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**HARP MUSIC AND IRISH NATIONALISM:
TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN'S MUSICAL LEGACY (1760-1840)**

VOLUME I

By

Kelly Lynn Keller Yoakam

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

Musicology

2009

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2008

ABSTRACT

HARP MUSIC AND IRISH NATIONALISM: TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN'S MUSICAL LEGACY (1760-1840)

By

Kelly Lynn Keller Yoakam

Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738) was imagined by antiquarian and nationalist writers as an embodiment of Irishness, comprising the ancient bardic tradition infused with cosmopolitan progressiveness. His image was first featured in a popular English publication by Oliver Goldsmith. He reappeared in the first work on Irish music by Joseph C. Walker during a campaign to define Irishness among antiquarian historians; and again in the first work presenting Gaelic verse translation, by Charlotte Brooke, the first female to enter Irish scholarly circles. Carolan was found most prominently, though, in United Irish attempts to preserve Irish culture in music and poetry. His music was collected at a Harpers meeting, and published in anthologies canonizing Irish music by Edward Bunting. Carolan's image in these works reflect the contribution each author made to the construction of cultural boundaries: creating an image that both upheld the Irish tradition and established cosmopolitan accessibility to European patrons.

To Bob

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those who made materials available and granted permission for their use: Michigan State University Special Collections; Queen's University, Linen Hall Library, The Estate of John Carey, Ulster Museum Picture Library—National Museums Northern Ireland, Belfast; National Library of Ireland, Dublin; Carl Johnson, Chicago. Appreciation also goes to MSU for a research fellowship to study in Ireland, 2005.

I doubt that any work of importance in a person's life is accomplished alone; I also realize that this work was aided by more supporters than I realize. I would like to thank those who have supported me:

Neal Hellman, who introduced me to Carolan's music some thirty years ago. Ann and Charley Heymann for their scholarly input and diligent research into the recesses of bardic history, and for Ann's practical application of it. Art Edelstein, for research contacts in Ireland. Dearbhail Finnegan, for Irish hospitality and guiding me to Carolan sites. Peter McGriff, who allowed me to assist him in tending Carolan's grave. Jean Zugger, for her unwavering support and interest. Dr. Winston Wilkinson and Carolan White, whose support was not only helpful, but colorful as well! Dr. Rex Hauser and his wife, Dr. Mary Garland Jackson, who shared her stories of pre-computer research in a third-world country. Selma Appel, whose delight in my work meant so much to me; I grieve that you didn't live long enough to celebrate its completion: I miss you. Dr. Michael Nealon, who initiated and inspired my interest in musicology: I respect you as a mentor, and treasure the continued friendship. Professor Lauralee Campbell, a wonderful

model in music and life. Dr. Anna Celenza, for giving me a great start in the program.

My dearly loved harp students and families.

My committee members: Dr. Stephen Rohs, who captured my interest and opened my eyes to the world of cultural studies all around me. Your encouragement sustained me throughout. Dr. Michael Largey and Dr. Kathryn Lowerre, for welcoming me into the program and giving me the opportunity to grow in life lessons while pursuing this degree. Michael may well never know the degree to which he impacted my life. Thank you both for your patience and understanding as I struggled with my health.

Dr. Peggy Parker, D.C., Sherri Hillman, R.N., and Dr. Sheila Gendich, MD: true healers in every sense of the word.

Of course, family is that foundation where our dreams are incubated.

Thank you to Vance and Donna Jo Broadaway, my parents, who encouraged me to step out of the box—and continued their support, as I did just that! And to my sisters and close confidants, Kristi Meiners and Kathy Hogan. My daughter, Amy, her husband Michael Van Hooser and their son Brenden Michael—truly the joy of my life during this period. My son, Ryan, who never ceases to bring a smile to my face.

Deep appreciation is extended to my uncle, Dr. James Criner, who accompanied me across the finish line of this project.

But most importantly, my deepest gratitude goes to my husband, Bob, who for thirty years has untiringly cared for me during years of intermittent illness, supported the dreams that sustained me during those times, and who nurtures me so those dream become realities.

And to God who has blessed me with these people in my life, I owe it all.

Thank you to Turlough O'Carolan, for the joy of his music,
and to Edward Bunting who saved it from "Oblivion."

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INTRODUCTION

One inexorably links Ireland with such images as harps, bards, pipes, fairies, mythical creatures, mysterious emerald landscapes, leprechauns, four-leaf clovers, and Guinness brew. Yet if one were to single out one symbol to represent Ireland, it would be the harp, the official symbol of Ireland. The image of the ancient bard and his harp is strongly embedded in Irish identity. Yet, that was not always the case.

Our contemporary view of Irishness is largely based on an Irish identity that was artfully constructed during the latter half of the eighteenth century by Anglo-Irish writers. These images were no random accident; they were chosen for specific symbolic reasons; to construct an image of Irishness that would elevate the nation in the eyes of the Irish people as well as those of the European community. Prominent among this symbolism was the Irish bard who represented both poetry and music; the harp embodied them all.

For antiquarian and nationalist writers, it was essential to establish the bard as rooted in antiquity, grounded in authenticity, skilled and cultured, and masculine. In addition to promoting the tradition, they chose a near contemporary with which to link the ancient tradition to current ideology. The harper who best served that role was Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738).

This study examines the literary representations of Carolan in nationalist writings as they reflect the development of Irish cultural nationalism from 1760 to 1840. As the prototypical Irish bard, writers used Carolan's figure and his musical compositions to represent both the Golden Age past and a cosmopolitan musical culture. He brought the symbols of poet, musician and harper together in one figure. His music, connected with Italian renaissance music—Corelli, Vivaldi, and Geminiani—imaged him as cosmopolitan, while his position as itinerant bard cast him as uniquely Irish. Ireland's music and poetry were significant cultural relics that became targets for preservation and perpetuation. The harp carried many meanings and memories, all of which supported the national culture of Ireland.

This symbolism was part of a centuries-long power struggle between the English and Irish—a contest for Irish identity. England struck a definitive identity blow to Ireland during the Norman invasion (1066). The writings of Giraldus Cambrensis defined the positive and negative stereotypes of Ireland that exist even today. The majority of Cambrensis's lengthy travelogue dwelt on Irish inferiority and incivility. These stereotypes, set in the twelfth century, have haunted the Irish for centuries.

Though a few Irish writers after that time began to re-negotiate Irish identity, it wasn't until the 1780s that a number of Anglo-Irish elite concertedly produced writings

that not only answered the attacks on the Old Irish, but which also created a space for themselves within that history.

Until this point, the Anglo-Irish had identified with England and enjoyed special status as member of the Protestant Ascendancy. Yet, as the eighteenth century progressed, they began to lose status in the eyes of England who included them in policy with the native Irish. They began to see themselves as misplaced—ostracized, on the one hand, by the Old Irish, because of their English connection and privilege, and on the other, ignored by England. Anglo-Irish occupied an uncomfortable space as a “middle-nation” in Ireland as they turned from their English roots to identify with Ireland.

As they began to shift their self-perception to that of Irish nationals rather than that of second-class subjects of England, they saw the need to redefine Ireland’s image, both internally and internationally. A number of Anglo-Irish writers set out in earnest to define Irishness with carefully chosen symbols to construct a national image that would join the disparate groups in Ireland under one collective identity that aimed to be complimentary to all.

In the construction of that identity, the antiquarian’s challenge was to find symbolism that transcended ethno-religious cleavages. Anglo-Irish antiquarians reached back into a Golden Age for pre-invasion cultural elements that would appeal not only to the Irish, but would also engender respect from the European community. The one element at which the English allowed the Irish to excel, became the central evidence of Ireland’s celebrated culture—the harpers’ music.

Music itself both transcends and defines cultural and political boundaries. Throughout this study we follow the efforts of nationalistic writers to distinguish the Irish

bard and his music from other countries while at the same time presenting them as viable within the cosmopolitan community.

Nationalists began to reconstruct the fabric of Irish culture—but constructed the images according to their imagination, and by their own design. They emphasized certain threads of culture, such as music, bards, literature, above others, and also used materials of their own making.¹

Irish harp Music became the central tool in the negotiation of national identity; yet national identity comprises several things: gender issues, cultural practices, a legacy rooted in longevity, authenticity of culture and purity of practice—continuity and homogeneity. These elements of discourse are common to national movements. This study addresses the particular expression of these elements as they shaped the images of the bard and his harp music that were used to promote Irish cultural nationalism.

Anglo-Irish writers re-imagined the image of the bard. Though all of Britain had bards, the Irish adopted that image in such a way as to create boundaries around the Irish bard that distinguished him from among the others. What is significant about that is the way writers like Joseph Walker, while constructing those boundaries, used Welsh, Scottish and English bards to substantiate the Irish bard. This image was also given a number of different characteristics that served to coalesce a collective identity for each class and special interest group. Emphasizing a Golden Age culture both deemphasized other areas of conflict and also allowed Anglo-Irish to adopt an ancient Irish heritage.

In Belfast and Dublin, where Gaelic culture had all but disappeared, nationalist efforts to “preserve” and “perpetuate” elements from that culture included a meeting of the few remaining harpers to collect music from their tradition. The harpers who

appeared, served as poignant emblems of both Ireland's past glory and its current demise. The significance of the meeting to this study is the preservation of nearly 200 melodies attributed to Carolan, as all but one harper included his music in their repertoire. The meeting, which served as the finale to the harpers' tradition, culminated in a canon of Irish national music. As part of the larger movement to promote cultural nationalism, this canon contributed to the cohesive impact of cultural unity that was needed to sustain patriotism during critical periods in Ireland's history.

In this study, we follow the progression of a national voice embodied in the ancient Irish bard as it attempted to construct a promising national future by re-inventing a glorious cultural past.

THESIS OVERVIEW

The study is divided into two volumes: Volume I considers the renegotiation and positive construction of Irish identity in antiquarian literature before the time of the United Irishmen. Three Anglo-Irish literary works are examined in which negative stereotypes of Ireland were renegotiated by using the “ancient Bardic” figure and the embodiment of that figure in the person of Turlough O’Carolan. The first is Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Last of the Irish Bards* (1760), the first literary work about Carolan; the second is Joseph Cooper Walker’s *Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786), which contains the first biographical sketch of Carolan; and finally, Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques of Bardic Poetry* (1789).²

Volume II recognizes the important role United Irish literature played in promoting cultural nationalism. We examine their literature and the Meeting of Harpers in Belfast in 1792.³ The meeting, often referred to as a festival, was one of the first United Irish events and was organized for the purpose of preserving national music and poetry. Also examined are the three volumes of music derived from that meeting which serve as a canon of national music recognized worldwide today.

Throughout these works, there were three distinct methods used in the development of Carolan’s image: the first was to establish the connection of Carolan, historically, to the image of the “ancient Irish bard”; the second was to establish Irishness by emphasizing characteristics, which are considered representative of Irish bardic culture: playing the harp, composing poetry and music, drinking whiskey, and speaking and writing Gaelic; and the third method used was “classicism”⁴—elevating his presence with allusions to ancient Greek literary images.

Yet, before we examine the sources, the first chapter places them in context. There is a brief overview of Carolan's life and career,⁵ with consideration of the Belfast Meeting of 1792,⁶ where the majority of his music was preserved. There are also topics drawn from general histories, which form the background for these works. These include events and literature regarding Irish identity from the twelfth century forward. These works were engaged in a discourse reflective of eighteenth-century Irish nationalism.

In tracing the negotiation process of Irish identity, Chapter 1 outlines the discourse between Ireland and England. Since the stereotypes presented by Cambrensis stand at the center of the negotiations, they appear and reappear throughout this work. We examine how both the negative stereotypes of barbarism and incivility and the stereotype of musical superiority in regard to the Irish harpers have shaped Irish identity for centuries.

We address literary works written later by Irish historians such as Geoffrey Keating who confronted that image. Their works brought forward venerable elements that were used in the eighteenth century to create a positive national identity, specifically in the works evaluated in Volume I. The recurring image of the Irish bard, and his superior skill on the harp, became a striking characteristic of Irish culture. His image began to appear in plays and poetry in England and Ireland; thus we examine the literary development of the bardic image before and during the time of its romanticization in the eighteenth century, and the specific embodiment of that image in the person of Carolan.

In Chapter 2, we see the way Goldsmith, an Irish writer living in London, appealed to an English audience during a time of romancing the exotic; Carolan, as an Irish bard, was a marketable subject. Goldsmith's essay "A History of Carolan: the Last

Irish Bard” established Carolan as a bardic representation just as cultural nationalism was beginning to emerge.

Chapter 3 introduces the antiquarian writer, Joseph Walker. In 1786, Walker published a two-volume work of *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786). This was the first work written about Irish music. Walker participated with Anglo-Irish writers of his time, who re-invented a pre-invasion Golden Age, where all Irish could claim roots. Walker used the bardic image to establish boundaries around cultural refinement that countered Cambrensis. After presenting a comprehensive description of the Irish bard, Walker presented a chapter in the appendix on Carolan. This was the first biographical sketch of Carolan that had been published. This chapter secured Carolan’s position as the embodiment of the Irish bardic tradition and a representative of Irishness. He was characterized as masculine, subject to drink, and a legendary harper and poet. One of Carolan’s songs was translated into English by the “young lady” Charlotte Brooke, Walker’s protégé.

Chapter 4 examines Charlotte Brooke, who was the first female to enter the male domain of scholarship with her Gaelic translations. Brooke published a volume of Gaelic poetry and song translated into English: *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789). Brooke reconstructed the Irish Golden Age and defined it according to her poetic selections. Brooke imagined the Golden Age as chivalrous and refined. While male Anglo-Irish writers constructed a Golden Age that included Anglo-Irish, Brooke also made a place for women. Brooke became the bardic voice in *Reliques*. Not only did she mediate the masculine Gaelic voice to the public, but she also composed an original poem that sanctioned her position in that role. She navigated not only racial and religious

boundaries, but gender ones as well. This was a much different context in which to place Carolan than Walker's *Historical Memoirs*. While Walker excluded women from the bardic role in his history, Brooke provided poetry that Carolan wrote in honor of the female mind, reinforcing the bardic sanction of women.

All three of these writers were Anglo-Irish, one generation removed from Carolan. While these writers ignored Carolan's Catholicism in lieu of unified nationalism, writers in the mid-nineteenth century used the Catholic religion as a boundary of Irishness, a boundary the Anglo-Irish had hoped to erase. The Anglo-Irish motivation to repudiate Irish stereotypes resulted in antiquarian construction of an Irish national identity; nationalists following them coalesced that identity into a nation.

Volume II of this study examines the literary influence of United Irishmen that was central to cultural nationalism. The following chapters prove that the United Irishmen and their supporters constructed a national identity based on elements from both a Gaelic past and an Enlightenment present; and that they then distributed their ideology through a wide network of political literature. We establish that nationalists highlighted traditional music and poetry as a significant cultural boundary within which to coalesce the disparate groups of Irish into one nation.

Because the United Irishmen played such an important role in shaping the image of Ireland's cultural boundaries, Chapter 5 outlines the establishment of the Society, their goals and ideology.

Chapter 6 follows the development of the United Irish literary campaign to educate the masses to new enlightenment concepts of freedom, liberty, and human rights, to further define boundaries of the nation of Ireland. This campaign produced a number

of literary genres, including songbooks and publications of parlor arrangements of harp music collected at the meeting of Belfast Harpers in 1792. This study focuses attention on the United Irish use of bardic symbolism and music as boundaries of cultural nationalism.

Because their agenda promoted the preservation of Gaelic poetry and music, the United Irishmen organized the Harpers' meeting that took place in Belfast in 1792.

Chapter 7 gives an account of that meeting and its effects on cultural nationalism.

Edward Bunting, a young conservatory student, was hired to attend the meeting to transcribe the music of ten Irish harpers. These harpers manifested the dual images of Golden Age glory and Gaelic demise. The meeting altered the course of Bunting's life. The harpers engendered a passion for Irish music that resulted in a fifty year pursuit of collecting Irish airs. From that collection, Bunting published three volumes of Irish airs: *General Collection of Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796), *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (1809), and *A Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840).⁷

The last three chapters examine Bunting's volumes as they appeared during critical times in Irish history. Each one follows the development of a cultural identity reflective of the political climate at that time. Chapter 8 examines Bunting's 1796 volume. It appeared with another, more radical songbook the year of the first United Irish rebellion, confirming United Irish expectations for music to motivate patriotism.

We see Bunting defining boundaries around Ireland's preeminence in terms of its "national" music. Though the music was transcribed from harpers, it was arranged for keyboardists. Bunting attempted to capture the harpers' music by transforming an oral

tradition that was inaccessible to all but the bardic lineage, into parlor music score to be distributed to the masses. It is the first in a series of three used to canonize a national repertoire of Irish music.

In his 1809 volume, Bunting combined poetry and music, competing with Thomas Moore for public patronage. Chapter 9 reveals the compromises he made in the publication of this work. While the dissertation reflected Bunting's antiquarian passion to present Irish music as uniquely Irish; the anthology did not. Tragic circumstances prevented him from using Gaelic lyrics he already acquired from an Irish scholar; consequently, the texts he provided were not consistent with his motivation to present national music and poetry. He returned to his antiquarian pursuits with his 1840 volume.

Chapter 10 explores Bunting's continued quest to establish an authentic national music repertoire. He established the musical science behind the form and structure, preserving not only Irish music, but also cataloguing the harpers' terminology. By 1840, scientific archaeology became the standard for authenticating historical remains by placing them in time and space. Two prominent figures in archaeological nationalism joined Bunting in this volume: Samuel Ferguson and George Petrie.

Bunting's 1840 volume has had several reprints. It is made up of two parts: the six-chapter dissertation and the anthology. The dissertation provides the most detailed accounts of eighteenth-century Irish harpers' techniques and terminology existing today. A remarkable element of this volume is the dedication to the Queen of England, Queen Victoria. While this seems inconsistent with his national stance, closer examination reveals an Irish national message. Each volume represents Bunting's promotion of cultural nationalism as reflected in the evolving political culture.

¹ Patriots of all societies construct their own mythology. Two who pioneered theories of social construction are Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. In their book *Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), they argue the perception of societal reality to be determined by thought, i.e. if a population believes themselves to be oppressed, that belief contributes to the reality of oppression. If their beliefs can be changed, the reality of the situation would also be altered. National identities are also developed by constructing “memories,” or re-inventing history in ways that empower the present and show promise for the future. For works that demonstrate re-invention of cultures see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983); Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002); Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music*, (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1996); Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh, eds., *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power*, (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1995); S. P. Udayakumar, “Presenting” the Past: *Anxious History and Ancient Future in Hindutva India*, (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2005); S.C. Lanier, “It is New-Strung and Shan’t be Heard’: Nationalism and Memory in the Irish Harp Tradition,” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 8 (1999): 1–26.

² Goldsmith, Oliver. “The History of Carolan, the Last Irish Bard,” in *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*. Peter Cunningham, F.S.A., ed. Vol. 7. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1908, 237–240. quoted from *The British Magazine*. July, 1760, 418. ; Walker, Joseph C. *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., (Reprint of book published in Dublin: Luke White, 1786); Walker, Joseph C. *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards; an Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish; and a Memoir on the Armour and Weapons of the Irish. (Anecdotes of, and Occasional Observations on the Music of Ireland; Also, an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Musical Instruments of the Ancient Irish, and Select Irish Melodies)* 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Dublin: J. Christie, 1818; Walker, Joseph C. *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards; an Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish; and a Memoir on the Armour and Weapons of the Irish*. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. Dublin: J. Christie, 1818; Brooke, Charlotte. *Reliques of Irish poetry (1789), by Charlotte Brooke, and A memoir of Miss Brooke (1816), by Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour. Facsimilie reproductions with an introduction by Leonard R. N. Ashley*. Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970.

³ After Gaelic League promotion of cultural events such as the *Feis*, or festival, the Belfast meeting became known as the Belfast Harpers’ Festival of 1792. It has since returned to the designation given it by Bunting, the Meeting of Belfast Harpers. (Bunting, 1840, 62-5). The terms meeting and festival are interchangeable terms.

⁴ For more about “classicism” see: Henri Zerner, “Classicism as Power”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 1, The Problem of Classicism: Ideology and Power. (Spring, 1988), 35-36. Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 5, 18, 124-7. Classicization is described by Michael Largey as “the use of historically and geographically distant ideas to link current practice to an esteemed ‘classical’ past” (18).

⁵ For more information about Turlough O’Carolan, see Yeats’ “Carolan [Carrallan, Carrollan, Carrolline, ‘Carolan], Turlough [O’Cearbhallain, Toirdhealbhach],” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, (London: Macmillan, 1980). vol. 5, 173-4; Donal O’Sullivan’s *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*. Cork, Ireland: Ossian Publications, 2001. (New edition of 1958, contains the book *Memoirs of Arthur O’Neill*); Joseph Walker’s *Memoirs of the Irish Harper*, Appendix VI, “Carolan,” 284-339; Arthur O’Neill’s *Memoirs* (O’Sullivan, vol. 2), Chapter 3, 318-320; Arthur Edelstein, *Fair Melodies: Turlough Carolan: an Irish Harper*, (East Calais, Vermont: Noble Stone Press, 2001).

⁶ For more information about the Belfast Meeting, see Gráinne Yeats’ *The Harp of Ireland: The Belfast Harper’s Festival, 1792 and the Saving of Ireland’s Harp Music by Edward Bunting*. Belfast, (Ireland:

Belfast Harpers' Bicentenary Ltd., 1992); Edward Bunting's volumes of *The Ancient Music of Ireland: An Edition Comprising the three Collections by Edward Bunting originally Published in 1796, 1809 and 1840*, (Dublin, Ireland: Waltons' Piano and Musical Instrument Galleries, Ltd., 1969); Janet Harbison's "The Legacy of the Belfast Harpers' Festival, 1792." *Ulster Folk Life*. (Vol. 35, 1989), 113-128; O'Sullivan, Donal. *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper* (Cork, Ireland: Ossian Publications, 2001). (New edition of 1958, contains the book *Memoirs of Arthur O'Neill*); John Magee's *The Heritage of the Harp: The Linen Hall Library and the Preservation of Irish Music—Féile na gCruitirí Béal Feirste 1792* (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1992); David Rogers, "The Music of the Irish Harper Turlough Carolan: Influences, Style and Reception," (Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1996).

⁷ Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music*, Dublin: W. Power and Co., 1796. (hereafter cited as Bunting, 1796); Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*, London: Cleminti and Co., 1809. (hereafter, Bunting, 1809); Edward Bunting, *A Collection of The Ancient Music of Ireland*, Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840. (hereafter cited, Bunting, 1840); There is also an edition containing all three volumes: Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland: An Edition Comprising the three Collections by Edward Bunting originally Published in 1796, 1809 and 1840*, (Dublin, Ireland: Waltons' Piano and Musical Instrument Galleries, Ltd., 1969).

CHAPTER 1

Irish Identity Negotiated

BACKGROUND TO THE DISCOURSE

...abandoning themselves to idleness, and immersed in sloth, their greatest delight is to be exempt from toil, their richest possession the enjoyment of liberty.

This people, then, is truly barbarous...indeed, all their habits are barbarisms.¹

...as this people inhabit a country so remote from the rest of the world, and lying at its furthest extremity, forming, as it were, another world, and are thus secluded from civilized nations, they learn nothing, and practise [sic] nothing but the barbarism in which they are born and bred, and which sticks to them like a second nature. Whatever natural gifts they possess are excellent, in whatever requires industry they are worthless.²

Cambrensis's report of the Irish (1184)

At the time of the Norman invasion (1166), Giraldus Cambrensis depicted the native Irish as barbaric and uncivilized. Because of the powerful impact his work had in

creating Irish stereotypes, his quotes became the hub of a literary discourse: a dispute with England regarding Irish identity. The discourse grew with the development and distribution of the printing press which in Ireland began in the sixteenth century.

In addition to the literary disparagement, the English passed laws to suppress Irish culture. The Statutes of Kilkenny (1366)³ were not only an insult to the Irish, but also defined the Irish as the enemy.⁴ Characteristics defined as Irishness such as methods of warfare, bardic poetry, the Gaelic language, and minstrels were banned.⁵ Enforcement of these cultural weapons was cyclical: suppression, relaxation and reversion back to Irish custom, only for it to be suppressed again. Seventeenth-century Irish historians wrote histories about Ireland to reclaim the dignity of a past which they saw in manuscripts and poetry. The wide distribution of the printing press in the seventeenth century provided a venue for public discourse to “negotiate” the Irish image.⁶

In constructing national identity, nations typically reach into antiquity to find aspects of a usable past, or Golden Age, with which to legitimize their present existence and also on which to build the future of the nation.⁷ That process uses positive pieces of that past to construct an identity. Anthony Smith describes the role a Golden Age identity serves in creating a national “character”, both to those within the nation and those outside:

...it is indispensable to an understanding of national ‘character’. Without a golden age, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discover the ‘true self’ of the people. [U]nder the influence of Romanticism, to seek and recover a golden age for the designated nation, and to draw from it the moral lessons needed to mobilize and unify the people...[they] embarked on a quest for an age of heroism and creativity, in the belief that its discovery and recovery would unlock the secrets of their ‘true self’ and help it to become a fully-fledged nation—in their own eyes, as well as those of outsiders.⁸

Irish historians confronted the negative images maintained by the English in their own writings. By reinterpreting those histories, they fashioned to create a glorious heritage and venerable identity for the Irish.

Establishing the authenticity of Irish culture was vital as the nation's primary defense against cultural conquest by colonial powers. As Lloyd expresses: "On the side of the colonizer, it is the inauthenticity of the colonized culture, its falling short of the concept of the human, that legitimates the colonial project."⁹ He also maintains that before the colony can reach independence, it is essential that "the in/authenticity of the colonized [be] overturned."¹⁰

Though the colony strives to dispel notions of inauthenticity, they must also maintain a separateness or "otherness" from the colonizer. "Otherness", as used in this study, expresses the need for the emerging nation to separate their identity from other nations, particularly their colonizer. They desire to be viewed as distinct, viable nations in the international sphere,¹¹ fearing that being subsumed into the colonizers culture would eliminate any justification of becoming a sovereign state rather than merely an appendage of the dominating kingdom. "Othering" as expressed by Leerssen is:

...exoticization of Irish society and culture in describing and evaluating it wholly in the ethnocentrist terms and standards of English culture. From Giraldus Cambrensis onwards, Irish society is described predominantly in those aspects wherein it is different from England; and in many cases this exoticization is discursively heightened for rhetorical purposes.¹²

Expressions of "otherness" were created in different ways during specific periods of history. Early Irish historians were eager to reprove restrictive legislation against themselves. They sought to vindicate their culture and persons from the writings of Cambrensis in order to obtain respect and freedom. During most of the eighteenth

century, antiquarians and nationalists hoped to obtain a separate Parliament that ruled in Ireland's favor rather than England's. Though they desired a separate Parliament, they were nevertheless, content to share the English monarch.

By the 1790s, home rule had come and gone and nationalists realized that the only hope for Irish rule was to separate completely from England, via revolution. In each period, "otherness" was used to distance the Irish from English stereotypes and establish themselves as viable, educated, cultured and ethical.

Geoffrey Keating (c. 1569-1644), in his history of Ireland,¹³ identified misconceptions left by the English and offered alternatives that presented Irish heritage with dignity and nobility.¹⁴ He claimed that the English, in an attempt to justify the Norman invasion (1066) sought out the worst of the culture to record—qualities needing reform by "domination" and "civilization" by the outsider, passing over the noble and valiant characteristics of the people.¹⁵ Of course, these discussions of Irishness were among the elite,¹⁶ avoiding vernacular language, since the peasant classes were not literate even in their own language. Keating's work was unique as the first written in the Gaelic vernacular, targeted for "the masses, not the classes."¹⁷ Following his example, literary texts grew in number and variety, intensifying the cultural discourse. We have mentioned that authors of these works, in constructing an image of Irishness, used several symbols to reinforce Irish "authenticity." Among these are: the Irish Bard, the harp, an Irish proclivity for music, consumption of whiskey,¹⁸ and the Gaelic language. The literary front is where authors present selected "memories" of the past. Irish writers began a concatenation process building on previous works to construct and reinforce their positive and "authentic" image of Irishness. Cheryl Natzmer discusses ways memories

used in constructing an image from the past are transformed subjectively by a process of selection and occlusion:

Memory is not a matter of simply recalling past experiences; rather, it is a complex and continuing process of selection, negotiation, and struggle over what will be remembered and what forgotten... The process involves remembering and forgetting, changing and structuring one's perception of the past so that it both supports the needs of the present and projects a logical future.¹⁹

Constructing history is a complex matter. Choices must be made about "memories": which to include, which to occlude, and how to interpret the ones chosen. Beyond selectivity is the process of retelling and recombining "memories" over time, a term coined by Michael Largey as "recombinant mythology."²⁰ He goes further, suggesting that these recombined myths do not necessarily replace other forms of recorded history. Such myths, attached to cultural or political ideologies, exist in a "third space"²¹ where the past and present meet in ways that affect thought and action in the present, where the "ideas coexist in contrary and competitive forms, available for use depending on the specific context."²² The ways in which these myths are remembered and recombined are dependent on "specific historical and cultural contexts,"²³ and provide meaning to pressing ideologies. In this case, England and Ireland "recombined" the same history in ways that supported their own political agenda. For example, the English accounts of history, such as Cambrensis' (1188),²⁴ though more of a travelogue rather than history, contained accounts of Irish character. The English needed to justify the invasion; thus, they needed a jaundiced view of the people.²⁵ In their writing, they "remembered" the vile conduct of the Irish, while "forgetting" the noble. These "memories" were then recombined later by English authors such as Edmund Spenser (1552-1599),²⁶ Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1769),²⁷ and Sir John Hawkins (1719-1789),²⁸

to repeat and perpetuate the hegemonic relationship with the Irish. The Irish writers, in turn, seeking to vindicate themselves, forged their identity by recombining images from the same time period, “remembering” the noble qualities and “forgetting” (or denying) those which would demean them. For Ireland to imagine a prosperous future and the respect of other nations, a negotiation process was necessary; a viable, legitimate image had to be constructed.

Other elements of cultural disruption, influential in the evolution of Irish identity, were the battles in the 1640s, and later in the 1690s which left the Irish hierarchical structure in flux. Class positions were challenged, as lands of the old Irish nobility were confiscated by the English, or forfeited because of allegiance to the Catholic Church. Many of the old Irish nobility lost their land to the English and became part of the tenant class.²⁹ Many who obtained these lands were gentry but others were soldiers who were given lands in payment of military service. Members of the middle-class took advantage of the forfeitures to purchase land.³⁰

From the sixteenth century, a cleavage developed between the elite and popular cultures.³¹ Changes in economics and literacy enabled the new gentry to distance themselves from the common culture from which they came. The elite class has control in defining culture,³² and class was shifting from old Irish Catholics to Anglo-Irish Protestants, creating a flux in cultural identity. Earlier nobility had claimed “status”, which was thought to be inherited, rather than class, which was defined as acquired. Implicit in inheritance were qualities such as virtue, bravery and justice, implying that lower classes inherited baser qualities.³³ Much of the new gentry could not claim such

inherited “status,” so a new ideology involving “class” rather than “status” joined the literary negotiations. As Niall Ó Ciosáin explains:

...the content of popular literature has frequently been seen as a form of ideological domination or aristocratic hegemony, either inculcating an ideology of status, or acting as a brake on the transition from a society of orders, based on an ideology of status, to a society of classes.³⁴

The elites used popular literature both to impose their ideologies on the lower classes and to secure their position. Some Anglo-Irish who married descendants of the old Catholics turned to antiquarianism to establish roots. As Ó Ciosáin states, “Antiquarian and literary interests among landowners were also a way of establishing links with the old order and achieving a status based on antiquity of title.”³⁵ Substantiating links in heritage brought them a semblance of “class.”³⁶ Anglo-Irish began adopting a Gaelic past rather than an English one.

During the eighteenth century in Ireland, though the literary conversation took place among the literate elite, the dramatic growth in the population and economy created literacy in all classes. While literature was still dominated by the elite, it was aimed at a much broader audience. Works by the elite promoted social conformity and the adoption of their values.³⁷ By dominating print media, as Michael Largey states, they exercise “their authority to enforce their positions on political and social issues.”³⁸ One way of accomplishing this was through establishing an Irish identity supportive of their position in the new hierarchy, which would eventually be intensified and carried into the nationalistic movement of the 1790s.



Figure 1.1 Turlough O'Carolan. Engraving from Charlotte Milligan Fox's *Annals of the Irish Harper*, (1911), opposite page 54. Reproduced from the original held by the Department of Special Collections of the Michigan State University Libraries.

TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN (1670-1738)

The Bard as Negotiating Tool; Carolan as the Embodiment

The only thing to which I find that this people apply a commendable industry is playing upon musical instruments; in which they are incomparably more skilful [sic] than any other nation I have ever seen. For their modulation on these instruments, unlike that of the Britons to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the harmony is both sweet and gay. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers, the musical proportions can be preserved, and that throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments, the harmony is completed with such a sweet velocity, so unequal an equality, so discordant a concord, as if the chords sounded together fourths or fifths. They always begin from B flat, and return to the same, that the whole may be completed under the sweetness of a pleasing sound. They enter into a movement, and conclude it in so delicate a manner, and play the little notes so sportively under the blunter sounds of the base strings, enlivening with wanton levity, or communicating a deeper internal sensation of pleasure, so that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of it.

*Si lateat prosit;...ferat ars deprensa pudorem.*³⁹

From this cause, those very strains which afford deep and unspeakable mental delight to those who have skilfully [sic] penetrated into the mysteries of the art, fatigue rather than gratify the ears of others, who seeing do not perceive, and hearing do not understand; and by whom the finest music is esteemed no better than a confused and disorderly noise, and will be heard with unwillingness and disgust. It must be remarked, however, that both Scotland and Wales strive to rival Ireland in the art of music; the former from its community of race, the latter from its contiguity and facility of communication. Ireland only uses and delights in two instruments, the harp and the tabor. Scotland has three, the harp, the tabor, and the crowth or crowd; and Wales, the harp, the pipes, and the crowd. The Irish also used strings of brass instead of leather. Scotland at the present day, in the opinion of many person, is not only equal to Ireland, her teacher, in musical skill, but excels her; so that they now look to that country as the fountain head of this science.⁴⁰

Giraldus Cambrensis (1188)

This quote by Cambrensis is the basis for the musical identity of Ireland.

Cambrensis's writings were intended to prove the uncivilized nature of a country unfit to govern itself and who needed intervention and reform from England. Because of the degrading assessment made by Cambrensis in the greater part of the work, this praise

stands in sharp contrast. Edward Bunting believed that the prejudices he held against the Irish made his assessment of Irish music all the more significant.⁴¹ This tribute to Irish superiority in music, particularly harp music became a primary tool of negotiating Irish identity.

The discourse on Irish identity became heavily steeped in the images now seen as stereotypical of the bard and his harp. Because Cambrensis believe the Irish harpers to be “...incomparably more skilful than any other nation...”—antiquarians and nationalists used the Irish bard and his harp as a prominent symbol of Irish identity.

In addition to the more generic historical bard was the use of a near contemporary embodiment of the figure. As the bardic tradition breathed its last, antiquarians and nationalists fought to instill life into the dying figure. The bard who appeared consistently as an embodiment of the tradition was the harper, Turlough O’Carolan,⁴² one of the last itinerant bards. In the 1780s there were still harpers who, though not able to support themselves in the profession, still performed on the harp and who had known Carolan.

Anglo-Irish elites were naturally less familiar with Irish music than that coming from the continent. For Irish harpers of Carolan’s time to maintain a career, they were forced to mimic music coming from the continent, namely Italian baroque music. Because Carolan was a prolific composer and pangyricist of patrons, he was able to maintain a healthy income. Those who were not composers either turned to their farms or adopted music from others, like Carolan.

As mentioned earlier, Carolan commonly appeared as the representation of the Irish bard in literature from Goldsmith through Bunting, and even into the present day. He embodied the combined bardic roles of poet, composer and performer.

Carolan represented the Irish people: he was born to a working class family, rather than to elites, from whom the itinerant harpers usually came. His affliction with smallpox and consequent blindness engendered his parent's patron to provide him with harp lessons, propelling him into the elite class—a rags to riches story.

Because of his multi-faceted characteristics, Carolan has been used to personify the bardic image since Goldsmith's article in 1760. Straddling the turn of the eighteenth century, Carolan had one foot in the seventeenth-century bardic "Golden Age", and one in the eighteenth-century bardic demise. His image carries both the glory of the illustrious itinerant poet/musician, and the pathos of the remnant of bards struggling to endure under English and European musical influences. His birth into a working class family and later apprenticeship into bardic status positioned him among both the working and elite classes. His ability to compose a type of crossover music which incorporated traditional Irish and Italian Baroque styles cast him as a contemporary link to the ancient bardic tradition; thus, meeting both requirements for historical "authenticity" and popular accessibility. His compositions (many extant today) praise patrons of both Old Catholic and Anglo-Irish lineage, crossing religious and ethnic boundaries; his association with Jonathon Swift both crosses religious boundaries and connects him with a popular, contemporary Anglo-Irish figure. Of the many symbols used to depict Irishness, Carolan encompasses: the bard, the harp, poetry, music, drinking (masculinity and camaraderie-accessibility), antiquity, tradition, and civility. Mary Helen Thuente recognizes the

multi-dimensional attributes of Carolan that are commonly drawn upon by writers as they craft his image for disparate groups:

The music and songs of the Irish harper Carolan (1670-1738) represented the survival of what many believed was an ancient bardic tradition, as well as a popular living musical tradition that appealed to all classes and religions. Carolan embodied the antiquarian, the elite, and the popular dimensions, as well as the potential political significance, of the eighteenth-century interest in Irish music.⁴³

When Carolan was 14 and their patron died, the family relocated from West Meath to Alderford, the estate of the McDermott-Roes. When blinded by smallpox, at 18, Mrs. McDermott-Roe arranged for Carolan to apprentice as a harper, a career normally reserved for the blinded children of aristocracy.⁴⁴ Otherwise, Carolan would likely have been a blacksmith like his father, and would have held no place in history. As it happened though, he became a prolific composer and innovator of early eighteenth-century harp music.

Unlike most harpers who were blinded at an early age, Carolan learned to read and write, skills provided by Mrs. McDermott-Roe. Harpers usually began their apprenticeship as young children; Carolan was older, making it more difficult for him to succeed. But if his technical skill was lacking, his compositional skill more than compensated for it. He was a prolific composer at the time Italian Baroque music experienced broad acceptance among the gentry, especially those newly relocated from England.⁴⁵

This new Baroque music, and the emergence of concert halls featuring performers from the continent, gave more fashionable options to the elite than entertaining at home. Itinerant musicians found it more and more difficult to secure patrons, and turned elsewhere for their livelihood. Carolan remained successful throughout this transition,

adapting to the desires of patrons by incorporating new styles along with the old. He is said to be the first to focus on the music over and above the text,⁴⁶ probably influenced by Baroque instrumental music and the rise in status of purely instrumental works. Until this time, poetry was written first, usually by the poet; the harper then set it to music. Carolan reversed this order by composing the music first, then writing his own lyrics to the songs, which were primarily panegyrics for his patrons.

Despite the prolific nature of Carolan's career, most of his music would have been lost if not for the efforts of some politically minded men in the 1790s. Though Carolan and his music were quite popular during his lifetime it was the meeting of the Belfast Harpers in 1792⁴⁷ that secured Carolan's position in history. In an effort to save the "national music and poetry from oblivion",⁴⁸ the meeting was organized to gather the few remaining harpers together and transcribe their music.

This attempt was influenced by the publication of Walker's work. As our study shows, his *Memoirs* not only preserved the history of the Irish bards, it also created the image taken by nationalists less than a decade later to promote the preservation of their music and poetry. What is more, Walker's presentation of Carolan as the personification of that ancient role was embraced by the transcriber, Edward Bunting. Bunting published three volumes of *Ancient Music of Ireland*, which contained numerous Carolan tunes.

Most of the more than two hundred extant tunes of Carolan were preserved at the festival. Of the music played by the ten harpers who performed for the three-day festival, almost half of it was attributed to Carolan⁴⁹—50 years after his death. While Carolan played out the role of Irish bard while living, in death his image was expanded and used as advocacy in the discourse concerning Irish identity.

DEVELOPMENT OF BARDIC IDENTITY IN LITERATURE

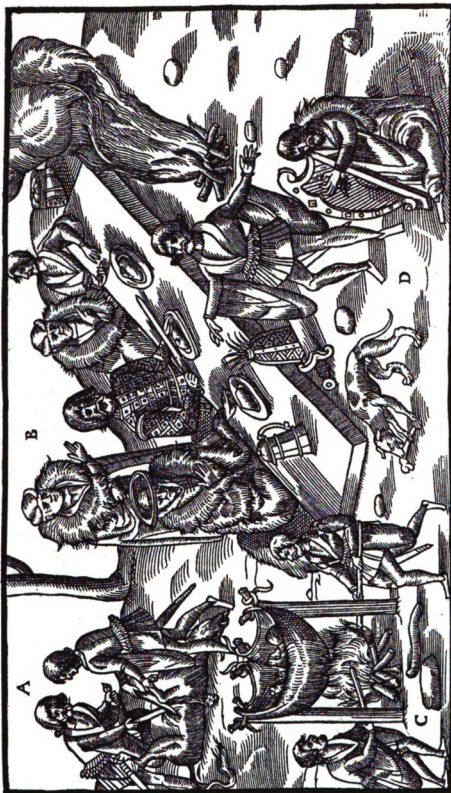
As noted, antiquarian interest emerged in the British Isles during the mid-eighteenth century, with special emphasis on “non” English antiquity.⁵⁰ The Druids were popular research subjects, and shortly after the publication of Thomas Gray’s poem, *The Bard* (1757), interest in Druid bards and bardic literature increased.

