Famine Traces
Memory, Landscape, History and Identity in Irish and Irish-Diasporic Famine Fiction, 1871–91

Lindsay Janssen
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Contents

Introduction 1
I Research Questions, Methodology and Theoretical Concepts 6
II Literary Famine Recollections in Time and Space . . . . . . . . 10
III The Importance of Land and Landscape for Irishness . . . . 15
IV Historiographical Demarcations and Structure . . . . . . . . 17

1 Methodological and Theoretical Framework 21
1.1 Methodological Framework . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 21
1.2 Theoretical Framework . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 25
1.2.1 Narratology and the Formation of Literary Memory 25
1.2.2 Different Forms of Cultural Memory in Irish and
     Irish-Diasporic Famine Fiction . . . . . . . . . . . . 28
1.2.3 Memory and Space . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 31
1.2.4 The Famine and Exceptionality . . . . . . . . . . . . 33

2 Land, Landscape and (re)Constructions of Irishness in Famine Fiction 45
2.1 Aesthetic Modes . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 51
2.2 Landscape and Future . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 56
2.2.1 Landscape: Tensions and Disconnections . . . . . . . . 56
2.2.2 Landscape: Continued Connections . . . . . . . . . . . 63
2.3 Land and Past . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 73
2.3.1 Spatial Testimonies to Famine Memory . . . . . . . . 73
2.3.2 Land: the Georgic and the Failure . . . . . . . . . . . 78
2.4 Famine Memory and Landscape on Both Sides of the Atlantic 89

3 Landlord-Tenant Relationships and Rural Temporalities 95
3.1 A ‘New’ Order to Be Born? Feudalism Revisited . . . . . . 100
3.2 Anachronism I: “[H]ow history repeats itself” . . . . . . . 119
3.3 Anachronism II: The Static Irish Timespace . . . . . . . . 128
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Multidirectional Suffering: The Irish Slave</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The Role of History, Irish Place and Famine Memory in</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Formulations of Irish Nationalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Huntly McCarthy and Keary and the Longevity of Trauma</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Historical Circularity in <em>When We Were Boys</em> (1890)</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Irish Transnationalism: International and Transhistorical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Prospective Nostalgia and the Nationalist Reinscription of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Literary Ruins and National Regeneration</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 F/famine Victimhood, Sites of Suffering and Literary</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauntings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Famine Memories?</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Excess, Liminality and Moral Transgression in Famine</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Gothic Topographies and the Pathetic Fallacy</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Human Haunts in Famine Fiction</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Emigration: Nostalgia, Exile and Their Contestations in</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famine Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Involuntary Exiles?</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1 From a Choice between Two Evils to more Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretations of Irish Emigration</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2 Living the American Dream</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Nostalgia</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Longing for the Homeland? Portable Landscapes and Ireland in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2 Return Migration</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Conclusion: Embedded Famine Memories in a Transnational Context</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Literary Famine Recollections over Time and Space</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Literary Borrowings, Narrative Devices and Techniques</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 The Importance of the Irish Land and Landscape</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Exceptionality?</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Appendix</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1 Corpus List, 1871–91</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Synopses of Works of Fiction</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Tables</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nederlandse samenvatting</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1 Kaders, Onderzoeksvragen, Theorie en Methodologie</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2 Analyses en Belangrijkste Bevindingen</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.1 Land, Landschap en (re)Constructies van ‘Irishness’ in Famine fictie</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.2 Verhoudingen tussen Landheren en hun Pachters en Rurale Tijdsbeleving</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.3 De Rol van Geschiedenis, Ierse Plaatsen en Herinneringen aan de Hongersnood in Literaire Formuleringen van Iers Nationalisme</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.4 F/famine Slachtoffers, Plaatsen van Lijden en Literaire Rondwaringen (‘Hauntings’)</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.5 Emigratie: Nostalgie, Ballingschap en hun Weerleggingen in Famine fictie</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.3 Conclusies en Suggesties voor verder Onderzoek</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Curriculum Vitae</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

It has sometimes seemed to me as if every great event, especially if it be of the more tragic order, ought to have some distinctive cairn or monument of its own; some spot at which one could stand, as before a shrine, there to meditate upon it, and upon it alone. Such a shrine—though only in my own eminently private mental chapel—the great Irish Famine of 1846–1847, possesses.¹

This is the opening of Emily Lawless’ short narrative ‘Famine Roads and Famine Memories’ published in her collection *Traits and Confidences* (1898). The author takes her readers on a mental journey back to deserted villages and roads, regions once teaming with life, but now depopulated. Lawless laments that the Famine does not have a public memorial, and that it only has a “shrine” in her “own eminently private mental chapel”. However, this was not the case, as even during the time of Lawless’ writing, the Famine had become encapsulated in several media of remembrance. As early as the late nineteenth century, numerous authors had erected such “mental shrines” and had written extensively about the period and its effects.

¹ Emily Lawless, ‘Famine Roads and Famine Memories’, in *Traits and Confidences* (London: Methuen, 1898), 142–62: 142. Lawless suggests that the Famine lasted for only two years. Today, scholars usually argue that the Famine extended over a period of five or seven years (1845–46 to 1850–52). Some scholars opt for a longer period: Kevin Kenny speaks of the Famine decade, which, he says, lasted from 1846–55. He does this to demarcate the direct suffering caused by the Famine, which he takes to exceed the years in which the blight was actually found in the potato crops. See *The American Irish: A History* (USA: Longman, 2000), 89–90. In this dissertation, the years 1845 and 1851 are used to demarcate the Famine period. This decision is based on the observations made by scholars such as Mike Cronin and Lawrence J. McCaffrey. Cronin calls 1851 “the nominal end of the Famine”, and McCaffrey states that “[a]lthough 1849 was the last year for a deased potato crop, the effects of hunger, scurry, typhoid, cholera and low morale survived into 1851.” See Cronin, *A History of Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 135; McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (USA: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 57.
Besides conveying memories of one of the most devastating periods of Irish history, Lawless’ semi-journalistic, semi-literary piece of narrative fiction has another function: it recognises the importance of sites people can visit to remember events that are part of their cultural memory. These sites exist either as physical locations, as symbolic spaces, or both. Lawless acknowledges the great value of what Pierre Nora was later to call lieux de mémoire; “material, symbolic, and functional” places containing memories that are of such importance for a people and their self-identification that they should and will not be forgotten.2

According to Lawless, the dilapidated villages and abandoned roads constitute such lieux de mémoire for the Great Famine of 1845–51. This period, disruptive as it was, should not be seen as an isolated series of events, but rather as the culmination point of a collection of flaws in British colonial practice and weaknesses within Irish society and economy itself. These included the shortcomings of a laissez-faire economic approach, poor land management, an outmoded system of land ownership, the over-reliance on a single crop (the potato) and generally ineffective agricultural processes.3 The Famine was the result of successive potato crop failures, caused by phytophthora infestans, a parasitical fungus unknown to Europe before 1845.4 Other European countries were also affected by the blight, but none to such a far-reaching extent as Ireland.5 According to Kerby Miller, from 1845 until 1851, between 1.1 and 1.5 million people died due

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3 Cronin, History of Ireland, 145. Cormac Ó Gráda refers to restraints imposed on official government aid during the Famine. Rejecting the interpretation of the Famine as a British act of genocide, he states that “if policy failure resulted in deaths”, these deaths “were largely the by-product of a dogmatic version of political economy; not the deliberate outcome of anti-Irish racism.” See Black ’47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory (2000; fourth edn, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9–10. Ó Gráda also discusses the matter of Ireland’s heavy reliance on the potato, which led to the blight being a far greater demographic disaster than in other European countries also hit by phytophthora infestans (15–16).


to starvation and famine-related diseases. In 1841, the Irish population had reached its highest point and counted about 8.1 million people; by 1851, this number had fallen back to about 6.5 million. The demographic decline was not only caused by the loss of lives, but also by a strong rise in emigration; while the Irish had been leaving Ireland from as early on as the Middle Ages, emigration levels peaked due to the Famine. Kevin Kenny estimates that some 1.8 million Irish moved to North America in the Famine decade alone. Many continued to emigrate long after the Famine, and by 1890 four out of ten persons who were born in Ireland, still decided to move to other counties. After the Famine, Ireland’s population continued to decrease well into the next century. The Famine therefore extensively altered Irish society; it impacted all layers of society, and heavily affected the poorest class, which predominantly consisted of poor Catholic land labourers who relied heavily on the potato as a staple food.

While earlier scholarship stressed the existence of Famine “amnesia” and tended to emphasise the absence of the Famine in Irish cultural mem-

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7 Mary E. Daly, Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800 (Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1981), 89.
8 Kenny, American Irish, 89–90. In her article ‘Something Old and Something New. Recent Research on the Great Irish Famine’, Mary E. Daly refers to a Famine ‘decade’ in a different way, when she stresses that “in the worst-effected areas it lasted for more than ten years”. See Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping and Eric Vanhaute, eds, When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the ‘Last’ European Subsistence Crisis, 1845–1850 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 59–79: 75.
ory, the period has, in fact, featured as a key memory for Irish society.\textsuperscript{12} Today, a plethora of scholarly work about the Famine and its legacies in a great variety of disciplines including history, art history, geography and sociology, demonstrates rather a surfeit than a shortage of attention for the period. Such research demonstrates that the after-effects of the Great Famine last well into our present time, influencing what people consider as Irishness across the globe today. With regard to literature specifically, scholars including Seamus Deane, Melissa Fegan, Margaret Kelleher and Christopher Morash have commented widely upon the recurrent representation of the Great Famine in Irish fiction and poetry.\textsuperscript{13} As Fegan, Morash, Kelleher and others have explained, many Irish writers since the mid-nineteenth century have both directly and indirectly mentioned the Famine in their works and have represented the period as an integral part of Ireland’s past and identity, thereby showing that the boundaries between Famine recollection and (conscious) forgetting never were as clear-cut as previous scholarship had suggested.

While around the turn of the twenty-first century, literary scholars would still argue that only “a handful of novels and a body of poems” which remember the Great Famine had been written, this dissertation and

\textsuperscript{12} For example, Charles Fanning mentions this “amnesia” in \textit{The Exiles of Erin: Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Fiction} (1987; 2nd edn, Chester Springs, PA: Dufour, 1997), 16. See also \textit{Irish Voice}, 3, 238. More specifically, Seamus Deane argues that “the literature of the Irish Revival” displayed “the remarkable feat of ignoring the Famine” and instead focused on legend to underscore Irish “cultural exceptionalism” (\textit{Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790} [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], 51). Christine Kinealy states that there was a “collective silence” about the Famine and says that for “the previous 150 years” silence marked the Famine, especially within the academic community (‘The Great Irish Famine – A Dangerous Memory?’ in Arthur Gribben, ed., \textit{The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America} [Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999], 239–54: 245). More recently, Mary Kelly has tried to counter what she perceives as the Famine’s “virtual eradication from the historical record” (\textit{Ireland’s Great Famine in Irish-American History: Enshrining a Fateful Memory} [Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014], xvi).

the larger project that encompasses it, in fact show that a vast amount of Famine fiction – more than 120 works – was written on both sides of the Atlantic between 1847 and 1921. A large proportion of these works are as yet little explored. The corpus of fiction central to this study, covering the period 1871–91, consists of 33 works of narrative prose fiction, ranging from short stories to three-decker novels. To make a selection of narratives that fall into the category ‘Famine fiction’, I have worked from the following definition, which not only includes works of fiction set during the Famine period, but also those set in later periods, which make use of Famine recollections: a work of Famine fiction is a work of narrative fiction in which the memory of the Great Famine features, either as a constitutive element of the narrative or as a referenced memory in that narrative.

The larger research project, ‘Relocated Remembrance: the Great Famine in Irish (Diaspora) Fiction, 1847–1921’, investigates the development of the fictional representation of the memory of the Great Famine through time and space. It considers works of fiction as “portable monuments”, as carriers and shapers of cultural memory. The simultaneously diachronic and synchronic approach to a cross-Atlantic corpus of largely non-canonical works of fiction is one of the innovative elements of the project, as many comparative studies have done either the one or the other, but none have ever (extensively) drawn comparisons between the literatures of different parts of the transnational Irish community for such a long period of time. Furthermore, despite their importance, earlier studies tended to overlook very important carriers and shapers of cultural memory: works of fiction that were (very) popular on both sides of the Atlantic in their own time, but which are now largely forgotten. In our research project ‘Relocated Remembrance’, we aim to fill these gaps.

The overarching research project is divided into three smaller projects covering the periods 1847–70, 1871–91 and 1892–1921. The three

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15 I will use the shorthand “corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91)” to denote the works of Irish and Irish-diasporic Famine fiction central to this study.

16 For more information on the entire project, see http://famineliterature.com.

17 Ann Rigney argues that works of fiction become “portable monuments” that can be carried over to new contexts, inscribe meaning and be inscribed with new meanings. See ‘Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans’, *Poetics Today, 25/2* (Summer 2004), 383.
scholars involved carry out comparative research on Irish, Irish-English, Irish-American and Irish-Canadian works of fiction.\textsuperscript{18} The Irish diaspora comprises more regions, but these different locations have been chosen, because outside Ireland, the largest Irish communities could be found in the United States, England and Canada.\textsuperscript{19} While a substantial body of Famine fiction written in America and Canada exists, to date no study focusing specifically on Irish-American and/or Irish-Canadian Famine fiction has been published; ‘Relocated Remembrance’ aims to provide a more comprehensive view of the uses of Famine memory in these community literatures as well.

I Central Research Questions, Methodology and Key Theoretical Concepts

A number of characteristics are commonly attributed to the Famine, its memory and its impact on Irish and Irish-diasporic society and culture. I believe them to be related, as they all point to a supposed exceptional status of the period and its memory. These related notions concern the unrepresentability of the Famine\textsuperscript{20}, its status as a cultural trauma (then and now)\textsuperscript{21}, the idea of the Famine as the founding myth for the diasporic community\textsuperscript{22}, and the conviction that Irish emigrants, especially since the Famine, are involuntary exiles.\textsuperscript{23} These issues, which I will discuss in the following chapter, prevail in the current debate, but they are not without contestation. As I will demonstrate throughout this study, works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) are of a multidimensional and multi-voiced nature and in them the memory of the Famine is frequently embedded within larger historical and literary discourses. Therefore, I expect that an examination of my corpus of fiction challenges a one-dimensional view of the role of Famine memory, and that

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{18} Marquèrite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, and myself.
\item\textsuperscript{19} Daly, Social and Economic History, 92.
\item\textsuperscript{20} For example, as I will demonstrate in the first chapter, Terry Eagleton takes up a relatively extreme position, placing the Famine in an “anti-representational environment” and upon a par with Auschwitz and its perceived “traumatized silence”. See ‘The Irish Sublime’, Religion and Literature 28/2–3 (Summer-Autumn, 1996), 25–32: 30.
\item\textsuperscript{21} For example Christine Kinealy, This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–52 (1994; new edn, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), xli.
\item\textsuperscript{22} See for example Mary J. Kelly, Ireland’s Great Famine in Irish-American History: Enshrining a Fateful Memory (Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), xiii.
\item\textsuperscript{23} See for example Kerby A. Miller, Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.
\end{enumerate}
it complicates the tendency to give the period a unique position as a cultural trauma or founding myth, or an unrepresentable event. Throughout the following chapters, I will investigate how these notions centred upon exceptionality feature in the corpus of fiction.

In line with the larger aims of ‘Relocated Remembrance’, I have formulated three main research questions which focus on the potential transformation of literary recollections of the Famine over time and space, and on the impact of narrativisation on Famine recollections:

1. How is the memory of the Great Famine represented in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) written in the homeland and in the diaspora? Are there spatially or temporally defined differences and/or similarities?

2. What is the role of narrative devices and techniques – such as narrative embedding, following and focalisation, the use of temporal shifts and the appropriation of existing genre conventions – in the formation of literary Famine memories?

3. How is the Irish landscape represented in connection to constructions of Irish identity and history? Moreover, how do the works of Famine fiction represent the impact of the Famine on the “environmental relatedness” central to Irish self-definitions?

As this final question demonstrates, in addition to the aims of the larger project, this subproject focuses especially on representations of the Irish land and landscape. Several scholars have acknowledged the function of the landscape as a building block for traditional Irish identity throughout the centuries. During the period which this research covers, events such as the smaller famine of the late 1870s and the Land War of 1879–82 occurred, and land ownership and the position of the tenantry remained contested issues. Concomitantly, matters concerning the land were of vital importance to Irish politics and self-conceptions. As a result, in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), representations of the landscape feature

24 I have borrowed the term from Terry Gifford who states that traditionally with the pastoral mode, a deep “environmental relatedness” between the human subject and his natural surroundings was established (Pastoral [London: Routledge, 1999], 18). This term may also be applied to the traditional bond between the Irish and their haunts.

Introduction

frequently as markers for an Irish identity characterised by a strong bond between soil and man. I will return to this topic throughout this study, and will focus on it in Chapter 2 specifically. Through these questions, in addition to exploring literary considerations of the Famine’s supposedly unique status, I intend to extract and reconstruct shared structures and intertextual imagery underlying literary representations of Famine memory.

I will analyse the use of a number of narrative techniques in my literary corpus. These are: the workings of narrative embedding – the manner in which a plot is constructed with various narrative layers –; focalisation – through whose eyes we experience events –; and following – whose actions we follow. I have selected these techniques, because they have effect on various levels of affect, and have the potential to stimulate readerly engagement with the subject matter. Works of Famine fiction have a clear ideological and sentimental compass: all works display (varying degrees of) identification with and compassion for the Irish poor and often advocate political messages. Their narrative structures support the guidance of readerly orientation; as I will demonstrate, the aforementioned narrative techniques contribute to drawing the reader into the narrative, to the creation of affect between the reader and the plight of the character(s) and to the ideological direction a text can provide for its readership. As such, these devices add to the “experiential mode of literary remembering”, as they can lead to more personal and direct ways of experiencing memory than a text constructed without such literary devices could.

Throughout this dissertation, I will make use of various theoretical concepts taken from the fields of trauma studies and memory studies; these critical concepts will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. To investigate which types of memory feature the corpus of Famine fiction

26 For narrative embedding or textual “hierarchy” and focalisation, see Mieke Bal, ‘The Laughing Mice: Or, on Focalisation’, Poetics Today 2/2 (Winter 1981), 202-10: 204. Elsewhere, Bal defines the focaliser as he or she “who selects the actions and chooses the angle from which to present them, [and] with those actions produces the narrative”, as different from the narrator who “puts the narrative into words”. In this manner, Bal emphasises the importance of experience and angle in defining focalisation and the focalising entity. See ‘Narration and Focalization (1991)’, in Mieke Bal, ed., Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies. Volume I: Major Issues in Narrative Theory (London: Routledge, 2004), 263-96: 273. For the concept of narrative “following” see Rick Altman, A Theory of Narrative (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

I Research Questions, Methodology and Theoretical Concepts

(1871–91), I will discuss key concepts such as “screen memory”, or the use of a memory to give shape to another (more traumatic) memory, and “postmemory”, which describes how memory is handed down from generation to generation, potentially without losing its affective intensity.28 The terms “prosthetic memory” and “multidirectional memory” will also be applied. The former explores how memory and its moral and affective dimensions are exchanged between different communities and cultures; the latter recognises both the inter- and transcultural directions found in many formulations of cultural memory.29 In connection to representations of traumatic events and their potential processing through artistic representation, I will make use of the notion of the “traumatic sublime”, a term which describes the representational trace of a traumatic event rather than the event itself, and which has the potential to open up public discourse about the event to which it refers.30 Moreover, the idea of unrepresentability is a notion commonly accepted in Famine studies; therefore it will also be discussed at various points in this dissertation. My application of the term is borrowed from Irish studies and trauma studies and pertains specifically to the supposed narrative unrepresentability of the Famine.31

To explore the workings of not just time, but also space in relation to literary Famine memory, I will make use of Nora’s theory of lieux de mémoire, as well as Foucault’s term “heterotopia”. In heterotopic spaces various times, cultures and meanings can exist – and clash – simultan-


31 Christopher Morash and David Lloyd discuss the narrative unrepresentability of the Famine, pointing out the difficulties in giving Famine memory a recognizable, narrative shape. See Lloyd, ‘The Indigent Sublime: Spectres of Irish Hunger’, Representations 92/1 (Fall 2005), 152–85 and Morash, ‘An Afterword on Silence’, in George Cusack and Sarah Goss, eds, Hungry Words: Images of Famine in the Irish Canon (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 300–308. Their views will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
Introduction
eously. The terms taken from Nora and Foucault will be linked to my considerations of the importance of Irish land and landscape in processes of Irish identity formation and in the use of political rhetoric in literature.

II Literary Famine Recollections in Time and Space

Recollection happens by tapping into existing discursive frameworks. Memory scholars such as Astrid Erll and Guy Beiner speak of “premediation”, a term which describes the process in which representations of earlier events “shape our understanding and remembrance of later events”. In the case of literary recollections of the Famine written by the Irish at home and in diaspora between 1871 and 1891, premediation also plays an important part, for several clusters of images and narrative formats used for earlier representations of the Famine continue to feature frequently.

The “future-turn” in memory studies has emphasised that the act of recollection is present- and future-oriented. In the present context this implies that specific Famine memories are incorporated because of their lasting validity for contemporary issues and future-oriented ideologies. The period 1871–91 was a time of transition. The rights and social standing of the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic improved in relative terms (although social mobility was still very much limited within the labouring classes), but, due to several problems in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Irish were nevertheless once more confronted with hardships reminiscent of the Great Famine. The agricultural crisis and smaller famine of the late 1870s, the Land War of 1879–82, and the period’s upsurge in emigration caused, as the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) also shows, Famine memories of hunger, food deficits, victimhood, colonial repression,

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governmental failure, emigration and class clashes to resurface. Specifically, this dissertation will discuss the following transhistorical themes which link the periods 1845–51 and 1871–91 together: representations of the Irish land and landscape; the Irish Land Question and landlord-tenant relationships; nationalist politics; representations of Irish victimhood; and Irish emigration.

In all locations which make up the transatlantic Irish community, Irish immigrants came into contact with different cultures, were received in different manners, and likely experienced varying degrees of identification with the homeland and their new ‘home’. Consequently, the manner in which the 33 works of fiction central to this study deal with their own inherited cultural memories – in this case of the Famine – will likely differ from location to location. Earlier scholarship has mainly focused on recollections of the Famine in national traditions. Charles Fanning has included representations of the Famine in fiction by Famine emigrants in his seminal work on literature by the Irish-American community over a span of 250 years. The influential studies by Morash, Fegan and Kelleher mentioned earlier adopt a broad scope but their discussion of Famine literature remains limited to the Irish context. While Morash has provided crucial insights into Irish poetry, Fegan has considered a wide array of (known) Irish fiction. Kelleher has provided a transcultural dimension, but focuses on fictional and non-fictional accounts of famine in India (the Bengali famine of the 1940s) and the Irish Famine, rather than the significance of the Irish Famine in literature on both sides of the Atlantic. What seems to be missing is an in-depth investigation of the cross-cultural literary dialogue concerning Famine memory between both sides of the Atlantic; exploring this dialogue is a central concern of the present study.

The need to move from this nation-oriented stance to a cross-Atlantic approach has been acknowledged only recently, while the corpus of fiction central to this study and its socio-cultural and literary contexts already call for such an approach. Irish immigrant life was different in Canada and in the United States. In the US, most migrants lingered in urban areas and often worked as unskilled labourers. Social and economic mobility in practice only became possible for second- and third generation migrants. In contrast, in Canada many Irish immigrants went to work in agriculture,

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the timber trade, or a similar branch of employment. In his 1877 celebration of the Irish in Canada, Irish-Canadian historian Nicholas Flood Davin stated: “I am convinced, from what I saw in the States, and from all that I have heard, that the position of the Irishman in Canada is better than in the States.”

Despite such differences, there were similarities in the social positions of Irish emigrants and in the cultural exchanges between the Irish-American and Irish-Canadian communities. In the period preceding 1870 and during the period that this research covers, anti-Irish violence in the receiving countries came in regular and often extreme outbursts against Irish migrants. A Protestant anti-Catholic stance and at times an even “militant Orangeism” was found in both host countries. A figure such as Irish nationalist Thomas D’Arcy McGee personified the cross-influences between Irish America and Irish Canada, as he escaped to the US after the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848 and gained prominence by establishing two famous Irish-American newspapers, the New York-based Nation and the Boston-based American Celt, before going to Canada in 1857 to become an influential Canadian politician.

In the literary market, the alignment in Irish-American and Irish-Canadian sentiments can also be demonstrated. For example, Irish author Richard Baptist O’Brien’s Catholic-didactic novel The D’Altons of Crag was first published in the Montreal-based magazine The Harp in 1879–80 and was serialised again in The Irish-American in those same years. Authors such as the Irish-Canadian Margaret Dixon McDougall and the Irish-Canadian/Irish-American Mary Anne Sadlier wrote for both the Irish-Canadian and Irish-American markets. The messages Sadlier put forward with regard to the retention of Irishness circulated in the American and Canadian Irish communities from the 1850s onwards, as, for example, her novel The Blakes and the Flanagans. A Tale, Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States (1855) was published by D. and J. Sadlier in New York, and by P. J. Kenedy in Montreal. Bessy Conway: Or, the Irish Girl in America (1861), moreover, was published in Montreal, New York and

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40 Nicholas Flood Davin, The Irishman in Canada (Toronto: Maclear, 1877), 8n.
41 MacRaild, Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 155. In this respect, MacRaild mentions Great Britain as the third receiving nation in which such violence manifested itself.
Boston by D. and J. Sadlier, and these are just two examples illustrating the spread of Sadlier’s fiction throughout North America.\textsuperscript{42} The political exposé concerning the Irish Land Question which McDougall offered was disseminated by the Montreal \textit{Witness} and the New York \textit{Witness}, as her \textit{Letters from ‘Norah’} (1882) were first published in these papers.\textsuperscript{43} Consequently, the messages voiced by these authors resonated in both communities.

In the context of the British Isles, a national approach is complicated as well. The variation in writers from the British Isles included in this study ranges from Irish nationalist writers to an Irish-English writer who displays a very nuanced political approach to the Irish Question (Annie Keary). These authors often identified themselves as Irishmen and women, rendering any clear distinction between these different Irish writers from the British Isles quite diffuse. I have therefore decided to regard authors from Ireland and those from England with Irish roots as part of one Irish writerly community, without losing track of the respective social and political orientations of individual writers.

Moreover, the period 1871–91 is characterised by many interactions between the British Isles and North-America. Christopher Dowd predominantly looks at Irishness in American literature; nevertheless, he has shown that constructions of Irish identity in America were greatly influenced by Irish (stage) writers such as Dion Boucicault (1820–90) and that early versions of derogatory stereotypes such as the stage Irishman or the simian Irishman in newspaper illustrations can be traced back to the Old World.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, through his extensive tracing of the literary markets of Britain and the US, Joel Wiener has demonstrated the high level of influence both markets had on each other.\textsuperscript{45} The \textit{D’Altons of Crag} by R. B. O’Brien was


\textsuperscript{44} Christopher Dowd, \textit{The Construction of Irish Identity in American Literature} (New York: Routledge, 2011), 14, 19–21.

\textsuperscript{45} For a detailed study of the cross-influences between the British and American
Introduction

not only published in North-American journals, but also in Dublin in book form by James Duffy in 1882. Moreover, several works by Rosa Mulholland were published and read on both sides of the Atlantic: *Marcella Grace* (1886), for example, was published by Kegan Paul and Trench in London, and by Harper in New York. William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat's Cabin: Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland* was first published in Dublin by M. H. Gill in 1882; it was later republished in New York in 1914 by Upton himself. These are just a few examples of the exchanges in fiction between the British and the North-American markets; such interactions further illustrate the need for a “translocational” approach.

With regard to quantity, a further adjustment is called for. Literary output was not steady throughout the period 1847–1921: while works of narrative fiction recollecting the Famine written by the Irish at home and in the United States continued to be published throughout the period, more works of Famine fiction were published closer to the event. Moreover, during the period 1871–91, most works of Famine fiction were written by Irish or Irish-American authors; a much smaller number were written by Irish-English and Irish-Canadian writers. As a result, the current project (and the project covering the period 1892–1921 as well) does not have access to a large number of English or Canadian works (one and four works, respectively, for this study); too few, in fact, to make a convincing argument on a quantitative basis. Because of the low number of works with regard to a Canadian and an English corpus, and because of the cultural and literary similarities and exchanges, in my literary corpus I will distinguish between two rather than four separate regions: North-America and the British Isles.

The ‘national’ distinction is one of the main hypotheses that inform the larger project ‘Relocated Remembrance’. I suspect that this hypothesis does not sufficiently take into account the many interactions within markets, see Joel H. Wiener, *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s–1914. Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).


49 I have taken the term “translocational” from O’Toole and King, ‘Introduction’, 1.
and between the cultures and literary markets of the British Isles and North-America of the period 1871–91 (and the period to follow). Therefore, this dissertation will most likely reveal larger developments spanning the Atlantic and will show that national diversities are limited in their differences and scope. Nevertheless, throughout this dissertation I will uphold a spatial demarcation between North America and the British Isles in order to demonstrate the possible differences in the development of literary Famine memory on both sides of the Atlantic.

III The Importance of Land and Landscape for Irishness

As Oona Frawley states, “it has long been a commonplace to remark upon Irish literature’s preoccupation with place, nature and landscape”. One may extrapolate from her remark by stating that not only Irish literature, but also Irish cultural memory and cultural identity at large have been strongly tied to and influenced by representations of the (rural) landscape. The Famine changed the Irish land and landscape beyond recognition, and functioned as a catalyst for the mechanization of Irish agriculture between roughly 1870 and the early 1890s – thus effectively ending the traditional Irish way of life. Nevertheless, the Irish at home and abroad continued to display great affection for their native soil; in 1879, the Rev. E. W. Young commented upon this, stating that “an Irishman loves his native soil with a vehemence which may seem to a political economist absurd; but which is from another point of view most pathetic, we might almost add, sacred”. In line with this, the Irish maintained their connection to the Irish landscape. The agricultural crisis and smaller famine of the late 1870s also brought back dark reminiscences of the Famine period. The latter is illustrated by the words of former poor law and local government inspector William Patrick O’Brien. In his retrospective work The Great Famine in Ireland (1896), O’Brien wrote that the potato failure of the late 1870s “made people realize that there were still to be found, in certain districts of the country, a congested population always hovering, more or less, on the brink of destitution”, a population which was “almost as liable as

50 Frawley, Irish Pastoral, 1.
51 Cronin, History of Ireland, 146.
53 MacRaild, Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 37.
of old to be reduced to a state of absolute famine”.\textsuperscript{54}

As the current study will demonstrate, despite these great changes in traditional Irish life during the latter half of the nineteenth century, land and landscape continue to take on a prominent position in Irish and Irish-diasporic fiction and literary renderings of Irishness: the Irish environs function as lieux de mémoire, infused with various symbolic meanings in various contexts. Often, long-standing dichotomies are invoked; versions of Irishness – despite recent developments – continue to be associated with rural culture and landscape, in contrast to essentially urbanised and industrialised Anglo-Saxon and American identities. Therefore, Irish and Irish-diasporic society and fiction of the period 1871–91, more than in the preceding period and the period to follow, are characterised by a deep ambivalence. The period 1871–91 can be seen as a transitional period between new and old ways of life, and old and new identities in which both considerations of landscape and the Famine were once again brought to the fore, making a discussion of the landscape as a marker of identity of vital importance to a full understanding of Irishness across the globe. The present dissertation will go beyond Frawley’s work, which concerns itself with Irish writings on landscape, by considering how representations of the Irish land and landscape are formed and appropriated on both sides of the Atlantic. Idealised images of a pristine pre-Famine or even pre-colonial Ireland are not only transported through Irish history, but also to other locations in which the diasporic Irish settled.

In Irish and Irish-diasporic Famine fiction, the importance of the land and landscape is not only demonstrated by depictions of the Irish natural and rural environs, but also by their significance for other elements of Irish identity and politics. The corpus of fiction shows that considerations of land and landscape were so important for Irish political ideology and the rhetoric of identity formation, that representations of the land and landscape are often indissolubly connected to these political and ideological issues as well. In literary configurations of Irish romantic nationalism, the Irish picturesque landscape becomes not only a site testifying to current oppression but also a space for counter-colonial expression. Land, landscape and connected aesthetic theory will be discussed in the next two chapters. Moreover, they will also return in the other chapters to function as a recurrent and connective theme throughout this dissertation. The following aesthetic modes are central to my analyses of literary representations of the impact of the Famine on Irish environmental relatedness: the pastoral,

\textsuperscript{54} W. P. O’Brien, \textit{Great Famine in Ireland}, 276.
IV Historiographical Demarcations and Structure

the georgic and the picturesque. These aesthetic modes explore the relations between man and – in the case of the georgic and the pastoral, rural – landscape and have ideological dimensions. These will be explored in detail in the following chapter and the chapter concerning Irish nationalism and rebellion. Additionally, the aesthetic device of the pathetic fallacy, in which human sentiments are reflected in the natural surroundings, and the idea of a “topography of the Gothic” will also serve as key concepts, for analyses of the literary representation of Irish victimhood.\(^{55}\)

Terry Eagleton has argued that in the aftermath of the Famine and subsequent highly disruptive instances of societal crises such as the Land Wars and the agricultural crisis of the late 1870s and 1880s, the idyllic representation of the landscape faced an inevitable reconsideration.\(^{56}\) Though I consider this a given, I expect that the representation of the impact of Famine on the Irish natural environment differs in various contexts. On the one hand, it would be logical that the Famine means a necessary reconsideration of the working land as a marker for Irish identity. On the other, the impact of the event on the aesthetic landscape (of the hills, glens and valleys of Ireland) does not seem as evident. By assigning different aesthetic modes and devices to representations of Ireland’s nature, I will provide an in-depth analysis of how exactly the impact of the Famine on Irish environmental relatedness is depicted in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91).

IV Historiographical Demarcations and the Structure of the Present Study

James Murphy has argued that during the late nineteenth century, Irish politics and Irish letters were intertwined; therefore, cross-influences between fiction and politics would have been substantial.\(^{57}\) This is illus-


\(^{57}\) “Whereas literature became deeply involved with issues of politics and nation, the other arts in the late nineteenth-century did not.” Murphy, *Ireland: A Social, Cultural
trated by the fact that many Irish authors were politically engaged and that several Irish Home Rule MPs such as William O’Brien and Justin Huntly McCarthy were also successful authors. In line with this, each of the three sub-projects part of ‘Relocated Remembrance’ deals with a different time frame, and their demarcation is based on influential events and periods in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century transatlantic Irish politics and history.

My specific research examines fiction from the period marked off by the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the foundation of the Irish Home Rule League on the one end, and the death of Charles Stewart Parnell and the dissolution of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) on the other. The year 1871 has been chosen, because it marks the onset of a period of growing political awareness and a developing preference for constitutional over physical-force nationalism. Moreover, it indicates the start of a more secure position for the Irish rural labouring classes as well as a more confident political stance on their part. This self-confidence had been badly damaged by the Famine, its after-effects and events such as the failed Fenian rebellion of 1867. The death of Parnell has been selected as a closing event of the period, for it marks the end of a period of increased political awareness and activity, of confident and united Irish politics, as Parnell’s death effectively terminated the fight for Home Rule and caused Irish nationalism to lose much of its ardour. Throughout the period, land issues were of vital importance. As an MP for the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) stated in an 1879 appeal to the Liberal Party: “[t]he conditions of the tenure of land in Ireland constitute, next to the demand for self-government the most important branch of the Irish Question.”

I will consider my corpus of literary texts in light of the five trans-historical themes mentioned above; these themes tap into earlier literary representations of the Great Famine and in that manner tie the three sub-projects of ‘Relocated Remembrance’ together. Each respective chapter will discuss one of these five topics in detail. Before the literary analyses proper, I will provide an explanation of my methodological approach as

\[\text{and Literary History}, 144.\]

\[58 \text{Cronin, } \text{History of Ireland}, 155, 154; \text{MacRaidl, } \text{Irish Migrants in Modern Britain}, 143.\]

\[59 \text{Alvin Jackson, } \text{Ireland, 1798–1998: War Peace and Beyond} \text{ (1999; 2nd edn, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010), 84.}\]

\[60 \text{Murphy, } \text{Ireland: A Social, Cultural, and Literary History}, 132; \text{Kenny, } \text{American Irish}, 179.\]

\[61 \text{‘An Irish M. P.’, } \text{The Irish Question. An Appeal to the Liberal Party} \text{ (Liverpool: Argus, 1879), 32.}\]
well as the theoretical framework that is applied to analyse the literary corpus. The second chapter looks at representations of Irish land and landscape, exploring the vital part they play in constructions of Irishness and formulations of Famine recollection. By making a division between land and landscape – or working land and aesthetic landscape –, I will analyse the representation of the impact of the Famine and later hardships on both, examining which elements retain their function as markers of a traditional, natural Irishness and which are excluded. Chapter 3 functions as a follow-up to the depictions of land studied in the second chapter. It considers representations of the plight of the Irish rural poor in fiction, and also discusses formulations of landlord-tenants relationships during and after the Famine. Specifically, in this chapter I will consider how in these works of fiction the Famine and later periods of hardship are envisaged as influencing the poor classes and the shape of Irish rural society. Furthermore, I will also discuss the temporal and spatial embedding of Famine memory. The former is achieved through analyses of different forms of Irish temporality and the influence of the Famine and similar later hardships on these perceptions of time. My understanding of a specific nineteenth-century Irish (rural) sense of time is based on Joe Cleary’s argument that “different perceptions of the temporality of history” existed in nineteenth century Ireland, which were critical to various social tensions and conflicts. As I will argue, the rural Irish timespace in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) is also marked by a distinct sense of temporality in which stasis and repetition are important features. Moreover, by studying how the representation of the suffering Irish rural poor is compared to other, non-Irish, histories of suffering and oppression – here specifically slavery – I will demonstrate how Famine memory becomes part of global constellations of memory.

Chapter 4 focuses on literary representations of Irish nationalist ideology and rebellion. It explores how the memory of the Famine is used to support nationalist argumentation in the struggle for Home Rule. Again providing an analysis of literary representations of Irish temporality, this chapter will analyse how the Famine and Famine-era strife become embedded in literary representations of Ireland’s larger colonial history. Moreover, historical and cross-cultural references are explored through an investigation of the place of Famine memory in a larger European and transatlantic context of rebellion and oppression. I will investigate which intertex-

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tual references to historical Irish and non-Irish rebellions and nationalist struggles the works of Famine fiction make. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the Irish landscape is used in literary nationalist argumentation to argue for Irish Home Rule on the basis of an Irish natural and historical distinctiveness that in these works is linked to a human connection to that landscape.

Chapter 5 analyses the narrative representation of the Irish victim and sites of suffering since the Famine period and places these within existing literary and generic frameworks, in order to explore the literary borrowings that shape representations of the suffering Irish. While earlier chapters place more emphasis on the temporal, spatial and mnemonic embedding of Famine memory, here I will study the literary embedding of this memory, demonstrating the extensive influence of the Gothic mode and the pathetic fallacy on literary recollections of the Irish victim and spaces of suffering.

Literary representations of Irish emigration are the topic of Chapter 6. In this chapter I will investigate how works of Famine fiction envision the supposed role of the Famine as a foundation myth for the Irish-diasporic community. I will also discuss motivations for Irish emigration, the sentiment of nostalgia, and the notion of Irish exile as formulated in Famine fiction. In fiction written in the immediate decades after the Famine, diasporic writers often continued to envision a strong relationship not just to their perceived home, but also to the idealised landscapes of home.63 Chapter 6 will consider whether in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) this connection to home still takes on such nostalgic forms. The memories of the Famine in the works of fiction are connected to a historical referent which is at an increasingly distant temporal (and affective) remove; I will investigate whether this distance has influence on the appropriation and mobilisation of Famine memory.

63 Corporaal, ‘From Golden Hills’; Lindsay Janssen, Imagining Homelands: The Transforming Imagery Concerning Ireland and America in the Fiction of the Nineteenth-Century American Irish (Nijmegen: Radboud University, 2009, unpublished MA thesis). The term “home” is an unstable concept; Angelika Bammer exposes its unstable nature by stating that the meaning of this “historically weighty and overdetermined” concept is far from fixed, as she still asks herself what it means and how it is “mobilized”. See ‘Introduction’, in Angelika Bammer, ed., Displacements (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), xi–xx: xvi.
Chapter 1

Methodological and Theoretical Framework

1.1 Methodological Framework: Collection, Selection Criteria, Analysis

The initial corpus of fiction with which I started this project was compiled from various sources, including *A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650–1900* by Rolf and Magda Loeber and Ann Mullin Burnham, and work done by scholars such as Margaret Kelleher, Chris Morash, Charles Fanning, Melissa Fegan and Marguerite Corporaal. To find little-researched or even forgotten materials, I have made use of general online databases such as Google Books and Archive.org and more specific databases, such as Cornell University’s Making of America project, the Early Canadiana Online database and the Chronicling America project, created by the Library of Congress. I have collected several first editions of rare texts through antiquarian websites, and have visited archives and research libraries to find otherwise inaccessible works of fiction. Throughout the project I have done research at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., the Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame University in Southbend (IN), Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, the Concordia University Library in Montreal, the British Library in London and the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. The process of find-

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1 An Foras Feasa: Maynooth University Institute for the Humanities has created a freely accessible online version of the *Loeber Guide*: <http://lgif.ie/>.

ing new literary materials was time consuming and, at times, haphazard. While I could rely on synopses of better-known literary works provided by scholars before me, working with forgotten materials meant that searching for new materials frequently came down to browsing through many catalogues, books and journals in search of references to the Great Famine. While I have found several little- or even unknown works of Famine fiction, I am convinced that there is more to be found, especially in the great number of literary journals and newspapers that have survived from the period.

A few remarks on the selection criteria at the onset of the present study are in order. I have included a few works of fiction in this study’s corpus, which, strictly speaking, are not ‘Famine fiction’ as defined in the introduction, but ‘famine fiction’; they treat later periods of famine, and thereby refer to Ireland’s long history of famines. While this dissertation deals with Famine memory, its approach will at times be broader. Literary recollections of the Famine are often incorporated into larger historical constructs, in which links are drawn between different periods and actors in Irish history. In my corpus, it is not always easy to speak of a separate category of Famine literature or Famine memory, or to disentangle Famine memories from more general famine memories. Recollections of later hardships bear strong similarities to Famine memories, such as memories of the Land War era and the smaller-scale famine of 1879. Moreover, in the texts that are included in my corpus, analogies are suggested between representations of Famine-time rebellion – the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848 – and later risings – such as the Fenian Rising of 1867. In some works of fiction it is not transparent whether the plot deals with the period of the Great Famine or a period of famine: when this lack of transparency features, I will use the term ‘F/famine’. This entangled representation of (recent) Irish history features in for example Rosa Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’ (1891). Furthermore, Emily Fox’s Rose O’Connor (1880), which discusses the famine of 1879 and does not explicitly mention the Great Famine, does contain many tropes and narrative templates which are borrowed from earlier and contemporary fictional representations of the Famine. If I were to focus narrowly on works which explicitly mention the Great Famine, texts such as Rose O’Connor and ‘The Hungry Death’ would have to be excluded from the present study. Consequently, the embedded dimension of this study’s literary corpus with regard to Irish history and generic traditions would remain under-exposed, which in turn would create a distorted image of the nature of Famine memory as
1.1 Methodological Framework

more exceptional and self-contained than was actually the case during the period.

Methodologically speaking, the central research questions at the heart of the present study call for a dual-focus approach. On the one hand, to investigate the role of narrative devices and techniques, as well as the use of generic and literary borrowings in Famine fiction, I have to go into passages and plotlines in detail. This requires qualitative, in-depth literary analysis. I will provide close readings of specific passages and plot developments from the most representative works of fiction in the context of each chapter, and will place them in their larger literary and socio-historical contexts. These specific works will feature as examples for the more general tendencies found in the corpus as a whole. In passing, I will make references to other works. I will not discuss every narrative in each chapter.

On the other hand, to be able to provide larger, comparative analyses on the level of this dissertation’s literary corpus as a whole and the potential transformations in literary Famine recollections over time and space, a more general approach is needed. To provide quantitative support for the overall claims that I make in the following chapters, I have included several detailed tables which can be found in the Appendix section. Moreover, I have also included pie charts, bar charts and smaller tables in the chapters to illustrate that my discovery of patterns in Famine recollection based on specific literary analyses are, in fact, supported by the larger corpus. Below is an example of a bar chart in which I have considered the full corpus of 33 works and have specified the number of works that place their narrative during the Famine, both during and after the Famine, or after the Famine. This information is distilled from the chronological list of publications and their temporal setting found in Table A.1, in the Appendix section. Figure 1.1 below demonstrates that in the second half of the period 1871–91, and after the Land War of 1879–82, a higher number of narratives are placed in the post-Famine period, while a lower number are set during the Famine. This demonstrates that the memory of the Famine is increasingly used to give shape and meaning to later events of a similar nature as the period progresses.

With respect to qualitative research, a corpus of 33 texts is substantial; in contrast, in the light of quantitative analysis, such a number is small. Therefore it should be taken into account that although my visuals and tables are of a quantitative nature, their scope is relatively limited. The tables included throughout this study have been compiled with what I, in the main chapters, have defined as the seminal elements of each respective
cluster of imagery in mind. For instance, in my discussion of representations of Irish victimhood in Chapter 5, I define the pathetic fallacy as the representation of an alignment between the environment and human sentiment and suffering. When representations of victimhood are cast in these terms, I have included them in my count of works that combine representations of F/famine suffering with the pathetic fallacy in the respective table (Table A.4) in the Appendix. Considering the table as a whole, I have drawn conclusions about larger developments in terms of temporal and spatial changes. This means that for the development that I describe, I have tried to determine whether the patterns of development vary for the North-American versus the British Irish texts. Moreover, I have tried to establish whether an increased distance from the period of the Famine in the temporal sense also leads to new appropriations of Famine memory, in the case of this example specifically memories of victimhood. To provide a visual demonstration, I have compressed the larger tendencies into the bar chart that can be found in Chapter 5. Similar processes underlie all
1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Narratology and the Formation of Literary Memory

This research project builds on the similarities between the construction of (conventional) narrative and the formation of cultural memory: both “narrativise” events into meaningful narrative sequences. Scholars from a wide array of academic disciplines such as Monika Fludernik (narrative theory), Oona Frawley (literature and Irish studies) Marianne Hirsch (memory studies), Greg Forter (psychoanalysis and trauma studies), Carol Bardenstein (diaspora studies) and James V. Wertsch (cultural memory and trauma studies), to name a few, have acknowledged the use of narrative formats or templates by both individuals and communities to tell their stories of the past. In memory theory, scholars often speak of ‘traces’ of

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the past that are combined into coherent plots.

In the context of national character formation, Joep Leerssen states that literary sources are “not merely a record of the ‘representation’ of a given nationality, but rather, constitute a cultural praxis articulating and even constructing that nationality”. Ann Rigney has argued that texts are “portable monuments” that help shape cultural memories, and that they, more so than other media of nineteenth-century recollection, have the power to make memories transferrable, allowing them to “be carried over into new situations”.

Astrid Erll adds that “poetic and narrative strategies tend to play an important role in the symbolic transformation of experience into memory”. It is this formative role of literary techniques in our processes of remembering which concerns me throughout this study. Erll also states that fictional narratives, more so than any other textual form, are characterised by the “experiential mode of literary remembering”, as they, through narrative devices such as the choice between first- and third-person narration, use of tense and direct reader address, can create more embodied, that is, more direct ways of experiencing memory. In *Towards a Natural Narratology*, Monika Fludernik also explores the notion of narrative “experientiality”. She points out that the main feature of a narrative is “embodiment”, and locates this embodiment on both the level of narration and focalisation. For Fludernik, the human agent and how he or she experiences and reflects on events is a vital element of what constitutes a narrative. According to Fludernik, narrative is special in contrast to other “texts”, for it is the only form which is able to display “consciousness” of

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7 Erll, ‘Re-Writing as Re-Visioning’, 166.
1.2 Theoretical Framework

the self and of others. Human “embodiment” and “consciousness”, then, together form the “experiential” dimension which transforms text to narrative. Because human consciousness is quintessential to her definition of narrative, Fludernik tells us that “[p]erception” is also a crucial issue, thereby also emphasising the narrative construction that happens between reader and text.

In A Theory of Narrative, Rick Altman similarly discusses experientiality. Altman argues for the application of what he calls narrative ‘following’, which is divided in different ‘focus types’. These focus types tell the story from a certain perspective or from alternating perspectives, and thus give a twist to the narrated events. Altman’s focus types should not be confused with focalisation. Mieke Bal defines the focaliser as he or she “who selects the actions and chooses the angle from which to present them”. In this sense, experience and the adopted gaze, or through whose eyes we experience events, are crucial to the definition of focalisation. Altman chooses a broader approach, arguing that focus types describe how the text follows – Altman speaks of “following patterns” – different characters and their actions, not (necessarily) through whose eyes we see events take place.

In my opinion, both narratological concepts are crucial to and complement each other with regard to establishing direction, perspective and experientiality within the narrative text. Therefore, in this study, I will apply the concepts of following and focalisation as defined and distinguished by Bal, Fludernik and Altman.

In the emphasis on the personal dimension inherent to narrative experientiality, narrative techniques such as focalisation, following and characterisation, and borrowings from generic conventions and intertextual references play an important role. These techniques and devices have their influence on the consciousness, embodiment and potential engagement crucial to any work of fiction which has a clear moral, didactic and/or political dimension, as is the case for works of Famine fiction. Moreover, different focus types, shifts in focalisation and the fictional narrative’s potentially “loose and ‘undisciplined’ form” allow the fictional text to become “a meeting ground for the many discourses operative in society at any given

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9 Ibid., 27, 30.
10 Ibid., 204.
time". In relation to focalisation, Bal speaks of “embedding” and textual “hierarchy”. In the context of the current project, “embedding” and “hierarchy” will also be investigated, because variation in the amount of layers within a narrative is likely to have its influence on the embodiment, consciousness and engagement created within the text. For example, the inclusion of narrative layers or a more complex narrative hierarchy might create a safe temporal distance between a character’s present and his or her disturbing past, thereby placing the memory of a (traumatic) event at a further affective remove.

1.2.2 Different Forms of Cultural Memory in Irish and Irish-Diasporic Famine Fiction

In his discussion of the recent ‘future turn’ in memory studies, Daniel Levy explains that “memory and its association with a particular past are not an impediment for the future but a prerequisite to enunciate a narrative (bridge) over the present. A shared sense of the past becomes a meaning-making repository which helps define aspirations for the future.” Not only what we now expect of our future, but also our “anticipated futures” – or what we imagined the future to be during past times – prove their durability, and influence what we consider our possible future. As I will demonstrate, in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), many such attempts were made to create narrative bridges over the disruptive recent past.

Irish immigrants came into direct contact with other communities in their host societies; consequently, transatlantic Irish cultural memory was also influenced by the cultural memories of these receiving communities. Transatlantic configurations of Irishness can be considered as influenced by transthistorical and intercultural connections. Therefore, recent schol-
arship concerned with the extreme fluidity of and cross-pollination within and between cultural memories will prove very useful. In this context, I will specifically make use of the concepts of screen memory, prosthetic memory, postmemory, and multidirectional memory. These different types of memory are found in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91). They share several characteristics – such as their moral potential and the acknowledgement of possibly far-reaching interactions between different cultures and generations.

Freud’s concept of screen memory is commonly seen as describing a form of recollection used to “[cover] up a traumatic event – another traumatic event – that cannot be approached directly.” Many of the narratives that are part of this research project use the memory of the Great Famine to give a recognisable shape to later – smaller-scale – events of a supposedly similar nature. Their memories of the Famine work as screen memories as they help shape the recollection of later events “by links of a symbolic or similar nature”. Moreover, Freud made his observations regarding the Deckernerinnerung on the basis of individual subjects; within Irish studies and Famine studies specifically, there occurs a problematic transferral between communal and individual memory and trauma, which I will discuss in more detail shortly.

Therefore, I will consider screen memory in principle as an individual form of memory, as experienced and constructed on the level of individual characters in works of fiction.

Marianne Hirsch’s theory of postmemory has a broader scope than Freud’s screen memory, and focuses not on the individual but on the familial group. Hirsch stresses the generational transferral of memory, as she argues that the second- (or third-) hand memory that has been handed down to us by our ancestors, is characterised by a “deep personal connection” and can be experienced just as intensely as if it were lived memory. Although focused on generations within the family, Hirsch’s theory can easily be transferred to the cultural group, as Hirsch herself acknowledges.

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21 Ibid., 22.
Whereas Hirsch stresses the vertical transferral of memory, Alison Landsberg’s idea of “prosthetic memory” emphasises the horizontal connections people make. She argues that prosthetic memories – memories which “have ceased to belong exclusively to a particular group and have become part of a common public domain” and are therefore also “transportable” – enable “the transmission of memories to people who have no ‘natural’ or biological claims to them”. According to Landsberg, such connections can “produce empathy and [can] thereby enable a person to establish a political connection with someone from a different class, race or ethnic position.” Landsberg stresses that people who otherwise have no connection to one another, can establish lasting and profound connections through prosthetic memory.

These observations regarding the personal, the communal, and the vertical and horizontal transferral of memory have been taken into account by Michael Rothberg when expounding his theory of “multidirectional memory”. Instead of seeing memory as a “zero-sum game” or as “memory competition”, Rothberg views memory as multidirectional, as existing of “dynamic transfers” between different memories. In so doing, his theoretical model paves the way for a more egalitarian view on cultural memories and how they interact. Multidirectional memory stipulates that “[m]emories are not owned by groups.” Rather, there is much interchange and interaction between cultural memories from different times and different cultural groups, in some cases – and as I will argue in this study, in the case of transatlantic Irish memory as well – leading to the “universalization” of once culture- or time-specific memories. Rothberg’s methodology stresses the prosthetic dimension of the memory of the Holocaust, as he explores how that memory is used to give shape to later formulations of memory in other cultural contexts. My take on the concept developed by Rothberg

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22 Alison Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture (New York: Colombia University Press, 2004), 11, 42, 18. Landsberg developed the concept of prosthetic memory in the context of twentieth-and twenty-first-century instances of recollection greatly influenced by modern media such as film, television and the Internet. However, many of the characteristics attributed to prosthetic memory can also be used to analyse older forms of (commodified) memory.

23 Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory, 48.

24 Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory, 11.

25 To prove this point, Rothberg refers to the many appropriations of the Holocaust in the memories and identities of other cultural groups: “Such linkages between the Holocaust and other forms of racism and violence have led many scholars to talk about the ‘universalization’ of the Holocaust, a process that some scholars deplore and others celebrate.” (Multidirectional Memory, 229.)
Theoretical Framework

is slightly different, as in the following chapters I will consider multidirectional memory as a combination of memory’s prosthetic and postmnemonic potentials, and as a form of memory in which both vertical transference and interaction – between generations within a culture – and horizontal transference and interaction – between different cultural communities – occurs.

Throughout this dissertation, I will use a number of working definitions. When discussing how on the level of the individual different memories become connected and interchange their meaning, we can speak of screen memory. When discussing the transferral of memory between generations (also subsequent generations within a culture) the term postmemory will be applied. In discussions on the mnemonic exchange between cultures the notion of prosthetic memory is most fitting. Lastly, when in the constitution of cultural memory both vertical and horizontal – both generational and intercultural – exchange and interaction are crucial to giving meaning to a memory, I will use the term multidirectional memory.

Memory and Space

In the late 1980s Pierre Nora developed his concept of *lieux de mémoire* and demonstrated that a nation or a people has certain sites of memory, that is, places that are of such importance for that people and their self-identification, that they should not be forgotten. These *lieux de mémoire* are not just places in the strictest, geographical sense of the word; they can be “material, symbolic and functional” places. As Nora explains, “[e]ven an apparently purely material site, like an archive, becomes a *lieu de mémoire*, only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura.”

In the introduction to *Displacements* (1994), Angelika Bammer likens the circumstances of an oppressed people at home to the situation of a people in diaspora, pointing out that both are in a position of “displacement.” Especially for (formerly) displaced cultural groups, such as the Irish and Irish-diasporic community – which already had a strong connection to physical place due to its traditional rural self-identification –, place takes up a special position in the ways that that cultural group constitutes itself. When displacement occurs, the dislocated culture’s native landscape

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27 Ibid., 18–19, 23.
is suddenly out of reach. Hereby, not only the dislocated cultural group, but also the memory of that space becomes “somehow dispersed”. Instances of (colonial) subjugation and forced flight often lead to a strong sensation of nostalgia and loss. As I will demonstrate, in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), this was also the case for the displaced Irish, as many works of Famine fiction reach to memories of past times and past spaces in a nostalgic manner, sometimes even casting these memories as viable options for the future, both at home and in diaspora. Through feats of self-preservation in the face of displacement and/or cultural domination by another community, the transatlantic Irish tried to retain their traditional connection to landscape by keeping it alive in their cultural identity and/or by destabilising the links between their traditional natural environment and its bonds to a set spatio-temporal location.

In his lecture ‘Of Other Spaces’, Michel Foucault reflected on the importance of place in our postmodern worldview and explained his theory of heterotopia. These heterotopias are spaces “which are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites” and which can be “thoroughly phantasmatic”. Thus, they can be seen as hybrid places which act as embodiments of multiple sites simultaneously, while also being synchronic and diachronic in nature. They can function as sites of compliance and contestation and demarcate states of liminality or transience. What a heterotopia means can vary from time to time and from culture to culture. Foucault’s concept heterotopia can shed light on what specific places can mean for a cultural memory over time and space. Because of its ambivalent and multidimensional connotations, the concept of heterotopia is a functional tool to fully understand narrative descriptions of place by a cultural group struggling to retain its cultural identity in the face of colonial oppression and resistance, and temporal and geographical displacement.

In my analysis of space I will make use of several aesthetic concepts which carry ideological implications. These are the pastoral, the georgic and the picturesque. As I will further elaborate upon in the following chapter, the pastoral’s representation of the idyll also contained a critique on contemporary ills. The georgic, the pastoral mode’s work-oriented

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31 Ibid., 25.
1.2 Theoretical Framework

counterpart, placed working on the land and an environmental connection as vital elements of nation- and people-building. The picturesque and its preference for natural decay and focus on ruins and ruined elements contained the possibility of social critique in its representation of forces contesting for the dominance of that space. I will make use of these distinctive modes so as to clearly demonstrate the effects of the Famine on different aspects of the Irish land and landscape in these narratives and how these representations could or could no longer be used in nationalist rhetoric and the construction of Irish identity.

1.2.4 The Famine and Exceptionality

The Famine is often seen as a unique period in Irish cultural memory. Its supposed exceptionality status is supported by specific interpretations of the human cost and demographic impact of the Famine, its effect on Irish emigration and issues concerning its representation. The following views corroborating this exceptional position of Famine memory are shared by many Irish studies scholars today. Scholars such as Christine Kinealy consider the Famine as having the status of a cultural trauma, for the Irish at home and in diaspora, in the past and present. Mary J. Kelly, among others, voices the opinion that the Famine has functioned as a founding myth for the diasporic community. Astrid Wonneberger also comments upon this latter notion, but in a critical manner as she points out that around the turn of the twenty-first century, the Irish-American diaspora still “constructs its own catastrophic origin [the Famine]” which is achieved by “neglecting all other causes” of Irish-American migration. Lastly, scholars such as Kerby Miller have stated that Irish emigrants, es-

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34 For a discussion of the critical potential of the picturesque, see Chapter 4 of this study.
especially since the Famine, have considered themselves involuntary exiles.\textsuperscript{38} In the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), these matters pertaining to the alleged uniqueness of the period also feature. The corpus contains many different representations of these topics, and of the potential meaning the Famine could have for them, and for Irish identity on both sides of the Atlantic. Together, these works of Famine fiction exhibit a multidimensional approach to the role of Famine memory in late nineteenth-century literary constructions of Irish identity. They complicate a coherent, unambiguous stance toward that memory and in that manner have the potential to problematise appointing a label of uniqueness and exceptionality to Famine memory.

The Diasporic Community and the Impact of Famine Memory

Irish cultural memory and identity formations became truly cross-Atlantic phenomena during the nineteenth century, and it is fair to say that what constitutes Irishness has been influenced as much by those who stayed at home as by those who left. The Irish community abroad is commonly seen as a diasporic community. Homeland orientation is a quintessential element for the self-identification processes of such a community, and the idea of the nation-state as an identity marker continues to be of great importance.\textsuperscript{39} The often found intense identification with the homeland and the unwillingness or impossibility to identify him- or herself with his or her present home, implies that the diasporic subject lives in a sort of temporal ‘third space’.\textsuperscript{40} Diasporic identity is “hybridized”, and “issues of home, belonging, and nation” become complicated for the diasporic subject.\textsuperscript{41}

Generally speaking, the Irish diaspora, especially after the Great Famine, is considered a victim diaspora.\textsuperscript{42} Frequently, members of a victim diaspora...
1.2 Theoretical Framework

diaspora hold the conviction that a specific event has sparked off their migratory flow. Furthermore, if this event is considered grave and influential enough, it can come to be seen as “the basis of their origin myth”. As Margaret Kelleher, amongst others, has observed: although Irish emigration was already a well-established part of Irish life before the mid nineteenth century and continued to be an integral part of Irish society after the Famine, the Famine indeed came to be seen as a the origin myth or “charter myth” of the Irish-diasporic community. Miller has argued that the Irish diaspora labelled itself a community of “involuntary exiles”. The term exile implies a “temporary state” of being, causing the exiled subjects to focus on “the territory and culture of their former home” instead of their new dwelling place for self-identification. In fact, the sentiment of exile was not limited to the Famine and the post-Famine period but predated them, and, as Miller’s extensive work on Irish emigrant letters and other forms of communication demonstrates, often did not correspond to the immigrants’ actual (more positive) experiences. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, the works of fiction central to this corpus seem to support Miller’s questioning of the (self-imposed) label. However, the term exile was often applied to Famine and post-Famine migration specifically by, for example, influential Irish nationalists such as Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and John Mitchel, and was consequently disseminated far and wide.

43 Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin, Migration in Irish History 1607–2007 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 165. This argument is also supported by Robert Lemelson, Laurence J. Kirmayer and Mark Barad: “Trauma may become part of the founding myth and charter of a people. In such cases, keeping trauma alive becomes important for moral and political legitimacy.” See 'Trauma in Context: Integrating Biological, Clinical and Cultural Perspectives', in Robert Lemelson, Laurence J. Kilmayer and Mark Barad, eds, Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 451–74: 471–2.

44 “the Great Famine constitutes a charter myth or birth myth for Irish America; as historian Kevin O’Neill has noted, ‘a creation myth that both explains our presence in the new land and connects us to the old via a powerful sense of grievance. The current emphasis placed by North American Famine monuments on emigration as the triumph over adversity, and as the beginning of a new and different narrative, may be understood in that context.” Margaret Kelleher, ‘Hunger and History: Monuments to the Great Irish Famine’, Textual Practice 16/2 (2002), 249–76: 267–8.


as their writings were spread throughout the diasporic community. The latter called the Irish driven from their homes during the Famine “columns of exiles” while the former, writing in 1898, called himself and “many another Irishman in New York” an “exile”.  

The Famine as Cultural Trauma?

Kevin Whelan states that “[i]ndubitably, Ireland remained culturally traumatized in the immediate post-Famine period.” Taking up the notion of deferral typically associated with traditional trauma theory, Whelan sees the Irish cultural revival of the late nineteenth century “as a delayed, second-generation effect, inspired by people born during the Famine”.  

By contrast, Vincent Comerford counters considerations of the Famine as a cultural trauma by pointing out that while the recall of the period was (originally) problematic and repressed on the level of personal testimony, the event was never cloaked in a psychological, traumatic silence.  

Within the field of Irish studies the ‘status’ of the Great Hunger as a cultural trauma is a much debated issue. One of the biggest and undecided (and unanswerable) questions concerns the scale of the Famine and its after-effects. Specifically, scholars have not agreed upon the status of the Famine for Irish memory and identity: was the event a cultural trauma? And how does one determine what signifies a cultural trauma? As Oona

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48 John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (perhaps)* (1861; author’s edn, Glasgow: R. and T. Washbourne, 1882), 102. The word “exile” appears frequently in Rossa’s work. The full quote is followed by Rossa’s famous denunciation of the double oppression of the Irishman:

> ‘Many another Irish exile,’ did I say? – did I call myself an exile? – an Irishman in New York, an “exile”! Yes; and the word, and all the meanings of the word, come naturally to me, and run freely from my mind into this paper. My mother buried in America, all my brothers and sisters buried in America; twelve of my children born in America – and yet I cannot feel that America is my country; I am made to feel that I am a stranger here, and I am made to see that the English power, and the English influence and the English hate, and the English boycott against the Irish-Irishmen is to-day as active in America as it is in Ireland. (Rossa’s *Recollections; 1838 to 1898* [Mariner’s Harbor, NY: O’Donovan Rossa, 1898], 262.)


1.2 Theoretical Framework

Frawley has put this: “What was it about the Famine that marks it as ‘more traumatic’ than other events for so many critics?”

Some scholars, especially during the mid-1990 boom in Famine commemoration, have argued that the Famine can be likened to the Holocaust. In the stark words of Terry Eagleton

> What happens, then, when in the midst of this anti-representational environment an event with all the characteristics of a low-level nuclear strike occurs? What happens when Ireland becomes home to a catastrophe which strains at the bounds of the knowable and depictable as surely as Auschwitz did for Adorno? Part of what happens is a resounding, traumatized silence.

While Niall Ó Ciosáin acknowledges that “the Famine and the Holocaust can be thought of as presenting similar artistic problems”, he immediately adds that this “does not necessarily imply any similarity between the events themselves, although that association has frequently been made”. Morash convincingly reasons that one should not forget the economic and political climate of the Famine period and that on the level of intentionality, the Holocaust and the Famine are not comparable, but are, “in fact, opposites”. Despite the warnings issued by Morash, Ó Ciosáin and others during the 1990s boom, such comparisons are still made. Several websites use the term ‘Irish Holocaust’, and in his very popular, deeply polemic and strongly emotional work of historiography *The Famine Plot*, popular historian Tim Pat Coogan applies the term several times. Additionally, in

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54 “While Marx’s analysis of this freedom reveals its illusory nature, it is still the case that classical political economy, with its emphasis on the rule of law over the power of the state, is, in this respect, the polar opposite of totalitarian fascism, which persecutes the innocent with the express purpose of elevating the power of the state over the rule of law. Hence, over and above any general edict against using the Holocaust as a point of comparison, when looked at in terms of relationships between the state and the law, the Famine and the Holocaust are not only different; they are, in fact, opposites.” See Chris Morash, ‘Famine/Holocaust: Fragmented Bodies’, *Éire-Ireland* 32/1 (1997), 136-50: 143.

55 To provide a few examples of websites (there are many more to be found):
response to recent plans made by Channel 4 to broadcast a comedy series about the Great Famine, Coogan spoke out and likened Channel 4’s proposed series to “holocaust humour”.\(^{56}\) Whether discussing such references on the basis of (narrative) unrepresentability or societal and demographic impact, the comparison does invoke connotations which are not sufficiently justified. These include issues regarding culpability, genocide, quantitative considerations of ‘who suffered most’, of whether a group was specifically targeted, and last but not least, of a supposed exceptional or unique status for the event. Consequently, questions regarding these matters are too quickly decided by association with the Holocaust, while (heated) scholarly debates have pointed out that there is no consensus about them in the field of Famine studies at the moment.\(^{57}\)

As Michael Lambek and Paul Antze argue, “[e]very nation must construct a past for itself. In the memory of that past, trauma plays a role, whether it is suppressed [...] or commemorated.\(^{58}\) The notion of repression is often tied to a sense of unrepresentability of the event. However, in the context of the memory of the Great Famine, scholars such as David Lloyd and Chris Morash have argued that unrepresentability should not

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In his introduction, Coogan uses the term a few times, and includes a comparison between Famine sufferers and those who were interned in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. See The Famine Plot: England’s Role in Ireland’s Greatest Tragedy (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

\(^{57}\) Gene Ray states that “the extreme violence of Auschwitz [...] was aimed at humanity itself” (Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory: From Auschwitz to Hiroshima to September 11 and Beyond [2005; 2nd edn, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010], 2); such a universalising claim cannot be made about British Governmental Policy during the Famine period without glossing over religious convictions – the Famine as a divine act – or the economical climate – Political Economy and a laissez-faire approach – of the time. Chris Morash provides a valuable discussion about the comparisons made between the Famine and the Holocaust, and also goes into the supposed unique status of the period. See ‘Famine/Holocaust’.

be equated with traumatic repression: while there are links, Lloyd rather
states that representations of the Famine and its victims are cast in terms
of the “indigent sublime”, which signifies “that which exceeds conceptual-
ization and overwhelms the boundaries of the subject”. Morash chooses
narrative representation as his playing field, arguing that the Famine it-
self is unrepresentable in that its memory lacks a recognisable narrative
shape. He states that concerning the Famine, no clear difference can be
made between good and evil and that issues of victimhood and agency
cannot easily be discerned. Furthermore, Morash argues that the Famine
was not an event, but a period without a clear temporal demarcation: its
beginning, middle and end are in no way transparent.

As said, the concept of (communal) trauma is also commonly associ-
ated with the idea of latency. Cathy Caruth defines a cultural trauma as
“an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which
the response to the event occurs in often delayed, and uncontrolled repetit-
ive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena”. Jeffrey
C. Alexander places more emphasis on the collective and more clearly un-
derscores an event’s perceived status as a cultural trauma. He states
that “a cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel that
they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks
upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and chan-
ging their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways”. Ron
Eyerman argues that “[t]rauma is not the experience itself that produces trau-
matic effects, but rather the remembrance of it”. Together, these scholars
demonstrate the relative nature of all cultural traumas, as they focus on
the formulation of the denominator ‘trauma’ after the occurrence of the

92/1 (Fall 2005), 152–85: 162.
60 Chris Morash, ‘An Afterword on Silence’, in George Cusack and Sarah Goss, eds,
Hungry Words: Images of Famine in the Irish Canon (Dublin: Irish Academic Press,
62 Caruth also informs us that “[t]rauma […] does not simply serve as a record of
the past, but precisely registers the force of an experience” (‘Recapturing the Past:
Introduction’, in Cathy Caruth, ed., Trauma: Explorations in Memory (Baltimore, MD:
63 Jeffrey C. Alexander, ‘Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma’, in Jeffrey C. Alex-
ander et. al, eds, Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity (Berkeley, CA: University of
64 Ron Eyerman, ‘Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American
Identity’, in Jeffrey C. Alexander et. al, eds, Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity
event and stress the importance of human perception.

According to traditional trauma theory, after a period of repression the traumatised subject relives the repressed event repeatedly in an often involuntary fashion and if this is not accompanied by a gradual coming to terms, the subject can become haunted by the memory while also being “stuck in it”. 65 Until the trauma is dealt with, for the victims it is still part of their present, for “[o]ur memory repeats to us what we haven’t yet come to terms with.” 66 LaCapra labels this a collapse of the “distinctions between then and now”, in which subjects involuntary focus too much on the past. This can seriously impede their “future possibilities”. 67

Although the use of the label cultural trauma is useful in a wider cultural context in that it acknowledges the gravity of the impact of an event – an acknowledgment which is often crucial for members of the cultural group concerned – it is also problematic in that it uses an individual, therapeutic framework for the theoretical analysis of a collective. The critical asides with regard to the application of trauma theory to the collective that I make throughout this dissertation should not be read as an outright rejection of the applicability of the concept of cultural trauma, or a denial of the gravity of the Famine and its after-effects. While I am critical of any facile application of such terms, or of considering the notion of communal trauma as an all explanatory solution to frictions and impossibilities in assigning meaning, on some levels theories of cultural trauma and their emphasis on repression and (narrative) unrepresentability do have their strong points. As this study will demonstrate, it is, in fact, plausible to assign the label of cultural trauma to some literary memories of the Famine. In contrast, other Famine memories, which are sometimes part of the same work of fiction, cannot be labelled as such.

I aim to demonstrate the plurality and nuanced nature of literary responses to the Famine, not just in different works of fiction, but also on different levels within a single narrative. Famine memory does not carry the same meaning in every literary context. To demonstrate this, I will apply concepts taken from cultural trauma theory to various aspects of the works of Famine fiction: I will investigate whether we can adopt the label of cultural trauma in connection to the levels of the different figurat-

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ive tropes which form the topic of each of the chapters, as well as to the narrative treatment of time, displacement and memory. In this manner, this study will also be an exploration of the possibilities and limits of the application of a cultural trauma framework. Moreover, it will demonstrate that the different textual and mnemonic meanings ascribed to the Famine do not always align; at times they even clash.

The notion of latency underscores that trauma processing is marked by an absence; in this sense, being traumatised is as much characterised by emphatic repetition as by repression of the supposedly traumatic event or period. Frawley inquires “how is trauma expressed? And what holds sway; silence, or compulsive acting out?”.

Moreover, she questions whether there is a hierarchy in potentially traumatic events, and whether there is a sliding scale of trauma whereby we can say how events fit in together? [...] We feel uncomfortable, I think, in this arena, and for good reason, since it marks the beginning of a descent into petulant and ultimately unprovable assertions that are not at all useful in advancing our understanding of trauma or, more broadly, of the past and historical contexts.

Although the critical note in this passage is there for legitimate reasons and should not be glossed over, I feel that there is some sense in the idea of trauma as a “sliding scale”; not because it will make trauma more measurable (like Frawley, I do not believe it can be measured objectively), but at least to provide a more suitable vocabulary to discuss (extremely) disruptive events, and to potentially disconnect the notion of communal trauma from too sweeping and generalising terms. As Cormac Ó Gráda argues, while the notion of cultural trauma supposes that an event has equal effect on and is interpreted in a similar manner by all members of a community, it, in fact, is very difficult to think of a communal event that caused the same (traumatic) reaction for all members of a community in question. Indeed, in the Irish case, the issue is that “the famine did not inflict ‘common injuries’ at the time, never mind across the generations”.

When discussing nostalgia, recollection and the repression of memory, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer point out that “[t]raumatic dissociation [...] is an extreme form of the splitting that characterizes ambivalent nostal-

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69 Ibid., 8.
Through the inclusion of the phrase “an extreme form”, Hirsch and Spitzer implicitly acknowledge that there are degrees in regarding the disruptiveness (and potential ‘traumatic’ nature) of the memory of an event. “[T]raumatic dissociation” and stasis can be seen as only the far end of the spectrum of remembrance, and not the only form such negative remembrance can take.\(^{72}\) In this respect, Gene Ray’s concept of the “traumatic sublime” is useful. The traumatic sublime implies a reorientation of the aesthetic notion of the sublime; it becomes “a category of transition” through which a traumatic event can be productively opened up to processing.\(^{73}\) “The little trauma of sublime art” can be seen as a mnemonic trace of “the real trauma of the historical referent”, which is distinguished from the traumatic event itself in its affect and duration: “we are not silenced by the hit [of the sublime] [...] so intractably” and “are better able to answer the call to testify to the hit, by narrating it and sharing it with others”.\(^{74}\)

Because the term traumatic sublime comes with an awareness of the incomplete nature of artistic recollection – as a mnemonic trace, it can never represent the historic event or period fully –, it also leaves an opening for multiple interpretations of that event. In that sense, the category of the traumatic sublime keeps the event or period open to continual reconsideration and public debate and processing. Although Ray’s theory is created with post-1945 art in mind, his ideas can also be applied to the recollection of the Famine in late nineteenth-century works of fiction, for they share a common manner of exploring the tensions between trauma, sublime, presence, absence and artistic representation. In viewing representations of (potentially) traumatic events in this manner, I will consider such depictions as part of a spectrum of possible responses. While this in no way diminishes the impact of the event itself, it does aid in disconnecting later representations of such events from generalising and limiting interpretations. In the chapters to follow, I will engage with the notions of trauma and the traumatic sublime, in order to decide whether works of Famine fiction from the period 1871–91 do or do not create opportunities for the reconsideration of the impact of Famine memory on literary


\(^{72}\) Ibid.

\(^{73}\) Ray, Terror and the Sublime, 5, 9.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 9, 11.
constructions of Irishness.
Chapter 2

Land, Landscape and (re)Constructions of Irishness in Famine Fiction

No man loves his own land more than the man born on the soil of Erin. No man clings more to the rocks and mountains, to the lakes and glens, to the ruins and castles of his native land than the Irishman. No one has the associations of every foot of it more interwoven with every fibre of his heart than the warm-hearted peasant of Munster or Connaught, of Ulster or Leinster. Why then do they so readily, so eagerly seek their new homes?1

The epigraph to this chapter was originally published in the popular American magazine McGee’s Illustrated Weekly in 1880, and describes the strong sense of connection the Irish felt with their native landscape. Indeed, as for example Julia M. Wright has asserted, the landscape of Ireland has “long been central to articulations of Irish nationality”.2 Whether functioning as celebrations of the beauty of Ireland, as sites of testimony to colonial subjugation or as spaces embodying the possibility of cultural reconstruction, representations of Ireland’s natural environment have played an important role in constructions of Irish cultural identity. During the Romantic era, in European nationalisms representations of the landscape

2 Julia M. Wright, Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), ix.
were considered vital to formulations of national character.\textsuperscript{3} Equally, the connection between the people and their environment based upon the ideas of eighteenth-century thinkers such as J. G. Herder were taken up in Ireland. The concept of “folk”, in which “the land is ‘rural’ and the people are fundamentally attached to it”, became “the core of the nation’s true identity”. As such, land and landscape were also vital elements to a specific Irish romantic nationalism and identity.\textsuperscript{4}

\`Una Ní Bhroiméil and Glenn Hooper argue that in nineteenth-century Ireland “land [...] is contested terrain”. Despite the unsettled nature of the concept of ‘land’, “the symbolism of land and landscape” functioned as “key determinants” for articulations of national character and identity” in the nineteenth century as well.\textsuperscript{5} The preoccupation with the landscape was also expressed in Irish literature.\textsuperscript{6} As Heidi Hansson explains, “most Irish literature from the earliest times up until today, is particularly preoccupied with ‘place as an unseverable aspect of self’”.\textsuperscript{7} Taking a broader approach to the Romantic period and its literature, Wright argues for two Romantic eras: the first from roughly 1790 to 1829 and the second from 1830 to the middle of the century, or even the 1860s. This later era is marked by “the rise of romantic nationalism in the affective rooting of national identity to

\textsuperscript{3} In his definition of ‘nationalism’ Joep Leerssen underscores the geographic dimension of the concept, as he states that as a political ideology, nationalism is a territorial and socio-political concept, in which “the most natural and organic division of human-kind into states runs along ‘national’ (cultural, linguistic, ethnic) lines, so that ideally there is a seamless overlap between the outlines of the state and of its constituent nation”. See \emph{National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History} (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 14. Lloyd Kramer notes that “[n]ationhood can scarcely be imagined without reference to specific lands” and adds that nineteenth-century romantic nationalism had a “fascination with nature and landscape”. He makes these comments in the context of both European and American nationalisms. See \emph{Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775} (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 57.

\textsuperscript{4} Wright, \emph{Representing the National Landscape}, xviii, x–xi. Leerssen says that, following Herder, a nation’s culture and sense of identity were no longer based upon more abstract, universal notions, but came to be seen as a manifestation of its “true, fundamental identity, something that comes from below, from the lower classes, from folklore, rustic traditions and popular customs” (\emph{National Thought in Europe}, 100–101).

\textsuperscript{5} \`Una Ní Bhroiméil and Glenn Hooper, ‘Introduction’, in \`Una Ní Bhroiméil and Glenn Hooper, eds, \emph{Land and Landscape in Nineteenth-Century Ireland} (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), 9–12: 9. Wright, \emph{Representing the National Landscape}, xvii.

\textsuperscript{6} Oona Frawley, \emph{Irish Pastoral: Nostalgia and Twentieth-Century Irish Literature} (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), 1. Wright, \emph{Representing the National Landscape}, x.

\textsuperscript{7} Heidi Hansson (quote taken from John Wilson Foster), \emph{Emily Lawless 1845–1913: Writing the Interspace} (Cork: Cork University Press, 2007), 55.
the land”, and is characterised by a greater stress on the concept of land as rural. Wright’s periodisation also includes the Great Famine, which Oona Frawley has argued meant “the literal failure of the pastoral” in both Irish literature and reality.

Indeed, for some, the Famine demonstrated that the Irish soil and its manner of tillage meant certain disaster; assistant to the Treasury Charles Trevelyan argued in *The Irish Crisis* (1848) that reliance on the potato was one of the biggest ills of Ireland, as it had led to a situation where three times as many people could be sustained on the same plot of land as, for instance, would have been the case with grain. Referring to the dangers of overreliance on a single crop, Trevelyan asked “what hope is there for a nation which lives on potatoes?” For Trevelyan and those sharing his Malthusian approach, the event would serve as a providential means to “alleviate overpopulation”. For others, including Charles Stewart Parnell, it showed that while the soil of Ireland could sustain its people under normal conditions, British colonial malpractice had impeded the land’s potential. In both views, however, the Famine meant the failure of the land. Nevertheless, after the Famine period, the preoccupation with the land remained an important part of Irish self-constructions and became a crucial element in Irish politics.

Not just the Famine, but also emigration and later societal crises such as the Land Wars and the agricultural crisis of the late 1870s and 1880s, greatly affected Ireland’s landscape and people. Therefore, the idyllic representation found in romantic articulations of the landscape and how it helped to give shape to a version of Irishness faced an inevitable reconsid-

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8 Wright, *Representing the National Landscape*, xxvii.
12 Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘The Irish Land Question’, *The North American Review* 130/281 (Apr. 1880), 388–406: 388–9. A quote from Parnell’s article has been included in this chapter as the epigraph to Section 1.2.2.
13 In *Irish Pastoral* Frawley argues that after the Famine, pastoral imagery quickly became part of “the rhetoric of the nation”. Many Irish held the British government responsible for the Famine, or at least for aggravating its effects by failing to act accordingly. After the Famine, existing rifts between urbanised and modernised England and rural and traditional Ireland deepened, and the land became both a symbol for Ireland and a justification for nationalist and separatist politics. In this manner, it continued to function as an important pillar of Irish self-identification (45–6).
In this process, Irish people around the globe looked to the past, and the landscape of the past, to (re)construct their Irish identity. Consequently, the past landscape was considered “the site of the ‘real’ Ireland” and became a paradoxical “element of stability” for Irishness.

As the quote from McGee’s cited above illustrates, a sense of environmental relatedness was not only expressed with regard to the Irish in Ireland, but was also felt by those in diaspora. Furthermore, pertaining to this newspaper article, and, most importantly in the context of the present study, with regard to literature, this sentiment can also be extended well beyond the Romantic period. Marguerite Corporaal has demonstrated that several Irish-diasporic works of fiction written between 1860 and 1875 engage with the Irish landscape as vital to constructions of self.

Furthermore, the corpus of Famine fiction central to this study also contains many articulations of the bond between the Irish and the Irish land and landscape. My study will demonstrate the different ways in which works of Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891 formulate the role of the land and landscape of Ireland in Irish identity formation. Moreover, it will also show how these works of fiction give shape to the inevitable reconsideration of this imagery ushered in by the Famine and later similar times of hardship.

While scholars such as Wright, Frawley, Corporaal and Hansson have acknowledged that representations of the landscape have for centuries played a decisive role in Irish fiction and considerations of Irish cultural identity, only few have written extensively about fictional representations of the Irish landscape as identity markers in the context of the narrative memory of the Great Famine.

Not just this chapter, but this dissertation

as a whole will attempt to fill this lacuna. In the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), the landscape is represented through the use of established aesthetic techniques and devices. Several different landscape modes are used frequently: the leisurely pastoral, the work-oriented georgic, the sublime and the picturesque modes of representing nature all feature. These different aesthetic modes have critical and ideological implications as well. Throughout this dissertation, I will demonstrate that in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), these modes are linked to political motives and cultural identities. As the Famine aggravated colonial tensions, these modes were used to engage critically with the impact and memory of the Famine on literary formulations of Irishness and Irish nationality. I will explain these modes and their ideological potential in more detail in the section on aesthetic modes below.

In their representations of the Irish landscape, Irish and Irish-diasporic writers from the period 1871–91 often employed imagery reminiscent of the Great Famine. As this chapter will show, many authors who depict tales set during later hardships – the reader can think of William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* (1882) which is set between the 1840s and early 1880s, or Margaret Dixon McDougall’s *The Days of a Life* (1883) which takes place during the Land War period – create mnemonic links between later events such as the smaller famine of the late 1870s and the Land War on the one hand, and the Famine on the other. I will show throughout this dissertation that there is an interconnectedness between representations of the landscape and other clusters of imagery vital to Famine memory and to literary constructions of Irishness; this indicates that representations of the landscape do not just form empty background sceneries to the narrative’s plot. Rather, they actively contribute to that plot and by extension to the constructions of cultural identity and memory that are expressed in these works of fiction.

In her recent study of Irish Romantic representations of the landscape, Wright makes a clear distinction between different types of landscape descriptions to explore the nature and function of these representations in their cultural and literary contexts. On the one hand, she uses the category of the landscape and its economic viability according to which the worth of the land is key to claims of sovereignty. On the other, she considers de-
pictions in which the landscape is founded on cultural aspects and in that manner plays a seminal role in formulations of culture and identity. This form of imagery is often found in romantic nationalism; in it, the landscape functions as a symbol for cultural identity “in which the people are bound to the land as an article of national faith”. In the present study I will also maintain a clear distinction between different types of landscape representations. Throughout this chapter I will use the terms land and landscape, which are briefly discussed by Ni Bhroíméil and Hooper. While they discuss the rural landscape, here, the terms will be applied to a larger understanding of landscape. ‘Landscape’, then, refers to the natural environment’s consideration as aesthetic, as a place for aesthetic contemplation. This brings to mind depictions of Irish spaces as locations for pastoral leisure, but also as rugged and beautiful locations, consisting of valleys “jewel-paved with emerald and diamond and azure”, surrounded by sloping hills and imposing mountain ranges where water and sky are as “one magnificent expanse of glory”. The term ‘land’, in my definition, points to the representation of the environment as functional, as a space of human rural labour and sustenance; a space (that should be) able to support its inhabitants. Moreover, in the context of the current study, it also refers to an image often encountered in Irish and Irish-diasporic Famine fiction: public works.

American correspondent James Redpath remarked during the Land War that “[t]he best lands, in nearly every county, have been leased to Scotch and English graziers.” Redpath directly linked this development to the Famine, and claimed that when poor Irish peasants were starving, “the

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18 Wright, Representing the National Landscape, ix–xxxii (quote on xi). While such formulations were crucial to romantic nationalism, they were not invented in the period. Frawley notes that during the time of the English plantations in Ireland (late-sixteenth, early-seventeenth century), planters remarked upon the connection between the Irishman and the soil, seeing parallels between the supposed uncultivated state of the land and people of Ireland. During the rise of romantic nationalism, this idea of the land and the nation as unspoilt came to be treated as a marker of national pride, and “wildness in landscape comes to be perceived as a sign of good government”. See Irish Pastoral, 26, 37.

19 Ni Broíméil and Hooper use these terms in their introduction to Land and Landscape in Nineteenth-Century Ireland. While they do not provide definitions for these terms, it seems that in their view ‘land’ refers to the rural, working environment, while landscape refers to a more aesthetic and contemplative concept, which is also tied to the rural landscape.

Landlords of the West answered [their] piteous moans by sending processes of ejectment to turn them out into the roadside or the poorhouse to die, and by hiring crow-bar brigades to pull down the roof that had sheltered the gasping people. As fast as the homeless peasants died or were driven into exile their little farms were rented out to British graziers.21 The Famine predominantly had its impact on the land: it decimated the rural labouring class and catalysed transformations in Irish agricultural society, such as the transition from small-scale agriculture to large-scale pasture and cattle grazing, signalled by Redpath.22 In this chapter, I will analyse how the works of narrative fiction included in this research deal with the impact of the Famine on the land and landscape, demonstrating that these works of fiction treat the Famine’s impact on both differently. Additionally, I will consider what such transformations can signify for post-Famine reconsiderations of Irish identity that were founded on an environmental relatedness to a radically changed rural Ireland.

2.1 Aesthetic Modes

Literary representations of the land and landscape of Ireland in this study’s corpus of fiction are generally infused with the sublime, the picturesque, the pastoral and the georgic. The sublime refers to that which because of sheer size (both in the literal and figurative sense) cannot be grasped or understood. In broad terms, whenever experience slips out of conventional understanding, whenever the power of an object or event is such that words fail and points of comparison disappear, then we resort to the feeling of the sublime. As such, the sublime marks the limits of reason and expression together with a sense of what might lie beyond these limits.23 The sublime points to “that within representation which nonetheless exceeds the possibility of representation”.24 David Lloyd explains the sublime by emphasising disconnection. He sees it as “the overpowering of the subject and the dissolution of the boundaries of the self in the throes of powerful

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22 In the 1870s, livestock already counted for as much as 75 per cent of the total output of Irish agriculture. Mary E. Daly, Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800 (Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1981), 27. See also L. Perry Curtis, Jr, The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845–1910 (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), 57–8.
24 Milbank quoted in Shaw, Sublime, 4.
emotions or representations”, thereby defining the sublime as a rhetorical rather than aesthetic concept. In their overpowering and unrepresentational sense, the Great Famine, its memory, its impact on human lives and the broad demographic and social scale on which it took place, can also be seen as ‘sublime’. In the context of this chapter’s argument about the impact of the Famine on representations of land, landscape, and literary formulations of Irishness, the sublime as an aesthetic device only has limited implications. Therefore, while the sublime will recur as a rhetorical concept throughout this dissertation, its application here will be limited.

