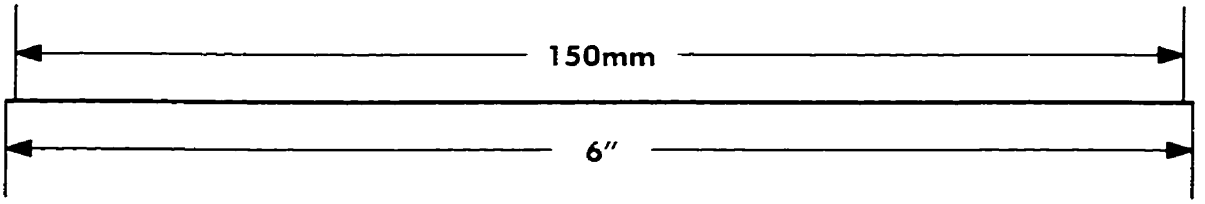

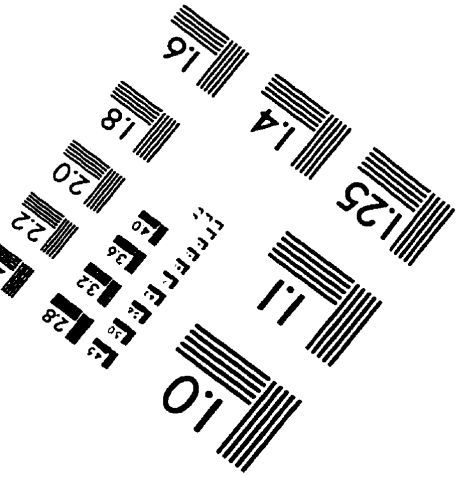

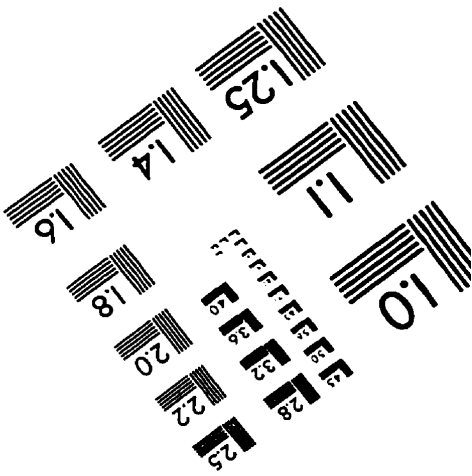

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