The romanticism of the eighteenth century cast the bard in a much different light than that of the historical reality. In tribal history, he was a poet whose poetry would have been accompanied by an instrument not necessarily played by the poet himself.⁵¹ (Figure 1.2)⁵² O’Grady defines the bards as:

...not the people, but a class. They were not so much a class as an organization and fraternity acknowledging the authority of one elected chief. They were not loose wanderers, but a power in the State, having duties and privileges. The ard-ollav (one class of bard) ranked next to the king, and his eric was kingly.”⁵³

The bard in reality performed a function similar to our statesmen, a dignified office, but perhaps not the mystical image that the term connotes. Just as statesmen today are well versed in communication, law, and history, bards would likewise be educated in these areas. O’Grady explains it this way: “Thus there was an educated body of public opinion entrusted with the preservation of the literature and history of the country, and capable of repressing the aberrations of individuals.”⁵⁴ There were three orders of bards for fulfilling these functions. Yet in national literature, they are treated as a “collective” bard, with emphasis placed on the poetical, or literary nature of their work.⁵⁵

The three bardic orders are⁵⁶: 1) the poets (Filea), whose duties included setting religious tenets to verse, recording significant events and persons involved, motivating soldiers before and during battle, and attending the king on and off the battlefield; 2) the



1. As he play'd in Scotland, the Ace, by commencing a suit,
 Of victory, the Ace, was made him then, the highest of all;
 As he being led, beneath the cheere, is deemed little wonder:
 Except the game be intermixt, and he be with a full mouth.
 2. Both Harle, and Harper, is prepar'd, which by their cunning art,
 Zooe strike and cleare up all the games, with contrage at the last.

A. As he when into their farrall the Ace, the houses are entred in,
 To make and other attend on the house, the houses are entred in,
 One plucketh off the Ace, and one, which he is with no more.
 Another, lacking pannes, to soyle the dish, his pipe prepare.
 C. Their figures stand upon the fire, for burning by the feast:
 B. And Ayres invadit burning in, both peace among the best.

Figure 1.2. Woodcut from John Derrick's *Images of Ireland*. This famous plate is a scene of the chief of the Mac Sweynes feasting while being entertained by a bard and a harper. Image from Armstrong's *The Irish and Highland Harps*, 6.

lawyers (Breitheamh, or Brehon), who acted as both judges and legislators, framing and enforcing the laws; and 3) the historian/genealogists (Seanacha), who preserved the genealogies of the their patrons. Each king and province had a bardic historian who maintained the history of that region. These men played powerful roles in the political hierarchy. They presented their materials in recitation, similar to Roman orators.⁵⁷ Unless they performed on their own instrument (and many did), the bardic order of musicians provided accompaniment to them.

Though the historical bards may not have enjoyed the mystical lifestyle attributed to them in later literature, they were figures esteemed as both cultural and political leaders. Some poets immortalized patrons in verse, much the same way painters have done in portraiture; those poets were treated with reverence; patrons hoped to avoid immortality in disparaging verse. Because the nature of their work involved a tangible medium, future writers used the manuscripts they left as material to immortalize both the patron and the bard.

The role of the bard changed after the Norman Conquest. The disruption of the traditional hierarchy inspired a different tenor in the poetry, one of sedition aimed at England. Though the bard was still revered by his countrymen, the English feared his influence; failed attempts to silence him only served to reinforce his political power. It was the bold image as the guardian of liberty in the face of tyranny coupled with the “ancient” role of powerful statesman that brought him forward, and into the eighteenth-century discourse of Irish identity. The ancient bard has been a significant symbol of Irish identity, yet in examining the bardic figure it becomes apparent that the powerful figure imagined today was not addressed in literature until the eighteenth century. Prior

to that time, bardic references cast him as silly or superstitious, particularly by the English, to whom the bard represented sedition and rebellion. Two examples illustrate each attitude. One from George Peele's play *The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First* (1593),⁵⁸ casts Morgan Pigot as a silly bard, and the other from Shakespeare's play *Richard III* (1594)⁵⁹ makes reference to bardic prophecy.⁶⁰ A comparison made between Pigot and the bard of Thomas Gray's poem, *The Bard: a Pindaric Ode* (1757) is revealing. Both were Welsh bards during the reign of Edward I, but were represented very differently.

Thomas Gray's poem, *The Bard: a Pindaric Ode* (1757),⁶¹ was the template for contemporary images of the bard: the powerful, sober, noble and mysterious figure. The depiction of this Welsh bard used elements from Druidic tradition.⁶² The contrast between Pigot (the silly bard serving Edward the First) and Gray's bard is stunning. Pigot was a comical side character, restrained and non-threatening in Edward's court.⁶³ Gray's bard was powerful, calling down curses on Edward and the soldiers who took part in the massacre of the Welsh bards. "The Bard" who stands atop a mountain peak overlooking the roaring river, chooses death by suicide rather than slaughter at the hands of the English.

In 1760, James Mcpherson, influenced by Gray's poem, published *Fingal*, largely fabricated "translations" of Ossianic poetry, thus creating an even greater interest in the bardic figure. The significance of the bard as historian was emphasized.⁶⁴ The figure symbolized antiquity and embodied the mythology, history, and heroic annals of the nations he represented.⁶⁵ Bardic literature and ancient manuscripts that had lain disregarded became objects of interest and study. Interwoven in the poetry were both

mythology, and historical accounts of battles and major events during the reigns of specific kings.⁶⁶ Standish O'Grady stated, "the history of one generation became the poetry of the next, until the whole island was illuminated and coloured by the poetry of the bards."⁶⁷ O'Grady distinguished between two types of pre-historic narrative. He described the first as purely of invention, such as harps emerging from fish bones: "The story floats loosely in a world of imagination."⁶⁸ The second is based in events of actual time and space, involving historical events and characters that were important to cultural identity. But these accounts had become so interlaced with legend, that though they were believed as fact, were no more than fiction themselves: "It may be legend, but it is legend believed in as history never consciously invented, and growing out of certain spots of the earth's surface, and supported by and drawing its life from the soil like a natural growth."⁶⁹ In viewing the poetry, remember that the poets were recording heroic deeds of the leaders and praising their patrons. Though the stories would naturally be exaggerated in favor of the patron, the events were historical events and the people in them historical figures.

In the eighteenth century, nationalism emerged across European nations and among their colonies, and with it the creation of nationalistic symbols. Because the bard embodied the history and mythology of the culture he inhabited, he was a sound symbolic representation of that nation.⁷⁰ Katie Trumpener contends that during this time "Irish and Scottish antiquaries reconceived national history and literary history under the bard," that "bardic performance binds the nation together across time and across social divides; it reanimates a national landscape made desolate first by conquest and then by modernization, infusing it with historical memory."⁷¹ In Ireland, the eighteenth-century

bardic symbol was embraced by Old Catholic and Anglo-Irish alike. This symbol facilitated a unity between the two races in working together toward political reform and self-rule.⁷² Print media fueled the national impetus for reform, and in the 1790s, independence. The use of mass printing provided the dissemination of political material from Europe and America. These materials stirred consciousness within countries of ethnic or national identification. The philosophy of these materials attempted to shift the “divine right” of monarchs who ruled subjects, to the “divine right” of citizens who chose their leaders. As these ideals developed into a strategy to gain independence, national symbols like the bard became a means to mobilize the masses to unity.⁷³

In Ireland, the bard is a rich symbol for several reasons. First, he represents a position of stature in the cultural tradition, a legitimizing presence. Second, his poetry contains cultural and legal history. He embodies not only the legislative and governmental element of the society, but the artistic tenor as well. He is associated with poetry and music.⁷⁴ Because of his association with the harp, this becomes also a symbol of national representation, and the harp is adopted as Ireland’s national symbol.⁷⁵

Works such as Gray’s *The Bard* and Walker’s *Memoirs* positioned the bardic figure to become a powerful symbol; particularly in a time when the position of bard had all but disappeared,⁷⁶ and cultural thought was in place to romanticize him. And the nationalists exploited this.

The term “bard” is used both in the generic sense of all bards of the British Isles, and also in a possessive national sense, among subaltern nations—Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Bunting’s comparison of Carolan’s music to Gray’s *Bard* illustrates the generic use of the term in which bards from other “nations” were embraced in a greater “ethnic”

scheme. In Bunting's statement about Carolan not playing the "“deep sorrows”" on the "Irish lyre",⁷⁷ he was quoting from Gray's *The Bard*, despite the fact that that bard and his lyre⁷⁸ were Welsh.

When reading Walker's information on the bards, many of the citations are about English, Welsh, or Scottish bards. *Their* histories are used to characterize the *Irish* bard. One might ask why Walker did not write about a collective bardic past of the British Isles, rather than singling out the Irish, when they apparently share a similar historical past?

The answer lies not in the documentation, which Walker used, but in the purpose of the work. Walker was not writing to record history, he was writing to construct Irish identity. That could only be done by casting the Irish bard as separate and unique from all others.

The reality is that the symbol of the bard used to represent Irishness is also inherent in England's past. But to England, bardic history was not as glorious as its own present power, and so was "forgotten" as part of their identity. With ancient elements safely tucked away in England's past, Ireland could successfully claim them as "other" than England. "Otherness" is not determined by dissimilar history—but by the present perception of social/cultural need.⁷⁹ Ireland needed relief from English domination; for that, they needed to negotiate a national identity, one upon which a future could be built. While England focused on their present and future, Ireland was focused on the past, to create a future—an *Irish* future.

The historical bard was an evocative symbol, providing a contemporary figure for the general public with which they could personally identify. In the 1790s, United

Irishmen, under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Knowledge, initiated a meeting to gather the remnant of harpers (who lived more like paupers than the elite of glorious memories) that held the last vestige of musical tradition. The plan was to bring the men together, transcribe the music they performed, and present it to the public as *their* national music, from *their* glorious Irish heritage. The results were conflicting. The transcriber, Edward Bunting, wanted to focus on Denis Hempson (1695-1807), the oldest of the harpers.⁸⁰ He was the only one who still played in the old style with long fingernails on his wire-strung harp, and he performed only music from the old tradition, avoiding contemporary music.⁸¹ While Bunting considered Hempson a “model of the old Irish school”⁸² and the most suitable representation of the old tradition, the results of the festival pointed in another direction. Of the music the others performed for three days, almost half of it was attributed to Turlough O’Carolan, deceased harper who was a generation removed from most of them.⁸³ At 97, Hempson was a near contemporary of Carolan who spent time with him when young; he was 43 when Carolan died.⁸⁴

The harper Turlough O’Carolan performed during the demise of the itinerant harpers’ tradition. With the emergence of public performance venues and patrons preferring the new Baroque music from the continent, itinerant harpers were hard-pressed to find enough patronage to support themselves and their families. Some looked to a different class for patronage. These harpers, who had been in service to the elite, carrying the art music of Ireland, turned to folk and dance music, hoping to find patronage in the lower classes.⁸⁵ Turlough O’Carolan, though, was able to compose music that imitated Baroque music, European art music, especially that of the Italians, i.e. Corelli, Geminiani and Vivaldi, yet remained diatonic in keeping with his instrument.⁸⁶

Perhaps because of the instrumental nature of much of the continental music, Carolan began composing the music first, emphasizing the melody.⁸⁷ Until that time, poetry had been the emphasis of the performance; harp music, as intricate as it was said to be,⁸⁸ was still secondary to the poetry.⁸⁹ Bunting presented a dual, cosmopolitan/traditional, image of Carolan in his volumes. In the 1840 edition he stated that Carolan was the “first who departed from the purely Irish style in composition...he delighted in the polished compositions of the Italian and German school, with which style many of his airs are strongly tingured,” yet continued “he felt the full excellence of the ancient music of his own country...he has produced some airs of surpassing tenderness, and of purely Irish structure.”⁹⁰ It was with this volume that Bunting placed Carolan’s music in the class of “modern” music that had been “infected” by the “taste for Italian composers,” and believed, “The public has been much too apt to regulate its estimate of Irish music by the standard of Carolan’s performances.”⁹¹ After the death of Denis Hempson, Bunting was able to focus on Hempson as the representative of the ancient tradition, while Carolan exemplified the “modern” tradition; yet Carolan remained the favorite of the people and continued to be representative of the bardic tradition in literature.

Carolan’s success lay in the fact that he could compose music and write poetry for his patrons. He was remembered because his music, adopted by his colleagues, was transcribed at the last gathering of harpers who embraced his music, either aesthetically or economically. His music, especially the transcriptions by Bunting, was a combination of styles and cultures that made his music aesthetically accessible to a wide range of patrons.⁹²

This accessibility of his music⁹³ was a major factor in choosing Carolan to embody the role of ancient bard rather than Hempson, who performed more traditional music than Carolan. In fact, Hempson refused to play any of Carolan's music at the Belfast meeting because it was too modern and did not represent the bardic style.⁹⁴ The fact is, the music Hempson played was inaccessible, even to the other harpers. Yeats states, "[I]t is clear that to them [the other harpers] he was an enigma, a voice from the past. The old music he played was out of date and he said that nobody, not even his fellow harpers, understood it." It is evident from the lack of understanding from the other harpers, that the old music, the more traditional music of Ireland was outdated. The national music represented by Bunting was a snapshot of the music the Irish harpers found acceptable at that time, Carolan being the predominant composer.

Irish nationalists embraced Carolan's music even though it had strong Italian influences and was not typically Irish. It was chosen to represent Irishness because its imitation of continental styles made it accessible to a cosmopolitan public. It was both "culturally unique and musically universal."⁹⁵

¹ Giraldus Cambrensis, *Historical Works*, 125. Cambrensis was a Welshman, sent by Henry II in 1184, with the Irish expedition, to record Irish culture. His work can be found translated into English in Thomas Wright's edition of *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*. (London: H. G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1863).

² Ibid., 126. This is a typical pattern of invasions. Similar constructs were forged by English immigrants to America toward the American Indian as well as African slaves.

³ "The Statutes of Kilkenny, passed by a small Anglo-Irish parliament in 1366, bound the whole island with disastrous results till 1613" Edmund Curtis, *A History of Ireland*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961, first ed., 1936), 92.

⁴ Preamble to the Statutes of Kilkenny: "Whereas at the conquest of the land of Ireland and for a long time after, the English of the said land used the English language, mode of riding and apparel, and were governed and ruled, and their subjects called Betaghs, by the English law, in which time God and holy Church, and their franchises according to their conditions, were maintained, and they themselves lived, in subjection; now many English of the said land, forsaking the English language, fashion, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies, and have also made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies

aforesaid; whereby the said land and the liege people thereof, the English language, the allegiance due to our lord the King, and the English laws there, are put in subjection and decayed." (Curtis, *History*, 112).

⁵ Ibid, 112-3.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 37-46.

⁷ Anthony Smith, "The 'Golden Age' And National Renewal," in *Myths and Nationhood*, eds. Geoffrey A. Hosking and George Schopflin (New York, NY: Routledge in association with the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1997), 37.

⁸ Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 190.

⁹ David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1993), 112.

¹⁰ Colin Graham, "'Blame it on Maureen O'Hara': Ireland and the Trope of Authenticity," *Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2001), 59; Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 132. The challenge in presenting authenticity is defining it in ways that does not constrain it to a particular time or segment of society. The goal would be as Filene illustrated in the blues culture of America: Dixon showed that a roots figure could be "Other" without being marginalized, "traditional" without being static, and "archetypal" without being obsolete."

¹¹ Leerssen, 13. Johannes Fabien, in *Time and the Work of Anthropology: Critical Essays 1971-1991*, (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), claims that "othering" is created by navigating perceptions between distance and difference, 230.

¹² Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 377.

¹³ Geoffrey Keating, *The general history of Ireland: I. Containing A full and impartial account of the first inhabitants of that kingdom; ... I. A relation of the long and bloody wars of the Irish against the Danes, ... Collected by the learned Jeoffry Keating, ... Faithfully translated from the original Irish ... by Dermo'd O Connor*, (London: printed by J. Bettenham for B. Creak, 1723). (hereafter cited as *General History*) Keating finished the preface to his history in 1629, the first part in 1631, and the second part in 1632 or somewhat later. James MacCaffrey, "Giraldus Cambrensis", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. VI Online, Nihil Obstat, September 1, 1909. Remy Lafort, Censor, Imprimatur. +John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York. (Accessed, June 25, 2006). <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/16048b.htm>>

¹⁴ Keating, *General History*, "...pass over all that might be said with Justice, to the Honor of the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation," ii.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Keating, David Comyn, ed. *The History of Ireland*. Vol. 1 (London: David Nutt, published for the Irish Text Society, 1902), vii.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The consumption of whiskey carries the inherent gendering of Irish masculinity.

¹⁹ Cheryl Natzmer, "Remembering and Forgetting: Creative Expression and Reconciliation in Post-Pinochet Chile", 161-179, in Jacob J Climo, and Maria G. Cattell's *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 164.

²⁰ Michael Largey, "Recombinant Mythology and the Alchemy of Memory: Occide Jeanty, Ogou, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines in Haiti", *Journal of American Folklore*, 118, no. 469, (Summer 2005): 327.

²¹ Ibid., 335. Describing the "third space" Largey refers to Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 37.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 350.

²⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis, Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis*. (London: H. G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1863). This work contains *Topography of Ireland, and the History of the Conquest of Ireland (1188)*, Translated by Thomas Forester, Esq., M.A. and *The Itinerary Through Wales, and the Description of Wales*, Translated by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart.

²⁵ In the following passage, Cambrensis simultaneously revealed the motivation for "exposing" Ireland's "sin and wickedness" and justifying the invasion: "...examine the whole series of the Old Testament, and

even consider familiar examples furnished by our own times and our own country, and you will find that no nation was ever conquered which did not bring down punishment of themselves for their sins and wickedness.”(312). “...the Irish people did well deserve, for their grievous offences and filthy lives, to be brought in to trouble by the incursions of stranger...” (313, 316).

²⁶ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland*, 1596, found in Edmund Saint Campion’s *The historie of Ireland, collected by three learned authors viz. Meredith Hanmer Doctor in Divinitie: Edmund Campion sometime fellow of St. Iohns Colledge in Oxford: and Edmund Spenser Esq.* (Dublin: Printed by the Societie of Stationers, printers to the Kings most excellent Majestie [and London: by Thomas Harper]), c1633.

²⁷ Dr. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*. 4 vols. (London, 1776-89).

²⁸ Sir John Hawkins, *General History of the Science and Practice of Music*. 2 vols. (1776. Reprint, New York: Dover, 1963).

²⁹ Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850*, (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1997), 170.

³⁰ Ibid, 171.

³¹ Ibid, 132.

³² Michael Largey, *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 9. Largey argues that elites are the ones who have the power to influence society and have more at stake in the way the nation is defined.

³³ Ó Ciosáin, *Print*, 170.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 172.

³⁶ Michael Largey, in his book *Vodou Nation* (9), discusses some of the ways in which elite Haitians used Vodou, considered lower class superstition by the elites, as a commodity in their efforts to secure a national identity in the face of foreign intervention.

³⁷ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 169. Here Leerssen describes a fourteenth century attempt of elite presumption in attempting to identify with Gaelic masses while exercising elite privilege. Hiberno-Norman Gerald, third earl of Desmond, composed a poem in Gaelic in 1367, a year after the Statutes of Kilkenny were enacted, using the terminology *Éieannach*, as a description of the combined other-than-Saxon races. The content of the poem though, contradicts the “oneness” of this unity in his explanation that he must “implement some of the king’s anti-Gaelic policy, but ventures to express the hope that this will not be taken as an act of personal ill-will against his beloved compatriots.”

³⁸ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 9.

³⁹ “Art profits when concealed...disgraces when revealed.”

⁴⁰ Cambrensis, *Works*, 126-7.

⁴¹ Bunting, 1796, 2.

⁴² The information about Carolan was gleaned from several different sources, all having their basis in Walker’s *Historical Memoirs* (1786) or Hardiman’s *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831). James Hardiman, *Irish Minstrelsy: or Bardic Remains of Ireland* (1831) 2 vols. (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971).

⁴³ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 49.

⁴⁴ Bunting, 1840, 60.

⁴⁵ The battle of the Boyne (1690) occurred during Carolan’s early years as an itinerant bard.

⁴⁶ Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 47.

⁴⁷ This meeting was later referred to as “The Belfast Harpers’ Festival of 1792.”

⁴⁸ See Figure 7.1, announcement and intent of the Meeting of the Belfast Harpers in 1792.

⁴⁹ Ann Heymann, “Denis O’Hampsey, His Style and Technique,”

http://www.harpspectrum.org/historical/heyman_short.shtml (accessed June 24, 2004)

⁵⁰ Snyder, *Celtic Revival*, 1-4. It is interesting that much of the “non” English interest, such as Druids, bards, etc. were actually part of England’s history as well. It seems that England was satisfied with their

identity as an imperial power, and as such—future focused. There was less of a need to reach back into history to define themselves. This left antiquity open for the colonies to rummage through, adopting elements in which to dress themselves, creating a fashionable identity—while at the same time establishing a perceived “otherness” from England. Modernity – English domain; Antiquity – colonial domain.; Partha Chatterjee maintains that colonies competing with the west in areas such as science and mathematics (material domain), the greater the need to “preserve the distinctiveness” of cultural identity (spiritual domain). (Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

⁵¹ There were different classes of bards performing different function: poets, musicians, lawyers, etc. Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 9-18.

⁵² John Derrick’s *Images of Irelande* present illustrations from the reign of Queen Elizabeth. There is a set of woodcuts that are used as reference material for Irish costume of all classes, customs of the time, of English military costume and equipment during the late sixteenth century. The woodcuts document the suppression of Irish rebels during the administration of Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord-Deputy of Ireland, Armstrong, *Irish Harp*, 6).

⁵³ O’Grady, *Bardic Literature*, 50.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ This is especially the way in which Walker treated the bardic figure.

⁵⁶ These are the three orders as described by Keating and repeated by Walker, (*Historical Memoirs*, 14-18).

⁵⁷ Walker compares them to Greek and Roman orators, (*Historical Memoirs* 17).

⁵⁸ George Peele. G. K. Dreher, ed. *The Chronicle of King Edward the First, Surnamed Longshanks with the Life of Lluellen Rebel in Wales* (1593), (Chicago: Adams Press, 1974).

⁵⁹ William Shakespeare, George Lyman Kittredge, ed. *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*, (London: Blaisdell Publishing company, 1968), Act IV sc.II, 105.

⁶⁰ This was the time in which Spencer, Campion, Hanmer, and others were writing English histories that discredited the Irish. Their histories can be found in Edmund Saint Campion’s *The historie of Ireland, collected by three learned authors viz. Meredith Hanmer, Doctor in Divinitie: Edmund Campion, sometime fellow of St, Johns College in Oxford: and Edmund Spenser, Esq.* (Dublin: Printed by the Societie of Stationers, printers to the King’s most excellent Majestie [and London: by Thomas Harper], c1633).

⁶¹ Gray, Thomas. *The bard. A pindaric poem, by Mr. Gray. Translated into Latin verse. To which is prefixed a Dedication to the genius of antient Britain.* Chester, 1775. Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. (Accessed 23 July 2007) <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/servlet/ECCO>

⁶² Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 14.

⁶³ Later dramas tended to be very stereotypical in depictions of Welsh, Irish and Scottish bards--mainly for comic effect.

⁶⁴ O’Grady, *Bardic Literature*, 6-7. See also Geoffrey G. Hiller’s “‘Sacred Bards’ and ‘Wise Druides’” Drayton and His Archetype of the Poet, *ELH* 51, no. 1 (Spring, 1984): 1-15. Hiller examines, indepth the distinction between Bards and Druides. Also Keith Stewart’s “Ancient Poetry as History in the 18th Century,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19, no. 3 (June, 1958): 335-347.

⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that the bards in literature were primarily Welsh, Scottish, or Irish. The English had bards as well, but were not as interested in their history as they were in their present and future as an Imperial power. Thus, the bard was an element used to create “otherness” from England.

⁶⁶ O’Grady, *Bardic Literature*, 7; Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 34. “Thus poetry became the vehicle of truth, and the voice of history; hence the adage...verse is as good proof as prose.”

⁶⁷ O’Grady, *Bardic Literature*, 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹ Geography is an important aspect of Irish history. “Soil” based narratives revolve around the mounds and cromlechs, elements that existed in other countries, but the histories “passed away.” O’Grady, 7.

⁷⁰ O’Grady, *Bardic Literature*, 8; Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 93-4.

⁷¹ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), xii.

⁷² Leerson, *Mere Irish*, 377.

⁷³ Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

"Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind."

⁷⁴ Cambrensis, 126. The prototypical bard of Gray's poem, played a lyre—or harp, although the lyre was not used at the time of Edward's invasion of Wales. The lyre was a "legitimizing" article alluding to Greek Antiquity and steeped in cultural value.

⁷⁵ Barra Boydell, "Female Figures on Irish and European Harps." *The Galphin Society Journal* 50 (Mar., 1997): 306; See also George Petrie's *Memoirs* in Bunting's 1840 volume.

⁷⁶ It is only after a death or demise that a person or group of people can be "revived" and transformed into a national symbol. Two works that describe the creation of a national icon in other contexts are David E. Whisnant's "Ancestral Feats and Future Dreams: Sandino and the Politics of Culture," 344-382, 495-500, in *Rascally Signs in Sacred Places: the Politics of Culture in Nicaragua*. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); and Michael Largey's "Recombinant Mythology and the Alchemy of Memory: Occide Jeanty, Ogou, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines in Haiti", *Journal of American Folklore* vol. 118, no. 469, (Summer 2005), 327-353.

⁷⁷ Bunting, 1840, 9.

⁷⁸ The bards of that time did not carry lyres; the triangular shaped harp with a front column was used then. Gray was using the cultural capital of Greek allusion.

⁷⁹ For more information about "otherness", see Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

⁸⁰ In his 1840 volume, Bunting gives Hempson high praise.

⁸¹ Bunting, 1840, 73.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ As noted earlier, these songs were collected fifty years after Carolan's death.

⁸⁴ Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 22. Arthur O'Neill does not refer to Hempson in his memoirs, though as Yeats suggests, "they must have known each other very well."

⁸⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁶ The Irish harp despite having different modes of tuning during that time, could not accommodate accidentals. In order to change keys, the strings had to be retuned.

⁸⁷ Bunting, in his work, emphasized melody above lyrics, as well. Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 47.

⁸⁸ Cambrensis, 126.

⁸⁹ Gráinne Yeats explains that the Irish phrase is "Abair amhrán" (say a song), not "Can amhrán" (sing a song). Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 47.

⁹⁰ Bunting, 1840, 71.

⁹¹ Ibid, 9.

⁹² Yeats, *Complete Works*, 6. Yeats casts Carolan as a bridge between the "continental art music on the one hand, and the Gaelic harp and folk music on the other. O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 95. O'Sullivan states, "Many of Carolan's airs have become part of English and Anglo-Irish song literature, among the most celebrated being 'Bumper Squire Jones', 'O'Rourke's Noble Feast' and 'The Saucy Arethusa' ('The Princess Royal')."

⁹³ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 5. The harpers' music was the native art music of Ireland. After the 1792 Harpers' meeting, Bunting published three volumes of *Ancient Music of Ireland*. This was an effort to both preserve and to "create" a "national" music repertoire, a canon, so to speak. Though Carolan's melodies were influenced by Italian Baroque music, Bunting carried it a step further in his arrangements, harmonizing it in ways that he learned in the conservatory, ways that could not be played on a diatonic instrument like the Irish harp. As Michael Largey observed in Haiti, "composers attempted to write

classical music that was both culturally unique and musically universal.” It is the universalizing of the music that made it aesthetically accessible to the English parlor as well as the Irish cottage.

⁹⁴ Bunting, 1840, 73; Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 22.

⁹⁵ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 5.

CHAPTER 2

Oliver Goldsmith: “The History of Carolan: The Last Irish Bards”

CAROLAN INTRODUCED

In 1760, Oliver Goldsmith, an Irish born author residing in England, became the first to feature Carolan in print.¹ His essay, “The History of Carolan: the Last Irish Bard,”² illustrates the European shift in tastes toward the exotic and Ireland’s inclusion as a subject of interest. According to Edward Snyder, 1760 marked the beginning of the Celtic Revival that was seeded during the previous decade.³ Though a few historians and archaeologists had shown an interest in the life of the Celts before this time, the general public showed no interest.⁴

However, as society became weary of time-worn Greek and Roman mythology, Celtic history became a fascinating replacement. While much of Celtic literature

emphasized the supernatural esoteric qualities of Druid history, Goldsmith presented more realistic, albeit nostalgic, images of Ireland. Playing on the interest in exoticism, and the allurement of bardic images,⁵ Goldsmith featured Carolan, the Irish bard, to sell his article. This not only showed Carolan's popularity, but reinforced it as well.

Though Goldsmith presented an Irish bard, his pragmatic tastes contrasted the mysticism found in contemporary literature. Carolan appeared, not as a shadowy figure, but as a historic one: a bard whose congeniality reached across class and ethnic boundaries; he was highly skilled in the art of music, competing with cosmopolitan figures such as Geminiani, the famed Italian violinist. This was a much different bard than constructed by other writers of the day. Myth and mystery dominated romantic literature.

Snyder explains, as the "Spirit of Romanticism" emerged, the public looked more to themes with novel supernatural episodes. As they found Druid history to satisfy their "craving for 'strangeness added to beauty' (which to Pater and others is the spirit of Romanticism), the poets were forced to abandon their familiar classical fields, and divert their attention to regions hitherto unexplored."⁶ He claims:

There were...Druids, Bards, and Vates, whose human sacrifices and huge uncovered temples would give an effect truly awe-inspiring; there were heroes and heroines like Caractacus, Arviragus, Boadicea, Cuchullin, and Ossian, whose history was so curious blended with fable as to be interesting beyond all measure.⁷

These and their counterparts were the heroes that ushered in the Celtic Revival.

Snyder speaks of the Celtic Revival as:

...a real movement among English men of letters who were united by a common desire to infuse into English poetry the mythology, the history, and the literary treasures of the ancient Celts. And for the beginning of this Celtic Revival we naturally take that date when Gray's *Bard*, Mason's

Caractuacus, Macpherson's *Ossian*, and Evan's *Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards* were generally understood and appreciated—that is, the years shortly after the middle of the century.⁸

Goldsmith, most well known for writing *The Vicar of Wakefield*, published his essay about Carolan three years after Gray's poem *The Bard* and the same year as James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, the introduction to his "Ossianic" works. Both works inspired interest in the bardic figure.

Goldsmith's essay for the *British Magazine* combined the exotic allure of the Irish bard with the popularity of Carolan. Carolan was well known in Ireland. His fame spread beyond his district of Roscommon. After his death, stories about him continued to circulate around Roscommon⁹ and among the harpers who succeeded him.¹⁰ The common knowledge of the fame of Carolan lent an air of authenticity to the essay as well as a positive reflection on Ireland.

As an Irishman in England, Goldsmith downplayed his Irishness. Although many Irish went to London to establish careers as actors and writers, the English were threatened by their presence. During Carolan's lifetime, the Irish were involved in the aftermath of the 1688 revolution and the 1690's Battle of the Boyne. As late as 1745, Bonnie Prince Charlie, the young pretender, invaded England to reclaim the throne for his father James III.¹¹ Though he was routed, the threat of a subsequent invasion kept the Irish suspect.

Goldsmith did not express overt patriotism in his work, nor did he deliberately contribute to Irish identity construction; in fact, he was later criticized for his lack of Irish patriotism and identification with Ireland. However, during the 1750s and 1760s, Irish patriotism was not advancing; English homogeneity was. A single English culture

continued to be a desire of the English, and was rewarded when accomplished, as was the case with Goldsmith's assimilation into English culture.

Nevertheless, a positive Irish image would have served Goldsmith, and for him to promote an Irish bard such as Carolan would reflect favorably on all Irish, countering both the diminutive characterization by English playwrights and the highly romanticized bard of Gray. Kiberd argues that "Goldsmith liked to consider himself a citizen of the world,"¹² but he was more effortlessly national than many who painted their Irishness on from the outside." Furthermore, "wearing the mask of honorary Englishman" freed him "to tell the underlying truth about a deeper self."¹³ He claims Goldsmith's "'The Deserted Village' is filled with images of famine, eviction and forced migration, alongside passages of nostalgia for things past."¹⁴ His essay on Carolan exhibited a similar vein of nostalgia and new pattern of bardic stereotype.

Inadvertently, Goldsmith set in print many of the characteristics endorsing Carolan as an iconic image embodying the Irish bard: the beloved bard, descendant of an ancient tradition, poet, harper, popular with his contemporary patrons, masculine, drinker, associated with the protestant scholar Jonathon Swift, and his musical embodiments of cosmopolitan Italian influences.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

Oliver Goldsmith: A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian, who left scarcely any style of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn. Of all the passions, whether smiles were to move or tears, a powerful yet gentle master. In genius, vivid, versatile, sublime. In style, clear, elevated, elegant.

—Dr. Samuel Johnson

Goldsmith was born in Ireland, his father a clergyman. After attending Trinity College, becoming a doctor in Edinburgh, and traveling across Europe on foot, Goldsmith settled in England. As a physician, he was unable to provide a sufficient income from his poverty-stricken patients. To supplement, he took a job as a reviewer for the *Monthly Review*. Both his desperate poverty and his love of literature prompted a career as a writer. "Nothing," he said, "is more apt to introduce us to the gates of the muses than Poverty."¹⁵ It so captivated him that he began writing successfully in various genres: essays, plays, books, poems, and one novel.

He spent part of his childhood in Carolan's district of Roscommon, with an uncle who was a rector. As a rector, familiar with those in his area, his uncle would have been acquainted with Carolan. Although there is no evidence to support it, Carolan may have met Goldsmith as a young boy. Goldsmith was nine years old when Carolan died, and would certainly have heard stories about him and perhaps heard him perform. There was a family connection, for Carolan composed the piece "John Drury" in 1724 for the marriage of Oliver's first cousin, Elizabeth Goldsmith, to John Drury.¹⁶ Carolan's wake was a big event, one that would likely have been known to Goldsmith, even if he did not attend. His memories of Roscommon may have provided the nostalgia evident in his essay about Carolan.¹⁷

While his uncle was an Anglican rector, he was a good friend of Charles O'Connor.¹⁸ O'Connor was a Catholic, active in Irish studies, who published political pamphlets, albeit anonymously, against the penal laws.¹⁹ The O'Conors were one of the few landed Catholics. Though much of their land was confiscated by the British, they still maintained a sizable estate that still exists in Castlerae. Carolan was friend and harper to both Charles's father and grandfather, Denis and Charles O'Connor, respectively. Carolan spent considerable amounts of time with Denis O'Connor and his family. Fellow Catholics, they had a common bond, culturally and politically.²⁰ Carolan instructed the boys, including Charles, on the harp.²¹ Incidentally, Charles O'Connor was the only person who knew Carolan that wrote about him.

Though Goldsmith had ties to political figures, he was not known to have played a part in Irish national activities, as Thomas Moore, an Irish poet who also moved to London, had done. In fact, in 1827 Dublin, Dr. Thomas Furlong²² gave a speech praising Moore as "one of the leading spirits of our time; we esteem him not merely as the eager and impassioned advocate of general liberty—but we love him as the lover of his country." He contrasted Moore with Goldsmith, who he characterized as "spiritless [and] slavish", one of the "Irishmen...scorned even to name the ill-fated land of their birth."²³ Goldsmith's article about Carolan was not intended to be a political gesture per se, but a marketable essay. A quarter of a century later, Joseph Walker would publish a work that was mentored by the same Charles O'Connor who befriended Goldsmith's uncle; this work *was* politically motivated.

“THE HISTORY OF CAROLAN: THE LAST IRISH BARD”

“The History of Carolan: The Last Irish Bard” was written for a popular magazine in London, where there was a growing interest in the Irish mythological past. This essay is not a major work about Carolan, and it has some glaring mistakes; yet, is significant, not only because it is the first work about him, but also because it laid groundwork for subsequent authors.

In the essay, Goldsmith either presumed an Irish veneration of Carolan, or sought to create one. He began by presenting the Irish admiration of bards in general, “remembering” their roles and prestige. He took established Irish traditions and embodied them in the person of Carolan, who became a representative of the “traditional” bardic line. In supporting Carolan’s popularity, he placed him in relationships with Catholic and Anglo-Irish Protestants, as well as with all classes. Carolan thus represented both the elevated status of the bard, and the cultural ideology prescribed by Rousseau of naturalism and the “untutored bard.” As Leith Davis states, “Carolan may have been used by writers like Goldsmith to represent ‘rude Celtic simplicity,’ but he was in fact a culturally hybrid figure to begin with,”²⁴ referring to the Italian influence embedded in his music. Goldsmith also elevated him by comparing him to the ancient Greek poet, Pindar.²⁵

This essay was written at the onset of the eighteenth-century Gaelic Revival and the literary construction of the mythological Ireland. Ireland acquired allure. Alice Hufstader describes it this way:

“The Romantic movement restored emotion to civilization, Ireland as a Lost Cause began to have certain allure, even to the oppressors-in-residence. Towards the close of the century curiosity about the Irish past, especially the distant mythological past, became fashionable.”²⁶

As stated above, during the eighteenth century, Irish history became a fashion even in England. The charm of Druid tradition and bardic literature captured the attention of the elite of society. While, at this point, the bard gained esteem, literary images of the bard prior to this time were generally cast as doltish or superstitious. That was particularly true of English writers who, influenced by the seditious reputation of the bard, attempted contrast by casting him as a non-threatening character.

The interest in the bard himself was initiated by Thomas Gray's poem *The Bard: A Pindaric Ode*. Gray's bard, sober, mysterious and powerful, became a template for future writers. The image of Gray's bard, the image planted in the minds of those reading Goldsmith's essay, was in stark contrast to Goldsmith's portrayal of Carolan as a jovial and optimistic figure. Goldsmith presented a much different depiction of a "bard" and what that meant. Later writers, Edward Bunting and Charlotte Milligan Fox both contrasted Carolan with Gray's bard, presenting Carolan much as Goldsmith did. Bunting in his 1840 volume of *Ancient Irish Music*, compared their music: "...[Carolan's music] reveled with surprising gracefulness and freedom. But to the 'deep sorrows' of the Irish lyre he rarely aspired."²⁷ Likewise, C.M. Fox, contrasted Carolan similarly, stating:

"...on hearing O'Carolan's airs they realized that, despite penal laws and exiled princes, there was some fun left in Ireland, and that there were drinking and hunting, courting and kissing, dancing and feasting, and harp music to lighten the feast. In his numerous productions, it was doubtful if there was a patriotic, sad, or Jacobite song among them."²⁸

The contrast displayed between these author's opinions of this particular bard and Gray's portrayal of bards in general may explain in some way Goldsmith's reception of Gray's poem.

In 1757, working for the *Monthly Review*, Goldsmith reviewed *The Bard*. His review foreshadowed the contrasting tone of his article about Carolan. Gray was following an aesthetic that Goldsmith resisted as lofty, flowery and neglecting the ordinary reader in preference for the elite.²⁹ Goldsmith stated in his review that Gray should “be more original”, insinuating that if Gray intended to imitate the ancients, he should imitate Isocrates,³⁰ and “Study the People.” He regretted that “those talents so capable of giving pleasure to all, exerted in efforts that, at best, can amuse only the few...”³¹ Goldsmith did not criticize the subject matter, since the bard was popular material; what he resisted was the esoteric elitism of the language. He reinforced his position of writing for the reader by stating that Pindar³² tailored his style and language “exactly to the dispositions of his countrymen. Irregular, enthusiastic, and quick in transition, he wrote for a people inconstant, of warm imaginations, and exquisite sensibility,” contrasting the eighteenth-century British reader with the ancient Greeks as “a people not easily impressed with new ideas; extremely tenacious of the old; with difficulty warmed, and as slowly cooling again.”³³ When Goldsmith compared Carolan with Pindar in his essay, he may have been reflecting that character of accessibility to the people to which Goldsmith himself achieved.

According to Edward Snyder, Goldsmith was correct in his evaluation of *The Bard*. It was not well received at the time of its publication, but “before the end of the century the poem was praised and quoted to an extent that baffles belief”³⁴ and became a major influence in the creation of the bardic image becoming, as Mary Helen Thuente describes it, “the champion of liberty against tyranny.”³⁵ Goldsmith abhorred what he saw as pretension in this poem. Quintana describes Goldsmith as one who “despised

affectation of any sort; his standard was simplicity, naturalness, in life and in art.”³⁶ This was evident in his writing style. Goldsmith tended toward an easy straightforwardness. His sense of timing and rhythm gave a deceptive simplicity to the elegance of his writing that appealed to his audiences.³⁷

In his essay on Carolan, Goldsmith sought to entertain his audience. He was not attempting to produce an authoritative biography of Carolan; a few prominent mistakes evidence that; even the title suggesting that Carolan was the last bard is inaccurate. He was the most celebrated of the eighteenth-century bards, but he was not the last. Goldsmith also stated that Carolan was suited to this career, “as he was born blind,” which was not the case.³⁸ Although this material was presented as historical fact, it would be more accurate to describe it as a romantic legend. It was written during the rise of literary romanticism, which tended toward a nostalgic idealization of its subjects.

This article echoed Rousseau’s “noble savage”³⁹ in the image of the wise untutored bard.⁴⁰ The two quotes below illustrate the way in which Goldsmith linked Carolan to Irish bardic tradition, positioned him in contrasting representations of the bard as both elite and primitive and compared him to the ancient Greek poet, Pindar. These allusions not only presented in Carolan the duality of primitive and cultured, but presented a masculine representation of Ireland that contrasted with the female figure often associated with Ireland as an English colony.

In the quote below, Goldsmith reinforced Carolan’s position in the continuum of the *Irish* bardic tradition, by emphasizing a customary role played out historically. Keening and eulogizing the dead in poetic song had a long tradition among the harpers. So did, as Goldsmith pointed out to his English audience, laments of oppression by the

English.⁴¹ The bard then concluded with sage advice to the young. This historical role, as Stephen Rohs explains, is reinforcing “their national identity and naturalizing it into visible, commonly accepted signs and expressions,”⁴² and at the same time suggests their unity over shared memories of suffering, their common traditions, and a shared destiny:⁴³

Their bards, in particular, are still held in great veneration among them; those traditional heralds are invited to every funeral, in order to fill up the intervals of the howl with their songs and harps. In these they rehearse the actions of the ancestors of the deceased, bewail the bondage of their country under the English government, and generally conclude with advising the young men and maidens to make the best use of their time; for they will soon, for all their present bloom, be stretched under the table, like the dead body before them.⁴⁴

Goldsmith “naturalized” the performance of the bardic traditions by taking specific acts, such as keening and lamenting English oppression, acts recognized in general; and placed them in the context of Irish identity. In the case of “bewailing the bondage...under the English government”, the Irish were reminded of a unity based on shared suffering from a common enemy; also reminding the English readers of the bardic resistance to the hegemonic relationship between the two countries.