The picturesque, an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reaction against the rationalising spirit of the Enlightenment, can be characterised by a romantic predisposition towards “rough and irregular scenes of nature”. Eamonn Slater has argued that many deliberately created picturesque spaces could be found on the estates of the upper classes in Ireland. Replacing the Irish natural landscape, these picturesque estates came to stand as visual proof of British colonial subjugation. Consequently, elements such as specific types of trees which were placed on the estates to provide a picturesque atmosphere were sometimes the target of agrarian violence. At the same time, picturesque ruins dating back to pre-colonial Irish culture could illustrate the prolonged presence of an ancient Irish culture, somehow resistant to British domination. In this manner, the picturesque demonstrated the conflicting forces at work in the Irish time-space, exemplifying both the ancient grandeur of Irish culture and its suppression by colonial domination.

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26 Lloyd speaks of the “indigent sublime” in the context of the representations of Famine victimhood. His sublime “is not so much a limit posed by the numerical excess of famine deaths, by the ‘mathematical sublime’ of literally countless victims, but the limit that emerges at the very point where the human ceases to exist for the observer as a subject that can be recognized as such.” It is to this form of the unrepresentable in representation that I understand the term “indigent sublime.” ‘Indigent Sublime’, 162, 156. For a discussion of the narrative unrepresentability of the Famine, see Christopher Morash, ‘An Afterword on Silence’, in George Cusack and Sarah Goss, eds, *Hungry Words: Images of Famine in the Irish Canon* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 300–308.
29 Frawley, *Irish Pastoral*, 43.
anti-colonial and nationalist sentiment, the picturesque will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The pastoral is commonly seen as a counterweight to the sublime, as it shows the known and demarcated landscape, the landscape of leisure and happiness. The pastoral mode consists of various elements, and among the most prominent we find the image of the Golden Age/Arcadia, innocence, nostalgia and a stress on otium. The pastoral mode describes an ideal way of life and is concerned with a balance between man and nature, which Bernard de Fontenelle (1657–1757) described as “Cheapness of their [the shepherds’] Happiness.” One of the mode’s central mechanisms is a form of escapism: it can function “as a breathing spell from the fever and anguish of being”. The pastoral typically implies a sense of loss, for an idyllic landscape that once was, but is no more or perhaps – as a transhistorical absence – never even existed. It has a “psychological root,” and “[t]he bucolic dream has no other reality than that of imagination and art.”

In this sense, a mnemonic and potentially self-referential image of a pre-Famine pastoral landscape of Ireland could function as a way of “rerouting” to bypass the island’s recent disruptive history. Simultaneously, it bears an elegiac testimony to the destructive force of the Famine for it reaches to an idyllic world which was now no longer accessible. Ní Bhroiméil and Hooper stress that representations of landscape can be (implicitly) subversive, in that “messages and agendas are obscured and secreted behind

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33 Frawley, *Irish Pastoral*, 39, 55. The term ‘transhistorical absence’ was coined by Dominick LaCapra in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). It stands in contrast to what LaCapra labels a “historical loss”: while the loss concerns a real event, which at a point in time was lost, the absence was never present, and its absence is therefore without a historical point in time, is transhistorical.
34 Poggioli, ‘Pastorals of Innocence and Happiness’, 98.
35 Seamus Deane argues that while the Famine weakened Ireland’s claim to a distinct, traditional and rural culture, it at the same time meant “an intensification of the claim to Irish difference”. After the Famine, and especially during the Celtic Revival, the stressing of this “cultural exceptionalism” vis-à-vis the colonial ruler happened by “rerouting” it “through legend rather than history”. *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 50–1.
a veil of popular imagery both verbal and visual”, and their critiques con sequences are “delivered to a reading and seeing public when they least expect it”. Additionally, several critics have “found in pastoral a means of rearticulating, rather than abandoning worldly concerns”.

“[P]astorals written under the rule of colonial government” for example, are often not only idealisations of a culture lost under colonial rule, but also critiques of that rule itself. Oona Frawley adds that “[p]astoral forms necessarily imply a critique, since creating an ideal world highlights the rupture of ideals in some present world.” In the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), connections between representations of the landscape on the one hand and contemporary concerns and political ideologies on the other are frequently expressed, both explicitly and implicitly. What repeatedly comes to the fore is a lamentation of the disappearance of a supposedly once present strong connection between man and his environment. In this sense, the pastoral landscape becomes a postmemonic image with great significance for later generations at home and in diaspora and their traditional sense of self, as well as a heterotopic textual space which simultaneously voices the opportunity to express a sense of loss and a critique on current conditions.

In his concise piece on the pastoral and the georgic, Bruce Graver argues that, traditionally, the georgic and the pastoral were separate genres. Originally, the critical and ideological potential of literary representations of the land was specifically emphasised in the georgic. However, in time the pastoral took over the “realistic” elements of the georgic, and the two became so closely intertwined “as to become almost indistinguishable”. Graver locates this shift in the Romantic era, while Paul J. Alpers places it in the Renaissance period already. Because of this merging of the two modes, when discussing pastoral poetry (from the eighteenth century onwards), Graver prefers to speak of “generic hybrids of pastoral and geor-

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38 Frawley, Irish Pastoral, 4–5.

39 Ibid., 59.

40 Postmemories – which are not lived experiences, but multiply mediated memories – can be just as “immediate” as ‘lived memory’ because of their intellectual or emotional significance for the subject. See Oona Frawley, ‘Toward a Theory of Cultural Memory in an Irish Postcolonial Context’, in Oona Frawley, ed., Memory Ireland: Volume I, History and Modernity (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011, 18–34), 30.
2.1 Aesthetic Modes

In contrast to the general pastoral, the georgic "celebrates the toil of farming" rather than otium. The georgic (re)gained critical and literary attention in the Romantic period because of its stylistic appeal and combination of "natural sympathy" with political implications. It was founded on Virgil’s *Georgics*, a poetic treatment of Italian agriculture, which not only discusses agricultural work, but also focuses on the difficulties the georgic farmer could experience when faced with the hostile forces of nature and the elements. The life and work of the farmer are infused with a strong ideological and didactic capacity, as its natural pleasures and simplicity are considered morally superior to urban wealth. As such, Virgil’s *Georgics* demonstrates that strong and morally just civilisations are built upon agriculture. Consequently, in the georgic, agricultural work is seen “both as the embodiment of permanence and as a foundation of peace and prosperity”. Because of this moral and ideological dimension, the georgic was supposedly the ideal mode to aid in “nation-building activities”.

Equally, working on the land held a central position in Irish constructions of self and nation, and the idea of “an idealized pre-industrialized society [with husbandry at its basis] as an economic utopia” functioned as a pillar for Irish nationalism. Moreover, by foregrounding the georgic nature of Irishness – a traditional sense of community building through a connection with and work on the soil –, the Irish could underscore the counter-colonial opposition which was vital to formulations of their cultural identity and a distinct understanding of Irish nationality in a transnational context, as these differences between Irish and English were played out on both sides of the Atlantic. This dichotomy entailed the following binary oppositions: rural/natural versus urban/industrial, communal/pre-capitalist

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versus individualistic/capitalist and traditional versus modern. As will be demonstrated shortly in the discussion of novels such as William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, Hester Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race* (1889) and James Doran’s *Zanthon* (1891), the fictional lives of the Irish poor can often be seen as microcosmic versions of developments in Irish society on the macrocosmic level. As such, the figures of the tenant farmer and the agricultural labourer and the concept of (agricultural) labour itself attain strong public and political connotations. In this manner, the efforts of the post-Famine Irish and Irish-diasporic community to (re)create their communal self image in literature through natural and rural imagery can be read as a specific preoccupation with the “very essence of the georgic spirit”, rather than just with the more general pastoral mode. To explore this specific orientation, I will treat the pastoral and georgic as two separate modes.

2.2 Landscape and Future

2.2.1 Landscape: Tensions and Disconnections

As Oona Frawley has demonstrated, in Ireland the tradition of celebrating the Irish landscape goes back to the days of early lyric and hermit poetry. Additionally, in various works of Irish-diasporic prose and poetry of the nineteenth century Ireland and its landscape were honoured in a nostalgic manner. The celebratory approach found in fiction lives on after the occurrence of the Great Famine, but a complication of this tone also features in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91). In William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* (1882), for example, the

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49 Irish-American texts written during the first four or five decades after the Famine, also deal with this dichotomy of the rural (Irish) versus the urban (Anglo-Saxon Americans). In much romantic didactic fiction, written by for example Mary Anne Sadlier, John McElgun and Henry F. Keenan, the urban Anglo-Saxon/American environment is represented as a hotbed of corruption and sin, and the Irish immigrant is urged to uphold traditional Irish virtues, directly linked to notions of rurality and (Catholic) religion. In texts written around the turn of the twentieth century, when the Irish were already becoming more integrated members of American society, such stark distinctions no longer feature as prominently, or are even actively subverted, and Irish-Americans are often depicted as urban dwellers. See for example James W. Sullivan’s *Tenement Tales of New York* (New York: Henry Holt, 1895).


51 For scholarship on Irish-American literature, see Fanning’s work. See also Corporaal’s ‘Golden Hills’. 
tension between human suffering and the idyllic landscape of Ireland is illustrated by the experiences of the eponymous protagonist. Pat’s native landscape is described as an idyllic space, a typical pastoral location of “innocence and childhood”:

It was beautiful to see the face of the country, with the glow of the red, rising sun, stamping all things it shone upon with the hues of burnished gold. The large elms and oak that rose high above Mr. Connolly’s residence seemed, in their gaunt rigidness, like giant devotees lifting up their bare limbs in silent adoration of Him who has diffused this splendour so equally on all things. The hedgerows and bushes were just sending forth from their wombs their tiny buds to begin again creation’s yearly round, indicating the presence of joyous spring. The song of the vigilant thrush, perched high upon a neighbouring branch, cheering on his mate in her laborious task, blended with the pure light air of morning, and called up to the weary human heart thoughts of innocence and childhood.52

However, these beautiful traits of the Irish landscape go completely unheeded by starving Irish labourer Pat: “The eye of Uncle Pat did not catch these sublime pictures as he strode away across the fields in the direction of the drainage works, where he expected employment.”53 Moreover, this description follows immediately after the opening epigraph of the chapter which is a quote from the famous poem ‘The Famine Year’ by ‘Speranza’ (Lady Wilde), published in the Nation in 1847. By suggesting an analogy between Pat’s plight and Speranza’s poem, the narrative draws links between Irish hardships during the Famine and the Land War era on the structural level and demonstrates that the Irish labourer’s disconnection from his landscape is a long-existing condition.

In Hester Sigerson’s A Ruined Race (1889), the bond between the poor Irishman and his environment is also complicated. On a beautiful night, “[t]he moon stood bright and beautiful in the heavens, pouring her flood of liquid crystal upon hill and tree and river the rich sweet smell of the hawthorn filled the air, and the fairy laughter of the little brook close by was the only sound which broke the stillness of the night.”54 However,

52 William C. Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin; Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1882), 267.
53 Ibid., 267. Drainage works were constructed to drain the notoriously wet Irish soil, thereby alleviating present crop failures and preventing future ones.
54 Hester Sigerson, A Ruined Race; Or the Last Macmanus of Drumroosk (London:
when the protagonist, Dan Macmanus, who lost his wife, child, land and home during the Famine and has no future prospects, sees the beauty of the landscape, he no longer feels part of it. Dan is as a liminal being, as the beauty of his environment confronts him with a sense of disconnection and impending death: “[W]hen he opened his eyes upon the scene”, Dan doubts if “he were still in the flesh, or if, mishap, he had already passed the golden gate”. 55

In The Lord of Dundonald (1889) by Irish-American author Thomas Sherlock, this sense of alienation is also mentioned repeatedly. Today, Sherlock is a relatively unknown author and virtually no biographical information exists; he also appears to have written a biography of Charles Stewart Parnell which came out in 1881. 56 The narrative is set during the Land War era, and the narrator draws many links between the conditions of the Irish poor during the early 1880s and the Great Famine, arguing that their deprivations during the 1880s are a direct result of the Famine. For example, the fact that many of the dwellings of the rural poor are in ruins is attributed to “the terrible depopulation which had taken place after the famine of ’47, and the wholesale evictions that followed”. 57 The narrative details how the estranged recluse landlord Garrett Dalton again comes to his senses after re-establishing contact with his wife and daughter, a change which leads to his transformation into an ideal landlord. Dalton looks upon the lands surrounding his estate:

Far off, bounding the horizon, the Dublin mountains, usually as sombre and solemn of aspect, looked gay and glad under the glamer [sic] of a Summer sun. The fields between – some in robe of vivid green, and some yellow with ripening corn – seemed to him to be smiling in happy-heartedness. [...] The busy little birds hopping about among the branches of the trees of his own uncared for lawn, or flying

Ward and Downey, 1889), 230.
55 Ibid., 230.
56 The National Library of Ireland (Dublin) and the Library of Congress (Washington DC) both have copies of Thomas Sherlock’s The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell: With Account of his Ancestry, with Appendix, Containing most Interesting Details of C. S. Parnell’s Early Life, and of the Parnell, Stewart, and Tudor families (Boston, MA: Murphy and McCarthy, 1881).
in graceful curves from spot to spot, twittered and chirped, and
called to each other so blithely and cheerily, that no one could dream
they had ever known sorrow. All nature was radiant and glad.\(^{58}\)

Dalton cannot bear to look upon the beautiful scenery as he is deeply
anguished by his seclusion and separation from his wife and daughter.
Moreover, the narrator contrasts these natural riches with the plight of
the Irish rural poor by stating that the as yet grief-stricken Dalton does
not realise that the world must look vastly different for his tenantry who
are concerned with trying to survive a famine. Directly after this idyllic
description, the narrator states that “there were wretches not far off who
knew not where to lay their heads that night, and other wretches who
would have sold themselves into slavery for one meal of food”.\(^{59}\)

The effect of the narrative juxtaposition of landscape versus human suf-
ferring is striking. By suggesting this contrast, these narratives exacerbate
Dan Macmanus’, Pat M’Mahon’s and the Dalton tenantry’s hardships,
demonstrating how out of kilter they are with their native surroundings; it
is as if these characters no longer have a place there. This lack of identific-
atation between landscape and self is antithetical to traditional conceptions
of Irishness. Furthermore, while Dan is the focaliser of the passage from \textit{A
Ruined Race} cited above, his awareness of his own liminal position in the
landscape underscores the disconnection. While Pat frequently functions
as the focaliser, the descriptions of his beautiful native surroundings are
focalised externally. This is also the case for the Dundonald tenantry, as
we experience the landscape through their landlord’s eyes. In this man-
ner, the latter two narratives structurally underscore the experiential gap
between landscape and the Irish labouring class, otherwise vital elements
to a post-Herderian concept of Irish cultural identity.\(^{60}\)

In Irish-American author James Doran’s \textit{Zanthon} (1891), the poor Ir-
ish tenants and labourers have become equally disconnected from their
former landscapes. In this novel, set during and after the Famine, pastoral
and picturesque landscapes are left practically undisturbed. For example,
landlord Zerlin Rigrasp’s estate, created along explicitly picturesque lines,
is described as follows:

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 41/48 (23 Nov. 1889).
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 41/48 (23 Nov. 1889).
\(^{60}\) Leerssen, \textit{National Thought in Europe}, 100.
Every device known to Rigrasp and his employes [sic] in the decoration of grounds, became subservient to his designs.

The glade, the grotto, the sloping esplanade, an open park, woods, shrubberies, flower knots, mammoth trees, hills, valleys, and a great number of other attractive features appeared in appropriate places, besides a beautiful promenade by the winding river, where during summer evenings the glory of paradise could be realized, so exquisite did everything appear in heaven and on earth.\(^{61}\)

Additionally, as she walks to the public works, May, the protagonist’s sister, encounters a beautiful pastoral space, which is described as “the cultivated land of the peasantry, [which] stretched into the valley of a large river flowing into the sea. This valley contained rich and beautiful land, owned by numbers of the aristocracy, and, seen from a distance, resembled a vast garden.”\(^{62}\) The narrative frequently comments upon the great differences between rich and poor in Ireland and contrasts the idyllic valley and other undisturbed beautiful landscapes with the environment and living circumstances of the Irish poor. A contemporary admirer of the novel also noticed the stark differences between the “wolfish desperation of the poor” on the one hand, and “the walls and towers of ancient aristocracy, [where] no famine enters – all is good cheer and comfort”, on the other.\(^{63}\) As May looks upon the valley, she realises the contrast between her family’s plight and the idyll found in the valley: “Why was there such a difference between them and her poor folks? […] Who was responsible for the cruelty perpetrated on the poor? This could not be God. It must be man. Standing here on a clear eminence, with extreme luxury on the one hand and extreme destitution on the other, her sensitive nature was shocked at the contrast.”\(^{64}\) Shortly after, this contrast is played out further, as May enters a town and is confronted with


\(^{62}\) Ibid., 92.


\(^{64}\) Doran, *Zanthon*, 94.
[d]istressed humanity in almost all forms known since the creation of the first man [...] Blind men led by dogs; crippled, idiots, deranged persons, the maimed; the chronic drunkard, penniless and clothed in tatters; peddlers without pack and tinkers without a budget; large families surrounding parents standing motionless in the streets, not knowing what to do. There was no difficulty in finding the soup yard.65

Later, the narrator implies that the Famine has further deepened the rifts within society: “[w]hile starvation brought hundreds to premature graves, the Boggleton’s [a nouveau riche family], secure within the castle walls, enjoyed the good things of the earth in abundance.”66 In Zanthon, all beautiful landscapes are inhabited and owned by the upper classes. Such spots of leisure are no longer part of the natural Irish landscape. The vast fertile “garden” and the leisurely estates have become heterotopic spaces which function as visible markers of foreign domination of the Irish landscape and social inequality, and serve as what Slater would call “embodied ideolog[ies]” of colonial rule.67

In their treatments of the landscape, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, A Ruined Race, The Lord of Dundonald and Zanthon show that the traditional ties between the rural Irishman and his haunts are ruptured during and after the Famine. The essential traits of the “intimate environmental relatedness” commonly associated with the pastoral are disturbed.68 The bond between the human subject and his or her environment is exposed as a cultural construct that in times of great strain can be broken and will not (easily) be fixed, as the Irish poor cannot find solace in Ireland’s natural riches anymore. Consequently, in all four narratives the suffering of the Irish poor is attributed to an imposed colonial oppressive system in which land-grabbing, exploitation and corruption are daily features, illustrating that the present condition of Ireland and its poor inhabitants is in fact an unnatural state.

The tension between human suffering and natural beauty is represented on another level: in the aestheticisation of the landscape through its desolation. As Spurgeon Thompson remarks, after the Famine, “[t]he landscape, because depopulated, could become picturesque.”69 The aware-

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65 Ibid., 95–6.
66 Ibid., 172.
68 Gifford, Pastoral, 18.
69 Spurgeon Thompson, ‘Famine Travel: Irish Tourism from the Great Famine to
ness of the ambivalent picturesque qualities of Ireland was acknowledged in other forms of writing as well. Travel book authors who wrote about Ireland between 1800 and 1850, commented frequently upon this ambiguity. In the section “Picturesque Scenery” of his 1852 *Ireland as I Saw it*, American traveller William S. Balch lauds the “wonderful and sublime” aspects of the Irish scenery as opposed to its “solemn and gloomy silence, the waste and desolation of time”. Balch then relates this to the Famine, as he voices his compassion for the “thousands starv[ing] amid rags and filth”, and spiritedly deplores the “wrongs, and outrages, and brutality of man towards his brother; the poverty, ignorance, and degradation which revel amid such natural splendour and profuse benevolence, the excessive jar of human wretchedness, which grates hatefully upon the ear, where so much poetry mingles in all the works of God!” Balch’s writings can be placed within a larger framework, as William H. A. Williams argues that “the contrast between the country’s natural splendour and its human poverty” was a dominant theme in much travel writing about Ireland. Additionally, it was frequently acknowledged that the Famine had opened up the island to tourists, and that Famine-era clearances and depopulation had aided the larger project of making Ireland more picturesque. By 1850, “picturesque” had become one of the most important though uncomfortable catch phrases to describe the Irish landscape and to stimulate tourism.

Similarly, many works of Famine fiction from the period 1871–91 place emphasis on the desolation perceived in the post-Famine picturesque landscape. There is a distinction between works that consider the desolate nature of the landscape as a direct corollary of the Famine, and those that consider it to be an integral element of the Irish landscape, predating the Famine period. *Hurrish* (1886) by Irish upper-class Protestant writer Emily Lawless belongs to the latter category, as the region on which the narrative focuses – the Burren – is described as a desolate and sublime

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72 Thompson, ‘Famine Travel’, 164, 168.

73 Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix also contain an overview of representations of the causes of the aestheticisation through desolation of the Irish landscape.
rocky and rugged region, of which the general impression [...] is that of nakedness personified – not comparative, but absolute. The rocks are not scattered over the surface, as in other stony tracts, but the whole surface is rock. They are not hills, in fact, but skeletons – rain-worn, time-worn, wind-worn – starvation made visible, and embodied in the landscape.\(^{74}\)

The Burren landscape is only sparsely flecked with fertile pastoral spots such as Hurrish’s “little fertile oasis”.\(^{75}\) Correspondingly, in Irish author Rosa Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’ (1891) the island of Inishbofin is described as an inherently desolate “picturesque wilderness”, of which “the greater part [...] is barren bog and rock”.\(^{76}\) Generally speaking, works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) consider the desolation of the Irish landscape as a direct result of the Famine, and in their formulation of this development, describe the transformation of the environment from a space for human labour into a depopulated aesthetic space. I will return to the desolation of Ireland in this chapter’s section on land to further illustrate this point.

### 2.2.2 Landscape: Continued Connections

In the previous section I discussed how Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction formulate the disruptive effects of the Famine and later hardships on the bond between man and landscape. More broadly speaking, however, a regenerative approach dominates in these works of fiction. Lengthy and numerous descriptions of the beauties of Ireland fill many a page. Descriptions of the landscape as beautiful and markedly Irish are constructed through a few characteristics specifically: a personal affective connection of the Irish onlooker with the landscape, a sense of divine inspiration linked to the sublime, and the attribution of ancient, folkloric traits to the landscape. In these descriptions, in the wake of the Famine and subsequent agricultural crisis, the former glory of the landscape is allowed to return or appears never to have been interrupted.\(^{77}\)

In Richard Baptist O’Brien’s *The D’Altons of Crag* (1879–80), Ireland’s

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\(^{75}\) Ibid., vol. 1, 6.


\(^{77}\) See Tables A.2 and A.3 for a quantitative overview of representations of land and landscape in this study’s literary corpus.
beautiful landscape is a key feature. O’Brien was born in Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary in 1809, and died in Newcastle West, Co. Limerick in 1885. He was an Irish priest, who sometimes also wrote under the pseudonym ‘Father Baptist’. He wrote poetry and several works of fiction, including the Famine-time novels *Ailey Moore* (1859) and *The D’Altons of Crag*. The latter was quite successful as it circulated widely throughout the global Irish community. It was repeatedly published in journals and book form in the US, Canada, Ireland and Australia between 1879 and 1882.\(^{78}\) O’Brien was a supporter of Home Rule and was well-known for his religious and philanthropic work. While he lived most of his life in Ireland, he also spent some years in North America.\(^{79}\) In 1859 O’Brien became Dean of Limerick; he would hold this position until his death. He was a staunch believer and his works of fiction are also marked by an Ultramontane streak.\(^{80}\) According to James Murphy, this can be attributed to O’Brien’s individualism and to the audience he targeted: O’Brien wrote for the Irish and Irish North-American markets which, on the whole, were more open to his staunchly Catholic viewpoints than the British market. This made it less necessary for him to find an accommodating middle ground to voice his religious beliefs.\(^{81}\)

Although written some ten years before the onset of the Celtic Revival, the novel’s approach to the Irish landscape and Irishness is Revivalist in tone, as it includes mythic and folkloristic imagery. Although the term ‘Celtic’ is not a homogenous concept, it does refer to common “classic ideals” of the supposedly “long-term history” of the Celtic race as a cultural group.\(^{82}\) As such, Revivalist notions of what is Celtic focus specific-

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\(^{81}\) James Murphy, *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland 1873–1922* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 55.

ally on “myth and nostalgia” and a “celtic landscape” of which “rurality, wildness, and unspoilt natural beauty” as well as “a strong feeling for nature” are seminal elements.\(^{83}\) Growing out of a distinct awareness of a Celtic otherness, such ideas are commonly attributed to the Revival, but in fact predate the movement, as they can be found in earlier race theory, and formulations of romantic nationalism and Irish nationality already.\(^{84}\)

The opening paragraph of *The D’Altons of Crag* immediately sets its early Revivalist tone:

Some thirty years ago there existed in the lap of Slieve-na-Mon, and a little towards its eastern slope, a crag of great boldness of outline, and at the foot of which, and along its outline for two or three miles, ran “the Glen.” “The Glen” was deep and gloomy, and the low hum of a narrow stream flowing on through its centre made the solemnity of the place more solemn. No more fitting place could be imagined for the location of witches and fairy caves; and, indeed, we remember, some sixty years ago, to have stood, not over courageously, at the “Pookah’s Hole,” where everyone knew, that lively quadruped buried himself, in the intervals of his night rambles around Europe, in the special service of the people who belong to the school of occult science. […] Yet the position was very beautiful. Behind, stretching out its widening arms in the blue background, was Slieve-na-Mon. Before it the hills of Waterford, and, nearly at its feet, the beautiful town of Carrick, while the Suir, as it flowed on to the sea, almost mirrored the house in passing.\(^{85}\)

The environs of the D’Alton residence – belonging to the protagonist landlord family of the novel – are described as beautiful. Furthermore, a supernatural dimension is added by references to figures such as witches,
Chapter 2

fairies and the “Pookah”. Such references recur frequently throughout the novel, as, for example, a witchlike “croonawning” crone, a prophecy, and several other supernatural elements are discussed, together serving to provide local colour and suspense to the plot. Moreover, Crichawn, the focaliser of the passage included above and a loyal servant of the D’Alton household is a semi-mythical creature: he is a misshapen dwarf born under obscure conditions. Supposedly, he was a changeling placed by the ‘good people’ instead of a human child. Crichawn is a liminal figure in another sense: while he has great bodily strength, is virtuous and a true patriot, he is also feared and misunderstood by some of his peers and accordingly is socially marginalised. Crichawn functions as a benevolent Pookah figure, who alone understands the many intrigues central to O’Brien’s tortuous plot, and consequently is able to prevent several evil plans from coming to fruition.

In Rosa Mulholland’s *Marcella Grace* (1891), the Irish landscape is also accredited with a mythic dimension. One of the main characters, Brian Kilmartin – a kind-hearted, patriotic Irish landlord –,

loved every huge boulder that hung out of the mountain over the path he travelled, every diamond-like splash of water that blinked at him as he passed by over bog and over moor, every forlorn tree at some desolate angle of the high-road. The whole company of elves and fairies are as well known and as dear to him as the flag lilies in the river, the fluttering pennons of the reeds, and the grotesque shapes of the bog wood just unearthed out of the reeking peat-moss.

Additionally, in William O’Brien’s *When We Were Boys* (1890), the narrator frequently connects the Irish present and past through an inclusion of mythic imagery: the environs surrounding “Cromwell’s Bridge” – a landscape element used as a metaphor for both colonial subjugation and Irish nationalist resistance which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 – are described in mythic tones reminiscent of the sublime, picturesque

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86 In Irish folklore, the Pookah – or Pooka, or Púca – was a mythic character which often appeared in the shape of a horse, goat, or half-goat (comparable to Shakespeare’s Puck for example). He could be the bearer of good tidings, but could also be the harbinger of doom. O’Brien seems to combine these two sides to the Pookah in the figure of Crichawn. See Patricia Monaghan, *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore* (New York: Fact on File, 2004), 394–5.


88 Ibid., 5/1 (Nov. 1879), 11.

2.2 Landscape and Future

and pastoral. The surrounding crag which is known as the “Lady’s Seat,” is described as follows:

It gives you the exhilaration of being on a mountain top, with the refinement of surroundings fit for a lady’s bower. The bosses of smooth rock underneath and immediately round you are scored with quaint geological writing, and shaded off into all sorts of beautiful softness by the lichens and funghi which have been for ages creeping into their stony hearts enamelling them with flowers and verdure-like vast stone monsters which Queen Titania’s sprites had been decorating with their fairy favours in their sleep.  

By referring to traces of ancient history and Irish folklore in the landscape, writers such as William O’Brien, Rosa Mulholland and William Baptist O’Brien infuse the Irish landscape with myth and a lengthy Irish history, thereby giving shape to Irishness along typical nationalist and Revivalist lines. Simultaneously they justify the claim to the landscape as Irish, because it has been typically Irish since mythical times, since well before the English arrived. These works of Famine fiction turn the beautiful Irish landscape into a lieu de mémoire; a site of great symbolic importance for Irish cultural memory and identity in the present and future. The landscape is turned into a space for radical memory, as these lingering mythical traits could be considered testimonies to the perseverance of ancient Irish culture in nature, and as images to (re)construct an Irish future identity on the basis of an environmental and historical relatedness.

A connection between divinity and the natural landscape had been a long-standing characteristic of Irish literature by the 1870s, as for centuries, many Irish and Irish-diasporic writers had “forged a Christianized pastoral” in which images of the landscape were not only inspired by literature, but mostly by “the spiritual world of God.” In contrast to, for

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91 “Radical memory seeks not for the past it had, but for the past it had not, the desired past; not an actual history but a possible history. It is anti-nostalgic, seeking to bring the past into the present, rather than leave it back there. It deploys the past to challenge the present, to release cultural energies stored in thwarted moments from the past.” Kevin Whelan, ‘Reading the Ruins: The Presence of Absence in the Irish Landscape’, in Howard B. Clarke, et al., eds, *Surveying Ireland’s Past: Multidisciplinary Essays in Honour of Anngrét Simms* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2004), 297–328: 320.

example, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin, The Lord of Dundonald* and *A Ruined Race*, in R. B. O’Brien *The D’Altons of Crag* the bond between the poor Irishman and his natural surroundings is allowed to continue despite the occurrence of the Famine, and is sustained through religious environmental imagery, as the landscape is considered a locus for divine inspiration and nationalist sentiment. While “famine and pestilence stalked through the land”, “home after home grew desolate” and “crops grew black in the ground”, still a connection can be made between the poor Irish subject – here Crichawn – and the Irish landscape.\(^93\) Crichawn experiences a direct connection to God and nature and throughout the narrative his strong bond with the flora and fauna of Ireland is stressed. Early on in the novel, Crichawn perceives the landscape in picturesque tones, a descriptive form which comes back repeatedly in O’Brien’s novel:

> “Crichawn” had reached a long level plateau, just at the first bend of the great mountain’s base, where it declines in a series of gradual and graceful curves till it seems, in a loving clasp, to meet the surface of the verdant valley, nestling in cosy contentment at its feet. Above him towered the mighty crest of Slieve-na-Mon, wreathed in fantastic drapery of silvery mist […] Before him, at his very feet – far and far away, on left and right, stretched out the fair valley of the Suir, sleeping quietly in the great silence of the Summer dawn. Only the birds were astir and the little silvery streams, that made a glistening gleam of light along the hoary mountain’s side; and both bird and stream made a sweet concert in the morning hymn of nature unto God.\(^94\)

“All ye works of the Lord, praise the Lord!” the narrator adds immediately after this description, leaving it unclear whether these words are interjected by him or come from Crichawn. The passage describes the presence of God, the sublime peak of Slieve-na-Mon, and the more familiar and safe sloping hills. A few pages later in that same descriptive passage a link is made with mythical and folkloric natural presences which is also reminiscent of the notion of leisure normally ascribed to the pastoral: nature becomes a space for song as Crichawn “did not know why the flowers spoke to him as he passed […] why the river sang to him in the drowsy noontide, and the great ocean heaved with the grand music of an unending psalm. He hardly realised how many divine pictures he wove, out of the

\(^94\) Ibid., 12.
glittering moonbeams." Immediately after this description, the narrator argues that the emotions aroused in Crichawn by the Irish landscape are "the spring and essence of his faith and patriotism", and that they "gave to his love of country, a daring and devotion happily not rare amongst Irishmen".

Another work of fiction, this time written by an Irish-Canadian author, also deserves brief mention here. The Days of a Life (1883) by Belfast-born Canadian author Margaret Dixon McDougall, frequently draws connections between the picturesque beauty and sometimes even sublime splendour of the landscape and some form of divine inspiration:

"I can understand why the emotional Irish people say 'Glory be to God,'" said Ida Livingstone, looking on the landscape. "I feel like saying it every time I look around. I am sure I feel it in the air, and hear it in the bird’s songs; [...] It is abroad everywhere and the people cannot help giving it voice." And later, the landscape is again represented as

The world seemed at its best; happy-eyed flowers looked out from every bank and hedgerow; the air was sweet with the breath of blossoms; there was the ecstasy of worship in the lark’s song; the thrush floated out a psalm of thanksgiving from the branchy sycamores; even the multitudinous rooks had a tone of joyfulness in their cawings to one another.

Immediately after, young Canadian visitor Ida Livingstone remarks that "[e]njoyment of this kind, on a day when nature is wild with rejoicing, always makes me feel nearer to God." Most of the descriptive passages in the novel provide detailed accounts of the Irish landscape by using similar tones and phrasing.

The celebratory tone adopted in these descriptions in both The D’Altons of Crag and The Days of Life contrasts starkly with the many instances of human hardship which are also included in the narratives, as the Irish during 1848–9 and during the smaller famine and Land War of 1879–82, respectively, go through similar periods of suffering. Although Ida and

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95 Ibid., 13.
96 Ibid., 14.
97 McDougall, Days of a Life, 32.
98 Ibid., 162.
99 McDougall argues that history repeats itself and that conditions in the early 1880s
her Irish friends in *The Days of a Life* feel a strong personal religious connection to the beautiful Irish landscape, the idyllic landscape in this novel stands disconnected from the lives of the rural poor: the beauty of the landscape is always focalised through Ida and her friends, never through the eyes of the Irish poor. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in more detail in Chapter 5, when the plight of the Irish poor is described, the narrative generally employs the pathetic fallacy, emphasising the contrast between beautiful landscape and ruined land through the affective alignment of the devastated land with the suffering Irish poor.

Richard Baptist O’Brien’s novel contains many depictions of Famine suffering, but eventually diminishes their impact by relocating them to the narrative margins. While the novel is set in ‘48 and ‘49 and contains many representations of Famine suffering – a telling example can be found when the narrator labels the “Midsummer of ’47” “the very carnival time of death”¹⁰⁰ – in the end they are subservient to the novel’s Catholic morale and romantic plot: when all’s well that ends well for the main characters – scheming cousin Charles Baring is deported, angelic landlord’s daughter Amy D’Alton finds true love and gets her long-lost brother Henry back, landlord Giffard D’Alton is united with his son and becomes a good landlord and happy grandparent, and poor invalid Ally Hayes miraculously walks again and becomes a nun – the novel simply ends, leaving those suffering of hunger and famine-related diseases in 1849 stuck *in medias res*. In the end, the Famine serves as little more than a backdrop to O’Brien’s


> While “Crichawn” rests in the holy peace of his morning oblation, it may be useful for the better understanding of our story that we should take the reader into the past, and see something of a period fraught with events of the deepest importance to almost every one of those who have kept of company so far. And to do this is no easy task; for even the highest courage must quail, and the most facile pen hesitate, before the awful memory of Ireland in the famine year – that year of woe and unspeakable desolation which has been so aptly named “The Black ’47.” Most people know something of its horrors, and many people shrink from even a slight recollection of these days of doom when famine and pestilence stalked naked through the land; and in the homes of plenty and luxury where hunger dare not enter, the red typhus laughed in ghastly triumph, and swept its hundreds of victims to the grave.

> It was then in the very carnival time of death – in the Midsummer of ’47 – that the clouds of woe lay as a loathsome-winding sheet around the fair valley of the Suir.
incredible tale, as a means to showcase the altruistic efforts undertaken by the D’Alton siblings and clergymen of the Crag.

Through this discrepancy between representations of the Irish landscape as unchanged and of human life and land as greatly changed after the Famine and the Land War, *The Days of a Life* and *The D’Altons of Crag* attempt to acknowledge two oppositional dimensions at once. They simultaneously recognise the human cost of the Great Famine and the smaller famine, while also providing a potential positive opening to recent hardships, in which despite repeated famines and colonial subjugation, the Irish landscape remained unchanged and consequently could still be used to construct a (transnational) Irish identity and nationality for “a country that must have a future”.

McDougall’s and O’Brien’s works of fiction were originally written for a transatlantic audience, as both were first published in North-America. The intention to provide a positive opening for the continuation of a form of Irishness on the basis of a relatedness to the Irish landscape could in that respect also be considered an extension of a development started in earlier diasporic Famine fiction. In several works of didactic Famine fiction written before 1875, the Irish landscape is allowed to recuperate and was sometimes even translocated across the Atlantic, thereby providing possibilities for a transatlantic readership to continually engage with a traditional, natural sense of Irishness in popular fiction despite recent hardships and displacement through emigration. Therefore, the contrast between the representations of land as dystopian versus depictions of landscape as relatively positive could also be attributed to these existing transatlantic generic conventions.

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103 Examples of works of fiction which promise the recuperation of a type of rural Irish environment in diaspora include Elizabeth Hely Walshe’s *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement; a Tale of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1863) and Dillon O’Brien’s *The Dalys of Dalystown* (Saint Paul, MN: Pioneer Printing, 1866). Mary Anne Sadlier’s *Bessy Conway; Or, the Irish Girl in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier, 1862), even includes the recuperation of the Irish landscape directly after the Famine, which, according to the narrative, does not take more than a year. For a discussion of O’Brien’s text in this context, see Lindsay Janssen, ‘The Impossibility of Transporting Identity: The Representation of Diasporic Irishness in Transatlantic Irish Fiction, 1860–1900’, in Eleftheria Arapoglou, Mónika Fodor, and Jopi Nyman, eds, *Mobile Narratives: Travel, Migration, and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 162–73. For a discussion of *Bessy Conway*, see Corporaal, ‘Golden Hills’. 
Reflecting upon his visit to Ireland at the height of the Land War, American professor David Bennett King felt that the present was like a "ghastly recurrence of 'Forty-seven'" and doubted whether Ireland's condition would improve soon.  

Sympathising mostly with the landlord classes, but also engaging with the plight of the poor tenantry, King felt that the inborn "character of the people themselves" – marked by "[h]opelessness and laziness" – combined with the errors committed by the government throughout recent decades and the "long-protracted agonies of conquest and frequent revolts and insurrections", had caused Ireland's present condition.  

Pointing out that this condition had a long history and was as yet far from resolved, as well as stating that it was deeply engrained in the Irish and British mindsets, King excluded the possibility of a regeneration of a rural pre-Famine or pre-colonial Ireland and Irishness. Rather, he felt that the Irish Question could be solved by not reaching to the past, but rather by modernising Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom: Ireland should make use of the “reforms that the English Liberal party [had] already brought about” which promised “further changes in the direction of giving the people larger rights and liberties”. In the end, King argued in follow up to Sir Robert Peel, these changes would lead to “complete equality between England and Ireland in all civil, municipal and political rights”.  

In contrast, in Irish culture and literature on both sides of the Atlantic, a resistance to modernisation was expressed, which took the form of a tendency to temporarily bypass the full impact of Famine and go back to distant history and the mythic past to reconstruct Irish identity. The writings by authors such as Richard Baptist O’Brien, William O’Brien, Margaret Dixon McDougall and in fact many works of Famine fiction included in this study, revert to traditional considerations of Irishness and Irish nationality to provide images for the future. Through such instances of prospective nostalgia, they demonstrate the “antagonistic relationship between the archaic and the modern” which is commonly attributed to the Revivalist mindset. The works of fiction analysed above imply that the revitalisation of a pre-Famine Irishness can be achieved through a traditional (re)connection with the landscape. The beautiful Irish landscapes

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104 David Bennett King, *The Irish Question* (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1882), 129.
105 Ibid., 74–5, 23.
106 Ibid., 316, 318.
in these post-Famine texts are imbued with typical Irish elements that somehow stand outside of the normal flow of time and history, and are therefore unblemished by the blight. Environmental elements based upon Irish myth and religion and the undefined distant past could in this manner be employed as undisturbed continuities of Irishness. These aesthetic depictions of the landscape as beautiful are not unambiguously positive, as the post-Famine landscape in these texts functions as a locus of disconnection and of connection at the same time. Nevertheless, as these texts suggest, in the wake of the Famine and subsequent crises, the aesthetic landscape contains buds to reconstitute a sense of Irishness based upon an aesthetic Revivalist environmental relatedness.\textsuperscript{109}

### 2.3 Land and Past

#### 2.3.1 Spatial Testimonies to Famine Memory

The landlords turn the farms into pastures, and raise cattle and sheep for export to England; the money they receive they spend for the most part outside the country. You roam over miles and miles of fertile land, or land that might be made fertile, without seeing a house or a human being. [...] When kept properly drained, there is no land in the world more fertile than the great uninhabited plains of Ireland.\textsuperscript{110}

The above words were written by Charles Stewart Parnell, who attributed the emptying out of the landscape – which facilitated the growth of grazier culture – to the Famine and (governmental) stimulation of Irish emigration. He argued that, had the soil of Ireland been properly taken care of, after the Famine the land of Ireland could have easily become the most fertile land in the world. However, despite the issues of blame and culpability alluded to by Parnell, the Famine demonstrated that the traditional Irish way of living – which is often identified with a harmonious spirit with others and the

\textsuperscript{109} As characters such as Fenian rebel Ken Rohan in William O’Brien’s \textit{When We Were Boys}, Ellen Daly in Annie Keary’s \textit{Castle Daly}, Ida Livingstone in Margaret Dixon McDougall’s \textit{The Days of a Life}, and dwarfish heroes Quish and Crichawn in \textit{When We Were Boys} and Richard Baptist O’Brien’s \textit{The D’Altons of Crag} demonstrate: while Ireland has become (more) desolate after the Famine and subsequent hardships, the landscape can still function as a locus for the formulation of a sense of Irishness and Irish nationality.

\textsuperscript{110} Parnell, ‘Irish Land Question’, 388–9.
land, and dependence on monoculture on small plots of land—was no longer feasible in a fast-industrialising and increasingly individualistic world and under the pressure of explosive population growth. In this section, I will investigate whether in works of Famine fiction the regenerative potential of the Irish land is considered strong enough to overcome the blow of the Famine and subsequent rural crises.

The visual proof of the failure of traditional agriculture could not only be found in the land, but also in another aspect of the human landscape: public relief works and the scars they left on the landscape. During the Famine, and again during the agricultural crisis and Land War of the late 1870s and early 1880s, many tenant farmers and agricultural labourers could no longer get employment in the rural sector. In 1880, the Quaker philanthropist James Hack Tuke visited Donegal and Connaught and wrote an alarming report on the state of Ireland. In his personal observations, Tuke made many references to what he had witnessed in 1847, when he had visited those same regions. Tuke speaks of “Famine faces”, and, when recalling a drive to the village of Ballyshannon, says: “I could not but recall the miserable objects I saw one Sunday morning in 1847, digging over the bare ground for a chance potato, and the corpses of the dead carried, without ceremony or funeral, to the grave.” Such comparisons were also made by the people Tuke spoke to: he quotes a local workhouse clerk in Donegal who argues that, if the poor do not get seed potatoes, “the prospect is simply awful: famine worse than in 1847 will [...] come”. Concerning Ballyshannon, Tuke wrote that “[t]here is no employment of any kind of labourers” in 1880.

Many labourers had to resort to public and private relief schemes to be able to provide a scanty living for themselves and their loved ones, and, in fact, frequently relief was only provided for those able to work for it.

In the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), images of relief works are also frequently included. An overview of the representation of public works can be found in Table 2.1 below. The references to Famine-era public works are not limited to narratives set in the Famine period: As Table 2.1 shows, 

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113 Ibid., 4.
114 A member of one of the Relief Committees visited by Tuke voiced the commonly-held opinion that “no relief should be given to able-bodied men except for work done on their own lands or elsewhere”. (Ibid., 10).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Type of relief work</th>
<th>Later depictions – connection to Famine memory?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – <em>Castle Daly</em> (1875)</td>
<td>Famine roads</td>
<td>lasting presence in post-Famine landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – <em>Dick O’Dell</em> (1875–7)</td>
<td>Famine roads</td>
<td>lasting presence in Famine landscape, set during Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – <em>Light and Shade</em> (1878)</td>
<td>Famine roads</td>
<td>lasting presence in post-Famine landscape, late 1880s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – <em>Uncle Pat’s Cabin</em> (1882)</td>
<td>general public works, general public works</td>
<td>conditions during Land War, connection with Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – <em>The Days of a Life</em> (1883)</td>
<td>Famine roads</td>
<td>set during Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – <em>Scenes and Incidents</em> (1884)</td>
<td>drainage works</td>
<td>no overt connection is made between public works of late 1870s and Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lawless – <em>Hurrish</em> (1886)</td>
<td>drainage works</td>
<td>set during Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – <em>Zanthon</em> (1891)</td>
<td>Famine roads</td>
<td>set during Famine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
several of the literary texts set in post-Famine times refer to Famine imagery of public works as well, or, like Tuke, associate the public relief efforts and hardships of the late 1870s and 1880s with Famine memory. Charlotte O’Brien’s *Light and Shade* (1878) is set during the late 1860s. Just before giving a detailed description of a dilapidated cabin with a starving family inside, the narrator describes “one of the many perfectly useless scraps of road made during the famine years, in which, all over Ireland, the money that might have been employed for really useful purposes was squandered”.115 In this manner, human hardships of the late 1860s are presented as a repetition of Famine suffering. In *Castle Daly*, when former Young Irisher Connor Daly returns to Ireland years later, he encounters “one of the roads that was devised and made in the famine year”, built as part of the public works, but never serving a purpose and therefore practically forgotten, “seeing it’s not the way to anywhere”.116 Later, Emily Lawless would portray the roads as “grim reminders” of Famine deaths and emigration in her ‘Famine Roads and Famine Memories’ (1898).117 Together, these Famine memories function as lasting testimonies to the lingering impact of the Famine and the continued bad condition of Ireland and its people.

In the opening pages of Kathleen O’Meara’s *The Battle of Connemara* (1878), a description of Famine roads is also included. O’Meara was born in Dublin in 1839 and died in Paris in 1888. She sometimes wrote under the penname ‘Grace Ramsay’ and was a novelist, religious biographer and short story writer: her writings appeared in *The Irish Monthly* and also in American magazines such as the Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly* and New York-based *Harper’s*. While living in Paris, she was a newspaper correspondent for the London *Tablet*, a Catholic magazine. Although she spent most of her life abroad, Ireland features prominently in her fiction.118 The *Irish Monthly* gave a positive review of *The Battle of Connemara* – it was “a charming story, charmingly told” by “one of the most graceful as well as the most diligent pens at present enlisted in the service of the insatiable reading public”.119 The public works in O’Meara’s *The Battle

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116 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 343.
of Connemara are located in a spot which “looked like the fag-end of the world”, where God had “left a remnant of His work unfinished”. The focaliser of this scene, the English Catholic Priest Mr Ringwood, learns the road “had been made by the Government to give employment to the starving people during the great Famine”. For father Ringwood, as they would do for Lawless in 1898, the roads point to an absence, functioning as metaphoric representations of the disappearance of the people in a region which now contains nothing to “indicate the existence of a living soul within miles”. The public works function as spatial scars, testimonies to the depopulation of Ireland which are still visible in the late 1860s.

Relief works are a central trope in William Upton’s Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882), which tells the tale of poor Pat M’Mahon who takes in his brother Davey’s large family after Davey is forced to migrate to America. To be able to survive, Pat and his peers have to resort to doing back-breaking labour on the public drain works. While focusing on the 1860s, 1870s and early 1880s, this novel creates overt connections between the Famine and current hardships, for the story not only evokes the looming threat of another famine, but protagonist Pat M’Mahon, whose story “wears a public complexion”, has lived through the Famine and subsequent hardships.

As James H. Murphy contends, the connection made between the two periods of great turmoil and hardship – the Famine and the Land War – by use of Famine-related imagery is characteristic of many Land War novels, for Land War fiction developed out of the land novels of the 1840s and beyond, becoming “more focused and urgent”. As the short exposé above and Table 2.1 demonstrate, this is not only the case for the genre of Land War fiction or works written during the Land War era, but for several works of Famine fiction written before and after this period of rural turmoil as well. The inclusion of memories of Famine-era public works demonstrates that in corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), the mnemonic imagery concerning the Famine became portable, and that it was appropriated to give shape to later hardships and victims. This re-use of Famine imagery presents the Irish land as in a state of paralysing stasis, as not being able to (fully recover) from the injuries sustained during the Famine.

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121 The poor labourers’ plight in Upton’s novel is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
122 Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, 261.
Traces of Famine-era public works still disrupt the Irish environment, are left open ended, and continue to remind the Irish of Famine-era hardships. In that sense, they are testimonies to the traumatised nature of the Irish land.

2.3.2 Land: the Georgic and the Failure

The corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) contains many representations in which the Irish natural environment is cast in tones of the pastoral and the georgic. As Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix illustrate, the majority of works that are part of this study’s literary corpus (28 out of a total of 33) contain several depictions of the land and landscape. In 25 of those (or 89 per cent), positive representations of the landscape feature frequently. By contrast, 20 of the 28 works (or 71 per cent) contain negative visions of the land, and acknowledge the failure of the Irish land to sustain its people. This demonstrates that a positive emphasis is placed on the aesthetic landscape, while the functioning land receives largely negative connotations. Moreover, it underscores the value of the approach chosen in this chapter: to fully understand the workings of Famine memory in literary constructions of the Irish rural environment, distinct notions of the pastoral – focusing on the beauty and leisure of the rural environment – and the georgic – focusing on the moral and ideological potential of rural labour – are required.

In Hurrish (1886) by upper-class Protestant author Emily Lawless, a potentially georgic space can be found. During her life, Lawless was a highly esteemed contributor to the Irish literary scene, and even received an Honorary Doctorate in Literature from Trinity College in 1905. However, being a member of the Protestant aristocracy and a lifelong Unionist damaged her reputation after the proclamation of the Irish Free State in 1922.124 Hansson adds that Lawless’ quick disappearance from the literary limelight was also due to her ambivalent approach to Irish politics, as her work displays a “resistance to political labelling”, a stance which was no longer appreciated at the time.125 The narrative is largely set in the Burren (Co. Clare) and the landscape invokes contemplations of its ambiguous aesthetic rather than functional nature. Its representation might well be rooted in the author’s own recollections, as she spent long periods in Galway with her mother’s relatives during her childhood.126

124 Corporaal, Cusack and Janssen, Recollecting Starvation, 81.
125 Hansson, Emily Lawless, 6.
126 Corporaal, Cusack and Janssen, Recollecting Starvation, 187.
turesque qualities of the landscape are frequently contrasted with its eerie desolation: as illustrated earlier, the Burren’s barren rocks are as nakedness made visible. Moreover, “every stick and stone seems to be grimacing with unpleasant intention” in this landscape where supernatural creatures might appear at any time. This eerie landscape contrasts starkly with protagonist Hurrish O’Brien’s land. Hurrish is a “well-to-do man” with “a good stock of cows and calves”, and his little part of the Burren is described as a georgic oasis. It is a self-sufficient idyllic space in the middle of the otherwise barren landscape of the Burren: “you would have been surprised at the sudden fertility of this little space, the greenness of the grass, the promising look of the small crops of bottle-green potatoes”.

The novel relates the life and death of Hurrish, a tenant farmer who can be considered to represent his larger class. Hurrish’ downfall during the 1870s can be indirectly credited to the thirst for land-grabbing of his neighbour Mat Brady. The novel is set in post-Famine times, and therefore shows that both the beautiful and even functioning qualities of the landscape are allowed to (partially) return, as through hard work, Hurrish is able to cultivate his land and provide for his family. However, society has become corrupt since the Famine. Hurrish’s neighbour, old Phil Rooney, – who lived through the Famine – in a relativising manner observes that “[t]here’s bad times and there’s good times [...] and I don’t see that there’s so very much amiss with these.” Although the narrative as a whole does not engage in an in-depth manner with Famine recollection, Emily Lawless elsewhere expressed herself “deeply affected” with the memory of the Famine. In contrast to the narrative’s present, in which “nothing but killing the landlords” will satisfy the Irish, Rooney is of the opinion that before the Famine, Irish rural society was in balance, as back then there was a solidarity between landlord and tenants and amongst tenants. Rooney humorously illustrates this by reminiscing a scene from his youth when tenants joined together to save the landlord from “jail” by having the bailiff eat the writ that was meant for their landlord, while the latter was hiding around the corner, “laughing fit to split”.

128 Ibid., vol. 1, 9.
131 Lawless, *Hurrish*, vol. 1, 83.
current lack of fellow feeling as one of the central ills of Irish society, and it strongly condemns acts of land-grabbing. Consequently, the traditional way of life of pre-Famine times – in which there was peace and balance between neighbouring tenants – is no longer attainable at the narrative’s end.

Heidi Hansson states in the context of Emily Lawless’ entire oeuvre that “landscapes possess very specific characteristics and the power to both influence and reflect human behaviour”.

Timothy Wenzell has argued that in *Hurrish* and especially the main character’s connection to the land, Lawless created a possibility for the Irish to reconnect with the land. However, this interpretation of the novel stands in uneasy contrast to the novel’s largely dystopian ending: Hurrish dies, his adoptive daughter Alley Sheehan becomes a nun and her former lover Maurice Brady leaves for America (where he does very well for himself as an urban shopkeeper), leaving the narrative’s desolate region without any successors or hope for new generations. Hurrish’s way of life ends with his death: his pastoral spot of land is still there, but there is nobody left to cultivate it, to infuse it with life and (human) meaning. Man has become disconnected from nature, and Hurrish’s patch of land, reflecting the fate of its human subject, consequently cannot function as a georgic space anymore: it can no longer figure as a basis for character and people building on the basis of a work-oriented bond with the native soil.

Unlike *Hurrish*, several works of Famine fiction contain representations of a different pre-Famine Irish land and landscape. In many of these texts, the pre-Famine Irish landscape is depicted as an idyllic pastoral haven, which only becomes dysfunctional and is by extension aestheticised by the Famine and/or following socio-economic and natural crises. Irish author Hester Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race* is a case in point. After losing everything, Dan Macmanus sees no other option but to go to Dublin, where he quickly develops a drinking problem and dies after falling off the quay inebriated. Early on in the narrative, Dan has a “comfortable roomy cottage” with “a pretty flower garden” for his wife, and two fields which

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134 Hansson, *Emily Lawless*, 64.
he has cleared himself and which, until the Famine hits Ireland, deliver high revenues.\textsuperscript{137} However, Dan loses everything and perishes, marking the end of his bloodline. Furthermore, because Dan is represented as the last of the “ould stock,” the last of “a ruined race”, he also metonymically represents a now lost class of people and the downfall of an entire traditional lifestyle.\textsuperscript{138} As is the case in many of the works of Famine fiction discussed here, the narrative frequently employs the pathetic fallacy to mirror Dan’s hardships and eventual downfall.\textsuperscript{139} The once idyllic environs of the Macmanus family become infested with blight, and as “[w]et seasons had swamped the fields by the river, and destroyed his crops, leaving no possible way of meeting the rent”, the potatoes, along with Dan’s “anxious hopes, the weary toil, and the hard, hard savings of the whole past year”, now lay “beaten down and rotting in the wet mud”.\textsuperscript{140}

Regarding the human environment, the effects of the blight are perhaps best felt in the description of Fortmanus, the little rural town which was once inhabited by Dan, Mary, their daughter Eily, and their peers, where “now ruin [...] prevailed”.\textsuperscript{141} The town, once “consecrated to humanity”, has become a depopulated dwelling place of sheep, as the Famine has ushered in grazier culture, the new form of agriculture which became predominant.\textsuperscript{142} The presence of British graziers and their large tracts of land were also seen as visible remnants of the effect of the Famine on both Irish agriculture and the land by contemporaries, as is illustrated by the quote from James Redpath included earlier in this chapter. In \textit{A Ruined Race}, then, the soil is no longer able to sustain the many tenant farmers and labourers, and the people of Fortmanus have either already emigrated or perished, or face a very uncertain future, as the narrative leaves the fates of these characters open ended, while also rounding off the story well before the end of the Famine. \textit{A Ruined Race} presents the Irish land as in stasis: hope for recovery is not provided, as at the narrative’s end, the Irish tenant farmer and his peers have disappeared and their village and plots of land are in ruins. In this sense, the novel represents the Irish Famine and post-Famine land as arrested and unable to recover.

\textsuperscript{137} Sigerson, \textit{A Ruined Race}, 58.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{139} The works of Famine fiction included in this research frequently make use of the aesthetic device of the pathetic fallacy to underscore human suffering. This device will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5; an overview of how frequently the device features in this study’s literary corpus can be found in Table A.4.
\textsuperscript{140} Sigerson, \textit{A Ruined Race}, 69, 71.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 209.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 208.
Annie Keary’s *Castle Daly* also contains a demarcated georgic space, but in this case it rather functions as a nostalgic reminder of a utopian alternative for an idealised rural Ireland. In Keary’s novel, the ideal (pre-Famine) rural life is represented by the idyllic space of Good People’s Hollow, which is governed by Irish landlady Anne O’Flaherty, who is presented as the ideal ruler of this traditional and ideal reciprocal feudal Irish community.\(^{143}\) In the first volume, the Hollow is seen through the eyes of Anne’s cousin Connor Daly, one of the half-Irish, half-English children of landlord Dermot Daly. He considers the Hollow as “a nook dropped among the hills and forgotten. Yet, in spite of its seclusion, an air of brisk life and activity pervaded the place.”\(^{144}\) The Hollow is densely populated with many labourers who in their turn are quite fertile: as the workers come home, “the women came out and put the babies into their fathers’ arms, and children filled the air with joyous evening clamour”. The valley is flecked with “reclaimed plots of potato grounds and meadow land”.\(^{145}\) This demonstrates that this secluded Eden is a flowering community which both functions as a spot for pastoral *otium* and georgic labour, and as such is an ideal fictional example of the nation- and people-building capacities inherent to the georgic mode.

However, as the Famine progresses and Anne O’Flaherty is stricken with famine fever, this community in a bubble disintegrates as many inhabitants die, and others have to resort to the emigration schemes instigated by Anne before her untimely death. In the third volume of *Castle Daly*, the Hollow, along with all the lands formerly part of the now destitute Daly’s estate, have become desolate: an English police inspector sent to Ireland to prevent the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion, remarks to the novel’s heroine Ellen Daly, that “there don’t seem to be no people about; nothing but ruined villages and waste lands as we can see”.\(^{146}\) The Daly’s estate is representative of the entire island, as in fact it is depicted as one of the last regions to be hit by the blight. As the narrative draws to a close, Ellen remarks again how she mourns over “the deserted villages and the silent hill-sides”, whereby the georgic and pastoral descriptions found earlier in the novel receive a specific, elegiac dimension.\(^{147}\) Simultaneously, however, the desolate landscape is paradoxically described in beautiful tones:

\(^{143}\) Anne O’Flaherty and Good People’s Hollow will be discussed again in the following chapter.

\(^{144}\) Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 1, 85.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., vol. 1, 151.

\(^{146}\) Ibid., vol. 3, 204.

\(^{147}\) Ibid., vol. 3, 349.
The [Hollow] valley had never looked fairer, or showed more like an enchanted region, jewel-paved with emerald and diamond and azure, than it appeared when Ellen found herself left alone to gaze on the misty outline of its protecting hills, the blue thread of its winding river, its opal-coloured lake, and its green slopes all growing momentarily more distinct in the brightening sunshine. There was something wanting; the old sights were there, but not the old sounds. A strange silence reigned all about the place that fell like an ache on Ellen’s heart.148

In 1870, Irish parliamentary leader and founder of the Home Rule League Isaac Butt commented retrospectively that “[t]he might of the people wasted away before the terrible famine that desolated our land.”149 Similarly, in Castle Daly, the Famine has left the land devastated and desolate. As the people have disappeared, the way has been cleared for English improvements in Irish agriculture and society. In the meantime, however, the regenerative powers of the picturesque landscape have taken over, and provide an uncanny contrast to the fates of its former inhabitants. The desolate but ambiguously beautiful landscape functions as a symbol of Ireland’s political condition: Ireland is in between traditionalism and modernisation, greatly injured by the recent past but also moving forward, and is a nation striving for autonomy which is also integrally part of the United Kingdom.150 I will come back to the novel’s ambivalent political message in Chapter 4. In Castle Daly, the working land becomes desolate and dysfunctional. It is effectively sanitised of its connotations of labour, and becomes an aestheticised picturesque landscape. This ambiguous approach to the landscape as both beautifully picturesque and uncomfortably devoid of people, reflects Keary’s personal observations: in the Memoir of Annie Keary, her sister Eliza quotes Annie’s letter to her, demonstrating Keary’s mixed feelings about the Irish landscape: “I quite despair of conveying all the pleasant and painful impressions that I received [...] It is a country of contradictions – some things in it so delightful and beautiful,

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148 Ibid., vol. 3, 332.
150 Wright argues that during the Industrial Revolution, “the land was used as a redolent symbol of the nation’s political condition, where the waste land signifies political predation and rich green fields a successful and harmonious society”. Representing the National Landscape, xxiv.
and others so utterly depressing and sad.”

In Irish writer Margaret Brew’s three-decker *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne* (1885), the land also fails its inhabitants and consequently they become disconnected from the soil. The once bountiful Irish landscape becomes infertile and damaged beyond repair due to the Famine. Early on in the narrative, during an exceptionally “cold and inclement” winter followed by a “most ungenial spring”, torrents of rain “[deluge] the whole country, [...] turning the fertile low-lying lands into perfect swamps. Farming operations, except on high ground, were at a standstill, for seed would rot if put into earth so soaked with moisture.” Shortly after this passage, the failure of potatoes and hay and the death of cattle are described in rapid succession, demonstrating the sudden and disruptive effects of the blight. Brew’s novel shows that due to the Famine, the landscape has changed beyond restoration.

In the third volume, the irreversible effects of the Famine on the landscape are explicitly mentioned and discussed at great length. In a passage set when the Famine has already run its course, the now destitute strong farmer’s daughter Oonagh McDermott has become a pedlar. In that capacity, she travels from town to town through “bleak and wild” country, which was “but thinly populated”. The landscape reminds Oonagh of those who have disappeared due to eviction, emigration and death. As the narrator exclaims, “[t]he Famine was all over, but the sad traces of it were not easily effaced!” In this manner, the environment in *Castle Cloyne* contains the lingering remains of the Famine, and thereby also testifies to the disturbing, traumatic effects of the period on that landscape and its inhabitants. It is not until decades later, that *otium* returns for Oonagh, as her adoptive son – now a priest – acquires a simple pastoral cabin for her to spend her last days in relative comfort. However, Oonagh is not able to enjoy this pastoral happiness for long, for soon after she moves into the cabin she dies. Moreover, the land does not experience a similar revival, for none of the suffering rural labourers and farmers return to their former way of life in the novel. It seems that at least in the first few decades after the Famine, Brew’s narrative fails to imagine any full return of pastoral bliss and, moreover, excludes the possibility of the land reverting to its pre-Famine georgic glory.

The depopulation of the Irish landscape is mentioned in one breath

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153 Ibid., vol. 3, 61.
with the description of abandoned and unfinished Famine roads in Kathleen O’Meara’s *The Battle of Connemara* (1878). As Father Ringwood rides through Connemara, the narrator describes the area as a “forlorn, uninhabited region. [...] Nothing indicated the existence of a living soul within miles. [...] The very genius of silence seemed to have taken up its abode in the place.”

By placing this utter desolation directly after the description of the Famine roads, the emptying out of the landscape is posed as a direct consequence of the Great Hunger.

While Irish-American author John McElgun’s *Annie Reilly* (1873) is not included in this study’s corpus of Famine fiction, it deserves brief mention here, for it taps into many of the same issues as the works of fiction discussed in this dissertation, and specifically the possibility of the return of the pastoral. While not going to the extremes of for example Mary Anne Sadlier, who, in her novel *Bessy Conway* (1863), promises the full return of the pastoral and georgic idyll within a year after the start of the Famine, McElgun’s novel does strike a positive tone. Set in Munster and America in the 1860s, this novel tells the tale of Annie Reilly and her lover James O’Rourke who are forced to emigrate to America. After surviving various trials and tribulations typical of the romantic didactic mode in which the novel was written, Annie and James do very well and live a prosperous life in New York City. At the beginning of the novel, the Reilly farm and its environs are described as serene and as “one of the most pleasant districts in Munster.” The landscape is represented as a setting for pastoral *otium* and song, as James “would gather [...] flowers for a nosegay in the garden or on the hillside” and “carried his flute to the hill-top” to play a tune for Annie. In *Annie Reilly*, the positive

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154 O’Meara, *Battle of Connemara*, 16.
155 The novel contains only one general reference to starvation, none to the specific era of the Famine. This singular reference is found in the conversation between established emigrant Terrence MacManus and greenhorn James (Annie Reilly’s lover). When the former asks “the people an’t starving as they wor when I left there?” James responds that things are not great, but that it’s “not as bad now”. John McElgun, *Annie Reilly; Or, The Fortunes of an Irish Girl in New York: A Tale Founded on Fact* (New York: J. A. McGee, 1873), 118.
159 Ibid., 17.
interpretation of the landscape is only connected to pastoral *otium*; in fact, the representation of the landscape turns sour when the georgic aspect of work on the land is implied. When having just heard of the destructive practices of land agent John G. Carey, who is selling all the town lands to English investors, Annie’s father, tenant farmer Farrell Reilly, fears for his family’s future. He looks at the idyllic landscape, but now sees all its beauty as “scenes he could no longer enjoy”. In this manner, the pastoral elements of the novel do not “imply a form of escapism” from current hardships, but rather serve as a contrastive “vehicle to engage with the debate about the Irish question”.

Many Irish and Irish-diasporic works of fiction demonstrate that nature again takes over – or has never given up its dominant influence on human life. The land becomes an aestheticised beautiful landscape, but at a very heavy cost. In the aftermath of the Famine and related later periods of hardship, the landscape represented in these texts is beautiful and simultaneously scarred, and functions as an uncanny *lieu de mémoire* reflective of its vanished inhabitants. Both the land and its human inhabitant/onlooker are marked by the devastating effects of the Famine. While the landscape has the potential to recuperate in the wake of the Famine and subsequent hardships, the land is not portrayed as having this strength. In that sense, in the literary depiction of the land, the full force of the Famine as a cultural trauma is acknowledged: the land is portrayed as in stasis and irreversibly scarred as it can no longer support the people or serve as a positive means for identity construction. In contrast, with regard to representations of the landscape, the attribution of the label ‘cultural trauma’ is undermined through the promise of recuperation. Additionally, this potential rehabilitation rhetorically likens the combined representation of the influence of the Famine on the land and landscape to what Gene Ray calls the traumatic sublime. When looking at the beautiful landscape, the human subject cannot fathom the true impact of the Famine: the depiction of the landscape creates a less disruptive or definitive insight into the environmental effects of the Famine than the representation of the land by itself would do. In that sense, the representation of that landscape arguably functions to point out that the works of fiction present a representational trace of the effects of the real historical period of the Famine. Consequently, this trace or instance of the traumatic sublime is open to different interpretations and discussion, and therefore keeps the

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160 Ibid., 26.
2.3 Land and Past

memory of the Famine open for negotiation. In other words, these repre-
sentations provide an opening for the processing of Famine memory. 162
Through the suggestion of the restorative powers of the landscape, the
reader can continue to find openings to renegotiate Irishness on the basis
of some form of environmental relatedness. 163

Analysing these or similar Irish and Irish-diasporic works of fiction by
contrasting the pastoral and georgic elements of the rural landscape is un-
precedented, and provides an important new insight. It demonstrates that
not only do works of Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891 devote
much attention and textual space to descriptions of the beautiful land-
scape; they also emphasise the aesthetic rather than functional dimensions
of not just the natural but also rural environs. By losing its work-related
characteristics, the agricultural land becomes effectively aestheticised; land
becomes landscape. This tendency to focus on the aesthetic seems to sig-
nify the onset of larger developments of landscape representation in fiction
and non-fiction alike, as in the decades after the period this study covers,
the “process of verbal mapping” to reclaim the landscape became intens-
ified. This verbal mapping focused on “detailed observation of the land
and its natural beauties” and in fact signalled a return to early Irish liter-
ature. 164

Terry Eagleton has claimed that in artistic considerations “[n]ature in
Ireland would often seem more a working environment than an object to
be contemplated”, and that “[n]ature may figure in Ireland as an ethico-
political category as well as an economic one” rather than function as
inspiration for “aesthetic appreciation”. 165 My distinctions between land
and landscape and pastoral and georgic have demonstrated that in Fam-
ine fiction written between 1871 and 1891, aesthetic appreciations in fact
dominate as potential spaces for Irish self-reconfiguration, while the recon-
structive capacities of “economic” spaces are discarded. In this manner,
the analyses in this chapter nuance and perhaps even counter Eagleton’s
remarks.

I have focused on the contrast between the decorative landscape and
(dys)functional land, on what the failure of the land in the wake of the
Famine and later agricultural hardships has meant for constructions of (tra-

162 Gene Ray, Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory: From Auschwitz to
Hiroshima to September 11 and Beyond (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 6.
163 Ibid., 11.
164 Frawley argues this in the context of the period leading up to Irish independence.
See Irish Pastoral, 52.
165 Eagleton, Heathcliff and the Great Hunger, 5, 4.
ditional) Irish identity and Irish self-assertions as a potential nation. The distinction between georgic and pastoral constructions of the Irish rural land, carries with it possible ideological implications. The acknowledgement of the failure of the land after the Famine, the Land Wars, the agricultural crisis (or all of the above combined), in fictional representations could have had a pervasive impact on Irish identity and its “anticipated future”. During the era in which these works of fiction were written, after Home Rule, the Land Bill and the agrarian settlements were seen as the most important pillars in the quest for national self-government. However, the narrative depiction of the disappearance of the functional element of the Irish landscape, displays that such ideological representations of the land could no longer unproblematically be used as images of prospective nostalgia, as memories that could be appropriated to inspire hope for the future.

The narrative patterns that chronicle the transformation of Irish landscape during and after the Famine and under the influence of later instances of crisis, display the highly animated and seminal role that the landscape plays in Irish and Irish-diasporic Famine fiction and formulations of Irishness in that fiction. My discussions of Famine fiction in this chapter have shown that while the regenerative role of the Irish land is generally excluded from these works, the constructive potential of the landscape – formulated in terms of the picturesque, sublime, and pastoral – is not. Therefore, in these works of narrative fiction dealing with Famine recollection, I would not speak of the failure of the pastoral, but rather of the failure of the georgic, specifically.


167 The Irish public will universally rejoice that the Land Bill has been read a second time’, The Irish Times (Dublin: Dec. 4, 1890), 4. Moreover, as Christopher Morash has argued, seeing the land as one of its key priorities, the “cultural nationalist project for Ireland” appealed “to an idealized pre-industrial society as an economic utopia” to legitimise their claim for a separate Irish nation as diametrically opposed to English modernity (Writing the Irish Famine, 63–4).
The majority of the works of fiction written in Ireland, England, America and Canada between 1871 and 1891 depict the failure of the georgic and emphasise aesthetic depictions. Approaches differ somewhat when works written in North-America are contrasted with works written in the British Isles. As Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix indicate, the aestheticisation due to depopulation of the Irish land – which effectively turns land into landscape – is found less frequently in North-American texts than in texts from the British Isles: 4 out of 11, or 27 per cent of North-American texts versus 12 out of 17, or 71 per cent of texts from the British Isles include representations of this aestheticisation. Connected with this, representations of the failure of the soil also feature more frequently in texts written in Ireland and England than in texts written in North-America: 14 out of 17 (or 82 per cent) texts from the British Isles versus 6 out of 11 (or 55 per cent) texts from North America describe what I have called the failure of the georgic. Figure 2.1 below takes into consideration the entire literary corpus of this study and shows whether works of Famine fiction suggest the inability of the soil to support the Irish. For those that do acknowledge this failure of the georgic, I have indicated what percentage was written in North America (18 per cent) and what percentage was written in the British Isles (42 per cent).

Together, these remarks about the acknowledgement of the failure of the soil and the aestheticisation of the land imply that works of Famine fiction from the British Isles present a more explicit interpretation of the impact of the Famine and concomitant later hardships on the land. These works seem to engage with the legacy of the Famine and later hardships in a relatively more profound manner than their North-American counterparts do. Whereas Irish-Canadian and Irish-American authors – with the exception of Margaret Dixon McDougall, who went to Ireland in the early 1880s to witness rural suffering and disturbances herself – wrote about Ireland at both a temporal and spatial remove, their peers in Ireland could write about the Irish land and landscape as first-hand witnesses of the direct effects of recent hardships and British governmental policy on Irish rural life and society. For Irish authors the literary lieu de mémoire of Ireland was probably more closely related to the real Irish environment and therefore more profoundly influenced by current issues and their effects on that environment than was the case for North-American authors.
However, while there is validity in such an explanation, it presents the works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) as distinct entities, a division which contrasts with the many exchanges and interactions between the two opposing sides of the Atlantic. Ely M. Janis explains that through the “laying of the transatlantic cable, and the shortening of travel time between Ireland and America through the use of steamships, Irish Americans were able to keep pace with events in Ireland”. Because of these innovations, by the 1870s, the press and publishing market had already become transnational and fictional and non-fictional accounts of the Famine and later rural hardships could circulate easily throughout the Irish community on both sides of the Atlantic. Works of fiction such as Mary Anne Sadlier’s novels, R. B. O’Brien’s *The D’Altons of Crag*, the anonymous *Dick O’Dell* and several works by Rosa Mulholland, to name a few, were repeatedly published in North America and the United Kingdom in book and serial form. Journalistic articles were reprinted in various newspapers: James Redpath’s letters about the famine conditions he witnessed in the early 1880s were reprinted in Montreal-based literary magazine *The Harp* and New York-based newspaper *The Irish-

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American. *The Harp* also included a letter about the 1879 famine written by Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland, which was reprinted from the American *Catholic Sun*. The *Irish-American* not only included articles received via cable from other American papers such as the *New York Sun* and *New York Tribune*, but regularly reprinted articles from Irish newspapers such as the *Dublin Freeman’s Journal*. The same can be said for the New York-based *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, which included pieces from British and Irish papers such as the *London Pall Mall Gazette*, *London Daily News*, the *Dublin Express* and *Cork Herald*, to name a few. Moreover, these papers also incorporated contributions by their own reporters stationed in, for example, Dublin and London.

Additionally, Irish politics had also become transnational by that time. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Land League maintained strong ties with the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the United Kingdom and the Fenians in America. The League was backed by American funding: in 1880, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt undertook extensive fund raising tours in the US to rally monetary support for the League and its attempt to relief the suffering Irish poor during the smaller famine. Allegedly, Parnell alone gathered “nearly a quarter of a million dollars”. Moreover, the organisation attracted a large following in the US, and it was from New York that John Dillon would issue his 1878 article on Ireland’s New Departure, in which constitutional Home Rule politics, Fenian revolutionary republicanism and land reform were combined. Therefore, although the Land League responded to specifically Irish issues, its concerns and opinions with regard to the Irish Land Question carried far and wide in the North-American diasporic community.

Because of these cross-Atlantic links, the differences between formulations of the effect of the Famine and later rural hardships in works of Famine fiction written in the US versus the British Isles can only be partially attributed to the greater spatial and temporal distance to these events for the Irish in North America. While I could argue that North-American works of Famine fiction engage with the transformation of the Irish land in a less detailed manner, the fact still remains that a large proportion

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of these texts do contain representations of the Irish land and landscape and through these formulations do engage with rural issues from Ireland’s present and recent past. This nuance in approaches, then, is by no means a testimony to a lesser degree of affective and political investment of the Irish in diaspora versus those at home.

Lastly, it can be deduced from Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix and Figures 2.2 and 2.3 below that, relatively speaking, in texts from the British Isles, more weight is given to the role later hardships had to play in the failure of the soil at present (this is represented by the categories ‘F+other causes’ and ‘other causes’). 8 out of 17 British works (or 47 per cent) that contain representations of the land, represent the Famine as having a main role in the current condition of the land. 2 (or 12 per cent) state that the current condition of the land can be attributed to a combination of the Famine and later events. 5 out of 17 (or 29 per cent) list other reasons – such as the smaller famine and the Land War – as causes for current conditions (and 2 give no specification). With regard to North-American works, 5 out of 11 (or 45 per cent) represent the Famine as having a main role in the current state of the land. 2 (or 18 per cent) attribute the current condition of the land to the Famine and later hardships. 1 text – Emily Fox’s *Rose O’Connor* (1880), set during the Land War – makes no overt connection between the present condition of the land and the Famine (and 3 give no specification).

While around half of the texts from both Britain and North America attribute a seminal role to the Famine, it seems that a lower percentage of North-American works emphasise the role of other periods of rural and demographic hardships as key factors in the deteriorated condition of the Irish land. While 7 out of 17 (or 41 per cent, I am taking the categories ‘F + other’ and ‘other’ together here) of British works discuss the impact of other periods of rural misfortune, 3 out of 11 (or 27 per cent) of North-American texts do the same. As such, it seems that current needs and developments such as the Land Question, the smaller famine, the Land War and an overall political preoccupation with the land and Irish rights to that land, are addressed slightly more frequently by those writing in the British Isles. In this respect, I could argue that – because they stress other causes less – North-American works give the Famine a somewhat more central role in their depictions of the deterioration of the Irish land. However, at the same time it becomes clear that the differences between works of fiction from both regions are relatively minor. Quantitatively speaking, these differences are insufficient to state that a markedly different role was given
to Famine memory in texts from either side of the Atlantic. British works suggest a relatively more explicit picture of the impact of the Famine and later hardships on the land and landscape of Ireland than North-American works do, as the former more frequently imply the failure of the soil and the aestheticisation of the land and are somewhat more specific in how this transformation came about. Nevertheless, while this difference exists, the fact remains that such transformations were suggested in texts written on both sides of the Atlantic, and that no sizeable differences manifest themselves. In that sense, the implication of the failure of the georgic and the redirection to the Irish landscape for the (re)establishment of an Irish environmental relatedness appear to have been transnational tendencies.
## North-American Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes for present condition Irish soil</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Famine (F)</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F + other causes</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other causes</td>
<td>9 %</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27 %</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.3:** Causes for present conditions Irish land in North-American texts.
Chapter 3

Landlord-Tenant Relationships and Rural Temporalities

I should gladly welcome any honest intention on the part of the government to solve this land question. It is of great importance for us to get it out of the way before the time arrives for the larger settlement of home rule.¹

The above statement was made in 1890 by Charles Stewart Parnell in response to the Irish Land Purchase Bill which was brought forward by Arthur Balfour on behalf of the Tory government. The bill further extended the government funds for land purchase by lease holders in Ireland, a measure which had been introduced through earlier land acts.² Being highly critical of the bill, Parnell felt that the proposed amendments to increase opportunities for peasant ownership of the land would in fact be “insufficient for its purpose”, as the bill “will not, at the outside, reach more than one out of every four of the Irish tenants”.³ As is illustrated by the above quote, at the end of his plea, Parnell pointed out the crucial importance of the Land Question to Irish Home Rule politics throughout the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s.⁴

The Land Question was a contested issue, which led to many heated

¹ Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Mr. Balfour’s Land Bill’, *North American Review* 150/403 (June 1890), 665–70: 670.
³ Parnell, ‘Mr. Balfour’s Land Bill’, 666.
debates and outbursts of “agrarian terrorism”.\(^5\) Between 1870 and 1891 Ireland went through the introduction of Gladstone’s 1870 and 1881 Land Acts, the partial crop failures and agricultural depression of the late 1870s and early 1880s and the concomitant Land War which ended with the Phoenix Park murders of 1882. Ireland subsequently witnessed a second land war (1886–91) resulting from the Plan of Campaign manifesto, which stated that when landlords refused to lower their rents, tenants were legitimised to go on strike.\(^6\) Moreover, the period also saw the transformation of Irish agriculture to pasture, the mechanisation of farming processes, the rise of the grazier class and demise of subsistence agriculture. At the turn of the century, the landlord system had virtually disappeared. In the context of land issues, the late nineteenth century was a time of great change and turmoil for Ireland. This chapter will discuss how Famine fiction written in the period 1871–91, in the face of all these changes, deals with the Land Question and landlord-tenant relationships. In the following discussions, I will demonstrate that works of Famine fiction display difficulties and tensions when dealing with the transformations occurring in Famine-era and post-Famine Irish rural society. I will also show that in these narratives a continual reaching back to Famine and even pre-Famine and pre-colonial imagery takes place, to make sense of these more recent developments in rural Ireland.

Unlike the chapters yet to follow, the present chapter will not go into representations of the landscape. This is not because the representation of the landscape was not of vital importance for the depiction of the effect of the Famine on Irish agriculture. Rather, this chapter and the previous should be considered as a two-part analysis, for together they investigate literary representations of the environmental and socio-historical effects of the Irish Land Question during the period 1871–91, and the use of Famine memories in these depictions. The transformation leading to what I in the previous chapter have called the failure of the georgic went accompanied by a direction towards the landscape of Ireland to reify Irishness on the basis of a link to the aesthetic rather than working environment. Connections between the failure of the land and representations of the land system and landlord-tenant relationships exist on various levels: they can be found in the strong links between the people and their land – which is central to envisionings of Irishness and the Irish Question. Furthermore, the failure

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of the Georgic also implies the near disappearance of the Irish small farmer and agricultural labourer from the Irish landscape, and thus also represents pervasive changes in the land system. The connection can also be made for another reason. As the redirection towards the aesthetic rather than the functioning aspects of the landscape in these texts has shown, works of Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891 display the Irish as not yet capable of or willing to reconstitute their sense of self on the basis of something other than their perceived connection to their environment. This chapter will show that nostalgic reluctance and longing references to an imagined pre-Famine or even pre-colonial Ireland also play a vital part in literary reconfigurations of landlord-tenant relationships of the time. I will demonstrate this through a discussion of the frequently encountered literary reiteration of a specifically Irish Catholic feudal ideal.

Several scholars and historians, both popular and academic, including Tim Pat Coogan and Christine Kinealy, underscore the traumatic duration of the Famine; for example, the latter states that “the lethal intensity and the longevity of the tragedy [...] continued even in the twenty-first century”. It is one of my aims in this dissertation to problematise such extreme stances influenced by Freudian notions of trauma. This is not because I do not regard the Famine as a highly disruptive event, but rather because, in my opinion, the stress on the potentially endless longevity of trauma which is often associated with traditional considerations of trauma precludes different readings of the Famine which also exist in these narratives.

Kinealy argues that the Famine is a unique event which has such arresting potential that it has instigated a period of decline leading up to the present. In this version of recent Irish history, later hardships and mishaps in Irish culture can be seen as results of the Famine, and the Famine’s traumatic status is prolonged indefinitely, turning the event into some kind of all-eclipsing trauma. (This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–52 (1994; new edn, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), xvi.

Several critics since the mid 1990s have undermined the idea of the Famine as a traditional Freudian trauma. For example, Vincent Comerford has recently argued that although the Famine has been like a “bugbear” for historians, and its recall was (originally) problematic and repressed on the level of personal testimony, the event was never cloaked in (psychological traumatic) silence. See ‘Grievance, Scourge or Shame? The Complexity of Attitudes to Ireland’s Great Famine’, in Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford, eds, Holodomor and Gorta Mór; Histories, Memories and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland (London: Anthem Press, 2012), 51–73: 58, 56. Nevertheless, the view of the Famine as an everlasting and ever-arresting trauma remains strongly present in academia and among the general public. Half jokingly, half seriously, historian Liam Kenney has attributed such tendencies to the Irish MOPE syndrome (‘Most Oppressed People Ever’).
While acknowledging these reservations, in its analyses this chapter will engage with the notions of repetition and the duration of traumatic affect central to Freudian trauma theory. In their representations of the Land Question and landlord-tenant relationships, the works of Famine fiction frequently make use of Famine imagery to represent recent wrongs inflicted on the Irish poor. This reaching back happens in two ways: some narratives suggest a repetition of Famine-time ills, thereby adversely recognising that between two such periods of suffering, prosperity is possible. At the same time, other texts portray rural Ireland in the post-Famine nineteenth century as a static timespace in which Famine suffering lingers on, and in which there is no potential for improvement.

The idea of ever-continuing hardship for the Irish poor also featured in contemporary newspaper reports, in which comparisons with the Famine were frequently made. In an illustration ironically titled “English Benevolence” (printed in *The Irish-American* and provided in Figure 3.1), America – here personified as Columbia – is presented as Ireland’s saviour once again, while Britain – personified as Britannia – and what seems to be a depiction of Charles Stewart Parnell stand on the sidelines and do nothing, while famine strikes the Irish poor once more. The caption reads “COLUMBIA – Must I again come forward to save these unfortunate Irish people during another of those ever-recurring seasons of distress, brought on and fostered by your iniquitous system of land-robbery? [...] while you, their self-elected rulers, stand by, cold and indifferent to their sufferings”. Moreover, a direct link to Famine-era policy is made by the inclusion of Charles Trevelyan in the caption, portrayed as a mumbling, misguided and ineffective speaker and statesman.

After analysing different approaches to the duration of Famine experiences, in this chapter I will investigate the manner in which works of Famine fiction compare the suffering by the rural Irish poor with the suffering of other peoples. Specifically, I will analyse the comparisons made in these works of fiction between suffering during the Great Famine and other histories of oppression, specifically slavery. I will demonstrate how, through these analogies, episodes of different cultural memories can be-

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9 Dominick LaCapra argues that after the occurrence of a traumatic event, victims involuntarily repeat that event. If this is not accompanied by a gradual coming to terms, the victim can become haunted by that event, “stuck in it”. Thus, Lacapra highlights both repetition and the potential longevity of traumatic memory. See ‘Trauma, Absence, Loss’, *Critical Inquiry* 25/4 (Summer 1999), 696–727: 699.

10 The full caption reads:
come temporally disconnected and possibly even universalised.

**Figure 3.1:** ‘English Benevolence’, in *The Irish-American* 35/4 (27 Jan. 1883).

COLUMBIA – Must I again come forward to save these unfortunate Irish people during another of those ever-recurring seasons of distress, brought on and fostered by your iniquitous system of land-robbery? It is a scandal to this civilized age that a peasantry whose industry has made my desert places to blossom as the rose should perish of hunger in their own country, while you, their self-elected rulers, stand by, cold and indifferent to their sufferings. Can you wonder they are driven to madness by such treatment?

CHIEF SECRETARY TREVELYAN – Oh! now, – er – really, you must not go – on – er – that way, you know! We have done all that is – er – necessary in the case. There is plenty of room for these – er – people I the poor-houses; and – er – I have given – er – a donation of ten shillings – er – myself, and have advised them to use Indian meal, which I think – er – is very nice!
3.1 A ‘New’ Order to Be Born? Feudalism Revisited

As Joe Cleary has argued, “[t]he British conquest of Ireland led to the creation of a landlord class that controlled the Irish legal and political system to a degree unparalleled in England. In this account, conquest led to the emergence of a kind of bastardized feudalism [...] Irish society remained essentially feudal or quasi-feudal in character in this view until the very end of the nineteenth century.” Despite this corruption of feudalism, various works of Irish and Irish-diasporic fiction, often written by middle-upper and upper-class authors, actively engage with a reification of this system. Notwithstanding whether these texts were written from the tenantry’s or the landlords’ perspective (or both), the characters in these narratives often display a resistance to change and to modernity, and instead voice a very strong nostalgia for a pre-colonial feudal ideal, typically found in Irish Big House fiction. As Vera Kreilkamp explains, the genre of Big House fiction typically centres on a landlord family which presides over a considerable agricultural estate that is leased out to tenant farmers. She argues that Big House fiction often contains “a conservative rural ideology” which takes on a “reactionary form”. The current section will focus mostly on the relatively unknown text *Rose O’Connor* (1880) by ‘Toler King’ – the pseudonym adopted by Irish-American writer Emily Fox – because of the pronounced emphasis it places on the poor Irish tenantry and its supposed wish for the retention of landlordism, albeit in altered form.

Virtually nothing is known about Emily Fox, besides that she resided in America and wrote two other novels: *Gemini* (1878) and *Off the Rocks* (1882). *Rose O’Connor* contains many stock images of Famine memory, including the benevolent angelic landlord’s daughter who does all she can to save the starving tenantry, the misled avaricious landlord, and the eviction of their families.

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of the protagonist family, the famished condition of the protagonist Rose and her father, and the deaths of Rose’s mother and little brother due to famine conditions. The death of little Tommy, Rose’s brother, is described in strongly sentimental tones:

“Tommy! wake up quick, an’ see what Rosie has for ye – tay an’ white bread. Tommy! Tommy! why don’t ye spake to me?” Rose withdrew the blanket. Tommy’s eyes were not closed, they were wide open; he did not notice her. His gaze was fixed on something: the intensity perplexed her. One little hand still held the slice of turnip (the marks of teeth were in it but not bitten through); the other was laid on his heart, as if some sudden pain had called it there. Rose shook him gently. No response. He was cold; she tried to get a teaspoonful of warm tea into his mouth; it ran out at the corners; his teeth were closed – his jaws rigid. Tommy was dead!

A sharp, agonized cry escaped Rose, as the truth forced itself upon her. She flung herself upon the body of her dead brother, passionately kissed his cold, famine-pinched features, and called him by every endearing name to “come back to his own Rosie.”

The novel contains the only reference to the eating of nettles and herbs found in this research corpus; an image which is often associated with the period of the Great Famine. Furthermore, the examples provided above and the novel’s orientation towards the Catholic feudal ideal, demonstrate that Rose O’Connor contains many topics and ideological outlooks also found in Famine narratives written during the same period. All this leads to the assumption that the novel is set during the Famine time. However, a brief reference to John Dillon’s and Charles Stewart Parnell’s fund-raising tour through the US in 1880 shows that the novel is actually set

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14 Emily Fox (‘Toler King’), Rose O’Connor; A Story of the Day (Chicago, IL: Chicago Legal News Company, printer, 1880), 95–6.
15 The protagonist’s father Hugh O’Connor goes to his landlord to ask for an extension on the rent, and states the following: “Plowin’ the land won’t give me money to buy food now for me shtarvin’ fam’ly, an’ a man can’t do work whin he has nothin’ bether than raw turnips, or biled nittles to ate; and that only once a day.” Fox, Rose O’Connor, 88. (As an aside to this specific quote, the reader is left to wonder why the O’Connor family does not boil its turnips along with its nettles, though.)
Chapter 3

during the Land War era, a period which is described in equally devastating tones as the Great Famine.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, this novel should be seen as a ‘famine’ rather than ‘Famine’ narrative. However, despite the temporal placement of the narrative, I discuss Fox’s novel in this section, for, save the singular reference to Dillon and Parnell, this novel reads as a Famine narrative. Moreover, as I have argued in the first chapter, concerning the period 1871–91 it is at times difficult and perhaps even distorting to differentiate between literary recollections of the Famine and famine memories, since they share many narrative devices, political ideologies and manners of representation, creating an amalgam best called literary F/famine recollection.

*Rose O’Connor* is set in an unknown village in Ireland and mainly details the lives of Rose O’Connor, her lover Tim Bryan, and their landlord to be, Lord Livingston Fenton. Just before famine afflicts the Irish, Tim leaves Ireland in the service of Lord Fenton. As conditions become worse, the O’Connors experience much hardship. After Rose’s brother and mother succumb to starvation, the deaths of many more of their neighbours are described in rapid succession. Rose and her father Hugh are taken in by the kind landlord’s daughter Leila D’Arcy, who saves them just in time, “like brands snatched from the fire”.\textsuperscript{18} By the end of the novel, Tim returns with Lord Fenton, who by this time has become the new landlord. Tim and Rose marry and look forward to a happy life in the service of their landlord and lady, leaving famine hardship quickly behind.

In the latter half of the narrative, Livingstone Fenton becomes a benevolent and caring feudal landlord. However, in the first half of the narrative, he actually expresses much more progressive intentions for his tenantry:

Lord Fenton was intensely interested in everything pertaining to, or connected with the present condition of the Irish people. He had devoted his time to reading histories and the writings of able men. He had proved to his entire satisfaction that a change in the land laws was imperatively necessary. He was aware of the advantages of a peasant proprietary over the system of landlord and tenant.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} In a letter to his parents back in Ireland, Irish-American immigrant George Stanley states that “[t]here is a great deal of sympathy manifested, and *most generously* expressed by the American people for the Irish sufferers, especially since the arrival of Messrs. Parnell and Dillon, who have been cordially and enthusiastically received wherever they appeared to plead the cause; they advocated *simple justice* for their suffering country and its oppressed people.” Fox, *Rose O’Connor*, 119.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 163.
On bad terms with his father Lord Melrose, who personifies the typically self-centred landlord tragically out of touch with his tenants and their needs, Livingstone Fenton writes his father many letters advocating a more just treatment of their tenantry. He feels that the corrupted system is completely to blame for the current famine, and says that “[t]here is no need of famine and suffering in Ireland; there would not be any if she was properly dealt with.”

The text acknowledges Fenton’s indebtedness to, among others, John Stuart Mill, as Fenton argues “that the land of Ireland, like the land of every other country, belongs to the people who inhabit it.” During the latter half of the nineteenth century, this view was shared by Irish politicians and thinkers such as Parnell, Michael Davitt and Isaac Butt, who voiced sentiments inspired by James Fintan Lalor’s ideas. In 1848, Lalor had stated that “the entire soil of a country belongs of right to the entire people of that country, and is the rightful property, not of any one class, but of the nation at large, in full effective possession, to let to whom they will, on whatever tenures, terms, rents, services and conditions.” Emphasising that Irish identity was rooted in the land, Lalor said that the “property of their own soil” was the people of Ireland’s “natural right, on the grant of God”.

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19 Ibid., 69. The historical nature of the inequality found in Irish society is supported by Lord Fenton’s readings of historical works. Jonathan Swift, Edmund Spencer (specifically his ‘A View of the Present Condition of Ireland’ from 1596) and William Pitt the Younger (the PM responsible for the Act of the Union in 1801) are all referred to.

20 Ibid., 70–1.

21 Ibid., 14–15; Mill is explicitly mentioned.


Fenton, because he advocates peasant proprietorship, even goes as far as wanting to abolish his own class. His father refuses to listen, exclaiming the traditionalist Malthusian-inspired credo “I am fond of the old way. Let well enough alone, boy; if there are too many poor people, and if the rents cannot be paid, why let them be evicted, take up the land from them; they can emigrate, you know, as many others have done.”

On his deathbed, Lord Melrose realises his mistake and declares that he now agrees with all his son’s views and wishes him all the best as the new landlord. He laments his own actions, but rejoices in the belief that his son will do better: “you will make yourself the champion of a people and a country that I have assisted in oppressing and draining.” The novel then provides a melodramatic rendering of Lord Melrose’s dying words: “Spend your time, talents, and wealth in the cause of oppressed Ireland, gaining restitution of her rights, and freedom from the burdens and wrongs that – that – I have assisted – in heaping upon her un – hap – py peo – ple!”

After this, peasant proprietorship and a great transformation of the Irish land system seem within reach. But despite his father’s blessing and his own altruistic and revolutionary views, Fenton realises that, while peasant proprietorship is a noble and just goal, it cannot be achieved in the current corrupted climate in which egoistic landlords continue to wield all the power. Instead, the narrative reverts to the Big House tradition, as Lord Fenton opts for a non-revolutionary and traditionalist approach by becoming, together with his equally benevolent wife, the embodiment of “enlightened landlordism”.

In its build-up to this conventional ending, the novel does not go into the religious and national dimensions that have long characterised Ireland’s rural society and solely focuses on idealised interpersonal relationships within a perfect feudal society where apparently religious differences play no or only a minor role. Rose O’Connor ends with the tenantry celebrating the new resident landlord and lady. In fact, tenant Tim – by now Lord Fenton’s much esteemed friend – expresses the wish to retain the existing societal hierarchy under the new landlord, stating that “no one need fear as long as the lan’lord lives among his tineantry an’ has an eye aftur their interest wid his own, for if the tenant

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25 Fox, Rose O’Connor, 17.
26 Ibid., 167.
27 Ibid., 169.
28 As Kreilkamp has argued, many nineteenth-century novelists writing in the Big House tradition, opted for “a vision of a lost ideal and a failed cultural purpose – of social responsibility, enlightened landlordism, or personal dignity” (Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House, 268).
3.1 A ‘New’ Order to Be Born? Feudalism Revisited

has a frind in the lan’lord, my hand to ye, [...] the lan’lord has a frind in the tenant”. The fact that Tim, although a trusted confidant, is still a servant, and that Rose also becomes a content domestic to the landlord couple, suggests that the novel’s lower-class characters do not desire drastic social change, at least not in the short run.

As Table 3.1 demonstrates, nostalgia for the return of a pre-colonial ideal Irish feudal society can be found in many works of Famine fiction. 18 works (or 55 per cent) of the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) contain (detailed) representations of Irish rural social hierarchy, and of the relations between landlords and tenantry. 13 out of these 18 works are by writers from the British Isles, demonstrating that, while Irish agricultural-political issues were of great importance for the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic, authors writing in Ireland and England concerned themselves more with the social configurations of landlord-tenant relationships.

Out of these 18 works, 11 (or 61 per cent; 33 per cent of the entire corpus) celebrate a form of ideal Irish feudalism. In the majority of these 11 works, and in contrast to Rose O’Connor, a religious dimension is included, as the narrative explicitly indicates of which faith the ideal ruler is. Exceptionally, one work is Protestant in its orientation: Lalla McDowell’s The Earl of Effingham (1877). Virtually nothing is known about McDowell. Her Big House novel is not strongly religious in tone, but Stephen Brown nevertheless states that the novel’s “bias is somewhat Protestant”. He praises Lalla McDowell – likely a pseudonym – for her humour, her ability to bring out “the good points in the Irish character” and her apt reproduction of the brogue. The eponymous Earl, who is English but also of Anglo-Irish descent, comes to Ballyquin during the Famine to buy the bankrupt Burk estate from Major Burk, a gambler and absentee landlord. Determined to treat his future tenantry right, Effingham does many good deeds and helps the starving tenantry, but this does not immediately earn him the people’s respect. When speaking to the tenants and asking for their “trust” and “a real Irish welcome”, one tenant even shoots him. Not fatally wounded, and understanding that the act was done out of love and protection for Nelly Burk, Major Burk’s angelic daughter – Effingham

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29 Fox, Rose O’Connor, 172–3.
Table 3.1: Presence of Feudalist Ideal in Works of Famine Fiction, 1871–91 (ordered by publication date).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Publication Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – Castle Daly</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – Dick O’Dell</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1876–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.McDowell – The Earl of Effingham</td>
<td>Y Protestant</td>
<td>1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – Light and Shade</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. O’Meara – The Battle of Connemara</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Steadfast Unto Death</td>
<td>N Catholic</td>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox – Rose O’Donnell</td>
<td>Y n/a</td>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sigerson – A Ruined Race</td>
<td>N Catholic</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Sherlock – Lord of Dundonald</td>
<td>Y n/a</td>
<td>1889–90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – Uncle Pat’s Cabin</td>
<td>N n/a</td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – The Days of a Life</td>
<td>N Presbyterian</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – Scenes and Incidents</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew – Castle Cloyne</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lawless – The Harp of Erin</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O’Brien – The Flag of Connemara</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – The Days of a Life</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O’Brien – Rose O’Donnell</td>
<td>Y n/a</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Sacred and Profane</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. O’Meara – The Death of Connemara</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. O’Dunlop – Light and Shade</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – Zanthon</td>
<td>N n/a</td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – Marcella Grace</td>
<td>Y Catholic</td>
<td>1891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (18) N: 11 Y / 7 N 10 Catholic / 1 Presbyterian / 6 n/a

Total per Region

B.I. a: 8 Y / 5 N B.I.: 9 Catholic / 1 Protestant / 3 n/a

N-AM. b: 3 Y / 2 N N-AM.: 1 Catholic / 1 Presbyterian / 3 n/a

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a 'B.I.' stands for Britain, Ireland.

b 'N-AM.' stands for North America.

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Table 3.1: Presence of Feudalist Ideal in Works of Famine Fiction, 1871–91 (ordered by publication date).
is convinced that the tenantry “[o]ut of their live and gratitude to Nelly [...] would have given their lives” – Effingham forgives the culprit. Following a conventional Big House national marriage plot, the Anglo-Irish Nelly and English (but of Irish descent) Effingham marry and become the resident landlords of Ballyquin. When the new landlord couple takes up residence in Castle Burk on Boxing Day, the Earl speaks to his tenantry again stating “I feel that I have now a strong claim upon your love and duty. I ask you to receive and trust me. I ask you to give me – a hearty Irish welcome!” This, Effingham receives, and an ideal reciprocal feudal bond is established, even before the Famine ends. The narrator rounds off the narrative by placing the blame for the Irish condition at present with the “misled” Irishmen rather than a “foreign [British] yoke” and argues against absenteeism, which she labels the “unfaithful stewardship” of Ireland.

By contrast, by far most works of fiction that specify their religious orientation, direct their attention to the Catholic faith. In Annie Keary’s *Castle Daly*, after the Famine, Irish Catholic landlord’s daughter Ellen Daly becomes the new landlady of the estate, and like a good Irish mother lovingly rules Good People’s Hollow together with her kind-hearted English husband, thereby again representing the traditional national marriage plot. In Margaret Brew’s *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne*, Hyacinth Dillon, a Catholic landlord’s son fallen on hard times during the Famine, returns to Ireland to buy back “the old estate” through the “Encumbered Estates Court” from the new landlord – a London “hotel-keeper” who has quickly become bankrupt – and the novel ends with Hyacinth trying to restore the Irish peasantry to its former state.

Irish-Canadian author F. H. Clayton’s *Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life* (1884) also looks favourably upon an ideal feudal reciprocal bond between the old-stock Catholic D’Arcy family and their tenantry. Little is known about the Reverend Clayton, who probably grew up in Banagher, Co. Offaly, and emigrated to Canada. Clayton used the pseudonym ‘An

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33 Ibid., 269.
34 Kreilkamp, Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House, 268, 5.
35 Ibid., 279.
36 Ibid., 280.
37 This traditional national marriage plot is further explained in the following chapter.
Irishman’; his *Scenes and Incidents* was also published under that pen name. The novel describes the D’Arcy family as displaying trust, “love” and “kind thoughtfulness” to their tenantry, and in return, each and every of their tenants would have “shed the last drop of his blood in defence or cause of the family of Gurteen Lodge” – the D’Arcy residence.\(^{40}\)

However, Clayton’s narrative also acknowledges that this is no longer a tenable social construction in present-day Ireland: by the narrative’s end, all good, old-stock landlords have lost their estates and fortunes due to the Famine and the disastrous actions of a new self-absorbed generation of “barely human” landlords.\(^{41}\) The text blames this generation of “English adventurers” for all the ills that have befallen Irish society during and since the Famine. The narrator describes the members of this new ruling class as *nouveau riche*, as “English speculators, tradesmen, shopkeepers, weavers and innkeepers, who come over from time to time to gather the pounds of flesh from the bodies of the poor hardworking Irishmen and women, widows and orphans, in exorbitant rents, which if not paid ejection follows, thereby destroying effectually all feeling of security and idea of permanency.”\(^{42}\) And while “genuine Irish landlords remained in the midst of their tenantry” during the Famine, the new type of landlord “barred up the windows and doors” and “betook himself to a more genial soil, and left his less fortunate fellow-creatures to struggle as they might for dear life”.\(^{43}\) The novel closes with a nostalgic lament of this development, stating “[t]he resident landlords seldom oppressed the tenant”.\(^{44}\) It uses these “past wrongs and present evils” as an argument for future change, for the granting of “fixity of tenure” and “local government” to Ireland, “the same as to Canada”. This, the narrator argues, would serve as “recompense and atonement for past oppressions and confiscations”.\(^{45}\)

Although, as Table 3.1 shows, the ideal of Catholic Irish feudalism

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\(^{40}\) F. H. Clayton (‘An Irishman’), *Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life* (Montreal: John Lovell, printers, 1884), 172, 92.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 89.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 337. Cormac Ó Gráda has noted that the landlords already in Ireland during the Famine were often too impoverished to buy up the newly available estates of their peers who had gone bankrupt during the Famine. As a result, the way was left open “to nouveau riche shopkeepers and lawyers”. See ‘Ireland’s Great Famine. An Overview’, in Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Papping and Eric Vanhaute, eds, *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the ‘Last’ European Subsistence Crisis, 1845–1850* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 43–57: 52.

\(^{43}\) Clayton, *Scenes and Incidents*, 54.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 338.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 338–9.
seems widespread throughout the Irish and Irish-diasporic community, a slight difference between works from the British Isles and from North America becomes visible. For the 18 works of F/famine fiction which discuss land issues, the following numbers can be provided with regard to their religious orientation: 10 works (or 56 per cent) imply that the ideal feudal landlord or lady is Catholic. 1 work gives preference to a landed class of the Presbyterian faith and 1 to a ruling class of the Protestant faith. In 6 works (or 33 per cent) such a religious orientation is absent (indicated by “n/a”). Although the differences are small, it does seem to be the case that a specific religious orientation is provided more frequently in Irish than in North-American texts, which is somewhat surprising. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many Protestant Irish emigrated. During the nineteenth century and especially since the rise in emigration levels due to the Famine, predominantly lower-class Catholics emigrated to the US in great numbers. Because of this, by the mid nineteenth century, Irishness had become “almost synonymous with Catholicism on both sides of the Atlantic”. As Lawrence McCaffrey states, while in Ireland, England and the US “[n]egative stereotypes in fiction and public entertainment were Catholic”, “the Irish wore their religion as a badge of honor and embraced it as their nationality and culture”. Because of the emphasis on religion as a marker of an Irish identity found throughout the Irish-American community, one would assume that stressing the religious dimension of the narrative and of the rural ideology expressed in that narrative, would be a crucial element in North-American works, and would

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47 Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (USA: Longman, 2000), 114. Catering for the transnational Irish Catholic audience, famous Irish priest Father Burke toured North America and Ireland extensively. His sermons were often published in newspapers. For example, on 15 June 1872, *The Irish-American* included two sermons which Burke had held in New York, in which he demonstrated the superiority of the Catholic religion. Stating that the first of the “great wants in our society” was “our relation to God”, Burke felt that in contrast to other religions, the Catholic faith gave followers practical guidelines to follow, “necessary for the sanctifying of every man” (2). In the second sermon, Burke argued that this superior spiritual connection could be found in “the national character of the Irish race and people” (5). See ‘Father Burke. Two Beautiful Discourses. Lecture in St. Bridget’s Church. “The Irish Nation and Its Relation to Catholicity.” Lecture in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. “The Catholic Church and the Wants of Society”’, *The Irish-American* 24/24 (New York: 15 June, 1872), 1, 2, 4, 5.
feature at least equally as strongly as it does in British works.

As is the case in *Rose O’Connor*, in Brew’s *Castle Cloyne*, the enlightened landlord to be is followed around the globe by a servant – Pat Flanagan – who is unconditionally loyal. Even when Hyacinth – after being inculcated with American democratism – grants Flanagan his freedom, Pat refuses and expresses his wish to remain his master’s “boy”.49 Similarly to Emily Fox’s novel, *Castle Cloyne* represents the internalisation of such social role patterns as far-reaching.50 In the novel it is implied that the ideal reciprocal feudalism of pre-colonial and perhaps even mythical times is apparently as much desired by the ruled as the ruling classes.

Various works of Famine fiction deal with the relationship between landlords and tenants during later periods, equally showing a reluctance to canvass thoroughgoing change, and rather opting for the continuance of landlordism, albeit under Irish (Catholic) landlords. Rosa Mulholland’s *Marcella Grace* shows that the ills of fever, famine and endemic hardship in the early 1880s stemming from a corrupted landlord system unchanged since Famine times can in fact quite satisfactorily be resolved by the introduction of the right-minded Catholic landlady, whose coming serves as a “final break with the past” and who cares like a mother for her tenants in “her little Kingdom” of Distresna.51 Mulholland’s novel acknowledges that such ideologies were contested terrain at the time already, without, however, rejecting them: as Marcella, who, “in her heart [...] leaned toward landliordism”, contemplates, “And yet, does it not seem a pity to let the old relations of landlord and tenant quite die out? [...] It seems to me such a good relation if everyone did his duty.”52 Likewise, Kathleen O’Meara’s *The Battle of Connemara* argues for more understanding among the landlord and tenant classes, and easily resolves this by having protean landlady Margaret Blake convert to Catholicism, and being welcomed “into the fold” by her “loyal-hearted people”.53

Thus, these works envision the creation or restoration of an affective


50 This acceptance and internalisation of social hierarchy is also expressed in the anonymous *Dick O’Dell: A Story of ’48*, which appeared in *Young Ireland. An Irish Magazine of Entertainment and Instruction* 2/36 (2 Sept., 1876) – 3/6 (10 Feb. 1877). While the O’Dell family have a warm and affectionate bond with their tenantry, tenant Miles Murphy warns his niece Winnie to not be too friendly with the quality and to know her place (442).

51 Mulholland, *Marcella Grace*, 90, 316.

52 Ibid., 126, 125.

bond between landlord and tenant, on the basis of common goals and in many cases, a shared religion. Some works take this identification one step further, by also employing the figure of the poor people’s landlord or lady, the ruler who has experienced poverty and hardships firsthand and thus can thoroughly identify with his or her people. Poverty becomes a shared theme between the tenantry and their rulers in for example Castle Cloyne and Marcella Grace. In the former, Hyacinth Dillon loses his entire estate, only to learn the value of hard work, before returning to Ireland to take his rightful place as landlord to the repurchased Dillon estate. And in the latter, it takes Marcella – from the urban lower classes, but secretly of upper-class descent – to rescue the tenantry by functioning as the ultimate just and compassionate landlady.\(^{54}\) Marcella herself also reflects on this personal advantage as she feels that “her exceptional experience of the tribulations of the poor ought to give her [...] a particular advantage in the effort she might make to raise the condition of those over whom she had been so strangely and so wonderfully placed”.\(^{55}\)

Although such experiences of poverty seemingly create identificatory links between the ideal landlord and his/her tenantry, I would argue that these novels still formulate incompatible forms of poverty. Hyacinth’s and Marcella’s poverty can be seen as crucial stages in the regenerative process at the core of their narratives, while the poverty of the tenantry personified in characters such as Pat Flanagan, Rose O’Connor and Tim Bryan is prolonged, and is internalised to such an extent, that it is still considered normative, even after the economic dimension of that condition has been dismissed. So there still exists an affective gap between landlord and tenant: Hyacinth and Marcella at a certain point are impoverished like their tenants, but never fully share their life-threatening plight. This is also the case for the larger reinstatement of a (Catholicised) form of Irish feudalism in these narratives, as the benevolent landlords and landladies such as Margaret Blake, the Earl of Effingham in Lalla McDowell’s eponymous novel, and Lord Fenton and his wife truly empathise with their tenants, but are still at a relative safe remove from their suffering tenantry as a consequence of existing class structures. Thus, regardless of the strongly unifying thrust of these novels, this juxtaposition of cross-class identification and a sustained affective gap could also point out that the narratives

\(^{54}\) Marcella grew up poor in Dublin. At the same time, she is also part upper-class Irish in her parentage and thus is presented as the ideal Irish landlady. Her humble upbringing gives her the ability to directly relate to her people, while she can also make claims to historical rulership rights on the basis of her old-stock parentage.

\(^{55}\) Mulholland, Marcella Grace, 126.
gloss over the differences between the poverty of the lowest classes and the temporary poverty of the upper classes through a facile identification between the two.

Despite this continued discrepancy and despite the odds – the occurrence of the Famine and later hardships reminiscent of Famine times – the characters in these novels express the wish to revert to “idealizations of new-feudal landlord-tenant relationships” in which loyal tenants are rewarded by their philanthropic landlords.\(^{56}\) Contrary to Vera Kreilkamp’s contention that such post-Famine idealisations are “the exception rather than the rule”, for many works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) that deal with landlord-tenant relationships, this reversion to a pre-colonial Irish feudalism is a shared theme.\(^{57}\)

To return to Rose O’Connor: Fox’s novel contains ideological tensions, displaying reciprocal feudalism as the short-term ideal realised at the narrative’s end, while apparently also hoping for something more for the Irish tenant – a peasant proprietorship modelled along the lines of the ideas of Mill, Lalor, Parnell, Butt and other likeminded thinkers and politicians –, as is voiced by young Lord Fenton in the first three-quarters of the novel. In this respect it is potentially more radical than many of the other novels discussed in this section (with the exception of Clayton’s *Scenes and Incidents*), which call for the return of ideal Irish feudalism, but often leave their urge for improvement at that. This could be attributed to the conventional and reactionary genre conventions of Big House fiction, but also, as James Murphy has stated, to the intellectual milieu of the authors in question and their social aspirations. As Murphy argues, “[b]efore the 1890s Irish Catholic fiction reflected the distinctive outlook of the Catholic upper middle class” which wanted to normalise its own position in Victorian society by distancing itself from agrarian violence and by placing “its hopes for peace, not in tenant ownership, but in the replacement of a Protestant with a Catholic gentry, dedicated to the fair treatment of the tenantry. A rural Ireland ruled by a Catholic gentry would be a country ruled by a class of an identical outlook to that of the urban Catholic upper middle class.”\(^{58}\)

The social backgrounds of the authors discussed in this section so far

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\(^{57}\) Ibid.

corroborate Murphy’s analysis: Irishwoman Margaret Brew probably belonged to the Catholic upper classes; English author Annie Keary was upper-middle class and hailed from mixed Irish-English parentage; Irishwoman Rosa Mulholland – later Lady Gilbert – belonged to the Catholic upper classes; Irish author Kathleen O’Meara was also upper-middle class and a staunch Catholic.59 The to some degree odd one out here is Margaret McDougall, who was of Ulster-Scots parentage; her position led to a mitigated Unionist/Canadian orientation with a strong compassion for the Irish poor’s plight.60 Too little is known about American writer Emily Fox’s and Canadian author F. H. Clayton’s backgrounds and viewpoints, but arguably they wrote with a different, potentially more radical audience (Irish North-American, versus British) in mind.61 Despite this, Fox’s novel


61 Many exiled Irish nationalists such as Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and John Mitchel came to the US. As Chapter 4 will show, Irish nationalists across the Atlantic were often even more ardent than their counterparts in the British isles. Vincent Comerford has argued that “in Irish America of the 1860s the Famine as British atrocity was by no means the only remarkable interpretation. Nonetheless, the Mitchelite version has
ends with a nostalgic image, which in hindsight could be labelled elegiac, for it suggests the reinstatement of an Irish pre-colonial form of feudalism, which perhaps had never even existed and which was no longer feasible at the novel’s time of writing.  

Rose O’Connor and Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life demonstrate that the narrative pattern of prospective nostalgia through the revitalisation and catholicisation of feudalism is not only found in works by the Irish upper and upper-middle class intelligentsia writers discussed by Murphy, but can also be found in Irish North-American works. Moreover, Marcella Grace was published on both sides of the Atlantic in various editions. Castle Daly was published repeatedly by Macmillan in London, and Porter and Coates in Philadelphia in 1875 and by G. Munro in New York in 1880. Charlotte G. O’Brien’s Light and Shade was published in book form in Britain and the US in 1878, by Kegan Paul (London) and Harper (New York), and was again serialized in the Illustrated Celtic Monthly (New York) a year later. The fact that these works were published and read on both sides of the Atlantic, suggests that the ideology behind the ‘reified feudalism’ pattern found resonance throughout the transatlantic community, for it was not only included in books written ‘at home’, but also in those authored outside of Ireland, and, moreover, was disseminated throughout the transnational community in books of Irish provenance. Perhaps the popularity of this traditionalist ideal may not only be traced to the Catholic orientation of the majority of the writers, but also to the alleged double

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62 Murphy, ‘Rosa Mulholland, W. P. Ryan and Irish Catholic Fiction’, 223.
3.1 A ‘New’ Order to Be Born? Feudalism Revisited

sense of oppression – by Anglo-Protestants at home and abroad – on both sides of the water, famously memorialised by Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa who stated “I cannot feel that America is my country [...] I am made to see that the English power, and the English influence and the English hate, and the English boycott against the Irishman to-day is as active in America as it is in Ireland.”\(^{66}\) Moreover, the fact that fewer North-American works explicitly engage with the religious dimension of the narrative pattern of reinstated feudalism, does not mean that this orientation featured less in the North-American Irish publishing market than it did in the British-Irish market.

After the Famine had greatly speeded up the consolidation of farmland into pasture land for sheep and cattle grazing, a new class of bourgeoisie farmers was introduced into Ireland, and the Irish small or tenant farmer largely disappeared.\(^{67}\) Moreover, in the middle of the 1880s another transformation in Irish rural society made the traditional feudalist orientation less feasible, as at the time “Irish tenant farmers of all classes” were encouraged by the National League – the new form of the Land League after 1882 – to take control in the distribution of land into “individually owned holdings” and thus could start to “envision a future of private ownership”.\(^{68}\) Through this tenant ownership a “new Catholic petit bourgeois establishment” became a reality. This orientation away from Irish feudalism is illustrated by the 1889 cartoon titled ‘The New Year’s Work and the Men to Do it’, provided in Figure 3.2. It shows that “[t]he rotten stump of the Upas of Irish landlordism” – feebly supported by earlier land bills – is about to be physically cut down by the Irish farmer and politically cut down by “the healthy growth of an Irish peasant proprietary”. After this, as the century drew to a close “not even the Catholic middle class could delude itself into imagining that it would ever be in the driving seat of the nation”.\(^{69}\) These societal changes imply that the nostalgic longing for a past ideal feudalism as propagated by these novels was already no longer feasible during the era in which these narratives were written.

Svetlana Boym makes a useful distinction between different forms of nostalgia. Discussing “restorative” and “reflective nostalgia”, she states:

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\(^{69}\) Murphy, ‘Rosa Mulholland, W. P. Ryan and Irish Catholic Fiction’, 223.
Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on nostos and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in algia, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. [...] Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers in ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.  

Restorative nostalgia is thus concerned with continuity and completeness, with building a bridge between an ideal past and the present. On the other hand, reflective nostalgia is elegiac in tone and acknowledges the fissures there are in a (cultural) memory. While remembering the past, it displays

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the scars of history. In line with this distinction, the works of Famine fiction discussed here argue for the reinstatement of Irish (Catholic) feudalism and thereby approach the memory of those long-lost times in a restorative manner. However, in the discrepancy between this ideal expressed in fiction and the social reality of the period 1871–91, the mnemonic fissures Boym links to reflective nostalgia can in fact be found.

Rose O’Connor and similar novels written in the Big House tradition sustain the “doubleness that is so characteristic” of the genre, by providing “the contrast between personal illusion and historical circumstances”. Here, nostalgia for a pre-colonial feudal Ireland only functions as a lament, displaying its own “solipsistic nature”, by drawing readers “into the past instead of the present” – or future –, for it provides no real future directions, but only reiterates a set mnemonic image and thus furthers that image’s ossification, to borrow Andreas Huyssen’s term.72 As Table 3.1 illustrates, a partial acknowledgement of this impossibility seems to exist in the literary corpus as a whole: the feudalist ideal appears to feature slightly more frequently in earlier than later texts (7 works published between 1871 and 1881 contain this ideal, while only 4 published between 1882 and 1891 do). This implies that after the changes effected in land politics, in Irish agriculture and in rural Irish society, the traditionalist ideal was already losing some of its staying power for Irish and Irish-diasporic authors writing in the 1880s.

Murphy argues that “the decade of the 1890s marks a watershed in Irish society” in the sense that fiction before that time reflected the “distinctive outlook of the Catholic upper middle class” – discernible in works such as Marcella Grace – while fiction written after this watershed “reflected the concerns of an emerging Catholic intelligentsia”.73 While I will not counter Murphy’s claim, I do want to nuance it slightly. This study’s corpus demonstrates that, with regard to Famine fiction, the change described by Murphy is rather a gradual transition than a watershed, which started a little earlier than the 1890s. In these works of Famine fiction, the

71 Kreilkamp, Anglo-Irish Novel, 268.
73 Murphy, ‘Rosa Mulholland, W. P. Ryan and Irish Catholic Fiction’, 220.
transition towards a different social orientation – away from a traditionalist social Catholic rural hierarchy and potentially towards a more modern rural economy – is ushered in by an increasingly less convinced engagement with the Catholic feudal ideal throughout the 1880s.

Nevertheless, in the majority of the works of Famine fiction included in this section, narrators and characters argue for the (re)introduction of ideal Irish feudalism on the basis of what Oona Frawley has termed a form of “pretraumatic” “recovered memory”.74 While they acknowledge the occurrence of the Great Famine, they do not accept its full after-effects on the traditional rural way of life, by casting an already absent or perhaps never existing way of life as a possible future. On the intradiegetic level, these narratives display a tendency perhaps not to ignore, but in any case seriously downplay the Famine, its after-effects and the results of later agricultural and demographic crises. They do so by rejecting inevitable, Famine-induced and Land League-inspired change and by evoking an archaic ideal for Irish society, a “past future” that was no longer feasible, but that they could not yet let go of.75 Minimising the after-effects of the Famine and later crises on Irish society and Irish characters, these narratives show a post-Famine Ireland in which the (traumatic) longevity of the effects of the Famine is undermined.

Conversely, this could also be interpreted as the attempts of a traumatized cultural group to hold on to their traditional sense of self through their writings. Since the future visions upheld by the characters and narrators discussed above refer to disappeared or never existing social configurations, the – to use Dominick LaCapra’s terms – structural absence of the pre-colonial feudal ideal is laid bare, as is the full impact of the Famine as a cultural trauma. The characters in these works of fiction suppress the painful past and resort to escapist utopias, placing memories of the Famine in a unique position somehow outside of these reconfigurations of a continued ideal Irish feudalism.

74 Oona Frawley, Memory Ireland, Volume 1: History and Modernity (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 32.
75 Deane, Strange Country, 51; Daniel Levy argues that a culture is not always capable of easily letting go of its past expectations for the future, despite the fact that their present might render these “past futures” as impossible or no longer desired. ‘Changing Temporalities and the Internalization of Memory Cultures’, in Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15–30: 17.
3.2 Anachronism I: “[H]ow history repeats itself”  

In the early 1880s, Margaret Dixon McDougall went to Ireland as a special correspondent for the Montreal and New York Witness. While in Ireland, she wrote several letters on the conditions of the peasantry, landlordism, evictions, famine, tenant rights and other problematic issues of early 1880s Irish society, which were published in these papers. Shortly after, McDougall’s observations were collected in her travelogue The Letters of “Norah” (1882). In her Letters, McDougall frequently uses the word “famine”, alternately speaking about Ireland at the height of the Land War and referring to the Great Irish Famine, thereby demonstrating the cyclical nature of Irish time. The repetitive nature of Irish history was acknowledged and experienced by others at the time: for example, in his speeches during his American fund-raising tour for the Land League, Parnell linked current ills to the Great Famine, so as to be able to “link Irish-American memory of the famine to the issue of land reform for Ireland”, as Ely M. Janis states. Moreover, the Famine-era philosophies of John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor again found much resonance during the Land War, in Lalor’s case perhaps “more than they had done during his lifetime”. Lalor’s revolutionary approach to achieve an “independent agricultural peasantry” which, he felt, was “the only base” on which the future Irish nation could safely rest, were considered too radical during the Famine, when the enfeebled Irish peasantry was simply worried with struggling to survive. Several newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic also made transhistorical comparisons. In 1890, Montreal-based Irish newspaper the

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76 ‘Norah’ (Margaret Dixon McDougall), The Days of a Life (Almonte: W. Templeman, 1883).
78 To be exact, the word “famine” is used 37 times in the Letters, alternately to describe current hardships and to compare them with the Famine period. See The Letters of “Norah”, on her Tour through Ireland, being a Series of Letters to the Montreal “Witness” as a Special Correspondent to Ireland” (Montreal: n.p., 1882).
80 Christine Kinealy, Repeal and Revolution: 1848 in Ireland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 284.
True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, while reporting of new agricultural crises and political struggles in Ireland, made repeated references to that other time of hardship, the Great Famine. Additionally, the paper often printed the sermons of Irish priest Tom Burke, who toured North America extensively. Frequently, Father Burke would refer to the Famine in his inflammatory speeches to arouse the nationalist feeling among his transatlantic audience.

Belfast-born McDougall reprocessed her Letters of “Norah” in The Days of a Life a year later, and the link between the Famine time and the Land War era also dominates the novel. McDougall provides an Irish-Canadian take on Ireland by the repetition of her own observations as a special correspondent focalised through Irish-Canadian protagonist Ida Livingstone. She depicts the suffering of the Irish poor at the hands of evil landlords, who are from a relatively new class: “it was generally remarked that the old landlords, who were passing away, or selling out under the pressure of financial difficulties, were giving place to a difference class of men – men of commercial ideas”.

The ideas of governance upheld by this new class can best be described as what Cleary has called a “bastardized feudalism”, for its members raise the rent “on the strength of the tenant’s own improvements” and “wish to exact feudal service and attachment, but have no idea of performing the feudal duties of protection and care”.

Agrarian terrorism also figures from time to time in the plot, but it does not comprise the main focus of the text. Rather, save for a few depictions of agrarian violence culminating in the murder of a criminal landlord – for which the plot’s tragic hero Bernard Butler is erroneously held responsible and is consequently deported –, the novel focuses on the patient and prolonged suffering of the Irish poor. Despite the fact that

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82 For example, The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle of 12 November 1890 (41/15) contains a short article about current distress in Connemara, which contains a letter by the Superior of the Convent of Mercy in Clifden to the Bishop of Buffalo, asking for relief for the starving and destitute parishioners. The author states that “[t]he wisest heads agree that since the great famine in 1847 there has not been such a failure of the potato crop throughout Connemara as at present” (4).

83 Between 1871 and 1891, Father Burke’s speeches were often reproduced on the pages of The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle. For example, in his lecture entitled ‘St Laurence O’Toole, the Last Canonized Saint of Ireland’, Father Burke preaches charity among the Irish by giving a lengthy sermon about a sixteenth-century saint who assisted many Irish during a contemporary famine. When discussing this episode in the saint’s life, Father Burke interjects the lamentation “Oh saint in Heaven! where wert thou in ’46 and ’47?” (23/10, 18 Oct. 1872, 2).

84 McDougall, Days of a Life, 129.

85 Cleary, Outrageous Fortune, 35; McDougall, Days of a Life, 129.
McDougall’s Butler is an ardent nationalist, the novel is written from an Ulster-Scots Unionist and Canadian democratic stance rather than from an Irish nationalist standpoint.

McDougall’s novel places the blame for Ireland’s current condition on what influential Irish journalist James Godkin some twelve years earlier had called “the rottenness at the foundation of the social fabric” of Ireland and the malevolent practices of greedy landlords. The novel does not blame the British government, as the narrator and several characters alike speak favourably of Prime Minister William Gladstone and his intentions. It is argued that the failure of Gladstone’s proposed improvements for Ireland should be accredited to the corruptness of the current land system and politics, which was also the cause of much Famine suffering, rather than a shortcoming in Gladstone’s intentions: in a conversation on current Irish politics, Bernard Butler argues that none of the measures proposed by Gladstone will be successful “until the common people are represented, and their representatives listened to”. Gladstone’s 1870 Land Act, which in principle granted the tenant the “right to sell on his interest in a property to the next incumbent” and thus meant an improvement in tenant rights, is discussed during various scenes in McDougall’s novel. In one such scene reverend’s daughter Mathilda Simson remarks that “God has sent

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86 When commenting upon the occurrence of the Famine, James Godkin referred to the long-existent corruption of Ireland’s social system, which he believed “would come down with a crash some day”. See The Land-War in Ireland: A History of the Times (London: Macmillan, 1870), 289.

87 The Days of a Life also contains a reference to the Irish Land Act of 1881 and its state agency, the Land Commission, established to “adjudicate rents around the country” (Perry Curtis Jr, The Depiction of Eviction, 107): one of the initially prosperous characters, Aunt Featherstone, goes to the Dublin Courts after her landlord rackrents and then tries to evict her. Unexpectedly, she receives a compensation of £800. Unfortunately this is only a seeming triumph, as her law costs virtually amount to that sum, the farm is worth thousands of pounds and evil landlord Lord Dane Clermont does not have to give her back the farm. The novel shows how impracticable and ineffectual the new laws are for the common (wo)man (324–6).

88 McDougall, Days of a Life, 289.

89 Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman, ‘Introduction’, in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman, eds, The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 1–18), 7. Since the Famine, a common tenant demand had comprised the “three Fs”: fixity of tenure, fair rents and freedom to sell. The Land Act of 1870 had only engaged with the latter F. In reality, by not fulfilling the other two – fixity and fair rent – the act provided the possibility to also circumvent the freedom of sale, not proving very practicable for the Irish tenants: “experience quickly showed that in the absence of the other two [Fs] it was possible for landlords to undermine or circumvent the objectives of the [1870] Act.” (Bull, ‘Irish Land and British Politics’, 136.)
his nation a deliverer in the person of Mr Gladstone.” However, she is also critical, and states that Gladstone’s proposals have proved impracticable, for in the current system “so few of the tenants are able to take advantage of its provisions, because they are too poor”.  

Indeed, as Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman among others have acknowledged, although Gladstone seemed to understand just how central dealing with the Land Question was to eventually solving the Irish Question, his 1870 Land Act was “relatively limited in its actual effects, and [therefore] did little to pacify Ireland”. Contemporary commentators such as *Times* correspondent James Godkin saw the difficulties facing Gladstone, but approved of his plans, describing the statesman as “a great physician” who “understands the case of Ireland, and [...] has the courage to apply the proper remedies”. In all, the central argument of McDougall’s novel focuses on increased tenant right, a devaluation of the landlord class’ power and social equality, but does not argue for separatism or a classless society.

In McDougall’s novel, the main evil of the Irish land system from which all other ills spring, is best captured by the conversation between Bernard Butler and Mathilda’s father. By the novel’s ending, Reverend Simson, until then very traditional and critical of all forms of rebellion, has been won over to the Land League’s side by Bernard Butler:

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92 Godkin, *Land-War in Ireland*, vi. David Bennett King saw the difficulties facing Gladstone, writing that many saw him as “a true friend of Ireland, anxious to do all he could for her, that he would do all in his power to make the land bill help the farmer, but that he had great odds to contend against”. *The Irish Question* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1882), 168.
93 In line with this, in the article ‘The Last Days of the Irish Parliament’ published in Toronto-based magazine *Rose Belford’s Canadian Monthly and National Review* 3 (1879, 10–25), Revd E. W. Young acknowledges the co-dependency between Ireland and England, stating that “it may be irritating to say it, but it is too true”: “Ireland is too weak to stand alone” and that “England needs Ireland” and “Ireland needs England” (23).
“My mind never grasped the subject in that light,” said Mr Simson. I thought the chief evils were absenteeism, the subdivision of holdings, the bitterness of religious prejudice, over-population, the indolence of the peasantry, and the prevalence of strong drink."

No, sir; these are evils, but not the evil. The evil is the dreadful doctrine that the Irishman shall have no home in his own land; that he shall not have a dwelling, but a stopping place. This is the source from which misery, pauperism and agrarian crime spring, and have caused the laws of Ireland to be a hissing and a bye word among the nations of the earth.”

Besides convincing an until then staunch opponent, the words by Bernard Butler also subvert the typical othering and pejorative "ethnotype" of the lazy, rebellious Irishman, hinted at by the Reverend Simson. Rather, Butler argues from a social determinist position and his words imply that the Irish poor have these negative attributes, because of their low socio-economic standing, which is "the evil". Butler suggests that Ireland’s problem has for a long time been that its people do not have a home and do not own the land they live and work on. Godkin in his 1870 *The Land-War in Ireland* also condemned Irish dispossession: “Ireland has been irreconcilable, not because she was conquered by England, not even because she was persecuted, but because she was robbed of her inheritance.”

The novel contains many depictions of the hardships suffered by the poor Irish. One of the central events of the plot is the occurrence of the smaller famine of 1879. This more recent famine – although in reality smaller in scale and effect than the Great Famine had been – is presented as another Great Famine, just as bad as the first one, and the more general concept of famine is seen as “an evil that takes the lead of all evils”. When describing these hardships, the text makes repeated use of Famine imagery to represent current hardships: several evictions are depicted, many starving tenants are portrayed, people die alongside the road, and

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95 My use of the term “ethnotype” accords with Joep Leerssen’s coinage: Leerssen states that “in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries”, “cultures and nations” became categorised “on the basis of ethnotypes reconfigured into what comes to be called ‘national temperaments’ or ‘national characters’”. He defines the “tradition of ethnotypes” as “commonplaces and stereotypes of how we identify, view and characterize others as opposed to ourselves”. See *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 55–6, 17.
the potato crops fail again. A local priest functions as a link between these two – as the narrative presents them – similar times of hardship. When discussing destitution and hunger among his flock, the local priest remarks to protagonist Ida Livingston:

“I am not unused to scenes like this. I was in the West during the awful time of the great famine, and there I saw miles of country cleared of its inhabitants. I have seen landed proprietors helping to pull down the cabins of the poor people with their own hands. I have seen the people by hundreds on the roadside stricken with famine-fever, dying daily.”

Speaking from personal experience, the priest draws a direct comparison between the present and the Famine past. In his experience, Irish time folds back on itself; Ireland is in the same condition as some thirty years ago. The inclusion of the priest as a linking character presents the Famine as lived memory and tells the readers just how close to the heart the memory of the event was to the Irish in the early 1880s. This viewpoint was also supported by McDougall herself, as I will demonstrate shortly.

As the priest’s personal memory of the Famine is used to give narrative shape to the first-hand witnessing of hardships in the story’s present, the mnemonic image of Famine suffering functions as a screen memory, in a broader sense. Frequently, scholars have interpreted Freud’s Deckeninnerungen as a form of recollection used to “[cover] up a traumatic event – another traumatic event – that cannot be approached directly”.

In his essay from 1899, Freud argues that the construction of memory works via “displacement along the plane of association by contiguity” and that in the process different memories are connected “by links of a symbolic or similar nature”. Emphasising the displacement and connectedness inherent to screen memory, it follows that screen memories do not necessarily cover up other, more traumatic or not directly approachable, recollections. Rather, they or their characteristics can become part of other memories as well. Moreover, in line with this, in The Days of a Life – and, in fact, as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, in several other works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) as well – Famine memory itself is used as a screen memory to give shape to later hardships.

98 Ibid., 178.
99 Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory, 12.
The novel represents the current hardships experienced by the tenants rather as a repetition of Famine-era suffering, than as constituting a prolonged history of suffering since Famine times. As one of Ida’s friends remarks, just before the 1879 famine hits the Irish poor, they experienced a biblical “seven plenteous years”. Irish historiography supports this idea of repetition rather than prolonged decline in the post-Famine era, as not just Ireland’s rural economy but in fact its overall economy experienced prosperity from the late 1850s well into the 1870s.

The novel’s repetition of Famine imagery reaches its culmination point in chapter twelve. In this chapter, entitled “Eviction”, practically all Famine tropes are repeated and compressed in a few pages. As a result, McDougall’s novel reads as a transposed Famine narrative that uses Famine memory as a screen to depict later hardships, and that depicts the Famine as a transplanted postmnemonic image. McDougall took notice of this strong affective link between the two periods made by the Irish peasantry firsthand, for in The Letters of “Norah” she reflects on an eviction scene in the early 1880s as follows:

Memory is very strong among people who seem to have little to look forward to – the past seems the principal outlook. Every incident of the French landing here so far back as ’98 is told to me in the West here with a freshness of detail as if it happened a few years ago; one can imagine, therefore, how the cruel evictions of the famine time fit themselves into the memory of the people, especially as the rush of fresh evictions are awaking all the horrors of the past.

In a similar vein, in its representation of rural Ireland during the Land War, The Days of a Life repeatedly engages with Ireland’s Famine legacy. The narrator informs us that at present “the great multitude struggled

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101 Ibid., 54.
102 Séan Connolly, ‘Ireland: Society and Economy, 1850–1870’, UCC Multitext Project in Irish History: Emancipation, Famine and Religion: Ireland under the Union, 1815–1870, <http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Ireland_society_and_economy_1815ndash1870>, accessed 15 Oct. 2014; Alvin, Jackson, Ireland, 1798–1998: War Peace and Beyond (1999; 2nd edn, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010). 89. It should be acknowledged that Irish farmers rather than land labourers experienced this intermediate prosperity, as the latter class was too severely affected by the Famine: “For farmers with substantial landholdings, the period after the famine was mostly one of increasing prosperity, interrupted by downturns in the 1860s and 1880s. Simultaneous with the reforms of the postfamine period, the number of agricultural laborers in Ireland fell by two-thirds.” (Campbell, Ireland’s New Worlds, 132.)
103 McDougall, Letters of “Norah”, 189.
with death, with famine, were evicted by the thousands, sat in the shelter of the rocks and ditches, drifted into the poor-houses, and the grave. [...] It is strange how history repeats itself.”

As a new “very unhealthy season darkened down on Ireland” which carries with it the “breath of decaying vegetation” and the “smell of a blighted potato field [which] burdened the air for a long distance around it”, the image of the blighted field comes back in the novel. In the same chapter which contains the description of the blighted crops, the angelic reverend’s daughter Mathilda Simson dies, presumably due to overexertion of the nerves. In this respect, the Famine imagery of the blighted field functions as a pathetic fallacy, acting as a backdrop to Matilda’s suffering and thereby pointing out the connectedness of the heroic Irish beauty with her environment in an aesthetic manner. As The Days of a Life draws to a close, the new famine is not over and probably more hardships will follow. To borrow Daniel Levy’s terminology, the novel’s representation of the rural Irish timespace contains a “realignment of temporalities”. Different points or periods in time are brought together and late 1870s and early 1880s suffering is cast in the exact narrative mould of Famine suffering.

Conversely, this repetition – with a time of prosperity in between – demonstrates that in The Days of a Life and similar novels, the Famine is not accredited with potentially unending traumatic affective potential, for (never-ending) stasis is precluded. Thus, while McDougall’s novel depicts Land War era suffering in all its excruciating detail, it also puts it in a relative light, by alluding to the possibility of improvement in the short term. This relativising tendency with regard to the Land War era is taken one step further in Edward Newenham Hoare’s Mike. A Tale of the Great Irish Famine (1880). Hoare was a clergyman and author and who was born in Limerick in 1802 and died in London in 1877. He held various religious posts during his life, including archdeacon of Ardfert (Co. Kerry) and dean of Aconry (Co. Sligo). He was also editor of the Christian Herald and a children’s author. Hoare’s Mike was published posthumously and spans several decades starting in the Famine era. It is enveloped by a framework

104 Ibid., 418.
105 Ibid., 419.
107 The Loebers state that E. N. Hoare is sometimes confused with his son E. N. Hoare Jr, also a clergyman and an author. They attribute Mike to Hoare Sr. ‘Hoare, Revd Edward Newenham Snr’), in Rolf Loeber, Magda Loeber and Anne Mullin Burns, eds, A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650–1900 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 603.
narrative in which the story is read by the family of former estate agent Mr. Chaplin. While reading the narrative of Chaplin and his servant Mike and their experiences during the Famine in Ireland, Chaplin’s daughter, Mrs. Longley – who was a young girl at the time – states that “there has been a good deal of distress lately, and many of the people are very poor; but things have never been so bad since the time of the Great Famine”. Moreover, Famine suffering is also placed in perspective, as Mrs Longley argues that “[t]he Irish famine was sad enough, but it is nothing compared to the famines there have been within the last few years in Persia and India and China”.

In the priest’s memory in *The Days of a Life*, the Famine functions as a screen memory for the mnemonic configuration of current hardships; for other characters who have not necessarily lived through the period but who are certainly familiar with its after-effects, the memory of the Famine becomes a postmemory that resonates strongly in the current era. Through the realignment of these different periods their contiguities – in this case famine suffering caused by a corrupted system – are acknowledged and strengthened. Mnemonic traces of the Famine become “displaced” postmemories and screen memories and their connotations are projected onto another situation, creating political and moral links between these two historical instances of suffering through an idea of analogous victimhood.

A slight glimmer of hope that there will come an end to the rotten system of Irish landholding and periodic famine suffering is not only provided by the possibility of improvement between Famine and famine, but also by the narrator’s final words, which suggest betterment of the characters’ situations beyond the immediate scope of the novel. A survivor’s mentality – maintaining that current hardships shall also pass – underlies the narrative. Indeed, as the narrator concludes:

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109 Ibid., 34.
Our story ends – it is not finished.

What will the end be? Evil is not eternal! It must abolish itself, or be abolished. Through whatever pain, and throe, a new order of things shall be born, and the Evangel really means, “Peace on earth, Good Will to men.”

“Erin, oh! Erin, though long in the shade,
Thy star shall shine out when the proudest shall fade.”

THE END.110

3.3 Anachronism II: The Static Irish Timespace

Such a famine could not have occurred except where great numbers of the people were living on the very brink of want and distress, where a thickly crowded population relied upon one means of livelihood, and were regularly separated from starvation by only a crop of potatoes. [...] Since then, whenever there has been a partial failure of the potato crop, suffering and distress have increased. When any danger of famine threatens, the memory of ’47 fills the people with alarm and consternation, since many of those who were eye witnesses of or actors in those dreadful scenes are still living. We must keep in mind this chronic distress in order to understand many recent events.111

The above quote is taken from *Irish Question*, American reporter and professor David Bennett King’s 1882 collected volume of travel reports for the Philadelphia *Press*.112 It strikes at the heart of the matter of this section: the representation of the suffering undergone by the Irish rural poor as unchanging and ongoing since Famine times. Contrary to the previous section, the present will analyse works of Famine fiction that portray the condition of the Irish poor in the late nineteenth century as a form of Famine-induced stasis, rather than a repetition of Famine conditions. It

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111 King, *Irish Question*, 73–4, emphasis mine. An anonymous Irish MP also acknowledged that the suffering by the Irish rural poor was prolonged: “The result of the accumulation of the land of Ireland into a few hands has been to reduce the masses of the people to the direst poverty and a state of almost chronic starvation.” (‘An Irish M.P.’, *Irish Question*, 33).
will also discuss how this stasis places the Irish poor outside of any normative experience of time, by situating them in an ahistorical timespace.

One novel dealing with prolonged and unchanged suffering by the Irish rural poor is Charlotte G. O’Brien’s *Light and Shade* (1878). O’Brien was born in Cahermony House (Co. Limerick) in 1845 and died in Foynes (Co. Limerick) in 1909. The novelist, children’s author, poet and social activist was the daughter of the well-known nationalist politician William Smith O’Brien, to whom she dedicated *Light and Shade*. She was also friends with William C. Upton. Charlotte O’Brien spent several years abroad with her father, and as a child she even followed him into exile in Tasmania. They came back to Ireland in 1856 when William Smith O’Brien was allowed to return. Charlotte O’Brien was supportive of Parnell and the Land League and was active in various social causes. She was also involved in the improvement of conditions for females on board of emigrant ships and in boarding houses on both sides of the Atlantic. O’Brien contributed to several journals, including *United Ireland* and *The Nation*.113

*Light and Shade* is set in Co. Munster during the late 1860s and describes the tense atmosphere in rural Ireland in the run-up to the Fenian rebellion. The novel mostly focuses on young adults Tom and Edith Vanhurst – Anglo-Irish children of a kind landlord, who identify themselves with their tenantry – and the newly arrived English landlord, Lord Dunallan.114 During his transformation from absentee to resident and engaged landlord, Dunallan is assisted by his kind-hearted estate agent Mr Lloyd. Under the previous absentee landlords, the Dunallan estate has fallen into ruin: it is filled with “the miserable cabins of the poverty-stricken population”. Mr. Lloyd adds that “[t]here is hardly any part of Ireland where the degradation and misery is so complete as hereabouts.”115 For more than forty years, Mr. Lloyd has overseen the estate in place of the absentee lord: during that time, he has experienced the injustice of the Irish land system firsthand. While Lloyd cares for the tenantry, he also had the “justifiable” feeling “that he would certainly be blamed” for the bad condition of the estate,
when in fact the course he had pursued was that which alone had been open to him. Money was what his employer required, and his business was to supply it; and except during the famine years, he had always contrived, often at considerable inconvenience and risk to himself, to have the full tale forthcoming. It was not his work to improve. That could not be done without an immediate expenditure, not likely to be authorised by one who had never set foot in Ireland.116

In this passage, the agent shares his lived memory of the Famine period and ties it to present conditions. Agent Lloyd realises that matters have always been as bad as they are at present, because absentee landlords such as the ones he has worked for, are only interested in their own financial gain, not in any improvements or the tenantry’s condition, even during the Famine.

At another point in the novel, Tom Vanhurst remarks that most likely “the degraded state of the peasantry” at present can be attributed to “the usual story – neglected estates, land let at enormous rents to large farmers, who finding grazing most profitable, have no employment to give to the over-plentiful population, who are therefore forced to emigrate or starve”. He then goes on to stress the long endurance of this condition, arguing that “[t]his has been going on and must go on till land becomes free in the market, and the poor man has some chance of getting a bit on which to support himself”.117 Later, Vanhurst again refers to the longevity of the suffering of the Irish poor, alleging that Dunallan’s estate at present is in “a condition little if anything better than when Dunallan’s grandfather had left the country”.118 Consequently he refers to the Great Famine and uses the memory of Famine suffering as a postmemory to convince the current Lord Dunallan of his moral obligation to help his suffering tenantry in the present: “Do you think if your father had lived here, if even he had come here pretty frequently, as he should, that things would have been in this state [...]? If he had been here in the famine years, would the people have been lying dead, and no one to bury them, about these very fields. You will not back out of your duty because it is painful or even dangerous?”119 Through this statement, Vanhurst lays bare what lies at the heart of Ireland’s present condition: absenteeism by neglectful

116 Ibid., vol. 1, 72–3.
117 Ibid., vol. 1, 65.
118 Ibid., vol. 1, 73.
119 Ibid., vol. 1, 85–6.
3.3 Anachronism II: The Static Irish Timespace

landlords. Furthermore, he demonstrates that Ireland has been in this condition at least since the Famine time, envisaging rural Ireland as being continuously plagued by these root ills.

Stasis is also suggested by Rosa Mulholland’s *Marcella Grace*. An Irish Novel. Mulholland, who through her marriage with historian Sir John Gilbert became Lady Gilbert, and who was born in Belfast in 1841. She was educated at home and also studied art in London. She spent a few years in the remote mountainous parts of Ireland, a part of her life which supposedly had much influence on her literary talents and interests. Mulholland wrote novels, short stories, poetry and children’s fiction. Her work was very well-received in her own time, and several of her earlier stories appeared in Dickens’ *All Year Round* and *Household Words* magazines.

Mulholland’s *Marcella Grace* was first serialised in the *Irish Monthly* in 1886. Although later largely forgotten, it was “a widely read and very influential novel in its day”. The narrative is set during the early 1880s and deals with the evils of landlordism and “agrarian terrorism”, here in the guise of a group of ruffians who believe that they are still following the Fenian ideology. However, as the narrative argues, in reality this mindset “has degenerated so far as to be connected with societies for assassination”, and consequently the rebels in the novel are cast as lowly plotters and murderers, far removed from the valiant patriots they were once believed to be. The plot focuses on Marcella Grace, a poor girl from Dublin who discovers that she is in fact the lost daughter of a woman from the landlord classes. Upon the death of her aunt, Marcella becomes the last surviving member of the O’Kellys, a good-hearted but somewhat misguided absentee landlord family, and consequently becomes the new landlady of a townland in Connaught with the tell-tale name of Distresna. Marcella takes time to

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120 Murphy, ‘Rosa Mulholland, W. P. Ryan and Irish Catholic Fiction’, 220.
124 Murphy, ‘Rosa Mulholland, W. P. Ryan and Irish Catholic Fiction’, 223.
125 Mulholland, *Marcella Grace*, 136. Charlotte G. O’Brien’s *Light and Shade* also makes a distinction between good and bad Fenians and celebrates Irish patriotism, while denouncing its physical force dimension. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
Chapter 3

get to know the tenants and does many altruistic deeds before revealing herself as their new landlady, thereby making herself much loved among her people. She becomes romantically involved with the benevolent nationalist landlord of the adjoining townland, Bryan Kilmartin. Kilmartin is framed for murder by evil ‘Fenians’ – he was once a Fenian in his young and naïve days, but soon renounced the movement, and they are still out for revenge – and is sentenced to penal servitude. Luckily, after several years of imprisonment, Kilmartin is acquitted and allowed to return to Distresna, where he and his wife Marcella become the good patriotic landlords of their townlands.

The novel contains many descriptions of Marcella’s good deeds, and especially focuses on her many acts of philanthropy during the late 1870s and early 1880s, when Connemara experiences a new bout of famine. Fever repeatedly affects Distresna, and Marcella works night and day, dividing her time between the cabins of her suffering tenantry and the fever hospital she herself established. Representations of hunger and fever suffering recur throughout Mulholland’s narrative: already in the early part of the story, parish priest Father Daly – who will become Marcella’s mentor on her road to landladyism – remarks to Marcella that “[i]n some of the cabins the people were as sullen and reserved as they looked hungry and poverty-stricken.” Furthermore, Marcella’s trusted friend and assistant, local adolescent Mike, is seen through Marcella’s eyes as a “poor, gaunt, shock-headed, ragged” boy, thereby functioning as a personification of famine imagery, known from for example Asenath Nicholson’s description of the Famine-stricken as “walking skeleton[s]”.

Rather than seeing the occurrence of famine and fever during the Land War era as new developments or repetitions (as was the case in The Days of a Life), the narrative represents these hardships as long-existent since the Great Famine. Reflecting on the current state of things in his parish, and in fact Ireland as a whole, Father Daly in Marcella Grace coins a

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126 During the late 1870s and early 1880s, Ireland indeed experienced several crop failures, leading to hunger and prolonged agricultural depression. Michael J. Winstanley, *Ireland and the Irish Question: 1800–1922* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2003), x–xi.


128 “In my childhood I had been frightened with the stories of ghosts, and had seen actual skeletons; but imagination had come short of the sight of this man. And here, to those who have never watched the progress of protracted hunger, it might be proper to say, that persons will live for months, and pass through different stages, and life will struggle on to maintain her lawful hold, if occasional scanty supplies are given, till the walking skeleton is reduced to a state of inanity.” See Mrs. A. Nicholson, *Annals of the Famine in Ireland, in 1847, 1848 and 1849* (New York: E. French, 1851), 37.
new name for the tenants’ suffering: “I would call [this] slow hunger if I were a doctor and could invent a new disease; not a new one either, but one that belongs to Ireland, as cholera belongs to the East.” The novel repeatedly refers to the narrative’s famine as “slow famine”, again emphasising how the current state of things is the result of long-existing bad conditions, endemic to the region and perhaps the island as a whole – “just as cholera belongs to the East”.

In comparison with other townlands in the district, Distresna is struck by famine and fever relatively late and relatively lightly. The outbreak of fever is attributed to the maltreatment and bad governance by other landlords in neighbouring districts:

Athlogue was a district on the estate of the murdered Mr Ffont. The people there had long lived in wretched condition, and, since the murder, had fallen from bad to worse. The new owner had refused even to visit the estate, and lived in England, and the agent misbehaved himself pretty much as he pleased. The plague that had now appeared was the outcome of slow famine and hardship, and would probably effect wholesale evictions.

In Mulholland’s narrative, current famine hardships are caused by the equally long-surviving corrupted land system, in which bad landlords only look after their own interest and often ‘run’ their estates as absentees. The condition of the people has not changed because landlords have not provided opportunities for improvement, seizing all income as their own.

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Mulholland, Marcella Grace, 122.
Ibid., 310.
Ibid.
The novel states that tenants do not feel inclined to improve anything on their lands, for the smallest improvement will suggest to their landlord that the rent can be raised, or that the land can be sold to a higher bidder. Contemporary commentators also commented on this lamentable situation. For example, in both her Letters of “Norah” and The Days of a Life, McDougall repeatedly discusses the rise in rents demanded by greedy landlords after tenants have made improvements. In the Letters, McDougall relates a recent history she has heard while talking to the Irish poor in Leitrim. She talks about one “John Buchanan, a Presbyterian of Scottish descent” who worked in the Earl’s office for twenty years and who invested his savings in “building on a site of the old farmhouse in Milford a block of two buildings. [...] He improved his farm by reclaiming land, making nice fields out of bog.” When the old, kind-hearted Earl dies, the new Earl comes into possession and immediately doubles the rent on the Buchanans. John Buchanan dies shortly after, leaving a wife and five children, who are put out of their home by the Earl and his bailiff, only to relet the house to them afterwards (27–8) Serving as an apt illustration of the cross-pollination between non-fictional journalistic
Marcella Grace shows that the Irish tenantry since the Famine has been under the spell of landlords’ whims and under constant threat of destitution, disease and starvation, and that their condition is so precarious because of the “slow famine” which always looms in the background. In this sense, in *Marcella Grace* the Irish peasantry and rural society have become arrested in time.

The novel therefore represents the Irish peasantry of the 1880s as being in a sort of ahistorical and even anachronistic condition of stasis since the Famine, and depicts the Irish poor as dying remnants of a lost society. In that sense, Mulholland’s peasantry seems to continue in the condition indicated by Asenath Nicholson, who, during the Famine, expressed the feeling that her writings about the period appeared “out of common course, and out of the order of even nature itself.” Joe Cleary argues that novels reflected the contrasting views on temporality and Irish history held by Irish nationalists and unionists in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, following anti- and pro-British orientations, respectively. It seems that Mulholland’s novel puts forward a distinctly Irish rural sense of temporality, which most likely did not align with experiences of time and history outside of this rural Irish community.

A similar representation of recent Irish time can be found in William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* (1882). Upton’s novel argues that the present time – the novel follows “all the circumstances that surrounded Uncle Pat since the famine of 1848 until the present time”, which is 1882 – is a

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*Outrageous Fortune*, 53.)
product of Irish colonial history. This is illustrated by the protagonist Uncle Pat – whose “story wears a public complexion” – and in whose life the unchanging continuity of recent Irish history is omnipresent. Having lost his wife and child in the Famine, Pat toils his life away, barely subsisting, before collapsing and dying of fatigue and starvation alongside the road. Pat, several characters and especially the narrator adopt a Mitchelite tone and see Pat’s situation as caused by the British government’s callous policies vis-à-vis the Irish labourers; policies that have been left unchanged since Famine times. When commenting upon the death of his wife and child in the poor house in 1848, Pat also speaks of intended murder by the poor house guardians who were “delighted [...] by the number of dead aich morning” and who “killed” his wife. Later, this extremist discourse is again adopted in the description of the death of Uncle Pat, who was intentionally “slaughtered” by British misgovernment.

Upton’s novel informs its readers that the Irish agricultural labourer cannot get work anymore because of the changes in Irish agriculture imposed by the British. While these measures were supposed to bring betterment, in Uncle Pat’s Cabin the Irish labourers are painfully excluded from improvement, slowly degenerating further and further since Famine times. In both Upton’s novel and Marcella Grace the poor Irish peasantry

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136 Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, 261.
137 Ibid.
138 For example, the astute and learned character Dr O’Leary remarks that he is “convincing that it [the Famine] must have been authorized; for it was clearly in the interests of the landlord, the guardian, and the farmers to get rid of the paupers” and “that it was in the interest of the British Government to get rid of [...] the surplus of population of Ireland.” (Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, 84–5) In his 1854 Jail Journal, John Mitchel famously maps out what he believes to be the British government’s prolonged and wilful policy of abusing and eradicating the Irish and states that in this long history “all encouragements and facilities were furnished by the British Government to get rid of them [the poor Irish Catholic peasantry]. Then began the ‘amelioration’ (for benevolence guided all) of clearing off ‘surplus population,’ and consolidating the farms.” Jail Journal (1854; new edn, Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1913), xxxvi.
139 Ibid., 282. In its defence of the Irish agricultural labourer, Upton’s novel is one of the staunchest defenders of extreme Mitchelite nationalist rhetoric found in this study’s literary corpus. Nevertheless, a toned-down version of that same rhetoric can also be found in other works, such as McDougall’s The Days of a Life in which a local priest comments upon the faith of the poor tenants and voices the opinion that “it was the will of the lord to rid the land of them; and all the law there was in the country was on the side of their oppressors” (178). Furthermore, Hester Sigerson’s A Ruined Race (1889) argues in similar manner, placing the blame for the downfall of the poor Irish tenants at the hands of evil land agents and middlemen with strong Anglo sympathies.
has been placed outside of (British) progressive history, involuntarily remaining in the anachronistic and static rural Irish timespace. Ireland in the 1880s is not very different – according to Upton, the situation of the Irish rural labourer is even worse – than Ireland during the Famine.

In these works of fiction, different temporalities are not so much re-aligned, as was the case in The Days of a Life. Instead, the period of Famine suffering is stretched out into the present (and perhaps future), creating a warped narrative experience of time “out of common course” in which the Famine as an event has become so meaningful that it has meant a break in time for the rural Irish poor. Moreover, it also shows the power of the Famine as a postmemory, as it still provides an all-pervasive explanation for and gives a narrative shape to more recent hardships. In contrast to The Days of a Life in which Irish temporality is marked by repetition and in partial contrast to Marcella Grace in which the implication of betterment – although not on the most realistic of terms – is envisaged, arguably in the context of Uncle Pat’s Cabin and the plight of the agricultural labourers and subsistence farmers, the Famine is represented as an arresting, traumatic event, at least up until the early 1880s.

In the present and previous sections, I have analysed different approaches to the passing of post-Famine time connected to the plight of the poor Irish farmers and farm labourers, making a difference between repetition and stasis. Because repetition and duration are key elements to traditional trauma theory, these different literary approaches to Famine memory and its impact have influence on what these texts suggest is the status of the period: on the one hand some narratives acknowledge that since the Famine, Irish society has ended up in a traumatic standstill, and it remains unclear whether this condition can and will be countered one day, providing a bleak outlook for post-Famine Irish society in the near and possibly distant future. On the other hand, texts that represent later famine conditions through repetitive images of Famine memory also recognise periods of improvement between these bouts of famine, thereby impeding a reading of Famine conditions as an everlasting cultural trauma,

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141 Similarly, in Irish-American author Thomas Sherlock’s The Lord of Dundonald (1889–90) the conditions of poor labourers during the Land War era have been caused by their maltreatment during the Famine and aggravating circumstances since that time: the uncaring landlord of the estate adjacent to Garrett Dalton’s estate, “with admirable forethought for himself, had cleared his estate to avoid the payment of the poor rate”. The narrative then informs us that such Famine-era policies have lead to “terrible de-population” and “wholesale evictions”. As a consequence, once well-off farmers have become landless labourers in the early 1880s.
marked by a lingering temporal stasis. In all, these different takes on the temporal dimension of Irish rural society show that in fiction from the post-Famine nineteenth century different views on potentially traumatic nature of the Famine were available, demonstrating that the event and its aftermath were open to varying interpretations already relatively soon after its occurrence. Nevertheless, both the narrative templates of repetition and continuation imply that whatever was wrong at the root of the Irish Land system has been left unaltered since Famine times. These ills – the corruptness of the system, absenteeism, and the lack of peasant proprietorship – are represented as still causing much suffering in later periods. Furthermore, because Famine imagery is recycled to depict these current wrongs, the afterlife of the Famine as a postmemory with great affective potential for rural Irish society is acknowledged.

3.4 Multidirectional Suffering: The Irish Slave

This section will continue the analysis of William C. Upton’s Land War novel. Very little is known about William Upton himself, but Stephen Brown notes that the author was a carpenter working in Ardagh. Some-time after 1878 Upton moved to New York, where he prospered enough to be able to privately publish a revised edition of *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* specifically written for the American market in 1914. Upton was a Fenian sympathiser and some believe that he was an important member of the movement. This nationalist streak is transferred only partially to the novel: a fictional rebel who goes by the name of “Henry Irving” engages in a heated nationalist dialogue with the local farmers and farm labourers in the late 1860s, leading to labourer Tom Harnett’s statement that “Misther Irving, I’m jesht of the opinion that all the labourers and servant boys will jine.” However, Fenian resistance serves as little more than local colour.

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144 Ibid.
145 This chosen pseudonym is probably a reference to the celebrated English stage actor Henry Irving (1838–1903), who travelled to Ireland several times to convene with Frank Marshall and Bram Stoker to put on a play about the Irish rebel and people’s martyr Robert Emmet. The play in which Irving would be the lead was never performed though. See Corporaal, Cusack and Janssen, *Recollecting Hunger*, 184n. Upton, *Uncle
and the only other fact the novel intimates about the Rising is that “[o]f course it was abortive.”

Dedicated to Land League leader Michael Davitt, “who grappled with a mighty institution – Landlordism”, the narrative focuses on the state of Irish agriculture from Famine times until its date of publication. Contrary to most Land War novels, Upton’s book does not focus on Irish tenant farmers, but on their even poorer brethren, and shows that whatever changes have been made in Irish agriculture and colonial legislation up to the present, none of these alterations have been beneficial to the Irish farm labourer. In the book’s polemic discourse, the agricultural labourer is depicted as “the Lazarus of the world”, whose “life is one continued struggle against adversity, and his social lot is the lowest in civilised society”. This representation follows Godkin, who considered the Irish farm labourer as the poorest wretch trapped in a long-existent condition: “the agricultural labourer of Ireland continues to suffer the greatest privations and hardships; that he continues to depend upon casual and precarious employment for subsistence; that he is still badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, and badly paid for his labour”.

Several of the novel’s characters and the overtly moralising narrator argue for legislative reform specifically geared to the labourer’s situation, and accordingly canvass “fixity of tenure”, a measure which was acknowledged by the IPP as the only possible solution to the Land Question, next to the “nationalisation of the land”. To be able to truthfully portray the situation in Ireland in its own day, the novel creates a transhistorically

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*Pat’s Cabin*, 136.

146 Upton, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, 188.

147 Ibid.

148 Melissa Fegan, *Literature and the Irish Famine 1846–1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 226. For example, the 1870 Land Act is described as only a “fancied security” (emphasis mine) which furthermore was created with the Irish farmer, rather than the Irish agricultural labourer in mind (Upton, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, 216).

149 Upton, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, dedication, vi.


151 Upton, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, 120. Other works of fiction also voice the opinion that increased security for the Irish tenantry could be a cure-all for current woes. Before the narrative proper commences, F. H. Clayton in the first chapter of *Scenes and Incidents* goes into a lengthy exposé on the current ills of Irish rural society and opines that “[f]or a contented and prosperous people, with a deep interest in the soil, through security of tenure, proceeding from the throne, will not hastily overthrow or destroy that which is their strength or source of peace and prosperity.” Consequently, “incipient rebellion would no longer find favor or encouragement” (60). Fixity of tenure and nationalisation of the land were also discussed by the anonymous ‘An Irish M. P.’ in *Irish Question*, 36.
3.4 Multidirectional Suffering: The Irish Slave

and transculturally – or horizontally and vertically – constructed vision of the Irish farm labourer and his hardships, with a strong moral imperative partially inherited from other formations of cultural memory. Specifically, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* makes several comparisons between the plight of the poor land labourer in the early 1880s, his or his predecessors’ situation during the Famine and the African-American slave’s predicament.

The comparison between the rural Irish poor and the figure of the slave also figured outside of fiction, as for example, Irish author and MP William O’Brien, when speaking about the Plan of Campaign in Mallow, also made such references when he promised his audience that the Plan would turn “a race of slaves into owners and rulers of this land”. As I will argue, in engaging with memories of slavery and the Famine, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* displaces these mnemonic images and casts them as multidirectional memories, by incorporating them into the depiction of the Irish land labourer.

According to the socio-political discourse in Upton’s novel, the main ill of the Irish land system is not so much the landlord, but rather the corrupted system and the land-grabber who is depicted as evil incarnated. Parnell argued in 1880 that after “the emigration of 1848”, “landlords took advantage […] to effect immense clearances of land, which have never since been put under cultivation”. After the population started to increase, this led to “greater competition for land” which “became fiercer than ever”. In this manner, a climate was established which stimulated land-grabbing. In the late nineteenth century, land-grabbers were frequently ostracised and not infrequently attacked. During several Land League rallies, they were despised and “ranked just below the informer or traitor in nationalist eyes”. Similar to Emily Lawless’ *Hurrish* (1886), Upton’s novel portrays Ireland between the Famine and the early 1880s as a dog-eat-dog world in which the Irish have to be most careful of their own compatriots. All the agricultural labourers and even several strong farmers in Upton’s narrative are ruined by the actions of these outlaw land-grabbers, who “are worse

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152 Apparently, this was a successful approach, as for example the historian W. E. H. Lecky in *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (vol. 3), noted that the novel is “one of the truest and most vivid pictures of the present condition of the Irish labourer” (London: Longmans, Green., 1892, 413–14).


154 Freud says that one of the key characteristics in the formation of memories is the “displacement” of other forms and/or traces of memory. Sigmund Freud, 545.


156 Curtis, *Depiction of Eviction*, 125.
than the landlord”, and who “in their endeavours to get land, forget every law, both human and divine, and, by the foulest and vilest means, compass their neighbour’s ruin”. 157 Pointing out the unchanging nature of Irish agricultural society and the land system, the estate manager remarks to strong farmer Ned McCarthy – who is also ruined by his neighbour in the end – “it is a repetition of the old, old story again. It is that you are ruining yourselves and not the landlord; for no landlord will evict one tenant if he is not sure of another.” 158

Due to these actions, the Irish farm labourer of the late nineteenth century is now in a debased state, no better off than the African-American slave once was. Upton’s characters and narrator make many comparisons between these two groups of people who find themselves at the very bottom of their respective societies. This racial analogy was made more often throughout the nineteenth century, as for example the Irish in America were depicted with simian-like qualities similar to how African-Americans were often represented. 159 This is exemplified by H. Strickland Constable’s well-known 1899 illustration “Scientific Racism” published in the American magazine Harper’s Weekly, in which Anglo-Saxon, Irish and African-American facial profiles are depicted side by side. The accompanying caption argues that the simian likeness between today’s Irishman and African suggest that the former has somehow descended from the latter. Supposedly, on the basis of this shared low position on the social Darwinist ladder, both should be ruled by the superior Anglo-Saxon race. 160 Moreover, the direct comparison between the Irish poor and African slaves was also famously made by nationalist and anti-abolitionist John Mitchel. Observing black slaves in Brazil, Mitchel felt that these “merchantable slave[s]” were a “fat and happy” lot, who had a much better life than the slaves he saw at home (the poor Irish), for, as Mitchel argues in his Jail Journal, at least these slaves had “real money value”. 161 This he con-

157 Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, 36, 281.
158 Ibid., 239.
159 Jonathan Gantt states that such descriptions were also common in late-Victorian Britain: “By the latter half of the 19th century, the English transformed the image of the Irish from drunken, relatively harmless peasants to dangerous ‘simianized agitators’. In the intellectual topography of Victorianism, Celtic peoples resisted civilization, where incapable of self-rule, and because of their racial inferiority, they were biologically predisposed toward uncivilized forms of violence.” (Irish Terrorism, 94).
sidered a stark contrast to their Irish counterparts, who, he believed, had no value in the eyes of their masters, and were thus much more easily discarded. 

Contrary to the position taken by Mitchel, the comparison between the Irish and the African-Americans in *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* is made not on pejorative racist grounds, but on the basis of a shared victimhood and oppression. In their literary depictions, poor Irish labourers and African slaves are not represented as contesting for the right to exist in a mnemonic “zero-sum game”. Rather, they are presented side by side and prosthetically share in their characteristics and moral plight. The comparison starts with the novel’s title, which clearly mirrors that of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s seminal anti-slavery novel from 1852, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; Or, Life among the Lowly*. The analogy between Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom and Upton’s Uncle Pat is drawn out further, as both are portrayed as long-suffering, subservient characters who eventually become martyrs for the plight of their peoples. Pat M’Mahon suffers his fate quietly, accepting his fellow villagers’ charitable deeds for him and his family, but never asking for their help until it is too late, and never countering the wrongs inflicted on him by his land-grabbing cousin Tom Cassidy and misled landlord Frederick Pakenham.

The novel’s fictional rebel, Henry Irving, when trying to win the agricultural workers over to the Fenian side, emphasises that they are treated worse than “dogs” and are in “continual degradation”, and states that those “who dig and delve, from morning till night [...] Are they still to be calculated among your goods as American slaves used to be?” Moreover, employers at the public works are likened to “slavedrivers” – as if not being transparent enough in his message already, Upton even labels his chapter about them “Slavedrivers” – who treat their workers as if they were “a gang of stubborn slaves”. The comparison does not stop there: when

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162 Ibid.
163 Michael Rothberg states that many people incorrectly assume “that the public space in which collective memories are articulated is a scarce resource and that the interaction of different collective memories within that sphere takes the form of a zero-sum struggle for pre-eminence”. See *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2–3.
164 Rothberg argues that instead of engaging in “memory competition”, we should strive towards the more inclusive model of multidirectional memory which is meant to draw attention to “the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance” (*Multidirectional Memory*, 11).
165 Upton, *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, 133.
166 Ibid., 268.
discussing the matter with Father O’Mahony, the novel’s main and most eloquent criticaster Dr O’Leary ardently voices the opinion that the Irish poor are in just as dire a condition as African-American slaves once were:

“I have seen the negro slave of the Southern States of America whipped at the post; I have seen him chained like a wild beast; I have seen him guarded like a criminal; I have seen him hunted down with bloodhounds, but I fearlessly assert, from all I have studied of the treatment the Irish agricultural labourers are subjected to, they are in as hapless a state as were the slaves of America. It is true,” the doctor, continued, “we have not the chain here for the labourer’s limbs, we have not the scourge here for his back, but there is a chain here as galling as the iron, and that is the chain of circumstances, which is as carefully and as cunningly devised; and, flung around the unfortunate victim’s limbs, that binds him as securely as the iron ever bound the negro. Perhaps, sir, your sacred and charitable calling might forbid you from attributing base motives to the tactics employed by men now-a-days in their dealings with one another, but I have probed the foul disease to its source, and can trace it to the insecurity of the laws of the land. The strong need not the protection of the law; the laws were made to protect the weak against the strong; and when these laws allow the strong to give full swing to their greedy passions, then, I say, these laws are a violation of justice, and are the fruitful source of our many social and political miseries.”

As this speech shows, Dr O’Leary sees ‘Irish slavery’ as being caused by the current land laws and corrupted land system; a point underscored by the entire novel.

The novel follows a line of reasoning inspired by Daniel O’Connell. In one of his public anti-abolitionist speeches held in 1843, O’Connell called slavery “that execrable system, which makes man the property of his fellow man – destroys the foundation of all moral and social virtues – condemns to ignorance, immorality and irreligion, millions of our fellow creatures – renders slaves hopeless of relief, and perpetuates oppression by law: and, in the name of what you call a Constitution!” He then directly turned towards the Irish-Americans and asked for their aid, for “was [it] not in Ireland [that] you learned this cruelty”?

167 Ibid., 157–8.
168 ‘Daniel O’Connell’s Address to Irishmen in America Against Slavery’ reprinted, original speech held in the Corn Exchange Rooms in Dublin in 1843, Daily Alta California.
would be adopted later by others writing in Upton’s day, as for example journalist and abolitionist James Redpath frequently “evoked his earlier abolitionist sentiments” in his letters, “linking land reform in Ireland to the successful abolition of slavery in America”. Indeed, the wrongs committed across the Atlantic – and ended by the abolition of slavery in 1865 – are incorporated in Uncle Pat’s political discourse as parallel incentives to also argue for the legislative correction of the condition of the Irish slaves in Land War-era Ireland. Later, in a conversation with Father O’Mahony, Dr O’Leary stresses this message again, arguing that in their work on the land, “the employer and employed are, or ought to be, just as partners in any undertaking”, but that they are not so in Ireland at present, due to “such laws as Political Economy lays down – Master and Slave”.

Other works of Famine fiction that are part of this study’s corpus written both in Ireland and North America also make references to the institution of slavery, turning these cross-cultural references into formulations of prosthetic memory. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the references to slavery made with respect to the plight of the Irish poor in this study’s corpus of fiction. In the idiosyncratic Irish-Canadian text Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life by F. H. Clayton, the narrator states that “[i]t is beyond reasonable dispute that a species of slavery has been carried on in Ireland”. He takes up a Mitchelite tone and even says that Protestant England “who boasted of setting free the slaves of her West Indian possessions” neglects to do the same “for a nobler race, far nearer to the Throne, if not to the heart of Britain”. Moreover, he also states that the Irish poor have experienced more pain than “the negroes of the southern plantations”, and that “exclude the question of punishment by the lash, [...] there is no difference. The negro [sic] was commiserated, but Ireland’s population was not.”

Other references to slavery, not specifically tied to the African-American context, can be found in McDougall’s The Days of a Life and Doran’s
Table 3.2: Prosthetic connections between representations of the Irish rural poor and the oppression of other peoples: slavery (ordered by publication date).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Irish Famine conditions referred to</th>
<th>Slavery connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – <em>Light and Shade</em> (1878)</td>
<td>Irish Conditions late 1860s – general condition</td>
<td>Institution of slavery, specifically to Belgium, France, Hungary as places where the rural poor do have some “small but certain independence”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O’Brien – <em>The D’Altons of Crag</em> (1882)</td>
<td>Great Famine conditions to slavery in Poland (no specific period mentioned)</td>
<td>General condition/institution of slavery, specifically to Greater Poland Uprising of 1848.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. H. McCarthy – <em>Lily Lass</em> (1889)</td>
<td>References between more general condition and slavery: 1798 (Wolfe Tone) + 1848 (Young Ireland) (“slavery” mentioned in song about 1848).</td>
<td>General condition/institution of slavery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McCarthy’s *Lily Lass* has been greyed out in this table, as the novel contains cross-cultural references to slavery, but does not link these to the plight of the Irish rural poor. 

Footnotes:
1. Authors and titles have been ordered to clarify the relationship between representations of the Irish rural poor and the oppression of other peoples.

Chapter 3
3.4 Multidirectional Suffering: The Irish Slave

In the former, when commenting upon the extreme subservient and grateful mien of the tenants upon the short return of their absentee landlord, future Land Leaguer Bernard Butler draws analogies between the behaviour of the tenants and slaves:

“They [the tenants] seem glad and gay, and light-hearted and happy, old and young of them. Their spirits are at holiday pitch, like children let out of school,” said Ida.

“I have heard remarks like that before, but it was [sic] applied to slaves, and to my mind there is something slavish in this whole performance,” said Mr. Butler.  

In Zanthon, when commenting upon the state of the Irish people since the Famine, the narrator takes up a social determinist stance and remarks that “poverty and ignorance had brought them on a level with the lowest type of slavery”, showing how a “brave and intelligent people may, under adverse circumstances, descend in the scale of animal life”.  

A more specific reference to another instance of slavery is made in Emily Fox’ Rose O’Connor: in one of several passionate letters to his father the landlord, Livingston Fenton likens the hardships undergone by their tenantry to Biblical suffering. When discussing their distressed situation under his father’s rule during the Land War era, Fenton says that their misery can be attributed to “that Egyptian bondage of cruel, oppressing and covetous landlords” who will not let their tenants have anything, causing their “spirits [to be] broken, and made fit for slavery”.  

Fenton compares the Irish tenant to the Jewish slave under Egyptian rule, and through such comparative argumentation, Fenton and other engaged characters illustrate that the transferral of prosthetic memory not only horizontally transports the characteristics of a (traumatic) historical period or event, but that it is also accompanied by an emotional transference of moral responsibility, shared indignation and horror.

As has become clear in this chapter’s sections on anachronism and the treatment of Irish time, novels set in later time periods such as Uncle

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174 McDougall, Days of a Life, 50. Later, on page 247, Butler again compares the situation in Ireland to the institution of slavery: “like slavery, the land tenure of Ireland is bad for both sides – for landlord and tenant. Once class cannot be oppressed and degraded, without the wrong reacting on the other. Evil is always two-edged, wounding the oppressor as well as the oppressed.”

175 James Doran, Zanthon: A Novel (San Francisco, CA: Bancroft, 1891), 146. Later, on page 408, the narrator again likens the Irish to an “enslaved people”.

176 Fox, Rose O’Connor, 70–1.
Pat’s Cabin, The Days of a Life and Zanthon portray the poor Irishman’s condition since the Famine as resulting from several devastating blows to their station. In Uncle Pat’s Cabin the downfall of the Irish farm labourer – once old stock and/or owner of the soil – can be directly attributed to the occurrence of the Famine or “the bad years of ’47 and ’48” and the current “Land Wars”. As is also argued in Sherlock’s The Lord of Dundonald, Upton’s novel states that these agricultural labourers were “farmers or farmer’s sons” who after the Famine had to give up their farms and are today “working on the farms they or their fathers once occupied”.177

In its bemoaning of the farm labourers’ plight in the early 1880s, the novel reaches out to both Ireland’s own recent history and to the recent suffering of other peoples. On the personal level of lived experience exemplified by Uncle Pat and characters such as Dr O’Leary, the Famine is presented as a screen memory for Land War-era suffering, while on the communal level – for the other characters, such as Uncle Pat’s young nieces and nephews who are also directly affected by their uncle’s suffering – the Famine is depicted as a transgenerational cultural postmemory. The life story of the character Uncle Pat demonstrates that no strict lines can be drawn between individual and communal memory, as in his case, pars pro toto, the individual narrative of the poor labourer becomes an emblem for the communal postmemory of his entire class. Through this vertical representation of the Famine, Uncle Pat’s Cabin attempts to give an accurate depiction of the evils of its day.