After Goldsmith reminded his reader of these “natural” bardic performances, solidifying them in Irish tradition, he singled out Carolan by confirming the Irish inclination to dote on his memory, his name mentioned with “rapture”, his poetry and music carried in the hearts of the people; he appealed even to some of English descent.⁴⁵

Goldsmith indicated his wide acceptance, assuming Carolan to “represent an ancient Gaelic culture that could also be appreciated by the Anglo-Irish.”⁴⁶

Of all the bards this country ever produced, the last and the greatest was CAROLAN THE BLIND. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp. The original natives never mention his name without rapture; both his poetry and music they have by heart;

and even some of the English themselves, who have been transplanted there, find his music extremely pleasing.⁴⁷

Goldsmith's reference to the "original natives" may reflect the influence of primitivism prominent at the time, coupling Carolan's elite status with the romanticized, primitive bard. Also his mention of Carolan's association with Dean Swift, in the following quote suggested the connection to be common knowledge.⁴⁸ This was surely meant to establish his credibility, as well as illustrate his acceptance among the Anglo-Irish elite: "A song beginning, 'O'Rourke's noble fare will never be forgot',⁴⁹ translated by Dean Swift⁵⁰ is of his composition; which, though perhaps by this means the best known of his pieces, is yet by no means the most deserving."⁵¹

Along with Swift, Goldsmith associates Carolan with Francesco Geminiani. Goldsmith's article was marketed to an English audience, familiar with Italian baroque music. Goldsmith cast Carolan as both traditionally Gaelic, heir to the ancient bardic line; and cosmopolitan, by the Italian influence in much of his music.

The comparison of Carolan's songs with those of Pindar reflects both his reputation, and Carolan's awareness of his patrons as mentioned above:

His songs in general may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the some flights of imagination; and are composed (I do not say written, for he could not write) merely to flatter some man of fortune up on some excellence of his stable, as in Pindar, another for his hospitality, a third for the beauty of his wife and children, and a fourth for the antiquity of his family.⁵²

Goldsmith again turned to the "native" and "natural" connotations of Carolan and his patrons, and reemphasized the role of bard at social functions, though this time of more upbeat occasions:

Whenever any of the original native of distinction [were] assembled at feasting or reveling, Carolan was generally there, where he was always

ready with his harp to celebrate their praise. He seemed by nature formed for his profession, for as he was born blind, so also he was possessed of a most astonishing memory, and a facetious turn of thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction.⁵³

Goldsmith ended the essay by remarking on Carolan's fondness for drink, stating "Homer was never more fond of a glass than he."⁵⁴ This would begin a continuing literary debate on Carolan's drinking habits: stressing his drinking in proportion to the desire to establish his masculinity and accessibility. Those stressing his religious commitment chose to de-emphasize that quality.

Goldsmith's choice of Carolan as the subject of this essay, published in England, is significant. It not only illustrates the public's taste for the idealized bard in general, but also indicates the author's choice of a well-known, popular figure that would attract readers' attention. It was vital that Goldsmith be published; he was consistently in financial need.

Although the growing interest in Irish antiquity, even among the English, may have influenced Goldsmith's decision to choose Carolan as the subject of this essay; his childhood memories may have played a great role in that decision. In this first published work of Carolan, Goldsmith sets a foundation on which subsequent writers further construct an image of Carolan as an Irish icon. He led the Irish to accept Carolan as the embodiment of the Irish bard, by emphasizing the Irish adoration of not only the "ancient" role, but also the specific figure of Carolan. Goldsmith capitalized on the emerging antiquarian interest in "remembering" the "ancient" past to root Carolan in Irish bardic history. Conflicting memories cast him as both prominent, in his association with Swift, and "natural", beloved and endeared by the masses.

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- ¹ Donal, O'Sullivan, *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*, (Cork, Ireland: Ossian Publications, 2001), 22.
- ² Peter Cunningham, F. S. A., ed., *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 237-240. T
- ³ Edward D. Snyder, *The Celtic Revival in English Literature 1760-1800*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), v;1.
- ⁴ Snyder, *Celtic Revival*, 1-2.
- ⁵ Popularized by Gray's "The Bard" (1759).
- ⁶ Snyder, *Celtic Revival*, 2.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid, 4.
- ⁹ Myles John O'Reilly (1780-1857) collected Carolan lore with the intentions of publishing *Carolaniana or Miscellaneous Notices Anecdotes and Observations relating to Turlough O'Carolan the celebrated Irish Bard and of his Patrons and Times*. O'Reilly died before it was complete. Three others who contributed to the work were: Edward O'Reilly, Daniel Malone and Daniel Early (O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 24-5).
- ¹⁰ Arthur O'Neill's memoirs contain stories collected from harpers who knew Carolan.
- ¹¹ This was the son of James II who lost at the Battle of the Boyne to William of Orange in 1690.
- ¹² In 1760, Goldsmith began to publish the serial letters "Citizen of the World" for the *Public Ledger*. Under the pseudonym Lien Chi, Goldsmith critiqued English manners from the perspective of a Chinese traveler.
- ¹³ Kiberd, *Irish classics*, 108.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ J. H. Plumb, "Dr. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)." (Accessed 5 August 2006)
<http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/goldsmith/about.htm>
 Sir John Harold Plumb (1911-2001), known as Jack, was a British historian, known for his books on British eighteenth-century history. Professor of Modern English History at Christ College, master of the college from 1978-1982.
- ¹⁶ O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 22. The piece, John Drury is no. 42 in O'Sullivan's anthology.
- ¹⁷ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*. 114-116.
- ¹⁸ Carolan taught harp to Charles and his brother. Their father Denis provided friendship as well as patronage to Carolan. The O'Conors were fellow Catholics.
- ¹⁹ Thunette, *Harp Re-Strung*, 27; Davis, *Music*, 10.
- ²⁰ Letters and memoirs from Carolan, Rev. Charles O'Connor, D.D. *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late Charles O'Connor of Belanagare ESQ, M.R.I.A.* Dublin, 1755; Robert E. Ward, John F. Wrynn, S.J. and Catherine Coogan Ward, eds. *Letters of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare: A Catholic Voice in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988.
- ²¹ There is a harp preserved at Clonalis House, the O'Connor estate, that Carolan use to teach the boys. A reproduction is there as well that the author was privileged to tune and play.
- ²² Thomas Furlong was a poet and a patriot. He was the translator for the "Carolan Remains" and other Gaelic poems for Hardiman's *Minstrelsy*.
- ²³ Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, lxxviii-lxxix. The criticism of Furlong in 1831 could be a reflection of the Catholic attitude toward Anglo-Irish "pretenders" to Gaelic culture. Goldsmith was contrasted with Moore, a Catholic, who was lauded for his participation in Irish nationalism.
- ²⁴ Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender: The Construction of Irish National Identity, 1724-1874*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 47.
- ²⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 73-4, 95-98.
- ²⁶ Alice Anderson Hufstader, "Beethoven's 'Irish Lieders': Sources and Problem. *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Jul., 1959), 344.

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- ²⁷ Bunting, 1840, 9.
- ²⁸ Charlotte Milligan Fox, "The Last of the Irish Minstrels", *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society*, vol. XI. 27.
- ²⁹ Peter Dixon, *Oliver Goldsmith*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 24; Ricardo Quintana, *Oliver Goldsmith: a Georgian Study*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 26.
- ³⁰ Isocrates (436-338 B.C.) was one of 10 Attic Orators. A Greek philosopher and rhetorician, Isocrates's school rivaled that of his contemporary Plato. Rather than focusing on arbitrary rules of rhetoric, Isocrates stressed "fitness for the occasion," or "kairos" enabling the speaker to adapt his discourse to the circumstances as they evolve. His concern was clear communication rather than ostentation.
- ³¹ Quintana, *Goldsmith*, 26.
- ³² Pindar (522 BC-443 BC) was considered the greatest of the nine lyric poets of ancient Greece. His father was an aristocrat and his mother was from a low class, possibly a slave, similar to Carolan's common birth and aristocratic opportunities.
- ³³ Dixon, *Goldsmith*, 24.
- ³⁴ Snyder, *Celtic Revival*, 194.
- ³⁵ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 29.
- ³⁶ Quintana, *Goldsmith*, 5.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 22.
- ³⁸ Carolan was blinded as a teenager.
- ³⁹ The "noble savage" evokes a masculine image as well as simplicity.
- ⁴⁰ Earle Barton Howe, *The Idealized Bard of the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Origins*. (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1927), 166-167.
- ⁴¹ Davis, *Music*, 46. Davis claims Goldsmith "depicts native Irish music as a potentially subversive threat to the dominant English hegemony" when he relates how the bards would "bewail the bondage of their country under the English government."
- ⁴² Stephen Rohs, "'Bold Soldier Boy: Irish Performance'", *American Studies*, 44, no. 1 (2003), 158.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Goldsmith, *Carolan*, 238.
- ⁴⁵ The acceptance by English transplants would be capitalized on in the 1780s and 90s in Carolan's symbolic position in nationalistic ideology.
- ⁴⁶ Davis, *Music*, 46.
- ⁴⁷ Goldsmith, *Carolan*, 237.
- ⁴⁸ Thuente, *Harp ReStrung*, 50.
- ⁴⁹ This was a legendary feast, which displayed another shared value—that of hospitality.
- ⁵⁰ The Gaelic poem was written by Hugh MacGauran, a friend of Carolan. This is the only song for which Carolan wrote music for the poetry of another. Swift's translation was not very literal. The earliest setting of this song was for bass and chorus by the Italian, Sigr. Lorenzo Bocchi (O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 293).
- ⁵¹ Goldsmith, *Carolan*, 238.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 239.
- ⁵⁴ Goldsmith, *Carolan*, 239.

CHAPTER 3

Joseph Cooper Walker: *Historical Memoirs of the Ancient Bard* (1786)

BACKGROUND TO THE WORKS OF J.C. WALKER AND C. BROOKE

A quarter of a century after Goldsmith introduced Carolan, Anglo-Irish writers began to define Irishness by using the Irish bard in national symbolism. Two of those works that featured Carolan were: Walker's *Historical Memoirs* and Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques*. Both works were written during the 1780s antiquarian movement and were shaped by the reception, pro and con of Macpherson's Ossian poetry.¹ Although Macpherson's *Fragments* were considered spurious, they had a profound effect on the antiquarian and literary movements, and the recognition of "Celticism" by the English. Eighteenth-century literature was characterized by reason and refinement. "Polite Literature," suitable for a refined audience, was prominent. The rise of the Gothic novel

during the second half of the century challenged the conventionality of parlor literature by incorporating dark subjects of violence, mystery, spontaneity and primitivism. The eager acceptance of primitivism not only provided an escape from rigid social expectations, but it was also a reaction to the development of social changes including industry and migration. Murray Pittock suggests that Primitivism was “a high cultural codification of orally based folk culture, which was beginning to suffer large-scale attrition.”² Macpherson provided a wild, savage epic, featuring bards and heroes set in a world that was expressed by and inhabited by common people rather than genteel society—peasants, rather than refined aristocracy.³ Yet this wildness was balanced by the civility of its poetic setting. Robert Welch gives an apt description of the work:

Macpherson concocted a fabulous Gaeldom for the Gothic sensibilities of Augustanism.⁴ He supposedly translated the poems of Ossian, which, he held, constituted a great northern heroic epic, the shards of which were only to found in the semi-delirious chantings of the Highland peasantry; and only to be understood by such as he, versed in the obscurities of this rude and unlettered speech. But this speech, neglected and despised as it was, held recollections of a savage nobility, of a world in which heroism and poetry went together; and one in which sensibility and bravery did not cancel each other out.⁵

This work, though largely fraudulent, met a desire for the intrigue of Celtic antiquity with poetry and it impacted English perception of their “Celtic” colonies. The “recollections of a savage nobility” that had been cast for centuries as barbaric, was now romanticized. Pittock argues the point that:

Primitivism’s commitment to the past was thus both profound and vacuous, for the past it praised was dehistoricized. Celts were no longer unwanted aliens, with manners, mores and language barely reconcilable to British civic society; they were now permitted to be the picturesque representations of both the heroic bedrock and finer feelings of that society.⁶

Macpherson, attempting to bridge two cultures, took what he claimed to be colorful Scottish legends from antiquity and clothed them in contemporary Authorized Version English. His style, coupled with Gray's *Bard*, influenced the style of writers such as Walker and Charlotte Brooke, combining primitivism with scholarship and refinement.

Despite the deception, this was the first appearance of supposed verse translation from Gaelic to English. The translations, the subject matter, and especially the controversy, put such work in public view. The growing interest in Celtic antiquity began in earnest with not only scholars attempting to prove or disprove the work, but also the general public becoming enamored of it.

When the authenticity of Macpherson's *Fragments* was questioned, Charles O'Connor, Henry Brooke, J. C. Walker, and Sylvester O'Halloran were major voices that spoke up in outrage. Though the poetry was suspect, there were few as qualified in Gaelic literature as these were. They believed Macpherson appropriated Irish myths as the basis for his work, especially since he was unable to produce the original manuscripts. O'Connor added an appendix to his *Dissertations* addressing Macpherson.⁷ Though Walker spoke up against him later, he was ambiguous about Macpherson in his *Memoirs*, and quoted him several times.

Brooke's *Reliques* was shaped by the fact that Macpherson could not produce original manuscripts to authenticate his poetry. Although she made no mention of Macpherson in the work, she included original text alongside her translations. It was O'Halloran's anonymous article in the *Dublin Magazine*, censoring Macpherson that

brought notice to the Irishman as a patriotic scholar and valuable voice championing the national honor.⁸

The article, “The Poems of Ossine, the son of Fionne Mac Comhal, re-claimed,” [1763] was written under the pseudonym, Miso-Dolos, to, according to Leerssen, defend Ireland’s national honor from “Macpherson’s kidnap of Oisi’n”.⁹ O’Halloran stressed that a nation’s esteem is found in the superiority of their “arts and arms”, identifying characteristics of a nation to be guarded. When discussing *Reliques*, we will see how important language and antiquity are in establishing a national identity. According to Breatnach, Macpherson was not merely appropriating literature, but stealing Ireland’s cultural identity, attempting, in Breatnach’s words, to create a literary hegemony over Ireland.¹⁰ O’Halloran, who imagined a chivalrous antiquity, moved in to rescue Ireland’s identity not from the English as previous writers did, but now from the Scots.

The first paragraph of the article, a portion of which is quoted in Brooke’s *Reliques*, is worth quoting in full:

The esteem which mankind conceives of nations in general, is always in proportion to the figure they have made in arts and arms.¹¹ It is on this account that all civilized countries are eager to display their heroes, legislators, poets, and philosophers; and with justice, since every individual participates of the glory of their illustrious countrymen. Never was nation blessed with a more numerous race of heroes, lawgivers, poets, and philosophers, than Ireland; and though the records of the country should be for ever [sic] lost, yet the testimonies of the greatest men in Europe will for ever [sic] secure them this glory. Scotland, which has for some ages figured in arms as well as arts, jealous of the glory of their neighbours, has endeavoured, under the name of Scotia, which Ireland retained in the middle ages, to arrogate to itself many illustrious Irish philosophers, &c. but their vanity has been justly exposed by several writers, particularly our great primate Usher, who, though not of Irish descent, yet thought the glory of his country worth contending for. But of all the instances of Caledonian plagiary, the lately published poem of FINGAL is the highest.¹²

The works of O'Connor and O'Halloran accusing Macpherson were so impressive that the Select Committee,¹³ made up of elites with the express purpose to "inquire into the antient state of arts and literature, and into the other antiquities or Ireland", invited three Catholics to be a part of the committee—Charles O'Connor, Carpenter, the archbishop of Dublin, and Sylvester O'Halloran.¹⁴

In 1772, the year the Select Committee was formed, O'Halloran published *A General History of Ireland*, (1772),¹⁵ which played a role in offering the Anglo-Irish identity with Gaelic culture.¹⁶ When the Anglo-Irish began identifying with the Gaelic past rather than their English roots, the term "Gaelic" was replaced with "Irish", which was a more comprehensive term, imagining Gaelic and Anglo-Irish as one culture. Leerssen describes the Protestant discourse and use of vocabulary in defining their identity:

It had become customary, by 1800, to speak of Ireland in the first person and of Britain in the third person, even when members of the Protestant elite were discussing history and antiquities; a category "Irish" and a name like "Erin" came into circulation which encompassed all inhabitants of Ireland and subsumed them under a historical heritage of ultimately Gaelic origin.¹⁷

Although O'Halloran was Catholic, Leerssen suggests that he wrote from an Irish perspective rather than a Gaelic or Catholic one, emphasizing a pre-Norman history.¹⁸ He describes this "middle ground" and the cohesive effect it had on the ethnic and religious divisions in Ireland:

A national self-image of sorts [that] slowly developed from earlier ethnic divisions, would not have been possible except for the presence of intermediate or hybrid groups: the Hiberno-Norman noblemen in the middle ages, the Old English in the Tudor period, the Anglo-Irish in the eighteenth century. It is this middle ground that seems to have obfuscated consistently the neatness of the original 'us vs. them' divisions; and it is, remarkably enough, on the middle ground, and among the 'middle nation',

as the Anglo-Irish became known, that opposing and interacting images could become the basis of a national, and eventually a nationalistic, idea of Irishness.¹⁹

It was the Anglo-Irish search for identity, coupled with the Catholic knowledge of manuscripts and antiquity that created a national identity for all Irish. This identity was imagined in literature before it “gained political currency” in the next few decades.²⁰

Central to this scholarship was O’Halloran, one of the foremost Irish scholars. He was Catholic, and learned Gaelic from Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill,²¹ a well-known Munster poet. His *History* was well-received and provided source material for the next generation of scholars. O’Halloran was mentored by Charles O’Conor. Joep Leerssen describes O’Halloran as being in the forefront of the generation mentored by nationalistic antiquarians like O’Conor. This generation of antiquarians was ‘overtly national in their motivation’.²²

As an Anglo-Irish writer, Henry Brooke shared interest in Irish cultural history and planned to publish his own history of Ireland. In 1744, he submitted a prospectus for a history that was never published: *The History of Ireland from the earliest Times; wherein are set forth the ancient and extraordinary Customs, Manners, Religion, Politics, Conquests and Revolutions of that once hospitable, polite, and martial Nation; interspersed and illustrated with traditionary Digressions, and the private and affecting Histories of the most celebrated of the Natives.*²³ Thunten stresses that “his aim was clearly literary appeal rather than historical accuracy.”²⁴ The prospectus stated Henry’s intentions to emphasize the bard’s role as poet above that of historian since their poetry “inspired patriotic youth to arms.”²⁵ He planned to include bardic literature regardless of its basis in historical fact, for its literary value. He also declared that he would exclude “many things, which, though true in fact, are tedious.”²⁶

Henry was to base the history on manuscripts acquired by his cousin Robert Digby who borrowed the manuscripts from Charles O'Connor and was supposed to return them.²⁷ When controversy ensued, Henry abandoned the project.²⁸ For Henry, as other writers of history, this was to be a patriotic endeavor. He had already written some political works of varying length. Seymour characterized Henry as a man loyal to his country, exhibiting "patriotism to excess".²⁹ The editor of *Biographia Dramatica* stated, "Through the whole of Mr. Brooke's writings there breathes a strong spirit of liberty, and patriotic zeal."³⁰ Though some of his writings were considered to be anti-Catholic, his daughter Charlotte later stated that he only believed that it was through the persecution of the English that they had been made disloyal.³¹ In any event, by 1760 he was united with Charles O'Connor in the Catholic Committee.

In his commitment to Catholic Emancipation, O'Connor was aware that a Protestant voice carried more weight than a Catholic one. O'Connor had even gone so far as to write anonymous pamphlets posing as a Protestant. Henry Brooke provided the voice he needed: a highly recognized, popular Protestant. Brooke's work *Tryals of Catholics* reframed the Battle of the Boyne and asserted Catholic's trustworthiness.³² Both struggling to create an Irish identity to promote home rule, Catholics and Protestants worked together—though within an Ascendancy context.³³ The Anglo-Irish literature appearing during the following decades helped to exalt Irish culture.

A century later, with Irish culture defined, Catholics would resent the appropriation of their culture by the Anglo-Irish, and would reenter the cultural discourse with a voice strengthened by that same literature.

JOSEPH COOPER WALKER AND
MEMOIRS OF THE IRISH BARD (1786)

In 1786, Joseph Walker published a two-volume set of *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*.³⁴ Walker, a young Anglo-Irish antiquarian, collaborated with his mentor Charles O'Connor to provide an extensive record of the Irish bard from antiquity forward. O'Connor was a noted historian, founder of the Catholic Committee and gentry of Old Irish stock. Though considered the definitive source for Irish bardic history at the time, evidences from English and Welsh history are used in the creation of the Irish bard. This was not a Celtic bard, but an Irish Bard.

Historical Memoirs was the first work highlighting Irish music and contained the first biographical sketch about Carolan, along with a few of his poems and songs. Leith Davis claims, "The burden of Walker's *Historical Memoirs* is to show the Irish bards as suitable subjects of history."³⁵ The significance of Walker's is that it established the Irish bard as a valuable cultural figure and simultaneously established Carolan's position as an embodiment of the bardic symbol of both the Irish past and the cosmopolitan present.

Although Alice Hufstader states that the work is "marred by exaggerated romanticism and by sentimental tributes to the 'wildness' and 'sweetness' of Irish music,"³⁶ this work is an in-depth, albeit romanticized, view of the Irish bard.

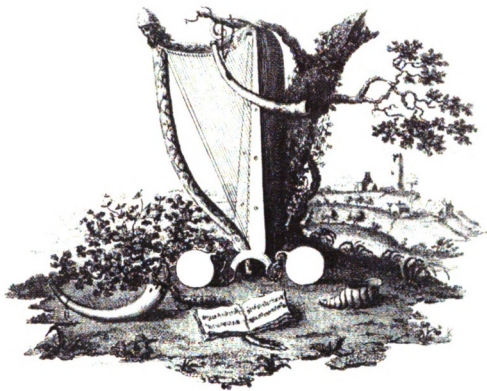
Walker wanted these *Memoirs* to provide a contemporary connection with the historic past. Mary Helen Thuente notes this connection in the "Select Irish Melodies" section, where Walker included several popular Irish tunes.³⁷ She explains that by printing Arthur Dawson's "famous early eighteenth-century English lyrics for Carolan's 'Bumper Squire Jones,'" (Figure 3.1) Walker "thus underscored the contemporary literary potential of the Irish song tradition."³⁸

Walker's work was aesthetically beautiful, calculated to capture the sensibility of the reader, containing lively prose, poetry, songs, and various engravings. The first page of the work shows an image full of national symbolism.³⁹ (Figure 3.2) James Christie expanded this work after Walker's death. The edition he published in 1818 is the most used. He added woodcuts of different stages in bardic history.⁴⁰ (Figure 3.3)

In addition to the beautiful woodcuts, the visual representation of the Irish language is reinforced by including a Gaelic typeset Christie designed in 1815.⁴¹ The first edition used Roman characters to transliterate the Gaelic. A comparison of the two is found in Figures 3.4 and 3.5. The use of a Gaelic typeface is addressed in the next chapter about Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques*. Christie emulated Charlotte Brooke's commitment to fidelity to the language. The visual representation of the Gaelic language in its own typeface confirmed the uniqueness and "otherness" of the Irish language—a cornerstone upon which Irish culture was built.



Figure 3.1. Melody to Carolan's "Bumper Squire Jones," using Christie's Gaelic typeface, from Joseph Cooper Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (Dublin: J. Christie, 1818).



HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF THE IRISH BARDS, &c.

I. "THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH BARDS, (says a celebrated Writer) IS PERHAPS OF ALL OTHERS THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY." (a) The following MEMOIRS will, we trust, both illustrate and establish this position.

Figure 3.2 Image on the first page of Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bard* (1786). Reproduced in facsimile form at Harvard University Library.



Figure 3.3 Image of Irish Bard from Joseph Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bard*, (1818) Christie, ed. Reproduced from the original.

GRACEY NUGENT, &c. (u)

I.

IS mian liom tràcht ar bhlaith na Finne,
Gracey an Ainneir is sùgaidhe;
'S gurab i rug bàrr, a ccaill 'sà Huigsi,
Air mhnaibh breadh glìce na Ccuigeadh.
Cia bè bhliadh na h'aice, d'Oidhche 'sdo Lò,
Nì baoghal do athtuirfe chòidhche, 'na bròn;
Aig an Rìogan l'fèimh is aoibhne meìn,
Sì leùl na ccræbh 'sna ffaìnlìghe.

(u) From this song the Reader may form some judgment of our blind Poet's idea of beauty.

Figure 3.4 Carolan's "Gracey Nugent." Walker's 1786 edition,
Appendix, 76-77: Gaelic language transliterated into Roman type.

GRACEY NUGENT.*

I.

Uir mian leam tràcht air bhlaith na Finne,
Gracey an Ainneir is sùgaidhe;
'S gurab i rug bàrr, a ccaill 'sà Huigsi,
Air mhnaibh breadh glìce na ccuigeadh.
Cia be bliadh na h'aice d'aoisiche, 'sdo lò,
Nì baoghal do athtuirfe aoisiche, no bròn;
Aig an rìogan l'fèimh is aoibhne meìn,
Sì cùl na ccræbh 'sna bfaìnlìghe.

Figure 3.5 Gracey Nugent. Walker 1818 edition, Gaelic language in Gaelic
type commissioned by James Christie.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOSEPH COOPER WALKER (1761-1810)

Walker was 24 years old when he published *Memoirs*. He was a wealthy Protestant, interested in Irish antiquity and Italian art.⁴² He worked as a treasury clerk at Dublin Castle,⁴³ where he had access to people and documentation useful for his research.

Memoirs was written for both old Irish and Anglo-Irish. The collaboration between Walker and O'Connor in this work answered both the Catholic need for Protestant support in presenting an Irish identity independent from the English, and to the Anglo-Irish who were searching for a nationalistic identity themselves.⁴⁴

Charles O'Connor was a Catholic activist⁴⁵ who wrote political pamphlets in the voice of a Protestant. He was a scholar of Irish history, specifically Gaelic history. His father, Denis O'Connor, was one of Carolan's patrons. Carolan stayed at the O'Connor estate⁴⁶ performing for the family and instructing Charles and his brother on the harp. It is Charles O'Connor who provided the bulk of the primary source material for Walker's biography of Carolan. The other source was Mrs. Mulvey, Carolan's granddaughter. Walker also gleaned stories and legends from those in Connaught, Carolan's district.

Walker built on the Irish discourse begun by Keating and continued by O'Connor in his *Dissertations on the History of Ireland* (1755). O'Connor expanded on Keating's goal to present positive views of Ireland in contrast with negative English ones. The influence of O'Connor's *Dissertations* is felt in Walker's *Memoirs*, e.g. Walker challenged Cambrensis by establishing the "civility" of the Irish, based primarily on the existence of the bard and his high position. Walker cried, "Can that nation be deemed barbarous, in which learning shared the honours next to royalty? Warlike as the Irish were in those

days, even arms were less respected amongst them than letter.—Read this, ye polished nations of the earth, and blush!”⁴⁷

Walker assumed the universal acceptance of musical skill, using it to create a foundation for positive identity construction. Walker was filling a gap left by English music historians, who either ignored or criticized Ireland’s musical achievements.

Two prominent English music historians, Dr. Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins’s, published works in 1776. Burney’s *General History of Music, From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* was four-volumes; Hawkins’s *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* comprised five. These works of “general” music history were substantial; yet spoke little of Irish music.⁴⁸ James Hardiman, in his *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831), addressed the tendency of English writers to slight Ireland: “It was customary to appropriate without acknowledgement, and unfashionable even to notice us, except either to censure or condemn.”⁴⁹ He specifically pointed to Burney’s slighting Ireland quoting an anonymous author who “severely, but justly censured Doctor Burney: ‘Doctor Burney has been extensive in his research, and elaborate in his detail of the anecdotes of music, as to dilate his history of them into several thousand quarto pages! Is it from the want of candour, or can it be from the want of information, that he has taken little or no notice of Irish music?’” Hardiman is incredulous that Burney would attribute the first song to be set in score to England, when it was Ireland’s *Samhre teacht*, or “Summer is coming”, collected by Edward Bunting at the Belfast Meeting in 1792.

Leith Davis points out Hawkins’s account of the origin of the triangular harp. He admitted that Vincenti Galilei attributed the invention to the Irish, but dispelled it with this statement: “there is some ground to suppose that it was first constructed by those

who were confessedly the most expert in the use of it, the ancient British bards.”⁵⁰

Walker’s work was to affirm Ireland’s historical supremacy, and though the Irish remained a colony, they were able to assert their cultural authority.

Memoirs also provided a context for the Anglo-Irish to assume identity within an Irish Gaelic tradition. Joep Leerssen explains the confusion of Anglo-Irish searching for a nation. They were caught between the English and the Gaelic. He asks, “What was the past, the ‘national’ past, to which [they] were to look? Alfred the Great or Brian Boru?”⁵¹ He also states that there was an “implicit notion that Ireland was fundamentally a Gaelic country, that the true Ireland looked back to a Gaelic past.”⁵² This left the Anglo-Irish between two cultures.

Because of their lack of attachment to England, for the Anglo-Irish to assume an identity in Ireland, they were compelled to adopt “Irishness,” in whatever way they could. Esther Wohlgenut, suggests that, “Foreignness...is not a matter of being outside native ground, but of having no local attachment to any ground, a constant condition of displacement.”⁵³ By the 1780s, antiquarian and literary interests were a common place for Anglo-Irish elites, like Walker, to connect to “true Irishness,”⁵⁴ while mediating between English and Gaelic cultures. Leerssen acknowledges the importance of Gaelic history to Anglo-Irish identity: “The adoption and central canonization of a Gaelic cultural affiliation and a Gaelic-oriented historical self-awareness had been a slow and complex process...[that] was to remain central to the Anglo-Irish sense of national identity henceforth.”⁵⁵

Combined with this “Gaelic-oriented” self-awareness, Walker not only constructed Irish identity in this work, he grappled with Ireland’s relationship with

England. Davis points out the ambivalence seen in Walker's construct of the Irish bard, using English, as well as Welsh and Scottish references, carries over into his interpretation of England's conquest of Ireland. She notes the lengthy passage quoted from Charles O'Connor bemoaning the Irish condition:

Oh the condition of our dear Countrymen! How languid their joys! How pressing their sorrows!...Are we not prisoners of the *Saxon* nation? The captives of remorseless tyranny? Is not our sentence therefore pronounced, and our destruction inevitable? Frightful, grinding thought! Power exchanged for servitude; beauty for deformity; the exaltations of liberty for the pangs of slavery—a great and brave people, for a servile desponding race. How came this transformation?...In truth, our miseries were predicted a long time, in the change these strangers wrought in the face of our country. They have hemmed in our sporting lawns, the former theatres of glory and virtue. They have wounded the earth, and they have disfigured with towers and ramparts those fair fields which Nature bestowed for the support of God's animal creation—that Nature which we see defrauded, and whose laws are so wantonly counteracted, that this late free Ireland is metamorphosed into a second Saxony. The slaves of Ireland no longer recognise [sic] their common Mother—she equally disowns us for her children—we both have lost our forms—and what do we see, but insulting *Saxon* native, and native Irish aliens?⁵⁶

Yet as Davis points out, Walker contradicts himself as he moves his sympathies from the native Irish to advancements affected by English influence. She writes, “Walker’s description of the effect of English dominance moves into lurching contradictions when he details the effects of the destructions of the bardic order as ‘English Customs and Manners’ were universally adopted.” And again, when he commented on the “positive effects of English domination: ‘Agriculture was introduced, and the face of the Country began to smile.’ In a similar vein, the Hanoverian succession is described as having a detrimental effect on Irish music and Irish society but also bringing peace to the nation and encouraging a return of swords to their scabbards.”⁵⁷

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF THE IRISH BARD (1786)

“THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH BARDS is perhaps
of all others the most extraordinary.”

—Dr. John Brown

Walker opened *Historical Memoirs* with this epigram from Dr. Brown’s well known dissertation on music and poetry.⁵⁸ For the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish, there was a political quest to define Irishness. The bard, his harp, and the Gaelic language became prominent symbols of Irishness and Irish nationalism, and Walker’s work presented all three.

Walker characterized the ancient bards and their music, yet he needed a near contemporary embodiment to stand as a cultural hero. Although there were other harpers discussed from that period, it was Turlough O’Carolan who rose to prominence, probably because of the number and popularity of his compositions. Walker wrote a shorter chapter containing the memoirs of Cormac Common, another eighteenth-century harper.⁵⁹ Stafford believes Walker measured Common’s stature “in terms of his ability both to recite Ossianic tales and to play O’Carolan airs, with the latter proving a more reliable test of authenticity.”⁶⁰ Mary Helen Thuente believes the inclusion of relatively recent harpers and their poems, suggested a “living literary tradition in Irish.”⁶¹

Walker’s chapter on Carolan stood in contrast to Goldsmith’s more atmospheric and popularized account of Carolan. Walker constructed a particular image of Carolan, an Irish identity that reached back in history to the ancient Irish Bard, an entity that could touch and resonate with the Irishness in the reader. Because Carolan was no longer alive, a “memory” could be constructed that would not be challenged by his person.⁶² Walker related stories about Carolan that portrayed him as both a mythic symbol of high regard,

and as one who related well to the common man. He stated that he chose accounts of Carolan from some of his contemporaries who were still living, because the accounts most interesting are the ones that are quickly forgotten and that “are rarely transmitted by tradition.”⁶³

Memoirs has the goal of constructing an *Irish* bard, separate and apart from other nations. In it, Walker not only “forgot” the past, he ignored or reinterpreted elements in the past and present that conflicted with his image of the Irish bard. He cast the bard simultaneously as an elite, venerated figure; a primitive, natural figure; and a refined figure who maintained eighteenth-century civility yet was accessible to the reader. Walker, like Goldsmith, presented the bard as representative of the old Gaelic order cosmopolitan enough to appeal to both Irish and English audiences.

During the twenty-five years between Goldsmith and Walker’s works, the antiquarian interest in the Irish rose. Ireland experienced a self-consciousness requiring negotiation of identity; not only their individual identity as a nation, but their identity in the broader context of European nations as well. Ireland was awakening to a sense of separateness among the European nations as its own entity rather than merely a colony of England.

Walker played a significant role in negotiating Irish identity. His *Memoirs* provided Ireland with its own bardic symbol: the ancient bard—and the embodiment of that symbol in Turlough O’Carolan. These symbols, constructed simultaneously, were used to reinforce each other. The antiquity of the bardic symbol, when connected to Carolan, gave him status in the bardic lineage; his popularity with the people gave weight to the bardic image.

In writing history, the problem—and advantage—of memories is that they are malleable. Walker “borrowed” memories of the English, Scottish and Welsh bards to substantiate the Irish. He made presumptions about the Irish bards by using others’ histories. It is not necessary to establish Walker’s text as historically accurate; the interest lies in the fact that he was willing to borrow history from even the English in his attempt to separate from them.

Historical Memoirs was a politically motivated work. Walker sought to legitimize Irish culture by its colorful history revolving around the ancient Irish bard. To construct Carolan’s identity, Walker used three main techniques: first, to establish Carolan’s universal acceptance as a musician and Bard; second, to authenticate Carolan by connecting him to the historical “ancient” Irish Bard, already established in the body of the work; and third, to venerate him by linking him with ancient Greek mythology and literature.

The trend at the time was to present materials as “scientific”, yet Walker also wanted to appeal to the masses; especially, the Anglo-Irish. For Penal law reform to take place, it was necessary to have the support of Anglo-Irish Protestants. In this attempt, memories were presented in garrulous poetic style, with enough “scientific” evidence to satisfy the mind, yet appeal artistically and emotionally to the general public.⁶⁴

O’Sullivan, a twentieth-century Irish scholar, reviewed Walker in his *Life Times* work about Carolan. While grateful, he nevertheless remarked:

Unfortunately, his style is execrable. He seems incapable of stating a plain thing in a plain way; and his comparatively short essay, instead of being confined to the geographical material at his disposal, is liberally interlarded with quotations from (amongst others) Dante, Dryden, Homer, Horace, Johnson, Milton, Pope, Rousseau and Voltaire: so that at times one wonders

what his subject is. Still,...he has discovered to us a good deal of material which otherwise would have been lost.⁶⁵

Though Walker's work may be effusive it is a valuable reference since a few of its anecdotes are not recorded elsewhere.⁶⁶ While many authors compiled general histories of Ireland, Walker focused on the bardic tradition. Walker was an antiquarian,⁶⁷ who preserved the Bardic image through literature.

There were several factors that may have influenced Walker to pursue this topic. One may have been the emerging antiquarian interest in recording historical accounts of culture. The antiquarian societies, one of which claimed Walker as a member,⁶⁸ were meeting places for the elite to negotiate cultural identity. There were a great number of Protestant elite who were involved in antiquarian pursuits. Catholics, such as Charles O'Connor, hoped the inclusion of Protestants in this area could help redefine the culture in terms that could bring legitimacy, home rule, and Catholic reform.

Another of Walker's influences may have been the growing interest of Europeans in "exotic" music. Although the harpers' tradition was the art music in Ireland, in a world deeming only the West to have culture, it was not Western art music; thus considered exotic.⁶⁹ That interest was capitalized on by the elite. Handler describes a national interest in projecting one's group as an "exotic other", revealing the "ethnic" nation and cohesive ethnicity among the group.⁷⁰ Irish music became that "exotic other" attractive to those outside its borders.⁷¹ Although *Historical Memoirs* promotes the uniqueness of the Irish bard, it reflects some conflicting perceptions about him. The bard, an elite, in service to the elites, is now given access to all classes. He inhabited an honored position, yet his "natural" and "untutored" nature identified with lower classes. Another influence from the continent may have been the cultural ideology of primitivism.

Walker's *Memoirs* was written on the heels of Rousseau's "noble savage", and "romantic naturalism." Edna Steeves defines "romantic naturalism" as:

the belief in the beneficent influence of nature upon the sensitive soul; the belief, perennially popular, in simple, passionate, and unconventional love, unsanctioned by civilized institutions; the belief in the religion of nature; and the belief in the superiority of primitive poetry."⁷²

The untutored, and ancient bard was part of this romanticized mindset.⁷³

Walker's sources⁷⁴ presented the bard as being one schooled deep in the oak forest, learning by candlelight and lanterns,⁷⁵ connecting him to nature. It was the bards who composed most of the "primitive poetry" being examined at that time. Yet, along with the primitive, they were characterized as well educated in literary subjects, science, and the arts. Walker stated,

It was in those seminaries, that the Druids instilled into the minds of the Bards, the rudiments of history, oratory and laws, through the medium of poetry, in which was wrapped all the knowledge of those ages. 'Their laws, their systems of physic, and other sciences,' says Keating, 'were poetical compositions, and set to music, which was always esteemed the most polite part of learning amongst them.'⁷⁶

The Bardic image of flowing robes and sage counsel were viewed as unconventional and superior to institutionalized civilization. Walker's presentation of the civil, if not civilized, moral sages contested Spencer's description in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Walker quoted Spencer's description of the unruly, corrupt nature of the image he presented:

For the most part so far from instructing young men in moral discipline, that they themselves do more deserve to be sharply disciplined: for they seldom use to choose unto themselves the doings of good men for the arguments of their poems; but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doings, most dangerous and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition; him they set up and glorified in their Rithmes, him they praise to the people, and to young men make an example to follow.⁷⁷

Walker attempted to dispel the negative English stereotype of the Irish. He presented in the skill and moral character of the bards “an ideal nation: civilized, yet strong, and most importantly, independent.”⁷⁸ Although Walker presented this material as historically accurate, it adhered closely to romantic naturalism. Others who characterized the Bard in this way were Shakespeare and Gray.⁷⁹ Walker presented one image of the bard as being attached to a tribal chieftain, leading and overseeing the men in battle; venerated and viewed as mystical and in possession of magical, supernatural powers. Here, Walker laid the groundwork for future authors to build on. Walker built on the bardic image set by Keating, Derrick,⁸⁰ and others of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, elevating the bard to be a national figure. The bard is also seen to have inhabited one image, continuous from pagan times, through the Christian era, and the eighteenth century. Consider these images: the white robed, mystical pagan, Druid Bard, presiding over ritual ceremonies, or inspiring warriors; the Christian era Catholic cleric or crusader who played the harp; the twelfth-century courtly Bard, serving one Chieftain and leading warriors to the battlefield; the seventeenth-century itinerant harper, traveling from patron to patron stopping at taverns for libations and fellowship; and the eighteenth-century harper, who struggled for a living, and in many instances hung up his harp and turned to his farm.⁸¹ These images have been linked as one continuing figure, creating a unity that transcends cleavages such as class, race, and religion. Because of the multiple meanings inherent in the image, this Bardic collage was adopted by various generations, class structures, religions, native Irish and transplanted English.

The appearance of *Historical Memoirs* coincided with the rise of Irish nationalism and rumblings of revolution. Hufstader criticizes Walker saying the work “is marred by

exaggerated nationalism and by sentimental tributes to the ‘wildness’ and ‘Sweetness’ of Irish music,”⁸² but Walker’s treatment of Irish music was for the purpose of establishing a deep-seated nationalism and tribute to Irishness.

Besides the influence of O’Conor, Walker was aided by Charlotte Brooke. She was the “anonymous” lady who translated one of Carolan’s poems, as well as other poems, from Gaelic into English.⁸³ Inspired by Walker, she published her own translations of Gaelic texts in 1789.⁸⁴

The chapter on Carolan appears in Walker’s extended appendix. As stated earlier, Walker used three primary techniques in constructing Carolan’s identity. He first established Carolan’s as a musician and Bard. Then authenticated Carolan by connecting him to the historical “ancient” Irish Bard, and finally by classicizing him in allusion to the ancient Greeks.

Walker began first by establishing Carolan’s prominence and fame, or his worthiness to become this embodied symbol. The chapter begins: “Several of the circumstances in the following Life, or rather Rhapsody, were supplied by the loquacity of common fame.” Referring to his life as a “Rhapsody” elevated him above the common man. Walker emphasized that some of the material he used was common knowledge, reaffirming Carolan’s ubiquitous popularity. Nonetheless Carolan’s stature was such that his birthplace would be visited “at a future day, with as much true devotion, by the lovers of natural music as Stratford-upon Avon and Binfield are, by the admirers of Shakespeare and of Pope.”⁸⁵ As support, Walker quoted from a 1784 publication calling for a concert to be held at the Rotunda in Carolan’s honor.⁸⁶ It is interesting that this article also contains the primitive/cosmopolitan concept of Carolan, comparing him

to Handel, despite an earlier characterization as an “untaught phenomenon in the cultivation of harmony”:

...Pope calls Ireland the mother of sweet singers. Carolan, though a modern minstrel, has been admired as a first-rate musical genius—an untaught phenomenon in the cultivation of harmony. Why not commemorate Carolan here, as well as Handel on the other side of the water? His music is in every body’s hands, and in the highest degree popular; therefore a selection of his best pieces might be brought forward, and performed in the Rotunda for the relief of the manufacturer, at which performance all the musical cognoscenti would be proud to contribute their assistance.⁸⁷

A response to this plea by Dr. Johnson’s “indignant muse”:

See nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust:⁸⁸

To which Walker rejoined, “Would my countrymen wish to escape the application of this severe censure on ungrateful nations, they must make haste to do justice to the memory of Turlough O’Carolan.”⁸⁹

These quotes assert the general acceptance of Carolan as a great musician, his music loved by all. Though Walker called the readers to set Carolan apart as worthy of praise and honor. He was either unaware of or decided to “forget” that Carolan was not appreciated by all. In eighteenth-century Connacht, his music was considered too modern:

Most of the modern manuscripts of Connacht and Meath, in which O’Carolan’s pieces may have been preserved, are lost or scattered to the four winds of heaven, and the people into whose hands [Carolan’s manuscripts] ha[ve] fallen...in procuring the remnant of them are so apathetic about them because they are modern, that I doubt if they would pick them up out of the street if they lay at their feet.⁹⁰

Not only was Carolan dismissed by some in his district, Denis Hempson, the oldest harper at the Festival in 1792, disregarded Carolan’s music as too modern and

uncharacteristic of the harpers' tradition, though he, himself was largely disregarded as old fashioned.⁹¹

In addition, Walker sought to affirm Carolan's authenticity⁹² by linking him with the ancient Irish Bard. He quoted: "'Carolan,' says Mr. Ritson, 'seems, from the description we have of him, to be a *genuine* representative of the ancient Bard.'"⁹³

Others denied the antiquity of Carolan's roots. Many considered him contemporary and bordering on cosmopolitan. The description in the 1784 quote above of "an untaught phenomenon in the cultivation of harmony"⁹⁴ placed him in the realm of untutored bard, consistent with the ideology promoted in romantic naturalism. While Carolan was "untaught" in Baroque Music, he went through a rigorous apprenticeship with a master harper and Mrs. MacDermott-Roe made provisions for his general education. Despite the romantic notions of "natural" ability, bards were highly skilled either through apprenticeships or through bardic schools.⁹⁵

Walker, in an attempt to link Carolan with the mystical qualities of the ancient Bardic past, related this story: A woman, aware of Carolan's skill in composing tributes, requested Carolan to compose an air for her daughter. After numerous attempts, Carolan was uncharacteristically unable to fulfill the request. He told the mother that his inability was due to his conviction that her daughter, Miss Brett, would not live through the year. This "prophecy" came to pass.⁹⁶ While Walker denied insinuating that Carolan was "endowed with the gift of prophecy", he encouraged skeptics to realize that others have also looked into the "womb of time" in such a manner,⁹⁷ illustrating his duality.

Walker's reference to Carolan as "the Irish Orpheus"⁹⁸ and associating him with Homer reveal his attempts to classicize him. In most areas Walker addressed, he used

some classical allusion. While establishing Carolan's broad acceptance in the homes of both the Irish and the English elites, Walker stated, "Wherever he goes, the gates of the nobility and gentry are thrown open to him. Like the Demodocus of Homer, he is received with respect, and a distinguished place assigned him at the table."⁹⁹ In discussing Carolan's affection for Brigid Cruise, he quoted, "His harp now, like the lute of Anacreon, would only sound of love."¹⁰⁰ He continued by comparing the two to Apollo and the nymph.¹⁰¹ When he addressed Carolan's fondness of whiskey, Walker again called on Homer: "And the goblet always 'flows with wines unmixt' for Demodocus, in whose person Homer represents himself, before he tunes his 'vocal lay.'"¹⁰² Carolan had been said to gain inspiration from his whiskey, as Father Ennius in the following quote:¹⁰³

When Homer sings the joys of wine, 'tis plain,
Great Homer was not of a sober strain;
And Father Ennius, 'till with drinking fir'd,
Was never to the martial song inspir'd.¹⁰⁴

Carolan's drinking habits have been addressed in numerous articles—presenting vastly contrasting views.¹⁰⁵ Leith Davis, in her book *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender*, addresses the role gender plays in Irish identity. Drinking and fighting are masculine expressions of Irishness.¹⁰⁶ Walker struggled to unify two polar views: one, that Carolan, as an upright moral man, devoted to his God and church,¹⁰⁷ was a moderate drinker (reinforcing eighteenth-century civility); and two, that Carolan had a fondness for Irish whiskey that only the most Irish of Irishmen could have—his creativity as an Irish Bard depending on it. Walker, like O'Connor, strove to present the "masculine nature of the sensibility associated with Irish music," a civility of sorts; yet "avoid[s] an association of a male community with barbarism."¹⁰⁸

Walker clearly stated that Carolan's drinking was a "vice of habit" and not to be excused, then quickly added, "But let me say something in extenuation. He seldom drank to excess: besides, he seemed to think, nay, was convinced from experience, that the spirit of whiskey was grateful to his Muse, and for that reason generally offered it when he intended to invoke her."¹⁰⁹ Walker continued to justify him by placing him in the company of other poets who could not "shine" in their poetry without drink for "illumination", linking "drink" to creativity: "Nor was Carolan the only Bard who drew inspiration from the bottle: there have been several planets in the poetical hemisphere, that seldom shone, but when illumined by the rays of rosy wine."¹¹⁰

To reinforce the drink's effect on his creativity, Walker relayed the anecdote of Carolan's physician Dr. Stafford after prescribing a cessation of whiskey for health concerns.¹¹¹ Walker described Carolan as melancholy and unproductive, "—every moment was marked with a defection of spirits, approaching to the deepest melancholy;—and his harp, his favourite harp, lay in some obscure corner of his habitation, neglected and unstrung," until after a six-week stint of abstinence, Carolan returned to his whiskey, cheered up and resumed his productive career, "...no sooner did the fumes ascend to his brain, than every latent spark within him was rekindled. His countenance glowed with an unusual brightness; and the soliloquy, which he repeated over the cup, was the effusions of a heart newly animated, and the ramblings of a genius."¹¹² So, despite Carolan's upright moral character, he was a true Irishman, evidenced by his inability to abandon his whiskey, or "Irish wine" as Pierre le Grand called it.¹¹³

The Bard, the harp, whiskey, and the Gaelic language are powerful representations of Irishness. Having established the first three, Walker presented five of Carolan's poems in Gaelic, one with English translation.¹¹⁴ Walker praised Carolan's poetry, lauding them as "brilliant effusions."¹¹⁵ Carolan grew up bilingual, speaking and writing both Gaelic and English. He wrote all but one of his songs in Gaelic;¹¹⁶ the one for Miss Fetherston, he wrote in English. Walker described it as 'humourously sentimental, but in bad English.'¹¹⁷ By downplaying his facility in English, Walker may have been reinforcing Carolan's Irishness as a Gaelic speaker. This might also be an attempt to create a parallel with Robert Burns, the Scottish poet. Though he wrote poetry in standard English, it was his poetry written in Scottish dialect that he became known for.

One last curious ambiguity is the last chapter of *Memoirs*. That chapter, finalizing a work that defines the Irish bard, is a work written in Italian about a marble statue of a bagpiper, by Signor Canonico Orazio Maccari of Cortona.¹¹⁸

In his antiquarian pursuit of both the history of Irish bards and of Carolan, Walker offered a combination of myth and legend. While an accurate historical account would be impossible, perhaps it is the history, embedded with its myths and legends that *is* the true account of Carolan's story.

CONCLUSION

By mid-eighteenth century, Anglo-Irish writers began to construct an Irish identity out of Irish history. Walker participated in the de-construction of the English caricature of Irishness in order to construct an identity that was both powerful and “other” than England. Walker reached back into the past to discover and negotiate the qualities of virtue and nobility found in ancient poetry and manuscripts that exemplified the Irish bard. He “remembered” the bard as a cultural element of a Golden Age that represented a glorious Ireland that extended into the present. The recurrence of elements such as the bard, his harp, music, poetry, whiskey, and the Gaelic language, influenced their symbolic representation of Irishness. The symbols they used to evoke images of Ireland are embodied in the literary discourse defining the identity of Ireland. Once these symbols were in place and generally accepted, the foundation was laid on which a Gaelic Revival was launched. Popular writers and antiquarians made great strides in the negotiations of Irish identity, with the Irish bard and his harp as powerful symbols of Irishness.

Both Goldsmith and Walker chose Carolan as the contemporary image of the bardic role. They constructed that image as positive, strong, and indisputably Irish. Walker brought the bard to the forefront of antiquarian studies. In the next chapter, we see that his protégé, Charlotte Brooke continued the tradition as the first female to enter the scholarly circle. Her *Reliques of Irish Poetry* redefined the masculine bardic image as characteristic of chivalry, virtue and respect for women. Carolan’s image was recast and shown in his poetry of tribute to women.

¹ James Porter, “‘Bring Me the Head of James MacPhearson’; The Execution of Ossian and the Wellsprings of Folkloristic Discourse.” *Journal of American Folklore*, 114, no. 454 (Fall 2001): 396–435. In this article, Porter recognizes the impact Macpherson had on the growth of Romanticism across Europe, i.e. Herder and Grimms in Germany and Elisas Lonnrot in Finland (397). In retrospect, and aside from the controversy of Macpherson’s authenticity, Porter believes Macpherson’s personal and political motivations as well as European interest to be significant reflections of the times.

² Murray G.H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 36.

³ Anthony D. Smith, in *Chosen People, People*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) discusses other invented “epics” used by nationalists, such as the *Kalevala* of Finland and the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and *Deutschum* of Germany, even of Greece, Egypt and Mexico. These works, challenging “polite” art, uncover a past imagined from a golden age that reveals the ‘true self’ of the people (191). By defending the downtrodden, these works serve as moral incentives needed to “mobilize and unify the people” (190).

⁴ Augustanism was an eighteenth-century style of literature based on refinement and elegance that was appropriate to a polite society. Macpherson contrasted this polite literature with a wild and savage epic that carried Gothic spontaneity in contrast to Augustanism’s rigidity and commitment to conventionality. His epic poetry presented a cast of peasantry and “savage nobility” rather than gentile aristocracy.

⁵ Robert Welch, *A History of Verse Translation From the Irish 1789–1897*. (Gerrards Cross Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Limited, 1988), 1.

⁶ Pittock, *Celtic Identity*, 37.

⁷ O’Conor, Charles (1710–1791). *Dissertations on the antient history of Ireland wherein an account is given of the origine, government, letters, sciences, religion, manners and customs, of the antient inhabitants*. Dublin: printed by James Hoey, for the editor, Mr. Mich. Reilly, 1753.

⁸ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 347.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 346.

¹⁰ R. A. Breatnach, “Two Eighteenth-Century Irish Scholars: J. C. Walker and Charlotte Brooke.” *Studia Hibernica* 5 (1965): 92. Robert Welch maintained Macpherson “argued at length for the literary and cultural ascendancy of the Scots over the Irish. This was all rubbish,” he says (*Verse Translation*, 2).

¹¹ “Arts and arms” is a reference to the opening of Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

¹² Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 346, quoted from *Dublin Magazine*, January 1763, 21–22, 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 347. Leerssen states (347) that the committee was the “brainchild” of Charles Vallancey, son of a Huguenot officer, and that the president of the committee was one of the O’Briens, a Patriot member of parliament.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Sylvester O’Halloran, *A General History of Ireland*, 1778.

¹⁶ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 33.

¹⁷ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13. In “Ethnography and Music Ideology: The Music of Werner A. Jaegerhuber” in *Vodou Nation* (186–230), Largey discusses this type of ‘middle ground’ was seen when German businessmen began marrying into Haitian elite families. Jaegerhuber was one such hybrid who had more at stake in establishing an identity in Haiti.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹ Mac Domhnaill followed a trend of incorporating English legal terms into their Gaelic poetry. Leerssen described the contrast of “homely Irish to alien, star, bureaucratic English” suggests a mockery of English “inflexible formality” and ‘the gap between justice and legal practice (*Mere Irish*, 243–4).

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- ²² Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 358.
- ²³ Brooke, "Proposals for Printing by Subscription the History of Ireland from the Earliest Times." *Anthologia Hibernica*, 1793, Vol. 2, 188-91.
- ²⁴ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 83.
- ²⁵ Brooke, "Proposals," 190.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.
- ²⁷ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 325. It was probably from these manuscripts that Charlotte obtained copies of the Carolan's songs she translated in her *Reliques*.
- ²⁸ Ashley, in *Reliques*, vi.
- ²⁹ Seymour, xii. In Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*.
- ³⁰ *Anthologia Hibernica*, 1793, Vol. 3, 80.
- ³¹ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 313-314.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 314.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 347.
- ³⁴ The most consulted work is the posthumously expanded edition completed in 1818.
- ³⁵ Davis, *Music*, 125.
- ³⁶ Hufstader, "Beethoven's 'Irishe Lieder'", 345.
- ³⁷ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 82; O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 22. Walker included in these volumes a collection of national music: 43 Irish airs, with seven melodies by Carolan. These are in the 1818 edition; the 1786 edition contained 15 melodies.
- ³⁸ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 82.
- ³⁹ Walker alludes to the Israelites hanging their harps on the trees as they were being taken into captivity by Babylon. As captives they had no heart to sing. The female harp representing Ireland is bound by ball and chain, with a round tower, relic of English occupiers, in the background.
- ⁴⁰ Hufstader, "Beethoven's 'Irishe Lieder'", 345.
- ⁴¹ Deane, *Strange Country*, 102. This typeface was also used to reprint Brooke's *Reliques* in 1816.
- ⁴² Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 81.
- ⁴³ Nicolas Carolan, "Walker, Joseph Cooper", *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 15 March 2005), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>
- ⁴⁴ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 376.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 329-30. O'Connor received a letter from Dr. Samuel Johnson, encouraging him to research Irish culture.
- ⁴⁶ The O'Connor estate is located in Clonalis. It is still in the family of the O'Connor Dons. One of the harps Carolan used to instruct the boys is preserved there.
- ⁴⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 5; 1818, 9. Also inherent in this work is the gendering of identity. "Warlike" qualities are gendered masculine and are used to balance feminine civility. In the construct of Irish identity, there is the dilemma of constructing civility at the expense of feminine gendering; or constructing a masculine image, necessary for English respect, at the expense of perpetuating ideas of barbarism. Walker navigates a delicate balance. Later, the United Irishmen neutralize some of the gendering—but mainly recast Irish identity in the masculine gender, replacing the female harp with one attributed to Brian Boru—a high king, male bard, and soldier, who died in battle.
- ⁴⁸ Davis, *Music*, 54.
- ⁴⁹ Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, vol. I, 353.
- ⁵⁰ Davis, *Music*, 54, quoted from Hawkins, *General History*, 265.
- ⁵¹ Joep Leerssen, "Anglo-Irish Patriotism and its European Context: Notes towards a Reassessment." *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*. 3, (1988): 20.
- ⁵² Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 376.

⁵³ Esther Wohlgenut, "Maria Edgeworth and the Question of National Identity", *Studies in English Literature*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Autumn 1999), 649. Maria Edgeworth was a novelist who wrote at the turn of the nineteenth century, challenging the idea of national character, espoused by such as Edmund Burke. She believed that national identity was "anchored in education...thereby open[ing] a space in which change can take place" (Ibid., 647).

⁵⁴ Roy Foster, *History*, 210. "O'Connor and his friends epitomize not only the preoccupations of the Catholic gentry and intellectuals, but also the obsession with Gaelic antiquity that would spread to Protestant society also by the 1780s" (Ibid); Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 17-26, 74-87; Davis, *Music*, 56.

⁵⁵ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 376.

⁵⁶ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 139-40. It is the bemoaning of oppression that inspires the creation of new "histories." S. P. Udayakumar describes this phenomenon in India: They argue that Hindus have been invaded and violated my Muslims, Christians, and others for centuries... This gives rise to an urgent need to replace these ignominies, traumas, and debilitating resentments with feel-good and make-believe fantasies, fables, and fabrications... creating a new, valiant Hindu history." (S. P. Udayakumar, *"Presenting" the Past: Anxious History and Ancient Future in Hindutva India*, (London: Praeger, 2005), 4.

⁵⁷ Davis, *Music*, 65.

⁵⁸ Dr. Brown, John. "A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music," (London: Printed for L. Davis and C. Reymers against Gray's-Inn, Holbourn. Printers to the Royal Society, 1763), 160. He cites it as being on page 170, but is actually on page 160.

⁵⁹ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 271-283.

⁶⁰ Stafford and Gaskill, *From Gaelic to Romantic*, 241.

⁶¹ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 82.

⁶² Two works that describe the creation of a national icon in other contexts are Whisnant's "Ancestral Feats", 344-382, 495-500; and Largey's "Recombinant Mythology" 327-353. Refer to note in Chapter 1.

⁶³ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 286.

⁶⁴ The trend was to write more poetically than rationally. Keith Stewart, "Ancient Poetry as History in the 18th Century," *Journal of History of Ideas*, 19, no. 3. (June, 1958), 335.

⁶⁵ O'Sullivan, *Life Times*, 22-3.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁷ According to Keith Stewart, the antiquarian was "no more than an enthusiast, exercising an ingeniously guided curiosity which at best resulted in mere pedantry, to be disdained, ridiculed, or in any even distinguished from the efforts of the historian, who was a gentlemanly scholar and a philosopher." He continues to add that, "It was one of the central problems of the editor or critic of ancient poetry—if he did not wish to be laughed out of polite society—to separate himself from the side of mere curiosity and associate himself with that of humane learning." There were many disparaging quotes about the role of antiquarian as opposed to historian (Stewart, *Poetry as History*, 335).

⁶⁸ Joseph Walker was a member of the Royal Irish Academy, Correspondent Fellow of the Antiquarian Society of Perth, and Honorary member of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona. (Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, title page).

⁶⁹ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 4-5. In this section, Michael Largey discusses the conflict when attempting to produce musical representations of a national culture that projects both a distinctiveness and "authenticity," yet maintains a broader appeal of to the aesthetic senses of Western listeners.

⁷⁰ Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, 19.

⁷¹ Leerson, *Mere Irish*, 377.

⁷² Edna L. Steeves, "Negritude and the Noble Savage", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Mar., 1973), 92.

⁷³ Howe, Earle Barton. *The Idealized Bard of the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Origins*. (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1927), 99.

⁷⁴ Keating, O'Halloran, Sylvester. *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland: in*

which the Assertions of Mr. Hume and Other Writers are Occasionally Considered. Dublin: Thomas Ewing in Capel-Street, 1772; and Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 9; quoted from William Beauford's (A.M. Society Antiquarian Hibernian Society) *Origin and Learning of the Druids*.

⁷⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 9.

⁷⁶ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 10-11, cites Keating, preface to the *History of Ireland*. Geoffrey Keating, *The general History of Ireland: Containing: I. A full and impartial account of the first inhabitants of that kingdom; ... I. A relation of the long and bloody wars of the Irish against the Danes, ... Collected by the learned Jeoffry Keating, ... Faithfully translated from the original Irish ... by Dermo'd O Connor*, London: printed by J. Bettenham for B. Creaque, 1723.

⁷⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 194.

⁷⁸ Davis, *Music*, 59.

⁷⁹ Howe, *Idealized Bard*, 34-8.

⁸⁰ John Derrick, *The Image of Ireland with a Discovery of Woodkarne* (1581).

⁸¹ For more information in the white robed Druidic bard see Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 10; Howe, *Idealized Bard*, 99. Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland Circa 1695*. (London: printed for Andrew Bell, 1703) ; for more information on the Christian era harper see Bunting (1809), 7-8 quoted from Fuller's *Holy War*, B.5, ch xxiii. ; for more information on the courtly bard and Brian Boru, John Derrick's *Image of Ireland*, 55-56; George Buchanan's *History of Scotland* (1581) 1722 ed., 85; for more information about the itinerant bards see Walker, O'Sullivan, and Edelstein.

⁸² Hufstader, "Beethoven's 'Irishe Lieder'," 345.

⁸³ She contributed other translations to this work as well. Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 82.

⁸⁴ Charlotte Brooke, encouraged by Walker, published *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789) by Charlotte Brooke, and *A memoir of Miss Brooke* (1816), by Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour. Facsimilie reproductions with an introduction. by Leonard R. N. Ashley, (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970), a volume of poetry translated from Gaelic into English. This work was published decades before the Irish revivalists began the same tasks. (Hufstader, 345) Because Brooke exhibited exceptional skill in her work, she was accepted into the male domain as a credible scholar. It is interesting to note, though, that "A Memoir of Miss Brooke," supplied by Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour (1816), casts her in a domestic role, contrary to the nature of the scholarship she had done.

⁸⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 287. Carolan's birth site is an unmarked hillside outside of Nobber. I was taken there by an Irish harper from the area.

⁸⁶ A concert in Carolan's memory was indeed held twice in one week at the Rotunda in 1809. Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, lxviii. A pamphlet of the event can be found in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin: "Irish harp Society: Syllabus of the First Commemoration of Carolan Under the Patronage of the Irish Harp Society 1809."

⁸⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 285.

⁸⁸ Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, quotes this phrase lamenting the fact that no grave stone had been placed to honor Carolan (lxviii). That was finally done in 1978.

⁸⁹ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 286.

⁹⁰ "Correspondence. In Defense of Carolan". *New Ireland Review*. Vol. VI. (Sept. /Oct. 1896), 120.

⁹¹ Bunting, 1840, 73; Yeats, *Belfast Festival*, 22; Edelstein, 80.

⁹² Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 89-91.

⁹³ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 292. cited from Mr. Ritson, *Historical Essay on National Song*, 37, ed. 1730. (emphasis mine).

⁹⁴ Ibid, 285.

⁹⁵ Maria Tymoczko, and Colin Ireland, eds. *Language and Tradition in Ireland: Continuities and Displacements*, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 104.

⁹⁶ Walker claims, "Some of our Bards were prophets too" (1786, 10).

⁹⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 306.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 303.

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- ⁹⁹ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 291.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 288. See Ode I. 1786, 69.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid, 289; 1786, 69.
- ¹⁰² Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 310.
- ¹⁰³ Father Ennius (239-169 B.C.) was a Roman poet, considered by the Romans as founder of Latin poetry.
- ¹⁰⁴ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 310, quoted from Odyssey, Book VIII. Pope's Essay on Homer.
- ¹⁰⁵ One such debate appeared in "From the Study Chair. Carolan". *New Ireland Review*. Vol. V(March 1896), 47-52, 121-2. "Correspondence. In Defense of Carolan". *New Ireland Review*. Vol. VI.(Sept. /Oct. 1896). A reply to the "Defense" by Mr. Kelly, who stressed that Carolan was a moral and upright man, claimed that Carolan did in fact drink a lot. Also, Mr. Kelly's article defending Carolan's piety. All found in the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.
- ¹⁰⁶ Davis, *Music*, 58. An interesting article relating Guinness to Irishness is the article by Brenda Murphey, "Pure Genius: Guinness Consumption and Irish Identity". *New Hibernia Review/ Iris Eireannach Nua*, 7:4 (Winter/ Geinhreahd, 2003), 50-62.
- ¹⁰⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 316-7. Walker describes Carolan's piety and involvement in composing and performing church music.
- ¹⁰⁸ Davis, *Music*, 58.
- ¹⁰⁹ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 309. Walker is probably referring to O'Connor's statement that "Carolan was seldom surprised by intoxication." (327).
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid, 309.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., 307.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 308.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 309. Perhaps, the reference to "Irish wine" is an attempt to "classicize" whiskey while retaining its masculinity. The Greeks and Romans were known for their libations as well.
- ¹¹⁴ Davis, *Music*, 83-4.
- ¹¹⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 292.
- ¹¹⁶ His English patrons would have also known Gaelic in that region.
- ¹¹⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 303.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., 1786, Appendix iv, 37-52.

CHAPTER 4

Charlotte Brooke: *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789)

Charlotte Brooke followed Goldsmith and Walker as the third Anglo-Irish Protestant writer to feature Carolan in a literary work. Brooke, Walker's protégé,¹ was the anonymous "young lady" who provided translations from Gaelic in his *Memoirs*. Encouraged by Walker, Brooke published the first anthology of Gaelic poetry and song translated into English, *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789). Breatnach suggests that these two works are complimentary: "Walker provided a historical account of Irish poetry and music, Miss Brooke supplied the examples."² Her chapter on Carolan contrasts most other accounts of Carolan. The context in which she placed Carolan redefined Irishness in terms of a masculinity characterized by chivalry and political partnership with women.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CHARLOTTE BROOKE (1740-1793)

Most of what is known about Charlotte Brooke was recorded by Aaron Crossly Seymour in the *Memoirs of Miss Brooke*, found in the back of his 1816 edition of *Reliques*.³ In keeping with the bardic tradition of genealogies, Seymour began the memoirs by providing Brooke's "pedigree" from William de la Brooke, who lived during the reign of Henry III, 1249, stating that his descendants were ennobled as "Knights, Baronets, and Barons,"⁴ echoing *Reliques*'s emphasis on Irish chivalry.

Charlotte Brooke was born in 1740, in Rantavan of County Cavan, the youngest of 22 children. Charlotte spent a considerable amount of time with her father Henry Brooke (1706-1783), who was an important figure in Anglo-Irish literature, both popular and political.⁵ By the age of five she was reading English and began writing prose and poetry at an early age. Henry Brooke's connection with great literary figures provided Charlotte with mentors who later inspired her career. Henry maintained correspondence with leading figures both in London and Ireland, providing the elite society with which Charlotte became acquainted. Literary figures such as Sylvester O'Halloran,⁶ Charles Vallancey, Thomas Percy and Joseph Walker would later encourage her career. As his constant companion, Charlotte frequented male circles from childhood.

A few highlights from Henry's career illustrate the environment and personality that shaped Charlotte's role in cultural nationalism. Long before Charlotte was born, Henry authored poetry, plays, political pieces, novels and short stories. As his works gained recognition in England, he acquired a home in London, where he socialized with other distinguished writers and patrons. His poetry attracted the praise of Alexander Pope,⁷ and the Prince of Wales became an important patron. At the time when his future

was brightest, illness forced his to return to Ireland.⁸ During the 1730s, rumors of civil war circulated as political tensions rose between King George and his son, the Prince of Wales.⁹ Though Henry determined to return to London and defend the Prince through political pamphlets, Charlotte's mother convinced him to refrain from political involvement and remain in Ireland.

Living in Ireland, Henry was never able to regain the popularity he once enjoyed in London. In fact, his play *Gustavus Vasa*¹⁰ was the first play banned after the passage of the Licensing Act of 1737. Charlotte stated that though there was nothing "exceptional" in the work to warrant the ban, the "government took offence at the spirit of liberty which it breathed."¹¹

The censorship inspired subscriptions amounting to £1000.¹² R. W. C. states that the twelve-page list of subscribers was "imposing", with notable names carrying the "force of a political demonstration."¹³ Among the subscribers were Lord Chesterfield,¹⁴ Dr. Samuel Johnson, Earl of Marchmont, and The Very Rev. Dr. Jonathon Swift.¹⁵ Dr. Johnson wrote a satirical piece on behalf of Brooke titled, *A Complete vindication of the Licensers of the Stage from the malicious and scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brooke, author of Gustavus Vasa* (1739).¹⁶ After a few alterations, the play was produced in Dublin as *The Patriot*, and was quite successful.

Charlotte experienced a broad education studying astronomy, science, mathematics, music, French and Italian. It was her translations of French and English that motivated her to become a writer.¹⁷ She also learned Gaelic from laborers on her father's estate,¹⁸ and collected Gaelic stories of Ireland.¹⁹ It was these stories from her youth that she recognized when she read the newly published *Fragments of Ancient*

Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse (1760) by James Macpherson.²⁰

When Charlotte's mother died in 1772; her father was devastated, and never fully recovered.²¹ For the next decade Charlotte cared for him as his mind and health deteriorated and aided him in writing moral and religious documents.²² He died in October 1783 and she followed ten years later.

The last decade of Charlotte's life was both difficult and rewarding. She was left in a difficult financial situation and with ailing health, yet this was when she became established in her own right: as an author and the first female scholar of Gaelic literature.

Joseph Walker, a close family friend, involved Charlotte in his *Memoirs of the Irish Bard* (1786). Her translations from Gaelic to English were invaluable.²³ Walker, twenty years her junior, encouraged her to publish her own work of Irish translations. In 1789, Brooke published *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. Although the book was well received, Charlotte made little money to relieve her financial situation.

As a result of Walker's encouragement, she applied to the Royal Irish Academy for the post of housekeeper as "the daughter of *Gustavus Vasa*—a man, who either as a friend, or a patriot, was dear to every member of your Academy."²⁴ Finding little help there, she wrote *The School for Christians* (1791), dialogues to instill virtue in children, based on instruction she received from her father. Acknowledging her father's instruction distanced her from the "presumption," as Seymour put it, "of pretending to offer *her own* wisdom—her *own* instruction to the world."²⁵ Despite her own financial need, Charlotte used proceeds from the book to establish a school to educate children of the poor.

There was one last project which Charlotte determined to complete before her death: that of editing and publishing her father's works, including memoirs of his life.²⁶ Her motive was to both honor and vindicate him. After submitting texts to a relative in London, she was shocked by an account in an English newspaper announcing a second edition of the father's works—without her endorsement. These editions were comprised of incomplete and unedited versions of his manuscripts.

Despite her failing health and finances, she managed to stop the sales of the books and buy the rights to the copies.²⁷ When Charlotte apprised her friends of the situation, a subscription was taken and the work was published. She finally completed her tribute to her father,²⁸ and the volumes were presented in 1792.

Charlotte spent her last winter in Dublin with her friends Dr. Hill and Mrs. Hamilton.²⁹ In March she returned to Cottage, her home near Longford,³⁰ where she died 29 March 1793.³¹

After her death, an unpublished play was found among her papers. It was based on Jean-François Marmontel's novel *Bélisaire* (1767), the story of Belisarius, a Byzantine general. Though Mr. Kemble approved it for the London Theatre, he later claimed it was lost. After some time, he produced his own play on the story of Belisarius.³² Though it couldn't be proven, there was speculation it was Charlotte's.

Charlotte Brooke was an author, scholar, and deeply spiritual woman, whose influence continued into the next century.

RELIQUES OF IRISH POETRY (1789)

At a time when women were relegated to writing fictional novels, Charlotte Brooke became the first woman to write a scholarly work in Ireland: *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789). With the writing of *Reliques* she presented a number of firsts: first female author of a scholarly work; first anthology of Gaelic verse translation; and first literary work printed in Dublin containing Irish characters.³³

Reliques was a massive work; it consisted of a preface by Brooke, a long list of subscribers, including many of the wealthy in Belfast,³⁴ then 18 translations of four types of verse: Heroic Poems, Odes, Elegies, and Songs.³⁵ The book concludes with an epic poem composed by Brooke, *Mäon: An Irish Tale*.

This work is not as straightforward as it might appear. There are cultural, political, and philosophical aspects in the presentation and the choice of entries. The art of translation carries philosophical connotations, and translation into poetry entails additional demands.

In *Reliques*, Brooke not only navigated boundaries between Gaelic and other cultures, but gender boundaries as well. *Reliques* was written to repudiate Irish stereotypes: Old Irish barbarism and Anglo-Irish dullards. Brooke presented a Gaelic world of honor, chivalry, and refinement—a masculinity that contrasted the barbaric stereotypes and presented a charge against those Anglo-Irish “lacking enlightened interest in Gaelic culture.”³⁶ Brooke encouraged the readers to redefine the masculine qualities of bravery and courage by placing them in the context of honoring the whole nation. Part of that honor would be extended to women, making room for them to participate alongside men in advancing cultural nationalism. These were characteristics she desired to see

develop as part of Ireland's national identity. This work served to educate the Irish about their past and hence to provide a pattern for their future. Her translations advancing these ideals came to represent authentic Irish culture.

The relevance of *Reliques* to this study is the inclusion of Turlough O'Carolan. Brooke used Carolan and his poetry to support her cultural image of Irishness. The bardic figure in general is central to this work and Carolan stands as a representative of both the ancient and a continuous tradition of Irish culture. His role as "bard", his Gaelic background and poetry, and his connection to harp music were characteristics that defined Ireland's golden past; his near contemporary status linked that past to the present. The way Carolan's character and music is recombined to embody opposing views of Irishness is striking. Brooke imagined a much different Carolan than that created by Walker and Goldsmith. While Walker emphasized Carolan's masculinity with drinking, Brooke represented him by his poetry in honor of women.

Brooke used bardic poetry to present Ireland's golden past and revered the bardic historian in this work. Brooke conceptualized the ancient bard much the same way as Walker: educated, refined, and cultured, symbolizing Ireland's sophisticated legacy. Brooke believed the bard to be worthy of study for his poetic genius as well as his historic significance. She claimed that even during the period of bardic wane "many of the productions of those times breathe the true spirit of poetry, besides the merit they possess with the Historian and Antiquary."³⁷ Her classical allusion described the "Romance" as "unit[ing] the fire of Homer with the enchanting wildness of Ariosto."³⁸

Brooke established the context of ancient poetry in a progressively more forceful proclamation that women are key participants in national affairs. Brooke negotiated

gender boundaries in cultural nationalism. She created a Golden Age of chivalry—female mediation backed by male endorsement. O’Halloran introduced the first poem and reinforced this image, despite the fact that the poem itself counters that image. In this case, Brooke reclaimed Ossianic poetry from Macpherson, an equally important goal. With Carolan, Brooke used poetry that honored women and their intellect. She closed the work with an original poem *Mäon* that served as a metaphor for her involvement in cultural nationalism. Based on an Irish legend, Brooke reshaped the legend to cast two women as active patriots who determined the fate of the male hero.

Reliques occupies a prominent place in the development of cultural nationalism. Hufstader recognized Brooke as a “pioneer” and claims, “the book anticipates by many years the wealth of translations from Gaelic to English which awaited the day of Douglas Hyde, James Clarence Mangan, and the other poets of the Gaelic revival.”³⁹

Brooke’s role as mediator added a female voice to the scholarly discourse on national identity. Brooke expressed her intentions to capture as completely as possible, the eloquence of Gaelic poetry; and she asserted her competency to do so as well. The ostensible ambiguities regarding her competence and modesty are reasonable when viewed from within eighteenth-century social practices. The significance of female mediation is viewed specifically with regard to this work. Though there were women writers, their works were assigned to the domestic genre of novel. Brooke paved the way for novelists like Sydney Owenson⁴⁰ who, though working in the realm of novels, became a powerful voice in cultural nationalism. Throughout her novel, *The Wild Irish Girl*,⁴¹ Owenson echoed Brooke by providing extensive and lengthy scholarly footnotes.⁴²

Brooke stated her reason for coming forward with this work rested on the absence of male participation; because of the void, certain male scholars encouraged her to publish. A century later, Augusta Gregory laid the same charge of neglect at the feet of learned men. She also presented Gaelic translations, to the chagrin of Douglas Hyde who believed “only a scholar was equal to the task.”⁴³ In 1902, Lady Gregory published an anthology of Irish legends: *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. She, like Brooke, claimed to address national concerns neglected by learned male scholars, feeling compelled to do a man’s job as well as hers at home:

And indeed if there was more respect for Irish things among the learned men that live in the college at Dublin, where so many of these old writings are stored, this work would not have been left to a woman of the house, that has to be minding the place, and listening to complaints, and dividing her share of food.⁴⁴

Not only were Irish texts neglected, but professors of Irish studies at Trinity College expressed to the Committee on Intermediate Education that “it was almost impossible to get hold of a text in Irish which is not religious or that is not silly or indecent.”⁴⁵ Women were excluded from the study of old Irish texts “lest they give young ladies a shock from which they might not recover for the rest of their lives.”⁴⁶ Charlotte Brooke was undaunted. Moved by patriotism, she determined to bring selected texts forward as “polite” literature for public estimation.

Charlotte’s role in the Anglo-Irish discourse was as mediator between ancient Gaelic culture and her contemporary audience. *Reliques* was well received and quickly went into a second publication. The audience was broad, consisting of Gaelic speakers, Anglo-Irish, and English: Old Irish were interested in reconnecting to a glorious past and seeing themselves vindicated; Anglo-Irish, the “middle nation” caught between two

cultures, were seeking to mediate a past which would include them, and the English were fascinated with anything Celtic.

For the Old Irish, Brooke served as a Protestant Irish voice situated between them and England. Her translations validated their heritage with historical documentation. The deeply artistic culture she presented was set in contrast to the negative stereotype established by Cambrensis. This poetry was inspiring, and created not only a vindication for the Old Irish, but a venerable heritage which the Anglo-Irish gladly adopted as their own. She also served to vindicate the concept of Anglo-Irish “against the charge of being muscular, horse-riding dullards and to remind colonial administrators in Dublin and London of the dignity and beauty of the literature of the ancient Gael.”⁴⁷

As far as their neighbor England was concerned, Brooke hoped that this work would serve toward conciliation between England and Ireland by means of their “sister” muses, of which she cast Ireland as the elder. She hoped that by presenting Gaelic literature, “sweet ambassadresses” as she called them, in a chivalric and civilized context, England would begin to esteem Ireland, if not grow to love her; she used the bardic poetry to inspire that esteem. In her overtures for mutual admiration, she recognized and received endorsement from the Englishmen William Hayley and Rev. Doctor Warner.⁴⁸ The title of this work paid tribute to Thomas Percy who published *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*⁴⁹ in 1765.

Though she stressed congeniality with England, Brooke nevertheless, carried on the Anglo-Irish tradition of appropriating Gaelic culture as a means of breaking with their English roots. Brooke’s identification with Ireland is seen in her use of the first person when speaking about Ireland and she represented Ireland as a superior nation, a sister to

England,⁵⁰ fully capable of functioning as a sovereign nation. Though she created a sense of hybridity as a method of unification; she, nevertheless, cast the two countries as separate entities—sisters—not alter-egos.

To downplay societal cleavages, Brooke reinforced cultural aspects to support national identity and ignored the conflicts of religious and political ideology. This would be a theme as cultural nationalism accelerated into the 1790s. She presented a pre-invasion Golden Age and emphasized characteristics of Irishness in terms of authenticity, a contemporary culture rooted in antiquity, and cultural preeminence.

Brooke overturned the gender hierarchy by casting both countries as female. She brought this message to England: Ireland is your elder sister, Ireland and England would benefit from a cordial relationship, and the union between the two is equally, if not more advantageous to England as to Ireland. She provided translation for better understanding between the two sister countries and implied that England should feel honored to share Ireland with her crown. Brooke boldly challenged the English attitude that Irish blood “disgraced” the English, claiming rather that the Anglo-Irish population was “ennobled” by Irish blood:

As yet, we are too little known to our noble neighbour of Britain; were we better acquainted, we should be better friends. The British muse is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle; let us then introduce them to each other! Together let them walk abroad from their bowers, sweet ambassadresses of cordial union between two countries that seem formed by nature to be joined by every bond of interest, and of amity. Let them entreat of Britain to cultivate a nearer acquaintance with her neighbouring isle. Let them conciliate for us her esteem, and her affection will follow of course.⁵¹

Let them tell her, that the portion of her blood which flows in our veins is rather ennobled than disgraced by the mingling tides that descended from our heroic ancestors.⁵²

Brooke wished to bring about an understanding between the two countries in which they would mutually benefit. Kiberd claims, “she wished to bring an enlightened rigour to bear on the political crisis of the time, believing that the scientific spirit of the English could induce the lively Irish to modes of civility, even as the English were themselves enriched by Irish feeling in a relationship of true equals.”⁵³

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS FOR FEMALE AUTHORS

Reliques was a bold project for two reasons. First, there had been but one attempt to promote Irish translations, and that was not received well. Charles Henry Wilson,⁵⁴ a respected friend of both Charlotte and Walker, published a smaller edition of translations titled *Select Irish Poems Translated into English* (1782). The work seems to have vanished; nevertheless besides mention in the works of both Charlotte Brooke and Walker, it is quoted in Hardiman's *Minstrelsy*. The work is also described by Sir Walter Scott as "scarce and forgotten, though a very curious collection."⁵⁵ Leerssen states, "apart from 'Pléaraca na Ruarcach' by Swift,⁵⁶ this is the first Gaelic poetry presented to an English-speaking audience."⁵⁷ Secondly, female writers of the eighteenth century were only welcomed in literary circles as novelists.⁵⁸ They did not venture into male, scholarly circles. They were expected to write fiction, not non-fiction, and definitely not scholarly or political works.

The eighteenth-century novelist Charlotte Smith protested the literary rules for women writers.⁵⁹ Her novel *Desmond* (1792),⁶⁰ although mainly conventional, provided a platform on which Katharine Rogers claims, "she dared to fly in the face of respectable public opinion by vigorously defending the French Revolution", despite the fact that politics was a taboo subject for women.⁶¹ Rogers uses Smith's words as she describes the general view of women in the late eighteenth century. She states that Smith protested a system that considered women "'as insignificant triflers' if they were ignorant, but censured them 'as affecting masculine knowledge if they happen[ed] to have any understanding'. Smith continued her complaint with:

Convention claims that "knowledge, which qualifies women to speak or write on any other than the most common and trivial subjects, is...of so

difficult attainment, that it cannot be acquired but by the sacrifice of domestic virtues, or the neglect of domestic duties.”

When viewed in an eighteenth-century context, Seymour’s *A Memoir of Miss Brooke* takes a defensive stance to her scholarship. According to Smith, women were generally considered virtuous in relation to their domestic attention. Seymour illustrated this attitude in his *Memoirs*. Though Charlotte was a scholar, her education was praised in a context of domestication, under the direction of her father or other male mentors. Seymour wrote pages on her virtues and flawless morality, both praising and excusing her intellect by stressing her attention to domestic duties and hobbies appropriate for an accomplished young lady “with no worldly ambition to gratify, no sordid appetites to indulge”⁶²: Charlotte had a “little garden, the cultivation and embellishment of which occupied all her leisure hours.”⁶³ “She was modest and unobtrusive.”⁶⁴ “Music, drawing, and painting in water-colours, engaged her attention.”⁶⁵ “She was admired for her personal charms; and she possessed all the graces of the most polished manners, and the most engaging address.”⁶⁶ The most striking tribute to her feminine qualities follows:

To the tenderness and elegance of genius, Miss Brooke joined the most amiable social virtues. Few enjoyed the softened pleasures of the society of “Home,” or entered with greater feeling into its interests and concerns than she did...Disinterested and self-denied, she had no worldly ambition to gratify, no sordid appetites to indulge...In short, if there ever lived a woman who, to softness of manners and gentleness of heart, united power of understanding and great energy of mind...if ever there was a female qualified for performing the strongest as well as the tenderest domestic relations, and while others might change, remain herself the same; I do verily believe Miss Brooke to be that woman.⁶⁷

The effusion of his praise towards Miss Brooke’s softness and modesty appears to be a counterbalance for her literary scholarship, showing that her “masculine” intellectual abilities did not discount her as a woman.