Moreover, the text not only appropriates these periods of Ireland’s own history but also of African-American history to give shape to the situation at present. The comparison with the Famine-era and with suffering caused by slavery influences the narrative representation of the suffering of the Irish rural poor in later times, for any (mnemonic) image “owes its value [...] not to its intrinsic content, but to the relation obtaining between this content and some other”.178 Uncle Pat’s Cabin realigns these different cultural memories and places them in direct connection with each other. Thereby the novel turns the depiction of the Irish agricultural labourer of the late nineteenth century into a palimpsestically and multidirectionally constructed image, the embodiment of accumulated memories of suffering. In conjunction, the Famine, American slavery and the suffering of the Irish poor during the Land War are all placed under the same header, and share their affective, moral and political connotations of victimhood.

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177 Upton, Uncle Pat’s Cabin, 27. Sherlock, Lord of Dundonald, 41/49 (30 Nov. 1889).
178 Freud, Sigmund Freud, 557.
and oppression. As Table 3.2 demonstrates, such connections were made more frequently, as about a third of the novels included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) make them. In these works of fiction, both the institution of slavery and the Great Famine undergo a “process of decontextualization”; their mnemonic traces move towards becoming more detached forms of remembrance.\textsuperscript{179} In this manner, the memories of the Famine and histories of slavery, because they are recontextualised to give narrative shape to later suffering – in the latter case even by another cultural group –, move towards becoming more timeless images of human suffering. With regard to memories of slavery, it can moreover be argued that they become what Huyssen has called “universal cipher[s]”.\textsuperscript{180}

On the level of the representation of the Irish rural poor and their plight in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), different forms of recollection feature: screen memory, postmemory, prosthetic memory and multidirectional memory are all repeatedly used to draw analogies between different phases of Irish, and, in fact, world history. As I have shown in this chapter, in the context of the representation of landlord-tenant relationships it becomes clear that there are different levels of representing Famine memory. It is not a case of black and white binaries usually associated with traumatic recollection, in which an event or period either is a cultural trauma, or it is not. Rather, the works of fiction analysed in this chapter show that a strategic narrative renegotiation of the Famine past takes place, in which the period, its effects and its memories are cast accordingly to the work of fiction’s main argument and ideological thrust. In line with this, it is useful to consider the representation of such imagery along the lines of a mnemonic, representational spectrum of possible interpretations of Famine memory, in which the Famine is at times considered a communal trauma and unique event ushering in its own sense of time and history, and at other times becomes embedded in Ireland’s ‘regular’ temporality. The following chapter will demonstrate how this narrative renegotiation of Famine memory and its effect on Irish time are envisioned with regard to literary formulations of Irish nationalism.

\textsuperscript{179} Levy, ‘Changing Temporalities’, 23.
\textsuperscript{180} Huyssen, ‘Present Pasts’, 24.
Chapter 4

The Role of History, Irish Place and Famine Memory in Literary Formulations of Irish Nationalism

In 1885, biographer J. S. Mahoney published *Charles Stewart Parnell and what He has Achieved for Ireland*. Before tracing Parnell’s actions until the present, Mahoney provides a short sketch of the Famine, in which he states that during the period, “[d]eath, [raged] like a demon throughout the land, here smiting down a family by starvation, there a district by fever”, which “everywhere exulted amid the cries of the stricken, the groans of the dying, and the wail of the hopeless”.1 Mahoney adopted the Mitchelite interpretation of British government policy during the Great Famine as he repeated the latter’s belief that “while the people of Ireland were starving, fleets of ships were sailing with every tide carrying Irish cattle and corn to England”.2 After this short bit of Famine historiography, Mahoney repeatedly refers to the 1879 famine, arguing that again the government had done too little and that any possible alleviation of the recent crisis should be attributed to the relief measures undertaken by the Land League: “if the famine of 1879 and 1880 did not have such tragical [sic] results as that of 1845–1848 the Land League and not the British government must be credited with the diminution of misery”.3

Mahoney’s work is an apt illustration of how alive the memory of the Famine continued to be during the 1880s. In fact, memories of the Fam-

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1 J. S. Mahoney, *Charles Stewart Parnell and What He Has Achieved For Ireland* (New York: Excelsior, 1885), 6.
2 Ibid., 7.
3 Ibid., 51.
ine period were clearly present in Irish politics between the 1870s and the close of the century, as “[t]he Fenian Brotherhood, Parnell’s Home Rule Movement, the Land League, and the cultural revival of the late nineteenth century all had their roots in the writings or personal involvement of the leaders of the 1848 rising.”

For example, Irish agitator and nationalist politician Isaac Butt – who, among other writings, had published the influential essay *A Voice for Ireland: The Famine in the Land; What has been Done and What is to be Done* (1847) during the Famine era – founded the Home Rule League in 1873. Political agitators such as secretary to the Irish National Land League Michael Davitt demonstrated their indebtedness to their peers from the Famine period. In his retrospective account of the struggles of Irish tenant farmers during the late nineteenth century, *The Fall of Feudalism* (1904), Davitt stated that “there was no real revolutionary mind in the ‘48 period except Lalor’s”. He called Lalor “the prophet of Irish revolutionary land reform” and stated that while Lalor’s ideas came too late to save those who had starved during the Famine, they “were seeds sown for another generation of Irish land reformers”, thereby acknowledging his own and other land reformers’ indebtedness to Lalor.

During the late nineteenth century, Famine-era political writings were reprinted and disseminated on both sides of the Atlantic on a large scale. By the 1870s, the Famine “had become an increasingly potent element in the propaganda war” in Irish politics. Indeed, within Irish political rhetoric of the late nineteenth century, the Great Famine was repeatedly placed in a longer succession of colonial atrocities and hardships, forming a lengthy historical narrative of Irish suffering. David Bennett King pointed

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6 Ibid., 79, 82–3. As Christine Kinealy points out, the Famine-era philosophies of John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor resonated widely and frequently during the Land War, in Lalor’s case perhaps even “more than they had done during his lifetime”. See *Repeal and Revolution*, 284.

7 Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 284.

out this continuity, stating that for a long time “Ireland has been called the island of sorrows. Cries of distress have gone up from it for centuries. War has devastated the country. Famine and fever have done terrible work with the survivors of the wars and massacres.” And Butt famously declared: “The social history of Ireland since the Union is a record of poverty and suffering such as could not be supplied by the annals of any other country upon earth. [...] At the end of seventy years of union with the richest country in Europe, Ireland is still the poorest and the most wretched.”

Nationalist fiction of the time follows suit, for many works written between 1871 and 1891 include Famine memories in their larger historical narratives of accumulated patriotic struggle and nationalist ideology.

After the failure of the 1867 Fenian rebellion, both Irish and British politicians turned their attention towards constitutional politics. The period 1871–91 was marked by the growth of a populist and confident single party approach in Irish politics. This unified period would be ended by the split in the Irish Parliamentary Party following the divorce scandal surrounding Parnell. The constitutional redirection also features in much Famine fiction written during the time, as many nationalist novels shed a positive light on the Irish nationalist spirit while denouncing its physical force outbursts. This literary orientation towards non-violent rather than physical force nationalism was paired with a celebration and fostering of a cultural nationalism consisting of antiquarian and romantic characteristics.

9 David Bennett King, The Irish Question (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1882), 72. The lines provided here serve as the opening sentences on King’s chapter on the Great Famine.
12 Chapter 6 demonstrates that various works attribute the physical force dimension to the negative influence of Irish-American nationalism.
13 Julia M. Wright provides an overview of definitions of different types of nationalism, in which she also underlines their international roots and orientations. “Civic nationalism”, coming out of Lockean liberalism and Enlightenment thought, focuses on “the willed participation of free individuals in a shared state”. Wright states that romantic nationalism was rooted in the works of J. G. Herder and related thinkers, and that in this form “people are bound to the land as an article of national faith” (x–xi). She adds that “cultural nationalism” is tied to romantic nationalism, for it also views “the land as affective object”, and has its “aesthetic pull” through “works of culture” (xvii–xviii). See Julia M. Wright, Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014). Niall Ó Ciosáin furthermore states that in romantic nationalism, there exists a “tendency to see individuals as carriers of a larger ‘national character’”. See Niall Ó Ciosáin, ‘Was There a Silence about the Famine?’
Agricultural and nationalist issues were intertwined during the period. In his 1880 article ‘The Irish Land Question’, included in *The North American Review*, Parnell argued that British legislation and remedies concerning the Irish land question had proved greatly insufficient. In the closing paragraph of this 20-page article, he included a statement directly tying these shortcomings to Ireland’s colonial status: “It may seem strange to Americans that England should prefer to keep Ireland poor and miserable, rather than to make her prosperous. But Ireland prosperous would mean Ireland populous and strong; and Ireland populous and strong would mean a great nation by no means satisfied to remain a mere province of England, governed by an English parliament.”

Shortly after, Parnell was hesitant to support the 1881 Land Act, fearing that if the Irish people would get what they had long campaigned for, their resolve to support Irish home rule would weaken.

To underscore the links which exist between literary representations of the Irish Land Question, Irish nationalism and the influence of the memory of the Famine on both in fiction written between 1871 and 1891, in this chapter I have opted for a similar theoretical approach to these issues as was applied in the previous chapter. In the present chapter, then, issues of temporality – specifically the repetitive and cyclical nature of Irish history – also feature. Together, the works of narrative fiction discussed here showcase a spectrum of representations of Famine memory in the context of Irish nationalism, ranging from the complete absence of the Famine in narratives set during the Famine period, to representations of a (prolonged) presence of the Famine and repetition of famine conditions in works set in later decades. Section 4.1 will discuss the existence of different perspectives on the Famine’s duration and impact. Continuing the discussion on temporality, Section 4.2 will focus on the historical placement of the period, with regard to its and its actors’ position within a longer line of recurring references to earlier and later rebellions, rebels and times of hardship. Together, the first two sections will serve to explore how nationalist works of Famine fiction de- and recontextualise memories of the Famine. By exploring these recontextualisations, I will demonstrate what these works of fiction suggest to be the possible impact of Famine memory and whether they imply or do not imply that the period was of a traumatic nature. In so doing, I will be able to establish what role Famine memory

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15 Cronin, *History of Ireland*, 162.
consequently plays in the text’s nationalist rhetoric and future ideology.

Various earlier works of fiction, as well as several narratives written between 1871 and 1891 focus on agrarian issues by featuring the Famine as their main theme or period of focus.\(^\text{16}\) In contrast, in several of the nationally inclined works that I will discuss over the course of this chapter, the Famine features less emphatically, for these narratives are set during later periods and only refer to the Famine in passing, or they are set during the period but hardly mention the Famine. Nevertheless, in these texts the Famine is often presented as a seminal event in Irish history and for Irish nationalist politics. In their representation of the Irish nationalist struggle as fuelled by the combination of past and present issues, many of the novels included in the corpus of this study create a three-fold argument for future self-rule rooted in current land issues, current nationalist struggles and past hardships.

In Section 4.3 of this chapter, I will discuss the transnational dimensions of representations of Irish nationalism and rebellion, focusing on American influences specifically. In the final section, I will investigate the role the Irish landscape plays within the nationalist ideology of many texts. Several of the works of Famine fiction analysed in this study (re)appropriate the colonised landscape to fortify the claim for Irish independence on the basis of a distinct Irish identity in which the people are strongly linked to their natural surroundings. As Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 and Table 4.3 in this chapter illustrate, the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) contains various representations of Famine ruins – varying from (remnants of) Famine roads and public works to Famine pits and ruined cottages. In the nationalist works of fiction analysed below, literary representations of decay do more than remind their readers of the destruction caused by the Famine and other instances of colonial suffering. Rather, they contain the capacity to simultaneously attest to and contest colonial subjugation.

\(^{16}\) For example, works of fiction such as Hester Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race; Or, The Last Macmanus of Drumrook* (1889), Richard Baptist O’Brien’s *The D’Altons of Crag; A Story of ’48 & ’49* (1882), *Forlorn but not Forsaken* (1871) and *A Tale of the Irish Famine in 1846 and 1847. Founded on Fact* (1847) by ‘Ireland’, focus on the landlord-tenant dynamic and the plight of the suffering Irish poor, while focusing on Famine-related hardships.
4.1 From Justin Huntly McCarthy’s Silence to Annie Keary’s Three-Decker Full: Different Perspectives and the Longevity of Trauma

The works of fiction included in this study were written during one of the most important eras of Irish constitutional nationalism, in which Ireland’s political confidence was relatively high compared to the period following the Famine. Accordingly, a positive note concerning Ireland’s future also resounded in many works of fiction; the positive teleology of nationalist self-realisation is a key element in these narratives. Despite this seemingly brighter outlook, Irish hardships and struggles from the past and present continued to infringe upon Irish daily life and politics. As several works of non-fiction included in this study demonstrate, the memory of the Famine was often used in discussions of more recent issues. Literary approaches to the memory of the Famine and its impact on Irish nationalism vary. In this section, I will discuss several works of Famine fiction that cover the full range of possible interpretations of Famine memory in the context of literary representations of Irish nationalism of the period 1871–91. Furthermore, these works also serve as illustrations of the dynamics of cultural memory construction, for key issues such as selection, presence and absence are at the base of these narratives.

In the context of the tensions between presence and absence with regard to Famine recollections, Justin Huntly McCarthy’s Lily Lass is a fascinating case study. Huntly McCarthy, son of Justin McCarthy, was born in 1860 in London. Like his father, he became a poet, novelist and Irish nationalist MP. Huntly McCarthy wrote many works of fiction, including the novel Lily Lass, in which a romantic plot is combined with a fictional rendering of the Young Ireland rebellion. In contrast to other works of fiction included in the corpus of this study, Lily Lass does not mention the...

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17 Alvin Jackson points out that the Famine immobilised the rebels of 1848 and undermined the political confidence of many repealers. With the rise of the Irish National League and Parnell during the 1870s and 1880s, this confidence returned. See Ireland, 1798–1998: War Peace and Beyond (1999; 2nd edn, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010), 84.


Famine once, despite the fact that it focuses on one of the key events of the Famine period. While nationalist and specifically rebellious sympathies had been growing before the Famine, the Great Hunger radicalised the nationalist mindset. Moreover, as a result of the growing unrests during the Famine era, the government passed a number of repressive regulations, including a suspension of Habeas Corpus. Meanwhile, on the European mainland and especially in France, an atmosphere of rebellion had formed which proved contagious. These matters combined with Famine-era dissatisfaction functioned as the main incendiaries for the rebellion of 1848. This is illustrated by a public speech held by both William Smith O’Brien and Thomas D’Arcy McGee during a large-scale Irish Confederation meeting in Dublin on the evening of March 15, a few months before the outbreak of the Young Ireland rebellion. First, O’Brien spoke favorably of the Confederation’s congratulatory address to the French republic. After this, McGee referred to the present condition of the country and saw this as giving the Irish the right to resist:

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20 In line with this absence of the Famine from recent colonial history in Lily Lass, another work also deserves brief mention. Irish-English-Canadian writer Louisa Annie Murray (1818–94) also wrote a novel-length story about rebellion. Serialised in various issues of The Canadian Monthly and National Review in 1873, ‘Little Dorinn; A Fenian Story’ relates the story of Dorinn and her lover Maurice who joins the Fenians. Described as the greatest mistake of his life, Maurice in the end greatly regrets his decision to join the rebels. Although the text expresses understanding for the Irish plight and to a certain extent celebrates Irish self-government, it simultaneously propagates a mitigated and perhaps specifically Canadian approach which is very critical of separation and of Fenian tactics. Interestingly, no rebellious action takes place within this narrative, save the devious Fenians’ attempted murder of one of their recently defected own, Maurice. And while the text, set in the 1880s, refers to earlier colonial traumas and failed rebellions such as the United Irishmen rebellion of 1798, Robert Emmet and the rebellion of 1803 and the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848, like McCarthy’s Lily Lass, it not once mentions the Famine.

21 Kinealy, Repeal and Revolution, 10.


23 Kinealy, Repeal and Revolution, 3.

As one Irishman, I declare here to-night that I would rather perish by rope or steel than survive this opportunity. My heart is sick at daily scenes of misery. I have seen human beings driven like foxes to earth themselves in holes and fastnesses; I have heard the voice of mendicancy hourly wringing [sic] in my ears, until my heart was turned to stone, and my brain to flint, from inability to help them. I cannot endure this state of society any longer [...] At least, let us try to save the living. Yes, I feel we shall save them, for I see here visibly to-night the ancient spirit of Ireland’s freedom [...] Fear not for Ireland – she wakes – she lives – she must be free!

McGee’s incendiary tone indeed demonstrates that while the Famine weakened the Irish people, it also strengthened their nationalist resolve to act just then. In this light, it becomes evident that the Famine era’s radical outburst of 1848 can be regarded an indivisible element of Famine memory. Therefore, within the context of this study, Huntly McCarthy’s nationalist novel is considered a work of Famine fiction.

While exploring the tensions between trauma, the rhetorical sublime, presence, absence and artistic representability, Gene Ray takes his cue from Kant and remarks that many works of art that deal with the legacy of trauma do so through “negative representation”. They use conventionalised forms and traditional narrative devices to partially present the trauma, thereby “negatively invoking and testifying to [its] unrepresentability”. Of course ‘reading for the gaps’ is not without its dangers, for in such a reading all omissions can become meaningful testifiers to traumatic absences, and other reasons for not including certain elements are potentially phased out by the blanket answer of trauma. However, taking other issues – such as nationalist teleology and generic conventions – into consideration, in the case of Lily Lass I feel I can convincingly argue that negative representation plays an important part in the novel.

No overt reason as to why McCarthy left any explicit mention of the Famine out of his novel can be deduced from the text itself. Perhaps the message of the novel impeded the inclusion of disturbing memories: it celebrates romantic and cultural nationalism, and focuses on patriotic passion and heroic behaviour, not on representations of civic nationalism and Irish

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victimhood. The narrative shape of the novel facilitates the omission: cast in a frame narrative which is set in America in the 1880s, *Lily Lass* is supposedly reconstructed from a collection of letters written by the characters and focuses narrowly on the romantic plot between upper-class heroine Lilias Geraldine and Irish rebel Murrough MacMurchad, and on the latter and his best friend Brian Fermanagh as Young Ireland leaders. It is remarkable, though, that the Famine does not even figure in the nationalist speeches in the novel, of which there are but few. Why exactly would McCarthy have opted for this highly selective approach to the Famine era? Perhaps the memory of the Famine as prolonged passive suffering sat too uncomfortably within this glorious tale of patriotic action and ardour, and romantic love.

What McCarthy’s omission in any case demonstrates, is that recollection is subject to an active process of remembering and forgetting. Irish virtues such as patriotism and heroic martyrdom for the nation (but cleansed of the connotation of passive victimhood) are stressed, while possible weaknesses are left out (save the fact that the rebels were ill-prepared for the rising), providing a more positive and typically heroic recreation of the Young Irelanders. This is in line with late nineteenth-century nationalist reconstructions of nationalist rebellions and of those involved, in which typically “failure in the cause of Irish separatism represented a moral victory.” Moreover, the fact that Huntly McCarthy chose to leave representations of the Famine out of his romantic rendering of 1848, does not automatically mean that the event was not recalled by *Lily Lass*’ readership. As Joep Leerssen has argued in the context of the rhetoric surrounding national character formation in Europe, changes in memory “do not occur by way of falsefication. Old images are not abrogated by

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27 Especially considering that many Irish politicians and agitators, such as Isaac Butt, William O’Brien and John Mitchel, referred to the Famine in their inflammatory speeches and writings, as is illustrated by the inclusion of their quotes in this chapter.


29 “The Young Irelanders [...] had been hurried into premature insurrection; they had no very decided plan of action.” See McCarthy, *Lily Lass* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1889), 123.

30 Kelly, *Fenian Ideal*, 117.
new developments; they are merely relieved from their duties *pro tem*. They remain subliminally present in the social discourse and can always be reactivated should the occasion arise.”

Although I cannot state this with absolute certainty, considering how frequently the Famine continued to resurface in non-literary texts and rhetoric, poetry and works of narrative fiction at the time of the novel’s writing, I consider it highly likely that despite of its omission, contemporary readers would have ‘read for the gaps’ and would still have thought of the context of Famine suffering while reading the novel.

*Lily Lass* in the main consists of two narrative layers: some twenty-five years after the rebellion, American war veteran and journalist Geoffrey Longstaff rereads the set of letters given to him by the late Brian Fermanagh, his army friend and war hero in the American Civil War. Having become intrigued by the long-forgotten letters, Longstaff decides to reconstruct the micro-history of Lilias, MacMurched and Fermanagh. The novel is interspersed with comments by the journalist, as he reflects on the writing process and its influence on these letters as traces of the past. He celebrates his imaginative “privilege as chronicler” and states that he is a “professional novelist, who is never more fanciful with his art than when he affects to be interpreting the voices of the dead”.

When reconstructing the narrative and being reminded of Fermanagh’s sorrows in Ireland and their joint experiences in the American Civil War, Longstaff states that “tears dimmed [his] eyes.” The journalist experiences MacMurched’s penned down patriotic speeches as “[b]urning words” that “stir [his] tamed, elderly blood” and “bring so vividly before [his] Transatlantic eyes” the scene of the speech. These interjections imply that Longstaff experiences Fermanagh’s, Lilias’ and MacMurched’s recollections of ‘48 in a very intense and personal manner, showing that in this novel the memory of the Young Ireland rebellion is considered “portable” – it can travel across the Atlantic and can be transported over many years – while it continues to carry meaning and generates new meaning.

The mnemonic trace of ’48 is experienced so intensely, that its representation

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33 Ibid., 5.
34 Ibid., 39.
35 Ann Rigney argues that texts can become “portable monuments” when they are “recycled among various groups of readers living in different parts of the globe and at different historical moments”. See ‘Portable Monuments, Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans’, *Poetics Today* 25/2 (Summer 2004), 361–96: 383.
may be considered a form of prosthetic memory. As Alison Landsberg explains, prosthetic memories have a moral dimension: they can be experienced as one’s own memories and create openings for different peoples to feel connected to one another.\(^{36}\) Additionally, the political message of the novel for Ireland in 1889 is constructed in a multidirectional manner. Reaching to both the heroic Irish and American past, the novel provides a horizontally and vertically constructed message concerning future hope for “pure and devoted patriotism to succeeding generations” and a “new strength to the spirit of nationality” despite past defeat.\(^{37}\)

In *Lily Lass*, in line with real events, the Young Ireland rebellion fails. As was the case in nationalist ideology, despite this failure, the Young Ireland rebels are depicted as noble martyrs, and the circular narrative begins and ends with their glorification for setting “a brilliant example of pure and devoted patriotism to succeeding generations” and for “giving a new strength to the spirit of nationality”.\(^{38}\) *Lily Lass* admits that the Young Ireland rebellion was a severe blow to Irish nationalism, but suggests that it was by no means a death blow, for, as Brian Fermanagh’s letter partially repeated within the framing narrative layer, argues: “*But let no man believe that the Irish hopes are crushed. Ireland is not dead; she is only sleeping, and something tells me that she is well nigh on the point of waking.*”\(^{39}\)

The justification for the struggle for liberty by the Irish is not only supported by references to the American Civil War in the framework narrative, but also by the accumulation of different historical periods of nationalist struggle within the narrative. *Lily Lass* makes few references to Famine era figures and events, for it limits itself to only a few references to John Mitchel, his capture and transportation. Furthermore, the novel does not

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\(^{38}\) Ibid., 147, 3. The quote taken from page 3 is written in the form of a fictitious letter by former Young Ireland leader Brian Fermanagh supposedly close to McCarthy’s own time. It demonstrates that Fermanagh does not regret his actions, but pleads for a different course of action in the future. In fact, Fermanagh expresses his hope that there will be Home Rule, but that there should be “justice without strife” and he speaks of a “brotherhood” between Ireland and England (3).

\(^{39}\) McCarthy, *Lily Lass*, 3. Doran’s *Zanthon* also glorifies its fictional rebels – this time Fenians – as heroic and visionary martyrs. The novel describes the Fenians as “the van-guard of progressive action whose example would influence the destinies of mankind, politically and socially, in many an ill-governed nation, hundreds of years in the future”. It sees them as “[t]he advocates of republicanism as a substitute for monarchy” (408).
engage with Mitchel’s nationalist rhetoric in an in-depth manner but only briefly laments that no rescue attempt was made to help Mitchel escape transportation.\textsuperscript{40} Several allusions are made to the United Irishmen rebellion of 1798 and Robert Emmet and the abortive rebellion of 1803.\textsuperscript{41} The Irish heroic past is used to give additional historical credit to the Young Irelanders and their cause. McCarthy’s nationalist text highlights only certain useful aspects of Irish rebellious history to support its claim for future self-governance, emphasising Irish heroism while de-emphasising Irish victimhood.

The nationalist ideology presented in Lily Lass is both romantic and antiquarian in tone, and the novel stresses the genetic predisposition inherent to Irish nationalism.\textsuperscript{42} The historical rebellious spirit is presented as age-old and inherited, which further contributes to its transhistorical nature. The central hero, Murrough MacMurchad, is – like the Dalys in Keary’s Castle Daly (1875), Dan Macmanus in Sigerson’s A Ruined Race (1889), or Zanthon in Doran’s eponymous novel (1891) – the last of a declining old stock noble Irish family.\textsuperscript{43} Supposedly, he comes from a lineage of ancestors that have all somehow been implicated in Ireland’s tragic but heroic history: “In every epoch of the country’s history one MacMurchad or another was to be found playing a part more or less prominent in the struggle”.\textsuperscript{44} This genetic predisposition of the Irish spirit is also acknowledged in When We Were Boys, when schoolmaster Rector Motherwell remarks that “[a]n Irish lad of spirit looks forward to his going out in a rising, as an English lad does to going up for the mathematical tripos.”\textsuperscript{45} Moreover, the novels by Huntly McCarthy, William O’Brien and many of their peers, endorse self-sacrifice for the good of the nation and display a type of “necrophilia” which according to M. J. Kelly was typical of the mindset prevalent in nationalist circles in Ireland in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{46} Most

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 65, 69.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{42} Concerning the national landscape in Irish romantic literature, Wright states that “[a]ntiquarian nationalism views the land as the palimpsest of history, defined by the sites of historical events and the archaeological residues of the past.” See Representing the National Landscape, xvii.
\textsuperscript{43} Clare Marlband, who transforms into Zanthon, is descendant of a long line of heroic Irish rebels, including his grandfather, the fallen rebel chief Merraloon, and his father Marlband, who has renounced violence and rebellious action to become a pacifist druid and farmer.
\textsuperscript{44} McCarthy, Lily Lass, 76, 58.
\textsuperscript{45} W. O’Brien, When We Were Boys, 233.
\textsuperscript{46} M. J. Kelly, The Fenian Ideal And Irish Nationalism, 1882–1916 (Woodbridge:
importantly, these novels imply that patriotism and rebellion are somehow innate qualities of all true-blooded Irishmen, and that the historical continuity of Irish rebellion – and suffering, for every rebellious MacMurchad was always fighting “on the losing side” – is founded on a transhistorical and unchanging Irish sentiment that cannot be destroyed by oppression, defeat, or hardships such as the Famine, and functions as a stable element for a transhistorical sense of Irishness on which romantic nationalism could be founded.\(^{47}\)

McCarthy’s narrative covers a small part of the Famine period, and discusses only the story of MacMurchad, Fermanagh and Lilias, leaving the wider implications of Young Ireland for the narrator’s deliberations in the framing narrative. It steers clear from explicit representations of the Famine, related suffering and its impact, and centres itself on Irish heroic action. In its silence concerning Famine suffering, McCarthy’s Young Ireland novel suggests that Famine misery can be considered an “absence” rather than a presence, hinting at the evocative potential of negative representation and the unrepresentability of the event, here in terms of passive victimhood. When read from a traditional trauma studies perspective, this could imply that Famine memory still was too uncomfortable or unique a form of recollection to be incorporated into the romantic nationalist theology of transhistorical heroism and grandeur, that supposedly demonstrated the self-sufficiency of the Irish now and in the future. This would locate the memory of the Famine – or lack thereof – outside of Irish nationalist history and would consequently present it as a repressed cultural trauma, which had not been granted its place in Ireland’s linear history yet. At the same time, this reading would impede the potential interpretation of the absence of Famine memory in McCarthy’s romantic nationalist novel as simply a strategic choice by the author; a choice to not incorporate recollections of passive victimhood in a novelistic format which had little room for such non-celebratory memories.

By contrast, the tensions between representations of the after-effects of the Famine and the depiction of Irish nationalism are approached in a very different manner in Annie Keary’s *Castle Daly*. Keary, daughter of an Irish Anglican clergyman and former soldier, was born in Wetherby (Yorkshire) in 1825 and wrote a traditional and hugely successful Big House novel largely set during the late 1840s, or early Famine years. Keary spent most of her life in England and the South of France, and never lived in Ireland.\(^{48}\)

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48 John Sutherland, ‘Keary, Annie [Anna Maria]’, *The Longman Companion to Vic-
Castle Daly was published in several formats in 1875; in serial form, as a three-decker and as a double-decker novel; I have used the three-decker version in this study. The novel is based on Keary’s own observations during a two-week sojourn in Ireland in the early 1870s, as well as on second-hand recollections of the Young Ireland rebellion and “the terrible Famine preceding it” provided by friends and relatives living in Ireland.

The novel was initially written for the Irish and British markets and was quite successful: after its initial serialisation in British magazine Macmillan’s, it went through at least six republications before 1880, including two American editions published in New York and Philadelphia. The narrative focuses on an old-stock Irish landlord family, and especially on daughter Ellen Daly and her dealings with the English land agent John Thornley, as well as on Ellen’s brother Connor, who becomes implicated in the failed 1848 Young Ireland rebellion.

The narrative focuses on British governmental policy during the Famine and on the Young Ireland movement. Through the incorporation of the British rational perspective as well as the Irish nationalist interpretation both sides of the Irish Question are represented and the tension between these different visions on the impact of the Famine is explored. Ellen Daly, then, functions as a mediator between the two positions, pointing out virtues and errors in both mindsets. Presenting its readers with both Irish and English, separatist and unionist views, Keary’s novel “differs fundamentally from other Irish land novels in not simply advocating one socio-political analysis”. Its multivoicedness is not only supported by the content of the novel, but also by its structure: besides describing different viewpoints, the narrative structure consists of a multi-focus following pattern, in which different characters are followed. Furthermore, frequent shifts in focalisation further support this polyphony on the structural perspective.
4.1 Huntly McCarthy and Keary and the Longevity of Trauma

...tural level: readers become acquainted not only with the inner workings of moral centre Ellen Daly, but also with those of her brother, their kinswoman cousin Anne and Englishman Thornley, all of whom, in consequence, are cast as rounded characters.

Central to the novel’s depiction of Famine-era government policy is the theory of Political Economy in which through a “mechanical kind of standardization” people were reduced to “labouring instruments and fertilizing mechanisms”.

Following from Malthusian ideas on demography and economy, this extreme rationality was not only applied to the realm of economics, but was also imposed in explanatory and prescriptive manners on the processes of population growth and decline. Moreover, through the views of thinkers such as Arch Bishop and Professor of Political Economy Richard Whately (1787–1863), the idea of “Natural Theology” became linked to the theory of political economy, and a religious interpretation was provided for demographic and economic developments in Victorian Britain. In public debates of the time, the application of Political Economy and especially its laissez-faire principles were highly contested, as critics felt that while such theories could successfully be applied in an in-

55 Reasoning from the fact he was appointed the first professorship of Political Economy at the University of Oxford, Richard Whately considered himself the personification of the acknowledgement that “Political Economy” and “Theology are [not] unfriendly to each other” (viii). Advocating a Protestant work ethic, Whately argued that following the theory of Political Economy, the “good economist” is not called thus “for making his fortune by a judicious investment of his capital in some successful manufactury or branch of commerce, but for making the most of a given income, and prudently regulating, so as to prevent waste” (5). Moreover, he linked this directly to the idea of “Natural Theology”: “the contemplation of the divine Wisdom as displayed in provisions for the existence, the well-being, and the progress, of society”. Whately considered Natural Theology to stand in connection “with natural wealth” and thus “more immediately in connection” to “the advancement of civilization” which, he argued, could be obtained through Political Economy and its division of labour (113). See Richard Whately, D.D., Introductory Lectures on Political Economy, Being Part of a Course Delivered in Easter Term, MDCCCXXXI (London: B. Fellowes, 1831).

The religious interpretation of the Famine as divine punishment for earthly improvidence was adopted by several Victorian commentators and political figures, most famously by Charles Trevelyan, who, during the early Famine years commented that “[a] remedy has already been applied to that portion of the maladies of Ireland which was traceable to political causes” by “the direct stroke of an all-wise Providence”. See ‘Letter of Charles Edward Trevelyan to Thomas Spring-Rice, Lord Mounteagle’, Treasury, 9 Oct. 1846.
dustrially advanced society such as Britain, they were vastly unsuited for a less advanced rural society such as Ireland.\textsuperscript{56} In 1847, the Irish Confederation published the booklet \textit{Irish Political Economy}. The publication was edited by John Mitchel, who, in the preface, stated the text had been published to help the Irish understand that they would continue to be “wretched, and miserable, and poor and naked [...] exactly as long as they chose to submit to be ruled by strangers, and no longer”.\textsuperscript{57} Mitchel extended his acerbic critique by arguing that “English professors of political economy have, by perverting and misapplying the principles of that science, endeavoured to prove to use, that to part with our bread and cattle is profitable ‘commerce,’ and that our trading intercourse with their country enriches us immensely, whatever the ignorant and starving Irish may say and feel to the contrary”.\textsuperscript{58}

The principles of Political Economy are rigorously adopted by agent John Thornley in the first half of \textit{Castle Daly}. When looking at the idyllic Georgic community of Good People’s Hollow and discussing its prosperity and future with landlady Anne O’Flaherty, Thornley coolly adopts the language of Political Economy, as he argues from the calm heights of logical deductions, and proved by well argued and thoroughly established laws of other people’s finding out, how baseless all Anne’s expectations were; how sure her work was to fall to pieces and fail in the long run; and how miserably inadequate her little bit of partial experience was to set against the world-wide, often proved wisdom on which he founded his theories.\textsuperscript{59}

Significantly, although the reader will become familiar with John Thornley’s benevolent side as the narrative progresses, during this early scene he does not function as focaliser yet, for the quoted passage is focalised through Cousin Anne’s eyes. As Thornley speaks, Anne, a compassionate Irishwoman, sees “a huge, crushing, iron monster called Political Economy” looming on her hopes, a monster “before whose Juggernaut wheels the prosperity of her populous little valley must inevitably be ground to

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Irish Political Economy} by Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patricks and George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (Dublin: William Holden [printer], 1847), v.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., iv.
\textsuperscript{59} Annie Keary, \textit{Castle Daly: The Story of an Irish Home Thirty Years Ago} 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1875), vol. 1, 151.
powder some day”. The inhumanity of the system is consequently pointed out as “the demolisher of her bright visions [Thornley] did not appear to find anything to regret in the results he foresaw so plainly”.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} Furthermore, the novel seems to take a stance against Political Economy, or at least its inhumane effects, by structurally supporting Anne’s side in this matter.

Eventually, through his work as an agent, his discussions with and love for Ellen, contact with the Irish, and the witnessing of Famine misery, Thornley sees the error of his ways. Reflecting on recent hardships to Ellen, he states:

“I begin to see where the fault lies. A few minutes ago I was saying vehemently to myself that at least I had been guilty of no injustice, yet I felt that the sting of remorse would not strike so deep if I were really blameless. Now I see how it is. I ought never to have come here, knowing so little as I did of the people I had to deal with, having scarcely glanced at the problems that rise up before me now as almost unfathomable. […] If I had been less self-confident, less contemptuous of other people’s doings, less full of the system, perhaps – but I dare not look back in that way, the consequences are too terrible.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid., vol. 3, 45.}}

In contrast to the previous quotation, the above excerpt is focalised through Thornley, who acknowledges his own and by extension the colonial system’s arrogance and cold-heartedness. Thereby he functions as a critique on British governmental policy, and points out that British theories cannot and should not be indifferently applied to the Irish context.\footnote{“Political economists over the last two centuries have consistently remarked upon the many ways in which Ireland can be seen to depart from those pathways to capitalist development regarded as normal in the Western World.” Joe Cleary, ‘Introduction: Ireland and Modernity’, in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly, eds, \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.}

Expounding on this critique, the novel does not only find fault with British colonial presence in Ireland. As an agent who has come to see the error of his ways, Thornley is allowed to stay and find happiness, as he eventually even marries Ellen Daly and they become the new landlords of the Daly estate. Although he sees the inhumanity of his former approach, Thornley at the end of the novel still rationally intends not to “discourage
the emigration, and induce people to settle here in their former numbers.” 63 This is painful to his new wife Ellen, who still “mourn[s] over the deserted villages and the silent hill-sides”. However, Thornley upholds this British principle because of the most philanthropic of convictions, feeling that an increase in the population “would only lead to another famine”. 64

Alongside this, the novel provides the Irish nationalist perspective on the Famine and British government policy. This view is mostly provided by Connor Daly, who becomes attracted to the ideology of Young Ireland. Connor develops into a passionate defender of his poorer countrymen and in doing so adopts a Mitchelite stance. In this he is not alone, for even the less rebellious sibling, Ellen, expresses her disbelief and lack of understanding when stating that “the abundance of corn our own land brings forth” is “by some machinery we can’t understand, to be spirited away from us”. 65 This strange “machinery” is a reference to Charles Trevelyan’s laissez-faire Malthusian approach to the governing of Ireland: reflecting on the British government’s Famine-era policy, Trevelyan reasoned “that the ability even of the most powerful government is extremely limited in dealing with a social evil of this description. It forms no part of the functions of government to provide supplies of food or to increase the productive powers of the land.” 66

Honing his sister’s tone, Connor questions the use of charitable initiatives while Irish produce and cattle are shipped off, stating that “[w]e should not need to be fed by charity if we could keep what belongs to us – keep our own cattle from being carried off to England to pay absentee rents”. 67

In the anonymous novel Dick O’Dell, which first appeared in serial publication in Young Ireland a year after the publication of Keary’s novel and which was republished in The Irish-American in 1880, this interpretation also features. The eponymous hero Dick remarks that the Famine victims are the “surplus population” of Ireland conveniently disposed of, and that “[t]here ought to be no famine in a land that sends out herds of cattle, pigs and sheep, by every tide to England, as well as the produce of our abundant harvests.” 68 These statements made by the Daly siblings and Dick O’Dell are strongly reminiscent of John Mitchel’s well-known expres-

63 Keary, Castle Daly, vol. 3, 349.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., vol. 2, 197.
sions of great indignity and disbelief at Famine-era food exports and the nature of the charity awarded to Ireland. Characteristically providing hyperbolic imagery, Mitchel famously maintained that while “insane mothers began to eat their young children who died of famine before them [...] still fleets of ships were sailing with every tide, carrying Irish cattle and corn to England”. Moreover, Mitchel also argued “that foreign nations should never believe [...] that our people, when smitten by famine, fell a-begging from England or from America”. By the time Castle Daly was published the issue of food exports had become one of the myths surrounding the memory of the Famine. James Murphy exposes that, at least concerning grain, export levels were lower than assumed by Mitchel and his followers, and were even exceeded by imports: just before the Famine “almost half a million tons of grain were exported from Ireland annually” while in 1847 “only 146,000 were exported” and “[d]uring the famine imports of grain exceeded exports by a ration of three to one.”

Arguing in similar vein as Mitchel – a line of reasoning which is also adopted by the Irish-American Captain Mike McCarthy from William O’Brien’s When We Were Boys –, Connor Daly believes the Famine to be caused by British governmental “neglect” and “misgovernment” and attributes not only the Famine victims but also the Young Irelanders with the status of glorious victimhood, arguing that both are “martyrs for the

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69 John Mitchel, Ireland since ’98: Daniel O’Connell; the Repeal Agitation; the Miseries of the Famine; the Young Ireland Party, etc. (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 124, 130.

70 James H. Murphy, Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History, 1791–1891 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 100. As a sidenote, it should be stated that Cormac Ó Gráda argues that although “[d]uring the famine Ireland switched from being one of Britain’s bread baskets to being a net importer of food grains”, “in the winter and spring of 1846/7 exports still exceeded imports, presumably because poor Ireland lacked the purchasing power to buy the wheat and oats that were being shipped out.” See ‘Ireland’s Great Famine. An Overview’, 53.

71 In a discussion of perceived Famine-era apathy and inertia, Captain McCarthy claims that the lack of will and incapability to work and concomitant starvation were caused by British governmental policy, for “just watch how industrious the Irish are in USA” (W. O’Brien, When We Were Boys, 227). Disbelief and apathy were terms commonly used in British comments upon the behaviour of the Famine-stricken Irish. For example, the leading article of The Times of 8 Mar. 1847 states: “The astounding apathy of the Irish themselves to the most horrid scenes immediately under their eyes, and capable of relief by the smallest exertion, is something absolutely without parallel in the history of civilized nations.” See ‘General Apathy in Ireland’, The Great Irish Famine of 1845–1846. A Collection of Leading Articles, Letters, and Parliamentary and other Public Statements, Reprinted from The Times (London: Times, 1880), 82.
Moreover, he also states that “[w]hatever is worth anything in the old country, the English get hold of”, again reflecting Mitchel’s point that charitable works and intentions are wasted on Ireland, for the “bushel of corn or a dollar of money” sent by the Americans “will never reach her”. Although this Mitchelite interpretation seems to feature more prominently in British works, it can also be found in North-American works such as Clayton’s *Scenes and Incidents* and Doran’s *Zanthon*. Moreover, several of the works that voice Mitchelite beliefs, were also re-published in North America (Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, Keary’s *Castle Daly* and the anonymous *Dick O’Dell*, for example), further illustrating that by the 1870s Mitchel’s interpretation of Irish colonial history and the Famine had become widespread within the cross-Atlantic Irish community and was readily adopted in works of popular fiction as well.

In *Castle Daly*, adolescent ardour and heartfelt sympathies with the plight of the Irish poor fuel Connor’s patriotism, leading to his involvement with Young Ireland as one of its rebel leaders. It is at this point that Ellen’s alliance with her brother’s views ends, for she sympathises with Young Ireland’s ideology, but questions whether the radical steps her brother plans to take are justified. At the height of the Famine, while the nation is severely weakened, Ellen asks herself “[w]ere not Connor and his friends perhaps right to try to create some spark of life, if it were only the galvanic spark that moves a corpse?”, implying that although the sentiment might be just, the Famine-stricken Irish are not considered fit material for a successful insurrection. Furthermore, Ellen favours the non-violent constitutional approach to Irish Home Rule, by fondly referring to a speech by O’Connell she witnessed in her youth when her father took her to one of his monster meetings, where ‘the Liberator’ argued in favour of Ireland becoming “an independent nation again, through the majestic force of its people’s united will, peacefully expressed”.

As the rebels gather before heading off for the Rising, Connor and Ellen’s cousin D’Arcy – who is also a Young Ireland leader – remarks that “[w]e’re fewer this morning that I thought we should be”, which in the

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72 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 3.
73 Ibid., vol. 3, 272; Mitchel, *Ireland since ’98*, 130.
74 Similarly, in Canadian writer Margaret Dixon McDougall’s *The Days of a Life* (Almonte: W. Templeman, 1883), constitutional criticaster Bernard Butler associates himself with the Land League when he can no longer suffer to watch the Irish poor starve.
75 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 180.
76 Ibid., vol. 3, 179 (emphasis mine).
novel is seen as a direct result of the Famine.\textsuperscript{77} Other characters share Ellen’s ambivalent view concerning Irish nationalism, as for example Doctor O’Leary, who in the narrative witnesses the rebellion, sees its leaders – William Smith O’Brien is explicitly mentioned – as true-spirited but misguided: “To think of clever lads like Connor and D’Arcy, to say nothing of a sober gentleman of forty like Mr. Smith O’Brien, proposing to stand up against Ireland with an army composed of material like that.”\textsuperscript{78} Consequently, the rebels – described by Doctor O’Leary as “skeletons” – are outnumbered in both number and arms.\textsuperscript{79} The Young Ireland rebellion is a catastrophe, many are killed and Connor is forced to flee to America, while the remaining leaders are captured and face a sentence of life-long transportation. Again, the novel’s structure seems geared to guide the reader’s interpretation of events and viewpoints in the text: while during the early stages of the novel, Connor Daly functions as a focalising agent (we see Good People’s Hollow through his eyes first, and much of the nationalist rhetoric is also focalised from his perspective), later the structure of the text prevents a direct connection to Connor. Doubts about the approach and success of the upcoming rebellion are represented as an internal monologue by Ellen, and the rising is reported in hindsight by a minor character, not by Connor or any of the Young Ireland sympathisers. Thereby the narrative structure in the end facilitates a direct connection with Ellen’s mitigated nationalist rhetoric, while it creates distance from nationalist physical outbursts.

This interpretation of why the rebellion failed also figures in \textit{Dick O’Dell}. The novel contains many similarities with Keary’s novel, which suggests that the anonymous writer of \textit{Dick O’Dell} was at least familiar with Keary’s text. The protagonist, like Connor Daly, is an impoverished Irish landlord’s son who also adopts a Mitchelite interpretation of Ireland’s condition. Moreover, like Connor Daly, Dick O’Dell Jr. is stricken by the plight of the Irish poor to such a degree that he becomes a Young Ireland leader, doing “his best to train the men who had pledged themselves to him to resist the laws that oppressed them”.\textsuperscript{80} Equally, the anonymous text contains sympathetic characters who question the success of the rebellion. Dick’s father Dan O’Dell says that “famished creatures [...] abound in the land, men from whom almost all semblance of manhood is gone, to whom a meal of food would be more welcome than any freedom”. After this, he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Ibid., vol. 3, 188–9.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid., vol. 3, 256.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid., vol. 3, 248.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Anonymous, \textit{Dick O’Dell, Young Ireland} 2/46 (11 Nov. 1876), 550.
\end{itemize}
concludes that they are ill-suited material for an insurrection. In *Dick O’Dell*, the failed rebellion itself is not even described as young Dick realises beforehand that the Irish victims have not become strengthened in their nationalist resolve by the Famine, but are indeed too weak. Travelling through the Irish countryside as a wanted rebel, Dick finds “everywhere ruin, desolation, and famine. It was no uncommon thing for them to come on mountain shielings where the inmates all lay dead, in different stages of decomposition.” The result of these confrontations is that for Dick and the other Young Ireland fugitives “all thought of rallying the people had now died out of their minds.” Rather than strengthening the people’s nationalist resolve, as D’Arcy McGee hoped it would do, the Famine impedes the success of the rebellion.

In *Castle Daly*, despite the failure of the rebellion, Ellen feels that the Young Irelanders possess vision and deserve high praise: “Then would be the names of those who from afar had foreseen the glory, but never entered into it, who had refused to give up hope, who had worshipped at the cradle of worth, be remembered again, and honoured and won in all the glad hearts.” Ellen’s statement demonstrates that although the Famine has severely weakened the people in both body and spirit, it does not signify the end of Irish patriotism. The persistence of Irish national feeling is recognised in other works of fiction as well, which not only demonstrate that the Famine and the Young Ireland rebellion, but also later nationalist failures cannot break the Irish spirit. For example, F. H. Clayton’s *Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life* (1884) acknowledges that at the novel’s time of writing “the eternal fire of patriotism is still aglow in the hearts of Erin’s sons and daughters, and that the beacon fires of liberty are only smouldering on the high altars of the green hills of the Emerald Isle.”

In Charlotte G. O’Brien’s *Light and Shade*, after the failure of the Fenian Rising the Irish nationalists’ “patriotism and their self-devotion are living – aye, and will live, and spread purifying idealisms in the country for which

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81 Ibid., 2/36 (2 Sept. 1876), 431.
82 Ibid. When Dan O’Dell remarks that the people are too weak to rebel, his brother Dick Sr retorts by stating that hunger and oppression rather instigate rebellion: “Desperation and starvation will do more affluence ever could to make these maddened, wronged, famished men soldiers. I’d bet my life on their mettle; and God knows if they were shot down it would be a nobler ending for their poor wasted lives than to lie down in the ditch ill of typhus, or to perish on their own hearthstones of hunger.”
84 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 181.
85 F. H. Clayton (‘An Irishman’), *Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life* (Montreal: John Lovell [printer], 1884), 11.
they gave their lives.”  

Ellen Daly’s conviction of the endurance of the Irish patriotic spirit in Castle Daly implies a revision of Irish society and Irishness. In its final pages the novel fast-forwards a few decades and shows Connor revisiting his sister on their familial estate in Ireland. Connor deplores the change and desolation that have come over the country, as does Ellen. However, she also remarks that she and Thornley “have been true to the spirit of the old traditions” as much as possible, demonstrating that despite the Famine some form of traditional Irishness still remains and is actively upheld by the Irish and British landlord alike. In the face of a devastating ordeal which, according to the narrative, has led to the depopulation of Ireland, elements of that Irish identity continue to exist and are cherished. In Castle Daly the ideal Catholic feudal character of the Irish estate continues to exist in slimmed-down form, while British-imposed measures such as aided migration and agricultural improvements help to alleviate stress on the population and the land. The Famine is not simply represented as an absolute rupturing event, but rather as a catalyst, which ushers in a new but still familiar Irish feudal society in which the Irish – although at much pain – can re-establish a modernised, slightly British-influenced form of their traditional identity.

The marriage between Ellen and Thornley functions as a typical marriage between Ireland and England, providing the novel with an updated version of the national marriage plot found in traditional Big House fiction. In the end, it is the combination of Irish heart and English rationale that survives the ordeal of the Famine, but no unambiguous happy ending is provided; (British) changes are necessary, but not always desired. The novel does not argue in favour of one side over the other: it bemoans the great loss caused by the Famine, “is sympathetic to Home Rule” and criticises the coolness of British government policy. However, it also represents some of the British aspects – such as the stimulation of emigration

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87 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 349.
88 Kreilkamp states that “big house novels are far from elegiac, typically directing considerable irony toward an improvident class of social and economic losers”. With social class, Kreilkamp is referring to the landlord classes, which already were much on the decline during the late nineteenth century. See ‘Novel of the Big House’, 61.
90 Sutherland, ‘Keary, Annie [Anna Maria’], 345.
– as inevitable and even desired to prevent another Famine.\footnote{Some commentators saw mass-scale emigration as the panacea for problems in Ireland, and, while others were less enthusiastic about such drastic measures, they did see the benefits of emigration, as does John Thornley in \textit{Castle Daly}. Sympathetic liberalist agricultural commentator James Caird (1816–92) did not consider emigration as the best solution to “the Irish agricultural malaise”, but did “[allow] that limited amounts [...] might facilitate what Ireland really required”. See Peter Gray, ‘Famine and Land in Ireland and India, 1845–1880: James Caird and the Political Economy of Hunger’, \textit{The Historical Journal}, 49/1 (Mar. 2006), 193–215: 197. Others, Parnell included, felt that emigration was no solution, as it sent the strong and young, or those “who, under natural conditions, would be considered the greatest possible loss to any country” abroad, which would only be damaging to Ireland’s development (Parnell, \textit{Irish Land Question}, 399).}

Furthermore, it casts the Young Ireland rebels in a heroic, but naïve light. Lastly, it does not call for Irish independence or the end of British colonial rule in Ireland, but rather for increased self-governance through a more balanced and non-violent approach within the context of Empire.\footnote{Connor tells Ellen that cousin D’Arcy O’Donnell, while in America, eventually denounced Fenianism and chose to fight for Irish independence through a non-violent approach (Keary, \textit{Castle Daly}, vol. 3, 350).} This thoughtful mediating approach to the Irish Question could be attributed to Keary’s own life and background, in which the novel’s contesting aspects featured as well: Keary was born and raised in England by an Anglican clergyman who spent his childhood in Ireland and came from an impoverished landowning family. She lived most of her formative years in England and later in life she apparently suffered a religious crisis.\footnote{‘Keary, Anna Maria (Annie)’, author entry, in Rolf Loeber, Magda Loeber and Anne Mulin Burnham, eds, \textit{A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650–1900} (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004). Electronic version created by An Foras Feasa, 2012, <http://www.lgif.ie>, accessed 11 Feb. 2013.}

Within this Irish-English political narrative, the representation of the Famine functions as a nodal point to explore the tensions in Irish-British relations and politics. The Famine is used to critically reflect on different co-existing viewpoints simultaneously. Its memory is appropriated to pinpoint the inhuman aspects of Britain’s colonial governance of Ireland, but simultaneously shows that something needs to change within Irish traditional society. Moreover, the memory of the Famine is used to give support to the viewpoints of the Young Ireland movement and Irish nationalism in general, but simultaneously supports the critique of its violent outbursts and naivety.

While \textit{Castle Daly} represents the Famine as a great calamity with irreversible impact on the people and land of Ireland, it also shows that the
Famine does not inaugurate an undefined period of traumatic stasis, and does not mean an end to the Irish nationalist spirit. Rather, it demonstrates that the Irish can and will recover, and, as Ellen Daly prophetically announced earlier in the narrative, that the Young Ireland rebels and Famine victims will be “remembered” and “honoured” in times to come.94 By representing the impact of the Famine as finite and pointing to the resilience of Irish traditional culture, the novel contains the potential to undermine any absolute rendering of a traumatic status frequently attributed to the event. Rather, in the context of fictionalised Irish nationalist history and rhetoric, and a romantic nationalist sense of traditional Irishness, the novel suggests that the Famine and its impact on Irishness can be seen as representations of the traumatic sublime. Castle Daly’s representation of the Famine leaves room for various interpretations of its after-effects and therefore that representation, like the traumatic sublime, can function as a “category of transition”.95 Keary’s novel implies that the impact of the Famine is not all-eclipsing or everlasting in the context of the Irish nationalist spirit. Thereby it suggests that “the period of nachträgliches deferral”, or postponement of meaning which is usually linked to a traumatic event and its arresting impact, potentially is shortened.96 The polyphonic nature of Keary’s novel, visible in its structure and content, helps to open up the literary memory of the Famine, making it accessible to reconsideration and working through.97 By extension, the same claim can be made for the works by O’Brien, Doran and others that are yet to be discussed in this chapter. These novels represent the Famine as a disruptive catalyst, but simultaneously show that Irishness will endure.

4.2 Historical Circularity: William O’Brien’s

*When We Were Boys* (1890)

William O’Brien was born in Mallow, Co. Cork in 1852 and was a land agitator, radical nationalist MP and writer.98 He was also the editor of the journal *United Ireland*, a task he fulfilled with great militancy, leading

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94 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 181.
96 Ibid., 11.
97 With regard to considering representations of a potentially traumatic events as instances of the “traumatic sublime”, Ray argues that in seeing events in that manner “we are better able to testify” to their impact and consequently can start to narrate and share what the event can mean with others. *Terror and the Sublime*, 5, 9.
98 Murphy, *Irish Novelists and the Victorian Age*, 233.
to the paper’s suppression and his arrest in 1881. This event also seems to have found its way into *When We Were Boys*, as the editors of the local nationalist journal to which protagonist Ken Rohan sends his inflammatory poetry are arrested as well. In his capacity as a nationalist politician, O’Brien was very much concerned with the Irish tenants’ plight and wanted to establish governmental reform through a constitutional approach.

O’Brien wrote *When We Were Boys* during two terms of imprisonment and the novel is saturated with Irish romantic nationalism. In 1890, the narrative was published in book form in Ireland and in serial form in *The Irish-American*. The novel was very popular in its day, and continued to be so: the 1919 edition sold out in Ireland. *When We Were Boys* is a veritable celebration of Fenianism, for O’Brien “idealised Fenianism as Irish nationalism in its purest and most authentic form”, as a nationalism “racy of the soil”. In the narrative, young Ken Rohan becomes a Fenian rebel and plans to fight in the rebellion. Presumably, Rohan was modeled after the author’s own brother, the Fenian James Nagle O’Brien. Just before the failure of the Fenian rebellion, Ken and his friends enter an American ship to find out that the rebellion has been aborted before it can commence: the American troops that have come to support the Irish rebels have found out that their cover has been blown, and have called the rebellion off. In retrospect, Ken remarks that after letting the Irish risk everything “for the sake of principles you [the Americans] have implanted on them”, they leave the Irish unarmed and unprotected to face yet another defeat.

100 Ibid.
103 Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal*, 66. Moreover, James H. Murphy informs us that in O’Brien’s novel “Fenians are seen as the natural and responsible leaders of the people” (*Catholic Fiction*, 67).
a fascinating feat of rewriting history on O’Brien’s part: in May 1867, the Americans did send a ship filled with arms and ammunition to Ireland, but the Irish rebels failed to meet the vessel and take over its cargo. Frustrated by the Irish, the Americans went home, taking their cargo with them.106

In *When We Were Boys* a connection is made between the novel’s central rebellion – in this case the Fenian rising – and earlier times of colonial hardship and insurrection. As Table 4.1 below demonstrates, such connections are also made in various other Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction. These works string together different nationalist episodes, turning them into a long, continuous history. For example, in *Light and Shade*, Charlotte O’Brien links together the plight of the Irish of 1867, 1848 and 1798. With regard to the Famine and Young Ireland rebellion specifically, this connection implies that the recollections of these events become an integral part of Ireland’s long history of oppression, failed resistance and hardship. This sense of historical connectedness also recurred in non-fictional writings such as newspaper and journal articles.

During the serialisation of Mary Francis Cusack’s *From Killarney to New York* (1877) in *McGee’s Illustrated Weekly*, an article appeared on United Irishman Theobald Wolfe Tone, in which the 1798 rebellion was described as “fatal but glorious”.107 In a similar manner as in the works of fiction discussed here, through the pairing of Cusack’s Famine-era text and the piece about the 1798 rebellion within the same issue of *McGee’s*, Famine memory and older recollections of the United Irishmen rebellion are linked, as are their connotations of an idealised, resistant Irishness in the face of British religious and/or colonial oppression.

In *When We Were Boys*, Jack, Ken’s friend and fellow nationalist, comments that his father “had his pike ready in ’48”.108 Furthermore, the Irish-American troops that come to support the Fenians are themselves returned Famine emigrants.109 The novel reaches back further: it includes a celebration of the tenacity displayed by Wolfe Tone, as Jack remarks that “[t]he most wonderful thing about Wolfe Tone is not that he should have brought about the expedition to Bantry Bay, but that he should have ever

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106 Cronin, *History of Ireland*, 152.
109 For example, their leader, Captain Mike McCarthy, recollects his family’s eviction, his starving neighbours and little sister who died of Famine fever (*When We Were Boys*, 155).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Nationalist references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox</td>
<td>Rose O’Connor (1880)</td>
<td>Robert Emmet – Daniel O’Connell – William Smith O’Connor (O’Connor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O’Rean</td>
<td>The Dánae of Cúa (1887)</td>
<td>Robert Emmet – Parnell (1884) – William Smith O’Connor (O’Connor) – Daniel O’Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. H. Breen</td>
<td>Lily Lass (1889)</td>
<td>Thaddeus MacManus, Terence Meagher, Thomas Sullivan, John O’Dwyer (1878) – Rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew</td>
<td>Castle Cloyne (1885)</td>
<td>John Dillon, land war etc. – Henry Grattan – James O’Dwyer (1878) – Daniel O’Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lawless</td>
<td>Huntah (1886)</td>
<td>John Dillon, land war etc. – Henry Grattan – James O’Dwyer (1878) – Daniel O’Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox</td>
<td>Castle O’Connor (1889)</td>
<td>John Dillon, land war etc. – Henry Grattan – James O’Dwyer (1878) – Daniel O’Connell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 works out of the corpus of 33 texts include nationalist rhetoric. 10 of those 14 present Irish patriotic history as a successive...
4.2 Historical Circularity in *When We Were Boys* (1890)

raised his head again to plan another”.¹¹⁰ Later, this historical repetition is further played out, as the rising on which the narrative focuses is planned to take place in that same bay.¹¹¹ Similarly, in McCarthy’s *Lily Lass* the United Irishmen are lauded on several occasions, including in a song written by rebel leader Fermanagh which glorifies the United Irishmen as “gallant hearts” that beat “[f]or their country and their father’s faith”.¹¹²

The strongest instances of historical accumulation can be found in two specific passages of *When We Were Boys*. In the scene in which Ken tells his parents that he rejects his future as a man of the clergy to become a Fenian rebel, he argues for the absolute necessity of his act by linking present injustice to the Famine:

> Hearts break and crumble away in Ireland. Two millions of hearts were broken in this small island since you were my age – broken miserably of sheer hunger without a blow. The redcoats might have been shooting them in platoons every day since the Famine time, and they would not have made as many corpses. Enough Irish lives have been thrown away in this generation to have purchased us a hundred Marathons or Bannockburns – and we have nothing to show for it but the Famine-pits of Skibbereeen. [...] believe me, sir, we will do better, and – God will provide!¹¹³

Strongly doubting Ken’s naïve enthusiasm for the patriotic cause, Myles Rohan subverts his son’s rhetoric and makes similar historical references to point out what he sees as a possibly never-ending downward spiral of defeat. Myles sighs and predicts that Ken will fall prey to the same rhetoric which led to the failed rebellions of 1798 and 1848: “Precisely what my poor father used to say of the ’48 men. He was a ’98 man himself in his day, and was denounced by the Bishop.”¹¹⁴ Similarly, in James Doran’s *Zanthon*, Fairside Marlband warns his young son Clare – later Zanthon – not to become involved in a rebellion using this rhetoric of prolonged defeat. When young Clare exclaims that he would want to “punish the enemies” of his grandfather rebel chief Merraloon, Marlband counters him, stating: “The power, however, which sustained them [Merraloon’s enemies] is still

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¹¹⁰ Ibid., 136.
¹¹¹ See chapter 34 of the novel.
¹¹² McCarthy, *Lily Lass*, 73. See also pages 107–8 of the novel, in which the rebels refer to the outbreak of the United Irishmen rebellion in Wexford, the abortive rebellion of 1803 and the concomitant execution of its leader Emmet.
¹¹⁴ Ibid., 127.
in existence. It would be useless to attempt its overthrow. You would fall like him.”

In William O’Brien’s novel the circularity of Irish nationalist history is best represented by Ken’s transportation scene. Arrested and convicted as a rebel and sentenced to life-long transportation to Van Diemen’s Land, Ken stands on the docks and realises that

from this very dock, from this very spot Robert Emmett [sic] gave up his young life two generations before in words over which Irish maidens still weep, and Irish youths wring their weaponless hands. From this very dock, and from this very spot, a generation later, John Mitchel uttered his fierce hymn of scorn while the irresistible Juggernaut-car thundered down upon him to break him limb by limb.

In this excerpt, historical Irish heroes are invoked to strengthen the narrative’s glorification of its own fictional rebels, thereby stringing together various historical actors and events and accrediting them with a like mindset. In so doing, the narrative creates a historical continuity of Irish martyrdom and heroism under the yoke of a colonial oppressor. Mnemonic traces of the heroic Irish past are firmly embedded in the main characters’ monologues and speeches and are used to give additional historical weight to alternately the Young Irelanders and the Fenians. Both novels – and novels such as Zanthon and Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882), to name a few, do the same – create strong links between different instances of colonial oppression and nationalist insurrection and in this manner establish a narrative template of perpetual defeat.

In linking the different events together, these novels construct the different instances of failed rebellion and colonial abuse as similar colonial catastrophes and transform the memories of failed insurrections and traumatic events into Foucauldian heterochronies which embody an accumulation of different “slices in time”, signifying “an absolute break with traditional time” in that the boundaries between past and present collapse. In

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115 Doran, Zanthon, 124.
116 W. O’Brien, When We Were Boys, 537.
117 The linking together of different episodes in Uncle Pat’s Cabin is done from the perspective of the Irish Land Question; Table 3.2 included in the previous chapter demonstrates which novels contain this historical linkage of the Irish poor’s plight and slavery; Table 4.1 in the present chapter does the same for postmnemonic references with regard to Irish nationalist history.
this sense, Irish history is construed as palimpsestic, for in one moment or event, various others are displayed, and the multiple historical layers which together form Irish history and identity become visible.

However, what many works of Famine fiction also have in common, is that although they attest to the perpetual defeat inherent to Irish colonial history on the intradiegetic level, on the extradiegetic level they strike a different note. For example, *Lily Lass* includes a positive outlook in its framework narrative, and states that the events described in the novel are luckily “things of the past”; *Zanthon* predicts a positive future for Ireland predicated on the American example; and, Irish-Canadian author Margaret McDougall Dixon’s *The Days of a Life* (1883) ends with the narrator’s promise that “Erin, oh! Erin, though long in the shade, / Thy star shall shine out when the proudest shall fade.” After the reader learns of Ken’s uncertain and undeserved faith, the narrator of *When We Were Boys* interjects that

we have not come to the end at all. Irishmen have discovered a saner resource than the wild weapons of boyish insurrection, and Englishmen a more glorious revenge than a handcuffed wrist and a convict’s brand. […] Readers, who shrink from the thought of a tale of youth and love ending with the sailing away of a dark-browed convict-ship, and the heart-breaking cry upon the quay behind, will in an approaching hour be summoned to exercise the all-but-heavenly high prerogative of settling for themselves what shall really be

THE END.\textsuperscript{120}

Rejecting violence as a means to gaining political independence, these closings

\textsuperscript{119} McCarthy, *Lily Lass*, 147.

The full ending words to McDougall’s *The Days of a Life* read:

Our story ends – it is not finished.

What will the end be? Evil is not eternal! It must abolish itself, or be abolished. Through whatever pain, and throe, a new order of things shall be born, and the Evangel really means, “Peace on earth, Good Will to men.”

“Erin, oh! Erin, though long in the shade,
Thy star shall shine out when the proudest shall fade.”

THE END. (437–8)

\textsuperscript{120} W. O’Brien, *When We Were Boys*, 550.
ing words seem to provide a negative judgement of Fenianism, in contrast to O’Brien’s celebration of Fenianism as true nationalism mentioned earlier. Supposedly, when Irish-American nationalist Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa read the novel, he felt that it was “a libel on the character of the Fenian movement in Ireland”. However, O’Brien makes a distinction between good and bad Fenians and in so doing reshapes history once more. Ken Rohan and his friends, possessing the true nationalist spirit and willing to die for their country, never actually fight, and are of the first classification. The rebels that do not heed the call that the rebellion is off and in the end rebel only to fight and loot their way through the Glengariff (Co. Cork) countryside, are those responsible for the violent and unjust excesses of Fenianism. Thus, the novel downplays the actual outbreaks of aggression that did take place during the Fenian Rising – such as the bombing of Clerkenwell Prison in London – by keeping its narrative small-scale and local, and distancing the Fenian mindset from acts of violence. Together with the ineffectual American rebels, the uncontrollable aggressors are portrayed as false Fenians. In making this distinction, the narrative attempts to keep the spirit of Irish nationalism and/or Fenianism pure.

In its direction towards both Ireland and England, the excerpt included above also appears to reflect O’Brien’s conciliatory approach to Irish Home Rule. Furthermore, although the remark on the extradiegetic level is positive, in the context of the novel’s foreseeable future it should also be nuanced somewhat, as the lack of specificity and use of the future tense in the narrator’s message imply an indefinite ending. Indeed, according to his biographer Michael MacDonagh, O’Brien held strong hopes of “Ireland being lifted up and crowned like a queen – one and indivisible, constitutionally associated with Great Britain and the Commonwealth of the Empire in the most perfect amity, but politically free and independent”, but that “[h]e did not expect to see it himself.”

On the extradiegetic level, nationalist-inclined works of Famine fiction such as *When We Were Boys*, *Castle Daly*, *Lily Loss* and *Zanthon* sound messages of hope for the future: each narrator informs us that although the narrative presented is one of prolonged suffering, one day the tables

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will be turned. The novels discussed here take the narrative template of
decline found on the intradiegetic level of the story’s events – which was
a reflection of Ireland’s condition in each writer’s day and age – and turn
it into a positive message of future triumph. This message appropriates
the pattern of cyclical defeat and presents it as cumulative justification for
the righteousness of this vision. Moreover, in this context, Famine memory
becomes ingrained in the ideological message of the text. While functioning
as a testimony to Irish victimhood and defeat, the memory of the period is
subverted into a marker of power for it is also interpreted as not killing the
resilience of Irish national feeling and as yet another justification for the
nationalist struggle at present and potential future betterment of Ireland’s
colonial condition in the future.

4.3 Irish Transnationalism: International and
Transhistorical Support for the Irish National-
ist Struggle

Authors attempting to endorse Irish nationalism did not just seek support
in Irish history, but also reached beyond the island’s shores. Table 4.2
provides an overview of works of Famine fiction that contain such parallels
to other national struggles and rebels, showing that especially Irish works
of fiction directed their attention to both the European mainland and the
US for inspiration and nationalist justification. In Huntly McCarthy’s Lily
Lass, the Young Irelanders are compared to other revolutionaries by the
novel’s heroine. The following is taken from a discussion between Lilias
and the English Lord Mountmarvel:

“I suppose they are patriots,” she said. “As much patriots as
Poles or Hungarians or Venetians.”

“No at all,” Mountmarvel answered, half amused at her impetu-
osity. “The Poles and the Hungarians and the Venetians are fighting
for their country’s liberty, you know.”

123 The analysis of Zanthon is taken from an article published by Christopher Cusack
and myself and reappears here in slightly adapted form. For a detailed analysis of how
the nationalist messages represented in Zanthon and John Brennan’s Erin Mor (1892),
can in fact be considered forms of Irish-American transnationalism with influence on
both sides of the Atlantic see ‘Famine, Home, and Transatlantic Politics in Two Late
### Table 4.2: Representations of Irish nationalism: prosthetic references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Nationalist references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – Dick O'Dell (1876–7)</td>
<td>Young Ireland Rebellion (1848) – general rebellious climate across Europe during 1840s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O'Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>Fenian Rising (1867) – American Civil War and references to France functioning as an example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O'Brien – The Days of a Life (1883)</td>
<td>Young Ireland Rebellion – Siege of Paris and famine (1870–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew – Castle Cloyne (1885)</td>
<td>Young Ireland Rebellion – Siege of Paris and famine (1870–1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. H. McCarthy – Lily Lass (1889)</td>
<td>Young Ireland Rebellion – Rising and famine in Poland (no specific date mentioned, but probably reference to Greater Poland Uprising 1848)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. O'Brien – When We Were Boys (1890)</td>
<td>Fenian Rising (1867) – Battle of Bannockburn (Scotland, 1314), Battle of Marathon (Greece, 490 BC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – Zanthon (1891)</td>
<td>General Irish nationalism (as historical condition) – France as an example; the US as an example</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact that the critique on the Young Irelanders comes from Lord Mount-marvel, is crucial. He is Irish hero Murrough MacMurchad’s arch nemesis and the closest thing to a British villain in Huntly McCarthy’s narrative; consequently, his critique only serves to strengthen Anglo-Irish heroine Lilias’ veneration of Young Ireland’s actions and cause. Furthermore, the reference to other failed – but as the novel presents them, justified – rebellions on the European mainland supports Young Ireland’s claim in a comparative manner: the memories of the Poles, the Hungarians and the Venetians here function as prosthetic memories: while they do not literally become part of what Huntly McCarthy’s narrative and the other narratives mentioned in Table 4.2 present as their own mnemonic repertoire, the strong similarities between the Irish case and its mainland European counterparts is demonstrated. Consequently, as is typical of prosthetic memory, the moral implications that are part of the memories concerning the European rebels become connected to the Irish plight, rhetorically strengthening the justification for the Irish struggle – they are another European people fighting for the liberty of their country. Moreover, European history not only becomes part of the Irish mnemonic repertoire, but the memory of the Young Irelanders is also incorporated into the wider European context. This places the Irish rebellion on an equal footing with these national rebellions, giving the Irish case more gravitas and presenting it as equally righteous and just, while the shared defeat of all these rebellions also deepens the sense of injustice concerning colonial oppression in Ireland specifically.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and due to mass-scale emigration and the continued home-bound orientation of Irish-American emigrants, Ireland’s orientation shifted to the American continent. As various scholars have emphasised, Irish nationalism became strongly transatlantic during the nineteenth century, as the development of nationalism in Ireland was buttressed financially, materially, and ideologically by the Irish-American community. Jonathan Gantt states that “the United States [in particular] served as an important entrepôt for repackaging and disseminating a violent nationalist ideology.” He further explores the transnational dimension by stating that from 1877 onwards, nationalist

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125 A recent discussion of post-Famine Irish nationalism in North America can be found in Brian Jenkins’ *Irish Nationalism and the British State: From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

Leaders such as John Devoy coordinated a transatlantic network between the Clan-na-Gael in America and the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the United Kingdom, to distribute arms and funds, and arrange recruitment.\textsuperscript{127} Indeed, during this period, Irish nationalism became Irish transnationalism.\textsuperscript{128}

Several works of fiction also engage with the cross-Atlantic dimension of Irish nationalism. While some novels remain quite superficial concerning such links – only referring to the sending home of American dollars by Irish-American immigrants, for example – others engage more deeply with these transnational ties: \textit{Zanthon} will serve as an example of the latter. James Doran originally came from Co. Mayo in the west of Ireland, where he worked as a schoolteacher. In 1867, the year of the failed Fenian Rising, he emigrated to America. After serving in the US Army, Doran settled in Oakland, California, where he contributed polemic articles on US politics to various newspapers.\textsuperscript{129} His political engagement with both America and Ireland is also evident in his novel \textit{Zanthon}.

Though set in one of the “western countries of Europe celebrated for the beauty of its physical features and mild climate” which remains unnamed, \textit{Zanthon} presumably depicts nineteenth-century Ireland, including famine, starving tenants, corrupt landlords, and failed rebellions.\textsuperscript{130} Doran’s novel spans several decades and two continents, starting just before the Great Famine and ending in America towards the end of the nineteenth century. As the Famine devastates the Irish countryside, young boy Clare loses all his loved ones. On his deathbed, Clare’s father has his son promise to discard his family name and history, and to reinvent himself as “Zanthon”: “Bear in mind then, your name must be changed from its present form to another, [...] with the view of severing all relationships between your future life and my family. [...] It is thought best, also, because going forth from this cave you shall be as one newly born.”\textsuperscript{131} Clare adopts

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 132.
\textsuperscript{128} Cusack and Janssen, ‘Famine, Home, and Transatlantic Politics’, 405.
\textsuperscript{129} Ella Sterling Cummins, \textit{The Story of the Files: A Review of Californian Writers and Literature} (San Francisco, CA: n.p. [“Published under the auspices of the World’s Fair Commission of California”], 1893), 354.
\textsuperscript{130} Clearly, contemporary readers picked up on the Irish dimension. In her overview of Californian literature, compiled for Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair, Cummins observes that “[n]o name is given to the country in which the action takes place, but presently it begins to steal over one that this beautiful, wretched country in which live these ignorant and hopeless mortals must be Ireland.” Cummins, \textit{Story of the Files}, 352. Doran, \textit{Zanthon}, 5.
\textsuperscript{131} Doran, \textit{Zanthon}, 122.
this new name and, after his father’s death, goes on a long journey across
the island, carrying out various jobs for several masters until he reaches
maturity. As a nationalist rebellion is about to break out – presumably
a reference to the Fenian Rising of 1867 – Zanthon learns that the people
are in need of a leader and call for the heir of the famed mythical Irish
rebel chief Merraloon. He decides to reveal himself as the son of Fairside
and grandson of Merraloon and takes his stand among the leaders of the
rebellion. Unfortunately, the insurrection fails, and Zanthon is forced to
flee to America, where he lives a long and content life in upstate New York.

In its representation of the build-up to the Fenian Rising, the novel
deploys the memory of the Famine and specifically taps into the Mitchel-
ite reading of the crisis. Shortly after the Famine, an unknown rebel who
goes by the name of “Ribbonson” and who will later reveal himself to be
the Fenian leader Colonel Tanders, states that although “the conditions
originating the blight could not have been stopped by any human power
[it] was the system instituted by men that made the famine a terror and
a means for destruction of human life. [...] Therefore, the governors are
guilty of murdering an innocent people.”²³² This echoes Mitchel’s widely
circulated critique of British policy in Ireland, epitomised by his oft-quoted
aphorism: “The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English
created the famine.”²³³ Later, as the Rising draws near, Famine suffering
again is used to validate claims to independence, and to catalyse the re-
bellious spirit into action. The narrator explicitly draws out this historical
validation: “Severity of the laws instituted by the rulers and mismanage-
ment of the internal affairs of the country were the remote causes of the
popular discontent, while the recent famine and its terrible consequences
aggravated this feeling into desperation. [...] Where oppression forged her
thunderbolts, there must be sparks of fire.”²³⁴ By reiterating this justific-
ation, and by again bringing Tanders to the fore as one of the leaders of
the Fenian Rising, the novel establishes a logical cause-and-effect sequence
that links the Mitchelite interpretation of governmental policy during the
Famine to later struggles for independence. As was acknowledged on the

²³² Ibid., 247–8. The alias “Ribbonson” is a play on the Ribbonmen, the early and
mid nineteenth-century violent agrarian insurrectionary movement.
²³³ John Mitchel, Ireland since ’98, 152. In Dick O’Dell, Dick O’Dell Sr, Dick Jr’s
uncle and an ardent upper-class Young Ireland supporter, also adopts this tone and
argues that “The famine was not God’s doing [...] It was a systematic piece of villany
hatched and carried out after the first appearance of the potato blight.” Later, Dick Sr
also discusses “the mockery of a trial” held for Mitchel. See Anonymous, Dick O’Dell,
Young Ireland 2/36 (2 Sept. 1876), 431 and 2/53 (30 Dec. 1876), 642.
²³⁴ Doran, Zanthon, 407.
extradiegetic level of *Lily Lass* and in the political rhetoric voiced by Ken Rohan in *When We Were Boys*, in *Zanthon*, the Famine, as a strong and directly felt mnemonic trace can be considered as a figure of postmemory as well.

The character of Zanthon can be read as a metonym for the nation, for his life reflects Ireland’s fate from the Famine until the late 1860s, comprising famine suffering and death, and presenting emigration as forced political exile. Moreover, Zanthon’s familial history reflects recent Irish history: his grandfather was a rebel in an earlier failed uprising – probably a reference to the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798 – and his entire family perishes due to the Famine. In providing Zanthon with this genealogy, the novel again emphasizes the direct causal link between various central crises in Irish colonial history, which together legitimise Ireland’s claim for autonomy. For most of his life in Ireland Zanthon is completely severed from his former self and familial identity. In this sense, he can be seen as inhabiting a liminal space of non-identity. Zanthon briefly reverts to his original name and background only when asked to do so for his country. However, when this fails, he goes to America, denounces radical violence, and lives a quiet life.

Reinventing himself as “Zanthon”, Clare declares himself a liminal being: “I must live as one who belongs no more to earth.”\(^{135}\) By extension, this argument also applies to post-Famine Ireland in the novel, which is represented as not only a liminal or ahistorical time-space – that is, simultaneously connected to Ireland’s history, but also as standing outside of the normal flow of time. Interestingly, Father Marlband, while talking about the Famine period on his deathbed, explicitly draws out the parallel between Zanthon’s disconnected condition and Ireland’s situation during and in the wake of the Famine, stating that “[t]his period of history and of our family as you know it, must be concealed from everyone.”\(^{136}\) Here, the Famine has severed the ties of historically determined Irishness as the protagonist can no longer unproblematically reconnect to his own past. Ireland since the Famine has not managed to continue its path through history, but has remained static, “its natives [...] suspended in the jaws of death” ever since.\(^{137}\)

As I mentioned briefly before, *When We Were Boys* also implies that post-Famine Ireland is in a state of torpor, for O’Brien’s novel specific-

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\(^{135}\) Ibid., 531.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 122.
\(^{137}\) Ibid., 407.
ally creates links between the Famine and the late 1860s, and emphasises that the Famine still affects everyday life. Upper-class character Mabel Westropp feelingly states “We are rich enough in Famine memories”, Miles Rohan still calls Ireland “the famished country” and minor character attorney Mr Blaquiere calls 1867 “the most panic-stricken year since the Famine”. Like Zanthon, When We Were Boys implies that the Famine has ushered in a long period of death and suffering, in which many are still living “in famine-time”, often “with one leg in the famine grave”. Reading the character of Zanthon as a metonym for Ireland between the 1840s and the 1890s, it can be argued that the novel presents Ireland in the decades following the Famine as unable to express its identity under the yoke of colonial rule. Both the eponymous character and the country he stands for dwell in a space of “displacement”, a liminal location which does not belong to any specific culture or identity, and which is therefore akin to the diasporic condition.

Although the plot of sustained oppression and exile might suggest otherwise, Zanthon’s (and, by extension, Ireland’s) liminality is not necessarily a negative identification (or lack thereof), as this condition also opens up the possibility of better futures. In this sense, it is similar to Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “third space”. In the “third space” the diasporic subject can (re)constitute the (cultural) self by reaching out to several of the cultural spaces to which he/she is connected through diaspora. The protean Zanthon resembles a chameleon, able to adapt to any situation. Finally, having said farewell to his former self, family, and eventually home for the second time, in the US, Zanthon reinvents his own beliefs and becomes convinced of the justice of the American political system, or at least what the novel presents as the core values of Republicanism. The final chapter is essentially a political pamphlet aimed at influencing contemporary political discourse, in which it is hard to differentiate between narrative voice, authorial opinion, and Zanthon’s ideas. Its take on American liberty incentivises the individual to maximize his potential and take

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138 W. O’Brien, When We Were Boys, 206, 15.  
139 Ibid., 159.  
141 What Homi K. Bhabha calls the Third Space, is an in-between diasporic space located between home and host country. Immigrants do not truly belong to either, and as a result, the diasporic community must continuously (re)define itself vis-à-vis realities external to their own social group. See The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994), 36.
responsibility for his own prosperity and self-realisation. At the same time, it assigns a large role to the federal state, which should support “capital and labor”. The US is also heralded as the “greatest institution the world ever beheld”. The American model is considered an example for “all mankind”: “The constitution is the foundation to be maintained, and the structure of republicanism from which all mankind may draw hereafter political power and individual prosperity.” Thus, presenting the US as a nation of justice and equal opportunity, its political system also appears as the way forward for politically less advanced or oppressed societies such as Ireland – as the publisher’s blurb crowns, “[i]t aims at the reconciliation of classes through the instrumentality of law”. The “destiny” of Doran’s version of republicanism is to “supersede feudalism, monarchy and serfdom in general”.

The narrative establishes American Republicanism as a form of “organic law” flowing from “[t]he order of the universe”. The structure of the narrative highlights this point: by presenting its moral-political message on both the intra- and extradiegetic planes of the narrative and by shifting to present tense, the novel crosses its own layers of embedding, establishing its brand of republicanism as a universal truth, valid in all places and ages and on all levels of the narrative. Thus, it invites its readership to engage directly with this viewpoint. In The Days of a Life by McDougall the orientation towards North America for Irish political prospects is also endorsed, albeit in a less extreme manner and rather geared to Canada. McDougall also creates direct opportunities for engagement with this viewpoint, by representing political passages as direct speech – often in the form of letters – by the focalising protagonist. Incorporating North-American political thought into the governing system of Ireland

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142 Doran, Zanthon, 534.
143 Ibid., 536.
144 Ibid., 537.
146 Doran, Zanthon, 537.
147 Ibid., 539. Emphasis in original.
149 In contrast with its manifold critique on the colonial system of government in Ireland, McDougall’s novel speaks fondly of the Canadian governmental system in which equality and democracy are held high. As protagonist Ida Livingstone reflects in a letter to her brother Davy: “how I do thank God that there is a Canada and a free America for these people [the Irish] to escape to” (Days of a Life, 201). As the previous chapter has demonstrated, in F. H. Clayton’s Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life this orientation towards Canada is also present (338).
is presented as the way forward in these diasporic novels.

In *Zanthon*, the Famine has not completely eradicated the Irish nationalist spirit, for, although it “had paralyzed political independence and commercial enterprise” and left the Irish “suspended in the jaws of death”, “the heart was yet sound!” and Irish “nationality” lives on “like an oak whose strength survives for more than a hundred years after its fall”. Doran’s novel presents the American political system as possibly the most enlightened system conceivable, as “evidence that a new era beneficial to mankind has begun”, and hints to its readers that if Ireland wishes to gain freedom, equality, and progress, it should adopt American republicanism. In so doing, *Zanthon* creates a transatlantic Irish nationalism premised on trademarks associated with Irish nationalism, history, and myth and links these to progressive American politics, arguing that this invigorated Irish-American nationalism should be implemented in Ireland. Zanthon does not promote Irish emigration to and the recuperation of Ireland in America, for although Zanthon leads a happy life in America, no prolonged future is possible for him there. He is the last surviving member of his family, never marries, and never procreates, dying peacefully among his loved ones, but without descendants of his own.

Doran’s novel is quite radical in its take on the infusion of North-American political ideology in Ireland, for it proposes the overthrow of the entire traditional governing system of “feudalism”, “serfdom”, and “monarchy”, and argues for the adoption of American republicanism to become a full-fledged and independent nation, led by “[a] government of the people by the people which guarantees equal rights to all citizens within its jurisdiction, protects them from violence and intrigue, and fosters industry for their benefit.” In this manner, the novel leans more strongly toward civic nationalism than do most works of fiction included in the present study. Even though it does not provide an easy road map for an independent Ireland, *Zanthon*’s final chapter offers hope for Ireland’s future, provided the country never forgets the legacy of the Fenian rebellion and the Famine and focuses on the US for political inspiration. Thus, the novel establishes a political ideology premised on a reciprocal dynamic between a utopian iteration of US republicanism and an activist yet nostalgia-infused intervention in the Irish Question.

A discrepancy between North-American and British works of fiction

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151 Ibid., 537.
152 Ibid., 418.
arises in the context of literary formulations of the role of North America in Irish nationalist ideology and struggle. While texts written by North-American authors celebrate the possible effect of North-American political ideologies on Ireland, several works written by Irish and English-Irish authors seem somewhat more hesitant. The contrast between American author James Doran’s *Zanthon* and Canadian author Margaret Dixon McDougall’s *The Days of a Life* celebrating the political merits of the US and Canada on the one hand and Irish author William O’Brien’s *When We Were Boys* and English-Irish author Annie Keary’s *Castle Daly* questioning Irish-American influence in Ireland on the other, are apt illustrations of this division. This discrepancy will be addressed in the discussion of Irish return emigration included in Chapter 6.

Although *Zanthon* portrays Ireland as being in stasis since the Famine, and in that sense as traumatised by the event, its positive and confident message for the future – through the adoption of an Irish-American transnationalism Ireland will become her own nation – casts the representation of the Famine as a potentially transitional category and makes it a strategic element in the novel’s Irish transnationalist rhetoric, thereby opening up Famine recollection to reconsideration. The Famine is presented as a highly disruptive event which functions as a catalyst, ushering in a tumultuous period of liminality for individual and national identity construction. However, this liminal space eventually is positively depicted as a space for regeneration in which Irish national sentiments and politics can be radically reformulated.

### 4.4 Prospective Nostalgia and the Nationalist Reinscription of Ruins

I have a faith, it may be a fanatical, but certainly an enthusiastic one, in a future for Ireland that will recall the glories of her ancient grandeur, and obliterate the traces of the centuries of miseries and humiliation which have intervened between that grandeur and our time.\(^{153}\)

In the above quote taken from his *Home Government for Ireland* (1870–1), Isaac Butt demonstrates that his nationalist aspirations are founded on a form of what Kevin Whelan calls “prospective nostalgia” linked to

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an antiquarian nationalism, in which recent “miseries and humiliation” would disappear to make room for the reinstatement of ancient grandeur.\textsuperscript{154} While earlier sections have discussed historical lines and continuities, the present section will make a connection to the environmental element of Irish romantic nationalism. In many of the nationalist-oriented works of Famine fiction included in this study, this prospective nostalgia for mythical times becomes tied to the Irish landscape as well, and representations of that landscape come to serve as a crucial part of the political argument made by the texts.

Within such nationalist considerations of the Irish natural surroundings, the picturesque mode receives an important function. The picturesque was a Romantic reaction against the Enlightenment’s rationalising tendencies.\textsuperscript{155} Uvedale Price (1747–1829) defined the picturesque as opposite to the beautiful: “it is evident that picturesqueness and beauty are founded on very opposite qualities; the one on smoothness, the other on roughness; – the one on gradual, the other on sudden variation; – the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on that of age, and even of decay.”\textsuperscript{156} Contrary to suppositions that the picturesque was “essentially a [British] national product”,\textsuperscript{157} or that the British picturesque had its influence on Europe,\textsuperscript{158} George Tatum’s article on Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52) and his American fame shows that the picturesque may have started out a national product, with influence on Europe, but that it evolved into a transnational phenomenon.\textsuperscript{159} Additionally, it is notoriously difficult to put national labels on aesthetic modes and currents, for such concepts are often transnational in nature.\textsuperscript{160}
In 1879, Scottish-born Bishop of Cleveland Richard Gilmour lamented that since the Famine, Ireland had become depopulated and that its landscape was frequently turned into leisure spaces for the upper classes. In a letter to the Montreal *Harp* titled “The Great Irish Famine”, he stated that

A system of landlordism has arisen that is a disgrace to a civilized age or nation; tenants without rights in the soil they cultivate, or encouragement to improve, lest their improvement but increase their rents; the fairest portions of the country turned into deer parks or pleasure ground for the “gentry” – and all this more, while the people are reduced to potatoes and miserable hovels to keep them from cold and starvation.\(^\text{161}\)

Eamonn Slater discusses this process as well, emphasising how such transformations made these manmade environments more picturesque. He states that many financially prosperous British embraced the hype of the “picturesque park” with great enthusiasm, which resulted in several English and Anglo-Irish landlords setting up such parks on their Irish estates.\(^\text{162}\) These spaces functioned as “embodied ideology[s]”, as “little Englands” and could be seen as tangible reminders of the property of the landed classes and of colonial rule.\(^\text{163}\) In some of the fictional works investigated in this study, the picturesque park on the landlord’s estate is depicted as a site of colonial subjugation and contestation simultaneously. For example, Mountmarvel estate in *Lily Lass* is depicted as a specifically British and man-made space in the Irish landscape, which becomes the stage for the novel’s rendering of the Young Ireland rebellion, as the rebels intrude upon the Mountmarvel estate and attempt to penetrate the castle in search for weapons, only to be defeated by the stronger police force. The narrative’s insurrection ends with Mountmarvel’s “green lawn” “torn, and trampled, and blood-stained. Half a dozen men lay dead or dying on the ground, and the soldiers were galloping in all directions in pursuit of the insurgents.”\(^\text{164}\)

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\(^\text{162}\) Slater, ‘Reconstructing “Nature” as a Picturesque Theme Park’, 232.