He expressed the same sentiment when recounting her mother's death. Seymour briefly stated that Mrs. Brooke was well educated, then defended it with accolades about her domestic attention. He stated:

She was favoured with a strong, comprehensive and active mind; and having had a good education, her genius led her to the paths of literature; but this did not prevent her from paying a diligent and exemplary attention to the duties of domestic life, and she was much respected in the characters of a wife, a mother, a friend, and a mistress, by many persons who were strangers to her literary attainments. She was well qualified to educate her children; an important employment, to which she devoted much of her time and care.⁶⁸

Seymour ended this paragraph by subordinating the importance of her education to that of teaching her children. When he described one of Charlotte's friends, Mrs. O'Neil, he stated: "a lady whose elegance of mind could only be surpassed by the charms of her person," and, "This elegant and accomplished lady...Mrs. O'Neil; yet her elegant pursuits did not divert her from domestic duties: as a wife and a mother her memory will be revered." In the same paragraph he referred to her friend Mrs. Charlotte Smith as her "ingenious and unfortunate friend."⁶⁹ Mrs. O'Neil was accomplished, but unobtrusive; Mrs. Smith pressed the limits of female literary acceptance with her radical stance toward conventional morality and revolutionary ideals of class equality.

Therefore, Brooke had a personal motivation to place Carolan in a context where women were honored alongside men, and in which they were treated fairly and respectfully. Because she stepped into the male arena of scholarship, as one who was equally or better qualified to present this material, she wanted to present "real" Irishness as embracing female co-workers in cultural nationalism. She understood the risk she took in presenting herself and this work. Her introduction to Mäon displayed her

injunction to participate in Ireland's vindication despite the "the frown of critic wrath,/Or smile of critic scorn."⁷⁰

It was a monumental step for a woman to enter the scholarly domain. Seymour stressed that Charlotte's modesty would have prevented it, had it not been for the encouragement of mentors and lack of male participation. Brooke opened the door for later female participants. Kibert addresses Brooke's influence on Lady Gregory's appearance:

In 1902 Augusta Gregory published *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* in London, having failed to interest any Irish publisher in her project. She was acutely aware that people might ask whether a woman of little fame was equal to the heroic challenge, but the tradition of female apology for such undertakings was by then well-established in Anglo-Ireland. Charlotte Brooke had, after all, exculpated herself for abandoning needle and pianoforte to compile the *Reliques of Irish Poetry* with a similar explanation—the failure of the existing male scholars to produce a text.⁷¹

Brooke's modesty was an attempt to work from within the system to enact changes that would welcome the female voice. She acknowledged the rules and used them to her advantage. She was aware of the societal conventions of scholarship and the need to be *invited* into the circle of scholarship. Hence, endorsements by male literary figures were important to Brooke's success. Seymour stated that Charlotte "invited Mr. Walker, and some well-known colleagues to share the labours and honours of her enterprise," but they "politely declined, as they knew her abilities were fully equal to the task."⁷² Brooke's work was endorsed by her male mentors: Sylvester O'Halloran, her godfather, and Joseph Walker, twenty years her junior. O'Halloran introduced the first poem, "Conloch." By doing so, O'Halloran simultaneously sanctioned her work and her position as a female scholar. His endorsement created a buffer between herself and her critics. Not only did she enter *his* literary circle, but she brought him into *her* circle.

O'Halloran gave her strong credibility, perhaps even more so than her connections with Walker, another strong endorser. Though Brooke was admired and respected by other writers as contributing significantly to the discourse between Ireland and England, as a woman she was not allowed to join the Royal Academy.

RELIQUES: A WORK OF CULTURAL PATRIOTISM

Brooke joined the generation of nationalistic antiquarian writers who laid the foundation for the cultural nationalism on which the radical nationalism of the 1790s was built. *Reliques* provided iconography used by future nationalists. During the United Irish literary movement, Brooke's poem "The Chase" was published in the only issue of the Gaelic language magazine, *Bolg an tSolair*. As we will see in Chapter 6, "Literary Nationalism," the context of Brooke's bardic poetry in this magazine was not one of conciliation, but of revolution.⁷³

Brooke purposed to preserve Ireland's illustrious history and vindicate its honor before an English speaking audience:

With a view to throw some light on the antiquities of this country, to vindicate, in part, its history, and prove its claim to scientific as well as to military fame, I have been induced to undertake the following work.⁷⁴

Seeing this work as a "service to her country",⁷⁵ Miss Brooke stepped out from behind the shadow of anonymity which had prompted Walker to write: "...a young Lady, whose name I am enjoined to conceal:—with the modesty ever attendant on true merit, and with the sweet timidity natural to her sex, she shrinks from the public eye."⁷⁶ Despite the modesty she exhibited in the preface to her book, comparing herself to the women of Greece who were worthy only to "strew the flowers in the paths of these laureled champions," Charlotte placed herself alongside the figures she praised: O'Connor, O'Halloran and Vallancey. Leith Davis represents her as "attempting to bridge the gap that separates women from participating in the public discourse of the nation," and one who "carves out a place for women in the discussion of national identity."⁷⁷

Joep Leerssen claims:

Brooke is thus the first mediator of importance between the Irish-Gaelic and the Anglo-Irish literary traditions—and was astute enough to recognize the importance of her translations in this respect. What is more, she saw this introduction of the Gaelic literary heritage to an Anglo-Irish readership, not like Macpherson or Gray, as an opportunity to capitalize on its exotic value, but rather, like Wilson, as a Patriot endeavour in the service of her country: hoping to instill some appreciation for native Gaelic culture among the lettered Irish, and, hence, to raise Ireland and its culture in the British estimate.⁷⁸

Anglo-Irish writers, in the wake of O'Halloran found the Gaelic past to be “a national concern.”⁷⁹ Though Brooke capitalized on the reception of exotic material, she attempted, according to Kibard, to make Ireland a “little less exotic and emphasize scholarship.”⁸⁰ It would be from Ireland's scientific and scholarly achievements that the nation would gain status in the European community. In his introduction to “Conloch”,⁸¹ O'Halloran asserted Ireland's preeminence in art and sciences by claiming the Romans “waged war against arts and sciences, as well as against mankind” at a time when [while] Ireland's “Arts and Sciences flourish[ed].”⁸² The importance of elevating the national image in the minds of Europe, recovery of antiquities from “oblivion”, authenticity, and cultural superiority were all a part of national concern.

A large part of Brooke's cultural service was dedicated to the fidelity in which she translated these Reliques:

I trust I am doing an acceptable service to my country, while I endeavour to rescue from oblivion a few of the invaluable Reliques of her ancient genius;⁸³ and while I put it in the power of the public to form some idea of them, by clothing the thoughts of our Irish muse in a language with which they are familiar, at the same time that I give the originals, as vouchers for the fidelity of my translation,⁸⁴ as far as two idioms so widely different would allow.⁸⁵

The most visible act of fidelity to the texts was shown by providing original Gaelic texts along with the translations. Brooke's role as mediator was complicated by the reception of Macpherson's *Ossian* cycle. Questions concerning the authenticity of his work raised questions about Anglo-Irish representation of the Gaelic culture, as well. According to Kenneth Gantz, some even questioned the "existence of the true Irish Ossianic cycle."⁸⁶ To substantiate her work, she included original Gaelic texts. Brooke never addressed Macpherson's work directly, but by providing the original texts in her work, she circumvented questions of authenticity that surrounded his. To reinforce the authenticity of those texts even further, Brooke presented them in a Gaelic typeset she created specifically for this work. If the poetry embodied the Irish Golden Age, the typeset embodied the language.⁸⁷

Brooke published these translations as part of the larger discourse between England and Ireland about Irish identity. Because of the decline of the Gaelic language, to continue the discourse with England, and between disparate groups of Irish, the translations had to be presented in the language that was "familiar" to them—English, even though the "idioms [were] so widely different."⁸⁸ Brooke attempted, according to Kiberd, "to render the psychic state of Gaelic culture in English," though it was not expressly of that culture.⁸⁹

English was a new language, and thus a new cultural context, for Gaelic literature; Gaelic literature was no longer contained within Gaelic boundaries, but it embodied a cultural duality—Gaelic traditional storytelling to a non-Gaelic audience. Cultural changes allowed the blurring of cultural boundaries,⁹⁰ a blurring that Brooke hoped to be conciliatory.

Since *Reliques* was following the eager reception of Macpherson's *Ossian* poetry, Brooke not only had to navigate the difficult role of translation, but also present it in an aesthetic style that would be appealing to the general public, a public who had only Macpherson's work by which to judge.

Brooke chose poetry that represented the civility of Ireland, contrasting Macpherson's work. Welch described the manner in which Macpherson used English, as Cambrensis suggested, to reform the wildness of Irishness:

Macpherson called his style a "measured prose": English was to measure and to bring to rational reclamation the wild excesses of the Celtic temperament; and yet, at the same time it would appropriate (colonize, if one wishes) its storehouse of energy and emotion. A union was taking place at the altar of Reason.⁹¹

Brooke had no desire to validate the poetry in terms of dressing it in English or prose. Brooke merely used English to "clothe" the poetry in familiarity. She believed Irish to be a superior language in which to capture poetic nuances. She expressed the separation of the poetry from a language that had "various and comprehensive powers" as a necessary compromise by placing it in a language that was less expressive. Brooke described Irish this way:

In the pathetic, it breathes the most beautiful and affecting simplicity; and in the bolder species of composition, it is distinguished by a force of expression, a sublime dignity, and rapid energy, which it is scarcely possible for any translation fully to convey; as it sometimes fills the mind with ideas altogether new, and which, perhaps no modern language is entirely prepared to express.⁹²

Brooke believed one way English to be unprepared is by the lack of concise expression contained in the Gaelic:

One compound epithet [in Irish] must often be translated by two lines of English verse, and, on such occasion, much of the beauty is necessarily

lost, the force and effect of the thought being weakened by too slow an introduction on the mind.⁹³

This conviction about the superiority of Gaelic for expression contrasted Macpherson who, according to Welch, used English as a means to validate and tame the inferior language, and to be accepted in Imperial terms rather than on Scottish ones. Brooke resisted that ideology. Welch expressed the divergence in this statement:

Even more annoying to the Irish, or, rather, the Protestant, Ascendancy Irish, was the fact that the Scots, through *Ossian*, were making a characteristically ‘Scottish’ tribute to the Imperial majesty of the English language, thereby affirming a cultural union by displaying a difference—a neat trick and one that the Irish tried hard to follow. When Charlotte Brooke made her claim for the Gaelic poetic tradition she did so modestly and hesitantly, fully conscious of the inadequacies of the poetic language of which she made use to translate the characteristic qualities of Gaelic verse.⁹⁴

Brooke was not only aware of the subtleties of translation, but the subtleties of cultural representation. There were many poems that she could have included in this work, but she chose ones that created an esteemed identity for the nation that was emerging at this time, and because she was addressing the public at large, she presented “polite” poetry.⁹⁵ The preservation and transmission of Gaelic culture through its literature was a nationalistic incentive. Welch argues:

It would be fair to say that much of the impetus towards the translation of poetry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries owed a good deal to Romantic theories of poetic language, which themselves were connected to certain aspects of revolutionary ideology.⁹⁶

While Brooke was not yet confronted with revolutionary ideology, she was in the midst of a cultural revolution, in terms of defending the honor of Ireland and its right to govern itself. Irish elites desired an autonomous Parliament, while continuing to share the English monarch. At this point parliamentary reform was the object of nationalists

and Brooke hoped her work would contribute to that end. While the English asserted that Ireland was not capable of self-rule, Brooke demonstrated through these translations Ireland's historic superiority when under self-rule.

Inherent in cultural nationalism is legitimizing the nation; Brooke used the bard in defense of its superiority. Though Cambrensis construed the Irish as barbaric, Brooke asserted Ireland's cultural superiority by inverting that image; she represented the bard as being alone in his cultivation when "the rest of Europe was nearly sunk in barbarism":

The production of our Irish Bards exhibit a glow of cultivated genius,—a spirit of elevated heroism,—sentiments of pure honor,—instances of disinterested patriotism,—and manners of a degree of refinement, totally astonishing, at a period when the rest of Europe was nearly sunk in barbarism: And is not all this very honorable to our countrymen? Will they not be benefited,—will they not be gratified, at the luster reflected on them by ancestors so very different from what modern prejudice has been studious to represent them[?] ⁹⁷

By upsetting the hegemonic hierarchy, Brooke challenged the English stereotype of Cambrensis. She claimed that the glory of ancient Ireland exhibited a "luster" that, though shadowed by English colonization, yet reflected on the Irish to that day.

Though Brooke wanted conciliation, she rehearsed the bardic trend of bemoaning English oppression expressed in Goldsmith's article. Brooke asserted the persistence of Irish literary genius despite English persecution. She provided contemporary examples of "native genius", including her own original poem:

...some other songs of modern date, I give, to show of what the native genius and language of this country, even now, are capable; labouring, as they do, under every disadvantage. ⁹⁸

Brooke presented a historical pattern that she believed to be a contemporary legacy. By including Carolan, Cormac Common, Patrick Linden and herself, she provided evidence of the continued legacy. Contemporary native genius broadened the

scope of cultural sophistication of which those in Ireland were capable, if they were shown. This work set forth to guide them.

Though Brooke included Heroic War poems, both she and O'Halloran, in his introduction, stressed the chivalry, refinement and loyalty to the fair [women] exhibited by the ancient Irish. Seymour echoed this emphasis in his biography of Brooke, tracing her lineage to "Knights, Baronets, and Barons."⁹⁹

O'Halloran introduced the first poem, "Conloch." Though Brooke portrayed the female presence in strength, this poem presented an ambiguous message. In the lengthy introduction, O'Halloran established the civility and education of Ireland in its earliest antiquity. He stated, "the custom of creating Knights in Europe originated not with the Romans, but among the Celtae themselves."¹⁰⁰ While in Ireland, chivalry flourished from the remotest antiquity,"¹⁰¹ O'Halloran argued, "the first institution of chivalry in Europe was about the time of the croisades [sic],"¹⁰² suggesting Ireland's civility preceded and overshadowed that of the rest of Europe.

O'Halloran outlined the process of a young knight's training. Interestingly, O'Halloran stated the first step was to remove him from the influence of women; and the last step was to instill "a reverence and tender respect"¹⁰³ for them. Here is the description:

At seven years old he was taken from the care of the women, and deeply instructed in Philosophy, History, Poetry and Genealogy. The using his Weapons with judgment, elegance and address, was also carefully attended to; principles of Morality were sedulously inculcate, and a reverence and tender respect for the Fair, completed the education of the young hero.¹⁰⁴

The poem of "Conloch" set during the Christian era¹⁰⁵ contrasts this image of chivalry set down by O'Halloran immediately preceding the tale, as Cuchullin was "by

no means constant in his attachments to the fair,” though a “gallant and most intrepid knight.”¹⁰⁶

Conloch was the illegitimate son born to Aifé, a Scottish woman Cuchullin impregnated and then deserted. Before he left, Cuchullin urged Aifé, if it be a son, to train him to observe three things: “That he should never reveal his name to a foe; that he should not give the way to any man, who seemed to demand it as a right; and that he should never decline the single combat with any Knight under the sun.”¹⁰⁷ When Conloch became a man and landed on Irish soil, he observed the three edicts: he did not reveal his name to Ulster Knights, he did not give way, and he did not decline battle with the knight, who happened to be Cuchullin. Cuchullin, unaware of the warrior’s identity, struck Conloch with a mortal blow. When Conloch then revealed himself, Cuchullin raged at Aifé for the encounter. Cuchullin never addressed his own part in the drama.¹⁰⁸ Cuchullin believed that Aifé set up the meeting between the father and son, intending for Conloch to defeat Cuchullin in battle as revenge for his desertion.

This poem shows a contrasting image of chivalry than that espoused by either Brooke or O’Halloran. In this instance, this poem was an example of Ossianic poetry that Brooke reclaimed from McPherson for Irish heritage. The acquisition for Ireland, authenticated with Gaelic texts superseded the claims of chivalry barely addressed by O’Halloran in his introduction. The lengthy introduction affirmed a contrary idyllic chivalry and regard for women practiced by the ancient Irish that was not seen in this epic.

Though Brooke persisted in representing Ireland’s civility and superiority, Brooke mediated beyond language and cultural boundaries to gender roles as well, negotiating

Ireland's identity as a female symbol. Gendering is entwined in the discourse on Irish identity and the appearance of a female voice in the negotiation was striking.

Colonies are typically gendered female, and Ireland was no exception. English writers characterized Ireland as a wanton woman in search of male domination.¹⁰⁹ Irish writers represented Ireland as female, both as a maiden who had been, on the one hand, raped by Imperial England, and on the other, a mother and nurturer.¹¹⁰ The nationalistic movement of the next decade imagined the land as female, but the "nation" as male, rescuing 'her' from the villain England, setting her free.¹¹¹ Cultural nationalism developed as the Irish sought to free Ireland from the domination of England.

In the national arena, Ireland was vulnerable to England's depictions. Those in power determine the rules for participation. The necessity to conform to power's expectation is inherent in all hierarchies. Brooke addressed that hegemony in national, scholarship, and class structures. Brooke's interaction with the laborers on her family's estate established within Brooke—blurred boundaries. Once boundaries in one discipline were seen as malleable, all other boundaries became negotiable as well. It was her interaction with peasant class, learning the peasant "Gaelic" that qualified her above her father's peers to mediate between cultures.¹¹² She used England's measuring stick to enlarge Irish reputation. She used the scholarly measure to qualify herself in their circle.

Since England disregarded barbarity and valued English qualities of chivalry and nobility, science and literary skill, Brooke presented Ireland in terms of chivalry, nobility, and literacy. Since conventions dictated female modesty, despite an ability to represent scholarship in ways superior to her male colleagues, Brooke modestly presented herself. Brooke was astute to the institutional rules that confined scholarship to gender. She

exploited her male endorsements and also played on respect for her father. She worked within the system, using the system's rules to break system conventions. This is exemplified in her poem *Mäon*.

Brooke imagined a nation where women worked alongside men; indeed played an important role in Irish cultural nationalism. She exhibited this personally as she joined male scholarly writers. By recording Irish history in bardic poetry, Brooke also inserted herself into the traditionally male role of Irish bard. Brooke was keenly aware of that role as described by Leerssen:

The poet was the cultural guardian of the Gaelic heritage, whose task it was to guarantee historical continuity, to legitimize the present in terms of past history.¹¹³

When Brooke retold the story of *Mäon*, she changed the gender of the historian from male to female, representing the position she occupied as a formal writer of this genre. The retelling was part of the cultural negotiation of gender. As nationalism grew, antiquarians found themselves recasting Irish gender. Leith Davis argues that Walker presented the bard, the embodiment of Ireland, in a more masculine character than historically staged. In Davis's opinion Walker dwelt on the masculine symbol of drinking.¹¹⁴ Brooke cast the bard in general, and Carolan in particular, in a different light; that of a gentleman, who honored women. Brooke placed Carolan in a context where women were honored alongside men, and in which they were treated fairly and respectfully. Contrary to Walker's depiction of a drunken bard, Charlotte Milligan Fox described Carolan as a "poet of polite society, most of his verse being made in honour of patrons, or of fair ladies of good family in different parts of Ireland."¹¹⁵ She portrayed

much the same view as Charlotte Brooke in her *Reliques*, that of a chivalrous, respectable man who performs honorably toward women.

A few years later, Arthur O'Neil, a harper who dictated his memoirs for Edward Bunting,¹¹⁶ placed Carolan's masculinity in the context of male tavern camaraderie. He presented Carolan as a great drinker, playing practical jokes and once grabbing an arrogant harper by the hair. These are the typical ways Carolan has been portrayed. Brooke presented a gentler man.

THE IMAGE OF TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN IN *RELIQUES*

Carolan was found under two headings in *Reliques*: Elegies and Songs. The first appearance was an elegy dedicated to him by his friend Charles M'Cabe.¹¹⁷ This was one of five elegies in this work and described the devotion Carolan inspired in those he touched. Brooke was moved by the pathos of the elegy especially since she considered M'Cabe "a wit, but not a poet."¹¹⁸

Brooke conveyed the level of devotion not only held by M'Cabe for his friend, but also by a peasant of the community in which Carolan lived. She related the circumstances surrounding this elegy in greater detail than Walker had done.¹¹⁹ As this work is instructive on performing Irishness, Brooke is suggesting that true Irishness can be displayed as devotion to Carolan.

After a long absence from his friend, M'Cabe decided to visit him. As he passed by a churchyard, he inquired of a peasant about Carolan. The peasant pointed to the churchyard grave of Carolan and wept.

On hearing this, Brooke stated that M'Cabe was:

...shocked and astonished, was for some time unable to speak; his frame shook, his knees trembled, he had just power to totter to the grave of his friend, and then sunk to the ground. A flood of tears, at last, came to his relief; and, still further to disburden his mind, he vented its anguish in the following lines. In the original, they are simple and unadorned, but pathetic to a great degree; and this is a species of beauty, in composition, extremely difficult to transfuse into any other language.¹²⁰

I do not pretend, in this, to have entirely succeeded, but I hope the effort will not be unacceptable;--much of the simplicity is unavoidably lost;--the pathos which remains, may, perhaps, in some measure, atone for it.¹²¹

M'Cabe cried in a portion of the elegy:

There is no anguish can with this compare!
No pains, diseases, suffering, or despair,

Like that I feel, while such a loss I mourn,
My heart's companion from its fondness torn!

...Alas? What wonder, (while my heart drops blood
Upon the woes that drain its vital flood,
If maddening grief no longer can be borne,
And frenzy fills the breast, with anguish torn?

In this instance M'Cabe became the pattern for performing devotion to Carolan.

The grief of the peasant represents the cross-over of class boundaries in Carolan's admirers. Gibbons states that Carolan's fame "ranged across the entire social spectrum during his own lifetime,"¹²² illustrating his own blurring of class boundaries. This is an observation of what Irishness means in cultural performance: devotion to the Gaelic past and enlightenment attitudes of social equality, as embodied in Carolan's life. Brooke went beyond preserving "Reliques"; she used them as instruction for the blending of antiquarians and enlightenment ideals.

If Carolan's death also represented the passing of the Gaelic culture, these words prefigure similar allusions to the harp "un-strung" in Brooke's introduction to *Mäon* and later United Irish symbolism:

Sweet-singing harp!—thy melody is o'er.
Sweet friendship's voice!—I hear thy sound no more!
My bliss,—my wealth of poetry is fled.
And every joy, with him I lov'd, is dead!

Though Carolan's harp was silent, his poetry continued to represent him. Brooke included two of his songs and some biographical information. She opened the song section with a lengthy introduction about music, connecting the bard to Walker's *Historical Memoirs* and to Charles O'Connor. The song section and the last poem emphasized the continuing tradition of Gaelic poetry. Two of the four lyric poems were

attributed to Carolan who was just one generation removed from Brooke; Patrick Linden, a contemporary of Carolan was also represented in this section.¹²³

Brooke did not add to Carolan's biography; Brooke quoted portions from Walker's *Memoirs*, stating: "the public will doubtless be better pleased to see them in Mr. Walker's words than in mine." Though Brooke displayed modesty in the preface, her comments on the poetry and the quality of the manuscripts she used or rejected took an authoritative stand. At times she even contradicted—or corrected—those men before whom she was strewing flowers. She pointed out that her translation of a particular poem in Walker's work was superior to the one contributed to Walker by another translator¹²⁴ and also corrected Walker's statement that Carolan could not remember color and believed Carolan's poetic descriptions so "glowing" that he must have remembered "every beauty that sight can convey to the mind."¹²⁵

While Walker emphasized Carolan's masculinity in drinking, Brooke emphasized qualities that reflected civility and respect of women. The lengthy quotes taken from Walker's *Historical Memoirs* stressed Carolan's virtues: his "musical genius",¹²⁶ the "respect" he received "wherever he goes",¹²⁷ his devotion to his wife,¹²⁸ his "piety" and commitment to "daily prayer",¹²⁹ and summation that "his talents, and his morality, procured him esteem and friend every where."¹³⁰

Also significant, is the context in which she placed him. Brooke imagined Carolan to inhabit a chivalrous Irish nation. Her choices of lyrics with which to represent him stand in contrast to almost every other account of his character and bardic career. The two songs representing him are "Gracey Nugent" and "Mable Kelly", both sweet, chivalrous songs. Brooke avoided the masculine drinking songs, which were emphasized

in Walker's work. The one instance where she did address drinking, she quoted O'Connor stating that Carolan was "seldom surprised by intoxication."¹³¹ Where Walker presented him as musician, Brooke presented him as poet.

Carolan's respect for intelligent women is shown in the two song examples: In "Gracey Nugent," Carolan praised not only Gracey's "sweet manners", but her "accomplished mind" as well.¹³² Similarly, he praised "Mable Kelly" for her 'beauty, talents, taste, refin'd/ And all the graces of the mind."¹³³

BROOKE'S ORIGINAL POEM: "MÄON"

Brooke's choice of poetry and songs supported her own images of Irish identity, recognizing and valuing the ingenuity and competency of women participating in major roles in the nation. She imagined a feminine strength that equaled and inspired masculinity. Her original poem *Mäon* illustrates the extent to which she believed women could participate in national politics. The poem posits that masculine courage and bravery would not transpire without the balanced strength, wisdom and courage of the feminine. The role women played in *Mäon* varied from Walker's version of the same text and contrasted her father's play *Gustavas Vasa*.

Mäon was based on an Irish legend recorded in Walker's *Historical Memoirs*. Walker retold the legend recorded in the works of Keating, O'Halloran, and Warner.¹³⁴ Charlotte's rendition added a few elements to the legend that addressed political circumstances in Ireland at the time. One, was her use of the *Aisling* tradition.¹³⁵ *Aisling* poetry was political poetry that occurred in a vision or a dream. These poems typically included a female voice that appeared in a dream to the male hero, charging him with a duty and sending him on a mission. In Charlotte's poem, she was approached by the "Bardic Sage", Craftiné.¹³⁶ Brooke was directed to write out this legend for instruction,¹³⁷ assuming the bardic voice and positioning herself in the bardic role. This was, perhaps, a tacit message that she was sanctioned by the ancient line of bards to join them—and in so doing, was sanctioned to penetrate the male circle of scholarship as well, discharged in duty by Walker and O'Halloran.

The legend, as told by Brooke, began similarly to Walker. *Mäon* escapes with his bardic mentor, Craftine, after the assassination of his father.¹³⁸ He lives with a

neighboring king, studying there and falling in love with his lovely daughter, Moriat. As he enters manhood, he leaves to fight for France.¹³⁹ Moriat hears of his accomplishments, and waits for his return. This is where the story departs. In Walker's account, Moriat dispatches Craftiné to the French court to sing her poem urging Mäon to return to avenge the death of his father and grandfather and reclaim the throne. After securing help from the French army, he does just that and takes Moriat as his queen.¹⁴⁰

In Brooke's retelling, an account appears that Mäon is to marry the daughter of the King of France.¹⁴¹ Though Moriat is outraged, she realizes that it is for the good of Ireland that he unite the two countries to avenge Erin. The poem Moriat sends through Craftine releases Mäon from their engagement, urging him to use the "strength of Gallia's throne" to "force one tyrant to atone/For all the wrongs we bear."¹⁴² Moriat willingly sacrifices her happiness for "patriotic virtue."¹⁴³ When the situation becomes clear to Aidé, the French Princess, she too releases from his vow to her. She respects the vow between Moriat and Mäon, a vow that Mäon neglected. Aidé appeals to the throne for fleets to aid Mäon in the defense of his country. Aidé's heart embraces and claims kinship with Moriat: "And tell that sister of my soul...Like her, I strain to Virtue's goal...she [is] by my spirit seen, And by my heart embrac'd."¹⁴⁴

Leith Davis points out that prior to this poem by Brooke, women were cast as sacrifices for the country. Henry Brooke displayed that sentiment in his patriotic play *Gustavus Vasa*. Where Moriat exhibits female self-sacrifice for the nation, a theme of classical drama—"noble" behavior, in *Gustavus Vasa* the climax of the play is reached when Gustavus is forced to choose between his country and the death of his wife and daughter. When the patriot chooses to sacrifice them, the mother tells her frightened

daughter that it is a valiant sacrifice. The sacrifice, though, is seen as *his* sacrifice—not theirs.

Both Moriat and Aidé sacrifice themselves for honor. Mäon, who neglected his vow and compromised the sovereignty of his country, had his fate determined by the women. Prompted by Moriat and granted French fleets at the request of Aidé, Mäon does return to reclaim his grandfather's throne and take Moriat as his queen.

The inclusion of the French Princess by Brooke maintained that Ireland should be independent and not joined with France. The marriage of Mäon, uniting Ireland and France would confuse Irish nationhood. That a cultured European nation would like to be linked with Ireland substantiates her value, but maintaining independence was crucial to Ireland's sovereignty. By returning to Moriat, Ireland remained in the hands of the Irish.

It is significant that Charlotte chose this legend for verse. Moriat became the poet and the patriot. This legend casts a female as poetess, just a few pages after Walker's declaration that bards were men; there were "no BARDESSES."¹⁴⁵ Though women held no formal position as bard, Walker addressed roles in which they did play. He deemed the "melting sweetness of the female voice...necessary in the chorus of the funeral song."¹⁴⁶

Walker contrasted the effects of power between the male and female musicians. While *Historical Memoirs* emphasized the male bard as powerful in motivating in battle, he represented the power of the female poet as "softening" behavior resulting from those battles:

[T]hough women, during the heroic ages, held no rank in the order of Bards, yet it appears that they cultivated music and poetry, whose divine

powers they often employed in softening the manners of a people rendered ferocious by domestic hostilities. What an unbounded influence must those arts, united with the irresistible sway of female beauty, have given the women of those ages!¹⁴⁷

Walker also addressed the tacit influence of the female presence on state affairs:

[W]e often find them guiding in secret the helm of the state, and proving the primary cause of great revolutions.¹⁴⁸

This is the effect presented in *Mäon*. Moriat composes a poem to motivate a prince to war, taking an active role in politics. She exhibited the masculine qualities of chivalry, honor and courage and inspired those same qualities in *Mäon*. Walker introduced the story of *Mäon*, highlighting the female impact on the fate of nations: “Anno Mundi 3649, a great revolution was occasioned in Ireland by the united powers of female poesy and music.”¹⁴⁹

Brooke’s introduction to *Mäon* may give insight into her mission in producing this work. She purposed to supply a work of national interest, vindicating Ireland’s history and claim to science, even though she was female and faced possible criticism. Similarly, in *Mäon*’s introduction, Brooke was given the injunction by the Muse whose “message...Taught them to glow with Freedom’s flame,/And Freedom’s arms to wield;”¹⁵⁰ to instruct in “the pride of ancient days;/ Truth, science, virtue, fame; / The lover’s faith, the poet’s praise, / The patriotic flame!”¹⁵¹ She was encouraged to complete this account in spite of “the frown of critic wrath,/Or smile of critic scorn,” and not to let them frighten her “from the splendid path .”¹⁵² The Bardic Sage affirmed the right to her sex to perform this task: “For oft the Muse, a gentle guest,/Dwells in a female form;/And patriot fire, a female breast,/ May sure unquestion’d warm.”¹⁵³

GAELIC LANGUAGE—TRANSLATION AND MEDIATION

Mäon was Brooke's interpretation of an old Irish tale and the only poem of the work that was not a translation. Though composed in English, Brooke presented *Mäon* as an example of the continuing bardic tradition of patriotic poetry. This original poem was based on a traditional Irish legend and it was written in traditional style—*Aisling* poetry in epic form. This poem represented "Irishness" in antiquarian form, presenting an ambiguity: Irish poetry was now being mediated to English speakers and also composed in English. Gaelic was being absorbed into contemporary context and donned familiar dress.¹⁵⁴ Brooke prefigured the trend of Anglo-Irish poets composing poetry in English, followed by Hyde, Mangan, W. B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney.

Composing in English was a gesture toward conciliation between Gaelic culture and English speakers of Ireland and England. Brooke believed that translations would create a better understanding of Gaelic culture and would engender respect both from the Irish for themselves and from the English. Welch explained Charlotte's impetus for translation: "For Charlotte Brooke, there is no reason why the differences that mark Ireland and England off one from the other cannot be overcome by the effort of understanding, of which the act of translation is itself an example."¹⁵⁵

Translation is both a skill and an art. Welch claims that translation is "profoundly occupied with the question of contact and relationship between languages and cultures. Translation is about discovery and recovery."¹⁵⁶ As Brooke stated, "there is a sense that the translator cannot fully accomplish his objective: there are resistant vitalities which will not and cannot be adequately conveyed."¹⁵⁷

She determined the meaning of the Gaelic poetry, and in turn, she constructed the interpretation in the way she believed the public should understand it. Brooke offered English speakers access to her interpretation of the Gaelic world. Brooke hoped this access would engender esteem not only from England, but also from the collective Irish and provide a cultural pattern for enlightened growth. The pattern could not be owned until it was conceptualized; Charlotte provided the cultural image. The poems reflected Brooke's image of Gaelic tradition filtered by her personal ideology. Brooke was a follower of William Law, which Welch explains influenced her though "toward ideals of concord and 'cordial union's rather than towards the difficulties of division and difference."¹⁵⁸

As a mediator between cultures, Brooke understood her unique role as a Gaelic speaker and accepted the responsibility to which she believed that skill obligated her. Brooke hoped to diffuse the long history of animosity between England and Ireland. She wanted, according to George Steiner, to "dissipate the density of hostile or seductive otherness that made the Irish and the English languages not only foreign, but even antagonistic toward each other."¹⁵⁹

It was rare for Anglo-Irish to speak Gaelic. The perpetuation of language as a symbolic boundary grew even stronger during the 1790s development of literary nationalism and the Gaelic League's attempts to revive the language during the nineteenth century. Yet with those nationalists, it was usually a superficial attachment with the language that existed—a symbolic union of cultural identity rather than lifestyle. This dichotomy is evident even today.

The role of language in cultural nationalism cannot be overestimated. Brooke stood at the forefront of Gaelic language revival. Though English is the practical language for commerce, the Irish language marks a significant cultural boundary. Steiner describes the life of a nation as found in the common language:

“When a language dies, a possible world dies with it. There is here no survival of the fittest. Even where it is spoken by a handful, by the harried remnants of destroyed communities, a language contains within itself the boundless potential of discovery, of re-compositions of reality, of articulate dreams, which are known to us as myths, as poetry, as metaphysical conjecture and the discourse of the law.¹⁶⁰

Brooke explored each of those qualities in *Reliques*. It was her way of recombining myth and “science” in a golden past that could serve as a pattern for the future. Brooke attempted to break through the linguistic barrier by opening the door, even superficially.

The Irish language had been portrayed as inferior, as a peasant language; it was historically despised and banned by English government. From this point forward the language possessed an otherworldly quality. It was esotericized to conform to elite curiosity and romantic notions of the exotic. This romanticization of the language added to the negotiation of Irish identity. The presentation of translations to English speakers contained both a conception of “other” and of conciliation.¹⁶¹

Brooke believed the language barrier between Gaelic and English speakers to be both a hindrance and an advantage: a hindrance because it locked the door to English speakers, leaving them to form attitudes vulnerable to outdated prejudices; an advantage because it established a linguistic boundary for the nation that she presented as artistically superior for expression, aural sound and visual presentation.

Brooke was able to combine the esoteric qualities of the language while presenting the Irish as a language suitable for study and, in her opinion, superior to English. She presented herself a competent appraiser of languages and held Gaelic to be superior to all others for expression and aural beauty: “It is scarcely possible that any language can be more adapted to Lyric poetry than the Irish. The poetry of many of our Songs is indeed already Musick, without the aid of a tune; so great is the smoothness, and harmony of its cadences.”¹⁶²

For Brooke, authenticity was marked by the inclusion of original Gaelic texts, and by presenting those texts in Gaelic characters.¹⁶³ Though passages of Gaelic text were presented in some works, they were transliterated into Roman type. Even Walker supplied brief passages of Gaelic quotes in *Historical Memoirs* that were transliterated into Roman characters. Gaelic type was rare; Roman characters were accessible, minimizing printing costs. Brooke’s fidelity to the Gaelic characters led to the preservation of the characters and the trend of presenting original texts in those characters.

Because of her familiarity with the language, Brooke understood the immediate association with Gaelic culture that is not present when viewing familiar Roman letters, despite the unfamiliar arrangement of them. Roman type was less expensive to use, but when used in transliterations, it created a hybridity or sameness—non-otherness. In mediating Gaelic civility and culture, the use of Roman characters undermined the uniqueness of the language. Roman characters could be seen as a form of “re-colonizing” the Gaelic language and blurring its boundaries.

Gaelic type embodied the language, giving the reader a visual, if not linguistic, connection to the beauty and refinement of the Gaelic language. By placing the Irish texts in Gaelic type, the songs became a visual representation of Gaelic literary tradition that was distinct from the English, yet the translations allowed the reader entrance into Gaelic imagination. The type significantly added to the discourse between same and other, exotic and ancient. E. W. Lyman comments on the use of Roman versus Gaelic type:

Anyone who is familiar with Irish in the Irish character will find not only difficulty but annoyance in reading it in Roman type. The language loses much of its individuality, just as Greek does in Roman type. The sounds of Irish, not well conveyed by Irish spelling, are still worse conveyed by a character which has alien and very definite phonetic associations.¹⁶⁴

Like Greek or Chinese languages, the Gaelic language shares its characters with no one else. The characters carry within them not only the symbolism of the words it represents, but the culture as well. Brooke believed this symbolism important enough to commission a set of characters specifically for this work.

There was a typeface available that Brooke could have used. It was designed for Queen Elizabeth and was used for printing religious and propagandist materials in the Irish vernacular.

Brooke did not want to use a cultural symbol created in England. She believed it important to have a Gaelic typeface that was designed and forged in Ireland. The commonly called the “Brooke” typeface, was created by Stephen Parker.¹⁶⁵ (Figure 4.1)

The use of this typeface affected the character of the book to the extent that Christi, when he republished Walker’s *Historical Memoirs* in 1818, commissioned a second Gaelic typeface and replaced the Roman characters (Figure 3.4) with Gaelic ones

(Figure 3.5). Similarly, when James Hardiman published his *Irish Minstrelsy*, he commissioned yet another Gaelic typeface to be used in his work (Figure 4.5).¹⁶⁶ George Petrie,¹⁶⁷ used Roman characters in his 1855 collection of music¹⁶⁸ (Figure 4.6), yet commissioned a typeface for his collection in 1905¹⁶⁹ (Figure 4.7) The comparison of these types, shown in Figures 3.4, 3.5 and 4.1-4.4, were used to present Carolan's "Gracecy Nugent."

Lyman recognizes the political influence in the preservation of a Gaelic typeface in this statement: "The Irish letter is a strange survival from the past, which owes its preservation partly to Irish conservatism, partly to political and religious conflict."¹⁷⁰

Seamus Deane argued that Gaelic typeface was yet another cultural weapon delineating national boundaries in a cultural battle for Irish distinctiveness and legitimization:

The importance of Brooke and Hardiman is further heightened when it is realized that their aesthetically pleasing but commercially expensive typefaces were essentially cultural weapons in a war of religious and political propaganda. In giving priority to the cultural element, they were not ignoring the religious and political; rather, they were, as already mentioned, promoting cultural accord as a means to the resolution of strife in these other areas.¹⁷¹

Brooke presented a visual representation of the Gaelic image that represented cultural elements to neutralize societal conflicts. Presenting the poetry in a Gaelic typeface distanced it from English by representing it as "other" yet accompanied by translations, welcomed English speakers into the exotic yet sophisticated Gaelic world.

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I.

2lf mjan ljom tpať ar blāt na rjune
 Ğrāeſj an ajnnyr ʒ fŕġaſb
 fġurab ſ ruġ bārr accaſl ſa tnyſj
 ajr mnaſb brāaḡ ġljce na ccŕġe-aḡ
 Cja be ḡjaḡ na haſce daſḡḡce fḡo lḡ
 ny baſgal ḡo aḡtnyſe ḡaſḡḡce no brḡn
 aſġe an nyſḡny tſējñ ʒ aſḡne mējñ
 fſ cŕl na ccraebh ſna bſhājnyġ
 2ltaḡ mur ael ſa pſob mrr ġēj
 ſa ġnaſj mrr ġrējñ aſſamſaḡḡ
 naḡ tapaḡḡ ḡon te ḡġ ġeallaḡ mar ſpſe
 ḡhejḡ aſcſe ġeuz na ccambſlaſj
 aſ ſuaſſe ſaſ ſājñ ḡo ſāſce ġſnamſſ
 aſ ālſny ḡe-aſ ḡo ſŕſlġlaſ
 ſe ḡlſnyḡ ġaḡ lā aſġ cāch ḡa aſſrſ
 ġur ſājnyne-aḡ caſ ḡo ḡŕltaſ

S f 2

Figure 4.1 Carolan's "Gracey Nugent." From Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques*. This example, commonly known as the "Brooke" typeface, was commissioned by Brooke and created by Stephen Parker.

ՅԻԱԵՐԻ ՊԱԿԿՐԻԱՊ.

ՇԵՐԲԻՆԻՆ յՈՒՆՈՒՆ.

Իյ տական Ե՛կտ Երկեւծի Կըր Բիւնիւն յՈՒՆՈՒՆ,
ՅԻԱԵՐԻ ԿՈՒՆԿԻՐԻ Իյ ԴՆՅԱՆԻ,
’Կ ՅԱՐ Բ’Ի ԴԱՅ ԻՆԻՐ Կ Յ-ԵՆԻՆ ’Կ Կ Ե-ԵԱՅԻՐԻ
ՉԻՐ ՄԻՆԻՆԻ ԲԵՆԻՆԻ, ՅԻՆԵ յՈՒՆ-ԵԱՅԻՆԻ :
ԿԿ Բ’Ե ԲԻՆԻՆԻ յՈՒՆ-ԿԻՆԵ Ե’ՈՒՆԻՆԻ ’Կ Ե ԼՈՒ,
ՊԻ ԲԵՆԻՆԻ ԵՈՒ ԴԱՅ-ԵԱՅԻՐԻ ԵՈՒՆԻՆԻ յՈՒՆԻՆԻ,
ՉԻՆ ԿՈՒ ՄԻՆԻՆԻ Ե-ԴԵՐԻՆԻ Իյ ԿՈՒՆԻՆԻ ՄԵՐԻՆԻ,
’Կ Ի ԵՆԻՆԻ յՈՒՆ-ԵԱՅԻՆԻ ’Կ յՈՒՆ ԲԻ-ԴԱՅԻՆԻՆԻՆԻ.

Figure 4.2 Carolan’s “Gracey Nugent” in Hardiman Gaelic typeface, from Hardiman’s *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831).

of it that Mr Curry can recollect – there are indications of a poetical feeling which might lead to a regret that the whole of this old song has not been preserved. These lines are:

Tá an bláth bán ar na móinte agus an fómhar ag filleadh;
Is cé gur lách lách an rud é an pósadh is dubhach deorach a d'fhág
sé mise.

The white blossom is on the bogs, and the Autumn is on the return;
And though marriage is a pretty pretty thing, it is sorrowful and
tearful it has left me.



Figure 4.3 Gaelic lyrics transliterated into Roman typeface, from George Petrie's *Ancient Irish Music* (1855).

TUNES WITH IRISH TITLES.

TUNES			TUNES		
A bean a' cige na páirtí	1088, 1249		A an mbótarín buíde, c'á nán mo		
A b'fáigib! ír c'á lé m'í-pat	1550		óroíde	1489	
A b'fáigib óig na gcumann!	1307, 1308		Ain 'Eipe, ní (i)nnéóiríonn oia hí	1237	
A buaóall an óúil bualaig	1571, see 1572		Ain maíon a-nóé, bí camabain rgoil	1116	
A buaóallíde! Cúingnaighe lé óéile	1254, see 1255		Ain maíon inóé	1076	
A buaóallíde ógu! an baile peo	1496		Ain moíabail epe baile-áca-Clíat dam	1559	
A óailín b'ig uarail na g'ráighe b'neáig			Aíene bán	1300	
buíde	1556, 1557		A bean ób fíor ain b'ruaó an e-rpuéáin,		
A óailín beap óig an g'áinín uatene!	1427		peó c'á leó	1532	
A óailín donn beap na g'fóda bána	1326		Ain boéap ó c'áid go C'páig-lí	1318, see 448	
A óatíóc Roíón,	1467, 1468		Ain buaóall bán	1257	
An cuimín leat!	1514		Ain buaóall caol buí	1260, 1261, 1262	
A óuile g'eal mo óroíde,	1160			see 1269	
A óeap'p'áeap! ír óíombáó c'á luab lé			Ain buaóallín buíde	1259	
mnaoí	1191		Ain buaóallín donn	1254, see 1255	
A óoc'áip' óilip!	1472		Ain óailín aed i n-aice Síligí	1126	
A óroéáip ír óíombáó c'á luab lé mnaoí	1087		Ain óailín donn	1218	
A óeioepaíó c'á a baile liom?	1487		Ain óailín ruab	1099, 1100, 1101	
A "Páipí" m'ánnín	1466			1321, 1323, 1324	
A g'éga cumain	1348		Ain clár bog "óéil"	1168	
			Ain ónoicín p'paoig	1164, 1384	

Figure 4.4 Portion of Table of Contents of Gaelic titles from Petrie's *Complete Collection of Irish Music* (1905).

CONCLUSION

Intermediaries between readers and the Irish literary tradition are the translators, editors, and authors who package it for our convenience: translators bring a text out of Irish into English; editors select a few texts from a great many, that we may quickly and easily get a sense of what an author, genre, or period was like; and authors re-invent an Irish text as an English text of comparable artistry, enabling those who cannot read an Irish poem to experience it at the closest possible remove.¹⁷²

In *Reliques*, Brooke mediated Gaelic culture in all three capacities: as translator, editor and author. She introduced Irish texts to an English speaking world, selected texts that represented a Golden Age of Ireland that could be woven into the fabric of the future, and composed an original poem in Irish style that re-invented ancient societal conventions to reflect enlightened ideals of equality.

As an antiquarian scholar, Brooke addressed characteristic elements of national identity: a prominent culture rooted in authenticity and antiquity; she substantiated the civility and genius of Irish cultural; and she advanced the idea that Ireland was capable of self-rule. In addition, she recreated the role of women as participants in that rule.

Brooke believed that women could work alongside men and indeed play an important role in Irish nationalism. She participated in national discourse, positioning herself as the only female in the male dominated literary context, and with the addition of her original poem *Mäon*, she assumed the traditionally male role of bard. In producing *Reliques*, Charlotte Brooke authored, according to R. A. Breatnach, the first work of Irish literary scholarship.¹⁷³

From her treasure of Irish poetry, she supplied iconography for future literary nationalism. As Welch affirmed, "...the importance of the *Reliques* in the development of Anglo-Irish literature can hardly be over-estimated."¹⁷⁴ He explains that "fundamental

‘growth-points’ for Anglo-Irish literature” combined the works from authors like O’Conor, who paved “a way forward for the new literature which led out of native culture, or...of a living literature [that] can be seen as a series of fresh beginnings,” and that of Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques*, that “made an advance upon the new, through its contact with the old.”¹⁷⁵ Brooke re-invented the old as a pattern for a new national identity.

The patriotic sentiment embedded in Charlotte’s work was used by future nationalists, though recombined to occlude her conciliatory sentiments. *Reliques* provided a platform on which the future United Irishmen built a tradition of literary nationalism.¹⁷⁶ As we will see in the next chapters, United Irish literature exploited the images of bards, harps, and bravery, drawing on literature such as *Reliques*. Mary Thuermer comments on the influence of Charlotte’s work on United Irish literature: “They certainly knew her work, in which she provided an important model for their own synthesis of numerous Irish cultural and literary traditions.”¹⁷⁷ She also suggests the likelihood of Charlotte’s contact with those who would later become United Irishmen, through the connections of two close friends: Mrs. Jane Hamilton, the mother of Archibald Hamilton Rowan, who joined the United Irishmen; and Countess Moira, who entertained many future United Irishmen in her home.¹⁷⁸

In 1795, the first, and only, issue of *Bolg an tSolair: or, The Gaelic Magazine*, published “a collection of choice Irish songs translated by Miss Brooke.”¹⁷⁹ Her legacy in providing a patriotic service to Ireland still remains. Her work contributed to the foundation of nationalism that eventually won Ireland its independence. Leerssen holds

the position that the national ideology holds more power in exploring the past than an interest in history:

[Of] spreading interest in Ireland's Gaelic past... it may be less the historiographical than the ideological significance of such activities that matters. The interest generated in Irish antiquity and Gaelic culture was to prove highly significant for the development of an iconography on which a national ideology could draw.¹⁸⁰

While the United Irishmen relied on revolutionary nationalism, Thomas Moore participated in the capacity of a romantic nationalist. Welch claims that *Reliques* “succeed[ed] in installing some part of the native heroic, Fenian, and love traditions in the poetry of the new literature Ireland had begun to envisage it might create.”¹⁸¹ Brooke provided romantic metaphors on which Thomas Moore “began to reshape these glories”¹⁸² for the future.

In 1816, at the forefront of a second Gaelic revival, Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour republished *Reliques*. The addition of his extensive *Memoirs of Miss Brooke* to the edition provided an account of her life not given elsewhere. As to the achievement of her work, Seymour sums it up this way:

To investigate the obsolete remains of other times, delivered in a language of which few have been hardy or inquisitive enough to attempt the acquisition; to elucidate those writings, and clothe them in the ungenial, I trust not ungraceful, vesture of modern rhyme, are achievements that might have staggered many a literary knight-errant and enterprising antiquary—yet all this has been attempted and accomplished by Miss Brooke, in her first poetical attempt, who stands forward “the avowed champion”¹⁸³ of her country's lovely muse.”

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- ¹ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, Appendix, 92-5.
- ² Breatnach, "Two Eighteenth-Century Scholars," 97.
- ³ Ashley, in *Reliques*, ix. Information about Charlotte Brooke can be found both in the introduction by Leonary Ashley and in the *Memoirs* by Aaron Crossley Seymour of the 1970 Facsimile edition of *Reliques of Irish Poetry*.
- ⁴ Seymour, in *Reliques*, vi.
- ⁵ Information about Henry Brooke can be found in Charles Henry Wilson's *Brookiana*, 1804.
- ⁶ O'Halloran was Charlotte's godfather. He was a Catholic ophthalmic surgeon and historian.
- ⁷ Seymour, in *Reliques*, xv.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, xvi.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii.
- ¹⁰ The play was about the liberation of Sweden from Denmark in 1521, led by Gustavus.
- ¹¹ Seymour, in *Reliques*, xvi.
- ¹² *Anthologia Hibernica*, Vol. III, 79. Baker states £800, 46. In either event, it was a considerable sum. The subscription price was 1s 6d.
- ¹³ R. W. C., "Brooke's 'Gustavus Vasa'," 461.
- ¹⁴ Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, British statesman and man of letters.
- ¹⁵ R. W. C., "Brooke's 'Gustavus Vasa'". *The Review of English Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 4 (Oct., 1925), 461.
- ¹⁶ Dr. Samuel Johnson, *A Complete vindication of the Licensers of the Stage from the malicious and scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brooke, author of Gustavus Vasa* (1739). Among statements made in this 31 page satire are: "Is a Man without Title, Pension, or Place, to suspect the Impartiality or the Judgment of those who are intrusted [sic] with the Administration of Publick Affairs?" (12); "Mr. Brooke was doubtless led into this improper Manner of acting, by an erroneous Notion that the Grant of a License was not an Act of Favour but of Justice, a Mistake into which he could not have fallen, but from a supine Inattention to the Design of the Statute, which was only to bring Poets into Subjection and Dependence, not to encourage good Writers, but to discourage all." (15); Answering Brooke's plea for a reason for the ban, which he never got, Dr. Johnson replied, "Unhappy would it be for Men in Power, were they always obliged to publish the Motives of their Conduct. What is Power but the Liberty of acting without being accountable?" (16), men of letters (20-21); Of "our unquiet Countrymen," who wish to be "admitted to the Knowledge of Affairs," he described as having "not the least Notion of the pleasing Tranquillity [sic] of Ignorance, nor can be brought to imagine that they are kept in the Dark, lest too much Light should hurt their Eyes." (29); He suggested suppressing schools, keeping children unable to write literature that would be a "Disturbance of their own Quiet, and the Interruption of ministerial Measures." (31); He concludes with: "The Licenser having his Authority thus extended will in Time enjoy the Title and the Salary, without the Trouble of exercising his Power, and the Nation will rest at length in ignorance and Peace." (31).
- ¹⁷ Seymour, xix.
- ¹⁸ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 304.
- ¹⁹ Seymour, in *Reliques*, xiv; Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 363.
- ²⁰ Thuyente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 82.
- ²¹ Seymour, in *Reliques*, xxiv.
- ²² *Ibid.*, xxvi.
- ²³ Among the translations was a song by Carolan on the death of his wife. Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 92-95.
- ²⁴ Seymour, in *Reliques*, liii. As a woman, she was not allowed to be a member.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, lv.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, lvi.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, lix.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, lx.

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- ²⁹ Ibid., lxix.
- ³⁰ Ibid., lxvi. Charlotte lived at Cottage in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Browne, whom she was fond of.
- ³¹ Ibid., lxx.
- ³² Ibid., lxv.
- ³³ Lynam, E. W., "The Irish Character in Print, 1571-1923," *Library*, vi, no. 4 (1 March 1924): 304.
- ³⁴ There were 13 pages of subscribers, several of whom became prominent United Irishmen who used her work in revolutionary literature.
- ³⁵ Michelle O'Riordan's *The Gaelic Mind and the Collapse of the Gaelic World*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1990), gives a detailed look at bardic poetry, its interpretations during different historical periods and defines who the composers of the poetry were.
- ³⁶ Kiberd, *Irish classics*, 619; Goldsmith mocked their "philistinism" (Ibid., 146).
- ³⁷ Brooke, *Reliques*, v.
- ³⁸ Ibid. Ariosto (1474-1533) was a well-known epic poet from Italy.
- ³⁹ Hufstader, "Beethoven's 'Irishe Lieder'," 345.
- ⁴⁰ Later Lady Morgan.
- ⁴¹ Sydney Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale*, (London: Phillips, 1807). Reprint: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Discussed also in Chapter 9 of this work.
- ⁴² One footnote was three pages long. The note concerning harper Denis Hempson was reproduced in full by Bunting in his 1840 volume, 73-5.
- ⁴³ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years 1852-1922*, ed. Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross 1974, 394.
- ⁴⁴ Lady Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, (Gerrards Cross 1970, originally published in 1902), 5.
- ⁴⁵ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 303.
- ⁴⁶ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 303; quoted by Tomás Ó Fiaich, 'The Great Controversy', in *The Gaelic League Idea*, ed. Seán Ó Tuama, Cork 1972, 67-8.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 619.
- ⁴⁸ Brooke, *Reliques*, x. Dr. Warner was the son of the Protestant historian Dr. Ferdinando Warner, author of Irish history quoted in Brooke's *Reliques*. Of Dr. Warner, she states, "whose historical justice, superior to modern prejudices, so generously asserted the dignity and character of Ireland, in a work which must ever reflect the highest honor on the candor, and philanthropy, as well as the abilities of its author." , x.
- ⁴⁹ Thomas Percy. *Reliques of English Poetry: consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, And other Pieces of our earlier Poets, (Chiefly of the Lyric kind.) Together with some few of later Date.* (London: Printed for J. Dodsley [etc.]), 1767. Second edition. First edition printed in 1765.
- ⁵⁰ Later Edward Bunting would cast Ireland as the parent country to England.
- ⁵¹ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 305.
- ⁵⁴ Wilson was the C.H.W. who authored *Brookiana*, (London: Printed for Phillips, 1804), a biography of Henry Brooke.
- ⁵⁵ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 25.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 17. Swift did not know Gaelic. He versified it from a literal translation given to him.
- ⁵⁷ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 363.
- ⁵⁸ Katharine M. Rogers, "Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists: Elizabeth Inchbald and Charlotte Smith". *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Autumn, 1977), 63-78.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 73.
- ⁶⁰ Charlotte Turner Smith, *Desmond*, (London: Printed for G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1792.) *Desmond* contains the poem *The Ode to the Poppy*, written by Hon. Mrs. O'Neil, a close friend of Charlotte Brooke. Seymour, in *Reliques*, lxix.
- ⁶¹ Rogers, "Inhibitions," 75.

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- ⁶² Seymour, in *Reliques*, cxxv-cxxvi.
- ⁶³ Ibid., xii.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., xiii.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., xxi.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., xxi.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., cxxv-cxxvi.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., xxiv.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., lxix.
- ⁷⁰ Brooke, *Reliques*, 326.
- ⁷¹ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 399.
- ⁷² Seymour, in *Reliques*, xl.
- ⁷³ This poem, according to Thunette, “presents a very heroic picture of the early Irish Fenian warriors and a moral about the value of people *uniting* in order to achieve victory against a common enemy” (*Harp Re-Strung*, 96).
- ⁷⁴ Brooke, *Reliques*, v.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., vii.
- ⁷⁶ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1818, 320.
- ⁷⁷ Davis, *Music*, 84.
- ⁷⁸ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 363.
- ⁷⁹ Leerssen, 346. The Gaelic past was a “mainspring of ‘Irishness’ in Anglo-Irish literature” (Ibid., 364).
- ⁸⁰ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 304.
- ⁸¹ Brooke, *Reliques*, 3-8.
- ⁸² Ibid., 4.
- ⁸³ This work stood at the forefront of a movement to preserve ancient poetry and later Irish music.
- ⁸⁴ This is a direct statement to Macpherson, who did not produce the original poetry of his *Fingal* “translations.”
- ⁸⁵ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.
- ⁸⁶ Kenneth F. Ganz, “Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques of Irish Poetry* and the Ossianic Controversy”, *Studies in English*, 20 (1940: July 8), 138.
- ⁸⁷ See Figure 4.1.
- ⁸⁸ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.
- ⁸⁹ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, 303.
- ⁹⁰ Pittock, *Celtic Identity*, 36-7. See also Maria Tymoczko and Colin Ireland’s “Language and Tradition in Ireland: Prolegomena,” in Maria Tymoczko and Colin Ireland, eds. *Language and Tradition in Ireland: Continuities and Displacements*, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 9, 16-20.
- ⁹¹ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 2.
- ⁹² Brooke, *Reliques*, vi.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 3.
- ⁹⁵ Donna Wong, “‘Of Irish Extraction’: Translation, Selection and Re-invention”. *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2004): 213-224. Wong illustrates the effects of societal convention on translations by contrasting three separate settings of *Táin Bó Cuilnge*, a Gaelic poem that would have been accessible to Charlotte Brooke: Lady Gregory (Sydney Owenson), 1902; Lucy Winifred Faraday, 1904; Thomas Kinsella, 1969. The first two were written during a period promoting Irish nobility; thus the poetry was sanitized. Kinsella, writing at a later date was able to fill in the gaps of flying dung that, Wong states, even “apart from the weighty motive of cultural nationalism...were not topics that polite women discussed,” and had they, their publisher would not have published it. (217) Maria Tymoczko also comments on this poem in *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (St. Jerome Publishing, 1999). “*Táin Bó*

Cuilnge,” she claims, “was an embarrassment. It could not be translated fully and accurately if the political aims to shift the image of the Irish and to display and embrace their ancient and noble culture were to be achieved. There are serious political problems with TBC as a document of cultural nationalism; one can sum up the problems somewhat irreverently by saying that the greatest Irish hero tale is unliterary, raunchy, and weird.” (66)

⁹⁶ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 3.

⁹⁷ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁹⁹ Seymour, in *Reliques*, v-vi.

¹⁰⁰ Brooke, *Reliques*, 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ In the year of the world 3950.

¹⁰⁶ Brooke, *Reliques*, 8

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Nash, Catherine. “Embodied Irishness: Gender, Sexuality and Irish Identities”, in Brian Graham, ed., *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. London: Routledge, 1997, 112. For quote, see Chapter 8, ““Ancient Irish Music’ 1796,” of this work.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Tymoczko and Ireland maintain these poems not only “contrast the industrial cultures of Europe,” but they also preserve the material and spiritual elements described by Chatterjee in *Fragments*: “a neolithic material culture” along with “ancient Celtic ritual and religious patterns.” They also indicate their ability to “perpetuate the consciousness of an aristocratic past, even in the context of their peasant transmission” (Tymoczko, *Gaelic Mind*, 3).

¹¹³ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 153.

¹¹⁴ Davis, *Music*, 49.

¹¹⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 260.

¹¹⁶ These memoirs are recorded in Fox’s *Annals* and Donal O’Sullivan’s *Life Times*.

¹¹⁷ Donal O’Sullivan relates a story about M’Cabe tricking Carolan into believing he was dead and was touched by the grief Carolan exhibited (*Life Times*, 49); See also Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, Appendix, 91-92; 1818, 319-320.

¹¹⁸ Brooke, *Reliques*, 223.

¹¹⁹ The story is recorded in *Historical Memoirs* (1786), Appendix, 96-97.

¹²⁰ Brooke, *Reliques*, 223-4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹²² Luke Gibbons, “From Ossian to O’Carolan: The Bard as Separatist Symbol,” in *From Gaelic to Romantic: Ossianic Translations*, (Fiona Stafford and Howard Gaskill, eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1998), 240.

¹²³ Patrick Linden taught Patrick Quin, one of the Belfast harpers of 1792. Quin was also the harper who performed Carolan’s music during the Carolan tribute at the Rotunda in 1809. The fourth song in the collection was “The Maid of the Valley,” to which Thomas Moore set his lyrics “Go Where Glory Waits Thee.”

¹²⁴ Brooke, *Reliques*, 247. Brooke showed her fidelity to the text by a literal translation as well as the poetic translation—showing that hers was more faithful than Walker’s.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 251-2.

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- ¹²⁶ Ibid., 242.
- ¹²⁷ Ibid.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid., 243.
- ¹²⁹ Ibid., 244.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid.
- ¹³¹ Ibid.
- ¹³² Ibid., 246.
- ¹³³ Ibid., 253.
- ¹³⁴ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 34.
- ¹³⁵ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 246-50, 375. May McCann explains the political potency of *Aisling* poetry in "Music and Politics in Ireland: The Specificity of the Folk Revival in Belfast," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 4, Special Issue: Presented to Peter Cooke (1995): 51-75. She states "*Aisling* poetry lamented the decline of Gaelic and Catholic power, and ideas of a potentially subversive nature ran through the Gaelic written and oral tradition in the period 1700 to 1850. This popular tradition was spread around the island by a class of itinerant bards, teachers and storytellers, most of them literate and acting as entertainers, teachers, instructors and news-bringers to an illiterate but receptive population. These purveyors of subversion were capable of quickly turning treasonable sentiments into a more acceptable appeal to theories of civil rights depending on their audience" (55).
- ¹³⁶ Brooke, *Reliques*, 326. Craftine was a legendary figure known for his poetry, and noted by O'Halloran and other Irish historians.
- ¹³⁷ Ibid., 325-30.
- ¹³⁸ Mäon was only allowed to live because "the natural weakness of his frame seemed to indicate a speedy dissolution." Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 33.
- ¹³⁹ This alluded to the Irish flight to France in the seventeenth century and the continued support of Irish soldiers in their battles against England especially. The Irish joined the French again the year this work was published, helping to fight their revolution.
- ¹⁴⁰ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 34; 1818, 33.
- ¹⁴¹ In Walker's account, there was no French Princess.
- ¹⁴² Brooke, *Reliques*, 362.
- ¹⁴³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 364.
- ¹⁴⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 19.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 20-21.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 33.
- ¹⁵⁰ Brooke, *Reliques*, 315.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid., 329.
- ¹⁵² Ibid., 326.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid., 327.
- ¹⁵⁴ Ibid., vii.
- ¹⁵⁵ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 4.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.
- ¹⁵⁹ George Steiner, *After Babel*, 1975, 298.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid., xiv.

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- ¹⁶¹ To Brooke, the Gaelic typeface represented an offering of conciliation; to later nationalists, separatism.
- ¹⁶² Brooke, *Reliques*, 229.
- ¹⁶³ More discussion on the importance of Gaelic language in cultural nationalism is found in Chapter 6 of this work, "Literary Nationalism."
- ¹⁶⁴ Lynam, "Irish Character," 289.
- ¹⁶⁵ Deane, *Strange Country*, 101. This type was used from 1789-1815 (Lyman, "Irish Characters," 306).
- ¹⁶⁶ Ibid., Deane claims that "an Irish typeface was itself, for Hardiman and for many others, before and since, an integral part of that cultural debate." "Hardiman" type is correctly called "Figgins" type after the foundry.
- ¹⁶⁷ George Petrie (1789-1866) was a cultural archaeologist and successor to Edward Bunting's Irish music another antiquarian discussed with Bunting's 1840 volume of *Ancient Irish Music*. Petrie was an artist who is believed to have designed Gaelic type (Lyman, "Irish Characters," 214). Also Deane, *Strange Country*, 106.
- ¹⁶⁸ George Petrie, *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. Cooper, David, ed. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002).
- ¹⁶⁹ Petrie, George, ed. *Petrie Complete Irish Music: 1,582 Traditional Melodies*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publication, 2003.
- ¹⁷⁰ Lynam, "Irish Character," 286.
- ¹⁷¹ Deane, *Strange Country*, 103-4.
- ¹⁷² Donna Wong, "'Of Irish Extraction': Translation, Selection and Re-invention". *Irish Studies Review*, 12, no. 2, (2004): 213.
- ¹⁷³ Breatnach, "Two Eighteenth-Century Scholars," 97.
- ¹⁷⁴ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 42.
- ¹⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁶ The Linen Hall library and Society for Promoting Knowledge still remain in Belfast and house Brooke's *Reliques*.
- ¹⁷⁷ Thunten, *Harp Re-Strung*, 87.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ashley, ix; Thunten, *Harp Re-Strung*, 96; Davis, *Music*, 91-2.
- ¹⁸⁰ Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 293.
- ¹⁸¹ Welch, *Verse Translation*, 42.
- ¹⁸² Ibid.
- ¹⁸³ It is interesting to note, that while Seymour emphasized Brooke's domestic attributes, his choice to include the description of her as "champion" supports a chivalric and masculine image.

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HARP MUSIC AND IRISH NATIONALISM:
TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN'S MUSICAL LEGACY (1760-1840)

VOLUME II

By

Kelly Lynn Keller Yoakam

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Musicology

2009

CHAPTER 5

The History and Ideology Of the United Irishmen

The purpose of this chapter, more than merely recounting United Irish history, is to provide the context in which United Irish literature, particularly Bunting's anthologies were written and to connect Bunting's work to a larger understanding of Irish nationalism. The facts of Bunting's life, his musical accomplishments and anthologies give the deceptive appearance of political disinterest. They were published as anthologies of Irish national music aimed at parlor musicians, yet these volumes illustrate the way Bunting participated in cultural nationalism during three distinct political periods in Ireland's history: at the height of the United Irish rebellions (1796), after the Act of Union (1809), and after Catholic Emancipation (1840). In each of these volumes, Bunting expressed cultural nationalism in different ways, as explained in the following

chapters. That his volumes appeared at strategic times in Ireland's political history was no accident. Correspondence in letters between Edward Bunting and Dr. James MacDonnell,¹ surrounding the publication of the 1840 volume, express the nationalistic motivation of the volume.

The point is that Bunting, despite his lack of involvement in the United Irish organization, designed these volumes as insertions to the discourse about Irish national identity. Though the presentation of each volume changed to address the changing political culture, these volumes exist strictly by the United Irish initiative established at the Meeting of Belfast Harpers' in 1792, a performance venue of cultural nationalism.

Bunting's first volume, linked with United Irish literary tradition, expressed a concept of Irishness, congruent with United Irish ideology, embodied in its music. Bunting deliberately inserted himself into the discourse through Irish music, which had been, and still is the primary defining characteristic of Irish culture.

Though Bunting was never a member of the United Irishmen, it is important to establish his strong connections with leading United Irish patriots. He was not merely acquainted with Wolfe Tone, but shared meals with him, engaged in political debates with him,² and was one of the few intimates who shared the last evening with Tone and his family before Tone's exile.³ His relationship with Henry Joy McCracken was even more intimate. Bunting came to live with the McCrackens as an orphan when he was eleven years old. He lived as a member of that household for thirty years. It is important, as we examine Bunting and his works in the following chapters, to keep in mind the highly charged patriotic context in which he moved.

Bunting was highly influenced by Dr. James McDonnell, a leading Doctor in Belfast and who organized the Meeting of Belfast Harpers that was held concurrently with Bastille Day, celebrating the anniversary of the French Revolution. Though neither man affiliated themselves with a political organization, their lives revolved around creating and sustaining cultural nationalism. In his dairy, Wolfe Tone called MacDonnell "the Hypocrite"⁴ by not publicly joining, believing him to be more of a patriot than many who made stronger claims; this epithet must also be, at least in part, true of Bunting.

BACKGROUND TO THE UNITED IRISH MOVEMENT

The first part of this study saw the foundation of an Irish nation laid by Anglo-Irish writers. They brought forward elements of ancient Gaelic culture that countered the negative English stereotypes holding Ireland in a subordinate position. Though these elements are entrenched in Irish identity today, that was not necessarily the case at this time. Gaelic culture, confined mostly to the west and south and with connotations of peasant or lower class, had finally succumbed to English ways and was rapidly changing. The smaller that circle became, and the less threatening it was to those outside, the more attractive it became as a defining element of Irishness.

Non-Gaelic nationalists continued the tradition of adopting Gaelic culture as their own, and became proponents of preserving that culture. In that context, they could preserve what elements they chose and recontextualize them in ways that validated the Irish nation.

The “nation” was the entity for which nationalists hoped to motivate the people. The foundation for independence was found in the framework of identifying with the nation above all else. That did not discount other forms of identities, such as religious affiliation, but the premise the nationalists presented was that to liberate the “nation” would be to acquire a greater freedom to express other identifying characteristics (i.e. Catholicism).

Imagining an Irish nation though, was not as straightforward as it might seem. There was confusion in the minds of those living in Ireland concerning a national identity. The late eighteenth-century generation of Anglo-Irish found themselves culturally distanced from both the Old Irish, those whom they were planted to replace,

and England, who had virtually relegated them to the role of colonized Irish, rather than that of colonizer, leaving them subject to restrictive English legislation. The ambiguity concerning Ireland's relationship to England complicated their feelings of displacement as well: was Ireland a separate sister-state, equal with England as Molyneux⁵ espoused, evidenced by her own Parliament; was she an English province; or was she a colony, as the English and Irish Parliaments were treating her?⁶

Nationalists were determined to present Ireland as a culturally separate nation, having just as much right to govern themselves as England did, though serving the same monarch. Wolfe Tone adopted the sister-state ideal when he proclaimed, "The King of England is also the King of Ireland."⁷ Anglo-Irish antiquarian writings were used to substantiate this cultural separation.

While the antiquarians of the 1780s sought to *define* Irishness, nationalists, and particularly the United Irishmen, sought to *claim* it for all of Ireland. Rallying people for independence rested on convincing them that they were indeed an Irish nation, and not an extension of England.

The United Irishmen determined to unite all religions and classes in Ireland under the collective identity of Irishness. In order to do so, they resolved to introduce the Irish to their identity as a member of a unique culture by both preserving remnants of Irishness found in Gaelic music and poetry as well as composing their own writings for widespread distribution. Utilizing the dual literary goals of preserving existing Gaelic cultural and publishing original literature, the United Irish combined the past with the present to create a "new" national interest based on preserving an "existing past."

So important was the distribution of political literature, that the United Irishmen set up their own printing presses and marketed their own form of radical nationalism. Deirdre Lindsay contends that in the early years of the United Irishmen, they were content with having just a few hundred members as long as they could work together with “like-minded reform groups” such as the “Volunteer corps, the Catholic Committee, Masonic lodges, Presbyterian congregations, and town, parish and country meetings to pronounce critically on current political arrangements.”⁸

United Irish ideology and strategy are important to this study because in each step of the process, the validation of the Irish nation was crucial, and a large part of that validation rests on antiquarian imagery of bardic tradition—the bard, his harp and his music. Specific ways in which they incorporated these images are examined in the next chapter, which focuses on United Irish literature.

This chapter describes the origin of the United Irishmen and their initial ideology. Understanding who they were and what they were trying to accomplish gives a fuller meaning to the literary works they produced and a better understanding of the symbols they used in those works and in the society.

While there were many influential nationalists in the United Irishmen, there were two who most embodied the structure and ideology of the Society: William Drennan (1754-1820),⁹ a physician and poet, who conceived the organization, and Wolfe Tone (1763-1798), an attorney and writer. Both were products of liberal Belfast politics, former Volunteers and active proponents of Parliamentary Reform.

DRENNAN'S DREAM (1791)

“For without enthusiasm, nothing great was done, or will be done.”

William Drennan

In 1789, William Drennan¹⁰ moved from Belfast to Dublin. Seeing the first influential changes in Parliament, which were collectively achieved by the Volunteers, many like Drennan had hoped for further reform. Though Home Rule promised hope of an Irish Parliament that would govern in Ireland's best interest, the power structure remained the same; those in Parliament still yielded to the pressure of English influence and members of Parliament continued to see themselves as extensions of the English legislature.

It is important to remember, that for Ireland to obtain any semblance of self-government, be it a separate Parliament or total independence; it was necessary for the populace to envision themselves as part of an Irish nation, not an extension of England.

For those Scotch-Irish in Belfast, their liberal views came with them from Scotland. The mindset of the Scottish Enlightenment and New Light movements¹¹ played a major role in the ideology of Ulster politics. We will take a closer look at that movement and how it influenced Irish nationalists below. Of course, these new ideas generally circulated among the elites of society, those who had access to higher education and cosmopolitan social circles, men like William Drennan.

Still seeking radical reform in Parliament, and witnessing the political influence of the Volunteers declining, Drennan envisioned another, more influential Society that would promote reform and Republicanism. With this view in mind, William Drennan sent a

letter to his brother-in-law, Samuel McTier of Belfast.¹²

This letter is an example of the continued sense of patriotism that intensified between the time of the formidable Volunteer era and the establishment of the United Irishmen. Here we see a blueprint for what, five months later, became the Society of United Irishmen:

Dublin, 21 May 1791

I should much desire that a Society were instituted in this city having much of the secrecy and somewhat of the ceremonial of Freemasonry,¹³ ... A benevolent conspiracy—a plot for the people—no *Whig Club*¹⁴—no party title—the Brotherhood its name—the Rights of Men and the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number its end—its general end Real Independence to Ireland, and Republicanism its particular purpose...

This quote gives examples of elements used by United Irishmen to create solidarity among the people of Ireland and advance their agenda for Irish Independence. “Real Independence to Ireland” became the focus for the growth of nationalism, though the independence meant at this time was legislative independence, with Ireland existing as a sister state to England, serving the same monarch. This was the image that Charlotte Brooke used in her *Reliques*, going so far as to cast Ireland in the role of “elder sister.”¹⁵

Based on his experience with the success and organization of the Volunteers, Drennan believed a secret society uniting all men in a “brotherhood” with Republicanism as its aim would ultimately result in Irish independence.¹⁶ But how does one motivate disparate groups to align themselves in a way to accomplish so lofty a goal? Stated in the first sentence of his letter, Drennan believed the means to be “strick[ing] the soul through the senses.” Here, Drennan foreshadowed the way nationalists combined politics and art in ways to engage the masses. In his letter, Drennan listed four components of a fraternity he believed would capture the senses: The secrecy of a society, ceremony in the

society, publications from within the “Brotherhood”, and the development of a symbol embodying their purpose to be “worn...next to the heart.”

Both secrecy and ceremony create deep bonds between group members, having a great impact on their beliefs and actions. As part of the ceremonial bond, Drennan proposed a “[d]eclaration, a solemn and religious compact with each other to be signed by every member.” Of secrecy, Drennan recommended having, “so much secrecy as might communicate curiosity, uncertainty, expectation to the minds of surrounding men”; along with secrecy he advised “so much impressive and affecting ceremony in its internal economy as without impeding real business might strike the soul through the senses.” Drennan did not believe that they could unite large numbers of members solely on intellectual arguments. One can reason one’s way to ideals, but it is not, as Gellner stresses, until the heart is engaged that men take action.¹⁷

The reason for secrecy, Drennan stated, not only gives it “greater energy within, [and] greater influence abroad.” But also it “conceals members whose professions, etc., would make concealment expedient until the trial comes.” The United Irishmen did not begin as a secret society, but after showing such signs of strength as to become a threat to English power, authorities searched out members to arrest and forced the society to move underground. Such nationalists as Dr. James MacDonnell,¹⁸ Edward Bunting,¹⁹ and Thomas Moore,²⁰ perhaps for this reason, though having strong ties with United Irish members, did not affiliate themselves with this or any other political society.

Drennan illustrated the great impact he believed literature to have when he proposed “Brotherhood” literature as the means by which to accomplish the goals of the society: “The means are manifold, publication always coming from one of the

Brotherhood, and no other designation.” The use of publications to move a “Brotherhood,” was a familiar concept to Drennan. Volunteers made use of print media in the form of such things as songs and pamphlets. Dissemination of print literature developed in the eighteenth century and was used to rouse souls to political fervor. The United Irishmen established their own printing presses to publish their own material, censored by them alone. They published material from circulars to newspapers, magazines to songbooks. These works looked both backward to a glorious Gaelic history, and forward to the promise of a collective glorious “Irish” future. While used to great advantage by the Volunteers, the United Irishmen would develop motivational and symbolic nationalistic literature into an art form.

The “symbol,”²¹ Drennan suggests, to be “worn by every [one] of them round their body next the heart,” is of particular interest in this study. That symbol, as Drennan states was to embody “the chief and leading principles” of the movement. It would also be a constant reminder of other combined aspects of the organization; the secrecy, the ceremony, the Brotherhood pact, and the message of the printed literature would be embodied in that symbol. At the sight of it, the emotional impact of all the other aspects would be evoked as it “[struck] the soul through the senses.” Ultimately, the symbol chosen to embody United Irish ideology—the independence of Ireland founded on the happiness and rights of men—was the harp.

Drennan hoped for the society to reach beyond the boundaries of Ireland to interact with and establish bonds with proponents of republicanism from France, England, and America. Ahead of his time, he wanted to “cement the scattered and

shifting sand of republicanism into a body,” a body collected from and composed of members from other nations.

Drennan ended the letter recognizing that, though McTier was not politically a republican, he believed McTier would find no other option but to finally support the cause—which he did in a prominent way. McTier became a founding member of the United Irishmen in Belfast, as Drennan did in Dublin.

As a poet and writer, Drennan produced a number of pamphlets for the United Irishman. In 1794, Drennan was the first United Irish leader arrested. He was charged and tried for seditious libel for his political pamphlets and speeches to the United Irishmen in Dublin. He represented himself and was acquitted.²²

THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN: 14 OCTOBER 1791

Drennan was one of many seeking to reform Ireland's Parliament. There was a large contingent at Trinity College who were, as Fox put it, "seething with the spirit of insurrection."²³ Wolfe Tone and his friend Thomas Russell both adopted a similar philosophy while they were students at Trinity College.

On 14 October 1791, six prominent men from Belfast established the United Irishmen: William Sinclair, Samuel McTier (Drennan's brother-in-law), Samuel Neilson, Robert and William Simms, Gilbert McIlveen, and William Tennent. Wolfe Tone and Thomas Russell were sworn in before the first meeting held on the 18th.²⁴ Other United Irishmen included Henry Joy McCracken, Henry Haslett, Thomas McCabe, Thomas Pearce and Henry Joy. With the exception of Wolfe Tone and Thomas Russell, all of the members were Presbyterians; Tone and Russell were Anglican, products of the Protestant Ascendancy they hoped to overthrow.

For the first meeting of the Society of United Irishmen, Wolfe Tone drafted the "Declaration and Resolutions of the Society of United Irishmen of Belfast."²⁵ The declaration, a much abbreviated form of Tone's *Argument in Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, contains strong aspirations of unifying all the people to bring about a government where the theory of the "rights of man" were "substantiated by practice," and where "the common sense and common interests of mankind" ended "absurd and oppressive forms" of governing.

The "heavy grievance" brought forth was this:

WE HAVE NO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT; we are ruled by Englishmen, and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is the interest of another country, whose instrument is corruption, and whose strength is the

weakness of Ireland; and these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country, as means to seduce and to subdue the honesty and the spirit of her representatives in the legislature.

Asserted in the declaration is the belief that the tyranny of English laws could be resisted “solely by *unanimity, decision, and spirit in the people.*” It had been almost a decade since Home Rule had been established; yet the influence of English power still controlled Irish Parliament. In order to break that power, United Irish determined to reach all of the people, all classes and religions, to convince them that it was in their best interest to put prejudices aside and unite for the good of Ireland. The United Irishmen made strong efforts to present an Irish “nation,” to which they all belonged. This was an ambitious goal, as there had been racial and religious factions for generations.

By uniting all groups, the United Irishmen believed that the resistance against English legislative tyranny could be “exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously.” They planned to enact reforms constitutionally; plans for revolution were not entertained at the outset.

Parliamentary reform included “reform of the representation of the people in Parliament”: “AN EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT”, which included Irishmen of “every *religious* persuasion,” which clearly referred to Catholics, who were banned from serving in Parliament.

The following three Resolutions give an excellent summation of the Declaration:

First, Resolved, That the weight of English influence in the Government of this country is so great, as to require a cordial union among ALL THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties, and the extension of our commerce.
Second, That the sole constitutional mode by which this influence can be opposed, is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in Parliament.

Third, that no reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include Irishmen of every *religious* persuasion.

These nationalists believed that the remedy for the condition of Ireland was Parliamentary reform, and that “With a Parliament thus reformed, every thing is easy; without it, nothing can be done.” They encouraged the formation of similar societies across Ireland, with the goal of promoting “constitutional knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the rights of man through all sects and denominations of Irishmen.” They were convinced that when the people succeeded in uniting, that feeling “their own weight” would “secure that power which theory has already admitted as their portion.”

Tone ended the Declaration with the verdict that if the people were not provoked enough at that time to alleviate the situation they were under that they deserved “to forfeit their pretensions FOR EVER.”²⁶

All signed the Declaration.

Having had their first meeting and their Declaration in place, the United Irish influence impacted Ireland so strongly that the 1790s in Ireland are dubbed the decade of the United Irishmen.²⁷

BELFAST: CENTER OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN

From mid eighteenth century through the first part of the nineteenth century, Belfast was the center of Irish political and militant activity. Belfast experienced rapid growth during the 1770s and 80s, thanks in large part to its commercial port. They traded not only with England, but with France and the American colonies as well. In the late seventeenth-century French Protestants fleeing persecution immigrated to Belfast and there introduced the linen and weaving trades in cottage industries. The economic situation of Belfast created a large middle class society. Primarily English Anglicans settled there, but because of the Ulster Plantations many Scottish Presbyterians had immigrated to Belfast and established businesses there as well. They brought their ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment,²⁸ which permeated Belfast society and formed the underpinnings of nationalism.

There were three major religious sectors in Belfast the nationalists hoped to unite: the Anglicans, the Catholics and the Presbyterians, and within these groups there were sub-sectors.

The Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy was the class of privilege. They had been settled during the seventeenth century to supplant the Catholic Irish. In the first part of this study, we saw how, by the mid eighteenth century, they experienced a significant change in social position. First, they began to feel orphaned as English laws, primarily regarding trade, burdened Irish economy; as a result, they began to shift from identifying themselves with England to identifying themselves with Ireland. In order to counter the racial heritage of supplanter and create for themselves an Irish legacy, they became scholars of an Irish history that the Irish themselves had largely neglected. They inserted

themselves in Irish-Gaelic history as the voice of a dying culture to be restored in the form of the Irish “nation” to which they belonged.

Though they identified themselves as Irish, the Anglo-Irish did not want to lose their position of power, materially or legislatively. Though there were those who espoused the liberal views of an egalitarian society, with Parliamentary representation for all, the fear of a Catholic uprising to reclaim family lands was a deterrent to many.