\(^\text{163}\) Ibid.,’ 236, 238, 241.

\(^\text{164}\) McCarthy, *Lily Lass*, 137.
This section will provide no further discussions of the fictional representation of these picturesque parks, but will focus rather on another important picturesque element: the ruin. Through their definition of the picturesque as opposed to the clean and finished beautiful, Downing and Price argued for the beauty of ruined structures and the consequent aestheticisation of their natural decay. Downing not only called for “irregularity”, “rough and irregular shapes”, but also for “abruptly broken contours”. Price accordingly argued for “the superior picturesqueness of ruins”, as “compared with entire buildings”. There was a contrast between “the standard Enlightened view of ruins” as “nature reclaiming nature” and harmony on the one hand, and “the anti-colonial Irish perspective, which tended to see them as a traumatic tear in the fabric of time” on the other. Therefore, Irish ruins are often considered paradoxical time-spaces that both symbolically and physically testify to abrupt breaks in history. The majority of the representations of ruins in the Irish and Irish-diasporic novels investigated in this study are heterotopic sites, figuring as spaces “linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites”. Ruinous sites are frequently at tension with the surrounding landscape and can function as witnesses to colonial history and hardship.

As Dylan Trigg observes in a wider cultural context, visiting a ruin means “[returning] to past places” which “testifies to [...] loss” and also means a current “being lost in place”. According to Trigg, “the ruin refuses closure” and inhabits “[a]n explicitly uncanny border, located in the discrepancy between place and time.” However, this uncanny temporal and spatial aperture also houses positive potential as it “instils the creation of a new place from the ruins of the old one”. In this sense, the ruin becomes an inspiration for the regeneration of that which is lost. When providing a biographical overview of John Mitchel, the writer for the Irish-American also argued that an Irish ruin was a source of nationalist inspiration for Ireland’s most famous and recently deceased nationalist: “Within sight of his home O’Cahan’s ruined castle stood a monument of the subjugation of Ireland, and not doubt, the old ruin with its crowding historic memory,
exercised on Mitchel’s mind a strong influence.” A year earlier, that same newspaper had used similar rhetoric and had argued that Mitchel’s specific brand of Irish nationalism was fostered by the surroundings of his youth, “a sort of intellectual borderland, where the newest ideas of France and of America were mingled with the old memories which breathed from every ruined fort, and in the echoes of every Gaelic glen”. In the majority of the representations of ruins in works of Famine fiction written in the period 1871–91, the ruin contributes to the glossing over of the devastating effects of colonisation and of the Great Famine by signifying a move back to pre-Famine times and folklore to reconstruct the mnemonic space of Ireland. This tendency is in line with Isaac Butt’s “fanatical faith” for an Irish Home Rule based on “ancient grandeur” quoted above.

4.4.1 Literary Ruins and National Regeneration

“And what is yon tower that is crowning the hill –
‘This strange how it stands thro’ the centuries still?
“Oh! yon tower were our father’s defended the land –
E’er it fell ‘neath the grasp of this lord and his land –
Ah! yon tower is a relic – God bless it I say”
And he seemed to recall some more fortunate day.

This excerpt taken from the 1880 poem ‘The Exile’s Return’ by well-known Canadian lawyer and author Joseph K. Foran illustrates the ambivalent nature of the ruin: it both reminds the onlooker of Irish oppression, as well as its long-standing endurance through that oppression. The ruins represented in Keary’s, O’Brien’s, Doran’s and McCarthy’s novels, among others, also serve a two-fold purpose: firstly, they function as physical reminders of Ireland’s longer history of colonial suffering, and specifically of Famine hardships. Secondly, however, they are not only emblems of trauma, but also provide openings for prospective nostalgia. In the current section a division will be made between ruins as markers of Famine suffering and ruins presented as spaces suggesting future potential.

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Scars of Famine suffering feature frequently in the fictional landscapes described in this study’s literary corpus. In Hester Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race* (1889) protagonist Dan Macmanus returns to his native Fortmanus to find that because of the Famine “[m]any of the cabins had disappeared altogether. [...]The remainder were roofless and ruined.”¹⁷³ In Keary’s *Castle Daly*, the increasing desolation of the landscape is described. In volume two, protagonist Ellen remarks that now all she sees are “roofless villages and deserted homes [...] “everywhere”.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, in *Zanthon* the reader experiences the decline of the rural Irish landscape during Famine times, as Zanthon’s home turns from “a tomb for the living” into “a tomb for the dead” at the height of the Famine, and the fictional village of Footford turns into a depopulated wasteland, “motionless, barren of culture, its habitable dwelling places deserted and in decay; noiseless like a dead object in which an observer would not expect to discover life”.¹⁷⁵ Plotlines set in later times also contain references to Famine suffering as mnemonic traces in the landscape. In The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne (1885) protagonist Hyacinth Dillon returns to his Irish home a few years after the Famine to find “nothing but heaps of stones and rubbish, tumbled about in unsightly, lonely ruin” where before there had been “snug farm-houses”.¹⁷⁶ In *When We Were Boys*, set in the late 1860s, the Famine is still continually present in the characters’ direct living environment, as they live close to “famine-pits”.¹⁷⁷

In contrast, the novels analysed in this chapter not only depict ruins as markers of decline, but also focus on their regenerative potential. Table 4.3 below contains an overview of works that include representations of Irish ruins and moreover specifies whether these become incorporated into the prospective nationalist rhetoric of the work of fiction in question. Out of the corpus of 33 works, 14 texts (or 42 per cent) contain nationalist rhetoric. Out of these 14 works, 9 contain representations of ruins, and 6 of these suggest the reappropriation of the picturesque ruin in the narrative’s nationalist rhetoric. In *Castle Daly*, an old “churchyard crowded with graves” – a place which is heterotopic by nature – is the site where the Young Irelanders meet to plan their rebellion.¹⁷⁸ The fact that Ellen –

¹⁷⁴ Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 2, 216.
¹⁷⁵ Doran, *Zanthon*, 114, 222.
¹⁷⁷ W. O’Brien, *When We Were Boys*, 147.
¹⁷⁸ In his lecture on heterotopias, Foucault uses the example of the gravesite specifically.
who secretly watches the rebels – first questions whether the rebels who have come to collect their weapons buried in the graveyard are “mourners” over an open grave, illustrates the ambiguous nature of the graveyard.\textsuperscript{179} It becomes linked to “different slices in time”, and is not only a site of death and decay, but also of possible national rebirth.\textsuperscript{180}

Other novels show the regenerative potential through their representations of remnants of Ireland’s more distant past. In \textit{Dick O’Dell}, the ruins of an old fort serve as the space where the Young Irelanders meet and store their arms.\textsuperscript{181} The novel \textit{Lily Lass} contains several descriptions of picturesque landscape elements that are linked to past insurrections. In McCarthy’s novel, the Irish landscape bears testimony to Ireland’s colonial subjugation, as the “green hills and wide meadows”, flowing “rivers” and “white villages” form

the broad domains which had once acknowledged native lords, and which were now owned by men of foreign name and race and speech, by ruined castles where the crests of the ancient clans had mouldered from the walls, and where the encircling woods seemed ever to answer the summer breezes and the winter winds with some whispered echo of the forgotten war-cries of the septs.\textsuperscript{182}

Although the landscape is now ruled by “men of foreign name and race and speech”, the landscape still contains markers of Ireland’s precolonial grandeur. Furthermore, protagonist MacMurchad – now destitute and the last surviving member of his old stock clan – lives in the actual ruin of his family’s castle, the Red Tower. This keep is described as an “architectural Oisin”, “[rising] straight up from the ground – erect, uncompromising [...] a gaunt example of antique splendour.” \textsuperscript{183} As police officers come to the Red Tower to arrest MacMurchad, the dilapidated but glorious castle transforms into a heterotopic site, simultaneously attesting to colonial subjugation, Irish past splendour and future promise. It becomes a site of resistance, for MacMurchad makes his escape while on top of the Red Tower is hoisted “a great green flag, on whose folds the uncrowned

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{179} Keary, \textit{Castle Daly} vol. 3, 185–6.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Anon., \textit{Dick O’Dell, Young Ireland}, 550.
\item \textsuperscript{182} McCarthy, \textit{Lily Lass}, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 25, 27 (emphasis mine). According to Irish legend, Oisín was a hero and poet.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Table 4.3: Famine fiction 1871–91 with nationalist rhetoric: inclusion of ruins (ordered by publication date).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Representation of ruins?</th>
<th>Nationalist reappropriation of ruins?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – <em>Castle Daly</em> (1875)</td>
<td>Y (graveyard where rebels meet)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – <em>Dick O’Dell</em> (1876–7)</td>
<td>Y (old fort where rebels meet)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. McDowell – <em>The Earl of Effingham</em> (1877)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – <em>Light and Shade</em> (1878)</td>
<td>Y (old fort where rebels meet)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O’Brien – <em>The D’Altons of Crag</em> (1882)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – <em>Uncle Pat’s Cabin</em> (1882)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – <em>The Days of a Life</em> (1883)</td>
<td>Y (old castle)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – <em>Scenes and Incidents</em> (1884)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lawless – <em>Hurrish</em> (1886)</td>
<td>Y (ancient religious complex)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sigerson – <em>A Ruined Race</em> (1889)</td>
<td>Y (old castle)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. O’Brien – <em>When We Were Boys</em> (1890)</td>
<td>Y (Cromwell’s Bridge, old tower in graveyard visited by rebels)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – <em>Zanthom</em> (1891)</td>
<td>Y (old fort, space for regeneration Zanthom/nation)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – <em>Marcella Grace</em> (1891)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (14)</strong></td>
<td>9/14 Y; 5/14 N</td>
<td>6/14 Y; 3/14 N; 5/14 n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
golden harp of Ireland was blazoned”. In contrast, MacMurchad’s nemesis – the English Lord Mountmarvel – lives in what is described as a “sham-medival building”, an imitation castle. This building, erected by the colonial ruler, is meant to look as if it has been in the Irish landscape for ages, but actually makes a mock attempt to claims of justified presence on the basis of prolonged existence in the Irish landscape. In line with this, McCarthy’s narrator describes the castle as “a ludicrous parody of the ages it aped and insulted”. The novel represents MacMurchad and his demesne as remnants of a lost culture that still somehow cannot be erased, despite the construction of picturesque estates by the colonial powers. McCarthy, by giving MacMurchad an extended rebellious bloodline and a tower to match, justifies his rebellious claim for self-governance by “establish[ing] the pedigree and authenticity of the Irish nation, forged in pain”. Furthermore, the novel deepens this claim by juxtaposing Macmurchad and his haunts to the false claims on the Irish landscape by Mountmarvel and his “Castle”.

In Zanthon the ruins of an ancient fort are the location for one of the key developments in the narrative. The turning point in the story – Marlband’s death during the Famine and Clare’s transformation into Zanthon – takes place in the ruins of an old fort, an “ancient stronghold” that is also believed to be visited by “mysterious beings of the spirit world”. Thus, the fort – a liminal space which stands in contact with the past, the present and the spirit world – serves as the site for Clare’s/Zanthon’s transformation into a liminal and adaptable being. The fort is key to Zanthon’s, and metonymically, Ireland’s survival. It can be seen as Revivalist element, simultaneously reminiscent of old glory and Irish myth, and as a a site of national rebirth. It is a heteropic space which shows the simultaneous absence and presence of a lost culture while containing the promise of a

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184 Ibid., 98.
185 Ibid., 99–100.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid., 99–100.
188 The Red Tower is also linked to Irish myth, as the building supposedly dates back to the days of “Lady Ceasair” (McCarthy, Lily Lass, 33).
189 Emilie Pine, The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 8. Pine warns against uncritical use of the term nostalgia and argues for the use of the term “anti-nostalgia” when Irish history cannot be used “as a welcome break from the demands of the present”, but when it is characterised by trauma. In Lily Lass this traumatic nature is consciously used to forge a sense of authenticity through historical suffering akin to Pine’s understanding of “anti-nostalgia”.
190 Doran, Zanthon, 20.
better and independent future, informed by a glorious past.

In O’Brien’s *When We Were Boys*, the landscape bears the scars of perpetual defeat. In this novel, the element of nationalist hope is explicitly linked to the Irish elements in the subjugated colonised landscape, which becomes clear in the narrator’s discussion of the ruin of “Cromwell’s Bridge”:

Cromwell’s Bridge juts out boldly upon two solid arches into the middle, and there it stops and holds out an ineffectual arm in the air – the river is only half spanned. What a type of Cromwell’s work in Ireland is this bridge – so seemingly irresistible in its beginnings, so disreputable an old ruin in its results – the impetuous Celtic current still flowing by untamably, and the bridge-builders pausing helplessly half-way in their work! But is there not also a cheery hint in the peaceful charm with which these rude grey arches melt in the soft Glengariff landscape? The material as well as historic Irish landscape will be all the more picturesque for its ancient scars and ruins, when they shall have passed into old bits of scenery – when the rest of Cromwell’s rough achievements shall have been given over as a bad job as frankly as the Glengariff bridge, and buried like it in kindly Irish mosses and wild flowers.\(^\text{190}\)

The bridge as a heterotopic space simultaneously functions as testimony to prolonged and repeated subjugation, as a site of anti-colonial critique and as a promise of self-rule. Like the Red Tower in *Lily Lass* and the ancient fort in *Zanthon*, it demonstrates that the overwriting of the Irish landscape taking place throughout Irish colonial history can never be fully realised, or, as O’Brien said, “the voice of Ireland’s past” cannot be “stilled”.\(^\text{191}\)

In these novels, the timespace of the Irish landscape figures as a palimpsest in which different layers of history impinge on each other.\(^\text{192}\) Emblems of Irish rebellion, such as the Red Tower, the “Celtic current” and the “kindly Irish mosses and wild flowers”, will always endure, and will one day victoriously re-emerge. Consequently the same can be said of nationalist ideology; although temporarily suppressed by colonial practice – like Irish nature by the interference of Cromwell’s Bridge – Ireland will one day be triumphant. Effectively, the picturesque ruin first serves as a representation of the British picturesque, as a site of embodied ideology of

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\(^{190}\) W. O’Brien, *When We Were Boys*, 188.


\(^{192}\) Whelan, ‘Reading the Ruins’, 300.
the Empire, which is then re-appropriated by Ireland in a natural fashion, implying that the counter-narrative of Ireland’s future self-governance will also be part of the natural course of time. In this manner, the symbolic language of the ruin and the colonial ideology linked to ‘British’ picturesque spaces are subverted, depicting the ruin as a space of future-oriented remembrance. A specifically Irish picturesque comes into being, for picturesque markers of British domination are appropriated into the Irish nationalist rhetoric and identity formation.

As Table 4.3 illustrates, while five works of Famine fiction from the British Isles suggest that in the ancient ruins of Ireland lies a regenerative potential, only one North-American work (Doran’s Zanthon) does the same. In this way, British works seem to place more emphasis on the romantic nationalist connection between the Irish historical space and Irish nationalist identity than Famine fiction written in North America. Arguably, this cannot only be attributed to continued interest in Irish ruins inherited from (Irish) Romanticism, but especially to the influence of a Celtic Revivalist mindset, which, as I have argued in Chapter 2, was already burgeoning in works of Famine fiction of the period 1871–91. Revivalists formulated a sense of a distinctive Celtic otherness in terms of the Irish penchant for nostalgia and myth, a strong connection to nature and a preference for unspoilt natural beauty. This explanation could also be extended to the presence of regenerative ruins in the American novel Zanthon, which is more strongly Revivalist in tone and subject matter than the other works of North-American Famine fiction included in this study.

The idealised visions of Irish past splendour combined with images of what Emilie Pine calls “anti-nostalgia” for the various phases of colonial subjugation from Cromwell’s time to the Famine and the Fenian Rising, lead to discussions of Ireland’s past landscape becoming spaces of “radical memory” geared towards future possibilities rather than past losses. This form of future-oriented nostalgia turns recollection into “a redemptive project intended to harness unreleased potential”.

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193 Julia M. Wright, Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 57.
195 Emilie Pine states that “time and again, the past which is evoked and performed is not a comforting vision, but is, rather, represented as a space of trauma and pain. This is anti-nostalgia and it is now the dominant form of Irish remembrance culture.”
of the graveyard in *Castle Daly* and the old fort in *Zanthon*, sites which both testify to future potential by referring to the past and specifically to Famine suffering, the regenerative ancient ruins included in these works of fiction bypass Famine memory and in that manner form juxtapositions with the (more recent) Famine ruins also present. Together with the Famine ruins, which function as instances of “elegiac” memory, Ireland’s more ancient ruins show the many historical layers visible in the Irish landscape, providing an apt representation of the tense and palimpsestic nature of Ireland’s history.\(^{196}\) The ruins of ancient splendour have survived for centuries and, as these novels indicate, have survived the Famine era as well. Consequently, these older traces have the potential to function as bridges, providing strong alliances between ancient, present and future Irishness, thereby overwriting the more recent disruptive memories associated with Famine ruins. They have the potential to reinscribe the damaged Irish post-Famine landscape with a positive message, long lost but now found again.

In nationalist-oriented Famine fiction of the period 1871–91 there is a tension with regard to the representation of the Famine and its impact on Irish nationalist ideology. The narratives acknowledge the prolonged effect of the Famine on the (diasporic) Irish by frequently including the event in the texts’ late nineteenth-century politics.\(^ {197}\) In so doing, they seem to veer between portraying the Famine as a lasting trauma and a unique event, and a more clearly historically embedded event. More hopeful nationalist messages for the future sit uneasily with the actual human cost of the event – which will be the topic of the next chapter. The representation of the pre-Famine rather than the Famine-era landscape as a potential regenerative heterotopic space, *Zanthon*’s liminal protagonist as metonym for the arrested nation and the acknowledgement of Famine-induced stasis in *When We Were Boys*, suggest that these narratives cannot or will not give the Famine a place in what is perceived as the normal chronology of Irish time. In other words – and McCarthy’s *Lily Lass* and its virtual lack of mention of the Famine is the prime example of this – Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction written in the period 1871–91 sug-

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\(^{196}\) Pine argues that an anti-nostalgia for a dystopian past can lead to a more positive or even utopian view of the future, which “becomes the idealised space”. See *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 8. Whelan, ‘Reading the Ruins’, 320.

\(^{197}\) Whelan distinguishes between prospective and elegiac nostalgia and says that the former, in contrast to the latter, focuses on the future rather than the past. ‘Reading the Ruins’, 320.

\(^{197}\) Morash, ‘Literature, Memory, Atrocity’, 118.
gest that Famine memory does not fit (easily) within a vision of national teleological progress to eventual future independence.

Through the juxtaposition of presence and absence, these texts show the difficulties at play for Irish and Irish-diasporic authors writing in the late nineteenth century and attempting to represent the terrible effects of the Famine while also arguing for a teleological form of Irish history in which narratives of Irish heroism and future promise figure centrally. In essence, in their representation of the period, these texts imply that despite recent periods of defeat and victimhood, such as the Famine, the Young Ireland rebellion and the Fenian rebellion, Ireland has or will have the power to overcome her present colonial condition. The narratives provide apertures, openings for radical memory, in which a positive outcome can be imagined for an aspiring nation whose history as yet has been one of successive defeat, oppression and suffering.
Chapter 5

F/famine Victimhood, Sites of Suffering and Literary Hauntings

The image that probably comes most frequently to mind when considering not just the fictional, but any representation of the Famine is that of its victim: the suffering mother, the father collapsing on the public works, the ailing child, the famished baby, the altruistic priest who succumbs to a fever he contracted when tending his sick flock, the multitudes of nameless victims found alongside the road. These images have been investigated thoroughly by various scholars including Margaret Kelleher, Christopher Morash, and, more recently, Charlotte Boyce, and have haunted the Irish cultural imagination on various levels.\(^1\) It has become commonplace to envision the Famine as the event which has the power to unsettle Irish culture to this very day, as that which is somehow simultaneously ever present and never directly approachable, but always somewhere at the root of recent ills. To get an idea of the longevity of the memory of the Famine, in recent politics and historiography one need only think of the various parallels drawn between, on the one hand, the Famine and British colonial policy at the time and Ireland’s recent economic troubles and the European Union’s approach on the other.\(^2\) What comes to mind in (popular) literat-

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2 When discussing Ireland’s bank debt on 13 December 2013, Finance Minister Noonan praised the Irish people for their sacrifices and drew a direct link to the Famine, stating that “everybody owes a debt of gratitude to all those Irish men and women who have made such sacrifices to get us out of the greatest crisis that this country has experienced since the famine.” (See ‘Irish Still Seeking Debt Deal’, <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/ireland-still-seeking-debt-deal-...>
ure are the many works of neo-Gothic and sensational fiction, written for both adults and children, which use the memory of the Famine. Indeed, the Famine and its victims can be seen as influential mnemonic presences which haunt the epistemological boundaries of Ireland’s present condition and identity and its place in a larger European or even global context.

Although the discursive haunting of contemporary Irish culture and society by the Famine past is a frequently explored avenue in Irish Studies scholarship, the current chapter will largely move away from this metaphorical consideration of continued haunting as a sign of prolonged suffering and victimhood for society as a whole to this day. Seminal work on this subject has been published by scholars such as David Lloyd, Joe Cleary and Christopher Morash, to name a few. Together, these scholars have provided sophisticated analyses of how Ireland as a former part of the British Empire remains plagued by its painful past, without resorting to unilateral declarations of Irish victimhood. This chapter, then, will focus specifically on textual representations of victimhood, and will analyse how the image or textual trace of Famine victimhood features in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91).

In 1847, the London Times stated that “[t]he great Irish famine and pestilence will have a place in that melancholy series of similar calamities to which historians and poets have contributed so many harrowing details and

Tim Pat Coogan makes various comparisons between Ireland’s condition then and now, and one of the most acerbic must be the following: “As this is written, Ireland, through corruption, incompetence, and profigracy of the then governing Fine Fáil Party has lost its economic sovereignty and Caitlín Ní Houlihan currently stands in a dole queue in Brussels to receive handouts of the Europeans and the International Monetary Funds. [...] The famine bell does not merely toll for those who died during the nineteenth century: it has resonance for those who live in the twenty-first.” See The Famine Plot: England’s Role in Ireland’s Greatest Tragedy (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–2.


touching expressions.” Indeed, this prediction would become a reality. As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, in Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction, Irish history is often cast either as a long succession of Irish suffering or as a cyclical or repetitive process. In the present chapter, I will also direct my attention to representations of both the larger picture of Irish suffering and other famine periods, and of the Great Famine specifically. I will investigate how the Great Famine fits within larger literary frameworks, by analysing how works of F/famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891 make use of established literary and generic conventions and devices to represent victimhood. The works of narrative fiction included in this research are all relatively conventional and reveal the use of several literary genres and traditions; elements from moral/religious didacticism, the romantic tradition, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nature writing, Irish folklore and myth, to name but a few, are all present.

To avoid providing a mere catalogue of literary traces, this chapter will not focus on all these genres and conventions. The other chapters demonstrate the presence and influence of, for example, romantic didacticism, genteel – or lace-curtain – fiction, the Big House genre and non-fictional writing such as (Irish) historiography and political rhetoric. The present chapter concerns itself with other generic traces crucial to the depiction of Irish victimhood and its setting and will consider the textual legacy of the Famine in light of borrowings from the literary Gothic; a mode which was quite influential in Irish letters, and to which Irish authors have certainly made their contribution.

This chapter will take a twofold approach: the first section will concern itself with the textual representation of the victims themselves, and will demonstrate that works of narrative fiction which are not in the first place defined as Gothic (or are perhaps not even considered as engaging with the mode at all), nevertheless make sustained use of devices inherent to the mode. The existence of literary borrowings in Famine fiction does not just come into focus when one looks at the portrayal of the victim, but also when considering the locations of suffering. Therefore, the second section will demonstrate again the importance of an environmental relatedness for formulations of Irishness – here considered as Irish victimhood – in the late nineteenth century, by discussing the representation of spaces of human suffering and how these are informed by existing generic conventions

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and devices. In this second section, I will investigate how a “topography of the Gothic” figures in the representations of these sites of hardship, and in so doing will also focus on the use of another frequently adopted aesthetic device, which directly links man’s feelings and experiences to his environment: the pathetic fallacy.

Works of F/famine fiction frequently display the combination of several devices and techniques commonly associated with the Gothic. These include the representation of excess and exaggeration, the use of repetition, considerations of liminality, and an exploration of thresholds. With regard to thresholds, I will investigate how in their representations of victimhood and sites of suffering, works of Famine fiction explore the boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar and will focus on the experience of disorientation accompanying these transgressions. Moreover, in this context I will discuss moral transgression, as for example Eugenia C. Delamotte argues that deviations from quotidian “logical and moral laws” were at the heart of the literary Gothic. In similar vein, in *Gothic Literature 1825–1914*, Jarlath Killeen defines the liminal state “endemic to the Gothic” and sees it as the condition “when normal roles and old forms are broken down”. Exploring the role of the human character in this process, I will analyse the manner in which he or she can function as a liminal being, embodying the line between normative and abnormal behaviour and normal and abnormal circumstances. Finally, I should stress that when I use the term “repetition”, I am not just referring to the Gothic’s “emphasis on the returning past” as a haunting mechanism, but also to its use of “repetition as a stylistic device”.

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6 David Punter and Glennis Byron state that the Gothic has a “particular interest in questions of identity and transgression of borderlines”. *The Gothic* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 26. Eugenia C. Delamotte argues that “a concern with boundaries of the self” is a matter in the literary Gothic and makes this the main argument of her *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 14. Several scholars writing about the Gothic link the idea of transgression to the interruption of the familiar by the unfamiliar, seeing links to the overpowering sentiment borrowed from the sublime, and tying this to Freud’s concept of the uncanny, in which the familiar (Heimlich) is disturbed by the unfamiliar (Unheimlich). See Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 131, 133.


9 Several scholars working on the Gothic discuss repetition as a specifically Gothic interest. The first quote is taken from Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, ‘Introduction’, in Catharine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, eds, *The Routledge Companion to*
This chapter will engage with the narrative techniques of layered focalisation and shifting points of view. These kinds of textual dynamics can establish different levels of disclosure, and are therefore often used to create suspense and mystery. Moreover, they also support both the formation and crossing of thresholds, as a more strongly layered narrative can underscore the establishment of thresholds structurally. By themselves, these different narrative devices and techniques are not ‘Gothic’, for, taken separately, they could also be considered characteristics of other genres and modes. Rather, it is the persistent combination of these techniques and devices that constitutes the Gothic dimension in works of Famine fiction. Throughout this chapter, I will focus on the application of these specific textual elements and how they are combined to demonstrate that in the sum of these parts the presence of the Gothic mode can indeed be found.

According to Renate Lachmann, the memory of a text lies in its intertextuality.\(^\text{10}\) When we acknowledge that the mnemonic literary intertext of works of Irish Famine literature of the late nineteenth century encompasses a wide array of references – or, to paraphrase, that seeming orientations towards Famine memory consist of much more than a unilateral referencing – this will very likely affect our understanding of the position of the memory of the Famine in the literary text. Therefore, I will also establish what the use of well-known literary conventions and devices tells us about the (literary) memory of the Famine and its status as portrayed in these works of fiction.

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5.1 Famine Memories?

...when the living are scarce able to bury their dead, and the Earth is strewed with human Carcases, that lie to be devoured by birds of Prey, when Sickness and Famine still walk through the Land, destroying thousands, for a warning to us, and proclaiming how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the Living God.

We have been long forborne, but the day of Vengeance is at last come, and should it please God, in his just and righteous judgement, to send a blast on our next Harvest, one half of the Nation must perish, and the whole Kingdom would soon be filled with meagre Spectacles of Want, pining away in their iniquity, followed by the sure Attendants of a Famine, Sickness and an infectious Air, that sweep away both poor and rich, who draw in death with their breaths.\(^\text{11}\)

The above quotations fit the standard interpretation of the Great Famine perfectly: it is a divine punishment for the sins of Ireland, and “Sickness and Famine” are personified as presences that “walk through the land” accompanied by an “infectious Air”.\(^\text{12}\) However, what might seem like stock imagery regarding the Famine is, in fact, something else: as the emphatic use of capitalisation might already suggest, these quotations were taken from an earlier Catholic pamphlet published in 1741, during the second year of the Great Frost, or, to quote David Dickson, “the forgotten famine” of 1740–1.\(^\text{13}\)

While I am aware that these quotations set the reader off on the wrong foot, I have included them to demonstrate that the language and ideas

\(^{11}\) Judgements: The Judgments of God upon Ireland, or Sickness and Famine, God’s Visitation for the Sins of the Nation (1741; 2nd edn, Dublin: George Grierson [printer], 1741), 5, 40.

\(^{12}\) For a telling example of how Famine imagery and rhetoric were shaped and continued to be shaped through such stock phrasing until well after the event, see the journalistic celebration of the many achievements of John Mitchel upon his return to Ireland, included in The Irish-American on 22 August 1874. In the lengthy article, a paragraph about Famine suffering also features: “Famine had fallen upon the land, with a cloud of horrors unknown to other peoples, undreamt of by the men of this generation. It was not merely that thousands sickened of starvation and walked the land, gaunt and ghastly heralds of fast following death. The gasp of the dying, the silence of the dead – these were awful and appalling.” 26/84 (New York), 1–2: 1.

commonly found in descriptions of the Famine, its causes and effects, in fact stem from a long-existent cultural register, a point made by, for example, Chris Morash, who has argued that certain “Famine” tropes go back for centuries. Additionally, the existence of this older discourse was explicitly acknowledged in Famine fiction: for example, in Charlotte G. O’Brien’s tale of human suffering, agrarian hardship and the Fenian Rising *Light and Shade*, an explicit reference is made to earlier descriptions of Irish suffering and famine, as the first chapter of Part Two starts with an epigraph taken from Jonathan Swift’s satirical tract *A Modest Proposal*, written during the famine of 1729: “it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold, and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected”.

Morash argues that “[i]n the living skeletons and specters who materialise again and again in the pages of Famine writing, we see a discourse of Famine taking shape, with its own particular vocabulary.” In other words, out of borrowed imagery, a new and specific language of Famine arises. When reading Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891 in its contemporary (literary) context it is indeed remarkable how similar these works of fiction are and how conventional they are with regard to literary genres. However, the presence of these many similarities and borrowings not only corroborates the existence of a ‘Famine vocabulary’, but also simultaneously undermines it. With respect to art which memorialises the Second World War, Ernst van Alphen has problematised claims to exceptionality or uniqueness, stating that the claim to similarity automatically renders the unique quality of the experience radically but slyly unspeakable and violently overrules it with something else. In other words, the uniqueness must be shown by different devices. One must construct a nonmetaphorical language capable of getting in touch with the very unspeakability of death as experience.

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14 Morash, ‘Spectres of the Famine’.
15 Charlotte G. O’Brien, *Light and Shade* 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, 1878), vol. 1, 209. Emphasis in original. The full title of Swift’s tract is *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden on their Parents or Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Publick* (Dublin: S. Harding [printer], 1729). The fact that Swift’s text was of a parodic nature complicates its inclusion in O’Brien’s serious depiction of Irish suffering.
16 Morash, ‘Spectres of the Famine’, 76.
17 Ernst van Alphen, ‘Touching Death’, in Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth
Keeping in mind van Alphen’s argument and the comparisons frequently made between the inexpressibility of both Holocaust and Famine memory on the level of narrative representation, it seems that expressions of Famine remembrance in fiction are prone to the difficulties that are signalled by van Alphen. Intertextuality and the possibility of placing a work of Famine fiction in a network of different genres because of its use of established literary devices and imagery, complicates the notion of an exceptional or unique discourse of Famine suffering as well.

Like many – if not all – other forms of mnemonic communication, literary representations of Famine memory rely upon what we already know, on shared registers, and on what Niall Ó Ciosáin has termed the most “tellable” elements of popular memory.\(^{18}\) In his essay on how to approach the Irish Folklore Archive and make it an important contribution to our understanding of the workings of Famine memory, Ó Ciosáin distinguishes three levels of memory, which overlap in oral retellings of the Famine: “the global, the popular, and the local”.\(^ {19}\) While the global level is the most official level, is “abstract and usually national in scope and most probably derives from written sources”, popular memory consists of “a stylised repertoire of images, motifs, short narratives and supernatural legends, many of them part of a wider international narrative repertoire”. Lastly, local memory “corresponds closely to folklore or oral history”.\(^ {20}\) In the transmittance of memory between people, Ó Ciosáin argues that “it was probably those elements of local memory that corresponded most closely to popular memory that were most ‘tellable,’ that survive in the narrative repertoire. In this way, popular memory structures local memory.” When Ó Ciosáin’s framework is extended to literary recollection, it emerges that all three layers interact and help shape each other: trends in political rhetoric, historiography and literature contribute to the formation of popular narratives, and these in turn help form and are formed by local tales and memories. Furthermore, Ó Ciosáin, like Dickson, refers to the influence of premediation of older forms of famine memory on formulations of Famine recollection, stating that “many of the motifs and stories in popular memory predate the Famine, [therefore] they may well have been influential in

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., 222.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 224–5.
perceptions during the Famine itself”.  

When reading works of fiction which recollect the Famine but which are set during later eras of similar suffering, the reader is often encouraged to see interconnections between Ireland’s recent periods of hardship, because of explicit references made to Famine suffering. In his overview of Irish folk memory on the Famine, *Famine Echoes*, which was published during the mid-1990 increase in Famine commemorations, Cathal Póirtéir already cautioned against too readily singling out Famine rhetoric as somehow exceptional. Rather, since such viewpoints could very likely stem from a post-sesquicentenary interpretation of historical material, he argues that what the Famine period is responsible for, is rather the more “accentuated” use of the descriptive phrases in question, than the inauguration of such terms.

In the context of Irish Gothic literature and many of its scholars’ inclination (especially during the 1980s) to “apply psychoanalytic formulae”, Richard Haslam warns of a “potential reductionism”, in the form of “allegoresis”: the employment of “a psychoanalytically inflected historicism [to] attempt to extract the political contexts (allegedly) inscribed within literary texts”. By extension, the same claim could (still) be made about the *a posteriori* allocation of the term “Famine” to representations of Irish suffering: because we can read the allusion to the Famine, it must be there, functioning both as a mnemonic overlay to give shape and add specific meaning to later events, and as the cultural trauma to which all later events are automatically compared. But what about other possible intertextual traces which are glossed over by this narrow scope? Is the walking skeleton (only) stalking out of the Great Famine’s and Famine fiction’s metaphorical closet? What happens when these images are also studied in the context of other periods of hardship and of different textual genres?

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21 Ibid., 226.
22 “The enormity of the Famine has led some historians to focus on it as the beginning of certain trends in Irish society”, while many of the descriptive “trends” used to describe the Famine, can in fact “be traced to pre-Famine times”. Cathal Póirtéir, *Famine Echoes* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995), 11.
23 Ibid., 11.
5.1.1 Excess, Liminality and Moral Transgression in Famine Fiction

...the condition of haunting and spectrality is such [...] that one cannot assume coherence of identification or determination.25

Works of Famine fiction are filled with walking skeletons, emaciated faces, gaunt frames, protruding bones and yellowed skins; embodiments of suffering abound. This goes for both narratives set during Famine times, as well as narratives set during later periods of hardship. An example can be found in *Steadfast unto Death* (1880) by Louise Berens. Little is known about Berens; she is also known as E. M. Berens and quite possibly Louise Berens was one of the names under which Elizabeth M. Stewart wrote after she was married. Berens wrote works of poetry, children’s fiction and a schoolbook, and was probably an Irish Catholic.26 *Steadfast unto Death* is set during the smaller famine and Land War period, and on its very first page draws a parallel between present suffering and the Famine: “In Ireland the destitution and misery were beyond imagination or calculation. The spectre of famine had not dared to show its ghastly face openly for years.”27 Besides this typical representation of famine personified as a ghastly spectre, the narrative also uses stock terms to describe famine victims, as the narrative focuses on the “starving mother” and the dying child.28 Moreover, Mora’s mother and young brother are described animalistically, the former carrying a “wild, hunted, hungry expression” and the latter behaving like a “human animal”.29 Referring to a condition often mentioned in accounts of the Famine, the narrator mentions the sense of apathy felt by the mother, who “is past crying; her tears have all been shed” and from whose face “time and misery have effaced much of

29 Berens, *Steadfast unto Death*, 11–12.
the thought and intelligence”.30

Because of the preoccupation with repetition characteristic to several works of Famine fiction, the link between textual representations of Famine suffering and later suffering is easily made. However, when reading narratives concerning both the Famine era and later periods of hardship, it appears that “coherence of identification” cannot be granted easily, as these works of Famine fiction make use of a much wider frame of reference to construct their textual representations of suffering. Moreover, in these works the specific Famine-related imagery of eating nettles and weeds figures only once, and the equally well-known Famine images of victims with green-stained mouths, overcrowded graveyards, sliding coffins and animals devouring unburied corpses, do not feature at all. By contrast, such specific imagery does reappear in non-literary writings of the period.31

The present section will concern itself with the application of Gothic borrowings in representations of Irish Famine victimhood. The classic Gothic novel had its heyday during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, during the nineteenth century, the Gothic became more loosely defined and continued as an important influence in later


31 In 1882, The Irish-American reprinted a series of letters written by American journalist James Redpath. In the specific letter titled ‘Galway in the Famine Years’ many of the stereotypical images concerning the Famine feature; the article practically constitutes a check-off list for such imagery. Excess of suffering and its unrepresentability, famishing pigs eating the dead, too many evictions to count, and as many as sixty coffins a day leaving the workhouse are mentioned even before the people really “began to die fast and thick”. After this, Redpath also discusses the eating of grass and nettles, and somebody being buried alive, concluding with the statement that “[t]he famine of 1847 was not an Irish natural famine but an English political famine”. James Redpath’s Letters, The Irish-American 34/23 (New York, 10 June 1882), 2.

In Rosa Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’ Moya Mailie looks for weeds (see quotation below). As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, the imagery features once more, in Emily Fox’s Rose O’Connor (1880, 88). Although I cannot provide a reason for this, the fact that this image appears so seldomly is quite astonishing, seeing as it returns frequently in Famine fiction written in the periods 1845–70 and 1892–1921, and also features in non-fictional accounts.

We might associate the images mentioned in the main text with the Famine specifically, but as Dickson has demonstrated in Arctic Ireland, such imagery already features in newspaper accounts of the Great Frost of 1740–1. See specifically pages 48–52 of Dickson’s book; quotations from contemporary newspapers detailing mass graves, the eating of grass and green-stained mouths, infants suckling at their dead mother’s breast and dogs carrying off the dead are all included.
literature; as David Punter and Glennis Byron state, while the classic Gothic novel came to its end in the early nineteenth century, it continued as the more broadly defined Gothic mode after that.\(^{32}\) More recently, Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie have provided an insight into the debate surrounding definitions of the (Irish) Gothic, in which they do not limit themselves to one single determinant (mode, genre, tradition, form) and have opted for a plurality of approaches.\(^{33}\)

Concepts taken from the Gothic, such as the idea of haunting and the image of the ghost, have been adopted in wider discursive contexts, frequently in the context of cultural memory and cultural trauma studies. Julian Wolfreys states that “ghosts cannot be either contained or explained by one particular genre or medium, such as gothic narratives”.\(^{34}\) Wolfreys calls this “movement from genre to trope, from structural identity to that which haunts the structures of narrative” the “spectralization of the gothic”, and argues that “that which haunts the gothic as a genre returns after the demise of the gothic as a vital literary form, as a number of apparitional traces and fragments in discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”.\(^{35}\) In her more general discussion of how “the sociological imagination” is haunted by lingering disruptive events which still have their effects in the present, Avery Gordon underscores the vague boundaries of what can be considered as Gothic (traces). Additionally she reflects on the social implications and potential of the (literary) figure of the Gothic ghost, arguing that “[t]he ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life.”\(^{36}\) Punter and Byron have stressed the social dimension of the mode as well, arguing that “the Gothic has flourished at times of actual or potential social upheaval” such as “the end of the nineteenth century”, that the Gothic is “above all [...] a manner of representation” and that critics should preferably see the Gothic in “terms of a psychological argument”.\(^{37}\)

\(^{32}\) Punter and Byron, *Gothic*, 26. Haslam defines the idea of a mode as distinct from a “tradition” as the former is broader in its scope, and is focused on mood and tone (‘Irish Gothic’, 87).


\(^{34}\) Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings*, 1.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 25, 7.


\(^{37}\) Punter and Byron, *Gothic*, xix, xviii.
Moreover, while the Gothic concerns itself with the subliminal, otherworldly and fantastic, Jim Shanahan contends that in the Irish historical context of prolonged and repeated suffering, the Gothic has functioned as “a consistent element of Irish reality, and therefore [is] an essential component of a specifically Irish realism”.\textsuperscript{38} He adds that, while in many contexts the Gothic was used to explore some “imagined, or remote trauma”, “the Irish Gothic is not so much concerned about the distant past and imaginary fears, but is better understood as a kind of hyper-realist technique that periodically reveals the truth by laying bare the awful reality behind Irish life and Irish historical experience”.\textsuperscript{39} As such, the Irish Gothic could figure as a suitable means to truthfully and realistically portray recent hardships and suffering; Gothic excess was in some ways already an aspect of Irish life. By extension, and pointedly so within the Irish colonial context, the Gothic mode can be seen as having the potential to deliver a “penetrating social critique”.\textsuperscript{40} We could see it, following Morin and Gillespie’s exploration, as a “displaced form of social interrogation, the only true way of explaining and attempting to address Ireland’s condition”.\textsuperscript{41}

It is the resonance of the mode and the Gothic trace rather than the more narrowly defined genre which also has demonstrable influence on works of Famine fiction. A telling example is found in popular and prolific author Rosa Mulholland’s story ‘The Hungry Death’ (1891). Mulholland’s story is not only of interest here because of the parallels that can be drawn to the Great Famine, but also because of the story’s diffuse take on Irish temporality and teleology and the author’s interest in various literary genres, as Mulholland also wrote works of Gothic and sensational fiction and poetry. ‘The Hungry Death’ was first published in W. B. Yeats’ Representative Irish Tales in London and New York, then reappeared in the Irish Monthly and was later republished in Mulholland’s own collection of supernatural and Gothic tales The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly, and Other Stories, all within the same year.\textsuperscript{42}


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 78–9.

\textsuperscript{40} Punter and Byron, Gothic, 22, 30. Wright reminds us that in Irish literature, the Gothic was often used to explore the colonial situation, and that it figured as an “early instance of ‘writing back’” (Representing the National Landscape, 129, 131).

\textsuperscript{41} In follow up of Terry Eagleton, Morin and Gillespie discuss whether we could consider the Irish Gothic in such a manner. See ‘Introduction’, 10.

Providing a fictionalised account of the hardships and hunger experienced by the island population of Inishboffin, Mulholland’s tale makes use of conventional imagery and devices, and contains elements of the Gothic, representations of the sublime, and well-established atmospheric descriptions. The narrative does not provide a decisive temporal placement, and, accordingly, different interpretations have arisen. While, for example, Marguerite Corporaal states that Mulholland’s story is set during the Famine, Margaret Kelleher has argued that ‘The Hungry Death’ rather deals with the island-wide hunger experienced by the inhabitants of Inishboffin in 1886.\(^43\) The latter observation is supported by the fact that in the *Illustrated London News* of 1886 at least one article was included in which first the distress on Achill island and then similar conditions on Inishboffin were reported: “Hundreds of families in Achill have no food but the small doles of Indian corn meal which are given them, and their low condition has brought on a particular type of disease. Their huts or cabins are wretched, with scarcely any furniture; and they are scantily clothed in rags.” After this, the article goes on to conclude that the smaller island of “Inishboffin seemed even nearer to starvation than Achill”.\(^44\) Furthermore, the article was accompanied by several illustrations by Claude Byrne (see below), which represented the islanders collecting seaweed, the arrival of a gun-boat with provisions and the handing out of meal on the coast of Inishboffin, all events which are also described in ‘The Hungry Death’.

The interpretation of ‘The Hungry Death’ as a Great Famine story is also plausible, though, as the imagery used in the story resembles descriptions used in well-known literary, philanthropic and journalistic reports of the Famine and the failure of the potato harvest is mentioned repeatedly.\(^45\)


\(^44\) ‘Distress in the West of Ireland’, *Illustrated London News* (3 Apr. 1886), 345.

\(^45\) When describing still living victims, many commentators used dehumanised terms; examples can be found in well-known American reformer, philanthropist and abolitionist Asenath Nicholson’s *Annals of the Famine in Ireland, in 1847, 1848, and 1849* (New York: E. French, 1851), as she famously speaks of the apathetic “walking skeleton” (37), and in the words of English Quaker philanthropist James Hack Tuke, which describe a Famine victim as a “a breathing skeleton” with a “ghastly livid face and emaciated form, wasted with hunger and sores” (*A Visit to Connaught in the Autumn of 1847. A Letter Addressed to the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, Dublin* [London: Charles Gilpin, 1848], 14). Mulholland uses similar terminology when describing the
5.1 Famine Memories?

Figure 5.1: ‘Collecting Seaweed and Limpets for Food on Inishbofin Island’, *Illustrated London News* (3 April 1886).

Figure 5.2: ‘Arrival of the Gun-Boat Banterer at Inishbofin, with Meal for the Starving Inhabitants’, *Illustrated London News* (3 April 1886).
For example, as is the case in several works of Famine fiction – the preface to Margaret Brew’s Famine narrative *Castle Cloyne* being the most apt illustration – Mulholland’s story emphasises the severity of famine suffering and the inability to fully understand its impact, as “the Bofiners became gradually aware that a visitation was at hand for which there had seldom been a parallel”.

As elaborated upon in Chapters 3 and 4, in *suffering Inishboffiners; see for example “galvanised skeletons” (388); “a mere skeleton covered with skin” (389); “many a skeleton hand was outstretched” (394); “spectre” (388) and “ghost” (394). These terms are all general terms which could also be seen as belonging to a commonplace register of suffering or to a Gothic register, but since they were also frequently used in reports on the Great Famine, one could also interpret them as part of the discursive register specifically concerning the Famine.*

“...It may be said that I have painted the great Irish Famine in colours that are too gloomy, and in language that is too strong. But to this I answer that the story of the Irish Famine could not be told with a pen dipped in rose-water, even in a work of fiction. But there are many still living who remember that calamitous epoch in Irish history, who will bear testimony that I have in no way exaggerated its horrors, or made its details more painful than was warranted by strict truth.” *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne; Or, Pictures of the Munster People. 3 vols* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885), preface.

many narratives which recollect the Famine, Irish time is marked by a circular or repetitive streak. This view of time also features strongly in ‘The Hungry Death’, and could also be read as a fixation on repetition, a preoccupation with the past and its continual return to haunt the present which is frequently associated with the Gothic. In a way, any pinpointed placement in time would be of little added value to the temporality of the narrative: as I have demonstrated in Chapter 2, at the onset of the story, Inishbofin island is described as marked by a circular or perhaps even static temporality. Periodic hunger is cast as part of the Inishbofin cycle of life, and the island is presented as a temporally and spatially unsettling environment contained in space and time. In this manner, Inishbofin is a heterotopic space in which the islanders are always haunted by their past.

Mulholland’s tale starts with the period of courtship between protagonist Brigid Lavelle, a strong-farmer’s daughter, and her suitor Coll Prendergast. Coll shows Brigid his emotions through his actions rather than his words, but instead of returning his affections (as she secretly desires), Brigid constantly taunts Coll to test his love. In the spirit of playful banter, she ridicules his attempts to approach her, until it is too late. Coll has become weary of the constant rejection and falls for another. Brigid is left alone, heartbroken. Then, “the bad times, the rotting crops, the scant expectations of a harvest” are mentioned, and “[d]istress began to pinch the cheerful faces of the islanders”, leading to much “sorrow and anxiety”. Brigid’s father falls victim to famine fever, and Coll’s in-laws perish one by one. Brigid turns into an example of female charity, stinting her own food to help out her neighbours. When his wife-to-be Moya is dying, Coll begs Brigid for some meal, but she cannot overcome her sentiments and rejects his plight. Spiritually torn after this act of moral transgression, Brigid

and states that her writings about the Famine are “realities, and many of them fearful ones – realities which none but eye-witnesses can understand, and none but those who passed through them can feel”.  

49 Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 369.  
50 As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, the view of Irish rural life as always being on the brink of destitution and thus also containing occasional periods of suffering can also be found in other narratives. Another example can be found in Doran’s Zanthon, wherein the narrator states that destitution is simply the way of life in pre-Famine rural Ireland: “To be a peasant, like those who resided in Footford, one must marry and live in destitute ways a lifetime; nor ever think of uttering a complaint against so hard a fate” (15).  
51 Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 381, 379.
has a religious nightmare/delirium, and seeks refuge in the local church. After confiding in her priest Brigid understands the error of her ways and brings her last bit of meal to Moya and Coll. Shortly after this act of ultimate self-sacrifice, she succumbs to starvation herself, while Moya and Coll survive the ordeal and emigrate to America.

Mulholland’s story deals both with general descriptions of famine suffering, and with more individualised hardships. General conditions on Inishboffin in the 1880s are typically described as “the bad times” in which laughter, music, song faded out of the island; feet that had danced as long as it was possible now might hardly walk, and the weakest among the people began to die. Troops of children that a few months ago were rosy and sturdy, sporting on the sea shore, now stretched their emaciated limbs by the fireless hearths, and wasted to death before their maddened mother’s eyes. The old and ailing vanished like flax before a flame. Digging of graves was soon the chief labour of the island, and a day seemed near at hand when the survivors would no longer have strength to perform even this last service for the dead.

These references to the disappearance of song and music, and the end of traditional rituals to bury the dead are reminiscent of descriptions of the Great Famine. After this description, the story focuses on Moya Mailie’s family, whose members remain nameless, and who are represented by the use of stock phrasing such as “galvanized skeletons”: “In the widow Mailie’s house the famine had been early at work. Five of Moya’s little sisters and brothers had one by one sickened and dropped upon the cabin

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52 Ibid., 381.
53 Ibid., 387.
55 This is not necessarily a reference to the Great Famine; the term “famine” was used to denote earlier and later periods of severe hunger as well. See for example the articles ‘Famine Fever in Ireland’, The Irish-American, 32/30 (New York, 24 July 1880) and ‘Perpetuating “Irish Famine.” “Unproductive Public Works” versus Seeding the Lands’, The Irish-American, 32/9 (New York, 28 Feb. 1880), in which the terms “famine” and “famine fever” are used to denote dire circumstances in 1880.
floor. The two elder boys still walked about looking like galvanized skeletons, and the mother crept from wall to wall of her house trying to pretend that she did not suffer.” 56 After this description, the narrative focuses on the suffering experienced by Coll and Moya. Again, stock phrasing – including the description of Coll as ghostlike and the disappearance of Moya’s beauty as the tell-tale sign of the deterioration of her overall health – is used to cast these images of suffering in communicable forms: 57

White and gaunt [Coll] followed little Moya’s steps, as with the spirit of a giant she kept on toiling among the rocks for such weeds or shell-fish as could be supposed to be edible. When she fell, Coll bore her up, but the once powerful man was not able to carry her now. Her lovely little face was hollow and pinched, the cheek-bones cutting through the skin. Her sweet blue eyes were sunken and dim, her pretty mouth purple and strained. Her beauty and his strength were alike gone. 58

After this description, the narrator speeds up the narrative pace and quickly adds that “[t]hree of the [remaining Mailie] boys died in one night, and it took Coll, wasted as he was, two days to dig a grave deep enough to bury them. Before the week was over all the children were dead of starvation, and the mother scarcely alive.” 59 The transition from general suffering to specific and individual suffering shows that the hardships experienced on the island are endured by all layers of Inishboffin’s society and also directly infiltrate the narrative on a profound level, as the main characters – including Brigid Lavelle and her father, who were once amongst those relatively well-off – belong to those who suffer most. Hunger and related hardships are brought to the foreground of the narrative’s development; they do not just function as atmospheric setting or short tribulations to be overcome in otherwise romantic plotlines as is the case in for example R. B. O’Brien’s The D’Altons of Crag, the anonymous nar-

56 Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 388.
57 The emphasis on her former beauty as a stark contrast to the present condition of the (female) famine victim is found elsewhere in ‘The Hungry Death’: when Coll accidentally meets with Brigid he “would scarcely have recognized her in her death-like guise, had it not been for the still living glory of her hair” (389). Moreover, it also features in other works of Famine fiction, including Brew’s Castle Clayne. See the description of Susie Molloy just before her death included in the second section of this chapter (and found in vol. 2, on p. 280 of Brew’s novel).
58 Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 388.
59 Ibid.
The all-encompassing nature of famine hardships or “the hungry death” is successfully established by the use of very condensed imagery: the suffering by the entire Mailie family is explained in two concise paragraphs, reproduced here almost in their entirety. Through this condensation, a sense of excess is established: narrative progression is accelerated to such an extent and many perish in so little textual space, that it creates a narrative overload of human suffering. Elsewhere, the narrative also displays a form of excess in its general descriptions of similar hardships, but this time it manifests itself as an excess in numbers, as the narrator repeatedly and concisely informs readers that a multitude of nameless “wretches” and “creatures” are struggling for their lives and are dying outside:

On her [Brigid’s] way she passed prostrate forms, dying or dead, on the heather, on the roadside, and against the cabin walls. A few weakly creatures, digging graves, begged from her as she went past.\(^{60}\)

Dire were the sights she [Brigid] had to pass upon her way. Many a skeleton hand was outstretched for the food she carried.\(^{61}\)

This dense culmination of imagery concerning victimhood is not to be considered an idiosyncrasy of the short story form or Mulholland’s narrative specifically, for this type of verbal excess, which is moreover also frequently and directly linked to the sensory perception of the protagonist, features in many other works of F/famine fiction, both short and long. For example, in ‘The Piper’s Gift’, by unknown author M. M. Armstrong which was published in *McGee’s Illustrated* in 1876, widow Mary O’Brien encounters an abundance of suffering between her cabin and the building in which the relief committee is housed:

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 392.  
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 394.
As she walked briskly along, scenes of misery met her eyes in every direction. Here the agonizing groans of some poor sufferer, tossing in the delirium of fever on the roadside, alone and uncared for, met her ears; there her frame experienced a cold thrill of horror, as a corpse, cold and ghastly, claimed her attention. Now the wails of children around their mother’s death-bed issued from a wayside hovel; then a mother’s caoine for some beloved child freighted the air with its soul-thrilling pathos. All was dark, gloomy and indicative of the sorrow that shrouded the land.\footnote{M. M. Armstrong, ‘The Piper’s Gift. A Tale of the Irish Famine’, }\footnote{McGee’s Illustrated Weekly vol. 1 (1876–7), 262.}

As is the case for the passages taken from ‘The Hungry Death’, in ‘The Piper’s Gift’ the description of Mary’s registration of these Famine-era horrors is marked by a rushed style, a noticeable speeding up of narrative progression: many different images of suffering pass before her eyes, and are described in short, startling phrases. The paragraph is focalised from the female protagonist’s perspective and reads as a strain on her senses. It focuses on sounds and sights and is marked by a sense of excess similar to the tone adopted in Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’.\footnote{“It has been a commonplace of narrative theory that an internal perspective, achieved either through first person self-narration, through figural narration (in which the 3rd person narrator stays covert and reports only on a single, focal center of consciousness located in a main character) or through authorial (omniscient) narration that moves inside characters’ minds, best promotes character identification and readers’ empathy.” Suzanne Keen, ‘A Theory of Narrative Empathy’, Narrative 14/3 (Oct., 2006), 207–36: 219.}

Additionally, in The Days of a Life, many victims also pass before the narrator’s eye; these are described by the external narrator in third person, and are focalised and commented upon alternately by protagonist Ida and the benevolent character Bernard Butler. Like Mulholland and Armstrong, McDougall creates a picture charged with meaning in which the reader is directed toward the focalising protagonists to guide his or her moral compass. In the latter part of the chapter titled ‘Eviction’, all conventional forms of famine-related suffering are condensed in the space of about ten pages. In these pages, the narrator describes “ragged labourers, [digging] with hopeless faces”, and a mass eviction scene in which an elderly woman is described as “a corpse [...] wrapped in a coarse sheet” as she is carried out of her former home. Moreover, among the evicted are suffering mothers, children, a cripple and an elderly man who dies on the spot,
and who now had “passed beyond the need of house or home [and] the anxiety for tomorrow”. The stock figures of the priest suffering with his tenantry and evil landlords and scheming agents are also present, and representations of public works and scenes of suffering by the roadside where “the evicted people were huddled in groups among their bits of furniture” feature as well.  

In *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* the hardships experienced by the Irish and specifically Pat’s wife and child during the Famine are presented in highly concentrated and excessive form too. The memory of these events is condensed into a one-chapter flashback to the entire Famine period. It is provided by the moralistic narrator who tells of victims and deaths and discusses the monumental questions of government action, culpability and murder. Again the narrative leaves little room for interpretation: the narrator clearly directs any possible readerly empathy towards the protagonist and consequently the Irish poor.

Killeen states that “Gothic writers have always held the colonial fringes to be particularly potent sources of horror for the English imagination.” He refers to the Celtic fringes specifically, as ambiguous borderlands in the Victorian imagination. This liminality of the ‘Celtic fringe’ of course also extended to its inhabitants, who were then transformed into otherworldly and even threatening beings. However, the colonial Gothic liminal subject is not just a subject – or object – to fear; in an anti- or postcolonial manner, he or she is also a figure of potential social critique. The dehumanised Irish F/famine victims are also fictional elements with a radical potential. Victims portrayed as animal-like, as ghost-like, as apathetic zombies, in short as no longer human, do not just function as shock devices or as affective tools to influence the reader, but also and perhaps more importantly, embody a critique on the inhumanity of the larger social and political environments that shaped them. For example, the emaciated

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64 McDougall, *Days of a Life*, chapter 12; quotes are taken from pages 170, 174–6, 180. What immediately strikes the reader is that McDougall has chosen to focus on the crippled, the very old, the very young, and the female, and that the male victim is largely absent from her narrative, thereby following journalistic and artistic conventions guiding many accounts of famine suffering. For work on these conventional images, see Kelleher, *Feminization of Famine and Boyce*, ‘Representing the “Hungry Forties” in Image and Verse’.


66 Killeen, *Gothic Literature*, 91.

67 In that sense, the liminal subject can figure in a similar manner as the Gothic monster. Punter and Byron state that “[e]xcluded figures once represented as malevolent, disturbed, or even deviant monsters are rendered more human while the systems that
subhuman victims found in McDougall’s *The Days of a Life* function as representations of what a rotten landlord-tenant system, absenteeism and most importantly the lack of property rights for the Irish will lead to.68

In Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’, the islanders can be considered liminal beings as well: they inhabit a desolate and sea-enclosed island with its own warped temporality, in which storms, bouts of famine and short spells of betterment constantly alternate. Because the Inishboffiners transform from “cheerful faces” into dehumanised and deindividualised “spectre[s]” and “ghost[s]”, they are liminal in the sense that they cross the threshold between being and non-being, between human and non-human.69 Moreover, the multitudes of victims are typically depicted as dehumanised objects, as “fragmented bodies”, to quote Chris Morash: Mulholland speaks of “prostrate forms, dying or dead” and “a skeleton hand” stretched out to beg for food.70 In this manner, the Inishboffiners become sublime creatures potentially threatening to contemporary readers because they signify the potential “annihilation of the self”.71 Mulholland’s Inishboffin can be read as a metonymic representation of Ireland: who was to say that Ireland, in the wake of the smaller famine of 1879, would not suffer such a crisis again?72 As Margaret Kelleher observes, Mulholland’s story has critical potential, but in contrast to the examples mentioned above, steers clear from overt political criticisms, and instead focuses on the potential of this microcosmic Ireland’s “moral economy”; Marguerite Corporaal adds that the spectral victims in ‘the Hungry Death’ function exclude them assume terrifying, persecutory, and inhuman shapes.” *Gothic*, 265.

68 The main point of McDougall’s novel is that the sufferers of the Land-War era ills depicted in the novel are victims of issues that have plagued Irish society for ages, as the narrator stresses that “history repeats itself”. When combined with the political and humanitarian message voiced by Bernard Butler throughout the novel and with Butler’s unhappy ending (he is arrested for his radical views and deported), it becomes clear that the long-existent ills at the heart of Irish society are still unresolved. I discuss this at greater length in Chapter 3; the novel’s central message can be found on pages 417 and 418.


70 Ibid., 394. Both literary and non-literary descriptions of human suffering are not only frequently cast in dehumanised terms, but are also established through the use of a synecdoche, as frequently a focus on the fragmented body can be found. For an insightful essay on the fragmented body in Famine literature, see Christopher Morash, ‘Famine/Holocaust: Fragmented Bodies’, *Éire/Ireland* 32/1 (1997), 136–150.


72 The islanders “feel themselves a little nation”. Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 370.
to underline “the story’s moral lesson of charity”.\textsuperscript{73} While not advocating a political guideline, then, Mulholland’s story rather warns against the potential breakdown of moral and neighbourly behaviour in the midst of a (demographic) crisis.

The identification with the liminal Gothic subject can also be made on a more specific level, namely as personified by the morally transgressive subject. In some respects similar to the Gothic monster, the liminal subject is “located at the margins of culture” and “function[s] to define and construct the politics of the ‘normal’ ”.\textsuperscript{74} In this context Fairside Marlband, father of the protagonist of James Doran’s \textit{Zanthon} (1891), should also be briefly mentioned. Marlband is reminiscent of William Carleton’s Black Prophet in some ways: he possesses “knowledge very uncommon, if not actually unbecoming in a person of such poor [rural] surroundings\textsuperscript{75}, and “would have been recognized as a man of superior mental attainment” in “an enlightened community”. But, among the rural poor, “who were superstitious and uneducated”, he is a frightening outsider: “Some of these persons, indeed, believed he possessed superhuman power, and not a few hinted darkly at the probability of his relationship with evil spirits”.\textsuperscript{75} Some of his actions – such as conversing with the spirits to secure the survival of his son – are indeed morally dubious and bring to mind the typical pact with an evil entity found in several works of Gothic fiction, the best example perhaps being Charles Maturin’s \textit{Melmoth the Wanderer} (1820). At the same time, “our peasant philosopher” and “true scholar” becomes “very popular” in his village, and is characterised by profound wisdom, benevolence and understanding.\textsuperscript{76}

While Marlband is feared by his peers, the narrator functions as the voice of reason and shows the reader the true and benevolent side of Marlband. Simultaneously, the reader is encouraged to sympathise with him on the structural level as well: the following pattern in the first half of the narrative focuses almost solely on Marlband, and his speech – for example during the scenes in which he forecasts the advent and severity of the Famine and his own death – is often directly represented and focalised through him. This diminishment of the narrator’s presence and simultaneous “diminishment of the observer role” provides readers with an opportunity to

\textsuperscript{73} Kelleher, \textit{Feminization of Famine}, 115; Corporaal, ‘Haunted by Hunger’, 95.
\textsuperscript{74} Punter and Byron, \textit{Gothic}, 263; Punter and Byron comment on the reversion at the heart of the Gothic monster and his or her relation to society (\textit{Gothic}, 265–6).
\textsuperscript{75} James Doran, \textit{Zanthon: A Novel} (San Francisco, CA: Bancroft, 1891), 5.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 8.
identify and possibly empathise with the character. Although Marlband is cast as a Gothic prophet, he is ultimately a benevolent liminal figure: he navigates the boundaries between good and evil, between the normal and the supernatural, between moral and objectionable behaviour during a period of great hardship. Before the Famine, he shows his wife the early signs of the blight: “dark-brown spots” on the leaf of a potato plant. Marlband predicts that these spots signify “[a] scourge. A misfortune.” He states that “nature’s impressions [...] and the lessons they teach never deceive” and that the small blemishes “shall result in a great famine!”.

His wife just smiles, “thinking the derangement of her husband would assert itself positively if he continued in this strain.” Here, Marlband functions as a social critique, as he shows his wife and peers, and possibly also his contemporary readers, that they – unlike him – have regrettably lost their direct connection to their natural environment sometime before the Famine, preventing them from being able to see the warnings of nature to prepare themselves for this time of great crisis.

A similar exploration of human morality and its transgression can be found in Mulholland’s narrative. Shanahan has argued that in contrast to the Protestant Irish Gothic, the “Irish Catholic Gothic tended to be more internal than external, with the emphasis more on psychological breakdown than supernatural terrors”. In this context, not only the islanders of Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’ are located on the limits, but so is its protagonist. Brigid Lavelle is a liminal figure located at the margins of her community: she lives in seclusion on the far side of the island, is a mediator between life and death for those she attempts to save and, being a kinless and single woman, lacks communal ties through marriage or kinship to the other islanders. Although Mulholland’s protagonist is portrayed as the heroine of the story, her failure to withstand her own feelings of rejection and antipathy and subsequent mental crisis, suggest another side to her personality. In the context of her own altruism displayed right up until the accidental meeting with Coll, Brigid temporarily becomes transgressive in her reaction to Coll and Moya’s plight, taking their life in her own hands:

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79 Ibid., 25.
80 Shanahan, ‘Suffering Rebellion’, 88.
‘But no more,’ pleaded Coll. ‘Oh Brigid, I’m not asking for myself. I fear I vexed ye, though I did not mean it. But Moya niver did any one any harm. Will you not give me a morsel to save her from the hungry death?’

‘I said I niver would forgive either o’ ye, an’ I niver will,’ said Brigid, slowly. ‘Ye broke my heart, an’ why wouldn’t I break yours?’

‘Brigid, perhaps neither you nor me has much longer to live. Will ye go before yer Judge with sich black words on yer lips?’

Brigid’s refusal is represented as a morally and religiously transgressive act, and directly after this event she breaks down, becoming torn between her romantic suffering as a scorned lover on the one hand and deep regrets on the other. Brigid is plagued by a “terrible dream” concerning her eternal damnation and Coll and Moya’s ascension to Heaven: “She saw herself dead and judged; a black-winged angel put the mark of Cain on her forehead, and at the same moment Coll and Moya went, glorified and happy, hand in hand into heaven before her eyes. ‘Depart from me, you accursed,’ thundered in her ears.”

Brigid’s act of transgression is caused not only by her feelings of rejection, but also by the inhumane and horrible conditions suffered on Inishbofin: circumstances on the island are so dire that Brigid simply cannot help everyone. This again illustrates the main thrust of the story, which lies in a warning concerning the limits of compassion during times of hardship, in the breakdown of a moral economy and of communal empathy. However, at the same time, this critique is levelled because of Brigid’s final decision to do the right thing. In all, we could say that through her brief transgression Brigid first and foremost becomes a human being rather than an ideal type. Her transgressive behaviour in itself might spark a negative reaction in the reader, inhibiting reader-character identification and empathy. At the same time, the narrative explicitly mentions the devastating effects of the breakdown of that moral economy and stresses the fickle but benevolent traits of Brigid’s personality. Additionally, large parts of the story are focalised through Brigid. These elements render her act of transgression more understandable and therefore aid in the establishment of compassion with the protagonist and her plight, despite her flaws. As a (temporarily) transgressive being – and in this way she has the same function as Marlband in Zanthon – Brigid not only navigates the limits of

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81 Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 391.
82 Ibid., 392.
5.1 Famine Memories?

her own humanity and kindness, but also of socially acceptable behaviour during times of great human hardship and famine. In this way, her behaviour functions to illustrate what Delamotte considers a key element of the explorations of “boundaries of the self” in Gothic literature, as it shows that at this time of great strain, the social and moral “boundaries that one ordinarily depends on prove unstable, elusive, ineffective, nonexistent”.  

Since the Famine has received such a pivotal and seminal position in Irish historiography and memory by now, audiences will probably recall the Great Famine when reading Mulholland’s tale. However, this link is never explicitly made in the narrative and Kelleher’s placement of the narrative during the brief period of hardship and hunger experienced by the inhabitants of Inishbofin in 1886 seems just as plausible, if not more so, with regard to the story’s date of publication, setting, and use of imagery which seem to directly reflect the representations chosen for inclusion in the Illustrated London News articles and sketches. This illustrates the cross-fertilisation between contemporary journalistic reports and fiction, which is not limited to Mulholland’s story, but can be found in many works of Famine fiction and journalistic writings on the Famine as well as on later periods of hardship, as supported by some of the references I make to journalistic reports throughout this chapter. ‘The Hungry Death’ is a strong example of this intertextual exchange.

Furthermore, through the narrative elements and the aesthetic devices of the excessive depiction of suffering, (moral) transgression, temporal diffusion, liminality, and potential social critique linked to the liminal being, Mulholland’s tale of Irish suffering can be given a place within a larger literary tradition, for these elements taken together demonstrate the extent to which the narrative is informed by the Gothic mode. Explicating such generic elements in narrative fiction and journalistic texts again underscores that the formation of memory is an act of narrativisation and that memory is shaped by known (literary) imagery which is interpretable to its readership precisely because it is already familiar to them. Shanahan has argued that the Gothic functioned as a form of literary realism in the Irish context; seeing how Mulholland’s story narratively renders the Inishbofin F/famine through the use of contemporary non-fictional accounts and aesthetic imagery and devices known from the Gothic mode, I can only concur with Shanahan’s observation.

Sometimes, a text which might not contain any deliberate allegorical layer is nevertheless, through the act of allegoresis, read “as if one were

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83 Perils of the Night, 22.
explicating a deliberately designed allegory”. Richard Haslam warns critics to always critically “distinguish between reading a designed allegory and designing an allegorical reading”. If we were to read ‘The Hungry Death’ with too narrow a focus, the memory of the Famine would receive a more special, more singular position than is actually the case in a narrative which demonstrably relies on an established literary genre to give it shape and meaning, and which, moreover, characterises Ireland’s history as a spiral of Irish suffering. So, rather than speaking of Mulholland’s story as a Famine story with a capital F, perhaps we should label it a famine narrative with lower-case f, as a Gothic story of more general Irish suffering. As Table A.4 in the Appendix shows, it is not just Mulholland’s short story about which such claims concerning genre can be made: many works of Famine fiction make use – and frequently sustained use – of aspects characteristic of the Gothic mode to give shape to human suffering and thereby embed the literary memory of the Famine in a larger, existing framework of signification.

5.2 Gothic Topographies and the Pathetic Fallacy

Everything seemed to assume a sadness in harmony with his feelings as if his departure were fully understood. The branches of the trees were waving him farewell, the water murmuring adieu and the breeze sighing for the forlorn condition of the boy traveller.

This quote is taken from the passage in which Zanthon, after losing his entire family due to the Famine, bids farewell to his early childhood surroundings. Similarly, in many works of fiction written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scenes of human suffering are not only cast in highly conventional phrasing and imagery, but their conditions and surrounding environments are also described through the application of stock forms. Fictional works recollecting the Famine written between 1871 and


85 The works of Famine fiction included in this table have been selected on the basis of whether they contained representations of F/famine victimhood. To decide whether or not these narratives contain borrowings from the Gothic, I have analysed whether they include (the majority of) the traits that I have considered as Gothic at the start of this chapter: excess/exaggeration, the use of repetition, considerations of liminality, and/or an exploration of human and spatial thresholds.

86 Doran, Zanthon, 135.
1891 are no exception. For example, in the opening chapter of Emily Fox’s *Rose O’Connor*, Rose’s mother and little brother die and the general condition of the Irish people deteriorates while “[s]ummer passed away, autumn had moaned a sad farewell, and winter shiveringly introduced itself at the doors of many homes, where the inmates were ill prepared for its coming.”\(^{87}\) In this atmospheric build-up to human suffering, nature is anthropomorphosised – seasons moan, shiver and introduce themselves – to reflect that human suffering.

This type of deployment of natural and atmospheric descriptions to underscore the situation, mental and/or physical state of the human individual is commonly known as the pathetic fallacy and was famously elaborated upon and critiqued by John Ruskin in his *Modern Painters* (1856).\(^{88}\) Starting well before the nineteenth century, Josephine Miles provides a broad and thorough overview of the development of the body of thought behind the device and its manifestation in poetry. With regard to the nineteenth century, Miles states that the pathetic fallacy was used to explore a key philosophical issue of the time: the “relation between self and object”\(^{89}\). She also argues that this relation was considered from divergent perspectives during the period: a more positive, well-established approach in which a poet like Wordsworth would rather speak of poetic “bestowal” of passion on the object than a ‘fallacy’ and a more critical approach – most famously voiced by Ruskin – which followed from the conviction that the attribution of additional affective qualities to an object was a distortion of the “object ‘in itself’”\(^{90}\). Generally, as Miles claims, what many late nineteenth-century authors attempted to achieve through the use of the pathetic fallacy, is the satisfactory “phrasing of sense perception through adjectives of temperature, texture, color, shape: and the phrasing of response to these with a lesser use of the standard terms of feeling”\(^{91}\). It is this more general take on the pathetic fallacy which can also be detected in the majority of works of Famine fiction discussed in this research; besides providing an insight into Gothic borrowings found in this study’s corpus, Table A.4 in the Appendix provides an overview of the use the pathetic

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\(^{87}\) Fox, Emily (‘Toler King’), *Rose O’Connor; A Story of the Day* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Legal News Company [printer], 1880), 83.


\(^{90}\) Ibid., 188–9.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., 185.
fallacy to give shape and environmental support to representations of Irish victimhood.\footnote{Whenever a work of Famine fiction represents a strong bond between the Irish victim and his or her environment in which the latter figures as a mirror for the former, I have noted this as an instant of the pathetic fallacy.}

Although critics and authors have predominantly linked the pathetic fallacy directly with poetry, the discussion concerning the device can also be extended to prose fiction. Moreover, links can be made to other genres besides, for example, pre-Raphaelite and Romantic poetry and prose. As Joel Wiener has demonstrated, with the rising popularity of popular fiction and its increased inclusion in newspapers and journals throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, \textquote{\textquote{fictional narrative structures were transmuted into techniques of reporting news}.\footnote{Joel H. Wiener, \textit{The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s–1914. Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism} (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31.} In line with this, the use of the pathetic fallacy also extended beyond the fictional, as it also featured in non-fictional writings such as newspaper reports. Commenting upon an eviction in Co. Meath, \textit{The Irish-American} made use of natural elements to set the mood and included that \textquote{the morning was bitterly cold and wet, the bells of the churches of St. Clonard and Kinnegad rang out a melancholy peal}.\footnote{‘The “Crow-Bar Brigade.” How Gladstone’s “Land Act” is Working. Evictions in the County Meath’, \textit{The Irish-American} 25/49 (New York, 6 Dec. 1873), 1.} And when detailing the recurrence of famine fever some seven years later, that same newspaper made a similar connection, by also mentioning that \textquote{it was an awful night to go outside doors. It was blowing hard and raining harder, as it had been doing all day long and is doing at the present moment as I write – raining in torrents and blowing in gusts}.\footnote{‘Famine Fever in Ireland’, \textit{The Irish-American}, 32/30 (New York, 24 Jul. 1880), 2.} The latter article adopts a personal tone, as it is presented as an eyewitness account by “Dr. Phillips, the medical officer of Charlestown district”.\footnote{Ibid.} The pieces from which these quotations are taken are marked by a mixture of a more factual reporterly style, and a literary approach here exemplified by the presence of a narrator and the use of the pathetic fallacy to underscore the hardships described, demonstrating the cross-pollination between these different media formats signalled by Wiener.

The relationship between man and his haunts is not only expressed through the use of pathetic fallacy, but is also established through what Punter and Byron, in relation to the Gothic castle, have called the “topo-
In the late eighteenth century, a pronounced taste for medieval buildings was cultivated and wealthy landowners even went as far as building Gothic ruins on their estates. Later, this taste evolved into the “Gothicizing mania of the Victorians”. In Gothic fiction, Gothic buildings also feature frequently. The Gothic castle, fort or ruin can be seen as the externalisation of the character’s psychological workings; winding stairs, labyrinthine corridors and overall bad lighting could be considered markers of the threshold between the real and the unreal and as spatial elements which distort human perception.

In Justin H. McCarthy’s *Lily Lass* (1889) the dark, ruinous Red Tower functions as a Gothic space. It is inhabited by the equally dark but valiant Young Irelander Murrough MacMurchad, who is able to escape the police through his family’s dishevelled castle’s secret rooms and corridors. These passageways are described as “gaunt, [...] festooned with cobwebs” and are “dismal as a tomb”. In James Doran’s *Zanthon* the ruin of an old fort, complete with secret subterranean chambers, has a similar function. However, with the exception of Doran’s *Zanthon*, human suffering in the works of Famine fiction discussed here does not take place in grand castles, fortresses, or similar structures. Wolfreys states that throughout the nineteenth century, “[e]scaping from tomb and castle, the monastery and the mansion, the gothic arguably becomes more potentially terrifying because of its ability to manifest itself [...] anywhere”. Consequently, when a more-encompassing view of the Gothic and its spatial elements is chosen, certain traits which mark the topography of the Gothic can be found in locations not traditionally associated with the Gothic, such as the cabins of the suffering. In F/famine fiction, the cabins of the poor, when they come to function as spaces of hardship, are often represented as claustrophobic Gothic spaces reflecting the inner physical and mental turmoil of both their dwellers and visitors.

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97 Punter and Byron, *Gothic*, 259. Delamotte also states that in Gothic literature, the “engagement” between the character and his or her surroundings “centers on the dominant presence in the narrative of a certain kind of architecture”. *Perils of the Night*, 14–5.


99 Ibid., 259–60.


101 Both Gothic structures are already discussed as sites for possible nationalist reconfiguration of the nation and its people in Chapter 4.


103 Scholars of the Gothic frequently discuss how Gothic spaces can mirror the psychological suffering of the character. See for example Delamotte, *Perils of the Night*,...
of thresholds and psychological disorientation form crucial elements.

5.2.1 Human Haunts in Famine Fiction

The narrative which perhaps contains the highest number of representations of the cabins of the sick and dying, is Margaret Brew’s *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne*. Little is known about Brew; Tina O’Toole suggests that she came from a Catholic landowning family, an orientation which also informs her novel.\(^\text{104}\) In the preface, Brew claims the veracity of her stark depictions of Famine suffering, and accordingly in its discussion of the novel, *The Irish Monthly* recognised that “[i]t is an excellent Irish tale, full of truth and sympathy, without any harsh caricaturing on the one hand, or any patronising sentimentality on the other.”\(^\text{105}\) Before analysing Brew’s representations of spaces of suffering, I will refer briefly to her descriptions of victims. *Castle Cloyne* contains many conventional images, and often uses the same imagery repeatedly to describe different victims. This is exemplified by the following excerpts: in the first, the general condition of the Irish people is described; in the second, Oonagh finds the lifeless form of her one-time lover John Molloy:

> The country swarmed with beggars, clad, or to speak more truthfully, half covered by filthy rags, fit for nothing but to be thrown into the fire. The appearance of those wretched people spoke for them more eloquently than any words could have done. There were no cases of imposture to be discovered and denounced. In the wasted limbs, the sunken features, the yellow parchment-like skin drawn tightly over the protruding bones of the face, their pitiful story was written in characters that could not be mistaken. And with all this acute suffering there was, strange to say, a profound apathy, a weary listlessness that made no complaint, no outcry, no struggle for life.\(^\text{106}\)

> The unfortunate man must have been dead for many hours, for his body was as cold and rigid as marble. He had died alone! There was no kind hand near him at the last to close his eyes, for they were wide open, and their fixed and glassy stare was perfectly horrible to look on. The worn face was half covered by a stubbly black beard of a fort-

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\(^{105}\) ‘Notes on New Books’, *The Irish Monthly* 14 (1886), 456.  
night’s growth, and was like nothing earthly but a yellow parchment mask, wrinkled, haggard, and careworn. The throat and chest, laid bare by having the quilt drawn down, were so thin that the bones were in a manner held together only by the skin, and could literally be counted. It was a shocking sight, the body of this poor wretch that had died of famine!\(^{107}\)

Certain contrasts and stock phrases – most noticeably, the image of the parchment-like yellow skin indicative of relapsing fever, dehumanisation, and protruding bones – are present in these excerpts, which in turn function as examples of many other instances in which this type of imagery is used in *Castle Cloyne*.\(^{108}\) Indeed, the novel is marked by frequent verbal repetitions of bodily suffering, here indicating the overall stasis in which the Irish find themselves during the Famine, as well as the all-encompassing nature of Famine hardships themselves.

Brew’s descriptions of the cabins of the suffering Irish and the manner in which passages relating the deaths of characters are introduced, are also marked by a stylistic repetition, frequently attributed to the Gothic.\(^{109}\) Through this repetition, the narrative has the potential to emphasise “a sense of helplessness” with regard to the many victims encountered.\(^{110}\)

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 286.  
\(^{108}\) One such instance includes the description of Oonagh’s cousin Susie, which is included below and can be found in vol. 2, on p.80. Apparently, repetition and the use of stock phrasing was not confined to narrative fiction, but also featured in official reports, which again demonstrates that non-fictional accounts of representation are formed by standardisation and narrativisation through use of known imagery. For example, after being sent to Ireland, correspondent James Redpath states the following:

From each of these counties on the Western coast, and from every parish of them, the reports of the committees give out the same dirge-like notes: “No food,” “no clothing,” “bed clothing pawned,” “children half naked,” “woman clad in unwomanly rags,” “no fuel,” “destitution appaling,” “privation beyond description,” “many are suffering from hunger,” “seed potatoes and oats are being consumed by the people,” “their famine-stricken appearance would make the stoutest heart feel for them,” “some families are actually starving, and even should works be started the people are too weak now to work.” These sad and saddening phrases are not a bunch of rhetorical expressions. Each of them is a literal quotation from the business-like reports of the local committees of the Mansion House. (‘Famine Scenes in Ireland’ (continued), *The Harp. A Magazine of General Literature* 5/12 [Montreal, Dec. 1880], 524).

\(^{110}\) Delamotte links the device of repetition to the establishment of the Freudian un-
The first ‘major’ death scene that is described in the novel concerns the passing of Oonagh’s father, Martin McDermott.\textsuperscript{111} His death is enframed by descriptions of the landscape and atmosphere, and an ominous tone is set before we enter the house: “It was the eve of Christmas – a dark, bleak day, the hours of which were marked by frequent showers of rain, and sleet. The evening came down darker, and bleaker still, than the day had been, as if in sympathy with the gloom, and the trouble that reigned within the house.”\textsuperscript{112} Simultaneously with Martin’s death during the night, the pathetic fallacy is applied again:

When Oonagh opened the door communicating with the kitchen, she found herself, to her great horror, almost in total darkness, for there was no light whatever but that of the cold, gray dawn struggling in through the window. The Christmas candle although not half burned down, was no longer burning! [...] With that sudden and unaccountable extinguishing of the Christmas light, had gone out her last desperate hope of her father’s life.\textsuperscript{113}

The pathetic fallacy is used repeatedly in the novel; for example, just before the failure of the potato crops and the destitution and death of many Irish are described, the narrator states that “a black thunder-cloud hung over the doomed land”.\textsuperscript{114}

One of the most aptly illustrative examples of a Gothic topography combined with the pathetic fallacy can be found in the passage in which Oonagh encounters former lover John Molloy and his wife Susie (who is also Oonagh’s cousin and childhood friend). Oonagh goes to their cabin as soon as she learns of their plight, never hesitating or fearing for her own safety.\textsuperscript{115} Marguerite Corporaal has remarked that in early Famine fiction – written during or in the first two decades after the event – “the ghastly bodies of the starving victims are securely placed at a distance from the narrative focaliser, and with this, from the reader by spatial or narrative enframement”.\textsuperscript{116} In contrast to the earlier works of fiction discussed by Corporaal, the deathbed scene of the Molloys is narrated in direct connection to the narrative focaliser, as it is told in free indirect discourse and canny, and argues that repetition points to helplessness. \textit{Perils of the Night}, 96.

\textsuperscript{111} Brew, \textit{Castle Cloyne}, vol. 1, 176–82.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., vol. 1, 176.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., vol. 1, 181–2.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., vol. 2, 160.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., vol. 2, 272–3.
\textsuperscript{116} Corporaal, ‘Haunted by Hunger’, 99.
from Oonagh’s perspective. The manner in which Brew establishes this connection is demonstrated by the passage in which Oonagh encounters Susie:

It was only by degrees she was able, with the imperfect light of the candle, to take in all that I have tried to describe in a few words. After a little she advanced to the bed, and laid the candle on the chest beside it, but in the shadow, so that its light might not awake its sleeping occupant. With a bursting heart and hushed breath she [Oonagh] looked down on the miserable wreck that lay before her. Was this starved-out creature, dying not less surely of famine than of disease in those filthy rags, the soft, fair girl who had been the companion of her youth? Was this wasted woman, prematurely aged, through whose yellow, shrivelled skin the sharp bones were working their way, the beautiful Susie Burke, who, reared in comfort, had never known what pain or sorrow meant, until her wedding day?\textsuperscript{117}

In this passage, at first the narrator is clearly present (“I have tried to describe”) and while the following pattern focuses on protagonist Oonagh, the narrator narrates and focalises the scene. But then, the omniscient narrator places herself in the background and provides a transparent window into Oonagh’s experience and understanding of the scene that unfolds before her eyes. The citation as a whole consequently becomes marked by narration in free indirect discourse; it is told in such a manner that the demarcations between the character’s thoughts and feelings and the narrator’s words cannot be easily made. In this manner, despite overall third-person narration, the passage almost reads as an internal monologue by Oonagh, and character and narrator are drawn to the same narrative layer.\textsuperscript{118} Consequently a reduction of the sense of distance between the reader/possible empathiser and the object of empathy is established through “the diminishment of the observer role”.\textsuperscript{119} The cabin scene continues to be focalised through Oonagh as she goes into direct dialogue with the dying Susie and says goodbye to the already deceased John Molloy.

Corporaal also argues that the narrative enframing which marks early Famine fiction is characterised by interiors and the control of the image of

\textsuperscript{118} Discussing how authors can establish narrative empathy, Keen argues that “the narrated monologue has a strong effect on readers’ response to characters” (‘A Theory of Narrative Empathy’, 219).
\textsuperscript{119} Sklar, \textit{Art of Sympathy in Fiction}, 106.
the suffering – enclosed by the spatial borders of the cabin, of the home – and that later imagery rather casts suffering as “uncontrollably, out in the open”.

This form of control is still to be found in a later text as well. In ‘The Shadow of Death’, a story which appeared in The Irish-American in 1888 and which was written by the unknown author ‘Murty Mullowney’ – likely a pseudonym –, suffering by the protagonist’s family during the Famine is detailed in the form of a dream sequence and focalised through an “old larch tree” which has been standing next to the cabin in question for decades and which has witnessed the coming and going of the “failure of crops, sickness, poverty [and] actual want”.

The narrative creates an enclosed image of suffering by relating that suffering at a temporal distance: the frame narrative is set during the late 1880s and advocates support for the Plan of Campaign, using the dream sequence – a flashback to the Famine years, described as unsurpassed in their effect as the tree states that “[t]imes within living memory have never been so hard” – as a warning against the repetition of famine suffering. Moreover, by depicting that suffering from the outside, distance is established through spatial borders.

The shift analysed by Corporaal holds true in the case of narratives such as ‘The Piper’s Gift’, in which the female protagonist leaves her home to join the relief queue and is confronted outside with an abundance of “scenes of misery [...] in every direction.” However, I would argue that in Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891, both scenes of suffering in the interior (in cabins) and the exterior (alongside roads, in the field, etcetera) feature. Furthermore, there is no clear demarcation between these different forms as either uncontrollable or (safely) enclosed, for scenes of suffering are often focalised through protagonists who travel freely between these public and domestic spaces of suffering, and who themselves are sometimes not spared either, demonstrating that none are safe and that the F/famine is in essence an uncontrollable event. This is illustrated by the discussion of ‘The Hungry Death’ and its protagonist Brigid in the first section of this chapter, as Brigid travels between the different cabins of the sick and dying, encounters many victims out in the open and finally succumbs to “the hungry death” herself.

In Castle Cloyne, the focus is

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120 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
124 Additionally, Fairside Marlband in Zanthon and Pat M’Mahon in Uncle Pat’s Cabin are also focalising protagonists who succumb to starvation.
placed more on interior than exterior scenes, and Oonagh as the focaliser of Famine suffering roams the country, entering different cabins to take care of the sufferers. She takes the reader into these places of human suffering and thus they are confronted in a relatively direct manner with disease, starvation and death.\textsuperscript{125} Similarly, in the anonymous ‘Thade M’Sweeney’, which appeared in \textit{The Irish-American} in 1880, both suffering inside and outside the M’Sweeney cabin is seen through the eyes of the protagonist Thade M’Sweeney. When in great distress after their crops have failed in 1847, Thade witnesses how his wife is “stricken down with malignant fever” and becomes increasingly “thin [and] pale” in the “miserable structure” which is their cabin. As times worsen, the M’Sweeneys lose their home. During their eviction, Famine suffering is brought into the external space as Thade’s feeble wife Mary is carried out of her home and succumbs, and Thade “gaze[s] on her, the lustreless eyes and lips sealed in death”.\textsuperscript{126}

In Brew’s \textit{Castle Cloyne}, in the scene in the Molloy cabin, the image of suffering is represented as uncontrollable, and inestimable, for what Oonagh finds in the cabin is initially not clear to her or us as readers. At first, “[t]here was no light within but such as came from a few half-burned sods of turf, that were smouldering on the hearthstone”.\textsuperscript{127} The narrative plays with its levels of perceptive disclosure: the cabin is enveloped in darkness, therefore Oonagh lights a candle, and with its “imperfect light” she is able to take in “by degrees” the scene of suffering she encounters within.\textsuperscript{128}

Susie and John are cast in dehumanised terms (“the body of the poor wretch” – rather than a human being – “had died of Famine!”), which contrast strongly with their former beauty, sturdiness and liveliness, making these once familiar characters uncannily unfamiliar.\textsuperscript{129} As Oonagh enters the Molloy cabin, the atmosphere of the scene is described by emphasis on excessive stench and horrific sights: “Oonagh had seen many poor cabins, but none of them were half so bad as this most wretched place. As if to complete the horror of such an abode, a sickening odour, that was most

\textsuperscript{125} Similar observations can be made with regard to Mulholland’s ‘The Hungry Death’, Keary’s \textit{Castle Daly}, McDowell’s \textit{The Earl of Effingham}, Richard Baptist O’Brien’s \textit{The D’Altons of Crag}, Emily Fox’s \textit{Rose O’Connor}, Charlotte G. O’Brien’s \textit{Light and Shade} and Doran’s \textit{Zanthon}. In all these narratives the reader is taken into interior scenes of suffering through the perception of the focalising protagonist.


\textsuperscript{127} Brew, \textit{Castle Cloyne}, vol. 2, 278.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., vol. 2, 279–80.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., vol. 2, 286, emphasis mine.
offensive, pervaded the air, almost intolerable to one who had just come in out of the pure, sweet atmosphere of the summer evening.”

Furthermore, when Oonagh enters the room in which the body of John lies, this type of description is repeated: “she was almost overpowered by the foul air and suffocating odour, driving her back to the kitchen”. In combination with the limiting effects of the cabin’s interior on human perception, and the build-up in tension through a gradual unveiling and re-familiarisation of the disturbing scene for the protagonist, this interior space bears the characteristics of a disorienting and uncanny Gothic topography.

The scene in the Molloy cabin also causes a shock effect in another manner: just before Oonagh promises the dying Susie that she will take care of her infant son, Oonagh finally exclaims her love for the deceased John, something she could never do while he was still alive:

There was no bashfulness about Oonagh now, no proud reserve, no womanly shame. She knelt down beside the dead man, she twined her arms around his neck, she clasped the wasted body to her bosom, she rained down bitter, scalding tears on the cold, pallid face. He was her own now, at last – this false sweetheart, for whose sake she had rejected many a good man’s proffered love – her very own!

Still holding on to the dead body, and not realising that Susie is not even dead yet, our protagonist exclaims that he is “all her own now” and passionately declares her love. In this scene, the interior of the cabin becomes the site in which various oppositions are played out: it is a site of disorientation reminiscent of many spaces in Gothic fiction where several physical as well as mental boundaries are explored and crossed. The contrast between hot – “scalding tears” – and cold – “cold, pallid face” – functions to separate life from death. The boundaries between the human and the no-longer human become blurred. The contrast between darkness and light is coupled to an initial lack of visibility and limited human understanding of the situation. On the structural level, layers of focalisation that are crossed help to narrow the perspective and thus heighten the sense of mystery, incomprehension and horror. Killeen has argued that liminal sites which feature in Gothic fiction are spaces in which “normal roles [...] are broken down” and the subject has to go through a stage in

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130 Ibid., vol. 2, 279.
131 Ibid., vol. 2, 283.
132 Ibid., vol. 2, 287.
133 Ibid., vol. 2, 288–9.
which “binaries are dissolved, borders are crossed, and dualities are merged together”. Similarly, the interior of the Molloy cabin figures as a boundary space between life and death, between the normal and the abnormal, between the tenable and untenable and also operates as a space in which the protagonist as a transgressive mediator between life and death crosses these thresholds.

On a structural level, the scene complicates reader identification with an otherwise positively portrayed protagonist. On the one hand, the manipulation of the narrative perspective through the crossing of the layers of focalisation and temporary diminishment of the observer role heightens the sense of embodiment and experientiality of the text, shortening the distance between character and reader experience. On the other hand, the transgressive nature of the events told could lead to what Suzanne Keen has called “emphatic inaccuracy” or an (unintended) distance between authorial and readerly empathy. Does the scene, in accordance with the novel’s central premise – that the horrors of the Famine cannot be portrayed adequately because they were so all-pervasive that they surpass our understanding – instil us with a sense that these Famine horrors are so great and indescribable that such excessive intimate communications with the dead remain horrible yet become understandable, thus in fact heightening the reader’s sense of injustice and empathy? Or does it cause such a sublime Gothic uncanny sensation in the reader that the scene in fact distances the reader from the protagonist? Whatever our

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134 Killeen, Gothic Literature, 11; The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction: History, Origins, Theories (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 70. At the thought of having to spend the entire night in darkness in a cabin with the dead and dying, Oonagh cannot control her fears any longer and flees (Brew, Castle Cloyne, vol. 2, 293).


136 See the preface of Brew’s Castle Cloyne, quoted earlier. Similarly, in an instalment of his ‘Famine Scenes in Ireland’ Redpath reflected on his inability to represent the conditions he witnessed on his visit to Ireland during the Land War era:

I have heard so much and I have seen so much of the sorrows of the West that when the memory of them rises up before me I stand appalled at the vision. Again and again, since I came back from Ireland, I have tried to paint a picture of Western misery; but again and again, and as often as I have tried, even in the solitude of my own chamber where no human eye could see me, – I have broken down and I have wept like a woman. If I could put the picture into words I could not utter the words. (The Harp, A Magazine of General Literature 5/11 (Montreal, Sept. 1880), 469–73: 471.

137 Several scholars have argued that the Gothic in part is founded upon eighteenth-century concepts of the sublime, especially to Burke’s notion of “terror”. Wright argues
response, it is highly unlikely that this scene will leave readers untouched; it will drive home the message about the horrors of the Famine regardless of whether the reader experiences empathy or a (temporary) affective disconnection.138

In his original essay ‘Of the Pathetic Fallacy’ Ruskin stated that:

The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, as I said before, that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of emotion which has induced it.139

The overpowering of the mind or body by the event signalled by Ruskin is reminiscent of the effect of the Burkean sublime and is also a crucial guiding force behind Castle Cloyne as is borne out by the preface referred to already. Indeed, in line with Ruskin’s reading of the application of the pathetic fallacy in literature, Brew has tried to approximate these “inexpressible” horrors as closely as possible, by heavily and repeatedly deploying conventional narrative devices to place the human inner and outer world in line with each other.

The representation of the death of Mathilda Simson in a descriptive context of the pathetic fallacy in McDougall’s The Days of a Life which I referred to in Chapter 3 and the examples from Castle Cloyne discussed just now, demonstrate that the use and manipulation of atmospheric qualities to demonstrate the “great likeness between man and nature in terms of aspects and sympathies of feeling” features in other individual deathbed scenes as well.140 However, the use of the pathetic fallacy is not confined to these individual scenes in Famine fiction, but recurs in representations of communal human suffering. Eviction scenes, images of people crawl-

138 Contemporary readers would likely already be familiar with the imagery, as several works of Gothic fiction explore boundary crossings between life and death, the most famous example being the scene in Wuthering Heights in which Heathcliff has somebody dig up the dead body of his love Catherine in a failed attempt to embrace her. See ‘Ellis Bell’ (Emily Brontë), Wuthering Heights, a Novel 3 vols (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847), chapter 29.
140 Miles, Pathetic Fallacy, 285.
ing and collapsing alongside the road, people succumbing while working on the public works; all these representations of human hardship are cast in familiar tones and are introduced by conventional descriptions of Irish nature and atmospheric conditions. For example, in *The Days of a Life*, Ida Livingston and her party are taking a drive along the countryside, when they come across a mass eviction. While the weather was perfect when the friends took off – the narrator goes into yet another detailed discussion of Ida’s rapture of Ireland’s natural beauty – a thunderstorm quickly develops:

Away up on the mountain side was a little chapel, with a tall cross beside it [...]. Our picnickers had hardly time to notice that it was there, for the sunny morning had been clouding over, and the mountains had dark mists curling round their tops; but they did not take warning until a sudden mountain hailstorm broke over them with such violence as almost to take away their breath. There was not a tree to be seen in all the bleak landscape, nor a shelter of any kind but the leeside of the little chapel.\textsuperscript{141}

After this description of the environment, the group encounters the suffering tenantry and the priest who functions as an embodiment of Famine memory, discussed in Chapter 3.\textsuperscript{143} On the structural level the narrative combines Land War era ills, Famine memory and the aesthetic device of the pathetic fallacy into a general image of (rural) Irish suffering. In similar manner, in ‘The Hungry Death’ Mulholland creates a link between the human condition and human haunts by enveloping famine suffering and the story of Brigid Lavelle’s struggle and death in a frightening atmosphere of a black tempestuous night. Significantly, after Brigid finds religious absolution and dies on the Church steps, day breaks, rays of sunshine break

\textsuperscript{141}[Mrs. Livingstone] had doubts about the weather, and there were some light vapors curling around the mountain tops; nevertheless it was a rare bright morning when the pleasure-seekers ventured forth. The world seemed at its best; happy-eyed flowers looked out from every bank and hedgerow; the air was sweet with the breath of blossoms; there was the ecstasy of worship in the lark’s song; the thrush floated out a psalm of thanksgiving form the branchy sycamores; even the multitudinous rooks had a tone of joyfulness in their cawings to one another.

“This is a day to be remembered,” said Ida, giving herself a comfortable wriggle in her seat beside Mr. Butler, who was put into the responsible post of driver. “Enjoyment of this kind, on a day when nature is wild with rejoicing, always makes me feel nearer to God.” (McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 162.)

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., 165.

\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., 169–70.
through the clouds and relief supplies arrive.\textsuperscript{144}

To provide one of the strongest examples of the combination of pathetic fallacy, Gothic topography and Famine memory, I will now turn to William O’Brien’s narrative of nationalist struggle, \textit{When We Were Boys} (1890). In O’Brien’s narrative, the death of dwarfish Irish hero Quish just before the outbreak of the Fenian rebellion of 1867 is introduced not only by a glimpse of his blackened potato field, but also by a description of terrible weather conditions and an ominous atmosphere. On a “night of uneasy moaning winds”\textsuperscript{145} the reader is directed towards Quish’ cabin

pitched under shelter of a black escarpment of rock, down which in wintry weather a savage wintry cataract smashed its way, and reeled headlong in foaming torrents under, and now and again over, the ruins of the bridge which spanned the public road lower down. Quish’s ‘stripe’ of land consisted of some black potato beds descending steeply from the cabin door, and at present littered with rotten stalks; and outside these some diminutive ragged fields which had once been reclaimed and fenced in with enormous stone fences by some former tenant. But were now re-invaded by gorse and flowering heather, [...] In the one-windowed hut which dominated this bleak mass of mountain, and to which Father Phil as he caught sight of it on the public road below presented the appearance of a burning eye set in the forehead of a monster, Quish preserved what more pretentious people would call his home; and it was here that at this moment, while the priest’s pony was picking its way through the black morasses and rocky watercourses towards the light, the bailiff lay moaning in dull inarticulate agony, like a dumb animal.\textsuperscript{146}

The cabin is located in an eerie, Gothic location, marked by (picturesque) decay, darkness and bleakness, in which Quish’s home is metaphorically described as “the burning eye [...] of a monster”. Moreover, the bleakness of Quish’s haunts reflects his unfortunate demise. After this, the reader is taken into Quish’s cabin, and the Gothic tone of the passage is enforced. In this passage, Quish and his mother are presented as stock figures of the Gothic mode: the monster and the old hag/witch. Quish’s eyes,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{144} Mulholland, ‘Hungry Death’, 395.
\textsuperscript{145} William O’Brien, \textit{When We Were Boys} (London: Longmans, 1890), 354.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 357.
\end{flushright}
in his present agony squinted and leered more horribly than ever in a
demoniac grin. Sometimes his eyes would close, and the purple weal
across his cheek would disappear in a corpse-like pallor; then, with a
groan as of a volcano in labour, the dead mass would stir again, the
long hairy paws would be flung out in fever, the purple gash would
fill again as if a great dab of blood had been dropped upon the face,
and those hideous unearthly eyes would go tumbling and flashing in
all directions, like ogres searching for their victims. If there was a
finishing touch wanting to the horror of the scene, it was supplied
by the awful creature wringing her hands by the bedside. Quish’s
mother was the type of an old woman who would have been burned
as a witch three or four centuries ago – bony, crooked, filthy-looking,
with protruding yellow tusks, hawk’s eyes buried under cavernous
grizzly eyebrows, naked bony arms that seemed to reach her feet, the
whole floating against an eerie mist of wild grey hairs that suggested
thoughts of their being blown about by the midnight air at some
witches Sabbath.\textsuperscript{147}

The passage is marked by the emphatic use of negative and horrific adject-
ives, and Quish, who had already been described in animal-like terms, is
again depicted as somehow not-human: words such as “corpse-like” “ogre”
and “paws” are used to characterise him, which stand in stark contrast
to his heroic actions and character described elsewhere in the narrative.

Furthermore, not only are the outside of the cabin and its inhabitants
represented in terms reminiscent of the pathetic fallacy and the Gothic, but
so is the inside of the cabin, which thereby reflects Quish’ inner struggle.
As the half-monstrous, half-human dwarf lies twisting in agony, the cabin’s
interior is described as an eerie Gothic space:

Bright as the light looked, as seen against the black mountain heights,
it was only a miserable smoking paraffin lamp, the upper portion of
whose chimney was a mass of stinking soot. The bloodshot-looking
rays that issued from the unblackened glass bulb did not do much more
than the uncanny flicker of a wet turf fire to throw the light into the
hideous corners of the cabin, were all sorts of weird things – peering
fowl’s eyes among the rafters, filthy-looking stone bed-recesses, horse-

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 358.
collars that had a strangling look, the ugly little cow’s fixed staring eyeballs – loomed and winked in horrid mystery out of the all-pervading wreaths of turf-smoke.148

What first draws attention is again the use of negative terms: the stench, blackness and hideousness and shocking contents of the cabin’s interior are impossible to miss. The use of contrasts and lack of clear visibility also mark the scene: uncanny flickering lights, dark corners and wreaths of smoke create an atmosphere of mystery, horror and death. This lengthy passage has the potential to disorient the reader: we peer into the darkness, and the image of the sufferer only comes to us in (disturbing) fragments, dead animals stare back at us through the walls of their glass jars. Together with the inclusion of supernatural terms (“witch”, “ogre”, the “demoniac grin”) these elements work together to destabilise our gaze and transform the interior of the cabin into a liminal, and typically Gothic space, located somewhere between life and death. As we cross the threshold into the cabin, we also cross the threshold into Quish’s inner life: the descriptive elements of the passage reflect the death struggles of the dwarf and also the horror of the act that led to his undeserved death.

Killeen argues that (British) Victorian audiences viewed fairy beings as “terrifying rather than decorative entities” and that their “fears were often projected on to those believed to be their human equivalents, such as dwarfs or the mentally and physically handicapped.”149 It seems that in the figure of Quish these fears are at first acknowledged, only to be completely reversed. He is a misunderstood and feared outsider living on the margins of his Irish community, but in fact is the essential selfless Irish hero, ready to sacrifice his life for his peers. This places the novel’s Gothic imagery in line with the mode’s frequent association with anti- or postcolonial discourses, as Quish – the physically deformed dwarf inhabiting the Empire’s margins – also functions as an early instance of counter-colonial ‘writing back’: he is the terrifying Irish half-monster of unknown parentage with a powerful, rebellious and strongly physical side.150

148 Ibid., 357–8.
149 Killeen, Gothic Literature, 69.
The depiction of the Irish as monstrous was also found in the media at the time; an apt illustration can be found in John Tenniel’s cartoon ‘The Irish Frankenstein’, published after the Phoenix Park murders of 1882 (see below). The caption consists of quotes from Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1818) and reads: “The baneful and blood-stained Monster *** yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature? *** Had I not breathed into it my own spirit?” These words are then falsely attributed to “the Works of C. S. Parnell, M. P.” As was done more frequently throughout the nineteenth century, the Frankenstein figure is used to censure an Irish political leader, as Parnell is held responsible for the murders and is depicted as no longer in control of his “Creature”. In contrast, rather than being the Gothic ogre, in When We Were Boys Quish embodies the reversion of the colonial Gothic stereotype and is the ultimate embodiment of all that is good and natural (but misunderstood) in the Irishman; the sheep in wolf’s clothes, if you will.

Quish dies because of a foul criminal act; nevertheless, although he is not a famine victim, the description of the location of his death does create a link to memories of Famine suffering. It is because of the inclusion of the “black potato beds descending steeply from the cabin door, and at present littered with rotten stalks” outside his cabin, that this connection can be made. Since such imagery only features in this passage of O’Brien’s vo-

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Dwarfish characters feature more often in Famine fiction: one of the best-known examples is Paul in Mary Anne Sadlier’s *Bessy Conway* (1863), who functions as the moral centre to his small community of friends in America. In fiction written between 1871 and 1891, Cormac in Justin Huntly McCarthy’s *Lily Lass* (1889) and “Crichawn” in Richard Baptist O’Brien’s *The D’Altons of Crag* (1882) also deserve mention. The former is a dwarfish character of great bodily strength, who is a loyal servant of the novel’s nationalist hero Murrough McMurchad. Through Crichawn, R. B. O’Brien seems to directly connect with the British Victorian approach to mythical beings, physical deformity and Irish threat, as Crichawn, characterised as a true Irishman who experiences a direct romantic connection with nature and the soil, is literally believed to be a changeling – a fairy child put in place of an unchristened baby by the “good people” (27). Like Quish, Crichawn is also often misunderstood, but is in essence a power of pure good and loyalty: he is wrongfully suspected of murder but in the end is acquitted and helps to prevent the evil plans of the narrative’s landlord, agent and conspirators. Thus, Crichawn can also be seen as the embodiment of a counter-colonial writing back and reappropriation of Irish folklore.

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152 W. O’Brien, *When We Were Boys*, 357.
luminous novel, the image of the blackened field stands out particularly.\textsuperscript{153} In its striking solitary presence, the image functions as a contribution to the specific atmospheric placement of Quish’s death. Reversely, the traits of benevolence and positive rather than threatening difference associated with Quish are thus also potentially transferred to other Irish victims. As was the case with the example of the priest and his flock on the mountainside in *The Days of a Life*, in *When We Were Boys*, the blackened potato

\textsuperscript{153}The novel also contains a reference to a Famine pit (mass burial site). The protagonist, Fenian rebel Ken Rohan, makes the reference when he talks of the injustices done to the Irish, incorporating the image of the Famine pit into his nationalist rhetorical register. (*When We Were Boys*, 126).
patch and by extension, the memory of the Famine victim, function within a larger discourse of Irish suffering, and also become part of the literary register used to represent such cases of victimhood. The memory of the Famine victim becomes embedded in a larger literary discourse encompassing the Gothic and the pathetic fallacy, well-known in Ireland and far outside of it.

Table A.4 in the Appendix section shows that the combination of F/famine imagery with the pathetic fallacy, and frequently also with borrowings from the Gothic mode, occurs in the majority of texts that are part of this research corpus. 20 texts out of the corpus of 33 works of fiction (or 61 per cent of the total) contain representations of Irish F/famine victimhood. All but one (or 95 per cent) of these works include representations of the pathetic fallacy in their depictions of victimhood; 15 out of 20 (or 75 per cent) also make use of devices and techniques borrowed from the Gothic, while 14 out of 20 (or 70 per cent) contain both. Through the combination of stock imagery modelled on Gothic devices, the use of the pathetic fallacy and the cross-referencing between different times of suffering, in many works of F/famine fiction individual or specific images of the suffering Irishman, woman or child become integral elements of a larger overarching literary discourse of Irish victimhood, and, by extension, a vital part of what constitutes a transnational and transhistorical Irishness as defined by (historical) victimhood.

The majority of the works of Famine fiction that contain representations of victimhood were written in the British Isles (14 out of 20). The relative scarcity of North-American works in this respect makes it difficult to deduce any specific diasporic developments in literary memories of Irish victimhood on a quantitative basis. Overall speaking, as Table A.4 in the Appendix section shows, the use of devices and techniques associated with the Gothic mode and the application of the pathetic fallacy in renderings of Irish victimhood, recurs frequently in texts from both sides of the Atlantic, implying that this generic and literary embedding of memories of F/famine victimhood was a cross-Atlantic phenomenon in the period 1871–91. This would be in line with the geographical scope of the literary Gothic, as the mode was already well established on both sides of the Atlantic at the time and therefore could figure as a well-known literary register.154 With regard to the pathetic fallacy, a broader context supports

154 While I am aware that there are variations in what can be called the American, the British and the Irish Gothic, the devices and techniques that I have discussed in this chapter recur in these different national variations. The works I refer to by Killeen, Punter and Byron, Wright, Morin and Gillespie and others discuss the selected devices
its cross-Atlantic adoption as well, demonstrated by the application of the device in non-fictional reports across the Atlantic, some of which I have referred to in this chapter.

For 5 out of the 20 works that contain representations of victimhood, these representations cannot be linked to the Gothic mode. Moreover, these 5 works were all written relatively early in the period that this study covers, as all were published between 1876 and 1880. I have provided a visual rendering of the publication distribution of the 20 works on the basis of the date of publication in Figure 5.5 below. I have divided the works of Famine fiction as either published before or after the start of the Land War and the occurrence of the smaller famine of 1879. What becomes clear from the graph and accompanying table is that after the start of the Land War and the smaller famine, especially the number of works that make use of Gothic devices and techniques increases, logically also leading to an increase in instances in which both the pathetic fallacy and borrowings from the Gothic mode are used to give narrative shape to victimhood.

This temporal development of literary memories of Famine victimhood could be explained by the societal context of the period. Not only do more works written at a later stage in the period 1871–91 make use of the Gothic mode, they also connect the mode to instances of post-Famine suffering somewhat more frequently than earlier works, which focus more on representations of the Famine itself. Gothic imagery was often used to represent real human hardships, and, as various scholars have argued before, the use of the Gothic mode increased in times of heightened tension, friction and human suffering. The period 1879–82 saw increased human hardship compared to the years before, which was caused by the Land War and smaller famine of 1879: workhouses again became overcrowded with inmates “in the most terrible and painful state”, estates were “encumbered”, an exceptionally damp climate and the still-existing need to improve agricultural conditions caused renewed “destitution and want” for many of the Irish poor, and also led to the reestablishment of Relief Committees. Moreover, later tensions again rose as after the Plan of Campaign a second Land War erupted. In all, the period 1879–91 was a period of greater social turmoil and human hardship than the period

and techniques in the context of one of these national variations and/or draw comparisons between these different Gothics.

155 ‘PF’ refers to pathetic fallacy; ‘G’ refers to borrowings from the Gothic.

5.2 Gothic Topographies and the Pathetic Fallacy

Perhaps, in follow-up of recent events and developments, authors of works of Famine fiction writing after the start of the Land War felt inclined to portray Irish suffering in a more bleak and unsettling manner, because due to recent tensions and hardships, the awareness of Irish victimhood became more acute. In that sense, the fact that almost all of the works of Famine fiction written after the onset of the Land War and the smaller famine of 1879 made use of the devices of excess, and stylistic and image-related repetition, explored the thresholds between the normal and the abnormal and considered the liminal state of the Irish sufferer, can indeed be considered borrowings from the literary Gothic to provide a sense of Irish realism rather than supernaturalism for a community under great strain.

In the face of new but uncomfortably familiar experiences and reports

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**Figure 5.5:** Use of Pathetic Fallacy (PF) and Gothic Mode (G) in combination with F/famine (F/f) memory, before and after start Land War.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871–1879 (start Land War) (total 7 works)</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880–91 (total 13 works)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 5

of hunger and human suffering, Famine memory was frequently appropriated in works of fiction. This repetition was not just a characteristic of the works of fiction discussed here, but could also be found in the non-fictional rhetoric of people such as Charles Stewart Parnell, James Hack Tuke, James Redpath, David Bennett King and Margaret Dixon McDougall. In that sense the memory of the Famine continued to give shape and meaning to later events and continued to haunt the public consciousness. Arguably, during the period that this research covers the Famine could be considered a haunting cultural trauma. Present-day scholars writing about the representation of cultural traumas often express the belief in an inherent inability to do justice to the uniqueness of all events considered as such. This conviction is also reflected in Ernst van Alphen’s comment on Holocaust art mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. As stated, the (narrative) unrepresentability of the Great Famine is also frequently explored. 157

Although I do not wish to counter the valid argument about the period’s narrative unrepresentability, I would like to add that in the context of the works of Famine fiction discussed in this chapter and by considering narrative unrepresentability from the perspective of literary genre and tradition, I could also provide a different argument. The claim that Famine memory is strongly embedded in larger historical, mnemonic and temporal contexts is a central argument of this study. In the present chapter, I have shown that Famine recollections can also be considered part of existing generic frameworks. Moreover, the frequent appropriation of conventional narrative devices and techniques creates a literary memory of the Famine with a less than exceptional language; these textual representations do not inhabit a unique position in the discourse of Irish suffering. This undermines or at least complicates assigning a unique status – which is usually associated with memories of a cultural trauma – to recollections of the Famine on the level of literary representations. It seems that, with regard to generic borrowings in Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891, we are not so much dealing with a memory which is unrepresentable on the narrative plane, as with a memory whose representation is difficult and problematic, but which is nevertheless representable and re-usable through narrativisation and the use of heavily conventionalised imagery.

Chapter 6

Emigration: Nostalgia, Exile and Their Contestations in Famine Fiction

After having conducted research in the late 1990s on the Irish diaspora in the United States, sociologist and cultural anthropologist Astrid Wonneberger concluded that the Great Famine was still very important for the Irish-Americans and their processes of self-identification. In fact, Wonneberger found that many claimed their fathers or mothers came over during the Famine, which is highly unlikely, as at the time, the Famine took place some 140 to 150 years ago. From this, she concluded that

The term ‘emigration’ is so deeply connected with ‘Famine’ that the emigration of one’s own family is cast into that scheme, especially if the exact dates and reasons for leaving Ireland are not known. The underlying motto is that they emigrated from Ireland, therefore, they probably came during or because of the Famine. This elucidates the central position this event holds in the collective memory of Americans of Irish descent.¹

Wonneberger’s research shows that the terms emigration and Famine have become so intertwined, that their combination distorts the usual passage of time, as second- or third-generation emigrants bring the event closer to

their own lives than is logically possible. This conviction that the Famine is one of the seminal events of (recent) Irish-diasporic history, can also be found in recent Irish studies scholarship, as in fact, more longitudinal views include the belief that the Famine had such a disruptive impact, that its influence is still felt today. For example, in asserting that “[t]he Famine [...] casts its shadow over all aspects of Irish life”, Christine Kinealy tellingly uses the present tense.\(^2\) Apparently, both members of the community and scholars alike – and perhaps especially so in the United States – still consider the Famine as their founding trauma, which consequently enables the prolongation of the self-definition of collective victimhood and (passive) suffering, even into the present.

With regard to Irish emigration, in Irish studies scholarship opinions have varied as to just how influential the Great Hunger was. The current more mitigated view seems to be that although the Famine served as a strong catalyst for emigration, it was not its sole motivator. Rather, emigration had been an important part of Irish life since at least the seventeenth century.\(^3\) Moreover, emigration continued to be an integral element of Irish life well into the twentieth century, and Malcolm Campbell asserts that in the fifty years after the Famine decade, “more Irish departed their homeland [...] than during the decade of most acute distress”.\(^4\) To mentally support the Irish while abroad, many guide books were written. Many of these books took on the form of novels, as is exemplified by the numerous works by authors such as Mary Francis Cusack, John McElgun,


\(^4\) Campbell states that “[i]n the period of two decades, from 1841 to 1861, Ireland’s population fell by nearly 30 percent, from 8.2 million to 5.8 million. However, to the dismay of Irish nationalists, the end of the Great Famine did not halt the decline of the population, and in the following half century the number of people residing in Ireland continued to fall. By 1911, Ireland’s population was 4.4 million, about half the number present on the eve of the famine. Although the famine decade constituted the greatest concentrated exodus of Irish men and women, in fact more Irish departed their homeland in the fifty years that followed than during the decade of most acute distress.” See *Ireland’s New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics, and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815–1922* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 132.
Dillon O’Brien and, perhaps most famously, Mary Anne Sadlier.

Since the Irish had been leaving their island of birth for centuries already, and often looked back to their home longingly, it can be argued a strong sense of Irish exile developed well before the Famine occurred. During the nineteenth century, the idea of exile became a key denominator for the Irish abroad, significantly for those who were part of the North-American Irish community, and Kevin Kenny states that especially “the strong farmers, nationalists and churchmen who dominated late nineteenth-century Ireland found it expedient to explain emigration almost exclusively as a matter of British-imposed exile”. Kerby Miller argues that “the notion that all Irish emigration was tantamount to political banishment flourished in speeches, sermons, and popular music and literature regardless of a wealth of mundane and contrary evidence”. Miller adds that these perceptions of emigration were “grounded in the most archaic aspects of Irish popular culture”. Across the Atlantic, this interpretation was perhaps most vehemently expressed in and widely disseminated through the works of exiled nationalists such as Thomas D’Arcy McGee, John Mitchel and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa. Indeed, in his polemic *Ireland Since ’98*, Mitchel portrayed the Irish as cast-out exiles who displayed “[a] deep and prevailing anxiety to fly – to escape any whither! From whom? Men pursued by wild beasts will show a pervading anxiety to go anywhere out of reach. If a country be made too hot to hold its inhabitants, they will be willing even to throw themselves into the sea.” Additionally, in the poem ‘A Malediction’, which was reprinted in Canadian magazine *The Harp* in 1880, the Irish nationalist who later became an influential Canadian conservative politician Thomas D’Arcy McGee included the following lamentation: “My Native Land! how does it fare / Since I last saw its shore? / Alas! alas! My exiled frère, / It aileth more and more.” Mitchel and D’Arcy McGee had been implicated in

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8 Patrick Ward argues that nationalist interpretations of recent events were quickly disseminated throughout North America through the newspapers and by the recently built railroads (*Exile, Emigration and Irish Writing*, 118).
9 John Mitchel, *Ireland since ’98: Daniel O’Connell; The Repeal Agitation; The Miseries of the Famine; The Young Ireland Party, etc.* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 132.
the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848 and consequently were deported and had to flee Ireland, respectively; the notion of exile suited these nationalist and their personal experiences well.11

Many Irish-American and Irish-Canadian newspapers also adopted the interpretation of emigration as forced expulsion and published numerous articles in which the terms Famine and exile were frequently combined. For example, when reporting Mitchel’s return to Ireland in 1874, The Irish-American reprinted an article from the Dublin Freeman’s Journal, which labelled the returned nationalist “the Exile” and spoke of exile as “a bitter thing at best, and, to those whose thoughts and emotions centre on their country, it is the double and abiding pain of loss to head and heart”. While discussing Mitchel’s return, the article digressed, at length discussing Famine suffering as witnessed by Mitchel.12 Additionally, the term “exile” also features in many works of popular fiction such as Mary Anne Sadlier’s Bessy Conway (1862) and William C. Upton’s Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882), and writers including Reverend F. H. Clayton and Margaret Dixon McDougall dedicated their work to the “[e]xiled sons and daughters of Ireland, in the United States and the Dominion of Canada.”13

In twentieth-century scholarship, the term “exile” was brought to popular attention by Kerby Miller’s highly influential work on the Irish in America, and he argues that although “conditions of Irish and Irish-American life were neither static nor homogeneous”, the Irish experienced a real sense of banishment while living in America.14 Miller accordingly argues that “sufficient evidence exists” to draw the conclusion that “both collectively and individually the Irish – particularly Irish Catholics – often regarded

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12 “The Famine had fallen upon the land, with a cloud of horrors unknown to other peoples, undreamt of by the men of this generation. It was not merely that thousands sickened of starvation and walked the land, gaunt and ghastly heralds of fast following death. The gasp of the dying, the silence of the dead – these were awful and appalling.” ‘John Mitchel. The Exile at Home’ (From the Dublin Freeman’s Journal), The Irish-American 26/34 (22 Aug. 1874), 1–2: 1.
13 Margaret Dixon McDougall, The Days of a Life (Almonte: W. Templeman, 1883), dedication. For Clayton’s work, see the dedication of Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life (Montreal: John Lovell [printer], 1884): “To thee, my dearest mother Erin, of noble name, fame and titles, and to all thy children I dedicate the production of my heart, and, although a poor and obscure exile, lay this my humble offering at thy feet”.
emigration as involuntary exile”. Although Miller developed his idea in the mid 1980s already, his conclusions have proved their lasting impact, for in more recent times diaspora scholars such as Robin Cohen continue to denote the Irish and Irish self-conceptions in terms of “involuntary exiles” and a “victim diaspora”.

As work by scholars including Kerby Miller, Lawrence McCaffrey, Christine Kinealy and Charles Fanning has shown, many Irish narratives – whether they are works of fiction, historiographies, letters, or other kinds of writing – published on both sides of the Atlantic during and shortly after the Famine period, engage with diaspora and exile as defining terms. Miller’s work and conclusions are largely based on extensive research on emigrant letters; Kinealy and McCaffrey have written elaborate histori-

15 Ibid., 3.
16 Robin Cohen, Global Diasporas: An Introduction (1997; 2nd edn, New York: Routledge, 2008), 1. With regard to the (self-) defining label of diaspora and especially victim diaspora, Cohen states that it arises when a community feels that it has been scattered, and that often “[t]hese peoples conceived their scattering as arising from a cataclysmic event that had traumatized the group as a whole, thereby creating the central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor.” Ibid., 1, 3.

The term diaspora in origins referred to the Jewish exodus. In the late nineteenth century already, the term ‘exodus’ was also literally used to denote the Irish-diasporic community, as for example William Patrick O’Brien in 1896 spoke of the wave of Irish emigration as “this remarkable exodus” (The Great Famine In Ireland and a Retrospect of the Fifty Years 1845–1895 with a Sketch of the Present Condition and Future Prospects of the Congested Districts [London: Downey, 1896], 254). Although current scholarship has acknowledged the displacements of many different peoples as different types of diaspora and has thus widened the scope of the term – causing diaspora scholar William Safran to fear that diaspora might become a one-size-fits-all container concept –, the Jewish diaspora and its connotations of forceful expulsion, homeless wandering, alienation or even castigation in the host society and strong homeward orientation are still crucial for our conception of a diaspora, especially of a victim diaspora. See William Safran, ‘Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas,’ in Waltraud Kokot, Khachtig Tökölyan and Caroline Alfonso, eds, Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research (London: Routledge, 2004), 9–29: 9.

17 While Lawrence J. McCaffrey acknowledges the seminal work done by Miller, he is also critical of the sometimes sweeping statements the latter makes:

Miller’s “social misfit” interpretation is largely based on immigrant letters. It argues that for a considerable period of time, Irish-American Catholics thought of themselves as exiles rather than immigrants, constantly dreaming of home and wishing to return there, and refusing to come to terms with their new situation. But immigrant letters are a shaky foundation for such a strongly stated thesis. [...] Sentimentality is almost a social obligation in this type of correspondence. (The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America [1976; 2nd edn, USA: Catholic University of America Press, 1997], 2).
ographies of Irish emigrant life; and Fanning discusses Irish-American works of fiction in a broader context. The question arises whether negative views on the (post-) Famine emigrant experience can be discerned in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) as well. Is it the case that in these works of fiction, self-definitions in terms of victimhood and exile feature predominantly too? This chapter will investigate what interpretations of Irishness arise from works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) that represent the Irish emigrant experience. Moreover, it will also examine what role the memory of the Famine played in these narratives of translocation and transformation in diaspora, to investigate whether Irish and Irish-diasporic authors also considered the Famine as the diasporic community’s founding myth, or whether they gave the period a different historical role in their community’s self-defining processes.

A typical trait ascribed to the experience of diaspora is a homeward orientation, and in many works of Irish emigrant fiction, this preoccupation with the home is translated as nostalgia. As the chapter on the Irish landscape has shown, this nostalgia looks to the memory of the land and landscape of home. In contrast to the first chapter, here I will investigate what function the home landscape can still play for the Irish abroad and their identity constructions, and whether we can identify a typically nostalgic harking back to those haunts. This chapter will go into the issues of exile, homeland/homespace orientation and nostalgia, diasporic belonging and the impact of the Famine on cross-Atlantic Irish memory and identity, as shaped by (popular) fiction. To establish how exactly the Famine fits into greater narratives of Irish emigration and identity formation in diaspora, I will investigate to what extent these narratives link representations of emigration and the Famine together. I will establish whether the Famine is represented as a continued and direct influence on Irish emigrant life and will analyse how the narrative structure of these works of fiction contribute to the creation of or denial of links between these two vital elements of late nineteenth-century Irish life.

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18 Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (1997; 2nd edn, New York: Routledge, 2008), 6. Safran states that “diasporas comprise special kinds of immigrants because they have retained a memory of, a cultural connection with, and a general orientation towards their homelands”, that “they relate in some (symbolic or practical) way to their homeland” and that “many of them have retained a myth of return”. ‘Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas’, 10.
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

Like Israel’s tribes of old when carried away captive, and, by the waters of Babylon, their broken-stringed harps hung desolate on the willows, refused to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, or forget the land of their forefathers which they loved so well, so it is with the sons and daughters of Erin [...] There is one thing certain, that, roam where he may, whether amongst the mighty pines of the north, or languidly straying amongst the orange groves of the south, and treading upon its floral carpet, which lades each passing breeze with richest odors, surrounded by all the varied glories of these climes, the Irishman’s heart fondly returns to that gem of the ocean – the Emerald isle – true as the needle to the pole.  

This excerpt taken from Irish-Canadian author F. H. Clayton’s *Scenes and Incidents* (1884) aptly demonstrates several features often associated with Famine and post-Famine Irish emigration: a strong homebound orientation marked by a romantic nationalist connection between the “sons and daughters of Erin” and their soil, a sense of nostalgia and unwanted expulsion from the homeland, as well a parallel between Irish emigration and the biblical expulsion of the Jewish people. This interpretation of Irish emigrant experience has been supported by recent diaspora scholarship. The characterisation as a victim diaspora not only comes with the connotations of victimhood, involuntary expulsion and marginality in the host society, but also with a “triple sense of belonging”. Diasporic subjects have connections to both their place of origin and host society, and, moreover, can experience a sense of homelessness or displacement between both these homing beacons, thereby feeling that the only true connection they have is to other members of the diaspora, and their shared position in a diasporic in-between space.  


20 David Lloyd argues that the use of the term “diaspora” to denote the Irish experience of emigration is a recent one, and that it came in vogue in the 1990s, the decade that was marked by the commemorative Famine boom. Moreover, he states that “there is no doubt that certain aspects of the historical Jewish diaspora [...] have irrevocably marked the conceptualization of diaspora in general”. (‘What’s in a Name?: The Dialectics of Diaspora and Irish Emigration’, *Breac: A Digital Journal for Irish Studies* [12 Apr. 2013]. <http://breac.nd.edu/articles/36705-whats-in-a-name-the-dialectics-of-diaspora-and-irish-emigration>, accessed 29 Aug. 2013.)

that although the label of diaspora is useful in that it acknowledges the “catastrophic social and economic reasons for the departure of so many”, it is reductionist in scope, for it collapses different forms, periods, reasons and sentiments concerning Irish emigration into one term, with limited connotations.\footnote{Lloyd, ‘What’s in a Name?’ n.p.}

Irish and Irish-diasporic authors writing between 1871 and 1891 often engaged with the issues of victimhood and exile linked to the concept of victim diaspora. They had to find a balance between the moralising dimensions of romantic didactic fiction, a genre which was in vogue in transatlantic Irish writing from the 1840s until the early 1890s, and hot issues of Irish (trans)nationalism and colonial oppression. Sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of this chapter explore the interpretations of Irish emigration found in this study’s corpus. These sections are written with a dual focus, as I will contrast the representation of the Irish emigrant as a victim and involuntary exile with success stories of Irish-American integration and formations of new, hybrid identities. I will do so by contrasting principally Hester Sigerson’s \textit{A Ruined Race; Or, The Last Macmanus of Drumroosk} (1889) and Margaret Anne Cusack’s \textit{From Killarney to New York; Or, How Thade Became a Banker} (1877). Starting with Sigerson’s dark outlook and ending with Cusack’s overly optimistic viewpoint, I will demonstrate the variety of interpretations of Irish emigration, and the role of the Famine in this process.

As Christopher Cusack and I have argued in a different context, narratives of Famine fiction often create links between the Famine and emigration, by narrating a long sequence of events, starting with the Famine, containing scenes of nationalist strife and ending with emigration and prosperity in the receiving country. Despite their involuntary expulsion, the main characters in the novels discussed by Cusack and myself cannot be labelled as suffering exiles, for they become prosperous and content in their receiving community.\footnote{Christopher Cusack and Lindsay Janssen, ‘Famine, Home, and Transatlantic Politics in Two Late Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Novels’, \textit{Atlantic Studies} 11/3 (2014): 403–18.} Within these narratives, prosperity, happiness and considerable upward social mobility in the host country are possible, even after experiencing serious tribulations and great poverty at home and within the same emigrant generation. A tension arises between
the depiction of Famine hardships and Irish emigrant life (shortly) afterwards; in the following section, I will investigate whether this tension also features predominantly in my corpus of fiction. Can we speak of the establishment of narrative distancing between immigrant life and the Famine? I will investigate this through a twofold analysis, focusing both on narrative content and structural layering.

6.1.1 From a Choice between Two Evils to more Positive Interpretations of Irish Emigration

Who but Satan could have invented a system that tells such a people in such a land: “Starve or emigrate!” in this nineteenth century, as it told them of old, “To hell or Connaught?”

This quote, taken from McGee’s Illustrated Weekly, is a good illustration of how anti-British indignation travelled with the Irish across the Atlantic, demonstrating that current Irish emigration was presented in the same line as Cromwell’s curse when he landed on the Irish shore in the seventeenth century. It portrays Irish emigrants as oppressed wanderers, forcefully set adrift by an age-old oppressive foreign system.

In accordance with the position taken in McGee’s, in a few works of fiction part of this study’s literary corpus, Irish emigration is cast in negative terms, as the decision to either stay or go is presented as a choice between two evils. The choice between terrible hardship (caused by the Famine) and emigration has to be made, as several characters face great suffering and even death if they remain in Ireland. Among others, this dilemma figures in the background of Annie Keary’s Castle Daly (1875); in Keary’s narrative the desolation of the landscape, the deaths of many, the Famine and emigration are presented as closely intertwined, as landlady Anne O’Flaherty sets up an assisted emigration scheme to rescue her tenants, before succumbing to Famine fever herself. In Dick O’Dell, a

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24 ‘The Coming Tide of Emigration’, McGee’s Illustrated Weekly: Devoted to Catholic Art, Literature and Education 7/13 (New York: J. A. McGee, 14 Feb. 1880, collected in vol. 7, 1879–80), 194. “To Hell or Connaught” refers to Oliver Cromwell and his plantation scheme. As Elizabeth Selby Meloy explains, the expression was “perhaps the most resonant chord in Irish Catholic memory before the Great Famine” and it “neatly summed up the Act of Settlement of 1652, which demanded that Catholic landowners forfeit their fertile fields in the east and head for the barren, rock-strewn province of Connaught and present-day County Clare” (Imagining the West of Ireland: Landscape and Memory in the Wake of the Great Famine, 1845–1860 [Providence, RI: Brown University, unpublished dissertation, 2012], 13).
Chapter 6

Story of ’48 (1876–7) impoverished farmer Miles Murphy fears that he and his family will have to undergo “the doom of the evicted – emigration or the workhouse”. The best example of the dilemma between perishing or leaving can be found in the figure of Dan Macmanus in A Ruined Race (1889). Granted, the eponymous protagonist in Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882) also faces the same choice, but his story is set in the early 1880s, and in this case emigration and starvation are cast both in the context of the Land War era, and more in general, transhistoric terms (‘such is Irish life’) rather than specifically contextualised in the Famine era.

A Ruined Race was written by Hester Sigerson (née Varian, 1828–98) who was born in Co. Cork and came from a well-off family whose members were “devoted to literature and music, all thinkers and all thoroughly Irish in feeling”. She married the author and Gaelic scholar George Sigerson, who was a leading figure in the Celtic Revival and their home became a meeting place for Irish politicians and artists. Sigerson primarily wrote poetry and short fiction and contributed work to various journals and newspapers, including The Cork Examiner, Young Ireland and The Irish Monthly. In The Cabinet of Irish Literature, she is described as a “woman of fine literary talent”. Sigerson, like her family, was “thoroughly Irish in feeling”, which becomes evident from her only novel A Ruined Race. The novel deals with recent Irish history and is told from the perspective of the suffering Irish poor.

At different times in Sigerson’s Famine-time novel, emigration serves as a “safety-valve” in the narrative margins. Many contemporary com-

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25 Anonymous, Dick O’Dell, a Story of ’48, Young Ireland 2/38 (16 Sept. 1876), 454. The story appeared in several journals and magazines: in Young Ireland. An Irish Magazine of Entertainment and Instruction it was serialised between 1876 and 1877 (2/36, 2 Sept. 1876 – 3/6, 10 Feb. 1877).
29 Read and Hinkson, Cabinet of Irish Literature, 201.
30 “A crucial difference between the Great Irish Famine and most other famines is that for many of the Irish poor in the 1840s, mass emigration provided a welcome safety-valve.” Cormac Ó Gráda and Kevin H. Rourke further note that it was a “safety-valve” not just for the emigrants, but also for those staying behind, as one of the long-
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

mentators agreed with this view of Irish emigration, as for example English Quaker philanthropist James Hack Tuke argued that (state-aided) emigration was a commendable outlet which should be allowed to continue. Several state- and landlord-supported emigration schemes were introduced, which would continue to function as relief measures; famous efforts include the schemes instigated by Tuke and his Committee between 1882 and 1885.

In *A Ruined Race*, when nearly all the tenants of the fictional town of Fortmanus have received their notices to quit, or “death-warrants”, all are “set adrift upon the world so little known or suited to them”. The option of emigration also weighs heavily on Sigerson’s protagonist: after another failed harvest, Dan Macmanus asks himself why he did not just leave when he had the chance: “But it was Dan, gazing on his flooded fields, which held – beaten down and rotting in the wed mud – the anxious hopes, the weary toil, and the hard, hard savings of the whole past year. ‘My God! my God!’ cried he, aloud, ‘why didn’t I go to America when I had the means?’” During better times, Dan simply “couldn’t bear to leave the ould place”. Because of this, the Macmanus family stays in Fortmanus until it is too late. They perish and their deaths are attributed to an oppressive foreign social system.

term effects of Irish emigration was better living conditions at home. See ‘Migration as Disaster Relief: Lessons from the Great Irish Famine,’ *European Review of Economic History* 1 (1997), 3–25: 4, 23.

31 After reflecting on his own contribution to the system of state-aided emigration, James Hack Tuke commended its effects and made recommendations for similar schemes in the future. However, he also mentioned that it is “evident from what has been said that emigration is not the only remedial measure required”. See *Emigration from Ireland: Being the Second Report of the Committee “Mr Tuke’s Fund.” Together with Statements by Mr Tuke, Mr Sydney Buxton, Major Gaskell and Captain Rutledge-Fair, July 1883* (London: National Press Agency, 1883), 10.

32 William Patrick O’Brien, *The Great Famine in Ireland and a Retrospect of the Fifty Years 1845–1895, with a Sketch of the Present Condition and Future Prospects of the Congested Districts* (London: Downey, 1896), 290. On 2 June 1883, New York-based newspaper *The Irish-American* stated that a “meeting of Mr Tuke’s Irish Emigrant Committee was held” and that “it was stated that thirty-two hundred emigrants had already been shipped”, and that “the number may probably be increased to five thousand” (‘The Enforced Emigration. A New English Programme’, 35/22, 2). A full report by the Tuke Committee of the efforts made in 1882 can be found in *Emigration From Ireland*.

33 Hester Sigerson, *A Ruined Race; Or, the Last Macmanus of Drumroosk. A Tale.* (London: Ward and Downey, 1889), 165.

34 Ibid., 71.

In Sigerson’s novel the reader is encouraged to empathise fully with Dan, his peers and their plight. This engagement is not only created by the moral dimension provided by the narrator, but is also supported by the structuring of the narrative. The following patterns in *A Ruined Race* are predominantly linked to Dan and only occasionally shift to his peers. In this manner, the “narrative experientiality” of the text is strongly linked to the character of Dan and the plight of the Irish poor during the Famine. I will come back to the narrative technique of following in more detail in the analysis of *From Killarney to New York*. While emigration is presented as a way out for the Irish tenants, the process of emigration and life in North America are by no means glorified in the narrative. When reflecting on the move to America made by many of their peers, Mary Macmanus states that only those who are better off than they and their peers are will actually make it in the New World: “Didn’t Hugh [a neighbour] get his death be goin’ to America, an’ didn’t his two little childthurs die in the ship, an’ that’s all he gained be going. Unless a man have a few pounds to back him, an’ know’s [sic] what he’s to do when he gets there, ’tis little use goin’ to America.”

Being by far the most pessimistic text incorporated in this research’s corpus, *A Ruined Race* presents recent Irish history as an inescapable dilemma: near-certain death and certain oppression in Ireland or great uncertainty, danger and also quite possibly death in exile.

The great dangers of emigration also feature in Reverend Edward N. Hoare’s *Mike* (1880) and William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* (1882). In the latter, Davy M’Mahon, the protagonist’s brother, has to leave Ireland because he and his family fear that he will take vengeance on the land-grabber who caused their eviction if he were to stay. Davey dies in battle after naively signing up to fight in the American Civil War. In Hoare’s novel, Mike’s father Pat used to be “a gentleman”, “fairly brought up and educated”. However, he became a vagabond and a drunkard, earning for himself the nickname of “Roving Pat”. Feeling that he has been a great shame to his family, and after naively getting himself involved with the “Young Irelanders and their nonsense”, Pat flees to America, leaving his wife and child to starve during the Famine. After this “wasted life” of

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36 Ibid., 158. In their report, the Tuke Committee actually recommended that the weakest and poorest should not be selected to emigrate, seeing as those who were in a (slightly) better condition had the best chance to emigrate successfully (Tuke et. al, *Emigration from Ireland*, 8–21).


38 Ibid., 141.
“lost opportunities [and] neglected duties” Pat feels that in America, he lives a life of “deserved poverty”. \(^39\) Hoare’s novel includes such warnings in line with its generic conventions: true to the romantic-didactic character of the novel, Mike and his father serve as contrasting examples of virtuous and sinful behaviour. Mike’s father leads a life of degradation and crime and is punished for this by an even worse existence in America. Consequently, he is filled with great remorse. By contrast, crippled Mike is the most loyal and loving servant a man could have, as he follows his master Mr. Chapman across the globe. After the death of the Chapman’s young son, Mike even becomes like a son to his employer. \(^40\)

The choice between death and emigration also features in *Blind Peter* (1871) by ‘Washington Frothingham’ and to some extent in Margaret Brew’s *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne* (1885), but like Mike, these texts provide a more positive twist to Irish emigration than is the case in Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race*. In Frothingham’s hodgepodge of autobiography, fact and fiction *Blind Peter*, the protagonist – probably a fictionalised rendering of Peter Halleran \(^41\) – leaves for America “in 1847” after “the crops failed” and the “Famine in Ireland set in with great severity.” \(^42\) The protagonist faces many trials in America, including struggles with his religion, alcohol addiction and his gradual loss of sight, which are all abundantly complained about by Peter as the narrator. Nevertheless, decades of setbacks and several religious wavering later, Peter finds his true religion (Methodism) and lives a fulfilling life in his adopted country, stating “I have loved America and the American people ever since, and desire no other country this side of heaven.” \(^43\) The Famine is only mentioned once, and plays no role in Peter’s life in America. At most, it seems to be cast as a specifically Catholic ordeal, as after his move to America due to the Famine, Peter quickly and fervently denounces his religion and his Irish past, and makes a fresh start.

The narrative strand of Margaret Brew’s *Castle Cloyne* which concerns landlord’s son Hyacinth Dillon never presents life in Famine-time Ireland as certain death for the hero, but nevertheless alludes to great destitu-

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\(^39\) Ibid., 144.
\(^40\) Chapman or Chaplin. The narrative uses a framework in which Mr Chapman has written a narrative about a Mr Chaplin and Mike. However, it is evident from the beginning that Mr Chaplin is Mr Chapman adopting a thin pseudonym.
\(^41\) The National Library of Ireland lists “Peter Halleran” as the author of *Blind Peter*. See <http://www.nli.ie>.
\(^43\) Ibid., 19.
tion. Moreover, like *Blind Peter*, it also undercuts the one-dimensional representation of the Irish as displaced exiles or helpless victims. In the narrative, the Famine is represented as equally disruptive to all classes of Irish society, and the event has brought upper-class character Hyacinth so much hardship that he has to leave his home: his beloved father has been (too) kind and lenient to the tenants, leaving the family destitute and forced to sell their property at a great loss. With no future prospects in Ireland, Hyacinth has no choice but to leave Ireland and decides to go to America. Unlike many of his compatriots, he does not settle on the urban East Coast of America, but ends up in California, where he reinvents himself as a hard-working manual labourer. Residing in California during Gold Rush of the 1840s, Hyacinth and his servant Pat make their fortune by finding a large amount of gold. For them, America has fulfilled its promise to the maximum. Hyacinth even embraces American ideology, as he becomes inculcated with the American ideas of the self-made man and equality. He tells Pat that he has such “a very great affection” for him, that he “could not bear the idea of [him] being [his] servant” any longer.

Stressing equality through hard labour, Hyacinth feels that Pat is entitled to half of their fortune and states: “I am quite resolved that you shall take your fair share of the wealth that you toiled to win equally with myself.”

His ready acceptance of American values implies that Hyacinth does not consider his host society as unwelcoming or hostile in any sense. This positive stance might be accredited to the different reception experienced by the Irish on America’s Pacific seaboard: as Malcolm Campbell argues, during the period 1840–1900, the Irish community in California experienced “relatively untroubled adaptation to the New World compared with the bleak conditions present in the eastern United States”. Campbell adds that in California “immigrants achieved satisfactory levels of prosperity

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44 “There are two different stories running side by side through the book, each having but slight connection with the other. This was to show how universal was the action of the Famine, and how impartial in its effects. Peer and peasant, landlord and tenant, the home of the great, and the cabin of the lowly, all were alike brought under its terrible influence, and all alike were compelled to bend beneath the storm.” See Margaret Brew, *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne; Or, Pictures of the Munster People* 3 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885), vol. 1, viii.

45 Malcolm Campbell states that “[t]he influx into California in the decades immediately after the discovery of gold was so pronounced that by 1870 the Irish-born were the largest overseas-born group in the state, accounting for a quarter of all foreign-born residents in California and almost 10 percent of its total population”. See *Ireland’s New Worlds*, 88–9.

46 Brew, *Castle Cloyne* vol. 3, 211.

within each generation”. Hyacinth and Pat’s story is one of great success, and although they do not attempt to integrate into American society and leave for Ireland as soon as they have made their fortune, Pat and his master can in no way be seen as passive victims or suffering exiles marked by an all-eclipsing homeward orientation, as they only return reluctantly to Ireland permanently after having toured the European continent for several years.

Like Hyacinth and Pat, the majority of emigrant characters in works that recollect the Famine leave for other reasons than acute Famine suffering: Connor Daly (Castle Daly, 1875), Dick O’Dell (Dick O’Dell) and Zanthon (Zanthon, 1891) leave because they are wanted rebels involved in either the Young Ireland movement or the Fenian Rising. After careful deliberation, the protagonist family in ‘How the Croziers Came to Canada’ (1871) by unknown Canadian author W. F. Monroe makes the decision to go to Canada rather than America well after the Famine, because they learn from their cousin who has been in both America and Canada that America is not the land of promise portrayed in emigrant letters: “I have read what your friends have been telling you, and I think it my duty to warn you not to act upon what is here written. At the lowest calculation, one half of it is not true. [...] They are as poor as you can possibly be and they are half the time sick with fever and ague.” By contrast, prospects for the Irish in Canada are much rosier, as in Canada “[t]here is nothing

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49 Miller has argued that “[d]espite the prevalence and persistence of the exile image, relatively few emigrants were directly compelled by actual force or imminent starvation to leave Ireland”. He adds that

Even during the Famine period itself (1845–55), although many of the roughly 2.1 million emigrants in that decade fled out of sheer panic, fear of death, or as a result of eviction – and although, as nationalists charged, some were helpless paupers ‘shovelled’ overseas by landlords and public officials – for many others, long-accustomed to contemplating migration, the crisis was simply the final determinant in their decision. In short, and like most of their peers from elsewhere in Europe, Irish families and individual Irishmen and -women generally emigrated more or less ‘voluntarily’ and in order, they hoped, to better themselves. (Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class and Transatlantic Migration [Dublin: Field Day, 2008], 13.)

to hinder an Irishman [...] from filling the highest place in the land.”51 In *The Days of a Life*, farmhand Patsy and his family leave to escape destitution in Ireland and prosper “in the land of promise” (Canada) as farmers. Later, Patsy, “a boy with native talent”, becomes a successful shopkeeper.52 Upper-class members Bell and George in *Rose O’Connor* (1880) go against their parents’ wishes and elope to America during the Famine.53 The same goes for the former Famine sufferer and farmhand Andy Nowlan and his love Kitty Doolin in the anonymous story ‘The Bridal of Death’ (1888) included in *The Irish-American*. They leave Ireland after the Famine to start a life together, but unfortunately do not survive the Atlantic crossing; their sea voyage has become “their bridal of death” and their deaths are portrayed as “the fruits of landlordism in Ireland”.54 Although Andy and Kitty leave of their own accord, this reference to landlordism at least implies that their social situation in Ireland stimulated the decision. And although set during or just before the Famine, the Mulrooney family (Hugh Quigley, *Profit and Loss*, 1873) and narrator/protagonist Bessie of Bessie Garland Ford’s *The Old Man’s Darling* (1881) come to America and Canada not as destitute peasants fleeing the Famine, but rather as well-off members of the strong-farmer class. In *Profit and Loss*, Michael Mulrooney, “a farmer of two hundred acres”, and his family want to avoid the possibility of poverty under a new tyrannical landlord, and decide to go to America, “where there are no landlords, but plenty of land for all the world!”55 In Garland’s narrative, protagonist Bessie states that she was simply “born with a disposition to travel” and adventurously wants to try her luck abroad.56

As Table A.5 in the Appendix section shows, 28 out of the 33 works of Famine fiction included in this study refer to emigration. Figure 6.1 below shows whether the 28 works of Famine fiction that refer to Irish emigration, consider the Famine the main reason for leaving Ireland. I have divided this study’s literary corpus along the lines of three orientations: works that consider the Famine as the main reason for emigration, those

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51 Ibid., 126.
53 Emily Fox (‘Toler King’), *Rose O’Connor; A Story of the Day* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Legal News Company, 1880), chapter 7.
that give a variety of motivations for leaving Ireland, and those that list other reasons than the Great Famine for Irish emigration. Out of the 28 works that contain representations of Irish emigration, 24 (or 86 per cent) do not represent the Famine as the main reason for departure. In providing alternative reasons for emigration, these narratives mark the Famine and immigrant life afterwards as different stages in Irish-diasporic life, thereby dissociating the Famine from Irish emigration. While the event does feature in the life stories of these characters, it is not represented as standing in direct correlation to their motives for leaving their native soil, even when such narratives are set during Famine times. In this manner, the majority of the works of Famine fiction undermines interpreting the Famine as a foundation myth for the diasporic subject. The following section continues with this exploration of motivations for emigration in Famine fiction, and moreover shows that the label of exile is questioned in many narratives.

6.1.2 Living the American Dream

As the preceding section has demonstrated, in Famine fiction from the period 1871–91 characters seeking out better lives in the New World appear frequently. The protagonist in Margaret Anne Cusack’s *From Killarney to New York* (1877) is no exception. Cusack was born in Dublin in 1830 and wrote under several pen names, including “the Nun of Kenmare” and “Sister Mary Francis Clare”. She was a devoted social worker, early feminist, writer, poet, publisher, and, for some time, a Catholic nun. She was quite famous in her time, and her works were lauded in a vignette in McGee’s as not only having been “extensively read and admired in her own country and England, but throughout the length and breadth of North America” too. Cusack was born a Protestant, but converted to Catholicism and joined the order of the Poor Clares. She travelled to America to start branches of her order there. Eventually disillusioned with the Church, she reverted to Protestantism before converting to Methodism. She was a productive writer and not only wrote works of fiction, but also several religious works, historiographies, a biography of O’Connell and advice books

57 ‘Sister Mary Francis Clare, the Nun of Kenmare’, *McGee’s Illustrated Weekly: Devoted to Catholic Art, Literature and Education* 2 (New York: J. A. McGee, May–Nov. 1877), 180.
Chapter 6

Famine as main reason for Emigration?

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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Figure 6.1: Do works consider the Famine as the main reason for emigration? (out of total 28).

for emigrants, and was celebrated as a “champion of the faith”.59

In 1872 her Advice to Irish Girls in America was published, which combined Catholic teachings with advice for practical applications in everyday life for Irish servant girls working in America. The overtly didactic tone found in the Advice also features in her novel From Killarney to New York, the title of which originally started with the phrase Tim O’Halloran’s Choice. It was republished various times in 1877: in London, the novel was published by Burns, while in Dublin M. H. Gill was responsible for its publication. Moreover, the text was issued in Melbourne and Paris, and was serialised in McGee’s, all in the same year. In the following, I will refer to the latter version.60 The novel belongs to the genre of romantic-didactic

59 ‘Sister Mary Francis Clare’, 180.
60 ‘Tim O’Halloran’s Choice; Or, from Killarney to New York (by Mary F. Cusack)’, title entry, in Rolf Loeber, Magda Loeber and Anne Mullin Burnham, eds, A Guide to
fiction, a genre characterised by heavy-handed religious moralisation and romantic plotlines with an exemplary function for the reader.\textsuperscript{51} The Catholic dimension of the tale is extremely explicit: as Cusack states, “even infidels have admitted it to be the grandest religion the world has ever known”.\textsuperscript{62}

The choice in the original title refers to the choice made by former strong farmer Tim O’Halloran not to let his son be converted to the Protestant religion in exchange for sustenance, despite their destitution during the Famine. Tim dies from fever, and his son Thade is kidnapped by Blanders, the same evil souper who tried to convert him. The young boy is eventually rescued by Miles O’Grady and his servant Mick, after which he is taken into the O’Grady household as a servant. In time the young man becomes practically part of the family. When Thade is close to reaching adulthood, he finds a well-filled wallet and decides not to keep it, but to give it to his employer’s virtuous daughter for safe keeping. It turns out to belong to the wealthy American banker Mr Maxwell, who is visiting Ireland. Impressed by Thade’s honesty and looking for a successor – Maxwell has no sons – he offers to take the youngster to America, to give him “a gentleman’s education” and teach him the trade of banking.\textsuperscript{63} Thade goes to America, becomes a prosperous banker and marries Maxwell’s daughter. In this incredible tale of Famine, Irish emigration, American settlement and divine benevolence, Cusack argues that because of father Tim’s original loyalty to the Catholic faith, son Thade eventually becomes a successful banker in New York decades later.\textsuperscript{64}


\textsuperscript{62} Margaret Anne Cusack (‘Sister Mary Frances Clare’), \textit{From Killarney to New York; Or, How Thade Became a Banker, McGee’s Illustrated Weekly} 2 (May–Nov. 1877). 278.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 347.

\textsuperscript{64} The closing paragraph of Cusack’s narrative reads as follows:

Little did the good farmer, whose death-bed scene forms the opening chapter of our tale, ever imagine the many happy results which would follow from his glorious fidelity to his faith. Little did he imagine how God would reward, and how many would live to bless

\textit{TIM O’HALLORAN’S CHOICE}. (Ibid., 347.)
far-fetched this typically romantic-didactic plotline might seem to modern-day readers, it was valued by contemporary critics as in McGee’s a review states that “[t]he story is interesting, is relieved by many comic passages, and has a striking moral. It illustrates the fact that on our conduct in life may depend the salvation of many souls.”

Although Cusack’s narrative contains both elements of Famine suffering and emigration, it does not make overt connections between the two. In fact, after an initial spell of Famine-related suffering – and here an analogy to Hoare’s character Mike is found – Thade does well and is very happy as a servant/family member within the O’Grady family. The narrative never presents his choice to emigrate as forced or necessary for survival, thereby representing Thade as a typical seeker of fortune and eventual American self-made man responsible for his own actions and moral decisions, rather than an exiled sufferer in a hostile America. Furthermore, Thade’s Famine experiences – which include his father “dying of famine-fever” and his grandmother’s death due to “months of starvation” and grief for the death of her son, and Thade’s being kidnapped by soupers – must have left their scars, but do not play any part in his life or identity formation in America. What is decisive for Thade’s life in America is not his past, but his inherent qualities: “his admirable conduct” and “quiet, patient religion” are praised. These traits are ascribed to his Irishness and are presented as well-suited “in a country where business ability is held in special honor, and where intellect takes rank as nature’s patent of nobility”. Restrained by the generic conventions and moral dimension inherent to the romantic didactic tradition, Cusack’s narrative quickly bypasses Thade’s initial Famine suffering and any possible challenges in starting a new life in America and foregrounds the dimension of moral action and divine reward. It does so by presenting an upbeat vignette of urban Irish America which functions as a compensation for the tribulations undergone at home and the good decisions made by the protagonist (and his father) in the past.

Moreover, Cusack’s narrative creates a distance between the Famine and Irish emigrant life in America, by incorporating different temporal and affective layers in the narrative. The different episodes of Thade’s life are clearly demarcated. First, in Part One, he suffers from hunger, loses his family and is kidnapped by soupers. Secondly, in Part Two, chapters

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65 Taken from a contribution to the Western Home Journal, Detroit (MI), and quoted in an advertisement for the novel in McGee’s Illustrated Weekly 4 (New York, J. A. McGee, May–Nov. 1878), 351.
66 Cusack, From Killarney to New York, McGee’s Illustrated 2, 182, 183.
67 Ibid., 347.
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

one to five, Thade is accepted into the O’Grady family and grows up to be an “honest” and moral young man.\textsuperscript{68} Thirdly, in Part Two, chapters seven to ten (the final chapters), Thade displays great virtue and is rewarded; he manages to go to America, finds a Catholic bride in Maxwell’s daughter and becomes part of the Maxwell family and American society as a whole.\textsuperscript{69} These episodes are presented as different periods in Thade’s development: during the Famine he is a young boy; in the O’Grady residence he is a youngster and his American life describes his (early) adulthood. Moreover, each episode is centred on a different family and community structure: a rural Catholic strong farming family in Ireland, an upper-class Catholic family in Ireland and finally a less overtly religious family in America, whose members nevertheless greatly sympathise with the Catholic religion.

The narrative distancing between Famine and emigration is established on another structural level, for the following patterns in \textit{From Killarney to New York} contribute to the layered structure of the narrative. While the entire narrative is told by the omniscient narrator, the following patterns shift at significant moments and through their shifts establish varying degrees of “narrative experientiality” with regards to the character, the events described and the reader’s possible engagement with the text.\textsuperscript{70} Thade’s life with his father, Part One of the narrative, is marked by a contrastive “dual-focus” following pattern in which alternately the father and evil souper Blanders are followed.\textsuperscript{71} The second episode (Part Two, chapters one to five) concerns life at the O’Grady residence, and is characterised by a similar following pattern which focuses on Miles O’Grady and Mick on the one hand, and Mr and Mrs Blanders on the other. Finally, in the latter episode (Part Two, chapters seven to ten), which describes Thade’s acquaintance with Mr Maxwell and his subsequent transformation into an American banker, the reader follows Thade and Mr Maxwell. It is this final part of the narrative which is most strongly connected to Thade’s experience of events as the readers gains an insider’s perspective of Thade’s moral decision and experience of emigrant life. In contrast, while some of the novel’s narrative experientiality is linked to Thade in the second section, in the first section Thade’s feelings or responses hardly feature at all; he is presented predominantly as the object rather than the subject of religious strife during the Famine time.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 330.
\textsuperscript{69} While Mr Maxwell is not a religious man, his daughter Rosaline was raised by an Irish Catholic servant. Her story is discussed in Part Two, chapter seven of the narrative.
\textsuperscript{70} Fludernik, \textit{Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology} (London: Routledge, 1996), 27, 30.
\textsuperscript{71} Altman, \textit{A Theory of Narrative} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 55.
In creating this structure, the narrative manages to retain the connection between the Famine and Irish-American life, but creates an experiential distance between Thade’s success story of emigration and his distant experiences of Famine. In turn, this narrative device has the potential to create distance with regard to the reader’s experience of the narrative: while the reader can engage easily with the last part of Thade’s life, any direct or lasting reaction of the reader to Thade’s distant Famine history is foreclosed as the narrative does not register the protagonist’s reaction to that event, on either the short or the long run. On the whole, for its protagonist, Cusack’s narrative undercuts a one-dimensional interpretation of the Famine as an all-arresting event.

America is the land of promise for Thade, and across the Atlantic he finds prosperity, love and happiness. In contrast to Mrs Sadlier, the uncrowned queen of the romantic-didactic tradition, who in her novels presented urban America as a veritable “[Babylon] of the West” where temptation and sin lurk around every street corner, Cusack never portrays America as a hostile community.\(^\text{72}\) Similar stories can be found elsewhere: in ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ (1871) by the anonymous writer using the penname ‘Ireland’, young orphan Biddy is taken in as a servant by the Protestant philanthropist Mrs Gwynne and her family. She converts to the Protestant faith and after six years of loving service, emigrates – eventually her younger siblings also follow – to America under the guidance of Mrs Gwynne’s sister, Mrs O’Donaghue. The narrative does not disclose any of the events that Biddy goes through after emigration, but does state that America provides a future for the girl that cannot be had in post-Famine Ireland. When commenting on the upcoming move, Mrs O’Donaghue recollects her own experiences, and says that

“in this country [Biddy] has not the same chances of bettering herself as she will have in the States. If I had stayed in this country, I should have never made my way up in the world, nor met poor O’Donaghue, either, though he was a boy from Kerry-most like I’d have died like the others in the famine, or ended my days in the Poor-house.”\(^\text{73}\)

After some ten years, Biddy is happily married to a well-to-do businessman

\(^{72}\) Mary Anne Sadlier, *Bessy Conway; Or, the Irish Girl in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier, 1862), 5.

\(^{73}\) ‘Ireland’, *Forlorn but not Forsaken: A Story of (The Famine of 1848) the ‘Bad Times’ in Ireland* (Dublin: George Herbert, 1871), 44.
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

and is surrounded by a brood of her own.\footnote{Years later, Mrs Gwynne hears from Biddy who now “is married, and she and her husband are well off – comfortably in business, and enjoying every happiness with a promising young plantation round about their table” (Ibid., 46).} Again, the moral of the story is that all this luck befalls Biddy because of her righteous religious compass, only here it points to the Protestant rather than the Catholic faith. Although in the case of Mrs O’Donaghue, a direct link is made between the Famine and emigration, no other mention is made of this besides this passing reference. On the whole, through its focus on Biddy’s story, and consequently, also the fates of her siblings, the narrative does not necessarily link Famine suffering and emigration, but rather stresses the moral and religious dimension of successful Irish settlement across the Atlantic.

In James Doran’s Zanthon, Zanthon/Clare also goes through many Famine-related hardships – he experiences great hunger and loses his entire family and community and becomes a wandering orphan – and eventually emigrates. Again, no overt connection is made between the Famine and emigration, as Zanthon emigrates some fifteen years after the Famine and has to leave because he is wanted for his part in the failed Fenian Rising. Lastly, this disconnection can also be found in Mike, as the eponymous character’s Famine-related suffering is not the reason why he leaves Ireland, for he leaves as a servant to the English agent who returns to England.

In Zanthon, ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ and Mike narrative distancing is realised in the same manner as in From Killarney to New York. Biddy’s life story also consists of clearly demarcated periods and different familial and social structures that accompany those periods: first, in chapter three ("Famine") her early life with her poor Catholic labourer family in their dilapidated cabin during the Famine is described; secondly, chapter four ("Better Days") discusses life with the upper-class Protestant Gwynne family after the Famine; and, finally, chapter five ("A New Home") refers to her adult life of prosperity as a Protestant mother and wife in America. Zanthon’s life story can be partitioned in a similar way. First, chapters one to nine detail his early life with his impoverished Catholic rural family during the Famine, and the deaths of his family members. Secondly, after Zanthon casts off his identity and family history, chapters ten to twenty-nine relate his state of non-identity and non-belonging as a youngster roaming post-Famine Ireland.\footnote{James Doran, Zanthon. A Novel (San Francisco, CA: Bancroft, 1891), 122.} Finally, in chapters thirty ("The Approach of the Whirlwind") to thirty-eight ("In America") his acceptance into the rebel ranks during the late 1860s and subsequent flight to and
life in America as an adult are discussed. In Mike, Mike’s life can also be divided into three stages, this time with two affiliations: first, in chapters one to four, Mike’s early life with his impoverished Irish mother during the Famine is described. Secondly, chapters five to fourteen portray his life with the Chapmans in Ireland and England. And thirdly, chapters fifteen to eighteen detail Mike and Mr Chapman’s travels to America to find Mike’s father, and mentions their subsequent journeys across the European continent, ending with the death of Mr Chapman decades later.

While in Mike the entire narrative following focuses on Mr Chapman/Chaplin, both Zanthon and ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ are characterised by following patterns akin to the highly episodic following pattern that can be discerned in From Killarney to New York. Both stories are told by an omniscient narrator and during the first episode of each narrative – Clare/Zanthon’s and Biddy’s childhoods – the following patterns are focused on Zanthon’s father and Mrs Gwynne – and to some extent, on the relief officers – respectively.\footnote{In the first part of Forlorn but not Forsaken, Biddy’s parents die and she tries to keep her siblings together in their cabin, by barricading the door. She fails and the siblings are taken and split up. The story here does focus on Biddy, but does not follow her perspective and affective responses in depth.} In the second episode of ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ – life at the Gwynne residence – the following pattern is still linked to Mrs Gwynne, only to (also) shift to Biddy from the moment emigration becomes a viable option. The Famine becomes a distant memory for Biddy, and it only features in the narrator’s quite astonishing statement that the idea of emigration and leaving her new best friend Mrs Gwynne is more distressing to young Biddy than her Famine-time ordeals: upon hearing that she is to go to America, the narrator tells us that for Biddy “her former grief and troubles, when she was weakened by hunger and bewildered by distress, seemed unreal compared with what she was now to suffer”.\footnote{‘Ireland’, Forlorn but not Forsaken, 44–5.}

In Zanthon, we largely follow the eponymous protagonist from the moment his father perishes (the end of episode one/start of episode two) until the end of the narrative. As was the case for Cusack’s serialised novel, in these narratives the Famine is represented as separate from the protagonist and his or her direct experience by incorporating a strong sense of passing time – through the use of distinct episodes – and by only later focusing on the (emigrant) protagonist’s consciousness of events and his or her affective reactions, marking a shift from the protagonist as the object to the experiencing subject of the narrated events. The reader’s engagement with the
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

text and the experiences of the protagonist that go further back than the narratives’ final episodes are complicated and the memory of the Famine also becomes more distant than would be the case if these narratives would have been less episodic and had a singular following pattern. The latter statement is illustrated by my short discussion of the single-focus following pattern in *A Ruined Race*, but can also be made in respect to other narratives in which the focus is mainly on the protagonist throughout his or her narrative. For example, in the anonymous story ‘The Bridal of Death’, the narrative follows Andy Nowlan’s tribulations from beginning to end; as a consequence, through the structural set-up of the narrative, the different events in Andy’s life – the loss of his family during the Famine, his work as a poor farm labourer for Doolin, his love for Doolin’s daughter, and their deadly sea voyage – become strongly connected and all hardships are presented as contributing to Andy and his bride’s eventual death on board a coffin ship.

Read together, these literary representations of emigration in works that recollect the Famine undermine the one-sided definition of the Irish as a victim diaspora. Charles Fanning states that within Irish-American literary works of what he calls the second generation, no single approach to Irish life in America and its representation of the time can be found. In fact, this statement could also be applied to texts written by authors well after 1875. Several literary approaches were in vogue at the time: many authors chose to continue writing in the romantic-didactic tradition, in which the homeland was strongly idealised and a moral upbeat message was included. Others opted to write in a more realist fashion, which acknowledged problems inherent to Irish immigrant life. And yet other writers, aspiring to become accepted into America’s middle classes, or perhaps already belonging to that layer of society, wrote genteel or “lace-curtain” fiction, in which preoccupations with Irish-American middle-class respectability and acceptance into the American mainstream played an important part.

A well-known author writing in this tradition but also providing a critical twist was priest, editor and writer John Talbot Smith, who is described by Fanning as “one of the strongest novelists of this ambivalent genera-

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78 Fanning pinpoints three distinct literary generations in nineteenth-century Irish America: “Irish immigrant writers who came before the catastrophe of the Great Hunger of the late 1840s; writers of the Famine generation, who came between 1850 and 1875, the period of greatest immigration and upheaval; and writers who described the emergence of an Irish-American middle class during the last third of the century” (*Irish Voice in America*, 1).
Smith was born in Saratoga (NY) in 1855 to railroad worker Bernard Smith and Brigid O’Donnell. He was ordained as a priest in 1881 and after his superiors recognised his literary talents, went to New York in 1889. There he edited the Catholic Review, wrote works of fiction, and was very active in several Catholic organisations. In Smith’s stories ‘The Deacon of Lynn’ and ‘How the McGuinness Saved his Pride’ (1891) included in this study’s corpus, Irish-American respectability and religion are seminal topics. And, interestingly, in these narratives, Famine memory even serves as a marker of respectability, underscoring human kindness and facilitating community acceptance in America.

‘The Deacon of Lynn’ carries an ironic tone with regard to small-town bourgeois American values. In the story, deacon Lounsbury unsuccessfully tries to halt the coming of “these God-forsaken Irish” workers and the establishment of a Catholic church to his town in Connecticut. Unwilling to help his Irish-American fellow countrymen, he nevertheless does see his own donation of “corn meal in ’48” to the Irish as a sign of his personal morality, stating “who could refuse” to help the starving. In the end, the despised Irish workers are victorious, as they not only move to Lynn in significant numbers, but their religion is accepted in the town, even by the opposing deacon. A Catholic church is built, and the deacon is even persuaded to attend Mass. While “[h]e had fought against the [cross] for what it represented to his mind – idolatry”, in the end deacon Lounsbury gazes upon the newly built church and realises that he “had failed in the fight”. He goes “home to struggle no more”, suggesting that even the staunchest opponent can be converted to Catholicism.

In ‘How the McGuinness Saved his Pride’, long-time resident and French-Canadian labourer Jean-Baptise Nolin is ousted from the Irish-American town of Sundsbury when he marries Irish girl Anne, and thereby blemishes her family’s respectable identity. However, Nolin is reaccepted into the community of emigrated Galway Irish when the townspeople find out that his mother in fact was “Mary Cassidy”. Here, the story refers to the large-scale outbreak of typhus which spread throughout Quebec from the newly established fever sheds of Grosse Ile in 1847. These sheds had been erected to accommodate the great influx of Irish Famine emigrants.

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79 Ibid., 189.
80 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 31.
that reached the city. Mary Cassidy was an Irish emigrant girl “whose parents died of the fever” in that city, and who was subsequently adopted by a French Canadian family.\textsuperscript{84} After hearing this news, Mrs McGuinness, Anne’s mother, immediately exclaims “may the sowl o’ Mary Cassidy forgive us that we iver trated her son so”.\textsuperscript{85} In a manner akin to in ‘The Deacon of Lynn’, in this story Famine memory is not something that the Irish-Americans themselves deeply engage with. However, Talbot Smith does use Famine memory as a marker for social standing. In ‘The Deacon of Lynn’ the memory of the Famine calls forth the deacon’s memory’s of his good deeds with regard to the Irish, and conversely demonstrates the limits and hypocrisy of his (religious) altruism because he is unwilling to help them in his town. In ‘How the McGuinness Saved his Pride’ Famine memory functions as an instant catalyst for social acceptance within an Irish emigrant community. At the same time, the use of Famine memory also lays bare the superficiality of these relatively new Irish-American notions of gentility by exploring the community’s uncritical stance with regard to their own values.

Often no clear division could be made in the orientations of Irish-American works of fiction written during the period that this dissertation examines, as many texts oscillated between realism and romanticism, tradition and innovation, confirmation and critique. Fanning convincingly argues that this division is the by-product of “the uneasy, transitional, ambivalent culture that produced it” and that its dual approach is caused by ambiguous authorial/immigrant intentions.\textsuperscript{86} Many writers were torn between the desire to either belong to the establishment and fully integrate into their receiving community, or to continue to act as the voice of the underdog, the struggling Irish immigrant, and thereby place themselves in the literary and social margins of America.\textsuperscript{87}

The frequent positive depiction of Irish life in America found in this study’s corpus complicates any one-dimensional negative reading. It has


\textsuperscript{85} Smith, ‘How the McGuinness’, 255.

\textsuperscript{86} Fanning, \textit{Irish Voice in America}, 156.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
been acknowledged that later emigrants and second- and third-generation emigrants did experience social mobility and economic prosperity in America.\footnote{Kenny, \textit{American Irish}, 150; MacRaild, \textit{Irish Migrants in Modern Britain}, 70.} This contrasts with many of their Famine-time and immediate post-Famine compatriots’ histories, as they experienced little to no social mobility. However, next-generation mobility needs to be relativised, for, as Kevin Kenny argues, “the children of Irish immigrants were typically more successful than their parents, though […] this was often a matter of getting a better position within the working class, rather than progressing to the upper echelons”.\footnote{Kenny, \textit{American Irish}, 150.} It seems that these extremely positive literary depictions of great immediate post-Famine prosperity for first-generation emigrants in America on the one hand counter reading their experience as victimhood, but on the other hand also seem out of kilter with actual Irish-American lives and events. Irish immigrant lives were probably more akin to stories of small-time success rather than great heroic tales. This tension between narrative representations and socio-historical reality can be attributed to the restrictions of generic conventions, as most of these works were written in the romantic-didactic tradition or at least built upon that tradition, and thus had a primary function to be exemplary for their readership: behave well and stay Irish – generally taken as a paraphrase for remaining a true Catholic – and you will live the good life in America.

In line with Donald Harman Akenson’s earlier work, Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin have recently argued that there has been “very little forced migration” in Irish history; and that “Irish historians have been mistaken” in seeing Irish emigrants as passive victims of circumstance.\footnote{Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin, \textit{Migration in Irish History, 1607–2007} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 54.} In the narratives central to this research project, the typical element of coerced leaving is present, but, as Table A.5 in the Appendix section and Figure 6.2 demonstrate, with the exception of \textit{A Ruined Race} and \textit{Blind Peter}, in these works the direct driving force is seldom (just) the Famine, Famine suffering or the threat of death itself. In these narratives, the memory of the Famine does not function as an all-pervasive, arresting trauma or founding myth for the Irish emigrant.

Fanning states that there is a “confidence and energy” in the body of late nineteenth-century Irish-American literature, which does not accord with the argument perhaps voiced most strongly by Miller, that as a group the Irish in America predominantly presented themselves as involuntary exiles, and passive victims of circumstance. As Fanning states,
6.1 Involuntary Exiles?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Views of emigration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive view</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous-Positive</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous-Negative</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative view</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.2:** Works that contain references to emigration (total 28).

“Irish-Americans who fashioned their experience into fiction did not limit themselves to the grey monotone of the exile’s lament”.91 Similarly, the transatlantic corpus of fiction studied here also shows vibrancy, variation, and confidence in Irish life in America. The feelings of displacement and non-belonging in the host society typically ascribed to the experience of diasporic victimhood and exile are repeatedly countered, as many fictional emigrants – Biddy and her siblings, Thade O’Halloran, Connor Daly, the Crozier family and even Hyacinth Dillon – quickly find happiness and prosperity across the Atlantic. The liminal state inherent to the diasporic subject is suspended, thereby also downplaying feelings of nostalgia usually ascribed to the Irish exilic consciousness. In these works, the ties between (successful) emigration and the occurrence of the Famine are severed or at least loosened.

Figure 6.2 and Table A.5 in the Appendix demonstrate the different views regarding emigration found in this study’s corpus of fiction. I have divided them into works that do not discuss emigration (5), works that provide a negative view of emigration (0), works that provide an ambiguous view which tends towards the negative (2), works that provide an ambiguous view leaning towards the positive (10), and works that provide an overall positive interpretation of Irish emigration (16). Not one work is entirely negative, and the majority of works (79 per cent, I am here taking the categories ‘positive’ and ‘ambiguous/positive’ together\textsuperscript{92}) contains positive views of Irish emigration. Together, these works of fiction do not offer an image of the Irish abroad as pining and displaced exilic wanderers with traumatic baggage, which was – and, if we look at Wonneberger’s study, still is – so common in contemporary self-configurations of Irishness on both sides of the Atlantic.

The richness in views signalled by Fanning with regard to fiction written by the Irish-American community, can also be extended to works written by authors in Canada, Ireland and England between 1871 and 1891, such as Castle Cloyne, Castle Daly, ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken,’ Uncle Pat’s Cabin and A Ruined Race. This supports the existence of a truly transnational Irish literary community, and underscores that among its members literary traditions, genres, innovations and viewpoints were widely disseminated and adopted. It emphasises that Fanning’s call for a more relative and all-encompassing view of emigrant experiences as expressed in fiction, cannot only be applied to the Irish community in America, but also to formulations of the emigrant experience by the Irish at home, in England, and in Canada, and to fictional representations of the Famine. My analysis has shown that on the level of fictional representations, we cannot place all Irish emigrants of the late nineteenth century into the same classification of exilic wanderers, homeless members of a victim diaspora. The corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) is quite positive in its overall tone and furthermore provides such a varied picture of motivations, residence in North America and judgements regarding the status of the Famine for post-Famine Irish cultural identity that a single denominator would fall short of covering the entire spectrum of literary representations of late nineteenth-century Irish emigrant experiences.

Generally speaking, the views on emigration found in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) seem to contrast with those often found in articles and works of poetry published in Irish and Irish North-American

\textsuperscript{92} 79 per cent out of the entire corpus of 33 works.
journals and newspapers, political writings, and emigrant letters exemplified in this chapter by the letters studied by Miller, by the journalistic and political pieces about and by John Mitchel published in Ireland and North America, and the poem by Thomas D’Arcy McGee. These are only a few examples of many writings which contain such a negative outlook. While I have not done extensive research into non-fictional writings and poetry of the period, I feel that this discrepancy between the views on Irish emigration offered in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) and works of poetry and non-fiction of the period is striking and deserves further investigation. While a clear reason for this difference cannot be provided easily, it could be attributed to the possible orientations and intentions at the heart of these different textual forms. The political and journalistic writings and works of poetry included in many journals often had the goal to emphasise the (long-existent) dire or oppressed conditions the Irish found themselves in at home and abroad, and consequently represented Irish emigration as forced expulsion and exile. In turn, this negative interpretation of Irish emigration could be used as support for anti-Anglo-Saxon nationalist rhetoric. By contrast, the works of Famine fiction seem to be written from a more positive perspective, depicting the Irish emigrant as active and morally responsible in shaping his or her own destiny abroad. In that way, these works of fiction followed the conventions of the romantic-didactic tradition to which messages of hope and moral reward were key and those of genteel fiction, in which more upbeat and socially normative and integrationist views were vital. In these literary renderings, the notions of forced expulsion, exile and prolonged victimhood would not have been very useful.

In this context, it is important to keep in mind that fiction and its tone should not be studied in isolation. The poetry, prose fiction, and non-fictional writings included in Irish and Irish North-American journals and newspapers should not be treated as separate textual entities, or as distinct discourses, for while many works of fiction were published in book form, many were (also) included in journals and newspapers. These different forms of writing – with their varying viewpoints – often featured in one and the same edition of a journal or newspaper and would have been read side by side.

93 In her recent book *Commemorating the Irish Famine: Memory and the Monument* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013) Emily Mark-FitzGerald provides an insightful chapter on the potential impact on readers’ perception of certain images and information, of issues of lay out and of the combination between text and image of sometimes differing historical events. See chapter 2, ‘Visualizing the Famine: Nineteenth-Century Image, Reception and Legacy’.
by side. Thus, together they created a multidimensional representation of
more general Irish suffering and exile, and more specifically of the role of
Famine memory in those processes: a combined representation in which the
event could feature alternately as origin myth for the diasporic community
and as ‘just’ another trial to be overcome, and as an ultimately marginal or
temporary element of Irish-American life. In combination, these different
textual forms created a truly polyphonic view of Irish emigration.