In the United Irish uprisings, the Anglo-Irish were “the revolutionary minority.”²⁹ “What they wanted above all else,” Beckett points out, “was to retain their own supremacy in Ireland.”³⁰ Wolfe Tone and Thomas Russell were among the few Anglicans who risked all for the chance to establish Republicanism in Ireland.

The Catholics had received some relief from the harsh Penal Laws; yet, in addition to being heavily taxed to support the church that enacted the Laws against them, they remained an unrepresented majority in Parliament, with no voice to fight for them. From the beginning of the century, thinkers like Swift felt no conflict about the exclusion of Catholics from Parliament. Since Ireland was an Anglican state, they considered “the Irish people” whom the constitution represented to be Anglican, implying that all others were virtually “stateless.”³¹

The religious sanctions against Catholics and lack of representation created deep resentments. Beckett explains the reason why these resentments were more pronounced in Ireland than in most other countries:

The resentment that the memory of this ascendancy can arouse in Ireland, even now, does not spring simply from the fact that it was a narrow and selfish ruling class. In this respect it did not differ essentially from other eighteenth-century ruling classes... What made the Irish situation a source of such long-enduring bitterness was the existence of a religious barrier

between rulers and ruled, a barrier so deepened and intensified by the wars of the preceding century that it superseded all others.³²

Though this barrier erected by England brought about abuse toward Catholics, they were in no position, even as a majority, to rise up en masse against the English. Earlier outbreaks of organized violence by Catholics such as the Whiteboys were not politically motivated; they were scattered, localized, and directed toward landlords or the tithe-proctor. It wasn't until the abuse of power in France motivated the Catholics to rise up against the monarch in the French revolution, that nationalists began to consider the possibility of Catholic Republicans. Up until that point, Irish nationalists were uncertain whether Catholics would be likely rebels or not.

Though many Catholics joined the uprisings, there was never a strong sense of solidarity between them and their Protestant "Brothers." Their union resembled oil and water; they were in the same bottle, but never completely mixed. However, Catholics wanted Emancipation, and they needed a Protestant voice to champion it.

Presbyterians, as we have said, formed the majority of the United Irishmen. They were rooted in the Scottish Reformation that informed the Scottish Enlightenment. Their philosophy easily converged with that of Thomas Paine in his *Rights of Man* and *Common Sense*.

The concept of an egalitarian government, introduced to Scotland by George Buchanan (1506-1582) and reinforced by John Knox (c. 1510-1572), argues that God endowed the "people" of a nation with authority: authority for direct access to Him and His scriptures; authority to appoint a governor to manage state affairs, but also the authority to remove that governor at will if he failed to govern effectively. The effects of this shift of power to the public was monumental.

In monarchies like England and France, the King's primary claim to the throne was that he was "God-ordained." In this type of culture, where religious and governmental structures were intertwined, where the Pope and monarch were considered God's representatives on earth; complete obeisance to the established church was not only advantageous but of eternal consequence, and set the stage for steep hierarchical systems in government and society.

Scottish Reformers transformed that embedded belief system by maintaining that "God-ordained authority" derived from mediators like priests or monarchs should be transferred to "God-ordained authority" derived from the people. The effects of this shift touched every arena of life, including the judicial,³³ legislative, economic,³⁴ and educational.³⁵

The Presbyterian belief that all people had a right to access the scripture prompted the growth of an educational system that reached even into the lower classes. This was a major reason for the high literacy rate in Scotland and northern Ireland. The emphasis on education in Scotland produced major universities where many in northern Ireland went to study and as a result many adopted their democratic ideals.

Working class literacy expanded the political base by giving classes other than elites political and philosophical currency. Where in previous societies, philosophical thought was considered property of the elite and clerics, during the eighteenth century the common man had access to and was encouraged to participate in discussions of philosophy.³⁶

It was the high level of literacy that gave patriots wider access to the masses. And they knew that to obtain independence for Ireland, the masses needed to hunger for

concepts like liberty and freedom, rights that had motivated those in America and France. The masses needed to experience an “enlightenment” that in previous generations was reserved for the elite.

Due in part to United Irish literature, the masses would now be “enlightened” to new possibilities in social hierarchies, “enlightened” to a new concept of equity among classes, and those based on inherent liberties granted each individual by God. The claims for prominence, as “ordained by God”, of monarchs and Pope were now being challenged by an “ordinance from God” which shifted power to the people.³⁷ No longer would “enlightened” subjects submit unquestionably to tyrannical rule as if it were from God; they would choose citizenship born out of liberty. They could now believe that the power to choose an appropriate government belonged to them, an inalienable right assigned to them by God.

UNITED IRISH IDEOLOGY

To reach the goal of Irish liberty, the United Irishmen knew that they had to create one nation out of disparate religious and racial groups, some members of which harbored deep animosities toward each other. Inherent in that creation was the Anglo-Irish tradition of preserving an “existing past.”

The Society chose as one of its main goals, preservation: preservation of the Irish nation and the symbols that validated its existence. Confirming the existence of an Irish nation was believed to validate the rights of that nation to govern themselves. The constitution enacted in 1783, giving Irish Parliament jurisdiction of Ireland was an on-paper-only constitution; the reality of the Irish condition remained virtually the same. Freedoms given created a resistance in a Parliament whose purse strings were dynamically affected by England. To stimulate public interest in reform, the United Irish published a reprint of Wolfe Tone’s *Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, examining the continuance of the Irish Parliament to legislate on England’s behalf, and encouraging plans for remediation of that state of affairs. The pamphlet, originally written for the Catholic Committee in August 1791, outlined the restrictions placed on the Catholics with regard to the Penal Laws, as well as economic restrictions placed on Ireland as a result of English laws. The pamphlet caught the attention of other radicals, especially Presbyterians from the Belfast area.³⁸

WOLFE TONE LAYS THE FOUNDATION (1791)

“Ireland has no National Government”
–Wolfe Tone

Wolfe Tone shaped much of the United Irish ideology. His essay *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*³⁹ drew many patriots to the society, and gave a clear explanation of his position with regard to national reform.⁴⁰ It so much embodied their ideals that it was reprinted “by order of the United Irishmen” soon after their formation.⁴¹

Tone, a former Volunteer looking back on the great accomplishments of the Volunteers in establishing Home Rule in 1782, described what many sadly came to realize after almost a decade of stagnant reforms: that Irish Parliament continued to serve English interests. Looking at what existed, Tone defined “Government” *not* as what the Legislature was “as it exist[ed] in theory”, but as men from both England and Ireland, “some of them members of our Legislature, and others not, who possess supreme power in this country.”⁴² Tone recognized these men of power and understood them to be ones for whom economic interests in England enhanced their own personal interests.

Tone viewed Home Rule as a disaster; he claimed that Ireland had “no National Government,” arguing that it fared better before 1782, for at least “it was not pretended that we had.”⁴³ Though modern history records the pressure from the Volunteers to enact Home Rule, it is clear from Tone’s lengthy address that it was considered, at the time, a successful “Revolution.” Tone challenged the success stating, “The Revolution of 1782, was a Revolution which enabled Irishmen to sell at a much higher price their honour, their integrity, and the interests of their country.”⁴⁴

This “Revolution” he claimed, “was simply the means of doing good according to law, without recurring to the great rule of nature, which is above all positive statutes.”⁴⁵

The “great rule of nature”⁴⁶ that he talks about is very much based on Scottish Enlightenment principles and Thomas Paine’s “Rights of Man.”⁴⁷ The philosophy of “common sense” and “inalienable rights” such as liberty, shaped Tone’s thinking; he was after all, an Ulster resident surrounded by Scotch-Irish who were imbued with New Light philosophy.

What angered Tone intensely was the fact that the Irish Parliament, though given token power to rule Ireland, did not look to Irish interests, but continued to be influenced by the powerful whose interests were enhanced by ties to England. He saw no changes after 1782, maintaining that the situation had become worse:

The power remained in the hands of our enemies, again to be exerted for our ruin, with this difference, that formerly we had our distresses, our injuries, and our insults gratis, at the hands of England; but now we pay very dearly to receive the same with aggravation though the hands of Irishmen.⁴⁸

Tone attempted to reconcile the sincerity of the leaders with their lack of follow through, yet congratulated the spirit with which they fought. Though he recognized that many of the leaders acted “by a sincere regard to [their] interest and [their] freedom,”⁴⁹ he goes on to say that “no Irishman of an independent spirit,...can acquiesce in *as final*.”⁵⁰

Tone stated clearly that the condition of Ireland, being ruled by “another government”, should be resolved and with it the emancipation for Roman Catholics. Tone could not conceive that a government honoring the “rights of man” could exist where a large sector, much less a majority, had no representation, regardless of religious or political ideology. Tone clarified his grievance:

My argument is simply this: That Ireland, as deriving her government from another country, requires a strength in the people, which may enable them if

necessary, to counteract the influence of that government, should it ever be, as it indisputable has been, exerted, to thwart her prosperity.⁵¹

He gave his plan for constitutional reform while attaching Catholic reform to the plan:

That this strength may be most constitutionally acquired, and safely and peaceably exerted through the medium of a Parliamentary Reform: And finally, that no Reform is honourable, practicable, efficacious or just, which does not include as a fundamental principle, the extension of elective franchise to the Roman Catholics, under modifications hereafter to be mentioned.⁵²

It is important to note here that Tone never questioned the King. He saw no conflict between “the King and his subjects;” the dispute was between “the government and the people of England, and the government and people of Ireland, in matter of trade and commerce,”⁵³ and in that, Tone indicted both Parliaments for their neglect of Irish interests.

Despite English fears that Ireland desired sovereign independence from the beginning, that was not the case. Tone did write later in his memoirs that he desired separatism from his youth;⁵⁴ but it is not what he espoused at this time. Though he may have doubted its success, reform is what he championed—not rebellion—and this was to be in a peaceable manner.⁵⁵

Because of the show of military pressure exerted by the Volunteers in 1782, there was much angst among the English about an Irish uprising. Many demands for reform were misinterpreted as separatist rhetoric.⁵⁶ Tone determined to show them that Ireland had no desire to break with their King. They wanted separate governments, yes; but ones that hailed the same King. Tone maintained, “the King of England is King also of Ireland,” and as such, should be “equally interested in the welfare of both countries.”⁵⁷ Beyond that, Tone believed the King should expect loyal subjects to “encrease [sic] their

own ability, to render him the service due to him;” and that the King of Ireland could not “rejoice” when Ireland suffers under their own law that “exclude[s] them from a commerce with half the known world. In complaisance to a monopolizing English company, though he may, as the common father of both his realms, rejoice,...”⁵⁸ This was *not* a question of loyalty to the King, but of loyalty to themselves in choosing to be governed by ones who would decide in the best interest of Ireland. Tone believed the King should be on the “side of Justice, and of Ireland, because his happiness and his pride must be most gratified by the rising prosperity of his people, to which title we have as much claim as the people of England.”⁵⁹

Tone then extended himself further to proclaim not only loyalty—but love for the King—as faithful and willing subjects, whose devotion is only limited by England: “we love him as well, we are as faithful subjects...our zeal in his service is only circumscribed by our inability.”⁶⁰

The second point that Tone made is that the main conflict in Ireland’s well-being was in “trade and commerce.”⁶¹ Tone cited the proceedings of Parliament regarding the Arigna Iron Works and the Double Loom. As these industries were suffering, aid was denied because it would interfere with England’s economy. Another debate on the East India Trade Company revealed pointedly the interests of England. Ireland was refused such trade “because it might interfere with the interest of England.”⁶²

Tone exemplified the trade in America, echoing the challenge to the Irish from the United Irish Declaration. He believed that the time was imminent to claim their rights or to “forfeit their pretentions [sic] FOR EVER.” Of the Americans who fought and won

their independence he commended, "THEY HAVE SUCH TRADE IN AMERICA, AND THEY DESERVE TO HAVE IT."⁶³

It was important to Tone for Irishmen not to accept the continuing problems of commerce and trade, but to "restore or if not restore, to create a rank for our country among the nations of the earth."⁶⁴ He maintained that a government interested in English benefits first was a barrier to the prosperity and well being of the Irish.

Tone was convinced that governing by "internal weaknesses" created "shame" in the people when "every where but Ireland Reform is going forward leveling ancient abuses in the dust."⁶⁵ He believed that Ireland was "struck with a political paralysis, that withered her strength, and crushed her spirit: "She is not half alive, one side is scarce animated, the other is dead; she has by her own law, as it were, amputated her right hand; she has outrun the Gospel precept, and cast her right eye in to the fire, even before it has offended her."⁶⁶ Tone's main concern was Irish interests first. England held the purse strings, and left Ireland to beg for help that was often denied, as Tone points out. He needed to convince, not only the government but the people as well that their needs should come before English ones in the case of Irish government. England's Parliament was taking care of England; the Irish Parliament needed to take care of Ireland—not England. This was the main thrust of nationalistic media—Ireland first, not as a colony, but as a separate nation.

It was the formation of that nation that occupied the enthusiasm of the United Irishmen. Gellner describes the two opposing motivations necessary to form and maintain national identity: "will, voluntary adherence and identification, loyalty, solidarity, on the one hand; and fear, coercion, compulsion, on the other."⁶⁷ The United

Irishmen set out to create a national identity that would bond the various ethno-religious groups not only around a positive identity connected with a golden past, but also around the fear of dissolution of that past and consequent increased domination by England.

Kevin Whelan maintains the United Irishmen followed the model of revolution as theorized by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*:⁶⁸ “war of position—a struggle for dominance within civil society itself, an effort to create an alternative sphere of political discourse, which would highlight the gap between social and economic problems, and the inability of the existing political system to address them.”⁶⁹ In this case, the “gap” in society was emphasized as between the ruling class, as exhibited in English control of Irish Parliament, and the Irish colony; “gaps” within Ireland were minimized for the sake of unification. The second phase, according to Whelan, is the actual revolution.

With this in mind, nationalists needed support. To obtain aid from fellow Irishmen as well as outside support from France, they set out to solidify a national identity that would unify those in Ireland while engendering respect from those outside. Armed with the press,⁷⁰ the United Irish began an organized campaign of national literary propaganda aimed at all classes, races and religions.

¹ These letters are found in Fox’s *Annals*. They are also housed with Bunting’s manuscripts at Queen’s University, Belfast.

² Wolfe Tone, *The Writings of Wolfe Tone 1763-98*, T.W. Moody, R. B. McDowell and C. J. Woods, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 145-6. (Sunday, 23 October 1791).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 208 (11 July 1792). Fox claims that dubbing him “‘The Hypocrite’” did “not signify that he fell short of his professions, but that he was a better Nationalist than he would allow himself to be considered.” (*Annals*, 7).

⁵ Irish scientist and philosopher (1656-1698). 1798 was the centennial anniversary of his death.

⁶ Thomas Bartlett, “The Burden of the Present: Theobald Wolfe Tone, Republican and Separatist”, in *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism, and Rebellion*, (Dublin: Lilliput Press 1993), 10. Bartlett

suggests that this lack of clarification on Ireland's relationship with England created anxiety among the English who tended to attribute "separatism" as a "hidden agenda" of Irish patriots.

⁷ Tone, Wolfe Tone, *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, (Belfast: Reprint by order of The Society of United Irishmen, 1791), 13.

⁸ Deirdre Lindsay, "The Fitzwilliam Episode Revisited", in *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion*, 210.

⁹ Drennan was the son of a Presbyterian minister.

¹⁰ William Drennan was a physician and poet.

He was the founder and editor of the "Belfast Magazine", a literary periodical. In his poem, "When Erin First Rose," he coined the phrase, "Emerald Isle," referring to Ireland. He is best known for his poem, "The Wake of William Orr", a United Irishman martyr. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and as a Presbyterian, he campaigned for Catholic Emancipation.

¹¹ The New Light proponents rejected creeds such as the Westminster Creed; Old Light proponents accepted them.

¹² Jean Agnew, *The Drennan-McTier Letters: 1794-1801*. 3 Vols. (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1999), 72. The entirety of this letter can be found on this page and subsequent quotes will refer to this citation.

¹³ There were also ties between United Irishmen and Freemasons that are explored in Whelan's *Tree of Liberty*, 85-7.

¹⁴ There had been a Whig club established before the United Irishmen (Foster, *History*, 215).

¹⁵ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.

¹⁶ Independence at this time meant legislative independence, with an independent Irish Parliament sharing the same monarch with England; not a separate nation state.

¹⁷ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

²¹ Chairman of the committee for the Meeting of Belfast Harpers Festival Committee.

¹⁹ Transcriber at the Belfast Festival, publishing three anthologies of Irish music.

²⁰ Nationalist poet who published 12 volumes of "Irish Melodies", setting his poems to Irish music, many tunes from Bunting's volumes.

²¹ That symbol ultimately became the Trinity Harp, with the motto, "It is Restrung, and shall be heard again!"

²² William Drennan's defense can be found in *A full report of the trial at bar, in the Court of King's Bench, of William Drennan, M.D. upon an indictment, charging him with having written and published a seditious libel. ...* (Dublin, 1794). Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/servlet/ECCO>.

²³ Fox, *Annals*, 24.

²⁴ John Killen, ed. *Decade of the United Irishmen: Contemporary Accounts, 1791-1801*, (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1997), 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20-21. The whole of this Declaration can be found on these pages and all subsequent quotes from it will refer to this citation.

²⁶ In his *Arguments*, Tone states that America enjoyed free trade, implicating by their willingness to fight for it, "they deserve it" (9).

²⁷ Killen, John, ed. *The Decade of the United Irishmen: Contemporary Accounts, 1791-1801*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1997.

²⁸ "New Light" Foster, *History*, 214.

²⁹ J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976), 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 54; Swift's *A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland* (1724) was addressed exclusively to the ascendancy in Ireland. (in *Swifts Irish Pamphlets: an Introductory Selection*, Joseph McMinn, ed. (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991), 69-85.

³² Beckett, *Anglo-Irish Tradition*, 44.

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- ³³ James Stewart, 1701, enacting law to reduce the power of his office as Lord Advocate, who had the power to arbitrarily arrest and condemn suspects.
- ³⁴ Economy: Catholic views on interest almost bankrupted France after Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, exiling protestants. The Huguenots, who practiced charging interest, held much of the banking and commerce. Their exile devastated the economy of France; conversely, their immigration to Ulster boosted the economy there. Those escaping to Germany, increased the economy there to the extent that when Louis the XV asked Frederick the Great how he could best show gratitude, Frederick stated, "A second revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (F. Nevill Jackson, *Old Handmade Lace: With a Dictionary of Lace*, (New York: Dover Publication, 1987).
- ³⁵ Impact on literacy, view of access to Bible, determines value placed on literacy.
- ³⁶ Herman, *Scots*, 23.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.
- ³⁸ Killen, *The Decade of United Irishmen*, 1.
- ³⁹ Originally published in August 1791.
- ⁴⁰ Ian McBride states in his chapter, "William Drennan and the Dissenting Tradition," that the United Irish societies took their "actual form" from Tone's essay. In *United Irishmen: Republicans, Radicalism and Rebellion*, 49.
- ⁴¹ Wolfe Tone, *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, (Belfast: Reprint by order of The Society of United Irishmen, 1791), title page.
- ⁴² *Ibid.* B3.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 10.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ "The Rights of Man" was published and republished, and advertised in the Belfast Newsletter and United Irish papers.
- ⁴⁸ Tone, *Argument*, 11.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ Tone, *Arguments*, 12.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ⁵⁴ Thomas Bartlett, "The Burden of the Present: Theobald Wolfe Tone, Republican and Separatist", in *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism, and Rebellion*. (Dublin: Lilliput Press 1993), 1.
- ⁵⁵ Tone, *Arguments*. Tone was not espousing rebellion in his arguments, but loyalty to a King that he hoped would look upon Ireland as valuable subjects.
- ⁵⁶ Bartlett, "Burden," 10.
- ⁵⁷ Tone, *Arguments*, 13.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8-9, footnote.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*
- ⁶³ Tone, *Arguments*, 9, footnote.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 53.

⁶⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London, 1973).

⁶⁹ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 75.

⁷⁰ Benedict Anderson discusses the effects print media had on the emergence of nationalism, in, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

CHAPTER 6

United Irish Literary Nationalism and Symbols

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE FOCUSING ON THE *NORTHERN STAR*

Instilling the concept of “nation” to the masses was all-important to United Irishmen Republican goals of independence. The United Irish used print media, distributed throughout all of Ireland, to construct a cultural nationalism that transcended class, race, and religious boundaries. Through this literary nationalism, the Society of United Irishmen became a powerful bulwark for the establishment and perpetuation of Irish “nationhood,” ultimately mobilizing thousands of soldiers (many previously trained as Volunteers) who fought in the rebellions.

The United Irish press presented this virtual nation within the printed page, by combining art and politics to define its cultural and political boundaries. Ernest Gellner

claims that “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”¹ Inventing the nation is what the United Irishmen did.

This chapter examines ways in which United Irish literature constructed boundaries for an Irish nation by combining art and politics to “strike the soul through the senses.”² United Irish literature presented cultural nationalism in ways that attracted many supporters, motivated masses, and became the impetus that gave members of this movement the heart to embrace a “national sentiment” culminating in rebellions and involving mass self-sacrifice. Through their varied media, the United Irishmen created intersecting communities, imagined to be unified in several ways: as participants of a shared cultural heritage, rooted in antiquity and valor; as progressive participants in bringing forward cosmopolitan Enlightenment ideology; and as sharing the common purpose of being called to rescue the nation, not only from the oppressor England, but also to rescue its culture from sinking into oblivion.

The United Irishmen were at the forefront of literary nationalism, even before Thomas Moore and the Young Irelanders.³ Determined to educate and influence public opinion as to their position in and responsibility for the Irish “nation,” they published pamphlets and circulars, at least five songbooks, several satires and four newspapers: the *Northern Star* (Belfast), the *National Journal* and *The Press* (Dublin), and the *Harp of Erin* (Cork).⁴

In their publications, United Irish writers constructed a cultural nation by infusing contemporary Enlightenment ideology with elements of the antiquarian Gaelic Revival. By using the past as a unifying present, the United Irishmen were able to solidify a national identity reinforced by strength and passion.⁵ Gaelic culture gave them a sense of

unique nationhood and cultural distance from England. From these symbols, a growing group of men saw themselves as “Irish” and “other” than England.

Symbolic images adopted from antiquarian writings revolved around the recognition of Irish harpers’ superiority in music celebrated from the time of Cambrensis. Found in every genre of United Irish literature, images of the harp, Irish music, and bardic poetry were prominent. United Irish writers added to these those of “shamrocks, green flags, political martyrs, and blood sacrifice.”⁶ The impact of music and poetry used earlier by the Volunteers and more so with the United Irishmen, should not be underestimated in its ability to motivate unification and activate national sentiment en masse.

During the 1770s and 1780s, Anglo-Irish writers collected and recorded ancient Irish history, reinterpreting and reconfiguring it, to construct and vindicate the image of the Irish “nation.” During the 1790s, nationalist elites built on the antiquarian construct to unify disparate sectors of society and motivate them to rescue the “nation.”

Typically, in nationalistic movements, it is elites who initiate change.⁷ They are the ones exposed through higher education and travel to progressive ideas and change, and whose position in society serves as a platform from which they may voice their opinions. Ireland was no different. A large percentage of elites in Ulster embraced Enlightenment ideals of Republicanism and Democracy. The success of the American and French Revolutions for independence inspired Ulster Protestants to move toward independence for Ireland. Since many of their immigrant relatives had fought in the America Revolution, they were all the more encouraged.⁸

Protestant elites, both of the Ascendancy, the Church of Ireland and Dissenters, mainly Presbyterians, stood in a precarious position. They were sandwiched between the power of the few representatives in the Irish Parliament whose decisions served English interests and the predominantly Catholic middle and lower class majority who, if empowered, some feared would press for land settlements to retrieve family lands from descendants of Protestant settlers. Arthur Young, in 1779, claimed, some of the peasants considered themselves as “the descendants and rightful heirs of the old families who had once possessed the land.”⁹

Presbyterian Dissenters, primarily well-educated and wealthy elites,¹⁰ resented their exclusion from high-level political office, filled exclusively by Ascendancy politicians. Though Catholics and Presbyterians were under-represented, Anglicans as well were part of the wholesale disregard of Irish interests by Parliament.¹¹ Yet to balance the inequity of power and to enact any change for reform, elite ideology needed support, or at least provide the appearance of support, from the “masses” in order to buttress their position and carry out their agenda.

To entice mass support, the construction of a nationalist political agenda needed to transcend racial, class and religious divisions, presenting a united plea from “the People” for whom elite nationalists professed to speak. United Irish leaders determined to stress areas that unified them, and practiced, as Kevin Whelan describes it, “collective amnesia” stressing “a political programme [based] solely on agreed issues, and to tacitly ignore divisive ones: ‘Our principal rule of conduct has been to attend to those things in which we agree, to exclude from our thoughts those on which we differ.’”¹²

The most prominent differences had been the religious factionalism between Catholics and Protestants, and between Anglicans and Presbyterians.¹³ Anglo-Irish antiquarians constructed a unified national image, distanced from England, by identifying the collective population of Ireland with the declining Gaelic culture. Some nationalists, such as Burke, saw this Gaelic construct as a stabilizing force (despite the fact that the Anglo-Irish represented an English colonizer to Gaelic culture). While Anglo-Irish writings served as the underpinning of cultural nationalism, having already defined Irishness with politically useful symbolism, United Irish leaders saw the potential for division if the Catholic majority rose to reclaim that culture, which had previously distanced them from Protestant settlers.¹⁴ Protestant nationalists needed the support from the Catholic majority to realize any significant reform. In an effort to diffuse the Gaelic past's "potentially destabilizing effect,"¹⁵ they placed the political agenda of reform and Catholic Emancipation in a national context based on a common cultural heritage dependent on Republican ideology. Understanding the impossibility of uniting on any terms other than political interests, the United Irishmen determined to unite around a "Political Faith," which Anthony Smith terms "civic religion."¹⁶ Because both Presbyterians and Catholics suffered from lack of representation by the Protestant Ascendancy, nationalists determined to lead them by championing their cause. Until Catholics were allowed to serve in Parliament, they had no legislative voice; Protestant elites would serve as that voice as part of their own agenda.

Attempting to diffuse societal divisions, William Drennan circulated a pamphlet calling to unify those "distinctions of rank, of property and of religious persuasion" under "one profession of Political Faith;"¹⁷ a "Political Faith" based on a "Doctrine" where "the

rights of Man are the rights of God, and to vindicate one is to maintain the other.”¹⁸

Essentially, the message was that religious duty to God involved uniting around universal human rights above personal religious persuasion.

Confronting the Catholic condition head on, Drennan asked, “What are the rights of Roman Catholics, and ...are [they] generally or partially *capaces Libertatis*? [fit for liberty]”,¹⁹ alluding to Montesquieu’s Enlightenment theory that defined societies by their relationship between *l’esprit* (national character) and *les lois* (the laws).²⁰ Kevin Whelan explained the conflict between *l’esprit* and *les lois* as experienced in Ireland:

Catholic Ireland could represent itself (especially from the mid eighteenth-century historiographical innovations initiated by Charles O’Conor) as a legitimate cultural entity, with its own specific *esprit* derived from a lengthy and authentic history, but which was excluded from political power as *incapax libertatis* [incapable of liberty].²¹

Catholics, who embodied the Gaelic culture, had no representation in parliament. “Until Catholics were admitted to the polity”, continued Whelan, “there could be no consonance between *l’esprit* and *les lois*.”²² To reconcile the two, Drennan challenged, “One of two things must happen. The people must serve the purposes of the Party, or the party must emerge in the mightiness of the People.”²³ Rather than “reform” the Catholics so that “*l’esprit* became congruous with *les lois*,” United Irishmen opted for governmental reform “to change *les lois* to make them reflect the Irish *l’esprit*.”²⁴

As mentioned earlier, empowering Catholics legislatively presented certain risks to Protestants. Yet nationalists realized that their national construct had to include both Gaelic heritage and Enlightenment ideals. Emphasizing Gaelic alone could have divisive effects, serving solely Catholic cultural needs; Enlightenment symbolism, identified largely with Protestant elites too much resembled the English culture from which they

wished to distance themselves and would not draw the Catholic majority. They resolved to include, or as Anthony Smith argues, to “*invent* a symbolic mythology and civic religion to persuade the masses to make the necessary sacrifices”²⁵ needed to support the nation. No nation can exist without a culture, and Gaelic heritage provided those boundaries defining the cultural nation.

Though Charles O’Conor, founder of the Catholic Committee (1760), did promote the Catholic “Hibernian nation”, he realized the importance of the Protestant voice to mediate it. Catholics welcomed the interest of Anglo-Irish scholars in Gaelic culture. Barra Boydell explains the change: “Instead of regarding the majority Irish population as a barbaric, uncultured people, the Protestant elite now acknowledged and explored their rich culture as it was mediated to them through Irish-speaking scholars.”²⁶ O’Conor mentored Joseph Walker and directly influenced other Anglo-Irish writers such as Henry and Charlotte Brooke and Sylvester O’Halloran. Anglo-Irish writers controlled the voice and history of the Catholics in the 1780s; Nationalists determined to maintain that control in the 1790s.

United Irish leaders realized the need to place Gaelic culture in a broader context. By infusing Gaelic symbolism with Enlightenment images, and mediating it from within a broader Republican ideology, United Irishmen accomplished two important things: one, they transcended the religious denominators by substituting a broader concept of collective service to God—by vindicating the inalienable rights given to all men; and secondly, they positioned themselves as participants in international rhetoric, allying Ireland to other nations, particularly France.

Though United Irishmen relied heavily on Gaelic symbolism, they reinvented it in terms of Enlightenment ideology. Their symbolism reflected the marriage of “ancient” tradition and new ideas about state and the people. This is evidenced in the symbol they chose to embody the goals and ideals of the Society. The United Irishmen placed the image of the female-harp in the center of the United Irish symbol (Figure 6.1). This was the harp shown on Irish coinage since the time of Henry (1534).²⁷ That harp on

coinage, though, stood beneath the English crown, symbol of Irish colonization. (Figure 6.2) In the 1780s, the Volunteers removed the English crown and replaced it with an Irish crown (Figure 6.3).²⁸ The United Irish replaced the English crown with the Phrygian cap of freedom, atop the pole of liberty.²⁹ Barra Boydell finds it interesting that the United Irish used the harp of the Ascendancy that embodied the Irish colonization;³⁰ although to declare independence by that particular symbol would have made a powerful statement to English and Irish alike. There were two



Figure 6.1. The United Irish symbol with motto, "It is New Strung and Shall Be Heard." The symbol incorporates the female harp, pole of liberty and the cap of freedom.



Figure 6.2. 1822 Irish coin illustrating the female mythical harp, symbolizing Ireland, beneath an English crown.

banners in the symbol. Above the harp attached to the pole of liberty was a banner inscribed "Equality." The second serves as the foundation of the emblem and is inscribed with the United Irish motto, "It is New-Strung and Shall be Heard."³¹

Throughout United Irish literature, Irish music and the bardic image played a significant role. The harp came to represent both Ireland and Irish music. Thuente comments:

...one cannot imagine a less threatening cultural icon for Irish people of all social and religious backgrounds to rally behind...None of the ancient works had survived so, lacking lyrics, the music transcended sectarian and political rhetoric and conflicts, and offered a paradigm of the 'Union' of all Irishmen that was the goal of the United Irishmen.³²

In the writings of Cambrensis, designed to cast a disparaging shadow on Irish character, his only praise was for the Irish harpers. Because of his prejudice against the Irish, this was seen as high praise and even greater justification for their celebration.

Bardic imagery became a significant political symbol throughout the United Irish movement.³³ Throughout the centuries, English monarchs considered the seditious nature of bardic poetry threat enough to periodically pass legislation to ban it. This stricture



Figure 6.3. From the cover of a program celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of the Meeting of Belfast Harpers in 1972. The image illustrates the Trinity harp within a larger triangle, beneath the Irish crown. "Eirinn Go Bragh" means "Ireland Forever."

presented the bardic image as the voice of one who courageously, and with great risk, positioned himself between the Irish and English—a saving voice of the true Irish.

Walker and Brooke associated the bard with national interests. The United Irishmen built on those works. Thuermer claims:

The bard who “tuned the harp in sublime strains” in “sacred groves” embodies the literary doctrine of the sublime as well as the religious fervor of the clergyman, which makes his patriotic verse a call to action rather than the lament of despair voiced in earlier poetry such as Thomas Gray’s “Bard.”³⁴

Another image deeply embedded in the mythology of the Irish harp is that of Brian Boru, both king and harper. The official emblem of Ireland housed at Trinity College, had been known for decades as the Brian Boru harp.³⁵ Though incorrectly labeled, it continues to carry meaning attached to that context. Brian Boru was the last high king of Ireland who courageously fought and died in battle against the Norse Gaels of Dublin.³⁶ Having died, in 1014, a century before the Norman invasion, he represented the regal elegance of masculine courage and cultural skill that contradicted negative stereotypes of the Irish.

The bardic voice issued not from a wild, English stereotype, but from positions of stature, holding elite positions, according to antiquarian historians, such as those of lawyers, statesmen, and judiciaries.³⁷

His voice could be heard as the voice of one who carried the “national sentiment.” Ernest Gellner contends that, “National *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.”³⁸ Just as the bards of old spoke out against English abuses, United Irishmen donned the bardic mantle to again

speaking out in Ireland's behalf. Ironically, when the Gaelic bard cried to remove the foreigner from the land, he was referring to the Anglo-Irish. But at this time, as Anglo-Irish nationalists began to identify with the Gaelic "nation", their "national sentiment" was to remove the foreigner (i.e. English influence) from the Irish government. United Irish writers, finding themselves in conflict with Gaelic representation, in a sense, reinvented the voice of the bard in their literature. Many were scholars, poets and writers who at Trinity College studied history, law, and literature—disciplines which Joseph Walker attributed to ancient bards in his *Memoirs*.

Nationalists realized that providing the populace with a cultural identity would not be motivation enough to enact the changes needed for Irish independence; along with identity, they created a national sentiment around which to rally for "vindication" of the "nation." By educating the masses of their "rights" and "liberties", and illuminating them in regard to Parliament's violation of those same rights and liberties, nationalists believed they could create the dissatisfaction and "feelings of anger" needed to rouse activism, just as the bards of old had done.

Though other images such as shamrocks were used by the United Irishmen, most revolved around the bardic figure and the many representations of his role and music. These images were notable not only in the literature of United Irishmen, but also in those they influenced, notably Edward Bunting, Thomas Moore, and Thomas Davis. The bardic image, embedded throughout Irish national literature, was remembered in different ways, reinvented in writing and reenacted in various ways by members of the public.

In order to introduce the people to *their* identity in Irish heritage and to arouse a "national sentiment," United Irish launched a nationalistic literary campaign, the success

of which became legendary. Their success rested on the print media boom begun in the seventeenth century. In the 1790s there were at least fifty printers in Dublin; there were thirty-four regional presses, particularly in northeast Ulster; at least forty newspapers; and in the Dublin Society of United Irishmen, fifteen booksellers and printers.³⁹

Benedict Anderson claimed that nationalism flourished with the printed page.⁴⁰ The dramatic growth of Ireland's population, especially in Dublin and northern Ireland, created the need for widespread education; and thus an increasing literacy rate. In Northern Ireland where Presbyterians emphasized the access of all classes to written scripture, the literacy rate was particularly high. Arthur O'Connor⁴¹ claimed the people of Ulster to be "the best educated peasantry in Europe,"⁴² making Ulster residents highly receptive to propaganda.⁴³ United Irish leaders believed that "the peasantry were ripe for politicization."⁴⁴

We will first look at the *Northern Star* newspaper (1792-1797) as the most effective example of the United Irish impetus to educate the masses politically and culturally. It was the most successful of their publications in creating and dispersing the national image across Ireland. The paper introduced the public to what it claimed to be its "true" Irish heritage and future potential. The combination of images and text from within this paper continues to shape notions of Irishness today. All tangential publications from the Society derived their symbolic vocabulary from this paper; as separate publications, i.e. songbooks, pamphlet, etc. each reflected the combined imagery embedded in the *Northern Star*. The *Northern Star*, in Gillian O'Brien's words, was the most successful paper of its time.⁴⁵

By unifying the mass populace within a framework of cultural nationalism, nationalist elites became the voice of “the People.” The *Northern Star* shaped the shifting political culture by advancing far-reaching political topics, as Pittock remarked, “the ‘invention’ (or rethinking) of nation states, social movements, cultural identities, and literary traditions was, after all, a major feature of Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, Whelan attributes United Irish literature as serving “a moral school where republicans could be shaped internally prior to their political incarnation.”⁴⁷

By combining both politics and art, United Irish writers added an emotional dimension to their reporting. While human events naturally touch the reader, art is *designed* to evoke us, if not seduce us. One can reason ideals, but it is not, as Gellner stresses, until the heart is engaged that men take action.⁴⁸ Though politics defines governmental forms and shapes laws, it is the art of a culture that captivates the heart. Art combines the senses with the mind, expressing in symbolism the ideas of one’s heart. Because of its symbolic nature, art can serve as an ambiguous vehicle for confrontational ideas that could not be safely expressed otherwise.

The task of educating the people was paramount in the goals of the United Irish Society.⁴⁹ Thuente claims that the newspaper was the first and primary means of educating the people.⁵⁰ The following excerpt from *The Press*, the Dublin United Irish paper, illustrates the powerful influence on society the writers assumed the paper to have. United Irish leaders believed the written word to shape a body of people from deterring their manners and inspiring their character, to preserving their fate by “officiating for the whole community.”⁵¹ But perhaps most potently, “it breathes a soul into the body of a

People.”⁵² This is a powerful metaphor alluding to the creation account, when God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and “man became a living soul.”⁵³ O’Connor was suggesting in the passage that the Liberty of the Press created and sustained the nation:

No maxim is more true than this, “That no Liberty can survive the Liberty of the Press;” it breathes a soul into the body of a People; it forms their manners, and by teaching them their duties and their rights, and inspiring them with the sentiments of virtue and courage, by which both are to be enforced, introduces the empire of reason to the universe; it is the vestal firs, upon the preservation of which, the fate of nations depends; and the most pure hands, officiating for the whole community, should be incessantly employed in keeping it alive.⁵⁴

Anthony Smith claims, “it is necessary to arouse a sense of national identity, appeal to the ethnic past and ‘restore’ traditional morality as the cement of national solidarity.”⁵⁵ United Irish built on Chivalry established in works like Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques*. This quote from the *Northern Star* illustrates their belief that education informs national virtue:

The present is an age of revolution. Everything is changing, every system is improving and mankind appears to become more wise and virtuous, as they become more informed. This is the consequence of knowledge, the effect of intelligence, the result of truth and reason.⁵⁶

According to United Irish writers, the Press not only shaped a People, but contained the power to liberate them as well. In an excerpt from *The Press*, Arthur O’Connor not only linked Ireland with revolutionary America, but linked United Irish literature, coming from the “Athens of Ireland,” with writings of Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau. The power to which he attributes the Press is that of revolutionary freedom, embodying the adage: The pen is mightier than the sword.

The Press is the palladium of Liberty. What has heretofore made England celebrated over the nations of Europe?—the Press. What overturned the Catholic despotism of France?—the Press, by the writings of Montesquieu,

Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Seyes, Raynal, and Condorcet. What has electrified England, and called down its curses on a Pitt? that Press he in vain attempted to silence. What illumined Belfast, the Athens of Ireland?—the *Press* and the *Northern Star*. Why did America triumph over tyranny?—a journeyman printer fulminated the decree of nature against the giants of England—and the pen of a Franklin routed the armies of a King.⁵⁷

The widespread interest in the United Irish newspapers had an effect on the education and literacy of the people.⁵⁸ Newspapers placed nationalist material within the reach of every person in Ireland, aiding the increase in literacy even more. By 1797, the last year of publication, Kevin Whelan claims the Belfast region to be “among the most literate areas of late eighteenth-century Europe,” as seventy-six percent of adult males were able to sign their names to oaths of allegiance.⁵⁹ Though FitzGibbon viewed the political movement as “A deluded peasantry aided by more intelligent treason,”⁶⁰ the press’s success in educating the masses prompted Thomas Russell’s claimed that “there does not exist in Europe a class of people in the same line of life, who possess the same large ideas, or minds as well stored with knowledge, as the farmers and manufacturers in the province of Ulster.”⁶¹ Alexander James noted profound interest in his observation: “newspapers went a good way into the business: “for I never knew the people in [this] neighbourhood anything like so attached to these vehicles of information and political sentiment.”⁶²

The *Northern Star* motto, by William Drennan, “The Public Will Our Guide—The Public Good Our End,” epitomized the ideology of “equality” and “common good.” United Irish writers were dedicated to dictating the “Public Good,” believing to unify men around these virtues would realize national integrity. Thomas Russell reached

across religious boundaries by linking the political integrity of a unified people with approval from God in his “Letter to the People of Ireland:”

...want of liberty [In Ireland] arises from want of union among the people; that by union the people would acquire sufficient weight to give political integrity and virtue to their government, and liberty, peace and happiness to themselves...and the means are the most delightful that life can afford, the cultivation of brotherly love to our fellow-creatures, and the end the greatest that the imagination of man can conceive, that of being acceptable in the sight of the Almighty, all perfect and adorable author of Nature.⁶³

To reach these ends, United Irishmen distributed their material as widely, and to a diversified public, as was possible.⁶⁴ Whelan explains their mission:

[T]he United Irishmen’s function would merely be to spread this message from European core to European periphery and from top to bottom of the Irish political spectrum. Once Enlightenment principles had permeated the Irish body politic, they would result in clear, simple, unambiguous law, in line with the modern spirit of the age. These laws would allow cosmopolitan Enlightenment principles to achieve their correct dispositions; benevolence, civic virtue, beauty would come into play, and there would be a harmony between national character (Montesquieu’s *l’esprit*) and its laws (*les lois*), between *res* and *publica*.⁶⁵

Nationalist writers interfaced Gaelic symbolism with Enlightenment ideology.

Charlotte Brooke’s representation of Gaelic chivalry and virtue followed in line with nationalist rhetoric. While the inclusion of poetry and songs introduced the Irish to their national culture, political ideology defined that culture. The combined symbolism linked traditional Gaelic (Catholic) culture with the broader cosmopolitan culture of continental Europe as well as creating identification with independent societies like America and France. This cast Gaelic heritage as both rooted in antiquity, yet equally capable of functioning among contemporary nations of Europe. These cultural symbols were embedded throughout United Irish material.