6.2 Nostalgia

6.2.1 Longing for the Homeland? Portable Landscapes and
Ireland in America

In the meantime, Mrs Murray ventured across to her son, in spite of
her dread of the “say.” It was not so very long till she and her boys
sowed and reaped on a snug little farm of their own. She took with
her in a flower pot a little whin bush as a reminder of the Donegal
hills, which she nourished with great care; but that prickly emigrant
refused to flourish under the cloudless skies of Canada, and died of
stove-heat the first winter.94

In previous chapters I have already demonstrated that in works of Famine
fiction, nostalgia or a “homing desire” plays a key role.95 Although home
is not a stable concept, the general understanding of the term does refer
to common ideas.96 In the case of the works of Famine fiction central to
this study, the homing desire not only refers to the sense of being home
but also to the (physical) landscape of that home.97 Demonstrating the
Irish preoccupation with Irish place, Nina Witoszek and Pat Sheeran have
even argued that since the bardic tradition until today, the Irish have been
“consumed by topophilia”.98 In this section I will again engage with the

94 Margaret Dixon McDougall (‘Norah’), The Days of a Life (Almonte: W. Temple-
man, 1883), 208–9.
95 Lloyd, ‘What’s in a Name?’ n.p.
96 Several scholars have pointed out that the concept of ‘home’ is problematic and
fluid, and that it is difficult to pinpoint to what exactly the term refers. See for example
Ghassan Hage, ‘Migration, Food, Memory, and Home-Building’, in Susannah Radstone
and Bill Schwarz, eds, Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates (New York: Fordham
97 Lloyd, ‘What’s in a Name?’ n.p.
98 Nina Witoszek and Pat Sheeran, Talking to the Dead: A Study of Irish Funerary
Traditions (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 48.
term nostalgia in the context of representations of the Irish landscape.

As Oona Frawley has observed, nostalgia can serve “as a safety mechanism designed to bridge past and present for cultures as they experience change”.\(^99\) Alternately, not establishing a connection to the home and the cultural past, or “forgetting the translocal diasporic connections [can] mean the ultimate disbandment of diasporic identity”.\(^100\) In these narratives, the link to a (past) identity, to a nostalgia for the home landscape can be found in its (mental) transportation to North America, whereby the past landscape of Ireland could continue to influence Irish-diasporic identity by functioning as a bridge, that is, as a persistent imaginary connection between the Irish and the Irish landscape, even in diaspora. This backwards orientation manifested itself in Irish (diasporic) literature and verse and the popular press, which is for example illustrated by the epigraph to chapter two which lauds the Irish landscape and consequently asks why the Irish “so readily, so eagerly seek their new homes?”\(^101\) In this section I will closely consider not only what role the depiction of the homespace continues to play in envisionings of Irish life as connected to the land, but also what part the landscape of the receiving country could play in such depictions. Moreover, I will discuss the impact of Famine memory on these renditions of the Irish-American landscape.

The opening quote of this section is taken from McDougall’s *The Days of a Life*, and shows Canadian rural life as seen through the eyes of recently emigrated and highly nostalgic poor Irish family. While the Murrays love their “snug” Canadian abode, it immediately becomes clear that in it their links to Ireland are impeded: the Irish whin bush – an example of the metonymic symbol for the Irish home landscape and the Irish emigrants’ relation to that landscape also found in other works of fiction – withers and dies in the Canadian climate.\(^102\) Moreover, the retention of the rural ideal is further undermined by the fact that son Patsy Murray – the protagonist of this narrative strand – eventually leaves the small family farm to become

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\(^100\) Baronian, Besser and Jansen, ‘Diaspora and Memory’, 12.


\(^102\) For example, in their article ‘Rites of Passage: The Coffin Ship as Site of Immigrants’ Identity Formation in Irish and Irish-American Fiction, 1855–1885’, Marguérite Corporaal and Chris Cusack also discuss such a metonymic reference to Ireland in the form of a box of dirt and shamrocks taken by Irish emigrants in David Power Conyngham’s novel *Frank O’Donnell* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1861). See *Atlantic Studies* 8/3 (2011), 343–59.
a manager and “man of mark” in one of the Livingstone family’s stores.\textsuperscript{103}

Another ambiguous view on the (North-)American landscape and the retention of some form of Irishness is present in Hugh Quigley’s \textit{Profit and Loss: A Story of the Life of a Genteel Irish-American, Illustrative of Godless Education} (1873). Through a discussion of the representation of the American landscape in that novel, I will argue that in works from the period 1871–91 a typical Irish-diasporic nostalgic longing still features, but that a critical dimension is also present. In several works of Famine fiction from the period starting with the Famine and running up to the 1880s, representations of the (Irish) landscape refer to some pristine and unspoilt pre-Famine and even pre-colonial version of Ireland cast in hues of what Svetlana Boym calls “restorative nostalgia”.\textsuperscript{104} In this section, I will briefly discuss several works from the period 1871–91 that contain such idealisations. However, I will also investigate literary representations that provide a different take on (recent) Irish history, hardships, the landscape of home and their continued influence on Irish-American life, and in that manner showcase a more critical and elegiac form of “reflective nostalgia”.\textsuperscript{105}

Hugh Quigley’s strongly Catholic romantic-didactic novel \textit{Profit and Loss} provides a multifaceted representation of the Irish-American landscape. Anti-Baptist priest, missionary and historian Quigley (1819–83) was born in Co. Clare and received his education in Ireland and Rome. He worked in Killaloe and Tula during the Famine and was implicated in the Young Ireland rebellion. After the Famine he went to Sheffield and then across the Atlantic, where he worked in New York, Chicago and Troy before resigning to become a missionary to the Chippewa Indians and gold diggers in California.\textsuperscript{106} Quigley’s last novel \textit{Profit and Loss} is set in rural America, where good Catholics have to fend off scheming and calculating

\textsuperscript{103} “We will see him [Patsy Murray] entrusted by Livingstone and Son with the entire management of a new store opened in a rising section of the country [...] and become a man of mark in his adopted country.” (McDougall, \textit{Days of a Life}, 209.)


\textsuperscript{105} Boym. \textit{Future of Nostalgia}, 41.

Methodists who are out to corrupt their souls. During the first chapters, the reader is introduced to the Mulrooney family, formerly well-off Irish farmers who, in fear of what their new landlord might do, take matters in their own hands and pre-empt suffering by going to America’s “Far West”. The novel is not very clear concerning its timeframe, but the reader can deduce from the text that the Mulrooneys leave Ireland during the latter years of the Famine. Moreover, the narrator also states that they as strong farmers could have weathered the storm, but fell victim to an evil new landlord. The family starts a farm in Brighton, Wisconsin, and through virtuous living and hard work soon prospers. The Mulrooneys are able to live a comfortable life. The narrator describes their American farming community as “an Irish settlement”, and thereby brings a specific Irish sense of rurality into the American landscape. The Mulrooneys’ quick rise to prosperity reflects Irish-Canadian historian Nicholas Flood Davin’s record of Irish emigrant life. Celebrating Irish life in both Canada and the United States, Flood Davin optimistically states that “[t]here is nothing unhappy about Irishmen crossing the Atlantic”, and that in the country “[t]he Irishman who started a quarter of a century ago with a dollar in his pocket, and who has in the interval climbed to wealth and influence, is met everywhere.” Furthermore, in his discussion Flood Davin describes rural Irish immigrant communities as patches of “Transatlantic Ireland”.

In Quigley’s novel, the land farmed by the family is cast in characteristically Irish tones, as Mulrooney wanted a place that would bear some likeness, in imagination at least, to the old estate on the banks of the Blackwater in Ireland called “Cappa,” out of which his forefathers were expelled by the ruthless hands of confiscation and war. The hills, the groves, the lake, as the St Croix is called, and the rivulet or creek, all carried his mind back to the memory of the past on the banks of the “Avon Duv”.

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108 The Mulrooneys’ son Pat, who is the central figure of the narrative, is 19 years of age when he starts mingling with American Methodists (120). That part of the narrative is set in the early 1870s and Pat is born when the Mulrooneys have just settled in America. The reader can deduce from this that the family emigrated approximately 20 years ago, so in the late 1840s or early 1850s and are therefore part of the wave of Famine emigration.
109 Ibid., 27.
Indeed, Mulrooney is successful in bringing back his ideal Ireland, as “the beauties of the surrounding sceneries” and “the richness of the soil, which was equal to the ‘Golden Vale’ in Ireland” remind him of home. The narrative reaches back to an unspoilt pastoral Irish landscape, and by representing the American farmstead and its surroundings as an Irish micro-landscape reminiscent of the Reilly farm in Annie Reilly, or cousin Anne’s abode in Good People’s Hollow in Castle Daly, it shows that the memory of the Irish landscape is transportable and that a sanitised version, free from Famine miseries, is placed within reach for the Irish emigrant.

Representations like this were quite common in the romantic-didactic tradition, which frequently included this form of transculturation. Earlier North-American Famine fiction such as Canadian author Elisabeth Hely Walshe’s Golden Hills (1865) and Cedar Creek (1863) and Irish-American author Dillon O’Brien’s The Dalys of Dalystown (1866) contain American and Canadian spaces in which little pieces of Ireland are brought back. Moreover, in Henry F. Keenan’s The Aliens (1886, not a work of Famine fiction), an American farm and its natural surroundings are repeatedly described in Irish mythical and folkloric terms, signifying an early example of Celtic Revivalism in Irish-American fiction. These works of fiction mitigate the impact of the Famine and rural hardships on Ireland and Irishness somewhat by including the possibility of transculturation, of moving the

Quigley, Profit and Loss, 29–30.

Ibid., 31.

For a discussion of how in several Irish North-American novels, including Sadlier’s, McElgun’s and Hely Walshe’s novels mentioned here, “the pastoral becomes a point of ethnic identification through which the immigrants can recollect and reconstruct a sense of Irishness in exile” (331), see Corporaal, ‘From Golden Hills’. In my master’s thesis, I have also analysed Irish-American spaces and their potential role in identity formation; see Imagining Homelands: The Transforming Imagery Concerning Ireland and America in the Fiction of the Nineteenth-Century American Irish (Nijmegen: Radboud University, 2009, unpublished MA thesis).

Besides providing many descriptions of the Marbury farm as surrounded by mythical haunts and landscapes filled with music, the novel also contains direct comparisons between upstate New York and rural Ireland. When commenting upon the farm lands, wealthy Irish-American character Lady Molly states that

“Sure, it’s the land o’ Canaan ye have here, me lad. Oh, luk at the apples – like me sisther Rosie’s cheeks for all th’world. And the sweet smells – by me soul, me lord, I’d like to live here, and, indeed, I would. The like of that hedge I never set eyes on since I left the ditches of Wicklow, God’s glory to it! And the gooseberries! O me lord, did ye ever lay eyes on such berries? I must stop and ate wan”; and, stooping down, she picked a handful of the plumpest of the freckled fruit. (Henry F. Keenan, The Aliens; A Novel [New York: Appleton, 1886], 190.)
pastoral and even georgic Irish spaces to the new world. Such mitigation and transplanted recurrence also features in Canadian and American works of Famine fiction of the period 1871–91. Talbot’s Smith’s ‘How the McGuiness Saved his Pride’ is set in the American village of Sundsbury, a small rural community consisting of mostly Galway immigrants who have made an Irish rural haven in small-town America for themselves. However, on the whole, environmental transculturation appears less frequently, is less positive and is more complicated in these works of Famine fiction. In American author John McElgun’s Annie Reilly (1873, not part of this study’s corpus), only the return of a more general pastoral otium is realised, as Annie and James O’Rourke become rich urban dwellers with a healthy brood of “little O’Rourkes” who experience pastoral bliss during the family’s Sunday carriage rides through New York City’s Central Park. Not containing a return of a traditional Irish way of life, but at least promising the (re-)establishment of a rural life, the anonymous story ‘Thade M’Sweeney’ (1880) tells the tale of a poor Irish emigrant who starts over in America and establishes a small farm and is “well and hearty”.

Through their illustrations of the transculturated landscape, Profit and Loss and the narratives mentioned above function as “mediums of collective memory”, as bridges to a landscape and identity, which for many members of the Irish-American community were no longer easily accessible in their current location and urban way of life. In these texts, the Irish landscape is depicted as a semi-detached idea, a “self-referential” lieu de mémoire in which the home landscape becomes seemingly accessible to

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115 John McElgun, Annie Reilly; Or, The Fortunes of an Irish Girl in New York: A Tale Founded on Fact (New York: J. A. McGee, 1873), 244.
117 Ann Rigney argues that works of literature, and especially popular literature, can function as important media for the dissemination of collective memory:

There is a way of using literature as a medium of collective memory which neither literary studies nor the theory of cultural memory have taken into account: I call this second mode reception, which turns the literary work into a medium of collective memory (i.e. a medium which actively shapes a host of possible ways of contextual remembering, from ‘cultural’ and ‘communicative’ uses of the past to implicit forms of collective remembering), the ‘collective text’. (‘Reading Literature as Collective Texts: German and English War Novels of the 1920s as Media of Cultural and Communicative Memory’, Frame 18/1–2 [2005], 48–69: 51–2).
the Irish immigrant once again. However, what the reader is presented with is the memory of that landscape, the imaginary reconstruction of it, rather than the actual Irish landscape itself as it once was. The image has become detached from its geographical referent and as an idea is easily incorporated into another natural scene across the Atlantic.

At a later stage in Quigley’s *Profit and Loss*, positive depictions of the Irish/American landscape return. The narrator does not shy away from laudatory comments as he states that the country around Lake Minnetonka (Minnesota) is “broken, uneven, and mostly uncultivated, but [that] the scenery, though not striking, was varied and fantastic. Every three, shrub and bramble […] bloomed with a beauty and elegance peculiar to itself.”

In a quite lengthy digression, the narrator describes a multi-day picnic excursion undertaken by the local Methodist chapter to the lake to gain new followers. Among the intended converts is a group of young male Irish-American teachers, “who joined this excursion from love of fun and excitement, or a desire to fish, hunt, or bathe”, rather than for the sermons or Methodist company. While wandering through the American landscape, they take note of the picturesque and pastoral qualities of the environs.

A strong appreciation for the American landscape and its inspirational religious and philosophical qualities was also a common feature of nineteenth-century American writings and art, especially so after the mid-century rise of Transcendentalism, inspired by authors such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. However, while the Methodists in Quigley’s novel attempt to tap into the religious inspirational qualities of the beautiful American landscape, no such connections are made by their target audience, the Irish emigrants; rather, they link the American landscape and its beauty to its Irish counterpart. Upon admiring the lake, one of the Irishmen notes that “[t]is a charming and a bright scene, this lake and its scenery. It may be called the Killarney of the Northwest. I assure you, gentlemen […] that there is more than one point of resemblance between the two lakes […] your Minnetonka reproduces many of the charms of Killarney.”

The Irishmen repeatedly comment on the beauty of the American landscape, and “[Y]oung Mulcahy […] who was out from the old sod but two years” remarks that “these hillocks remind one of the

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118 Quigley, *Profit and Loss*, 278.
119 Ibid., 278.
121 Quigley, *Profit and Loss*, 298.
fairy hills or mounds which we have in Ireland. It is very singular,” he con-
tinued, “the whole country I see is so regularly laid out in those irregular
hillocks, that, as Sir Walter Scott said of the county of Down, it reminds
one of a quantity of eggs in a broad dish or sieve”. In the Irishmen’s
and narrator’s descriptions, references and comparisons to Ireland are re-
peatedly made and the emigrants display a deeply rooted nostalgia for the
Irish landscape of old.

Despite such restorative idealisations of the Irish landscape through cele-
brations of and identifications with its American counterpart, the novel
also displays a very different side of the Irish-American landscape. Al-
though the landscape largely inspires celebratory remarks, recalls mem-
ories of the beauty of home, and functions as a literal combination of home
and host haunts, it also brings back disturbing memories of the Famine. In
a typical representation of the landscape as a locus for pastoral *otium* and
song, one of the Irishmen, Mr Haley, who is described as having been im-
plicated in the Fenian Rising, feels inspired by his surroundings and sings
a few verses about Ireland and the Irish landscape. And while the Fam-
ine hardly features in the novel, in Haley’s supposedly self-written verses
titled “An Exile’s Farewell to his Native Land” it is suddenly recalled:

I’d sooner as an exile seek,
A home ’mid Afric’s sands,
Than come back again to view the woes
Of this most oppress’d of lands.

They spoke to me of improvement
Among the peasantry,
What that means in Saxon phrase,
I plainly now can see.

[...]

Whole villages in ruins left,
The only record keep,
Of myriads of human beings
Displaced by flocks of sheep.

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122 Ibid., 279.
123 Ibid., 284.
Chapter 6

Two million mouths, by famine shut,
    Have ceased to cry for bread,
While landlords, like hyenas,
    Dig up the murdered dead,
With blasphemous assurance.\textsuperscript{124}

Haley’s verses contain various nationalist commonplaces regarding the Famine: emigration and exile feature heavily, as do suffering and death at the hands of a colonial oppressor and a Mitchelite interpretation of British government policy. Lastly, the transformations in Irish agriculture at the cost of human labourers are also touched upon, as humans become “[d]isplaced by flocks of sheep” through the transition from tillage to cattle grazing.

For these fictional Irish immigrants the American scenery becomes a layered heterotopic landscape, in which the picturesque American landscape of the 1870s and the memory of the idealised Irish landscape of mythical times are fused together. In Quigley’s narrative, the Irish landscape becomes portable as it is shipped across time and space to the immigrants’ present in America. Although the representation of the American/Irish landscape at first looks like an idealised reconstruction taken from Ireland’s undefined pre-colonial history, the disturbing memory of the recent Famine is also included in this representation. It appears that in this idyllic memory the Irish landscape is haunted by the memory of the Famine, and that the memory of that landscape bears Ireland’s more recent hardships as an inescapable connotation.

In this manner, memories of the Famine are represented as inescapable and inscribed on not just the Irish landscape, but also on the emigrant’s mental reconfiguration of that homeland. Furthermore, the representation provides an alternative twist to the typical nostalgia for the idealised idea of home described in many works of transatlantic Irish fiction. Because the image of the homeland is accompanied by the troubling recollection of the Famine and its after-effects, this literary recollection lays bare the fissures in Irish cultural memory between this idealised home and the (transatlantic) Irish present, and thereby implies that this version of home can no longer, or perhaps could never be reached by the Irish emigrants. Consequently, this elegiac dimension complicates the use of that landscape as a building block for Irish-diasporic cultural identity. In that sense, the depiction of the multi-layered landscape also works against the establish-

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 284–5.
ment of continuity between the Irish past and (transatlantic) present, for it severs the links between the Irish emigrants and their idealised image of home, through the incorporation of Famine memory. As is typical for images that imply a critical, reflective nostalgia, the layered landscape “defers homecoming itself”, whether that homecoming is physical or spiritual.\textsuperscript{125}

A similar critical voice may be found in Irish author Upton’s \textit{Uncle Pat’s Cabin}. Pat M’Mahon’s niece Kathleen, as did many of her female peers, emigrates to America to be better able to take care of her family by working as a domestic.\textsuperscript{126} When Kathleen goes to find her father’s grave, she comments upon the American landscape and its beauty. But instead of providing a typical veneration of her American natural surroundings (which in the same breath would also celebrate the Irish landscape), Kathleen sighs that nothing in America reminds her of her beautiful home:

The journey to there was rendered very pleasant by the varying scenes of American rural life, which Kathleen had not witnessed since her arrival. She did not at first like the face of the country, it was so much unlike her own. Here there were no stone or sod fences dividing the country into fields and gardens; here there were no pretty hedgerows cutting off the occupiers’ residence from the outlying country. And she missed the warm-looking thatched houses of her own land, that for her were more acceptable than these pretentious abodes of rural wealth and happiness, with their broad piazzas, their ornamental-headed windows, their white wooden walls, and their shingle roofs. Taking them in all their architectural beauties and designs, they could not compete with the one-storeyed thatched cottages of Ireland.\textsuperscript{127}

Here, the transportation of the imagined homeland emphatically does not take place, and the omission actually fortifies the emigrant character’s

\textsuperscript{125}Boym, \textit{Future of Nostalgia}, 49.
\textsuperscript{126} In Ireland’s emigration numbers of the latter half of the nineteenth century, young women outnumbered men (Campbell, \textit{Ireland’s New Worlds}, 133). See also Marjorie Howes, ‘How Irish Maids Are Made: Domestic Servants, Atlantic Culture, and Modernist Aesthetics’: “between the Great Famine and the 1920s, we can say with some justice that the prototypical scullery maid in the Atlantic world was an Irish immigrant”. (in Peter D. O’Neill and David Lloyd, eds, \textit{The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas} [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 97–112: 98).
\textsuperscript{127}William C. Upton, \textit{Uncle Pat’s Cabin, Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland} (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1882), 227.
nostalgic sense of longing and homeward orientation.

However, instead of only nostalgically pining for the lost home that is out of reach for her, Kathleen also expresses great relief: “Yet, in that journey she saw no human residence like her Uncle Pat’s cabin. Ah, no, nor in the whole civilised world could such be found, to the credit of the society in which that oppressed individual moved.”\(^\text{128}\) Indeed, Kathleen is very glad that nothing reminds her of home, because this means that hovels such as her uncle Pat’s home – in shambles since Famine time and now nothing more than a ruin – luckily cannot be found here, or anywhere else in the “whole civilized world”. For Kathleen, the beautiful American landscape by contrast provides a strong critique of rural Ireland’s recent history and the present state and governance of the island. Kathleen’s nostalgia is a hybrid nostalgia, as she has a restored idealised home in mind, but simultaneously acknowledges the lack of realism behind that image, for recollections of her uncle’s abode imply that things are very different in present-day Ireland. Together with the heavy-handed moral and political critique provided by the novel’s omniscient narrator, this reference to Ireland’s rural landscape directly confronts Ireland’s recent misery.\(^\text{129}\)

Casting the Irish/American landscape in tones of restorative nostalgia, and thereby idealising the homeland, was not only an integral part of the generic conventions of romantic-didactic fiction; such a form of nostalgia is also seen as a common feature of any diasporic community.\(^\text{130}\) In all, \textit{Profit} 128 Ibid. 129 To give just one example of the many moral judgements found in Upton’s novel, in the chapter ‘Famine Again’, the narrator argues that either government tardiness, government mismanagement or a combination of both have lead to a new period of famine in early 1880s Ireland:

\begin{quote}
In vain did Michael Davitt plead on the plains of Mayo, assuring the world that the Irish people were again face to face with famine. Political scientists, and those who had the care of watching the famine barometer, would not move until Death’s freezing point was reached – until some labourers’ lives were sacrificed; – then the rusty machinery of legislation was set in motion to counteract the evil it had created. Relief works were proposed [...] One would think that all these potent instruments of charity would be sufficient to stem the gradually swelling tide of famine. Yet deaths from starvation occurred, whether from the tardiness of the details or from the general mismanagement of these charities, none now can tell. (\textit{Uncle Pat’s Cabin}, 262–3.)
\end{quote}

130 A common feature present in all forms of diaspora is a collective myth concerning the homeland, and a commitment to its maintenance, (re)creation or restoration. See Kevin Kenny, ‘Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study’, \textit{Journal}
6.2 Nostalgia

and Loss and Uncle Pat’s Cabin demonstrate that this is not unquestionably or uniformly done in Famine fiction written between 1871 and 1891. By precluding the mental return to an imagined, idealised homeland, these tales of emigration acknowledge that Ireland is no longer a place which the emigrant should want to or can return to, as recent history has left lasting scars on the landscape and its inhabitants that are so drastic that they become set connotations of the transported landscape as well. Apparently, although images of home are imaginarily reconstructed in several texts, recognition of recent history becomes an important part of the depiction too. By juxtaposing the idealised image of the homeland with its dystopian counterpart in more recent times, in these texts “the uncanny and terrifying aspects of what was once homely” are acknowledged.\(^{131}\)

The following section will engage further with Irish-diasporic nostalgia, as it will investigate the fictional representation of post-Famine Ireland as a home for the wandering Irish subject.

6.2.2 Return Migration

Sentiments of exile and nostalgia encompass a wish to return, either in body or spirit. Despite this longing, only few emigrants actually returned to Ireland.\(^ {132}\)

Nevertheless, return migrants often feature the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91): main criticaster Bernard Butler in The Days of a Life returns to Ireland after failing to live a successful life across the Atlantic; landlord’s son Dick O’Dell in Dick O’Dell becomes implicated in the Young Ireland movement, flees to America and quickly comes back to start a family in Ireland; Kathleen M’Mahon in Uncle Pat’s Cabin comes back to Ireland just after the death of her uncle, only to discover that America now is her home; in From Killarney to New York, Thade O’Halloran takes his new bride Rosaline to Ireland on their honeymoon; and Hyacinth Dillon in The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne returns to patch up his devastated estate with his newly acquired fortune. Only few fictional “Yank” Irishmen mentioned in this study’s literary corpus – Dick O’Dell and Hyacinth Dillon are the exceptions – return to Ireland to stay. Building

\(^ {131}\) Boym, Future of Nostalgia, 251.

\(^ {132}\) “In all, at least eight million men, women and children left Ireland in the period 1801 to 1921 and very few returned” (Ward, Exile, Emigration and Irish Writing, 133). See also Fitzgerald and Lambkin, Migration in Irish History: “the Irish diaspora, both Catholic and Protestant, stood out from those of other countries, because [...] they all were so much less likely to return and so many of them ritualised their leaving as if it were a death” (182).
on the previous section, I will engage with representations of the reactions expressed by returning characters as they indeed reach their post-Famine home, and will thereby reflect on how these characters deal with feelings of nostalgia and belonging.

The anonymous *Dick O’Dell* was serialised in *Young Ireland* in 1876 and 1877 and is largely set during the Great Famine.\(^{133}\) As “the dreadful famine was devastating the country” agent Peter Moore – the main evil of the narrative – “accumulated riches, dragged from the starving people”.\(^{134}\) The narrative revolves around the O’Dell family, a good landlord family fallen on hard times and their dealings with benevolent English landlord Denham Pierce, evil agent Moore and the starving tenantry. After the Young Ireland rebellion fails, rebel leader Dick Jr. has to flee to America, where he becomes “a wanderer in the “Far West”. As a “wandering exile” Dick feels an “undefinable feeling of loss”.\(^{135}\) The narrative does not relate any further details about Dick’s emigrant life, and fast forwards an undefined number of years to find him back in Ireland. Now a “big, broad-shouldered, sun-burned, whiskered fellow”, hero Dick is “pardoned” for his role in the rebellion. The reader learns that he has married the love of his youth, Winnie, while in America; they return as happy parents to their families in Ireland.\(^{136}\) The narrative rounds off with this happy reunion. Furthermore, the narrative metes out a final act of justice by relating agent Moore’s death in a “railway collision in Washington”.\(^{137}\) *Dick O’Dell* does not show whether Dick will stay in Ireland for good; however, through an emphasis on Dick’s feelings of loneliness and exile during his early days in America and happiness when back in Ireland, the narrative implies that Dick belongs in Ireland and that he will stay. As I will demonstrate, in this he is the exception rather than the rule.

As I have revealed in Chapter 4 in the context of literary representations of nationalism, many of the return migrants in Irish fiction have become Americanised and take their American ideas with them back home. While Irish America was of great importance for the development of a more radical nationalism from the late 1860s onwards, in Irish fiction the influence of America on the Irish mindset at home is not universally applauded; in Charlotte G. O’Brien’s *Light and Shade* (1878), for example, the US

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\(^{134}\) Ibid., 2/39 (23 Sept. 1876), 466.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., 3/5 (3 Feb. 1877), 50.

\(^{136}\) Ibid., 3/6 (10 Feb. 1877), 65.

\(^{137}\) Ibid.
are held responsible for the physically violent dimension of Irish nationalism during the Fenian era. The corruption of Irish patriotism and American influence go hand in hand, as the gun provided to murder benevolent agent Lloyd is provided by the crooked government informer Eugene Meenane, and is described as a “bright new American revolver”. Furthermore, the Irish-American patriotic sentiment is exposed as superficial, for the Irish-American rebels – James Stephens is explicitly mentioned – supposedly back out of the rebellion beforehand. While the true patriotic and non-aggressive fervour of the Irishman is celebrated in *Light and Shade*, physical force nationalism is strongly disapproved of. This division and preference for constitutional nationalism is also supported by the structure of the narrative: while the patriotic spirit and rhetoric are described in detail, all acts of aggressive force are represented in the past tense, in hindsight and in a very brief manner by the narrator; Charlotte O’Brien’s novel does not contain one direct depiction of nationalist action.

Even in seemingly radical nationalist narratives such as *When We Were Boys* by nationalist MP William O’Brien these American ideologies are not considered as (easily) applicable to Ireland. In *When We Were Boys*, Famine emigrants come back to Ireland to share their democratic ideals with the Irish Fenian rebels. In O’Brien’s novel, the Famine looms mostly in the background, as an uncanny form of local colour; only on a few occasions is the event placed in the narrative foreground. One of such instances is the scene in which return emigrant Captain Mike McCarthy tells of his family’s roots in Ireland. It appears that Mike lost his younger sister due to the Famine and that he as a young boy emigrated to America to escape death and destitution in Ireland. When telling protagonist Ken of his childhood in Ireland, Captain Mike recollects that

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138 For a further discussion of how this transnationalism features in a selection of Irish-American works of fiction written in the 1890s, see Cusack and Janssen, ‘Famine, Home, and Transatlantic Politics’.
140 Ibid., vol. 1, 147.
141 Ibid., vol. 1, 110–11, 143, 273. While American physical force nationalism is denounced, good Irish Fenian Maurice’s words as presented as the true patriotic message: “It is our work to fight against the tyranny and inequity of the laws of government, not to murder, or even revenge on the heads of the gentle folks the harm they’ve done to us and to our fathers.” (vol. 1, 282.)
“I mind, as it was yesterday, the morning we were put out of the cabin at Coomhola Bridge. [...] the poor ould man could hardly drag his legs after him with the hunger, and my little sister, Mary – Mat Murrin, you may remember little Mary – it was the famine-fever, I believe. I remember a couple of soldiers lifted her on the cart for the workhouse in the sheet, but the poor girsha never got there. I went out the first thing this morning to the ould quarryhole where they buried her – there was forty more put in the same morning by the relieving-officer without coffin or sheet, the Lord be kind to them!”

Captain Mike, one of the most ardent and vociferous nationalist rebels of O’Brien’s narrative (although in the end he is all talk), was inspired to act because of the Famine. In this manner, the text presents indignation at Famine suffering as a prolonged and decisive force to motivate later struggles for Irish independence, even to their violent extreme and shows that the event indeed awoke strong nationalist sentiments across the Atlantic, making Irish nationalism a truly cross-Atlantic endeavour fuelled by Irish history, American political ideology and prolonged hardships in contemporary America.

Unfortunately, in O’Brien’s story, Irish-American ideology lacks the stamina to be truly successful in Ireland. When We Were Boys acknowledges the merits of the North-American democratic ideology, for it has brought about a “transformation” in Irish society, yet the novel also calls into question any unmodified transferral of American ideals and approaches. When We Were Boys implies that Irish-American vehemence is perhaps not the way out of Ireland’s present misery, and that these ardent sentiments are only superficial at best: Captain Mike and his peers immediately return to America, and leave the Irish to their own devices, which indicates that the emotional investment of the Irish-American return emigrant with his home country does not go far, and that his sense of belonging lies across the Atlantic rather than at home. Possibly, O’Brien considered this message even more appropriate for Ireland’s condition at the time of writing than during the narrative’s temporal setting of the

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143 The transatlantic dimension of Irish politics and nationalism has been widely acknowledged in recent scholarship. For a detailed and well argued discussion, see Jonathan Gantti’s Irish Terrorism in the Atlantic Community, 1865–1922 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
144 W. O’Brien, When We Were Boys, 549.
late 1860s, as in an afterword he disproves of a violent approach, claiming that “Irishmen have discovered a saner resource than the wild weapons of boyish insurrection” since the events of the story occurred.\footnote{Ibid., 550.}

In Annie Keary’s\textit{ Castle Daly}, a nationalist return emigrant with similar intentions figures: cousin D’Arcy O’Donnell. Poet and rebel D’Arcy spent considerable time in the United States where his Irish romantic nationalism became fused with American political ideals. In America, D’Arcy started editing a paper when he was only eighteen, wrote romantic nationalist poetry and further shaped his ideals of freedom for Ireland, before coming back to become “a sub-editor of the \textit{Nation}”, and function as one of the Young Ireland leaders to help “make [the Irish] resolute in claiming the management of our own land for ourselves” during the Famine.\footnote{Annie Keary, \textit{Castle Daly: The Story of an Irish Home Thirty Years Ago} 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1875), vol. 2, 251-2; vol. 3, 3.} Although D’Arcy is portrayed as a noble character with the purest of hearts, in the end the intentions voiced by him and his Irish-American peers are not enough to help Young Ireland’s cause. American intervention in the Irish nationalist cause does not provide the solution for Ireland’s Famine-era problems. Because of his implication in the failed Young Ireland rebellion, Cousin D’Arcy has to flee and leaves for America again, this time for good. He becomes a member of American society and becomes so disillusioned with his Irish rebel roots that he denounces Fenianism in the late 1860s.\footnote{Ibid., vol. 3, 351.} The reader learns that D’Arcy will never return to Ireland and dies “a martyr to the foresight that would not let him encourage new ill-timed attempts [at rebellion and Irish freedom]”\footnote{Ibid., vol. 3, 350.}

Connor Daly undergoes a fate similar to that of his cousin, but with a more positive outcome. Although Connor initially does not want to leave Ireland, after going, he never intends to remigrate to Ireland. After Connor and D’Arcy’s narrow escape, the novel skips to the scene of Connor’s homecoming years later. Tellingly, the chapter in question starts with the description of Connor as a vaguely familiar stranger who surveys the much changed Irish landscape: the hero is thoroughly alienated from his home. Through this fast-forwarding technique, the structure of the narrative again underscores this detachment between diasporic subject and former home: we learn nothing of Connor’s life in between his flight from Ireland and his return as an Irish-American years later, disconnecting these two distinct episodes in his life. It is only when he is brought into contact
with his sister that the identity of the mystery visitor is verified: he is indeed the lost son of the Daly estate. During the conversation between brother and sister, it becomes clear that Connor has become a fully integrated Irish-American and that he has no intention of returning to Ireland for good. In fact, Ireland is no longer described as his home, as Ellen bluntly states that Connor is “giving up the old home for the new one you have made for yourself out in the far West, and for the clever little American wife that is in it”. In contrast to, for example, the Wynns in *Cedar Creek* (1863) who create two homes for themselves, one in Ireland and one across the Atlantic, in *Castle Daly*, a dichotomy is presented between those who remain and those who leave; a sense of dual belonging is undermined, as Ellen presents emigration as a choice to belong either to the Old or the New World.

While many of his poorer peers in real life could only imagine their return home, destitute upper-class member Connor is able to actually return to Ireland. But upon his return, any idealisation of the homeland is impeded, as he considers the Daly estate “so changed”. Confronted with the great desolation of the estate, Connor is astounded at the transformation of his former home. He exclaims to his sister: “Yes, yes; but where are the people? that is what I cannot make out – to be sure I have only had a morning’s experience – but though I see signs of prosperity about the place itself, and in one or two cabins I have been in, I say again where are the people?” Ellen sighs that she “mourn[s] over the deserted villages and the silent hill-sides”, and attributes the emptying out of Ireland to the Famine, and especially to emigration.

For Connor, his former home now engenders an uncanny experience, for it is somehow familiar, yet disturbingly different from the idyllic pre-Famine space described in the first volume of Keary’s novel. If this

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149 Ibid., vol. 3, 362.
150 While the Wynn siblings continue to love their old home Dunore, they happily settle in Cedar Creek, the town they have established in Canada. Their Irish home continues to exert great power over them, as for Linda Wynn Dunore is described as “the place you loved so much” and at the narrative’s end she still gazes “with eyes full of tears” on renderings of the old estate. Elizabeth Hely Walshe, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement; a Tale of Canadian Life* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1863), 290.
151 Keary, *Castle Daly*, vol. 3, 349.
152 Ibid., vol. 3, 343, 349.
153 Ibid., vol. 3, 349.
154 For a discussion of remigration and uncanny homecomings in Irish and Irish-diasporic fiction of an earlier period, see Marguerite Corporaal, ‘Remigration in Irish and Irish Diaspora Famine Fiction, 1860–1870’, *Breac* (Apr.
return emigrant had an idealised concept of home in his mind, it is starkly countered by the post-Famine reality. No longer reminiscent of his childhood haunts, Ireland is no longer described as Connor’s home, and as he laments the loss of people and the desolation of the landscape, Connor displays a sentiment that can be read as reflective rather than restorative nostalgia, for it underscores the abrupt break between the Irish emigrant subject and his identification with Ireland itself.

To a lesser extent, a similar claim can be made about Hyacinth Dillon’s experience of return. Although Hyacinth’s experience in Ireland ends on a more positive note than Connor’s in Keary’s novel, in Brew’s *Castle Cloyne* the uncanny nature of post-Famine Ireland as home is also acknowledged. After the Famine, the Dillon estate is described in dystopian tones. In fact, the change has been so great and so many of Hyacinth’s loved ones have died due to the Famine – he even returns to the estate just as his only sister is about to be buried –, that he cannot bear to remain any longer and resolves to leave, lamenting “[d]isinherited, and alone on earth, what tie have I to bind me to Ireland?” For Hyacinth, post-Famine Ireland is no longer his home. Consequently, he forestalls homecoming by roaming the European continent for several years, before coming back for good to repurchase his father’s estate and to restore it by functioning as an ideal feudal landlord. Upon his first return, the Daly estate is described in a manner reminiscent of the portrayal of the desolated landscape found in Keary’s *Castle Daly*:

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As she rounds off Hyacinth’s narrative, the narrator states that she “cannot see into the future” but does demonstrate that with the return of Hyacinth, at least the ideal Irish Catholic landlord has returned. The narrator then leaves out in the open whether her ending should be accepted, or taken with a grain of salt: everything “could have been nothing but a dream, or it might be a pleasant reality; who can tell?” (Brew, *Castle Cloyne*, vol. 3, 284–5.

Ibid., vol. 3, 207.
The teeming population that had once made the air resound with the sounds of life and labour, was all gone. Mile after mile was passed over in the glad light of that summer morning without a human creature becoming visible, for the Famine had done its appointed work with a resolute and masterful hand. [...] Where Dillon had once known snug farm-houses, and little hamlets of a few houses grouped together, he saw nothing now but heaps of stones and rubbish, tumbled about in unsightly, lonely ruin. The country had been in a bad way when he left it two years ago, [...] but what he now saw as he drove along, was very much worse than he had expected.\textsuperscript{157}

The present condition of his home surpasses his expectations in a negative manner, and in that sense is a sublime testament to the disruptive force of the Famine. As was the case in Keary’s novel, in \textit{Castle Cloyne} an easy homecoming to an idealised homeland is undermined and deferred. In Brew’s novel, the emigrant comes home to an uncanny remnant of his former world, and has to put in much personal investment to perhaps better its condition. In the end, the narrator only hints at the possibility of improvement, but never affirms the full return of the idealised feudal estate.

Whether or not these novels promise or at least hint at some betterment in post-Famine Ireland, a discrepancy is displayed between the idealised, restored (mental) image of home and the experience of that home, laying bare the constructed and illusory nature of that image. Feelings of belonging are altered, as these characters become disillusioned with post-Famine Ireland and can now no longer unproblematically consider it their home. The narratives play with the multiple senses of belonging typically ascribed to the diasporic subject, and underline that for that subject the connection with his or her country of birth, or homeland orientation, need not necessarily come first.

David Lloyd has commented upon the rather free use of the term diaspora in a wider and more recent context of Irish emigration, and argues that the common appropriation of the term “insidiously” aids in claiming “a special ethnic status” of prolonged victimhood, even at present.\textsuperscript{158}

What this chapter has demonstrated, is that such critical asides can be made from a very early stage already, as fiction written relatively soon after the Famine is open to many different interpretations of Irish emig-

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., vol. 3, 191–2.
\textsuperscript{158} Lloyd, ‘What’s in a Name?’ n.p.
rant experience and the Famine’s historical legacy. It has to be stressed that with this remark I in no way intend to downplay the hardships and suffering that were part of nineteenth-century Irish emigrant life, but, simply want to validate the variety of literary *interpretations* of those experiences. Building upon the discussions concerning senses of exile, nostalgia and belonging that have formed the core of this chapter, I want to argue that we need not necessarily let go of the term of diaspora as a theoretical tool to describe the nature of the Irish emigrant community. However, we do need to move beyond the narrow classification of Irish emigrants, and even Irish Famine emigrants, as members of a victim diaspora. It would be fruitful to separate our understanding of the Irish emigrant community from connotations usually associated with biblical/historical Jewish expulsion and suffering.

In her recent article on the Irish-diasporic space published in *Éire-Ireland*, Mary J. Hickman provides a useful redefinition of (Irish) diaspora. Her notion focuses on becoming rather than being, provides room for the “intersection of social divisions across time and space” and acknowledges the continually changing “(national) formation and reconfigurations”.

Hickman argues that “diaspora […] refers to a hybrid, historical social formation in process that has been produced by migration” and also states that the “lens of diaspora space focuses on the creation of new social relations and identifications.”

Following Hickman and Lloyd, in the context of formulations of the Irish emigrant experience in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), a more inclusive definition of the term diaspora is needed, a definition which opens up the term to both positive and negative readings and focuses on the many new and fluid social formations within the

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159 Mary J. Hickman, ‘Diaspora Space and National Reformations’, *Éire-Ireland* 47/1–2 (Spring-Summer 2012), 19–44: 20. Hickman emphasises the continued “national” dimension of Irish-diasporic identities as formed within the diasporic space, the space where different social, cultural and temporal contexts encounter one another and are used to form diasporic identities. However, her call to reconsider and open up the term with regard to the Irish-diasporic community should also encompass a more ample reading for Irish self-definitions that have gone beyond the narrow process of self-definition along the lines of the nation-state. Granted, Irish nationalism and the future Irish nation were two of the most important pillars of Irish (transatlantic) identity, but a few things complicate leaving the (self-) definition at that. For one, in the late nineteenth century, Ireland was not a sovereign state, and secondly, as Chapters 3 and 4 of this study have also illustrated, Irish self-definitions went beyond Ireland itself, as American ideology and other cultures’ histories and identities were also used to define what it meant to be Irish. So while Irish identity was very much a national identity, its construction was also very much a transnational and transhistorical process.

160 Hickman, ‘Diaspora Space and National (Re)Formations’, 22, 23.
diasporic space rather than on finite senses of belonging external to that space. This more open approach provides a suitable lens to look at identity and memory formation within the transnational Irish community of the late nineteenth century, and to move beyond limited (self-ascribed) connotations of nostalgia, homeland orientation, (trans-) historical victimhood and exclusion.
Chapter 7

Conclusion: Embedded Famine Memories in a Transnational Context

7.1 Literary Famine Recollections and their Development over Time and Space

Melissa Fegan argues that the Famine became a “blank canvas” on which later writers projected their current fears.\(^1\) While this is true to some extent, at the same time Famine memory is not a blank slate, but also a literary topos carrying an \textit{a priori} significance, which, moreover, receives shape from older memories of famine and (Irish) suffering and from established literary traditions. As such, Famine recollection itself is subject to premediation.\(^2\) Simultaneously, Famine memory provides representations of later hardships with its specific connotations and thereby also functions as a form of premediation. Many similarities can be found between representations of Famine and famine recollection; sometimes they align to such a far-reaching degree that I have spoken of F/famine memory.

Famine memories rarely stand on their own in the works of Famine fic-


tion that I have studied; they are embedded in larger historical, political, ideological and literary discourses. Famine recollections are used in a strategic manner, as they are activated to showcase the injustice of the Irish condition during the Famine or during a later crisis and are appropriated to advocate for betterment of this condition. They function as incentives for political action. Sometimes Famine memory carries this task by itself, but more frequently it is operationalised in the context of a longer history of Irish suffering and colonial oppression. The effects of this embedding are twofold: while it increases the gravity of later events by association with Famine memory, it also places the Famine in a longer history of Irish hardships, often at the behest of colonial rule, and incorporates the Famine in a broader, Irish-diasporic or even global context of unjust oppression.

In the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), Famine memory is temporally embedded through either the consideration of Irish (recent) history as repetitive or as continuous. While there is subtle difference between such considerations, I would argue that these approaches to narrative time demonstrate a similarity. Considerations of F/famine suffering as an endemic condition or as a “realignment of temporalities” both suggest that Irish (rural) temporality distinguishes itself from the regular, chronological passage of time. Moreover, they show that the root causes of Irish suffering – absenteeism, a corrupted social system in which the poor have too few rights, and the idea that the land does not belong to those who till it – are always looming in the background of Irish life. This view of recent Irish history is in line with the opinions voiced by many political and philanthropic commentators writing between the Famine and the early 1890s, such as John Mitchel, James Fintan Lalor, Charles Stewart Parnell, David Bennett King, James Hack Tuke and Isaac Butt, who argued that because of these wrongs the Irish poor had been on the brink of starvation for decades.

With regard to political interpretations of Famine memory, another similarity which is found in fiction from both sides of the Atlantic and which spans the period 1871–91, can be discerned. On the level of several different topics – Irish nationalism, the Land Question and the plight of the Irish rural poor – many Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction include a Mitchelite interpretation of the Famine period and British governmental policy. Condemnations of the inhumanity of British Political

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Economy and *laissez-faire* economics, the conviction that exports greatly succeeded imports, Mitchel’s famous dictum that “The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine”, and the accusation that British policy was murderous in its intent can be found in works from the 1870s, 1880s and early 1890s, written in North America and the British Isles and disseminated on both sides of the Atlantic.\(^4\) This rhetoric is sometimes used in a relatively subtle manner, as is the case in Keary’s *Castle Daly*. At other times, it is adopted wholesale, the most apt illustration of this being Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*. Chris Morash has argued that Famine memory functioned as a powerful element in Irish nationalist politics at the time.\(^5\) Works that are part of the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) and which include nationalist rhetoric indeed reveal such a politicisation of Famine memory. Mitchel’s polemic nationalist interpretation of the Famine and its after-effects functions as a key element in these works, figuring as a justification for present nationalist politics and struggles.

The differences in the uses of Famine memory throughout the period and in North-America versus the British Isles are to be found in the nuances. From the smaller famine of 1879 and the start of the Land War onwards, Famine memory increasingly became incorporated into narratives set during later times. Many later works focus on more recent hardships, events and developments – the smaller famine, the Land War, the Plan of Campaign and the second Land War of the late 1880s – and make use of Famine memory as a form of premediation to assign meaning to these later events. However, the nature of this approach does not greatly differ before and after the early 1880s, as before that period Famine memory also became embedded in larger historical formulations, only then more often in conjunction with earlier events, such as the Fenian rebellion, the United Irishmen rebellion and the failed rebellion of 1803 and execution of Robert Emmet, or even going further back, to the time of Oliver Cromwell. In line with nationalist rhetoric and newspaper reporting of the period, these works of fiction underscore the lasting validity and applicability of Famine memory throughout 1871–91, and also demonstrate that authors adapted this memory to suit the changing needs of their cross-Atlantic community.

Regarding the Land Question and the literary propagation of an Irish

\(^4\) John Mitchel, *Ireland since ’98: Daniel O’Connell; the Repeal Agitation; the Miseries of the Famine; the Young Ireland Party, etc.* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 152.

(Catholic) feudal ideal, a temporal development can be detected. While the feudal ideal resurfaces throughout the period in works written on both sides of the Atlantic, it manifests itself less frequently in the closing years of the period. Following James Murphy and Donald Jordan, I believe this can be explained by the Irish socio-historic context of the time, as during the last decade of 1871–91, tenant ownership and the establishment of a “new Catholic petite bourgeoisie establishment” became a reality, whereby the traditionalist ideal as represented in the works of Famine fiction was no longer a viable or desirable option.6

With regard to representations of Irish victimhood a difference between works of Famine fiction written in North America and the British Isles comes to the fore. British narratives more often depict Famine and famine victimhood than do North-American works. This could be attributed to the fact that several of the North-American narratives focus more on emigrant life in America and Canada or on positive romantic-didactically inspired formulations of the Irish future (in North America), than British works. North-American works more frequently engage with what it means to be Irish in North America; they direct their attention rather to the Irish immigrant than emigrant, and try to show the upside of immigrant existence – if the immigrant lives a virtuous life. Additionally, in the context of representations of victimhood, a temporal difference features in British narratives. In times of increased political turmoil – in this case the period from the smaller famine of 1879 and the start of the Land War onwards – works of F/famine fiction make more use of devices and techniques linked to the Gothic mode.7 In line with Jim Shanahan’s contention that the Gothic functioned as a form of Irish literary realism, I argue that these Gothic devices and techniques serve to show the disturbing reality of Irish suffering between the Famine era and 1891.8

At the onset of the larger project ‘Relocated Remembrance’ we assumed the existence of clear national differences in the appropriation of Famine memory in works of Famine fiction. This assumption was made

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7 David Punter and Glennis Byron state that writers more often turned to the Gothic in times of political and social turmoil. See The Gothic (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), xix, xviii.

on the basis of earlier scholarship on Irish and Irish-diasporic literature and identity formation, which was predominantly geographically confined. In line with my expectations, the present study has demonstrated that at least for the period 1871–91, no great claims with regard to different literary appropriations of Famine recollection in North-American versus Irish-British Famine fiction can be made. This study demonstrates the many continuities and concordances found in the literary representation of Famine memory. The differences that I have described earlier are rather exceptions concerning images and narrative developments found in both Irish and Irish-diasporic fiction, than that they can be attributed to vastly different geographically-identifiable interpretations. Consequently, a “translocational approach” which spans the British and North-American Irish literary communities would indeed be more justified.  

This translocational approach accords with the cross-Atlantic nature of Irish nationalist politics of the time. Moreover, the Irish-American community was also deeply involved in the Irish Land Question, as Ely M. Janis explains. The many similarities and cross-Atlantic tendencies found in Irish and Irish-diasporic Famine fiction can be placed in the context of the British and American publishing markets. Throughout the nineteenth century British influence on the American literary market was substantial, as before the existence of copyright protection laws (which only came into being in 1891) British books were easily and cheaply republished in the US. Moreover, as Joel Wiener demonstrates, in the third quarter of the century, America’s influence in Britain increased, signifying a “shift of power in the cultural sphere”. The influences both markets had on each other are not just demonstrated by the cross-Atlantic publication histories of many works part of the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), or by the fact that many articles from British newspapers were frequently republished in North-American journals of the time, but is also borne out by the fact that, often, works of fiction written before 1871 were recycled in journals of a later publication date. The corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) in

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13 For example, Irish author David Power Conyngham’s *Frank O’Donnell* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1861) was reprinted in serialised form as *The O’Donnells of Glen Cottage*
that respect serves as an apt illustration of what could be considered a cross-Atlantic publishing market.

These remarks pertain to larger contexts. The cross-influences in the publication markets, politics and culture mentioned above, cover a longer timespan; therefore, the argument in favour of a translocational approach is not only valid for how Famine memories become embedded in larger historic and cross-Atlantic contexts in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), but could also be made for their representation in Famine fiction written during earlier and later periods. Additionally, as the important studies by scholars such as Kelleher, Morash and Fegan demonstrate, at the moment, literary Famine studies are largely represented by Irish literature; since the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) contains about an equal amount of North-American and British works, the scholarly field seems to represent the actual situation in an uneven manner. The larger project ‘Re-located Remembrance’ (1847–1921) redresses this geographically confined approach and provides a more balanced picture.

The translocational argument could also be extended to the larger fields of Irish and Irish-diasporic literature. In related disciplines, scholars increasingly adopt a transnational view: for example, Ely M. Janis and Jonathan Gantt study Irish politics and nationalism in a cross-Atlantic context; Joel Wiener discusses the overlaps between the broader American and British publishing markets. Peter D. O’Neill and David Lloyd have edited the interdisciplinary *The Black and Green Atlantic* (2009) which explores the concordances and differences between the Irish and African Atlantic communities. The latter collection also contains essays concerning literature and identity formation. A literary scholar such as Charles Fanning provides important inroads into a cross-Atlantic dimension by including socio-historic information for the Irish-American community before and after emigration. Nevertheless, at the moment, an in-depth comparative and translocational approach to cross-Atlantic Irish fiction (and its role in cultural identity formation) seems to be lacking, while the thoroughly intertwined social, political, economic and literary contexts of the time would legitimise this.

In the specific case of the present study, further research into the publication market would be valuable. It is very difficult and perhaps even

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in the Montreal-based magazine *The Harp* in 1875. Well-known Irish author William Carleton’s seminal Famine narrative *The Black Prophet* (1847) was republished in *The Irish-American* during the Land War (1881), thereby creating a link between literary Famine memory and Land War-era misery.

14 The volume was published by Palgrave Macmillan (New York).
impossible to precisely assess readership numbers for many publications – exact issuing numbers are often not available, and we do not know how often novels, papers and journals switched hands. Scholars such as David E. Sumner and Alan and Barbara Nourie have written about the publication histories and numbers of many American journals, but have focused on the US market after 1900 and on mass-market publications, respectively.\footnote{David E. Sumner, \textit{The Magazine Century: American Magazine since 1900} (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Alan and Barbara Nourie, eds, \textit{American Mass-Market Magazines} (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1990).} Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor have provided a detailed encyclopaedic overview of the British and Irish publication market of the nineteenth century.\footnote{Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, eds, \textit{Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism} (Gent: Academia Press, 2009).} However, because they catered to a relatively limited audience, many of the newspapers and journals that (re)published the works of fiction included in this study have not received such in-depth investigation, certainly not within the contexts of both the British and North-American publication markets. A more in-depth view of the interchanges within the transnational publishing market, as well as a fuller understanding of circulation and publication numbers of novels and of works of fiction included in journals would be of great value to gain a better understanding of the popularity of the works of Famine fiction and their potential influence as carriers and shapers of cultural memory within a cross-Atlantic community.

\section*{7.2 The Role of Literary Borrowings, Narrative Devices and Techniques on Formulations of Famine Memory}

The works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) are, generally speaking, of a similar generic and stylistic nature. Often, they can be placed under the generic header of romantic didactic fiction, or at least contain many elements associated with that literary tradition. In contrast to Fanning’s earlier observations, this is not only the case for Irish-American works, but also for Irish works written in Canada and the British Isles. All of the works of fiction are of an emphatically moral character, and often offer clear political and ideological directions, advocating a betterment of Ireland’s colonial condition, or at least improvements in its rural society. They engage with the plight of the Irish rural poor and lay bare the tribulations undergone by both upper and lower classes in a rural so-
Chapter 7

society under great strain due to socio-cultural, political, demographic and natural changes and hardships. Moreover, the forms of these narratives bear many resemblances, as they are of a conventional nature and are all told by a (moralising) omniscient narrator who speaks in the third person.

The literary devices and techniques of excess, repetition, liminality, and of explorations of thresholds, commonly associated with the Gothic mode, and the device of the pathetic fallacy form an integral part of formulations of Irish victimhood for about two-thirds of all the works of fiction involved. As a consequence, in these works of fiction, memories of the Famine become part of a Gothic and pathetic fallacy-inspired literary repertoire. Recollections of Famine victimhood and Irish victimhood during other periods of hardship are expressed through similar literary forms and thereby become linked. Repetitions on both the levels of imagery and stylistics demonstrate that the narrative form of these works of fiction underscores the sense of continuity allegedly central to Irish suffering.

Moreover, with regard to representations of victimhood, I have demonstrated that the crossing of spatial thresholds and of layers of focalisation leads to a “diminishment of the observer role”. In narratives which are on the whole told by an omniscient narrator, the narrative experientiality of images of hunger and fever victims is enhanced through seemingly direct representation, as the reader is not confronted with these images through descriptions by the narrator, but witnesses them through the eyes of the protagonist. In contrast to what is often the case in earlier Famine fiction, in the majority of the works included in this study’s corpus there is no safe distance between the focalising character and the suffering F/famine victim. Narrative enframedment of images of suffering is undermined through the transgression of spatial thresholds by the witnessing character: characters move freely between interior and exterior scenes of F/famine suffering, whereby images of human victims are focalised in a direct manner.

In the context of Irish and Irish-diasporic narratives detailing Irish emigration, the use of temporal and affective layers creates a narrative distance between Famine suffering and a happy life across the Atlantic.


I argue that this is also underscored by how narratives employ shifts in following and focalisation: descriptions of Famine suffering are frequently not focalised or even followed through the protagonist’s perception, while immigrant life set during later times is. Through the use of layers and shifts in focalisation and following, the “narrative experientiality” of scenes from Irish immigrant life is stimulated, while the potential experientiality with regard to Famine memory is partially precluded, as it is not narratively embodied through the protagonist. Consequently, potential identification of the reader with Famine memory is restricted, while readerly engagement with the positive rendering of Irish life in North America is stimulated.

Dependent on ideological orientations, works of Famine fiction emphasise contrasting issues with regard to Famine memory. At times they focus more on considerations of Irish suffering; in other cases they stress (eventual) triumph and success despite periods of F/famine suffering. Mitchelite readings of the Famine and British governmental action during the period are fully supported or nuanced, dependent on whether the text stimulates identification with these extreme viewpoints through its following patterns and/or shifts in focalisation. Notwithstanding the comparable nature of the 33 works of fiction, different levels of engagement with Famine memory are found, as the impact of that memory is represented in different degrees of severity dependent on in what context it is appropriated, and whether it is represented directly – for example through direct character focalisation. The strategic uses of Famine memory are supported by the narrative devices and techniques of embedding and layering, enframing, following and focalisation. The variety in uses of these devices and techniques creates varying levels of distance and consequently can stimulate or impede readerly engagement with Famine memory. Therefore, the effects that the narrative devices and techniques investigated in this study have, can be found on the levels of the narrative experientiality of and engagement with Famine memory.

Through its narratological approach, the present study underscores the fact that literary form has substantial influence on the shape of Famine recollection and its potential impact for later generations. Literary devices and techniques such as the pathetic fallacy and shifts in focalisation were also applied in non-literary writings. To gain a fuller understanding of the extent to which such devices and techniques contribute to the formulation of cultural memories and identity, further investigation of the influence

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19 See, for example, the article ‘Eviction in the County Meath’, *The Irish-American* (New York, 6 Dec. 1873), discussed in Chapter 5.
of the literary elements on non-literary formulations of memory and identity would be fruitful. James V. Wertsch has more generally explored the appropriation of narrative templates in non-literary articulations of cultural memory.\(^{20}\) Reasoning from the awareness that Famine memory was frequently used as a strategic tool to point out the injustice of the Irish condition and argue for its betterment in later times, I believe that a specific consideration of the narrative devices and techniques that I have explored in this study and their potential use in non-fictional writings, would benefit our understanding of the narrativisation processes inherent to the construction of Famine memory. Like the works of fiction central to this study, political discourse, religious speeches and journalistic engagements with Irish suffering also relied on audience engagement and sympathy. By studying how narrative devices and techniques which have the potential to stimulate readerly engagement – here following, focalisation and levels of embedding – specifically are employed in non-fiction writings of the time, our understanding of the narrativisation process and the influence of literary form on the formation of Famine memory and constructions of identity could be (greatly) enhanced.

7.3 The Importance of the Irish Land and Landscape in Literary Formulations of Famine Memory and Irishness

This study has demonstrated that representations of land and landscape take on seminal positions in literary formulations of Irish nationality and Irishness in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91). In earlier fiction the Irish landscape is repeatedly transplanted to American and Canadian natural settings, whereby, on the imaginative level, it is made re-accessible for Irish immigrant characters in North America.\(^{21}\) While in Famine fiction from the period 1871–91 this transculturation can still be found, it also becomes more problematic because of the inclusion of Famine memory. In


works such as *Profit and Loss* and *Uncle Pat’s Cabin*, picturesque and pastoral American landscapes recall idyllic memories of the home landscape, but these recollections are intruded upon by Famine memory and its elegiac dimension for a now lost ideal Irish landscape and accompanying way of life. Famine memory in this manner functions as a disturbing traumatic memory.

In the context of literary formulations of romantic Irish nationalism, Irish ruins function as spaces for national(ist) rebirth and rebellion. In this sense, Irish picturesque ruins function as important *lieux de mémoire*. They are also Foucauldian heterotopias testifying to colonial oppression and defeat throughout the ages, while simultaneously showing the potential for nationalist regeneration and self-assertion. This engagement with ruins and their nationalist potential is more frequently found in British than in North-American texts, which arguably can be attributed to a continued interest in these structures following from the Irish Romantic mindset, as well as the influence of the burgeoning Celtic Revival. The positive interpretation of the Irish ruin is but infrequently linked to Famine-era ruins, and is predominantly connected to pre-Famine or even pre-colonial spaces and structures. Memory is rerouted, as Irishness and nationalist ideology become joined to the distant or even mythic Irish past and the more recent memory of the Famine is bypassed. Thereby, in the context of an Irish nationalist teleology towards eventual Irish independence, the works of fiction suggest that Famine memory is still too disruptive and does not fit into such narrative patterns; as Asenath Nicholson already stated during the Famine, here Famine memory appears “out of common course, and out of the order of even nature itself”.

Irish environmental relatedness is not only formulated in connection to positive interpretations of the Irish landscape, but also figures in representations of (traces of) public works, which are often seen as spatial testimonies to human suffering. Moreover, the link between the Irishman and his haunts is also found in the frequent deployment of the pathetic fallacy and a “topography of the Gothic”. The use of these narrative

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22 Julia M. Wright discusses romantic representations of the Irish landscape, and also discusses “the tension in ruin discourse”, found in romantic writings. See *Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 57.


devices demonstrates that the Irish natural environment reflects the mental and physical hardships endured by Irish sufferers.

I have used the term ‘the failure of the georgic’ when discussing representations of the Irish land and how it (definitively) fails to sustain its people due to the Famine and later similar hardships. Although this development implies that the devastation of the land can be seen as a testimony to the traumatic effect of the Famine and later hardships, it does not mean that, consequently, Irish environmental connectedness is no longer an option in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91). Rather, to retain the possibility of this traditional natural connection, the works of fiction focus on the aesthetic landscape rather than the work-related land. As novels such as The Days of a Life, The D’Altons of Crag and When We Were Boys show, the relation between landscape and Irishman or woman is not established through agricultural labour, but is founded on the divine/religious and nationalist inspiration stimulated by the landscape, as well as by mythical, typically Revivalist elements found in that landscape which apparently speak directly to the Irish psyche. This finding implies that in the context of the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), an adjustment of the arguments voiced by earlier scholars such as Terry Eagleton and Oona Frawley is in order. I have shown that in contrast to Frawley, here we should rather speak of the more specific failure of the georgic, its work-related ethic and implications for nation and communal identity building, than of the more general “failure of the pastoral”. Unlike georgic spaces, beautiful pastoral landscapes become part of the aesthetic(ised) Irish landscape and in that manner can still figure as literary loci for Irish identity construction. Moreover, the emphasis placed on the beautiful landscape as a building block for Irishness goes against Eagleton’s argument that in Irish literature of the nineteenth century, Irish nature was seen as a “working environment” and considered an “ethico-political category” rather than an inspiration for “aesthetic appreciation”.26

In the context of the failure of the georgic, it appears that North-American texts somewhat more frequently attribute the Famine with a decisive role in the depopulation and concomitant aestheticisation of the land and its failure than British works, which more frequently suggest that later periods of similar hardships – such as the smaller famine of 1879 and the Land War – also play a seminal role in such environmental

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transformation. Thereby, in the context of depictions of the land, North-American works give a slightly more prominent role to Famine memory and its impact. However, I have argued that this difference is of a minor nature, as, quantitatively speaking, it is insufficiently supported. Whether we are dealing with a work of Famine fiction written in Ireland in 1871 or a work written in the US in 1891, landscape descriptions are an important element of that work and do not just function as backdrops; more often than not, there is a strong connection between the landscape and the Irish character. This engagement between Irishman and Irish environment does not become less pronounced as the period 1871–91 progresses; nor is it less present in North-American works. In this sense, what I have called the failure of the georgic and the focus on the landscape rather than land to (re)formulate an environmentally-inspired sense of Irishness can be considered transnational tendencies throughout the period 1871–91. In the works of Famine fiction, Famine recollections have an important but not destructive impact on the “environmental relatedness” commonly associated with considerations of Irishness.27

7.4 Exceptionality? Victim Diaspora, Origin Myth, Exile and Cultural Trauma

At the onset of this dissertation, I stated that the notions of Irish emigration as a victim diaspora, the Famine as the diasporic founding myth, and the conviction that Irish emigrants, especially since the Famine, consider themselves as involuntary exiles, are widely held beliefs. Moreover, I also demonstrated the commonly accepted notions that the Famine is, in a sense, inexpressible and that it is a cultural trauma, with traumatic after-effects lasting well into our present age.

Throughout this study, I have complicated each of these assumptions with regard to the representations of Famine memory found in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91). Margaret Kelleher and Astrid Wonneberger take on a critical stance vis-à-vis the belief that the Famine is the birth myth of the Irish-diasporic community.28 Accordingly, I have demonstrated that

refutations of this belief dominate fiction from the period 1871–91 already, as the majority of works of Famine fiction that discuss Irish emigration, do not suggest that the Famine was the (main) motivation for the Irish leaving their island of birth. In these works of fiction, a (partial) dissociation of Famine memory from Irish emigration is established.

Several scholars, most notably Kerby Miller, have demonstrated that Irish immigrants in the US, generally speaking, saw themselves as involuntary exiles. By contrast, with regard to the present study I counter this view and rather take up Fanning’s celebration of the vibrant and polyphonic nature of the Irish-American literary community, arguing that his view can be also extended to Canadian and British fiction in the period 1871–91. While negative interpretations of Irish immigrant life exist in my corpus, they are trumped by a much larger number of positive depictions of that life.

Together, the literary contestations of the notions of involuntary exile and the Famine as the diasporic charter myth problematise the conviction that the Irish-diasporic community is a victim diaspora. David Lloyd and Mary J. Hickman indicate the necessity of a broader, less restrictive understanding of twenty- and twenty-first-century understandings of Irish emigration and diaspora. This awareness needs to be extended to earlier representations of Irish emigration (to the US) as well, as the works included in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91) already indicate the need for a more inclusive understanding of the Irish emigrant community, seeing it as a diaspora rather than a victim diaspora. This reconsideration of the Irish diaspora would then provide room for the various individual interpretations of late nineteenth-century Irish emigration found in my literary corpus.

Scholars such as Chris Morash have discussed the (narrative) unrepresentability of the Famine. Because of the problematic nature of the event as a narrative this claim is valid, but on the levels of historical and generic borrowings, it can also be complicated. Building on the work on folk memory done by scholars such as Niall Ó Ciosáin and Cathal Póirtéir, I

have argued that representations of Famine and famine suffering are not only shaped by the premediation of older representations of famine suffering, but also that existing literary genres and traditions – in this case, the literary Gothic and the pathetic fallacy – have demonstrable influence on the narrative shape of Famine recollection. Thus, because Famine memory becomes embedded in larger literary discourses, on the level of genre and literary tradition it becomes less exceptional and receives familiar narrative form through the inclusion of well-known imagery, devices and techniques. In this sense Famine memory is expressible, but through conventionalised imagery which perhaps relies on “negative representation”.32

Finally, one of the main themes of my research has concerned the potentially traumatic status of the Great Famine, supported by scholars such as Christine Kinealy, Tim Pat Coogan, Terry Eagleton and Kevin Whelan. Since this has been a principal but also highly contested issue within Famine studies for decades, and since arguments for and against the perception of the period as a cultural trauma can be made, I wanted to see what interpretations of the Famine and its impact could be deduced from my corpus of fiction. Different and sometimes juxtapositional readings feature in the corpus; I have tried to underscore such contrasts by demonstrating when the argument that the Famine figures as a cultural trauma can be made, and when it cannot be made. Often, imagery and plot developments suggest the interpretation of the Famine as a cultural trauma. This is for example the case for representations of the Irish landscape as deeply scarred and emptied out by the Famine, or for the consideration of the Irish rural timespace as caught in a traumatic standstill since the Famine. However, simultaneously, these works of fiction suggest other, non-traumatic interpretations too. For example, on the level of nationalist rhetoric, Famine suffering is often used to serve as an incentive for political action, but is not presented as infinite or everlasting, as works of fiction often suggest betterment of Ireland’s colonial condition, perhaps even in the near future. In these more positive interpretations, Famine memory is rather formulated in terms of a finite trace, and a productive opening is provided through which the audience can (re)consider the impact of the Famine to potentially renegotiate it. Famine memory is used strategically: when (long-standing) Irish suffering is emphasised, it functions as a testimony to the traumatic nature of the period. In these cases, trauma theory’s emphasis on stasis, repetition and deferral of meaning has provided plausible explanations. By contrast, when future Irish triumph and success in spite

32 Ray, Terror and the Sublime, 6.
of recent adversity are stressed, Famine memory functions as a catalyst for action, but is not represented as traumatic and everlasting. Regarding the Famine as a cultural trauma in this context would counter the hopeful message and positive twist provided by the narratives.

Because of the multiplicity of interpretations of the impact of the Famine found in the corpus of Famine fiction (1871–91), I do not want to dissociate my findings from the concept of cultural trauma completely. In attempting to move towards a reconsideration, I distance my findings from the blanket answer commonly associated with a cultural trauma in which either an event constitutes a cultural trauma or it does not. This black-and-white interpretation incorrectly suggests that Famine memory is, to quote Michael Rothberg, “a zero-sum game”, which precludes alternative and potentially contesting interpretations of the event.33 Throughout this study, I have opted for other but connected terms, speaking rather of literary traces of the event which may or may not suggest that it was a cultural trauma. In this context, I have found Gene Ray’s concept of the “traumatic sublime” useful and have voiced the opinion that we should rather consider the different literary iterations of Famine memory as part of a representational spectrum of possible interpretations of the Famine. Cormac Ó Gráda contends that “the concept of communal trauma leaves no room for the subjectivity of the individual psyche”.34 By not denying the validity of the concept of cultural trauma wholesale and, as does Ray, by stressing that we are dealing with representations of and not the event itself, I have attempted to open up the concept of cultural trauma in the context of literary Famine recollection. In this way, I hope term cultural trauma can start to include various degrees of (negative) mnemonic responses to the Great Famine. In this more open form, it would simultaneously underscore the gravity of the Famine and its after-effects and its potentially traumatic status, while also leaving room for individual considerations of the Famine’s impact as well as its different strategic appropriations.

My argument not only carries weight in the context of literary Famine recollection in Irish and Irish-diasporic works of Famine fiction from the period 1871–91, but also for the larger field of Irish Famine studies. The works of fiction that I have studied, were written some twenty to forty years after the period, and together contain a plethora of different interpretations of Famine memory, ranging from a full-on recognition of its irreversible

impact on Irish society and culture since the event in a work such as Hester Sigerson’s *A Ruined Race*, to the omission of Famine suffering and its impact on the romantic celebration of Irish nationalist valour in a work such as Justin Huntly McCarthy’s *Lily Lass*. Thus, this corpus of fiction from the late nineteenth century already demonstrates the existence of a great variety of interpretations of Famine memory. This, then, undermines one-dimensional readings of the Irish Famine as a cultural trauma. Emily Mark-FitzGerald has significantly asked how and why “the Famine, an event over 150 years in the past” has come to be understood in traumatic terms since the upsurge in Famine studies of the mid-1990s. Indeed, the literary corpus central to my study suggests that such a one-sided analysis in our present day and age which focuses on silence, amnesia and the traumatised state of Irish and Irish-diasporic culture since the Famine, is, in fact, retroactively applied to the period’s representations since the Famine era itself. It is a projection of current convictions on earlier times, rather than a transhistorically supported perception.

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Appendix A

A.1 Corpus List: Irish and Irish-Diasporic Works of Famine Fiction, 1871–91


11. Fox, Emily (‘Toler King’). *Rose O’Connor; A Story of the Day* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Legal News Company [printer], 1880).


30. Sigerson, Hester. *A Ruined Race; Or, the Last Macmanus of Drumroosk* (London: Ward and Downey, 1889).


33. Upton, William C. *Uncle Pat’s Cabin: Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1882).
A.2 Synopses of Works of Fiction

1. Anonymous. *Dick O’Dell. A Story of ’48. Young Ireland. An Irish Magazine of Entertainment and Instruction 2/36* (2 Sept. 1876) – 3/6 (10 Febr. 1877): The narrative revolves around the O’Dell family, a benevolent landlord family fallen on hard times. Dick O’Dell Sr and his nephew Dick Jr care so much for their poor tenants that they become implicated in the Young Ireland rebellion. A central role is also given to benevolent English landlord Denham Pierce, who was an absentee but returns to Ireland to help the starving tenantry during the Famine. After the failure of the rebellion, Dick Jr is forced to flee to America. After several years he is pardoned and returns to Ireland. There is much mutual respect between these good Irish landlords and their tenants. Many scenes of Famine suffering are included in the narrative, but are subservient to the romantic plot. The main evil force in this narrative is agent Peter Moore, who has to flee Ireland after Pierce and the O’Dells find out his evil scheming: he dies years later in a railroad accident in Washington.

2. Anonymous. ‘Thade M’Sweeney; Or, A Tenant Farmer’s Trials. A Story of the Great Famine.’ *The Irish American* 32/15 (1880): Thade M’Sweeney, a tenant farmer, loses all (including his wife and freedom) because of the evil actions of his landlord Mr Harden. M’Sweeney migrates to US and establishes a small farm there. His landlord has fallen on hard times and emigrates as well. When Thade encounters Harden on the brink of drowning, he is tempted to seek retribution, but stops himself and he saves his former landlord. The story is told at Christmas time some thirty years later, by a man who turns out to be the evil Harden who is haunted by his inhumane deeds.

3. Anonymous, ‘The Bridal of Death; Or, The Curse of Landlordism. A Story of ’47.’ *The Irish-American* 40/15–16 (1888): Andy Nowlan loses his family due to the Famine. He goes to work at a friend’s farm and finds happiness in his work and his love for his friend’s daughter, Kitty. Kitty’s parents do not approve of their match is, and Nowlan and Kitty elope to America. America is portrayed positively, but Nowlan and Kitty never reach it, as they die during the crossing.
4. Armstrong, M. M. ‘The Piper’s Gift. A Tale of the Irish Famine.’ *McGee’s Illustrated Weekly* 1/262–3 (1876–7): This is a Catholic morality tale. The widow O’Brien goes to find food for her dying son. She is offered sustenance in exchange for her son’s conversion to Protestantism, but refuses to do so. They are saved from eviction by the gift of a few pounds from Dinny Mara, the piper, who received money from his relatives in the US to emigrate. The piper leaves for America, and the widow and her son survive the Famine. Mrs O’Brien finds a good position and lives to a ripe old age.

5. Berens, Louise. *Steadfast unto Death: A Tale of the Irish Famine of To-day* (London: Remington and Co., 1880): Set during the famine of 1879. Mora Sullivan loses her mother and infant sister. She and her little brother Pat Jr are taken in by Black Hugh McGrath, a mysterious and feared but misunderstood man. Hugh turns out to be an old suitor of Mora’s mother, who was rejected in favour of Pat Sr. Pat Sr turns into an abusive drunkard and is responsible for the murder of the local agent. Hugh hides Pat Sr and is arrested instead. Hugh is executed for Pat’s crime. Before his death, Hugh saved money to support Mora and her brother, and to send their abusive father away to America. Mora and Pat Jr are taken into the home of Colonel Singleton – the landlord – and his daughter Evelyn as servants. A flash forward shows that Mora is happily married and living in Dublin.

6. Brew, Margaret. *The Chronicles of Castle Cloyne; Or, Pictures of the Munster People*. 3 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885): The preface reflects on the unrepresentability of the (true depth) of the Famine. The narrative contains two plotlines to underscore that the Famine affected all layers of Irish society profoundly. One plot focuses on Oonagh McDermott. Oonagh loses her family farm and father to the Famine and is forced to roam the countryside, working for other families and as a pedlar. She does many selfless deeds, such as helping the starving and the sick, even adopting the son of her deceased friends. Oonagh saves some money and, with the help of the local priest, is able to send the boy to school. He becomes a priest and buys a cabin for her, in which she lives for some years, before dying contentedly. The other plot focuses on Hyacinth Dillon, landlord’s son and good Catholic, who has to
emigrate to America because the family estate has to be sold. Dillon and his trusted servant Pat emigrate to California, where they find a large amount of gold. Dillon comes back to Ireland, only to witness his last family member’s (sister) funeral. Having nothing left, Hyacinth gives money to the local priest to help his former tenants and leaves. He travels around Europe for several years before coming back. The narrative ends on a hopeful note, as Hyacinth marries a wealthy woman, buys back his estate through the Encumbered Estates Court and takes his place as a responsible and caring landlord on his devastated family estate.

7. Clayton, F. H. (‘An Irishman’). *Scenes and Incidents in Irish Life* (Montreal: John Lovell, [printer], 1884): The first few chapters are a combination of narrative fiction, biographical information and vehement anti-British rhetoric. One chapter relates personal reminiscences of the Great Famine, and the narrator shows that he also suffered. Somewhat strangely, however, this Famine suffering limits itself to having no potatoes, but only vegetables, meat and bread – which the narrator describes as uninteresting food. The main narrative’s temporal setting is somewhat diffuse: it probably spans the first sixty years of the nineteenth century. However, beside the chapter included in the preliminary material, no mention of famine conditions or victimhood is made. The narrative focuses on the Irish upper classes and details tense landlord-tenant relationships and evictions. It depicts the related D’Arcy and Claymore families. The D’Arcy’s are good Irish resident landlords of an age-old lineage, who live in an idealised feudal relationship with their tenantry. Henry Claymore is also of the old stock through his mother’s side and is married to Mary D’Arcy. Although landlord William D’Arcy (Mary’s brother) has the best intentions, he ends up spending and squandering his money. Forced to sell and rent back his house through the Landed Estates Court, William D’Arcy is so ashamed and penniless that he leaves Ireland for France. Henry Claymore dies, leaving his fortune to his wife and sons. Mary goes back to her ancestral home and invests wisely but loses all her money nevertheless. All good, old-stock Irish landlord families lose their fortunes and estates in similar manners, and the novel argues that they are metonymic examples of the loss of an entire – sorely missed – generation, who have lost their position in Ireland due to the influx of a bad new generation of disinterested landlords, shopkeepers and prospectors from
England. The novel ends with a plea for “fixity of tenure” and “a local government granted the same as to Canada” (338).

8. Cusack, Mary Francis. *From Killarney to New York; Or, How Thade Became a Banker*. *McGee’s Illustrated Weekly* 2 (May–Nov. 1877): This is a typical work of romantic-didactic Catholic fiction, with caricatures of a Protestant souper and his wife, who try to convert young boy Thade O’Halloran but fail. Tim O’Halloran dies because of Famine fever. His son Thade is kidnapped by the soupers but freed by Mr O’Grady and his servant. Thade is taken into the O’Grady residence as a servant and family member. He grows up to become a morally upright young man. When he does a selfless deed for American banker Mr Maxwell, who is visiting Ireland, the latter invites him to come and work for his bank in New York. Thade goes to New York and does well for himself: he marries Mr Maxwell’s Catholic daughter and takes over the bank. The narrator argues that this good luck befalls Thade because Tim O’Halloran would not let his son be converted to Protestantism during the Famine.

9. Doran, James. *Zanthon: A Novel* (San Francisco, CA: Bancroft, 1891): This Revivalist novel is set in an unnamed country which is clearly Ireland. Druid-like farmer Fairside Marlband and almost his entire family perish during the Famine. Marlband has his only remaining son Clare denounce his former identity and reinvent himself as Zanthon. Clare, now Zanthon, roams the island and works for various masters. He is protected by his father’s pact with mysterious powers: all who try to harm Zanthon perish. During his early adulthood, he experiences the advent of the Fenian Rising. Compelled to help his peers, Zanthon reveals his identity as son of Marlband and grandson of mythic rebel leader Merraloon and becomes one of the leaders of the rebellion. After the failure of the rebellion Zanthon is forced to flee to the US, where he leads a quiet and non-violent life. The narrative ends with the narrator’s/Zanthon’s high praise of the benefits of American Republicanism and freedom. The US is seen as a model to be emulated by Ireland if she is to receive independence.

10. Ford, Bessie Garland. *The Old Man’s Darling* (Toronto: B. Garland, 1881): Protagonist Bessie is the daughter of a Protestant farmer. She emigrates out of free will and a desire to devote herself
to God while abroad. Living in Canada she hears of the Famine, which prevents her from returning. In a few years’ time, she marries an older man, earning her the nickname “the old man’s darling”. After his death, she becomes an itinerant Bible saleswoman. The book is a celebration of North-American Methodism and as a text it constitutes an odd combination: the first half is a typical narrative, while the second half consists of a succession of sketches of events experienced while traversing Canada to sell religious writings.

11. Fox, Emily (‘Toler King’). *Rose O’Connor; A Story of the Day* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Legal News Company [printer], 1880): Set during 1879–80, this narrative depicts the dire conditions in Land War-era Ireland and represents them as equally devastating as Great Famine circumstances. Rose O’Connor and her family, and many of their peers suffer greatly during this later famine. Rose’s mother and little brother die, and Rose and her father are forced to leave their cabin. They are taken in by the caring landlord’s daughter Leila D’Arcy. Rose’s lover, Tim Bryan, escapes the famine by travelling through Europe in the service of landlord’s son Lord Fenton. Fenton is a proponent of thoroughgoing revisions and the creation of a peasant proprietorship in Ireland, and pleads with the current landlord – his father Lord Melrose – for change. Lord Melrose refuses to listen to his son, until he sees the errors of his ways in a melodramatic death-bed scene. Lord Fenton and his new bride become the new benevolent landlord and lady. While peasant proprietorship is still Fenton’s goal, he realises that this cannot be established in Ireland at present. Instead, the novel ends with the reification of an idealised, specifically Irish feudalism, supported by lords and tenants alike.

12. ‘Washington Frothingham’. *Blind Peter. Written from his own Statements* (New York: C.A. Alvord [printer], 1871): Only the first brief part of this narrative is set in Ireland during the Famine period. Due to the Famine, small farmer’s son Peter emigrates to America. Here he searches for his religion, soon denouncing Catholicism and eventually converting to Methodism. Peter travels around the New Salem area to converse with various Protestants and Methodists and to sell religious writings. This odd combination of narrative fiction, personal reminiscences and short sketches of exemplary Methodists, strongly denounces the Catholic faith and casts
the Famine as a Catholic event, as the Protestant farmers of Ireland “are an intelligent and educated population” who do know what to do with Ireland’s rich soil (12–13), while the Catholic peasantry are merely unenlightened and sinful followers of a “dreadful superstition” (18).

13. Hoare, Edward N. *Mike: A Tale of the Great Irish Famine* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, [1880]): The framework narrative is set at the time of writing. Englishman Mr Chaplin and his Irish servant Mike McCarthy visit Mr Chaplin’s daughter and grandchildren. Chaplin has a manuscript with him, which details his and Mike’s life from the Famine until the present time. During the Famine, Mike’s father disappears and his mother dies. Mr Chaplin is the agent at the time and takes Mike into his family as a beloved servant. They leave Ireland for Brighton. There, Chaplin’s young son and Mike’s best friend dies. Mr Chaplin never recovers fully from this. After the death of his wife, he starts travelling the globe with Mike, visiting his daughter frequently. Mike and Mr Chaplin go to the US, where Chaplin finds Mike’s father, Pat, who fled Ireland after being implicated in the Young Ireland rebellion. Pat had been a violent and sinful man, and his fate only worsened in the US. He atones and after seeing how good and righteous his son has become, betters his life and becomes a devout man. Mike and Mr Chaplin go back to Europe, and Mike stays with Mr Chaplin until his death.

14. ‘Ireland’. *Forlorn but not Forsaken: A Story of (The Famine of 1848) the “Bad Times” in Ireland* (Dublin: George Herbert/Porteous and Gribbs [printer], 1871): Young girl Biddy loses her parents in the Great Famine. She is taken in as a servant by the Protestant landlady Mrs Gwynne, who runs a soup kitchen from her home. Mrs Gwynne teaches Biddy the ways of the Protestant religion and they become best friends. Mrs Gwynne’s sister-in-law from America comes to visit and offers to take Biddy with her, so that she can have a better future than is possible in Ireland. Biddy goes to America. The narrative fast forwards a couple of decades, demonstrating that Biddy is happily married, a mother and living in Cumberland City, Massachusetts.
15. Keary, Annie. *Castle Daly; The Story of an Irish Home Thirty Years Ago*. 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1875): Set during the Famine, this narrative details the near-complete downfall of the Daly family and the failure of the Young Ireland Rebellion. The tenants of the Daly estate suffer greatly due to the Famine. Benevolent landlord Dermott Daly, his wife, and their children are compassionate and do all they can, but are not able to save many of the tenants. In their efforts they are assisted by English Agent John Thornley, who at first is a strong proponent of Political Economy, but soon realises the errors of this doctrine. He turns into a personally involved and loved agent. Connor Daly becomes involved with Young Ireland and functions as one of the rebel leaders. After the failure of the 1848 rising he is forced to flee and emigrates to America. In the meantime, the Famine has caused the depopulation of the Daly estate. Ellen Daly and John Thornley fall in love and together become the new landlords. Connor Daly revisits Ireland briefly and remarks that much has changed. However, John and Ellen try to retain some form of traditional Irishness and take pride in this. The novel considers the Famine and the Irish Question from different perspectives, and provides a multi-faceted interpretation.

16. Lawless, Emily. *Hurrish. A Study*. 2 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1886): Set in the Burren (Connemara) during the late 1870s. References to the Famine are made by protagonist Hurrish’s friend Old Phil Rooney, who describes Famine victims and also argues that the nationalist spirit embodied by Meagher, O’Doherty and their peers was a purer sentiment than felt by the current generation of rebels. The narrative denounces agrarian violence. It also argues that the tensions and problems between landlords, tenants and the government are often based on misunderstandings and miscommunication, and argues that the real corrupted elements are those who have come into the country through the Encumbered Estates Court and land-grabbers. Hurrish O’Brien has a small plot of land in the Burren, where he lives with his mother and adopted girl Ally. Hurrish’s neighbour Mat Brady is a land-grabber who tries to kill Hurrish. Mat’s brother Maurice is a better man, and is in love with Ally. Hurrish accidentally kills Mat in self-defence and is arrested. He is acquitted and returns to the Burren. Maurice misunderstands the situation and avenges his brother by fatally shooting Hurrish. On Hurrish’ deathbed, Maurice learns of the true evil nature of his
brother Mat and asks Hurrish to forgive him, which he does. Hurrish dies, Ally rejects Maurice and becomes a nun, and Maurice emigrates to America, where he becomes a successful shopkeeper of a large dry goods store. The novel ends with the message that Irish rural society is facing an inescapable change, but that it unclear yet what this will entail.

17. McCarthy, Justin Huntly. *Lily Lass* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1889): The novel presents a small-scale version of the Young Ireland rebellion. It contains a romantic plot of upper middle-class, upper-class and old stock characters in romantic and nationalist entanglements. It does not mention Famine conditions once. Orientalist scholar Mr Geraldine and his adoptive daughter Lilias visit Ireland. Lilias feels a strong connection to Ireland and is supportive of the Irish cause. Mr Geraldine and Lilias become friends with Murrough MacMurchad, a Young Ireland leader who is the last surviving member of an old noble Irish family, and his friend Bryan Fermanagh, also a rebel leader. They also become acquainted with Lord Mountmarvel, the English landlord of the estate. The novel’s central rebellion takes place on the Mountmarvel estate, where the Young Irelanders are defeated by a much stronger police force. The Geraldines witness the rebellion from inside Mountmarvel Castle, and Lilias is convinced of the injustice of the situation. MacMurchad is fatally wounded. On his deathbed, Lilias and MacMurchad confess their love for each other. The narrative is enveloped in a framework narrative, told from the perspective of an American journalist in the late 1880s. It celebrates the Young Irelanders as examples of Irish nationalist heart and reflects that since 1848, the bond between Ireland and England has fortunately improved.

18. McDougall, Margaret Dixon (‘Norah’). *The Days of a Life* (Almonte, Ontario: W. Templeman, 1883): The novel is partially based on McDougall’s own observations as a special reporter in Ireland during 1881 and is set during the Land War era. It details the prolonged trip made by the young Irish-Canadian girl Ida Livingstone to her relatives in the northern part of Ireland. Ida loves Ireland and feels a deep connection to its nature. She does not understand why Irish society is so unevenly divided, and many of the novel’s critiques on Irish society and British government are voiced through her. The novel contains various plotlines, but the main plot
focuses on Ida. The novel describes many scenes of famine suffering during the Land War and argues that this period of famine is just as destructive as the Great Famine. Ida becomes friends with Bernard Butler, who cannot bear to see the Irish poor suffer so much and becomes a member of the Land League. Butler is arrested for his involvement and deported. Not just the Irish poor suffer, but also Ida’s upper middle-class friends who are wronged by the current landlord. The narrative itself does not end on the most positive of terms: Ida and her father go back to Canada and famine suffering is far from over. However, the narrator provides hope by stating that things will change. The narrative favours the old generation of caring landlords over the new generation of uncaring and calculating specimens.

19. McDowell, Lalla. *The Earl of Effingham* (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1877): Set during the late 1840s, this narrative is a romantic plot, with images of the Famine as background material, mostly incorporated to underscore the altruistic nature of the protagonist. Major Effingham, an Englishman with an Irish mother, comes to Ireland to buy Ballyquin estate. At first he meets much opposition from impoverished landlord’s daughter Nelly Burk, for she fears he does not have her tenants’ best interest at heart. The tenants have much love and respect for Nelly; one of them even shoots Major Effingham because he feels the Major is a threat to her. Over time, Effingham is able to win the hearts and confidence of the Irish tenantry and Nelly Burk. In a typical national marriage plot, Effingham and Nelly get married and together become the benevolent landlords of Ballyquin. Very little is known about the author, and the *Loebner Guide* states that ‘Lalla McDowell’ is likely a pseudonym.

20. Mulholland, Rosa. ‘The Hungry Death.’ In *Representative Irish Tales*. Ed. W. B. Yeats (London: Putnam, 1891): Set during 1886, when Inishboffin island experienced another famine. The temporal dimension is not specified; consequently, the story has also been interpreted as a tale of the Great Famine. Brigid Lavelle is a strong farmer’s daughter. She is courted by Coll Prendergast but does not return his affections sufficiently and is left for another, Moya Mailie. Inishboffin is struck by famine, and all suffer. Coll’s in-laws and Brigid’s father are among the victims. When Coll begs Brigid for some of her meal for his dying Moya, Brigid refuses. She is torn by her decision and goes to the local priest. He points out the
error of her ways, and after a dystopian nightmare in which she is punished for her moral digression, Brigid takes her last bit of meal to Moya. Moya and Coll survive the famine and emigrate to America; Brigid dies. Famine and hunger are described as part of the small barren island’s way of life.

21. Mulholland, Rosa. *Marcella Grace* (New York: Vatican Library, 1891): This novel is set during the Land War period. Marcella grows up in urban Dublin, unaware that she is in fact the last descendant of a landowning family. Upon her aunt’s death, Marcella inherits the Distresna estate. She at first does not tell her tenants that she is their new landlady. Marcella does many good deeds and wins the hearts of the tenantry. She reveals herself as their new landlady and they embrace her. Meanwhile, the landlord of the adjoining estate and Marcella’s love interest, the kind-hearted nationalist Bryan Kilmartin is threatened by evil Fenians (presented as degenerate remnants of the once heroic movement). They frame him for the murder of a neighbouring landlord and Kilmartin is sent to jail. Marcella and Kilmartin marry each other while Kilmartin is imprisoned. A new period of famine occurs and Marcella takes care of her tenantry and sets up her own fever hospital. She is able to protect her tenantry from the worst. After several years, Kilmartin’s innocence is proven and he is released. He returns to Marcella, and together they become the landlords of their estates.

22. Munroe, M. F. ‘How the Croziers Came to Canada.’ *Canadian Literary Journal* 1/7 (1871): The story is told from the son’s perspective. Throughout the nineteenth century, members of the Crozier family have emigrated to North America. The present family experiences the Famine, but does not suffer greatly (the story is set in the northern part of Ireland). A few years after the Famine, the mother decides she wants to emigrate to America. Their cousin in the US advises against this, saying that America is not as wonderful as often imagined back home. The story argues for the superior and more suitable nature of Canada for Irish emigration. The narrative ends with the Croziers’ decision to go to Canada.

next to it and goes in. Consequently, the narrative shifts to a few decades earlier and the perspective of the old larch tree, which tells the visitor the history of Evelyn Thornbury and Arthur O’Moore who get married and move into the cabin together. They live happily for some time and have two children. Then, the Famine hits the family. Arthur dies and Evelyn and the children are left. Their suffering spans many years, which suggests that they suffer throughout the full length of the Famine (1845–52). Oddly enough, while the family suffers much due to hunger and fever, the daughter dies because her hair gets caught in the hearth fire, and the enfeebled mother dies of grief shortly after. The protagonist/first narrator then awakens and realises that he has dreamt his own early life story, for he is John O’Moore, the only surviving child of the O’Moore family. However, he realises that the last part of the narrative did not happen, because they refused to pay their arrears decades ago. Consequently, the mother and sister are still alive, but are also just surviving at present, suggesting another parallel. John gives them food and drink and saves them. He claims the veracity of the dream sequence as exemplary for the fates of many Irish throughout the decades. Consequently, the narrative argues in favour of the Plan of Campaign’s call to refuse to pay unfair rents and donate that money to the treasury of the Plan instead, to make sure that such histories can never be told again.

24. O’Brien, Charlotte G. *Light and Shade*. 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, 1878): This novel is set during Fenian times and focuses on benevolent brother and sister Tom and Edith Vanhurst – children of a good landlord – and the new landlord from England, Lord Dunallan. Tom and Edith self-identify as Irish, and sympathise with the plight of the poor. They get along well with the tenantry. Dunallan gradually comes to understand the Irish and at his own peril takes full responsibility for his tenantry, becoming a resident and improving landlord. Famine memory features in the story, as some of the tenants relate their personal experiences and the memory of the Famine, the Young Ireland rebellion and many other historical events are used to provide historical support for the Fenian mindset. While the novel approves of its ideology, goals, and a constitutional approach, it denounces its aggressive physical force dimension, claiming that this is due to the influence of the US. These two sides are played out by the representation of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Fenians: the
former are good, non-violent Irishmen such as tenants Maurice and Thady, the latter are returned Irish-American Fenians and the novel’s main antagonist, Meenane Jr, a false Fenian, evil tenant and secret government informer. Just before the Fenian Rising, Meenane Jr is exposed by Maurice and Thady as an informer and later is killed by one of the people he wronged. After the Rising, old Meenane tries to shoot Dunallan but fails. Maurice, Thady and the latter’s love interest Hanny go to America, where they do well for themselves. In a national marriage plot, Edith Vanhurst and Lord Dunallan are married and work hard to relieve the suffering of their combined tenantry. The novel laments that so many sons and daughters of Ireland have left, and states that they take a “passionate hatred of English law, and a passionate love of for Ireland” (253) with them.

25. O’Brien, William. *When We Were Boys* (London: Longmans, Green, 1890): The narrative is set during the late 1860s and makes many connections between the Fenians and historical events, movements and rebellions to historically justify Ireland’s struggle for freedom. The story is a tortuous construction of many plotlines. One plotline concerns Lord Drumshaughlin, his children Mabel and Harry. Lord Drumshaughlin was an absentee landlord who let his agent Hans Harman run the estate. When he returns, he gradually discovers that Harman has stolen much of his money, has greatly wronged the tenants and has accumulated serious debts in his name. After his exposure, Harman flees. The novel uses this plot to show the difference between the good old generation of Irish landlords and the bad new generations and their agents. Lord Drumshaughlin is presented not so much as evil, but as naïve and lazy. Mabel and Harry, on the other hand, care greatly for the tenants. The main plot concerns Ken Rohan, a young man who says farewell to his future as a priest to become a Fenian rebel. The Fenian Rising is aborted because the Irish were short on weaponry and because they were deserted by their American brethren. Ken is arrested and convicted to transportation for life. As his ships sails away, the narrator provides hope and argues that since then the Irish have found saner ways than aggression and “boyish insurrection” and the English have become more reasonable. It celebrates the Fenian patriotic mindset, but raises questions with regard to America’s involvement with Irish nationalism.
26. O’Brien, Richard Baptist, D. D. The D’Altons of Crag. An Irish Story of ’48 & ’49. The Harp. A Magazine of General Literature. 5/1 (Nov. 1879) – 5/9 (July 1880, Montreal): Set during the Famine, this strongly Catholic narrative contains a great multitude of plotlines, supernatural occurrences, virtuous priests and maidens, a threatening atmosphere of rebellion and intrigue, and several in-depth representations of Famine suffering by the poor. The main plotline details the lives of Giffard and his daughter Amy D’Alton, and their friend Henry Meldon. Giffard D’Alton is a miserly landlord, who will not tolerate his tenants to fall behind on the rent. He is not outright evil, but rather misguided and tricked by his agent. His daughter Amy is represented as a caring angel. She takes care of the tenantry during the Famine. Newcomer Mr Meldon does many good deeds and really cares for the Irish poor. He eventually reveals himself as the long-lost son of Giffard D’Alton. All’s well that ends well and all protagonists get what they deserve: Lord D’Alton realises the error of his ways, gets rid of his agent and becomes a good landlord and gets back his son and granddaughter. Amy has her brother back marries another benevolent landlord. The ideal feudal relationship of reciprocity between landlord and tenant is re-established. In the end, Famine suffering seems to be included to underline the altruistic nature of the protagonists, and is subservient to the romantic plotlines.

27. O’Meara, Kathleen. The Battle of Connemara (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1878): The narrative is set in the 1870s. References to the Famine can be found in Connemara’s landscape in the form of abandoned Famine roads. The novel is strongly Catholic in tone. Irish Colonel Kevin Blake and his English wife Margaret are the landlords of an estate in Connemara. They are visited by the English Father Ringwood, who is much impressed with the religious fervour of the tenantry. When Colonel Blake dies, his wife is stricken with grief. She mourns him for several years and then leaves for France. In Paris, she discovers that the French lower classes experience many of the same hardships as their Irish counterparts. Her friend Father Ringwood visits in Paris and they have several religious discussions. Margaret witnesses the 1870–1 Siege of Paris at close hand. She returns home, and converts to the Catholic Church. This causes much joy among the tenantry who receive her with open arms.
28. Quigley, Hugh. *Profit and Loss: A Story of the Life of a Genteel Irish-American, Illustrative of a Godless Education* (New York: T. O’Kane, 1873): A work of Catholic didactic fiction, warning Irish emigrants of the dangers of an American education and Methodism. The Mulrooneys are well-to-do farmers. They leave Ireland during the Famine, not because of Famine suffering itself, but rather as a preventative measure, out of fear of what their new evil landlord might do. They emigrate to the US, where they establish an Irish farm in Wisconsin. They do well for themselves, until Michael Mulrooney falls prey to the lure of alcohol. Several years later their barely adult son Patrick becomes ensnared by plotting Methodists through an infatuation with the young widow Polly Spoons. Methodists are depicted as a lying, scheming, calculating and superstitious lot by the narrator. Patrick is converted, made to change his Irish name and is turned against his family. He marries Polly Spoons, and they have a child together. Pat begins to understand his mistake and secretly has his child baptised, to save him. Polly is enraged and says she cannot love a Papist. When Pat is away she converts the child. Pat returns, and enraged, assaults a Methodist brother. He is sent to prison, where he reverts to Catholicism. Polly robs Pat of his family farm and all his money and remarries with the man who is actually her child’s father. Having nothing left, Pat is at least happy to be rid of the Methodists and to have his personal and religious freedom and identity back. In the end, the Methodists are of course punished: they are unhappy, and Polly ends up in an insane asylum.

29. Sherlock, Thomas. *The Lord of Dundonald. An Irish Story of To-Day. The Irish-American* 41/46 – 42/1 (1889–90): This narrative is set during the Land War Era. Garret Dalton, the Lord of Dundonald, used to be a good landlord but has become a strange, mad and secluded figure. He does not seem to care about his tenants and is only interested in extorting rents to be able to seclude himself. Charley Gerty comes to the Dundonald estate and buys some land to build houses. He is intrigued by Dalton and resolves to meet him. At his house, Gerty discovers that Dalton has a secret: his wife left him, which made him insane with grief. Dalton thinks his wife has died, but she is still alive, living in a nunnery as Sister Martha Mary. Dalton has a daughter, Norah, who is in that same nunnery and is taken care of by Martha Mary, without knowing her
true identity. Norah turns eighteen and goes home. Meanwhile, the Dundonald tenants are suffering. They experience a famine, and their condition is compared to Great Famine circumstances. Due to the return of his daughter, Garret Dalton becomes a changed man and understands that he has wronged his tenants. Gerty becomes his benevolent agent and together they take care of the tenantry. Gerty finds out Mary Martha’s true identity and reunites the family; it seems that Dalton and his wife, Helen in secular life, were separated through the jealous intervention of Dalton’s brother, who atones and becomes a Trappist monk. Gerty marries Norah. The famine is over, and the feudal ideal is re-established, some of the tenants even return to a life of georgic bliss. The narrative argues in favour of improvements in Irish agriculture.

30. Sigerson, Hester. *A Ruined Race; Or, the Last Macmanus of Drumroosk* (London: Ward and Downey, 1889): The novel narrates the rise and fall of Dan Macmanus and his family during the Famine. Dan is the last of ‘a ruined race’ of noble Irishmen, who today is a tenant farmer occupying a small cabin and some reclaimed patches of land on the wild mountainside. Dan and his wife Mary are happy and hard-working, and have a child together, Eily. Their good fortune ends: the landlord sees Dan’s hard works and improvements and accordingly raises the rent. Then, the Famine hits Ireland. The Macmanuses are forced to move to a smaller cabin and daughter Eily dies. They are evicted by the evil converted middleman Billy Finnigan. Dan strikes Finnigan and is arrested. While in jail, his wife dies in the poor house hospital. Dan comes home to the town of Fortmanus to find nothing but ruin. He goes to Dublin where he succumbs to the lure of alcohol. He resolves to better his life, but on his last drunken night, falls off the quay and hits his head. He dies a few days later, content that he has atoned for his sins and will join his wife and daughter in Heaven.

31. Smith, John Talbot. ‘The Deacon of Lynn.’ In *His Honor The Major. And Other Tales* (New York: Vatican Library, 1891): Deacon Lounsbury notices that more and more Catholic Irish labourers are coming to Lynn, and sees this as a negative development for the community. While he felt sympathy for the Irish and sent them corn meal during the Famine, he does not tolerate them in his town. He tries to fend them off but fails to do so. The Irish-
Americans and their religion become more and more important in Lynn, and eventually a Church is established. Deacon Lounsbury knows that he has lost the religious battle and the end of the story even hints at his realisation that the cross should not be fought. Like many of John Talbot Smith’s stories, this narrative discusses Catholicism and (middle-class) respectability in small-town America.

32. Smith, John Talbot. ‘How the McGuinness Saved his Pride.’ In His Honor The Major. And Other Tales (New York: Vatican Library, 1891): This narrative is set in the village of Sundsbury. McGuinness is a man of note in this community largely consisting of emigrants from Galway. His daughter Anne falls in love with the poor French-Canadian Jean Baptiste Nolin, a long-established servant in the community who has learned perfect English and has many virtues. She resolves to marry him. She is rejected by her family, who cannot deal with the disgrace brought upon them by such a match. The daughter chooses Jean Baptiste and has his child. The McGuinnesses are torn by this familiar rift. Then, it is discovered that Jean Baptiste is in fact the son of a female Irish emigrant who came to Canada during the Famine and died of fever in Quebec. This background is seen as a great credit to Jean Baptiste, now Jack Nolan, and he and his wife are reaccepted into the Sundsbury community. The story somewhat ironically reflects on the small-mindedness of small-town Irish-America. Like many of John Talbot Smith’s stories, this narrative discusses Catholicism and (middle-class) respectability.

33. Upton, William C. Uncle Pat’s Cabin: Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1882): The narrative spans the time from the Great Famine until the Land War. The story of Uncle Pat “wears a public complexion” (261), is meant as metonymic narrative for the condition of the Irish labouring poor. The novel condemns land-grabbing and argues that all the improvements that have been made in agriculture and rural legislature, have not benefitted the poorest of the poor, the Irish land labourer. It narrates the life of Pat M’Mahon, a farmer who loses his wife and child during the Famine. The narrative suggests that their deaths were caused by the deliberate murderous policies of the British government. Uncle Pat barely subsists, is forced to become a land labourer and even has to take in his brother’s children and wife.
His niece Kathleen goes to work with local priest Father Fitz for a few years and then leaves for America to become a domestic there; her brother eventually goes to America as well. Meanwhile, the Land War has begun and Uncle Pat is forced to work on the public works. Unable to bear his lot any longer, he collapses alongside the road and eventually dies of hunger and fever at home. His niece comes back and we learn that she has married a well-off American who valued her for her Irish traits: virtue and piety. Seeing that Ireland at present has little to offer for the young Irishman or woman, Kathleen goes back to America for good.
A.3 Tables

List of Tables:

- Table A.1 – Chronological list of publications and temporal placement narratives.
- Table A.2 – Representations of land and landscape, North-American works.
- Table A.3 – Representations of land and landscape, British works.
- Table A.4 – Representations of victimhood – Use of pathetic fallacy and borrowings from the Gothic mode.
- Table A.5 – North-American and British works categorized on: “Views of emigration”, “Nostalgia for Ireland?”, and “Famine as (main) reason for emigration?”. 
Table A.1: Chronological list of publications and temporal placement narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Set during Famine?</th>
<th>Set in later period?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W. F. Munroe – ‘How the Croziers Came to Canada’ (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ireland’ – ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘W. Frothingham’ – Blind Peter (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Quigley – Profit and Loss (1873)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – Castle Daly (1875)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. M. Armstrong – ‘The Piper’s Gift’ (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon. – Dick O’Dell, a Story of ’48 (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M. F. Cusack – From Killarney to New York (1877)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. McDowell – The Earl of Effingham (1877)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. O’Meara – The Battle of Connemara (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. N. Hoare – Mike (1880?)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Steadfast unto Death (1880)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Fox – Rose O’Connor (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon. – ‘Thade M’Sweeney’ (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. G. Ford – The Old Man’s Darling (1881)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>W. C. Upton – Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – The Days of a Life (1883)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – Scenes and Incidents (1884)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Brew – Castle Cloyne (1885)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Lawless – Hurrish (1886)</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘M. Mullowney’ – ‘The Shadow of Death’ (1888)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Anon. – ‘The Bridal of Death’ (1888)</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. H. McCarthy – Lily Lass (1889)</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Sigerson – A Ruined Race (1889)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. Sherlock – The Lord of Dunonald (1889–90)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. O’Brien – When We Were Boys (1890)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>R. Mulholland – ‘The Hungry Death’ (1891)</td>
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<td>R. Mulholland – Marcella Grace (1891)</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Doran – Zanthon (1891)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. T. Smith – ‘The Deacon of Lynn’ (1891)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. T. Smith – ‘How the McGuinness’ (1891)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: 33</td>
<td>4 CAN / 12 US</td>
<td>16 N-AM.\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 IRL / 1 EN</td>
<td>17 B.I.\textsuperscript{c}</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Scholars disagree about the temporal placement of Mulholland’s narrative. For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 3 of this study.
\textsuperscript{b} N-AM.: North-America.
\textsuperscript{c} B.I.: British Isles.
**Table A.2**: Representations of land and landscape, North-American works (*n/a* = *not specified in narrative*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Repr. of landscape</th>
<th>Repr. of land</th>
<th>Aestheticisation, depopulation</th>
<th>Disconnect people and land</th>
<th>Failure of land</th>
<th>Due to? Since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘W. Frothingham’ – <em>Blind Peter</em> (1871)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Quigley – <em>Profit and Loss</em> (1873)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – ‘Thade M’Sweeney’ (1880)</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox – <em>Rose O’Connor</em> (1880)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F, F, since F (set during late 1880s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘M. Mulkoney’ – ‘The Shadow’ (1888)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – ‘The Bridal of Death’ (1888)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Sherlock – <em>The Lord of D.</em> (1889–90)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – <em>Zanthon</em> (1891)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. G. Ford – <em>The Old Man’s Darling</em> (1881)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – <em>The Days of a Life</em> (1883)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>+ since F (set during Land War)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – <em>Scenes and Incidents</em> (1884)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL: 11</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 | N | 2 | n/a | 4 | n/a | 2 | n/a | 3 | n/a |
# Table A.3: Representations of land and landscape, British works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Repr. of</th>
<th>Repr.</th>
<th>Aestheticisation</th>
<th>Disconnect</th>
<th>Failure Due to?</th>
<th>Since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Ireland' – Forlorn but not Forsaken (1871)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – Dick O'Dell (1876–7)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. F. Cusack – From Killarney to NY (1877)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. McDowell – The Earl of Effingham (1877)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O'Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. O'Meara – The Battle of Connemara (1878)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O'Brien – The D'Altons of Crag (1879–80)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Steadfast Unto Death (1880)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Other: famine 1879–80 and longer condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. N. Hoare – Mike (1880)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – Uncle Pat's Cabin (1882)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F + longer condition – 1880s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew – Castle Cloyne (1885)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sigerson – A Ruined Race (1889)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. O'Brien – When We Were Boys (1890)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Other: longer condition – late 1860s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – 'The Hungry Death' (1891)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Other: longer condition – 1880s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – Marcella Grace (1891)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F + since F – 1880s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – Castle Daly (1875)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.4: Representations of victimhood – Use of pathetic fallacy and borrowings from the Gothic mode\textsuperscript{a} (ordered by publication date).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Set during Famine?</th>
<th>Set in later period?</th>
<th>Pathetic fallacy and F/famine suffering?\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Gothic and F/famine suffering?</th>
<th>Pathetic fallacy, Gothic and F/famine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Ireland’ – ‘Forlorn but not Forsaken’ (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Keary – Castle Daly (1875)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. M. Armstrong – ‘The Piper’s Gift’ (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – Dick O’Dell (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X and F</td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. F. Cusack – From Killarney to New York (1877)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. O’Meara – The Battle of Cournemara (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X F and f</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O’Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X F and f</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox – Rose O’Connor (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X f</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. N. Hoare – Mike (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X and F</td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Steadfast unto Death (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X and f</td>
<td>X and f</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – Thade M’Sweeney’ (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>X F</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – Uncle Pat’s Cabin (1882)</td>
<td>X (flashback)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X F and f</td>
<td>X and f</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Only texts that include representations of victimhood are included (20 out of 33). As stated in Chapter 5, when works of Famine fiction borrow from the Gothic the techniques and devices of the representation of excess and exaggeration, the use of repetition, considerations of liminality, and an exploration of thresholds to represent Irish victimhood and sites of suffering, I consider them as inspired by the Gothic. When these works represent the environment in alignment with human sentiment and suffering, I consider them as making use of the device of the pathetic fallacy.

\textsuperscript{b} ‘F’ stands for Famine; ‘f’ for famine.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>Set during Pathetic fallacy, Famine?</th>
<th>Pathetic fallacy, F/famine</th>
<th>Gothic and Pathetic fallacy, F/famine?</th>
<th>Gothic and</th>
<th>Pathetic fallacy, G/famine?</th>
<th>Pathetic fallacy, G/F/famine?</th>
<th>Gothic and Pathetic fallacy, G/F/famine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – <em>The Days of a Life</em> (1883)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew – <em>Castle Cloyne</em> (1885)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘M. Mullowney’ – <em>The Shadow of Death</em> (1888)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – <em>The Hungry Death</em> (1890)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. O’Brien – <em>When We Were Boys</em> (1890)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Mulholland – <em>Marcella Grace</em> (1891)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – <em>Zanthon</em> (1891)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:**

- 12/20 set
- 11/20 link
- 19/20 link
- 15/20 link
- 14/20 link
- during F
- later (55%)
- PF+F/f (95%)
- G+F/f (75%)
- 15/20 link (70%)
- G+F (55%)
- 9/20 link
- 7/20 link (45%)
- G+f (35%)

*Table A.4 – continued.*
Table A.5: Views of emigration\(^a\) (ordered by location of author at time of publication).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title</th>
<th>View: positive</th>
<th>View: ambiguous / positive</th>
<th>View: ambiguous / negative</th>
<th>View: negative</th>
<th>Nostalgia for Ireland?</th>
<th>Famine as (main) reason?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘W. Frothingham’ – <em>Blind Peter</em> (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Quigley – <em>Profit and Loss</em> (1873)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – <em>Dick O’Dell</em> (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. M. Armstrong – ‘The Piper’s Gift’ (1876–7)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – ‘Thade M’Sweeney’ (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fox – <em>Rose O’Connor</em> (1880)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. – ‘The Bridal of Death’ (1888)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Doran – <em>Zanthon</em> (1891)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. T. Smith – ‘The Deacon of Lynn’ (1891)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. T. Smith – ‘How the McGuinness...’ (1891)</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>(multiple reasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. F. Munroe – ‘How the Croziers...’ (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. G. Ford – <em>The Old Man’s Darling</em> (1881)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. D. McDougall – <em>The Days of a Life</em> (1883)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. H. Clayton – <em>Scenes and Incidents</em> (1884)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ireland’ – <em>Forlorn but not Forsaken</em> (1871)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>(multiple reasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. A. Cusack – <em>From Killarney to NY</em> (1877)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 28 out of 33 works include representations of Irish emigration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author – Title View: View: View: View: Nostalgia Famine as positive ambiguous / ambiguous / negative for Ireland? (main) reason?</th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>negative</th>
<th>multiple reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O'Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. N. Hoare – Mike (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Berens – Steadfast Unto Death (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O'Brien – The D'Aulons of Crag (1882)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – Uncle Pat's Cabin (1882)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Brew – Castle Cloyne (1885)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lawless – Huish (1886)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. H. McCarthy – Lily Lass (1889)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sigerson – A Ruined Race (1889)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. C. Upton – Light and Shade (1882)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. O'Brien – The D'Aulons of Crag (1882)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. N. Hoare – Mike (1880)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. G. O'Brien – Light and Shade (1878)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals of Table A.5

View of emigration
North-America: 9 positive / 4 ambiguous-positive / 1 ambiguous-negative
British Isles: 7 positive / 6 ambiguous-positive / 1 ambiguous-negative

Nostalgia for Ireland?
North-America: 5 No / 5 Yes
British Isles: 4 No / 5 Yes

Famine as (main) reason
North-America: 9 No / 3 multiple reasons / 2 Yes
British Isles: 10 No / 2 multiple reasons / 2 Yes

View of contribution
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Nederlandse samenvatting
(Summary in Dutch)

Sporen van Hongersnood
Cultureel Geheugen, Landschap, Geschiedenis en Identiteit in Fictie over de Grote Ierse Hongersnood uit Ierland en de Ierse Diaspora, 1871–91

B.1 Wetenschappelijk en Socio-Historisch Kader, Onderzoeksvragen, Theorie en Methodologie

Tussen 1845 en 1851 maakte Ierland een van de meest verwoestende periodes door van haar (recente) geschiedenis: de grote Ierse Hongersnood. Een tot dan toe nog onbekende schimmel zorgde ervoor dat de aardappeloogsten verschillende jaren achtereen mislukten. De Ieren waren op grote schaal afhankelijk van de aardappel als hun voornaamste voedselbron; de gevolgen van de mislukte oogsten waren dan ook enorm: schatting lopen uiteen, maar ongeveer 1,5 miljoen Ieren stierven door honger of ziektes die daaraan gerelateerd waren en nog eens 1,5 miljoen Ieren emigreerden binnen een tijdsbestek van 10 jaar. Deze emigranten kwamen vooral uit in de Verenigde Staten, Canada en Engeland. De hongersnood trof vooral het armste deel van de Ierse bevolking, de overwegend Katholieke boeren en landarbeiders. Na de Hongersnood was de demografische samenstelling van Ierland ingrijpend veranderd, aangezien de armste laag van de bevolking voor een groot deel verdwenen was. Daarnaast versneld de Hongersnood ook bepaalde transformaties die al in gang gezet waren voor 1845. De Ierse landbouw bestond eerst voornamelijk uit het kleinschalig verbouwen van gewassen (vooral de aardappel) op kleine stukjes grond; na de Hongersnood veranderde het karakter van de landbouw en veeteelt, en
ontstonden er veel meer grote samengevoegde velden, geschikt voor gra-
zend vee. De mechanisatie van de landbouw werd ook versneld. De Ierse
rurale samenleving was onherroepelijk veranderd. Hoewel vele Ieren al
voor de Hongersnood emigreerden, moet de impact van de emigratiestro-
men op de ontvangende landen ook niet onderschat worden. De stroom
van Hongersnood-migranten was van ongekende omvang, en de maatschappi-
pijen van Engeland, Canada en de VS werden ingrijpend beïnvloed door
de influx van Ieren.

Lang is aangenomen dat de Ieren thuis en in diaspora leden aan een
soort geheugenverlies met betrekking tot de Hongersnood. Dit geloof
werd ondersteund door een lezing geïnspireerd op traditionele Freudiaanse
trauma-theorie, waarbij de Ieren wereldwijd gezien werden als zo getrau-
matiseerd door de Hongersnood, dat zij de herinnering eraan verdrongen,
en hun culturele identiteit op andere zaken uit het verleden en uit de Ierse
folklore baseerden. Men ging er lang van uit dat deze traumatische stilte
ook gold voor de Ierse literatuur. In de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw
en in de vroeg 21ste eeuw hebben academici zoals Melissa Fegan, Chris-
topher Morash en Margaret Kelleher aangetoond dat het toch minder stil
was rondom de Hongersnood dan gedacht werd. Zij keken vooral naar ca-
nonieke literaire werken, journalistieke verslagen en poëzie uit Ierland die
de Hongersnood bespraken.

Het onderzoek dat gedaan is in het kader van het grotere project ‘Re-
located Remembrance’ – waarvan dit proefschrift een onderdeel is – bouwt
voort op de bevindingen van Kelleher, Fegan, Morash en anderen. We
hebben meer aandacht besteed aan literaire werken uit Canada en de VS
een aan de uitwisselingen tussen Groot-Brittannië en Noord-Amerika dan
tot nu al gedaan is in het kader van de Grote Hongersnood en diens re-
presentatie in literatuur. Om aan te tonen dat er geen schaarste maar
juist een overvloed aan literatuur over de Hongersnood geschreven werd
tussen 1845 en 1921, en dat dit ook nog eens literatuur was met een grote
publieke reikwijdte, hebben we gefocust op populaire fictie, geschreven en
gepubliceerd in Groot-Brittannië (zowel Ierland als Engeland), Canada en
de VS. We zijn op zoek gegaan naar obscure bronnen: fictie die populair
was in zijn eigen tijd, maar die sindsdien vaak verloren was gegaan, van-
gewee verschillende redenen, zoals de discutabele literaire kwaliteiten van
het boek, alsmede de veranderende status van een schrijver. We hebben
gekeken naar literaire werken die (een) herinnering(en) van de Hongernood
bevatten; ik heb deze ‘works of Famine fiction’ genoemd, en de selectiede-
finiteit voor deze groep werken is als volgt: een ‘work of Famine fiction’ is
een werk van narratieve fictie waarin de herinnering aan de Grote Hongersnood voorkomt, ofwel als een belangrijk element van het narratief, ofwel als een herinnering waarnaar verwezen wordt in dat narratief. Daarbij moet aangetekend worden dat ik ook naar enkele werken van ‘famine fictie’ in plaats van ‘Famine fictie’ heb gekeken, waarin het bijvoorbeeld gaat over de kleinere hongersnood van 1879, zonder dat er verwijzingen worden gemaakt naar 1845–51. Dit heb ik gedaan omdat zulke werken vaak gebruik maken van dezelfde narratieve technieken, figuren en terugkerende thematiek als de ‘works of Famine fiction’ uit dezelfde tijd. Als ik deze boeken over hongersnood in plaats van Hongersnood niet had toegevoegd aan mijn primaire corpus, had dat een vertekend beeld opgeleverd.

Binnen ‘Relocated Remembrance’ hebben we in totaal meer dan 110 romans en kortverhalen over de Hongersnood bestudeerd; dit proefschrift heeft een corpus van 33 primaire werken, variërend van kortverhalen tot ellenlange Victoriaanse ‘three deckers’. Het onderzoek is opgedeeld volgens tijdsperiodes. Project 1 beslaat de periode 1845–70; project 2 – mijn project – kijkt naar de periode 1871–91; project 3 beschouwt de periode 1892–1921. De verdeling is gemaakt op basis van belangrijke gebeurtenissen in de Ierse (politieke) geschiedenis, ervan uitgaand dat dergelijke gebeurtenissen ook invloed hebben op onderwerpen in de literatuur. Mijn project begint met het opheffen van de Ierse Kerk (“Disestablishment of the Irish Church”) en de oprichting van de ‘Irish Home Rule League’ en eindigt met de dood van de invloedrijke Ierse politicus Charles Stewart Parnell. Opgemerkt dient de worden dat de publicatiespreiding van de werken in mijn corpus niet gelijkmatig was: zo zijn veruit de meeste werken geschreven in de VS en Ierland, slechts enkelen in Canada (4) en Engeland (1). Omdat het aantal Canadese en Engelse werken te klein was om echte kwantitatieve analyses te doen, heb ik ervoor gekozen twee regio’s te hanteren: Noord-Amerika en Groot-Brittannië.

De periode 1871–91 wordt gekenmerkt door het nemen van afstand van fysiek nationalisme (“physical force nationalism”; rebellie en geweld) en een toenemend vertrouwen in constitutioneel nationalisme (“constitutional nationalism”). De Ieren kregen steeds meer invloed in het Parlement in Westminster, mede dankzij sleutelfiguren als Parnell. Daarnaast speelden er tijdens de periode verschillende belangrijke zaken binnen de rurale samenleving van Ierland. Na de Hongersnood was er een opleving in de rurale economie. Ondanks deze relatieve welvaart, was er nog steeds

\[\text{1 Wanneer ik ‘famine fictie’ naast ‘Famine fictie’ beschouw, spreek ik in het proefschrift van “F/famine fiction”}\]
een gebrek aan politieke en eigendomsrechten van de Ierse bevolking, wat leidde tot een verhit politiek debat waar Westminster niet meer omheen kon. In de late jaren 1870 vond er een kleinere hongersnood plaats en brak de ‘Land War’ (1879–82) uit, een tijd van grote onrust en rurale agressie. Deze gebeurtenissen deden vele Ieren denken aan de grote Hongersnood, en vergelijkingen werden dan ook regelmatig gemaakt in de pers, politiek en literatuur. Tijdens de periode werden ook verschillende ‘Land Bills’ opgesteld, die zorgden voor meer rechten voor de Ierse boeren. Twee zaken domineerden de Ierse politiek: de strijd voor ‘Home Rule’ (het recht om Ierland zelf te besturen en de Britse koloniale macht in te perken/af te schaffen) en de ‘Land Question’ (de strijd voor meer rechten voor de Ierse boeren en landarbeiders). De Ierse maatschappij was nog overwegend ruraal, en haar vorm was zeer hiërarchisch: het was een feodale gemeenschap, waarbij de heersende klasse veelal bestond uit Britse of Ierse ‘landlords’ met pro-Britse sympathieën. Ze verhuurden land aan rijkere boeren, die op hun beurt weer kleinere stukjes land verhuurden aan arme boeren. Onderaan de ladder stonden arme landarbeiders. De lagere klassen – de overgrote meerderheid van de Ierse bevolking – had daardoor slechts weinig eigendom en nog minder zeggenschap. Sinds de Hongersnood hadden belangrijke politieke denkers zich al uitgesproken over deze vorm van “bastardized feudalism”.

Tijdens de laatste helft van de negentiende eeuw kwam er veel verandering in dit corrupte systeem: de landheren raakten veel van hun macht kwijt, de positie van de Ierse boeren werd sterker, en aan het eind van de eeuw was het systeem zo goed als verdwenen.

Bij al deze maatschappelijke kwesties speelde het Ierse land een grote rol: het was onderwerp van veel politieke twist, en het eigendomsrecht van het land was onlosmakelijk verbonden met koloniale overheersing. Daarnaast baseerden de Ieren thuis en aan de andere kant van de Atlantische Oceaan hun identiteit op een traditionele band met het land. Zoals theoretici als Oona Frawley en Julia M. Wright al hebben aangetoond, gaat deze identificatie al eeuwen terug. Daarnaast is het ook zo dat de traditionele identiteit – van mensen die in harmonie leven met het land – haaks staat op hoe de Ieren de Britse overheersers zagen: als stedelijk, moderniserend en industrieel. Ideologisch gezien was het dus ook belangrijk om dit verschil met de Britse overheersers te benadrukken. De Hongersnood had een grote invloed op het rurale landschap van Ierland; de periode liet zien dat de band tussen de Ier en diens land verbroken kon worden, en dat

veranderingen onvermijdelijk waren. Echter, de identificatie met het land bleef ook belangrijk na de Hongersnood, zowel in politieke retoriek, als de Ierse cultuur en literatuur.

‘Relocated Remembrance’ bekijkt literatuur vanuit het perspectief van theorieën over culturele identiteitsvorming en culturele geheugenvorming, waarbij een van de leidende overtuigingen is dat leden van een cultuur selecteren welke elementen uit hun verleden (en ook uit het mythische verleden) zij incorporeren in hun verhalen over zichzelf. Identiteit en geheugen zijn constant onderhevig aan processen van selectie en vergeten, en zijn in die zin maakbare constructen. Een van de overtuigingen ten grondslag aan het grotere project, is dat (populaire) literatuur niet alleen een reflectie is van de cultuur en maatschappij waar zij uit voortkomt, maar ook dat literatuur wordt gebruikt om vorm te geven aan hoe een culturele groep over zichzelf en haar geschiedenis denkt. Daarnaast kun je literaire werken zien als draagbare monumenten (“portable monuments”3) die uitgewisseld kunnen worden binnen verschillende leden van een culturele groep (in diaspora) of zelfs tussen verschillende culturen. In mijn onderzoek heb ik gekeken hoe in populaire literatuur bepaalde ideeën over de invloed van de grote Ierse Hongersnood op de vormgeving van de Ierse culturele identiteit – “Irishness” – thuis en in diaspora, weergegeven worden. Herinneringen worden vaak niet zomaar opgehaald: vaak wordt een herinnering strategisch ingezet, met een bepaald doel. In het geval van de Hongersnood kan dit bijvoorbeeld gedaan worden om te laten zien dat de Ieren onder Brits bewind – Ierland was nog een kolonie van het Britse Rijk tot 1921 – ontzettend leden en onderdrukt werden. Hoe het verleden ingezet wordt, is veelal afhankelijk van de behoeftes en wensen van een cultuur in het heden; daarom vermoedden we bij aanvang van het grotere project ‘Relocated Remembrance’, dat er door geografische en temporele veranderingen – de Hongersnood lag immers steeds verder in het verleden, en veel Ieren hadden zich letterlijk elders ter wereld gevestigd – ook verschillen zouden zijn in hoe leden van de wereldwijde Ierse gemeenschap de herinneringen aan de Hongersnood zouden inzetten ten behoeve van hun identiteits- en geheugenformatie in het heden.

Dit proefschrift heeft naast een cultuurwetenschappelijke en historiografische dimensie ook een literatuurtheoretische component. Wetenschappers die zich bezighouden met de vorming van cultureel geheugen, zeggen dat geheugen gevormd wordt door narrativisering (“narrativisation”); de her-

inneringen die tot ons komen, zijn geen ‘affe’ verhalen, wij herinneren ons flarden (“traces”) van gebeurtenissen, en maken een mentale reconstructie, waarbij we de verschillende flarden combineren tot een betekenisvol narratief. Narratieve technieken en middelen zoals een vertellersperspectief, focalisatie (door wiens ogen we de gebeurtenissen zien), “following” (wiens acties we volgen⁴), karakterisering, en het kiezen van een bepaalde volgorde, worden allemaal ingezet om een samenhangend verhaal te creëren. Deze zaken hebben vervolgens weer invloed op hoe wij als publiek een bepaald verhaal, een bepaalde herinnering, interpreteren, aangezien dergelijke technieken en middelen ons kunnen sturen, ons een kant kunnen laten kiezen en bij ons betrokkenheid met bepaalde karakters/spelers kunnen stimuleren (“readerly engagement”).

De centrale vragen waarmee ik mijn onderzoek begon, gaan in op de aannames dat er geografische en temporele verschillen zijn in hoe het geheugen van de Hongersnood ingezet wordt in fictie, dat narratieve elementen en technieken een sterke invloed hebben op de representatie van dat geheugen, en dat het landschap als identiteitsmarker een belangrijke rol speelt in hoe de Ieren over zichzelf dachten in de periode 1871–91. De vragen zijn als volgt:

1. Hoe wordt het geheugen van de grote Ierse Hongersnood geregpresenteerd in het primaire corpus van Famine fictie (1871–91), geschreven in het thuisland en in de diaspora? Zijn er verschillen en/of overeenkomsten die voortkomen uit temporele en/of geografische veranderingen?

2. Wat is de rol van narratieve technieken en figuren – zoals narratieve inbedding (“narrative embedding”), ‘following’ en focalisatie, het gebruik van temporele verschuivingen en het gebruik van bestaande genre conventies – in de vorming van literaire herinneringen aan de hongersnood?

3. Hoe wordt het Ierse landschap geregpresenteerd in relatie tot constructies van Ierse identiteit en geschiedenis? Hoe geven ‘works of Famine fiction’ de impact van de Hongersnood op het traditionele Ierse verwantschap met de omgeving (“environmental relatedness”) weer?⁵

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⁵ De term “environmental relatedness” wordt gebruikt door Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (Londen: Routledge, 1999), 18.
Vervolgens heb ik deze drie hoofdvragen toegepast op vijf thema’s die vaak voorkomen in het discours over de Hongersnood, zowel in fictie als in de maatschappij. Op elk thema is een hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift gebaseerd: het Ierse land en landschap, de Land Question en relaties tussen landheren en hun pachters (“tenantry”), Iers nationalisme, de representatie van Ierse slachtoffers, en Ierse emigratie.

Zowel in het wetenschappelijke als populair debat is men er nog niet over uit wat de exacte impact van de Famine is. Een overwegende tendens is dat men ervan overtuigd is dat de Hongersnood een exceptionele status heeft binnen het Ierse culturele geheugen. Binnen het wetenschappelijke discours rust deze aanname op een aantal facetten: de Hongersnood en diens impact zijn niet te presenteren (“unrepresentability”); de Hongersnood heeft de status van een cultureel trauma; Ierse emigranten – vooral ten tijde van en na de Hongersnood – zijn onvrijwillige ballingen (“involuntary exiles”) die samen een “victim diaspora” vormen; en de Hongersnood is de ontstaansmythe (“foundation myth”) voor de Ierse gemeenschap in diaspora. Op basis van deze heersende overtuigingen – waarvoor trouwens ook genoeg weerklink te vinden is – heb ik mijn theoretisch kader gebaseerd op de theorieën aangaande culturele identiteits- en geheugenformatie, diaspora en cultureel trauma. Bij cultureel geheugen heb ik me toegepast op vier verschillende vormen van geheugen. Ten eerste de Freudiaanse Deckerinnerung (“screen memory”), waarbij – in de door mij aangepaste definitie – een individuele herinnering wordt gebruikt om vorm te geven aan een andere individuele herinnering.6 Ook leen ik de termen “postmemory” (Marianne Hirsch) en “prosthetic memory” (Alison Landsberg); de eerste gaat ervan uit dat binnen een groep herinneringen worden doorgegeven van generatie op generatie, en dat deze herinneringen ook voor volgende generaties grote affectieve impact kunnen hebben.7 Ik noem dit verticale uitwisseling. ‘Prosthetic memory’ benadrukt juist dat herinneringen uitgewisseld kunnen worden tussen verschillende culturen, en dat de affectieve en morele connotaties van de herinnering dan ook getransporteerd worden. Dit noem ik horizontale uitwisseling. Tenslotte gebruik ik “multidirectional memory” (Michael Rothberg), dat ik definiëer als een vorm van uitwisseling, waarbij de herinnering zowel de functie

heeft van ‘prosthetic memory’ als ‘postmemory’.\(^8\) Natuurlijk speelt de eerder genoemde narratieve theorie ook een belangrijke rol.

Omdat het belang van het landschap ook als een rode draad door het proefschrift loopt, heb ik gebruik gemaakt van esthetische theorieën over het landschap: de lezer kan dan denken aan de “pastoral” (de pastorale traditie met nadruk op genot en vrije tijd, *otium*), de “georgic” (de pastorale traditie met nadruk op werken op het land) en de “picturesque” (de nadruk op de schoonheid van het schijnbare onaangetaste landschap).\(^9\)

Het Ierse landschap heeft vaak een meerzijdige functie in de verhalen waar ik naar kijk: het is altijd een plek van groot belang voor de constructie van de Ierse identiteit en kan dus gezien worden als een *lieux de mémoire*.\(^10\) Daarnaast belichaamt een plek ook vaak verschillende tijden en visies: ik toon bijvoorbeeld aan dat een Ierse ruïne zowel een bewijs is van de gloorie van een oude Ierse cultuur, als van koloniale overheersing (waardoor de ruïne in verval is geraakt), als van een belofte voor de toekomst: deze glorieuze cultuur zal terugkeren. In die zin zijn veel landschapselementen ook “heterotopia”; zij belichamen meerdere, soms tegenstrijdige, belangen en interpretaties.\(^11\) De termen *lieux de mémoire* en heteropia komen ook regelmatig terug in het proefschrift.

De meningen zijn verdeeld over of de Hongersnood gezien moet worden als een cultureel trauma. Op zich is het al problematisch dat een theoretisch kader bedoeld voor individuele therapeutische diagnose (te) gemakkelijk geprojecteerd wordt op een hele groepsdynamiek. Jeffrey Alexander defineert een cultureel trauma als een verschrikkelijke gebeurtenis die voor de leden van een culturele groep zo’n grote invloed heeft, dat deze hun zelfbeeld in het heden en in de toekomst onherroepelijk verandert.\(^12\) Theoretici en (populaire) historici als Mary C. Kelly, Christine Kinealy, Kevin Whelan en Tim Pat Coogan zijn van mening dat de Hongersnood een cultureel trauma is, soms zelfs nog voor de Ieren vandaag de dag. Andere – zoals Oona Frawley, Emily Mark-FitzGerald, Cormac Ó Gráda en

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\(^9\) Ik heb hier geen passende Nederlandse vertalingen voor, dus heb ervoor gekozen de termen onvertaald te laten.


Niall Ó Ciosáin – plaatsen een kritische noot en beargumenteren dat er te weinig overeenstemming is over de impact van de Hongersnood op de Ierse maatschappij en het Ierse volk in verleden en heden, om te kunnen spreken van een trauma op het grotere culturele vlak. Om te kijken hoe dit interessante hedendaagse debat mogelijk terugkwam in een tijd waarin de Hongersnood veel minder lang geleden was, heb ik ook gekeken naar hoe de schrijvers die onderdeel uitmaken van mijn primaire corpus de mogelijk traumatische status van de Hongersnood weergaven. Ik wilde onderzoeken in welke contexten de Hongersnood mogelijk wel en niet als cultureel trauma geregisseerd werd, om zo te beoordelen wat de mogelijkheden en beperkingen zijn van een theoretisch raamwerk dat zo belangrijk is binnen de Irish Studies. Daarnaast zijn de overwegingen van slachtofferschap in diaspora, onvrijwillig ballingschap en het idee dat de Hongersnood zo invloedrijk was voor de Ierse diaspora, dat de periode haar ontstaansmythe is geworden, gelinkt aan dit debat over trauma. Omdat de meningen in het huidige academische discussie hierover ook verdeeld zijn, wilde ik onderzoeken hoe deze zaken aangaande een Iers exceptionalisme gezien werden in mijn primaire corpus.

Dit onderzoek is grotendeels kwalitatief van aard: ik geef tekstanalyse op basis van close reading, plaats wat ik in de literatuur vind in een socio-historische en politieke context, en tracht met het reeds genoemde theoretisch kader te verklaren waarom er voor bepaalde manieren van representatie gekozen wordt, en wat dat zegt over de incorporatie van de Hongersnood in het grotere Ierse culturele geheugen en de Ierse culturele identiteit van de periode 1871–91. Echter, omdat ik ook grotere tendensen, veranderingen en overeenkomsten gedurende de periode en in de verschillende regio’s (Noord-Amerika versus Groot-Brittannië) wilde schetsen, heb ik een kwantitatieve dimensie toegevoegd. Ik gebruik de close readings van de verschillende kortverhalen en romans als illustraties voor grotere tendensen in het corpus als geheel, en ondersteun deze op kwantitatieve wijze met illustraties als tabellen, grafieken en taartdiagrammen. Deze zijn zowel te vinden in de lopende tekst van het proefschrift, als in de Appendix.

B.2 Analyses en Belangrijkste Bevindingen

B.2.1 Land, Landschap en (re)Constructies van ‘Irishness’ in Famine fictie

Land was een betwist onderwerp in het Ierland van de laat-negentiende eeuw, en het landschap was een belangrijke identiteitsmarker voor de Ieren.
De band met het land, en het werken op het land, werden gezien als vitale onderdelen van een traditionele Ierse identiteit. Deze identiteit was al eeuwen oud, en had ook ideologische en politieke implicaties, aangezien de ‘environmental relatedness’ gezien werd als een onlosmakelijk deel van ‘Irishness’ en op gronde daarvan werd beargumenteerd dat het land van Ierland dan ook van de Ieren – en niet van de Britten – zou moeten zijn.

Bijna alle ‘works of Famine fiction’ uit 1871–91 bevatten (uitgebreide) beschouwingen van het Ierse land en landschap. De Hongersnood had meer invloed op het rurale dan natuurlijke/esthetische landschap (de bergen, meren, etcetera) van Ierland. Daarom besloot ik om in mijn analyses van het Ierse landschap ook een verdeling te maken tussen het functionele land en het esthetische landschap; dit was tot nu toe nog niet gedaan. De termen die regelmatig gebruikt worden om het landschap van Ierland te beschrijven, worden vaak geleend uit de “pastoral”, de “georgic” en de “picturesque” tradities. Waarbij de “pastoral” en de “picturesque” met name gebruikt worden voor het esthetische landschap, wordt de “georgic” gebruikt voor het functionele landschap.

In Hoofdstuk 2 toon ik aan dat in Famine fictie de ‘environmental relatedness’ van de Ieren in relatie tot hun omgeving blijft bestaan ondanks de Hongersnood en latere periodes van soortgelijk lijden. Echter, het esthetische landschap wordt in de periode eerder gebruikt als een bouwsteen voor een traditionele Ierse identiteit, waarbij de connectie met het Ierse landschap, niet het land, voortaan centraal staat. Het functionele land wordt over het algemeen weergegeven als niet langer in staat zijnde om de bevolking te onderhouden. Het land is onherstelbaar beschadigd door de hongersnood, wat in de literaire werken vaak geïllustreerd wordt met de aanwezigheid van (verlaten) publieke werken en ‘Famine roads’ en de recente verlatenheid van het ooit drukbevolkte landschap. De schoonheid van het landschap kan blijven voortbestaan, of kan kort na de Hongersnood alweer herstellen. Daarnaast is het ook zo dat het functionele land zijn werk-potentie verliest, en dus effectief esthetisch wordt; land wordt landschap. In vele van de fictionele werken is het bovendien zo dat de karakters eerder hun persoonlijke band met het landschap van Ierland uitdrukken, dan met het land. Deze identificatie met het landschap wordt structureel ondersteund door focalisatie: de karakters die directe relaties met het landschap van Ierland belichamen, functioneren ook als focalisators van dat landschap. Dit landschap wordt gekenmerkt door folkloristische en Romantische eigenschappen, en diens representatie is daarom zowel een verlenging van het traditionele Romantische landschap als een
vroege vorm van literatuur van de Ierse ‘Celtic Revival’. De focus op het landschap stelt de schrijver en de Ierse gemeenschap in staat om de impact van de recente Hongersnood tijdelijk te verhullen en te focussen op het verre verleden, Ierse mythe en folklore als elementen voor ‘Irishness’, een tendens die breder gedragen werd in de Ierse cultuur.

Oona Frawley heeft eerder beargumenteerd dat de Hongersnood het falen van de pastorale traditie betekende (“the failure of the pastoral”).\(^{13}\) In mijn analyse heb ik onderscheid gemaakt tussen de ‘pastoral’ en de ‘georgic’, twee aanverwante vormen die een harmonieuze symbiose tussen land en mens veronderstellen, waarbij de eerste de stress legt op een gevoel van *ôtium* en de tweede op een werkethiek. Wanneer je dit onderscheid maakt, vallen pastorale omgevingen onder de noemer landschap, ‘georgic’ omgevingen onder de noemer land. In de ‘georgic’ werkethiek is het zo dat de ideale vorm van in harmonie leven met het land dat je onderhoudt ook een parallel is voor het vormen van de ideale staat/natie. In die zin heeft het falen van het land dus ook gevolgen voor hoe het land als identiteitsmarker kan dienen in de nationalistische retoriek van de natie (in spe). Omdat het primaire corpus overwegend het falen van het land erkent na de Hongersnood en latere soortgelijke gebeurtenissen, en de nadruk legt op de regeneratieve mogelijkheden van het landschap, beargumenteer ik dat we niet zouden moeten spreken van de “failure of the pastoral” maar specifieker van de “failure of the georgic”.

Wanneer ik dit onderscheid lees vanuit het perspectief van traumatologie, worden tegenstrijdige tendensen zichtbaar. Als het land weergegeven wordt als diep en onomkeerbaar geschaad, als in “stasis” (stilstand), dan kun je beargumenteren dat middels representaties van het land, het primaire corpus demonstreert dat de Hongersnood beschouwd kan worden als een cultureel trauma. Immers, het land laat het verdwijnen van de bevolking zien, en de onomkeerbare verandering in de rurale maatschappij. Echter, in het landschap ligt de potentie tot regeneratie: het esthetische landschap verliest haar kracht niet, of krijgt deze snel terug, en is niet ‘getraumatiseerd’. Op deze manier kan het landschap blijven functioneren als een bouwsteen voor een traditionele vorm van ‘Irishness’. Met betrekking tot representaties van land en landschap is het mogelijk waardevoller om te spreken van de “traumatic sublime” dan van cultureel trauma.\(^{14}\)


Nederlandse samenvatting

De hierboven beschreven tendensen gelden voor zowel het literaire corpus uit Groot-Brittannië als uit Noord-Amerika; er zijn geen grote temporele of geografische verschillen merkbaar. Als we naar de nuances kijken, is het wel zo dat werken uit Groot-Brittannië iets vaker latere gebeurtenissen noemen dan werken uit Noord-Amerikaanse werken. De discrepanties in de ‘works of Famine fiction’ tussen de impact van de Hongersnood op het land en landschap kunnen ook gelezen als “instances of the traumatic sublime”, omdat het geheugen van de Hongersnood en diens impact op het landschap open gelaat worden en er dus ruimte geboden wordt voor verwerking.

B.2.2 Verhoudingen tussen Landheren en hun Pachters en Rurale Tijdsbeleving

Hoofdstuk 3 gaat in op de Land Question en op de samenstelling van de Ierse rurale samenleving en wat de invloed van de Tongersnood en latere soortgelijke gebeurtenissen hierop kan zijn. Ik gebruik de Iers-Amerikaanse roman *Rose O’Connor* (1880) van Emily Fox om te demonstreren dat een groot deel van de romans een traditionalistische en nostalgische wens laat zien: de terugkeer van een ideale feodale gemeenschap. (Daarbij kan men zich natuurlijk afvragen of een dergelijke samenleving überhaupt ooit bestaan heeft.) In deze feodale gemeenschap is er een band van zorg en wederzijds respect tussen de landheer en de boeren en arbeiders, en is de landheer ideaal van dezelfde overtuiging als zijn pachters: Iers Katholiek. De Hongersnood wees uit dat de traditionele Ierse rurale gemeenschap wel...
moest veranderen; de traditionele tendens in verschillende romans en kort-
verhalen spreekt dit juist tegen en laat zien dat de feodale gemeenschap
(kort) na de Hongersnood en soortgelijke gebeurtenissen wel kon terugke-
ren. De volle effecten van de Hongersnood werden zo dus ondermijnd.

Ierse werken speciferen wat vaker wat de religieuze overtuiging van
de ideale landheer/dame zou moeten zijn (veelal Katholiek). Dit is een
interessant gegeven, aangezien het Katholicisme ook een zeer belangrijke en
onderscheidende identiteitsmarker voor de Ieren in Amerika was. De
nostalgie voor een ideaal Iers feodalisme is vaak in overeenstemming met
de afkomst van de schrijvers: verschillende kwamen zelf uit de Katholieke
midden- en bovenklasse, en zagen hun eigen klasse als geschikte leaders voor
die Ierse maatschappij. Echter, het ideaal strookt niet met ontwikkelingen
deur de periode 1871–91, vooral van de laatste jaren. In navolging van
James Fintan Lalor streden politici en denkers als Parnell, Michael Davitt
en Isaac Butt juist voor meer eigendomsrechten en politieke rechten voor
die Ierse boeren en arbeiders, niet voor het behoud van de hiërarchische
rurale samenleving. In de laatste jaren van de periode worden de idealen
van meer rechten voor die Ierse boeren en arbeiders reële opties. Je ziet
dan ook dat in de ‘works of Famine fiction’ het Ierse feodale ideaal wat van
zijn kracht verliest; meer boeken geschreven voor het begin van de Land
War bevatten dit ideaal dan zij die na 1881 geschreven zijn. Het ideaal
verdwijnt echter niet helemaal.

In dit hoofdstuk kijk ik ook naar verschillende weergavés van (Ierse)
tijdsbeleving. In de politieke retoriek en literatuur van de periode wordt
vaak benadrukt dat de Ierse maatschappij onderhevig is aan herhaling, aan
viciueze spiralen: hongersnoden blijven zich maar voordoen, de bevolking
staat eigenlijk al jaren constant op het randje van de afgrond. Deze over-
tuiging komt ook terug in Famine fictie, waarin onderscheid wordt gemaakt
tussen herhaling van hongersnood condities (‘repetition’) en het voortdu-
ren van dezelfde slechte condities (‘stasis’). Veel boeken en kortverhalen
leggen links tussen de toestanden ten tijde van de Hongersnood en tijdens
die Land War en kleinere hongersnood van 1879–82. De Iers-Canadese
schrijfster Margaret Dixon McDougall’s The Days of a Life (1883) wordt
gebruikt als voorbeeld van een roman die de herhaling inherent aan de
Ierse boerengemeenschap illustreert. De roman stelt namelijk dat de klei-
nere hongersnood van 1879 net zo erg is als de grote Hongersnood; in die zin
vindt er in de roman een “realignment of temporalities” plaats. ¹⁵ Echter,
McDougall laat ook weten dat er tussen deze periodes jaren van voorspoed waren. Vervolgens sluit de roman af met de boodschap dat verbetering (op de korte termijn) mogelijk is, mits de Ierse boeren meer zeggenschap en rechten krijgen. De Ierse roman *Marcella Grace* (1891) van Rosa Mulholland dient ter illustratie van ‘stasis’, aangezien deze roman laat zien dat de toestand van de Ieren al decennia lang precair is, dat de bevolking van Ierland al lang lijdt aan “slow famine”. Aangezien de duur van de Hongersnood en hongersnood en hun naslag beperkt wordt in de eerste aanpak (herhaling), wordt in de context van de Land Question ook onderscheid gemaakt tussen de Hongersnood gelegen wordt als een cultureel trauma. Daarentegen benadrukt het erkennen van ‘stasis’ juist de (mogelijk onbeperkte) lange duur van de Hongersnood en diens effecten, hetgeen juist de lezing van de Hongersnood als een cultureel trauma zou onderschrijven.

Tenslotte heb ik in dit hoofdstuk ook gekeken naar een regelmatig terugkerende parallel: de vergelijking tussen de arme Ieren en slaven in andere culturele en contexten. Sommige werken leggen de relatie met Bijbelse slavernij, anderen met slavernij in de VS. William C. Upton’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* (1882) is een voorbeeld van de laatste categorie en vormt de basis voor de sectie over slavernij. Daarnaast werden er op negatieve gronden ook regelmatig vergelijkingen getrokken tussen Ieren en African-Americans waarbij zij beiden als inferieur aan de blanke Anglo-Saxons werden gezien. In *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* en andere ‘works of Famine fiction’ worden vergelijkingen getrokken tussen de arme Ieren en slaven, om aan te tonen dat zij onderhevig zijn aan dezelfde soort onterechte onderdrukking. Dit is een vorm van ‘prosthetic memory’, waarbij de morele en politieke dimensie van het onrecht in de andere cultuur (in de Amerikaanse context al uitgewezen door de afschaffing van de slavernij) wordt getransplanteerd op de Ierse casus, waarmee de ernst en morele noodzaak van de laatste benadrukt wordt. Vaak is het zo dat herinneringen van de Hongersnood ook betrokken worden in de vergelijking: bij *Uncle Pat’s Cabin* is het bijvoorbeeld zo dat de het (nood)lot van de Ierse landarbeider ten tijde van de Land War wordt vergeleken met diens gelijke tijdens de Hongersnood en met slaven in de VS. De representatie van de landarbeider kan daardoor hier gezien worden als een vorm van

multidirectional memory’, waarbij ‘postmemory’ en ‘prosthetic memory’ gecombineerd worden.

B.2.3 De Rol van Geschiedenis, Ierse Plaatsen en Herinneringen aan de Hongersnood in Literaire Formuleringen van Iers Nationalisme

Wanneer we kijken naar de nationalistische boodschap van de ‘works of Famine fiction’ blijkt dat velen de opvattingen van de bekende Ierse nationalist John Mitchel ondersteunen, hetzij ze deze boodschap niet altijd op dezelfde polemische manier uiten als Mitchel zelf. De Hongersnood was in verschillende opzichten een koloniaal probleem, aangezien de meningen – zelfs vandaag de dag – nog verschillen over de schuld en verantwoordelijkheid van de Britse overheid. Was het door de geldende laissez-faire aanpak in de Britse economie geoorloofd om niet teveel in te grijpen in de voedselcrisis, of waren de Britten verantwoordelijk voor de echte omvang van de Hongersnood, omdat zij nalatig waren? Mitchels credo “The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine”, en zijn – onterechte – overtuiging dat er ten tijde van de Hongersnood meer eten uit Ierland geëxporteerd werd dan er ingevoerd werd door de Britten, komt in verschillende werken terug. Deze ‘Mitchelite’ interpretatie komt iets vaker voor in romans en kortverhalen uit Groot-Brittannië. Desalniettemin is het niet zo dat Mitchels overtuigingen meer voedingsbodem vonden aan deze kant van de Atlantische Oceaan: door zijn betrokkenheid bij de Young Ireland rebellion (1848), werd Mitchel verbannen. Hij ontsnapte en vestigde zich in de VS, waar hij een belangrijke invloed bleef op het Iers nationalisme. De Britse ‘works of Famine fiction’ (1871–91) die de Mitchelite interpretatie bevatten, werden daarnaast ook opnieuw uitgebracht in Noord-Amerika (als boeken en in tijdschriften en kranten), hetgeen uitwijst dat Mitchels ideeën ook gedragen werden door de Ieren in Noord-Amerika, verschillende decennia na de Hongersnood.

De ‘works of Famine fiction’ leggen de nadruk op constitutioneel nationalisme, en veroordelen daden van fysiek geweld. Deze oriëntatie naar niet-gewelddadig nationalisme wordt vaak ondersteund door de structuur van de tekst: op belangrijke momenten wordt er gewisseld in focalisatie en in ‘following’ patronen, waardoor de lezer een bepaalde kant op gestuurd...

16 “De Almachtige zond inderdaad de aardappelschimmel, maar de Engelsen creérden de Hongersnood.” Ireland since ’98: Daniel O’Connell; the Repeal Agitation; the Miseries of the Famine; the Young Ireland Party, etc. (Glasgow: Cameron en Ferguson, 1871), 152.
Nederlandse samenvatting

wordt. Zo worden scenes van fysiek geweld doorgaans niet getoond vanuit het perspectief van de pleger, maar vaak naderhand verteld en worden nationalistische discussies veelal getoond middels focalisatie door een karakter van gematigde politieke overtuigingen. De ‘works of Famine fiction’ maken het op deze manier makkelijk voor de lezer om zich te identificeren met de karakters met minder extreme overtuigingen.

Nationalistische rebellen worden verheerlijkt als martelaren en slachtoffers van omstandigheden, van een wereld die simpelweg nog niet klaar was voor hun grootse idealen. In zulke heroïsche verhalen kan het moeilijk zijn om de Hongersnood te includeren, omdat deze juist de slachtofferrol en het grote lijden van de Ieren blootlegt, hun zwakheden benadrukt. Als gevolg blijkt dan ook dat er met betrekking tot de representatie van nationalism een spanning is in het primaire corpus. Sommige werken erkennen de volle impact van de Hongersnood en gebruiken de grote menselijke schade juist als ultieme rechtvaardiging voor de strijd voor Ierse onafhankelijkheid. Anderen leggen de nadruk op de heroïsche aard van de Ierse nationalisten en op de positieve boodschap voor de (nabije) toekomst en spreken juist niet of nauwelijks over de Hongersnood en diens slachtoffers. Justin Huntly McCarthy’s Lily Lass (1889) over de ‘Young Ireland rebellion’ van 1848 is een voorbeeld van de laatste; Annie Keary’s Castle Cloyne (1875) gaat voor een groot deel over dezelfde opstand en is juist een voorbeeld van de eerste categorie. Deze romans dienen als representaties van twee uitersten van een representatieel spectrum: compleet zwijgen over de Hongersnood tot een integrale behandeling van diens impact op Ierland en de Ieren, beiden ten behoeve van een nationalistische retoriek. De andere ‘works of Famine fiction’ liggen qua gebruik van de herinnering aan de Hongersnood binnen hun nationalistische discours overigens wat meer in het midden. Wat alle romans tezamen laten zien, is dat herinneringen aan de Hongersnood strategisch worden ingezet, en dat zij in vorm aangepast worden aan het beoogde doel/de boodschap van de tekst. Ze laten dus zien dat elke proces van herinnering onderhevig is aan (bewuste) selectie en omissie en dat herinnering constant onderhevig is aan verandering.

Net als het vorige hoofdstuk, kijkt Hoofdstuk 4 naar (Ierse) tijdsbeleving, met de nadruk op herhaling en ‘stasis’. Ik analyseer het boek When We Were Boys (1890) van politicus en schrijver William O’Brien, waarin de Fenian rebellion van 1867 besproken wordt. Op verschillende momenten worden vergelijkingen gemaakt met Ierse nationalistische helden uit het verleden: de United Irishmen (1798), Robert Emmet (1803) en de Young Ireland rebellen worden onder andere benoemd. Deze herinneringen fun-
geren dan als ‘postmemory’ voor 1867, maar ook voor de boodschap die de schrijver voor zijn eigen tijd (1890) heeft. De roman hanteert een retoriek van opeenstapeling, en duidt aan dat de Ierse onderdrukking al jaren een feit is, maar ook al jaren bestreden wordt, en dat de menselijke offers inmiddels zo hoog zijn, dat het niet meer dan legitiem is dat de Ieren meer zeggenschap krijgen over Ierland.


De nationalistische toon in de ‘works of Famine fiction’ is Romantisch van aard: de nadruk wordt gelegd op langlopende Ierse bloedlijnen en eeuwenoude claims op het landschap. Dit landschap maakt dan ook een belangrijk deel uit van de nationalistische retoriek van veel romans en kortverhalen. De Ierse ruïne – bij uitstek on landschapselement behorende bij de ‘picturesque’ – vormt een belangrijk onderdeel van de nationalistische retoriek. In verschillende ‘works of Famine fiction’ wordt de ruïne beschouwd als een paradoxale ‘timespace’. De ruïne is een heterotopia, en herbergt de (oude) glorie van een (bijna) verdwenen Ierse cultuur, terwijl hij ook laat zien dat deze cultuur in verval is geraakt, en nu overheerst wordt door een externe heerser (de Britse koloniale aanwezigheid). In verschillende werken zijn Ierse ruïnes zoals vervallen kastelen en forten de plaatsen waar heroïsche Ierse rebellen wonen, waar zij hun plannen sme-

Wat alle verhalen behandeld in dit hoofdstuk laten zien, is dat de herinneringen aan de Hongersnood en de ‘Young Ireland rebellion’ die plaatsvond ten tijde van de Hongersnood, ingebed worden in langere geschiedenis van Britse onderdrukking en Ierse rebellie. Ook laten ze zien dat ondanks de Hongersnood en latere misstanden, het Iers nationaliste denkgoed niet te vernietigen valt; ondanks alle tegenslagen leeft het voort, en geeft het moed voor latere generaties. Binnen het nationaliste discours van het primaire corpus fungeert de Hongersnood dus niet als een cultureel trauma.

**B.2.4 F/famine Slachtoffers, Plaatsen van Lijden en Literaire Rondwaringen (“Hauntings”)**

Binnen de Irish Studies wordt herhaaldelijk gesproken over de “haunting”\footnote{Het Nederlands heeft hier geen mooie vertaling voor, dus ik houd de Engelse term “to haunt”.} eigenschappen van de Hongersnood; de ‘geest’ van de Hongersnood waart nog steeds rond in de Ierse cultuur en werpt haar schaduw over latere gebeurtenissen en debatten. Hoewel dit onderwerp op het moment levendig bediscussieerd wordt, kijk ik in Hoofdstuk 5 minder naar het meta-discours, en eerder naar tekstuele representaties van Ierse slachtoffers. Ik kijk hoe de representatie van slachtoffers van latere misstanden wordt beïnvloed door de herinnering aan de Hongersnood en slachtoffers van de Hongersnood. Theoretici zoals Chris Morash, Niall Ó Ciosáin en Cathal Póirtéir hebben beargumenteerd dat men ervan uitgaat dat de Hongersnood een exceptioneel verbaal kader heeft, terwijl aangetoond kan worden dat weergaves van Hongersnood-slachtoffers onderhevig zijn aan “premediation”; ze worden geïnformeerd door beelden die al bekend zijn onder de bevolking, van bijvoorbeeld slachtoffers van eerdere hongersnoden.\footnote{Guy Beiner spreekt onder andere over “premediation”: ‘Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory: from Postmemory to Prememory and Back’, *Irish Historical Studies*} Vervolgens is het
zo dat herinneringen aan de Hongersnood op hun beurt weer dienen als ‘premediation’ voor latere gebeurtenissen.


Om wederom de centrale positie van het landschap in constructies van ‘Irishness’ in fictie te benadrukken kijk ik niet alleen naar de representatie van slachtoffers, maar ook naar de plaatsen waar zij ziek zijn en sterven, met name de hutten (“cabins”) van de armen. Ik bekijk welke rol de ‘pathetic fallacy’ – en literaire techniek waarin het landschap en de omgeving de mentale en/of fysieke toestand van de mens weerspiegelen – en een “topography of the Gothic” – de Gothic ruimte werkt vervreemdelend en

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20 Er is geen letterlijke vertaling van “liminality”, een term die veel gangbaarder is in het Engelse talige wetenschappelijk discours; het betekent zoveel als jezelf op de drempel bevinden, in een grensregio, bijvoorbeeld door buiten je gemeenschap te staan, of op de grens tussen leven en dood.
desoriënterend en reflecteert doorgaans de geestestoestand van het subject – spelen in deze literaire ruimtes. De focus ligt in deze sectie onder andere op Margaret Brew’s Castle Cloyne (1885), waarin de hoofdpersoon een groot aantal hutten van stervende en zieke mensen binnengaat, om ze te helpen als het nog niet te laat is. De roman speelt veel met het overschrijden van grenzen in ruimtelijke en psychologische zin en met het gedoseerd blootgeven van informatie, zodat de spanning opgebouwd wordt en je als lezer met de focaliserende hoofdpersoon gaandeweg de storende beelden van hongersnood en hongerdood ervaart. De spanning opbouw wordt hier door de narratieve structuur ondersteund, aangezien de vertellerslaag verdwijnt als de lezer met de hoofdpersoon de ruimte instapt waar slachtoffers liggen; dit wordt ook wel “the diminishment of the observer role” genoemd, en de techniek leidt ertoe dat je als lezer je zo direct mogelijk kunt identificeren met het karakter en haar gewaarwordingen. De ‘pathetic fallacy’ speelt daarnaast ook een belangrijke rol, aangezien de omgeving vaak in overeenstemming is met de toestand van de karakters. Sterfscenes worden vaak vergezeld door slechte weersomstandigheden of onheilspellende condities, waardoor de band tussen het Ierse slachtoffer en zijn/haar omgeving op negatieve wijze onderstreept wordt.

De overgrote meerderheid van de werken in het primaire corpus bevat ten representaties van slachtofferschap; bijna allemaal maken ze gebruik van de ‘pathetic fallacy’. Een wat kleiner, maar nog steeds aanzienlijk aandeel maakt gebruik van de leningen van de Gothic mode. Opvallend hierbij is dat Britse werken vaker representaties van Ierse slachtoffers bevatten en dat van deze werken zij die geschreven zijn later in de periode 1871–91, iets vaker gebruik maken van de Gothic mode. Ook is het opvallend dat de Gothic mode wat vaker toegepast wordt in werken uit Groot-Brittannië dan Noord-Amerika, terwijl de Gothic mode in beide regio’s toch echt populair was. Jim Shanahan stelt dat de Gothic mode in veel landen gebruikt werd als vorm te geven aan een kwaad dat ver van ons verwijderd staat, maar dat de Gothic in Ierland gebruikt werd om vorm te geven aan directe problemen, omdat de Ierse maatschappij regelmatig geplagd werd door ernstige zaken als hongersnood en rebellie. In die zin werd de Gothic gebruikt als een vorm van Iers literair realisme.

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23 Jim Shanahan, ‘Suffering Rebellion: Irish Gothic Fiction, 1799–1830’, in Christina Morin en Niall Gillespie, red., Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions,
1879 en 1891 werd Ierland inderdaad weer geplaagd door verschillende nare gebeurtenissen en misstanden (zoals een hongersnood en twee Land Wars), waardoor er wederom een acutere reden zou zijn voor Ierse schrijvers om zich tot de Gothic te wenden; wederom gold de mode als een vorm van realisme.

In dit hoofdstuk toon ik aan dat het binnen de context van mijn primaire corpus moeilijk is te beargumenteren dat de Hongersnood een exceptieel eigen discours heeft, of dat de periode niet te representeren valt ("unrepresentable" is). Het literaire discours wordt juist sterk beïnvloed door bestaande en bekende literaire conventies en figuren en kan dus juist ingebed worden in een veel breder literair raamwerk, dat Ierland ontstijgt. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat het wellicht lastig is een goede, waarheidsgetrouwe representatie van slachtoffers van H/hongersnood te geven, maar dat er desalniettemin wel representaties gegeven worden.

B.2.5 Emigratie: Nostalgie, Ballingschap en hun Weerleggingen in Famine fictie


hoogstwaarschijnlijk bekend met zowel de positievere beelden die voorkomen in Famine fictie als met de negatievere interpretaties zichtbaar in andere uitingen. Desalniettemin laten deze verschillende vormen samen zien dat het beeld van het Ierse emigranten leven zeer veelzijdig was, en dat het label “involuntary exile” te eenduidig is.

De Hongersnood wordt door velen gezien als de ‘origin myth’ van de Ierse diaspora; de gebeurtenis waardoor de diaspora écht begon en haar vorm kreeg. Dit beeld wordt ook weerlegd in de Famine fictie van de periode 1871–91, aangezien de werken op grote schaal laten zien dat Ierse karakters om andere redenen emigreren dan acuut lijden door de Hongersnood. Dientengevolge wordt de link tussen Ierse emigratie en de Hongersnood dus doorbroken, en is het in de context van dit primaire corpus niet mogelijk om de Hongersnood als ontstaansmythe voor de diaspora te zien.

Het Ierse landschap bleef ook belangrijk voor de Ieren in diaspora; ‘works of Famine fiction’ van voor 1871, laten zien dat het Ierse landschap getransplanteerd kan worden naar een Amerikaanse setting. Deze narratieve transculturatie vindt ook nog plaats in mijn primaire corpus, aangezien verschillende werken typisch Ierse kenmerken toekennen aan Amerikaanse ‘georgic’, ‘pastoral’ en ‘picturesque’ settings, en zo Ierland gevoelsmatig toch toegankelijk houden voor de emigrant. Echter, transculturatie wordt ook bemoeilijkt omdat de herinnering aan de Hongersnood als onlosmakelijke connotatie meekomt met de Iers-Amerikaanse transculturatie; dit is bijvoorbeeld het geval in Profit and Loss van Hugh Quigley (1873) en Uncle Pat’s Cabin van Upton. Het gebruik van het ideale Ierse landschap van vroeger als bouwsteen voor een traditionele vorm van ‘Irishness’ in diaspora wordt zo dus gecompliceerd. De nostalgie die gevoeld wordt, geeft dus niet langer houvast voor het heden en de toekomst, maar wordt een treurlied (“elegiac nostalgia”) voor een verloren Ierland.

De nostalgie voor Ierland wordt ook op een andere manier bemoeilijkt. Terugkeer (“return migration”) was in werkelijkheid voor de meeste Ieren in de laat-negentiende eeuw geen optie. De meeste Ierse emigranten in de ‘works of Famine fiction’ keren dan ook nooit terug naar Ierland, en van zij die het wel doen, blijft maar een klein deel voorgoed in Ierland. Castle Cloyne van Margaret Brew en Castle Daly van Annie Keary worden in deze context geanalyseerd. Wat blijkt uit deze en andere werken is dat het Ierland waarnaar de migrant terugkeert toch vaak anders is dan gehoopt, en dat kwesties met betrekking tot behoren (“belonging”) een belangrijke rol spelen. Ierse migranten voelen zich in de ‘works of Famine fiction’ toch

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25 Whelan, ‘Reading the Ruins’, 320.
vaak meer thuis in Noord-Amerika dan Ierland. Een ‘victim diaspora’ wordt gekenmerkt door nostalgie en door een sterke oriëntatie naar het thuisland; twee zaken die weerlegd worden in mijn primaire corpus.

Veel romans en kortverhalen laten zien dat met terugkeer ook de invloed van Amerika en Iers-Amerikaans nationalisme meekomt. In contrast tot de Noord-Amerikaanse werken die ik bespreek in Hoofdstuk 4, laten de werken uit Groot-Brittannië in dit hoofdstuk zien dat de Amerikaanse invloed niet altijd goed is; ze bevragen de invloed van de Amerikaanse politieke mindset, door te stellen dat deze niet één-op-één toepasbaar is in Ierland, en door te stellen dat de corruptie van het Iers nationalisme en diens gewelddadige excessen vaak de schuld zijn van de Amerikanen.

Met betrekking tot literaire representaties van Ierse emigratie, weergeeft het primaire corpus een aantal belangrijke (nog steeds geldende) aannames: de Ieren, Iers-Canadezen en Iers-Amerikanen in de romans en kortverhalen zijn geen kwijnende exilanten die alleen maar denken aan Ierland, maar worden juist integrale onderdelen van hun (Iers-)Noord-Amerikaanse gemeenschappen. De inmenging met trans-Atlantische Ierse politiek laat wel zien dat de “homeward orientation” op bepaalde vlakken nog belangrijk is. In die zin laat het primaire corpus zien dat de Ieren in diaspora verschillende oriëntatiepunten hebben. Het is daarom ook nog steeds zinvol om de term diaspora te hanteren voor de Ierse gemeenschap buiten Ierland. Echter, zoals David Lloyd stelt, draagt dit label ongewenst de connotatie van ‘victim diaspora’. In de context van het corpus van Famine fictie (1871–91) is het verstandig om de term ‘diaspora’ los te koppelen van de term ‘victim’, en zo de term weer open te stellen voor de meerdere interpretaties van de Ierse diaspora die het primaire corpus bevat.

B.3 Conclusies en Suggesties voor verder Onderzoek

Wat blijkt uit het corpus van Famine fiction (1871–91) is dat herinneringen aan de Hongersnood zelden op zichzelf staan, maar in de regel ingebed worden in grotere historische, politieke en literaire discoursen en netwerken. Het effect hiervan is dat het de gravitas van latere gebeurtenissen verdiept door associatie met de Hongersnood, maar ook dat de herinnering van de Hongersnood een breder toegepaste herinnering wordt, ingebed in een mondiale context. Herinneringen aan de Hongersnood worden strategisch ingezet om behoeftes in het heden en de recente toekomst tegemoet te komen.
Gedurende de periode 1871–91 kan het verschillen waaraan herinneringen van de Hongersnood gelinkt worden; logischerwijs worden die herinneringen later in de periode steeds vaker ingezet om vorm en betekenis te geven aan latere gebeurtenissen zoals de kleinere hongersnood en Land Wars, en de Plan of Campaign (1886–91 – een periode waarin de huurders opgeroepen werden hun huur niet te betalen als deze exorbitant hoog was). Echter, de manier waarop het geheugen van de Hongersnood ingezet wordt, verschilt weinig gedurende de periode; over het algemeen wordt dat geheugen als integraal onderdeel van grotere discoursen gebruikt, worden er vele vergelijkingen tussen deze periode van Iers lijden en onderdrukking en andere (Ierse) soortgelijke periodes gemaakt. Ook zijn er veel meer overeenkomsten tussen ‘works of Famine fiction’ uit Noord-Amerika en Groot-Brittannië dan we bij aanvang van het project aannamen. De verschillen die ik besproken heb in mijn proefschrift betreffen eerder nuance verschillen dan grote discrepanties die verklaard zouden kunnen worden door de verschillen tussen de verschillende regio’s. Dit alles vraagt om een “cross-Atlantische” aanpak.

Zo’n aanpak is in overeenstemming met de Ierse politiek – het transnationalisme met de sterke Iers-Amerikaanse dimensie – en publicatiemarkt van die tijd. Er waren veel uitwisselingen tussen uitgevers, kranten en tijdschriften in die tijd. Stukken uit Ierse en Britse kranten werden regelmatig opnieuw geprint in Noord-Amerikaanse kranten en tijdschriften, en veel Noord-Amerikaanse kranten hadden correspondenten in Ierland en Engeland. Ook was er veel uitwisseling tussen Noord-Amerikaanse kranten. Deze uitwisseling betreft niet alleen berichten over Iers nieuws, maar ook fictie, aangezien verschillende van de verhalen die deel uitmaken van het grotere corpus van ‘Relocated Remembrance’ zowel in serie-vorm uitkwamen in verschillende Britse en Noord-Amerikaanse kranten en tijdschriften, als opnieuw gedrukt werden in boekvorm. Effectief zou je dus kunnen spreken van een grote cross-Atlantische publicatiemarkt.

Deze gewaarwording heeft niet alleen invloed op hoe we de spreiding van Famine fictie zouden moeten zien, maar ook voor onderzoeken naar het grotere veld van literatuur uit Ierland en de Ierse-diaspora van de (laat-)negentiende eeuw. Vaak zijn studies nog gericht op Iers-Amerika, Iers-Canada, Ierland of Groot-Brittannië; om een accuraat beeld te schetsen dient men eigenlijk een bredere, overkoepelende lens aan te meten. Daarnaast laat deze “translocational”26 aanpak ook een lacune in mijn on-

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derzoek zien. Hoewel het moeilijk is om exacte publicatiedata te traceren voor veel van de (minder bekende) Ierse en Iers-Amerikaanse tijdschriften, zou een onderzoek naar deze data en naar de vele cross-Atlantische uitwisselingen in de publicatie van Famine fictie ons meer kunnen vertellen over hoe populair deze werken nou precies waren. Dit zou ook een exacter beeld kunnen geven over wat hun impact op het cross-Atlantische Ierse lezerspubliek en hun identiteitsvorming zou kunnen zijn.


In verschillende hoofdstukken wordt kort geïllustreerd dat het gebruik van narratieve technieken en figuren, en leningen van bestaande literaire genres zich niet beperken tot fictie, maar dat dit ook gebeurt in krantenartikelen. Om te onderzoeken in hoeverre culturele herinneringen inderdaad genarrativiseerd worden, zou het zeer waardevol zijn de tekst-analytische aanpak van dit proefschrift toe te passen op non-fictie, door bijvoorbeeld te analyseren hoe de door mij geselecteerde literaire leningen en technieken voorkomen in de verschillende Ierse en Iers-Noord-Amerikaanse kranten en tijdschriften.
Representaties van het land en landschap van Ierland lopen – net als het geval was in de Ierse politiek en cultuur van die tijd – als een rode draad door dit proefschrift. Noord-Amerikaanse werken geven een wat zwaardere rol aan de Hongersnood als veroorzaker van het falen van het land en andere verregaande veranderingen in de rurale omgeving, terwijl Britse werken wat vaker latere gebeurtenissen een belangrijke rol geven. Desalniettemin zijn de verschillen klein, en ontstaat er een cross-Atlantisch beeld, dat laat zien dat er ondanks het voorvallen van de Hongersnood en latere soortgelijke crises, nog steeds ingezet wordt op een Ierse ‘environmental relatedness’, dat ‘Irishness’ nog steeds in sterke mate gedefinieerd wordt door een traditionele band met de omgeving. De Ierse omgeving dient nog steeds als een locus voor identificatie en als een belangrijk onderdeel van de literair-nationalistische retoriek. Deze oriëntatie bestaat al eeuwen, kende een opleving tijdens de Romantische periode en zou aan het eind van de negentiende eeuw weer een verdere opmars maken binnen de Celtic Revival.

Tenslotte was een belangrijk onderdeel van mijn onderzoek de zoektocht naar antwoorden op belangrijke vragen binnen het exceptionaliteitsdiscours aangaande de Hongersnood. Het proefschrift toont aan dat het binnen het primaire corpus lastig, zo niet onmogelijk, is om zomaar te spreken van een culturele groep (ik neem de Ieren thuis en in diaspora hier als een groep) die zichzelf zien als leden van een ‘victim diaspora’ waarvoor de Hongersnood een ‘founding myth’ is, als onvrijwillige ballingen met een sterke nostalgische drang naar het thuisland en als een getraumatiseerde culturele groep. In de context van historiografische en genre-gerelateerde leningen heb ik beargumenteerd dat het gecompliceerd was om de Hongersnood weer te geven, maar dat de representatie ervan niet noodzakelijk gekenmerkt wordt door ‘inexpressibility’. De veelheid aan interpretaties van de Hongersnood in het corpus van Famine fictie (1871–91) toont aan dat zulke eenduidige lezingen geen recht doen aan hoe levendig en kleurrijk het corpus is in haar interpretaties van de Hongersnood en diens rol in de Ierse culturele identiteit.

Daarnaast toont het proefschrift dat er in het primaire corpus veel verschillende interpretaties zijn met betrekking tot de mogelijke traumatische status van de Hongersnood: soms kan deze claim wel gemaakt worden, soms niet, en soms vindt men paradoxale interpretaties binnen een en hetzelfde literaire werk. Om een gebeurtenis te kunnen bestempelen als een cultureel trauma, is er consensus nodig over de impact ervan; deze overeenstemming is niet te vinden in het corpus van primaire werken. Ik beargu-
menteer niet dat dit betekent dat we de term ‘cultureel trauma’ niet langer moeten gebruiken, maar wil wijzen op de tekortkomingen die een dergelijke theoretisch kader met zich meebrengt. Wat de term namelijk wel doet, is erkennen wat de zwaarte was van de gebeurtenis, wat voor enorme impact de Hongersnood had op vele mensenlevens. Echter, de term trauma verdringt andere mogelijke interpretaties van een gebeurtenis, en wordt doorgaans op zwart-witte manier gebruikt; iets is een cultureel trauma (en een andere uitleg voor waarom iets op een bepaalde manier weergegeven wordt, wordt aan de kant geschoven), of het is het niet. Het laat geen ruimte voor individuele invulling. Het is zinvoller om de representatie van een ernstige gebeurtenis, een catastrofe, zoals de Hongersnood te plaatsten in een spectrum (“representational spectrum”), waarbij verschillende gradaties erkend worden. In die zin is de term ‘traumatic sublime’ bruikbaar. De term redeneert vanuit de representatie en niet vanuit de gebeurtenis zelf, en legt nadruk op zowel de zwaarte van een gebeurtenis als de potentie die er altijd is om de herinnering eraan bespreekbaar te maken en te verwerken. In dezelfde lijn zouden we de term trauma meer open moeten stellen voor deze verschillende interpretaties en individuele verschillen.

Mijn conclusies over de beperkingen van de term cultureel trauma hebben implicaties voor het grotere veld van Irish Studies. Theoretici zoals kunsthistorica Emily Mark-FitzGerald en literatuurtheoretica Oona Frawley trekken de toepasbaarheid van het label al in twijfel, terwijl er velen zijn die het – met veel passie – toepassen, zelfs op de Ierse en Iers-Amerikaanse gemeenschappen en literatuur- en kunstuitingen van vandaag. Mijn onderzoek laat zien dat het label trauma inderdaad a posteriori wordt toegepast door wetenschappers vandaag de dag, dat dit label niet ondersteund wordt vanuit het literaire corpus uit 1871–91. Dit betekent dat de lezing van de Hongersnood als exceptioneel en als cultureel trauma al niet ondersteund wordt door een literair corpus van relatief kort na de Hongersnood zelf, en dat dergelijke eenduidige en vandaag geldende lezingen geen transhistorisch gedragen feiten zijn.

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Other Academic Experience


Publications, Lectures and Presentations (selection)

Books


Articles and Chapters


Reviews


Invited Lectures and Presentations

Master-level seminar on trauma theory, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, April 2014.

Joint presentation with Marguerite Corporaal and Christopher Cusack. “At the verge of ruin: Poverty and Feudalism in Famine Fiction”. Symposium ‘Poverty and Famine in Ireland: The Great Famine and its Legacy’, Queen’s University Belfast, April 2014.


Presentations


“Ruins of the Self: Reimagining Post-Famine Ireland through the Aesthetics of the Landscape Picturesque in (Diasporic) Irish fiction, 1871–91.” IASIL conference, Concordia University (Montreal), July 2012.