The masthead of the *Northern Star* bore the illustration of two classically clad female figures, one holding a sword and scale of justice, the other a harp.⁶⁶ Between them stood the Irish harp beneath a star, an Enlightenment image of illumination. Though the masthead was changed a few times, the motto, composed by William Drennan, “The Public Will Our Guide—The Public Good Our End,” remained unchanged.

The United Irish attempted to unify the diverse groups of people found in Ireland into a “Public,” centered around a single national identity. This was a lofty goal. The United Irish newspapers creatively linked disparate elements together in meaningful ways, becoming a visual and ideological representation of the Irish nation. Whelan suggests that “art for the United Irishmen was a mould, not a mirror or lamp,”⁶⁷ reflecting not so much the Irish past as designing an Irish future. The newspapers had the ability to combine in one format such disparate elements as poetry, song, and serial satires, side-by-side with political ideology, advertisements for such as Paine’s *Rights of Man* and international news from the independent states of America and France. Finding local names and events along with international ones gave readers a sense of belonging to a much broader and sophisticated community. The wide distribution and influence that newspapers had on the public carried the collective images into other materials they printed. When broadsheets, songs, circulars, etc. were published, they carried connotations of images embedded in the newspapers, creating a symbolic representation of the many parts of the “nation”, both culturally and ideologically.

The dissemination of nationalistic material played an important role in coalescing and mobilizing mass populations in revolution. The press not only accelerated the

English/Irish discourse on Ireland's national identity, but also broadened the platform of class and number of voices. Thuermer lists anonymous writers who contributed poems and songs as "ministers, weavers, solicitors, and former soldiers, thus representing the union of all social classes that was fundamental to the United Irishmen's political creed."⁶⁸ Thomas Emmet remarked that United Irish materials were successful in "making every man a politician [sic]."⁶⁹ The newspapers particularly created a community of patriots. Readers, knowing others were simultaneously reading the same material as they, felt a strong sense of fraternity. This sense of fraternity, or "Brotherhood" imagined by William Drennan,⁷⁰ was crucial to the revolutionary cause. As Benedict Anderson explained, "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."⁷¹ These communities are "imagined" for the simple reason that they are too large for members to meet with each other apart from the medium that connects them; yet that medium provided a powerful sense of community for its disparate members.

Without direct interaction, there were other important elements that were imagined by members of this community. Within the framework of fraternity was the illusion of large numbers of committed members, homogenous in political views and who shared a common cultural heritage despite racial and religious differences. The natural tendency was toward the community reinforcing the political dogma of the press. Sharing these group views served as a form of "membership" in a vast community. This was particularly prevalent in those reading the newspapers.

In the case of the United Irish tradition, all classes were encouraged to read, or have someone read to them, the material.⁷² Though equality among men was stressed and distribution was orchestrated to reach all classes, it was primarily aimed at middle and upper classes.⁷³ Nevertheless, this gesture extended the sense of fraternity experienced by the lower class members to include those in elite society, and it was an invitation to lower classes to enter into the discourse formerly reserved for (and still led by) the elite.

This nod toward a “classless” society empowered the masses by admitting them into a Society that exceeded class boundaries, while simultaneously manipulating them to use that power to “embrace their [elite] ideas and heed their call to action.”⁷⁴ Educating the masses and providing them with a framework in which to move politically provided a foundation for mass self-sacrifice—the willingness to die for the “cause.” The powerful impact of United Irish newspapers in motivating nationalist activism should not be underestimated. “In late eighteenth-century Ireland,” says Gilian O’Brien, “the purchase of the *Northern Star* was as potent a symbol of freethinking, independent citizenship as bearing arms.”⁷⁵

[Dickson] states that although the literary campaign was highly effective in recruiting masses, United Irish leaders overestimated the power of sustain long-term commitment based on naiveté. He goes on to say that when the masses realized (and they eventually did) that they were pawns in an elite political machine, a widespread exodus developed, leaving the United Irishmen without the numbers to win complete independence.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, United Irish propaganda and controlled education were

effective means of influencing the masses long enough to accomplish the goals, in this case, of the Uprisings.⁷⁷

OTHER WORKS

Though the United Irishmen's most effective tool of influence was the newspapers; their circulars, broadsheets, songbooks and pamphlets also had a great impact on society. Several of the pamphlets and songs printed elsewhere were first printed in the *Northern Star* and were "suffused with images of light, of rationality, of progress, of Utopia"⁷⁸ consistent with *Northern Star* material. Tone's *Argument on Behalf of the Catholics* and Paine's *Rights of Man* were the most popular of the pamphlets used to promote Enlightenment ideals of Liberty and Freedom.⁷⁹ The satirical pamphlets, *Trial of Hurdy Gurdy*,⁸⁰ (Sampson),⁸¹ *Billy Bluff and the Squire Firebrand*⁸² (James Porter), and *The Lion of Old England*⁸³ (Sampson and Russell) were immensely popular and were originally published in serial form in the *Northern Star*.⁸⁴

Along with goals of advancing Enlightenment ideology, a number of patriots were intent on "preserving" those elements of Gaelic culture that still remained. The construction of a collective Irish identity depended on Gaelic "purity" that was "authentic" and rooted in "antiquity." As elements of Gaelic culture faded away, northern nationalists began using those elements symbolically to perpetuate cultural nationalism. The antiquarian pursuit of ancient Ireland and distinct cultural characteristics became a powerful platform for cultural identification.

Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques*, in particular, created an interest in collecting and preserving Gaelic manuscripts and poetry that embodied Irish culture. It was from within these works that images of a valiant Irish legacy are brought forward to form a national identity, and it was in the Gaelic language that the embodiment of the poetry was found. Seen as embodiments of Gaelic culture, patriots believed Irish identity would be lost if

ancient manuscripts perished, and so began collecting, translating and publishing works from those manuscripts as elements for cultural identification. Garvin states that Gaelic literature during the period between 1700 and 1850 characteristically held “ideas of a potentially subversive nature.”⁸⁵ This quality aligned with nationalist ideology, thus was appealing to United Irishmen; they could express their current sentiments through the publication of ancient anti-English poetry.

The study of the Gaelic language among United Irishmen became part of the larger context of United Irish nationalism, as it provided one of the most significant cultural boundaries in defining the nation.⁸⁶ The impetus was not necessarily to revive the language as the first spoken language, English was more practical economically, but language serves to uniquely distinguish a nation. When Eino Jutikkala discussed the Finnish language becoming subsumed by Swedish around the turn of the nineteenth century, he quoted Adolf Ivar Arwidsson. Arwidsson described the impact he believed language has in uniting the “soul” of a people:

When the language of its forefathers is lost, a nation, too, is lost and perishes. All speaking the same tongue naturally form an indivisible whole; they are bound together internally by ties of mind and soul, mightier and firmer than every external bond. For language forms the spiritual, and land the material, boundaries of mankind; but the former is the stronger, because the spirit means more than the material.⁸⁷

Because language embodies the soul of a nation, vernacular language can provide a sense of roots and security in the course of change.⁸⁸ During the 1790s, in addition to the changes in Irish society, there was a component of millennial ideology found in many Protestant congregations that some found to be unsettling. Smith suggests that these types of conditions create a fear that “drives men and women back to the comforting warmth of language and ‘ethnicity’.”⁸⁹ But the “warmth” of the language was not

enough to promote the idea of nationhood; the Irish language needed to be a viable, legitimate language on par with English and French, not a plebeian dialect. To prove the viability of the Irish language, nationalists developed grammars and lexicons providing legitimate cultural boundaries.⁹⁰

The emphasis on Gaelic language prompted the United Irishmen press to publish the Irish language magazine *Bolg an tSolair: or, Gaelic Magazine* (1795).⁹¹ Patrick Lynch, an Irish language teacher in Belfast, edited the magazine. Though plans were made for serial publication, only the first magazine survived.⁹² Thuente describes *Bolg an tSolair* as having “an Irish grammar, prayers,⁹³ a glossary, and a selection of poems from Charlotte Brooke’s *Reliques of Irish Poetry*.”⁹⁴ The inclusion of the grammar and glossary would give even non-Gaelic speakers a sense of connection to the language. The preface recognized the importance of music in a Gaelic context by promising, “Those who delight in Irish music (which seems greatly to prevail at present) shall also be entertained with the choicest of airs.”⁹⁵

There were notions of superiority and artistry about the Gaelic language that came through in United Irish works that were influenced by this sentiment of Charlotte Brooke:

It is really astonishing of what various and comprehensive powers this neglected language is possessed. In the pathetic, it breathes the most beautiful and affecting simplicity; and in the bolder species of composition, it is distinguished by a force of expression, a sublime dignity, and rapid energy, which it is scarcely possible for any translation fully to convey; as it sometimes fills the mind with ideas altogether new, and which, perhaps, no modern language is entirely prepared to express.⁹⁶

About the time of the magazine’s publication, an anonymous writer submitted an editorial that appeared in the *Northern Star* titled “The Irish Language” (20 April 1795).

This writer, whom Thuente suggests could be Thomas Russell,⁹⁷ one of Lynch's Irish language students,⁹⁸ saw Irish as a necessary key to understanding and communicating national sentiment across the societal spectrum. Even a superficial knowledge of the Irish language seemed to serve as an emblem of solidarity within the political camp. According to Thuente, the author of this article "claimed that Irish was of use to scholars, merchants, and artists, and declared that Irish would help communicate 'our sentiments and instruction' with 'our countrymen.'"⁹⁹

Despite the claims of Gaelic superiority and conveying national sentiment, elites were interested in rescuing the language—not speaking it. Their patronage served as a legitimizing force to Gaelic culture; their distance from it as a member, protected them from identifying stereotypes that might have sabotaged Old Irish attempts at promoting the culture.

Patrick Lynch, though not a member of the United Irish Society, still maintained close ties with them and was deeply involved in helping to carry out their cultural agenda.¹⁰⁰ Because language provided such a concrete boundary in terms of a nation, national interest influences the production of books on grammar and lexicons to define terms as well as establish the legitimacy of the language.¹⁰¹ Besides his involvement with *Bolg an tSolair*, Lynch published *Pentaglot Preceptor; or Elementary Institutes of the English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Irish Languages* (1796). Although this contained a complete Grammar of the English tongue, Lynch compared usage and structure of classical languages, placing Irish in equal position with them. His intention was to help the student progress in his "knowledge of Grammar, both as a *Science* and an *Art*":¹⁰² science to legitimize it, and art for cultural significance.

In his praise of the Irish language, Lynch claimed in the preface of *Bolg an tSolair*, “never was any language fitter to express the feelings of the heart” and “abounding in terms of art, and words to express every thought of the mind.”¹⁰³ As “the mother tongue of all the languages in the West,” Lynch praised Ireland as being “the seat of the muses from the times of remotest antiquity” and that “no nation ever encouraged poets and musicians more than the ancient Irish.”¹⁰⁴

Lynch, as other writers before him, took a defensive stance when “recommend[ing] the Irish language to the notice of Irishmen,”¹⁰⁵ since “many tongues and pens have been employed to cry it down, and to persuade the ignorant that it was a harsh and barbarous jargon, and that their ancestors, from whom they derived it, were an ignorant, uncultivated people.”¹⁰⁶ Lynch, via the magazine, remedied that impression with the inclusion of refined music and poetry.

Yet as important as Gaelic “purity” was to Ulster nationalists, those living near remnants of *Gaeltachts*, or Irish speaking areas, felt ambiguous at best about drawing attention to those elements of Irishness that identified with the peasantry. Though nationalists imagined a unity formed around Gaelic images, literary symbolism carried with it multiple meanings, and not all of those were seen as positive. Ulster nationalists carried a romantic view of the fading culture and it became to them a commodity to collect, repackage in glorified antiquity, and use in cultivating national boundaries. Contrary to the impression of “revival” given in some of the writings, Gaelic culture was treated more as a commodity or collector’s item, than as a culture to reinstate.¹⁰⁷ To those living in areas where Gaelic culture was still practiced and the language still spoken, exposing it to the masses was not seen as an advantage. It still had tinges of

lower-class backwardness. George Petrie, a protégé of Edward Bunting, looked back to this time in his anthology and pointed out that,

An ideological debate in this movement concerned the role of *Irish language, literature and music*, for while to some Southern members, where the culture had not yet died out, the appeal to tradition was seen as at best unhelpful and at worst a positive hindrance to the cause, a number of Ulster, and generally Presbyterian, United Irishmen, held *indigenous culture* to be of considerable significance in the development of a *non-sectarian national ethos*.¹⁰⁸

Though cultural elements from peasant classes are typically seen as “pure” and “authentic,” and used as building blocks in constructing a cultural nation, conflicts between class identity must be addressed by elites in power. Michael Largey discusses this type of conflict experienced in Haiti during the U.S. occupation from 1915 to 1934.¹⁰⁹ Attempting to distance themselves from American cultural elements, Haitian elites adopted elements of the peasant culture, which was viewed “pure” and “authentic” cultural. The ambiguity revolved around attitudes of elite toward peasant culture. On the one hand, they saw cultural elements as defining boundaries around the cultural “nation,” distancing themselves from the occupation; but, on the other hand, these were characteristics that had been seen as class boundaries from which they had distanced themselves from as elites, and over which they needed to maintain control. Though they wished to identify with cultural elements, they did not wish to identify with the peasant class, nor be displaced by a peasant majority. Elements from that culture needed to be “sanitized” from its link to peasantry and art forms such as music were “universalized” to appeal to global aesthetic tastes.¹¹⁰

In the same way, certain Irish elites feared both the international image of Ireland, if identified with Gaelic culture, and the loss of class and power if the Catholic majority

organized their own uprising. Representing the nation required a delicate balance between global recognition and cultural distinctness.¹¹¹

Even so, despite the emphasis on language preservation and claims of “authenticity” in national material, there was a conflict in the actual usage of Gaelic in United Irish songbooks. Barra Boydell noted not only the fundamental conflict of having Anglo-Irish elites represent Gaelic culture, but also that the music in the United Irish songbooks, though espousing cultural nationalism in Gaelic terms, printed all of the texts in English, with only “occasional lines or mottoes in Irish.”¹¹² And even though melodies came from tunes of Irish and French origin, Boydell pointed out that somewhere around fifty-six of the ninety-nine songs in United Irish songbooks were of English origin—over half. Boydell reminded the reader that United Irish leaders, coming from an Anglo-Irish background, would have been more familiar with English tunes.¹¹³ This also suggests the pervasiveness of English songs from hegemonic influences: the working class was expected to easily recognize those melodies to which they would sing patriotic lyrics.¹¹⁴

Nationalists necessarily combined cultural elements already in existence, such as music, with which the public was familiar, with elite political ideology. According to Whelan, eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish elite and popular culture were closely intertwined.¹¹⁵ Frank Llewelyn Harrison states, in his article “Music, Poetry and Polity in the age of Swift,”¹¹⁶ that: “...the poetry the people of Ireland read and declaimed, the songs they heard and sang, the church music they accepted, the sonatas and concertos they listened to were all a functioning part of their ‘nation’ ...and at certain times also an affirmation of their religious and political convictions.”¹¹⁷

United Irish combined all aspects of popular political ideology and found ways to incorporate them in an Irish national discourse used to educate and unite a nation of mixed races, religions and classes. Thuermer states, “the United Irishmen, individually and as a movement, had no qualms about combining politics and literature and drawing upon the images popularized in scholarly and literary antiquarianism in order to propagate their political principles in song.”¹¹⁸

During the first year of the Society, the bardic symbol was emphasized as a cultural representation, and the contrast in representations of that symbol reflect the comprehensive audiences to whom the United Irish appealed. Poems about the bard were prominent in the *Northern Star* during the year of 1792, thereafter declining but still appeared. By December 1791, plans had been made to host a harpers’ meeting in Belfast and circulars were distributed to solicit funding. The number of poems relating to the bards may have been linked to the desire to bring attention to the meeting as well as encourage additional funding. The Meeting of Belfast Harpers’ was planned for July of 1792. The intent was to bring as many of the remaining harpers together as possible, to collect what harp music survived with them, in musical transcription.

With the influx of non-Gaelic immigrants, loss of Gaelic gentry by plantation, and the emerging concert venues; patronage of the harpers declined until there were few left. Consistent with the United Irish amalgamation of “antiquity” and Enlightenment symbolism, the meeting, celebrating the ancient bardic tradition, took place alongside the anniversary celebration of Bastille Day and the success of the French Revolution. The festival had far reaching implications. It not only resulted in three anthologies of “Ancient Irish Music” that still stand as the embodiment of bardic and Irish music, but it

also brought the bardic tradition into real space and time. It provided a contemporary symbol which reflected the condition of the Irish nation as it stood in general: validation of the long cultural heritage being crowded out, in this case musically, by English hegemony in much the same way their ancestors had been; it provided yet another reason to unite and remove the “foreigner” from Ireland.

Articles appearing in the *Northern Star* in the months leading up to the meeting promoted the image of bard, not only in terms of Gaelic culture, but international as well. Rev. James Glass, A.M., whom Thuente suggests is a pseudonym for James Porter,¹¹⁹ submitted the poem “Address to Mr. Paine, Author of the Rights of Man” (15 February 1792). The poem suggested that a bard who, inspired by Paine, would discard the “plaintive” music, sung by suppressed people, for that of “patriotic joy”; he would no longer mourn Ireland’s state of slavery, for he would see the “light of freedom” shine as the “people” would rise to govern themselves:

The poem was an address by a “Bard” who, inspired by Paine, would tune “Ierne’s harp” harp and sing ‘with bolder notes, with patriotic joy’ rather than the ‘plaintive lays’ in which she previously had ‘mourn’d her dearest rights, her freedom lost.’ The self-proclaimed bard declared that “The light of freedom” would “o’er the wretched slave its glory shed” as “Kings, whose thrones are stain’d with guiltless gore” would be replaced by the people’s “supreme command.”¹²⁰

The second poem, “Address to the Patriot’s of Belfast” (10 March 1792) contained an equally revolutionary message, suggesting international support, directly inviting Belfast Patriots to imitate the French in the fight for liberty. Thuente claims the poem:

...reiterated poetry’s crucial role in inspiring patriotic deeds. The poet, recalling how “France the torch of liberty displays” in “glorious deeds” that were immortalized in verse by French “Bards,” asked the patriots of Belfast, “Shall not Belfast, which glows with all her [France’s] fire,/ To equal honors to the Muse inspire?”¹²¹

These poems linked the “Bard” with patriotism internationally, risking the unique position of the Irish Bard, yet inviting the patriots of France into the hallowed halls of the bard. There was another poem published in two months before the meeting titled “The Irish Bard.”¹²² After the festival, bardic poetry did not appear as often. The last bardic poem appeared in the final issue of the *Northern Star*. Thunente states they published a “bardic” poem in “imitation of Ossian” that was written by the young Thomas Moore, still a student at Trinity College.¹²³

The meeting did increase interest in the bardic subject. Afterward, both Bunting and United Irishmen introduced national songs and music featuring the bardic image. The United Irishmen published their own *Paddy’s Resource* songbooks as well as influencing other national songbook publications and Bunting published three anthologies of a national repertoire, two with dissertations explaining the cultural significance of the music.

POWER OF SONG: *PADDY'S RESOURCE*
AND BUNTING'S *ANCIENT MUSIC OF IRELAND*

Music exerts a powerful ability to instigate and to document social change; songs are a significant means of communicating historical events and political sentiments.¹²⁴

During critical periods of their nationalist history, United Irishmen published books of song and music used to activate national sentiment into revolution. There were six such works published: *Songs on the French Revolution that took place at Paris, 14, July 1789. Sung at the Celebration thereof at Belfast, on Saturday, 14 July 1792* (1792)¹²⁵, four songbooks (1795, 1796, 1798, and 1803), and Edward Bunting's *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796), an anthology of Irish music arranged for the parlor.

The timing of these publications was orchestrated to coincide with major political events between 1792 and 1803. The United Irishmen established their Society in the fall of 1791. As mentioned earlier, many United Irish leaders were scholars interested in preserving Gaelic poetry and music. They understood the gravity of the written word, especially when coupled with music. Thuermer argues that United Irish leaders were well aware of the "cultural significance" and "propagandistic value of the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for Irish antiquities, music, and language."¹²⁶

Poetry, though recited orally, was also contained in manuscript form to be collected, translated and published. Music was strictly from an oral tradition, with no written score. There had been few publications of Irish music,¹²⁷ and those were usually combined with music from other countries. By December, shortly after the Society began, United Irishmen distributed circulars seeking subscription funds to save Irish poetry and music by organizing the harpers' meeting. The next month, January 1792,

the *Northern Star* began to publish its paper, advertising the festival to be held the next July in Belfast. The meeting was held simultaneously with the Celebration of the Fall of the Bastille, for which the *Songs of the French Revolution* were sung. This was a political event where harpers would “perform” Gaelic culture in the context of Enlightenment ideology. In the Assembly Rooms in the Old Exchange, harpers, representing the Gaelic past were preparing their harps, while parades commemorating the French Revolution took place outside. During the meeting, political rallies also took place. Wolfe Tone and his friend Whitely Stokes, a Gaelic scholar, attended the harpers’ meeting as well as the other events. Though the meeting was held under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Knowledge, all but one of the organizers were United Irishmen, and he was a devout patriot. One of them, Robert Simms, was also a proprietor of the *Northern Star*.

For the next three years the United Irishmen spread their nationalist views throughout Ireland via the *Northern Star* and various pamphlets and circulars. They were so successful in their impact that English authorities took notice. By 1795, English officials resolved to silence the radicals as best they could. Wolfe Tone was arrested and exiled to America, but began negotiations with the French for a revolution to be set in 1796. Samuel Neilson, *Northern Star* editor, was arrested and imprisoned, yet his arrest did not stop the publication of the paper; William and Robert Simms continued publication until their arrest in 1797. Also, in 1795 intense division between loyalists and radicals ensued and The Orange Order was organized in opposition to the United Irishmen. This is the year the Society published the first *Paddy’s Resource* songbook. The title was *Paddy’s Resource: being a select collection of original and modern*

patriotic song, toasts and sentiments, compiled for the use of the People of Ireland.

Zimmerman describes the frontispiece of the book as: “Ireland as a woman standing under a Tree of Liberty, holding a harp and a pike topped with a Phrygian cap, some broken chains at her feet: a fairly complete epitome of the contents.”¹²⁸ Kevin Whelan believes the woman of the frontispiece “blends references to the French Marianne with the Irish Caitli’n Ni’ halacha’in.”¹²⁹ Zimmerman adds that “Paddy’s Resource” was the title of a cartoon published in 1780 of an Irish Volunteer in the demonstration for free trade.¹³⁰ The demonstration included a cannon with a placard addressed to Parliament reading “Free-Trade or This”,¹³¹ the caption on the cartoon read: “Ireland long tuned her harp in vain,/ The Cannon seconds now the strain...”¹³²

In 1796, the year of the first rebellion, backed by French troops and calculated to win, two music books were published. One was the second *Paddy’s Resource* songbook, titled *Paddy’s Resource, or the Harp of Erin attuned to Freedom; being a collection of patriotic songs, selected for Paddy’s Amusement*. The title of this songbook reflected the United Irishmen’s motto: “It is New-Strung and Shall be heard.” Zimmerman describes the frontispiece of this book as showing “a Phrygian cap irradiating like a sun,¹³³ two clasped hands, a harp, and the inscriptions “Erin Go Bragh” (Ireland for ever) and “Irishmen United.”¹³⁴ Symbolism, both verbal and visual, were integral features of United Irish literature. The images in the lyrics and on the frontispiece carried politically charged messages and defined political and cultural boundaries. Thuermer suggests the importance of defining much of what is considered representative of Irishness today: “United Irish songs, drawing upon diverse sources, generated what have become the

stereotypical images of Irish nationalism: bards, harps, shamrocks, green flags, political martyrs, and blood sacrifice.”¹³⁵

The other publication that year was Bunting’s volume of *Ancient Irish Music*, the first anthology of Irish music to date.¹³⁶ The music was collected from both the Belfast Meeting and from around Ireland, as Bunting traveled extensively in search for native music. The national melodies were then arranged for pianoforte and parlor performance. The volume was published four years after the Meeting of Belfast Harpers’, and under pressure from nationalists to distribute it at that time.¹³⁷ With *Paddy’s Resources*, containing revolutionary poetry that appealed to the working class, and Bunting’s anthology of genteel parlor music, aimed at the elite, nationalists presented music to all classes in their cultural promotion.

The final two Paddy’s *Resource* songbooks were published the same years as the final two rebellions, 1798 and 1803. The publication of these works during critical periods of political activism indicated the influence nationalists believed music and song to have in motivating rebels to mass self-sacrifice, and each of these works carried with them the message of an empowered Irish nation.

Mary Helen Thuente described the first songbook published by the United Irishmen, *Songs on the French Revolution that took place at Paris, 14, July 1789. Sung at the Celebration thereof at Belfast, on Saturday, 14 July 1792*. It contained six anonymous songs that were later reprinted in the *Northern Star* or in the first *Paddy’s Resource* songbook.¹³⁸ The first two song lyrics were written by Samuel Neilson, owner of the *Northern Star*, and the fourth by Wolfe Tone.¹³⁹ Thuente suggests that Tone’s

song prefigured the “successful blend of popular lyricism and political propaganda”¹⁴⁰ in United Irish song tradition.

United Irish ideology was aimed at unifying all classes and races of people into a nation; it was through their songs that the diversity was mostly addressed. In the *Northern Star*, though the articles were aimed at elites, some of the songs had a “broader popular appeal.”¹⁴¹ Thuermer claims that *Paddy’s Resources* “embodies the unity of sects, classes, and cultures the United Irishmen were seeking.”¹⁴² The songbooks addressed a “more popular and diverse audience,”¹⁴³ with lyrics from “political songs, formal odes, peasant dialogues, drinking songs, and military marches,”¹⁴⁴ with tunes of diverse musical origin: Irish, Scots-Irish, English, and even American and French.¹⁴⁵ Zimmerman lists three songs of the French Revolution that were translated for *Paddy’s Resource*: “The Marseilles’ March”,¹⁴⁶ “Ça ira” and “The Carmagnole”.¹⁴⁷ Thuermer states the first two *Paddy’s Resources* open with songs “in peasant dialogues extolling the French, if not the French invasion.”¹⁴⁸ Zimmerman maintains the “internationalism” and “intermingling of French and Irish elements is the most striking characteristic of *Paddy’s Resource*,” and that these elements were not found in “later patriotic song books.”¹⁴⁹

Just as the *Northern Star* had created a sense of camaraderie, so too, a strong sense of unity was created when performing nationalism in patriotic song. Song became a powerful source of solidarity among United Irishmen, coalescing disparate groups. Altenmüller refers to research suggesting that music “aids in the organization of community life and in the forging of connections among members of one group when disagreements occur with another.”¹⁵⁰ He asks the reader to consider such forms as

“lullabies, work songs for spinning or harvest time, and war marches,”¹⁵¹ stating that groups “play certain types of music as a means of identification and to set themselves apart from other groups.”¹⁵² This is particularly important in Irish nationalism, given the diversity within the society. Leith Davis explains that, “Music is presented as a connecting national practice, one capable of surmounting internal differences in the nation.”¹⁵³ The United Irishmen and their supporters went to great lengths to unite the “nation” with songs, and to set themselves apart as an Irish nation.

Kevin Whelan claims songs not only “signified solidarity [and] public affirmation”, but also served as “a means of assessing the political spirit of any gathering.”¹⁵⁴ It was not only the words of the songs that carried a message: “Failure to join in the chorus of a popular radical song was a sure sign of disaffection from the popular cause.”¹⁵⁵ Songs define boundaries of those who are in the community and those who are not. Harrison states, “On the one hand they reinforce social identifications; on the other, they assert distinctions, whether national, religious, political or generational.”¹⁵⁶ While some Irish songs were offensive to Catholics like “The Protestant Boys” and “The Boyne Water,”¹⁵⁷ *Paddy’s Resources*, though politically strong, avoided sectarian views. Adams believed this goal to be successful, for after conducting a survey of eighteenth-century popular literature in Ulster, he concluded, “it is impossible to assign material to a Protestant or a Catholic tradition.”¹⁵⁸ The communal influence of singing these songs was great, and besides providing a social sphere in which to share and enhance patriotism, there was imagined a much larger community. Whelan finds “the most striking feature of all these genres is their assumption that the culture which they addressed was a shared one.”¹⁵⁹ Whelan believes the oral culture to

be the one in which cultural knowledge was most widely shared, and that the oral nature of song created tighter localized boundaries around current events or localities; members of the community could insert meaningful “place or personal names” with which the group could personally identify. He states that the songs:

...were interfaces where authoritative forms of the written word penetrated oral culture and imprinted their shape on it; assimilated in this public (oral) fashion, rather than in a private (written) way, they created a communal store of knowledge, accessible to all, and hence were inherently democratic modes of communication. Such genres were essentially performance-driven, enacted in contexts of sociability. They were also fluid, portable and malleable, capable of being given a topical or local inflection as occasion demanded, through, for example, the alteration of place or personal names.¹⁶⁰

The malleability of the songs was reinforced by the fact that these songs had new poetry written that was set to old or familiar airs. *Paddy's Resources* had only the lyrics with an indication of the tune by which it should be sung. The lyrics were, for the most part, not ancient sacrosanct poetry that was not to be tampered with; but rather they were new lyrics that lent themselves to alterations determined by context. The use of familiar tunes eliminated the need for a musical score, since most of those to whom it was distributed did not read music. Using familiar melodies with politically charged lyrics provided the listener a double context in which to hear the music: one of the original musical setting—sometimes a traditional melody with nostalgic or metaphorical connotations; and the new patriotic context, linking the music with national sentiment.

Nationalists not only used visual symbols, as on the frontispieces, associated with music to create meaning to the masses, but they also used metaphoric symbolism to evoke national sentiments whenever the music was performed. Linking poetic symbolism with music awakens memories and emotions in a way nothing else can.¹⁶¹

Loves songs, establishing gender roles in which Ireland is gendered as a woman, and patriots as the lover/protector, was one popular metaphor. Taking romantic tunes and troping new words to the music gives a double symbolic message. A love song troped with revolutionary lyrics could evoke feelings of going to the mat for a lover—or Ireland, the “damsel in distress,” to rescue her from the clutches of England. Garvin uses the love song *A Roisi 'n Dubh* (Black Rose) as an example of a context where “patriotism and sexual love became fused together with great dramatic and emotional effect.”¹⁶²

Catherine Nash describes the strategic way nationalists constructed patriotic sentiments through these gendered roles:

Nationalist versions of Ireland constructed roles and identities for Irish men through their loyal and self-sacrificing relationship towards a revered sorrowful mother or virginal figure, who would be exonerated by the political freedom of Ireland.¹⁶³

Songs were powerful motivators and recognized as such. A quote from the United Irish satire, *Billy Bluff*, expressed the potency of song, and even the suggestion of a tune that is whistled:

T’is songs that is most to be dreaded of all things. Singing, Billy, is a damned bad custom: it infects a whole country and makes them half mad, because they rejoice and forget their cares, and forgets their duty, and forget their betters. By heavens, I’ll put an end to singing in this part of the country in a short time. And there’s whistling is near as bad: do you hear much whistling nowadays?”¹⁶⁴

These songs from *Paddy’s Resource* were immensely popular and important in United Irish education. Thuente states, “only ten of the sixty songs had appeared in the *Northern Star*, so the songbook represented a major escalation of the United Irishmen to ‘educate’ through song.”¹⁶⁵ There were many reprints of *Paddy’s Resources* even in Philadelphia (1796) and New York (1798).¹⁶⁶ A large number of songbooks were sold

by peddlers in the north. Whelan comments that the songbooks were “so successful in ‘galloping about the country’ the Squire Firebrand’s servant [from *Billy Bluff*] thought its name was ‘*Paddy’s Race-Horse*’.”¹⁶⁷

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF LITERATURE AND SONG

United Irish literature created a romantic view of patriotism that obscured the tragic reality of battle. Two who expressed the destructive impact patriotic motivational songs had on the nature of men were Whitely Stokes, the good friend of Wolfe Tone, who accompanied him to the Belfast Festival, and the twentieth-century writer, Roddy Doyle.

Whitely Stokes,¹⁶⁸ well aware of the impact literature has on the psyche of people, wrote *Projects for re-establishing the internal peace and tranquility of Ireland*, that commented on profitable literature. Written in 1799, not long after the death of friends in the 1798 rebellion, his involvement with the United Irishmen makes this quote all the more poignant: “some will think romances innocent; but these works contribute greatly to keep alive a false admiration of courage, a spirit of war and revenge, and a love of adventure so incompatible with the happiness of mankind.”¹⁶⁹

Charlotte Jacklein explores similar feelings to Stokes in Roddy Doyle’s novel, *A Star Called Henry*.¹⁷⁰ The novel centers on the power of song to manifest their sentiments in the actions and identities of one particular man, Henry, who represents soldiers like those who fought in the United Irish rebellions. Jacklein claims that throughout the book, “the potency of music and song is never doubted.”¹⁷¹ Though songs can motivate noble ideals, Doyle believes song to have the power to engage emotions beyond reason and to the detriment of men, as seen in the life of Henry. In his novel, Doyle describes the awakening of Henry, a gunman in the rebellion, who, from disillusionment, decides to leave the regiment. To keep him there, Jack Dalton wrote a ballad about him, praising his courage and stamina. The ballad re-motivated the young

man to stay. Jacklein explains that, “the romance of a mythic rebel begins to be projected onto his identity;”¹⁷² “On hearing the song, for the first time in his life Henry Smart feels that he has been given identity and importance—an offer he is unable to refuse.”¹⁷³ She describes the power of the ballad on Henry’s identity, and the conflicting results of Henry’s desire to be cast as a rebel hero:

This song not only celebrates past actions, but actually seduces Henry Smart into acting—in his own hungry and imaginative mind—the role of a rebel hero. Ironically, even as the song creates an appealing identity that then embraces, the position of gunman that he takes up in order to live out the song-created legend increasingly forces him to lead a transient and secretive life of false identities.¹⁷⁴

The impression Doyle gives in this novel is the impact of song to entice one into cult-like fidelity, secrecy, and brotherhood emphasizing “hero worship and glorified violence.”¹⁷⁵

Songs, like United Irish songs, filter the perception of reality. Doyle writes, “rebel songs were sung like hymns.”¹⁷⁶ Jacklein agrees that patriotic songs “impart a conviction equal to religious belief as they provide their own inspirational lessons on how to act bravely and well.”¹⁷⁷

This type of romantic patriotism evoked by song took place in the lives of United Irish leaders Robert Emmet and Henry Joy McCracken. When Robert Emmet heard Thomas Moore performing “The Foxes Sleep” from Bunting’s 1796 volume of *Ancient Irish Music*, he was overcome with patriotism and jumped to his feet shouting, “Oh that I were at the head of twenty thousand men marching to that air.”¹⁷⁸ Emmet eventually led the last United Irish rebellion in 1803 for which he and Thomas Russell among others were executed.

When Henry Joy McCracken, with whom Bunting lived most of his life, led soldiers in the 1798 Antrim rebellion, they sang “The Marseillaise,” a song of the French Revolution out of *Paddy’s Resource*. According to Fox, before it totally faded away, one of the men began singing “The Lass of Richmond Hill,”¹⁷⁹ an upbeat tune, the lyrics of which were written by Leonard McNally, the defense attorney employed by the United Irishmen.

CONCLUSION

United Irish literature was designed to educate on morals, politics, philosophy, and culture. *Paddy's Resource* expressed overt militant nationalism and gave those participating an identity within a romanticized community, imagined as heroes capable of rescuing the Irish nation.

The volumes published by Edward Bunting created a much different national community: that of genteel society, whose position and power were crucial to nationalistic success. Bunting provided them with the means of participating in cultural nationalism as an extension of the bardic image. The introduction of Irish music embodied in an elegant format that was well received in Europe and England as well as Ireland, gave Irish music its cosmopolitan debut, positioning it alongside more universal types of art music. Instead of direct revolution, Bunting's political energy was placed in "cultural practice." These volumes are examined in later chapters.

United Irish literature played a major role in the development of cultural nationalism. The newspapers, circulars, and songbooks not only promoted the bardic symbolic on the page, but also, in a real way, became an embodiment of the bardic voice—educating the people of their oppression at the hands of the English on the one hand, and their rights to freedom, on the other. They maintained that those inalienable rights were rooted in the significance of an authentic national culture—defined in United Irish literature.

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- ¹ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 169.
- ² Drennan, *Letters*, 72.
- ³ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 3. Thomas Davis was the leader of the Young Irelanders and prominent writer of national literature during the mid nineteenth century.
- ⁴ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 2-3.
- ⁵ Anthony Smith, in his book *Chosen People* (3), is concerned with "the persistent strength and scope of national identities, and the passions they evoke."
- ⁶ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 3.
- ⁷ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 8-12. Largey discusses the middle ground elites occupy between the lower classes who see them as a threat and the constraint issued to them by the colonizer.
- ⁸ During the years 1769-74, 40,000 Ulster residents immigrated to America. Michael Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic*, 1997: quoted in Gillian O'Brien "'Spirit, Impartiality and Independence' The Northern Star, 1792-1797." *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*, 13 (1998), 23.
- ⁹ Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland: with General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom, Made in the Years 1776, 1777, and 1778, and Brought Down to the End of 1779*. Vols. 1 and 2. Dublin: Printed by George Bonham, 1780, 2:14. "All the poor people are Roman Catholics, and among them are the descendants of the old families who once possessed the country, of which they still preserve the full memory, insomuch, that a gentleman's labourer will regularly leave to his son, by will, his master's estate," (2:14).
- ¹⁰ O'Brien, "'Spirit,'" 9-10.
- ¹¹ Gellner states, "The circumstances in which nationalism has generally arisen have not normally been those in which the state itself, as such, was lacking, or when its reality was in any serious doubt. The state was only too conspicuously present. It was its boundaries and/or the distribution of power, and possibly of other advantages, within it which were resented." In Ireland it was the "conspicuous present" of English interests protected by an Irish Parliament. (*Nations and Nationalism*, 4).
- ¹² Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 59, quoted from *Reports of the Committees of Secrecy of the House of Commons and the House of Lords of Ireland* (Dublin, 1798), 72.
- ¹³ For a more extensive look at the social and economic dynamics among society at this time see, Thomas Brown's "Nationalism and the Irish Peasant 1800-1848", *Review of Politics*, 15 (1953), 403-445.
- ¹⁴ By the 1830s, Catholic historians began to write Protestants out of Gaelic culture.
- ¹⁵ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 60.
- ¹⁶ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 98.
- ¹⁷ This circular was an elaboration of the letter written to McTier a month earlier: Secret Committee, (June 1791), 67. Full Citation for Ireland. Parliament. House of Commons. *Report from the Committee of Secrecy, of the House of Commons in Ireland, as reported by ... Viscount Castlereagh, August 21, 1798*. (London, 1798). Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu:2047/servlet/ECCO>
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ²⁰ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 59-60, quoted from Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat, baron de. *The complete works of M. de Montesquieu. Translated from the French. In four volumes. ... Vol. 1.* (Dublin, 1777). 4 vols. Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/servlet/ECCO> "The Spirit of Laws" is in vol. i. Dublin, 1777.
- ²¹ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 60.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Drennan, *Report*, 72. Secrecy.
- ²⁴ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 60.
- ²⁵ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 98. (emphasis mine).

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- ²⁶ Boydell, *The United Irishmen, Music, Harps, and National Identity*, 46.
- ²⁷ Barra Boydell, Boydell, Barra, "The Irish Harp on Glass," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 12 (Dublin: Eton Enterprises Ltd. 1996), 111.
- ²⁸ Boydell, "Irish Harp on Glass," 111. The English crown is distinguished by the curved arches; the Irish, rather than arches comes to points in areas.
- ²⁹ The red Phrygian cap, an ancient symbol of freedom, placed atop the liberty pole was used both in the American Revolution and in the French. It appears on the Seal of the United States Senate and on the coat of arms of countries such as Argentina, Columbia, Cuba and Haiti, among others.
- ³⁰ Boydell, "Iconography," 48.
- ³¹ One of the Volunteer mottos had been, "It is new-strung with Liberty"; another, "It is new-strung and shan't be heard," possibly drawing on the poem of Matthew Pilkington, "The progress of music in Ireland" (Dublin, 1730, 16) (White Keeper's Recital, 17).
- The first rude lays are now but meanly priz'd,
As rude, neglected, as untun'd, despised:
Dead—in esteem too dead) the Bards that sung,
The Fife neglected, and the harp unstrung.
- ³² Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 56-7.
- ³³ McCann, "Music and Politics," 56.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 97. Thuente believed that Moore, though sounding a more plaintive voice than the United Irish, learned to "write poetry during the 1790s by imitating the "bardic" verse of the United Irishmen." (94).
- ³⁵ Petrie gives an account of this harp in his "Memoir of the Ancient Irish Harp Preserved in Trinity College," in Bunting's 1840 volume of Irish airs.
- ³⁶ Brian Boru became legendary beyond Ireland. He was also gloried by the Norse Gaels and Scandinavians in such works as *Nial's Saga* and the *Orkneyinga Saga*.
- ³⁷ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 12-13.
- ³⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.
- ³⁹ McDowell, "Personnel of the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen" in *Irish Historical Studies*, ii (1940-41), 12-53. See also FDJ 24 Apr. 1798, quoted in Whelan, "United Irishmen," 276.
- ⁴⁰ Anderson, "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983), 37-46. This whole chapter discusses the effects print capitalism had on the rise of nationalism.
- ⁴¹ Arthur O'Connor was editor of *The Press* and later the *Northern Star*.
- ⁴² Kevin Whelan, "United Irishmen", 278.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalists Politics*, 13.
- ⁴⁵ O'Brien, "Spirit," 16.
- ⁴⁶ James Porter, "Bring me the Head," 402. See also Murray G.H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999; and Joep Leerssen, "Ossianic Liminality: Between Native Tradition and Preromantic Taste" in Stafford and Gaskill's *From Gaelic to Romantic*, 1-16.
- ⁴⁷ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 62.
- ⁴⁸ Gellner, *Nations*, 1. Gellner on national sentiment.
- ⁴⁹ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 2.
- ⁵⁰ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 132; Kevin Whelan quotes a letter from John Schoales, a prosecuting counsel in 1797: "The Northern Star [is] the principal and most powerful of all the instruments used for agitating and deluding the minds of the people...that circulation too is great beyond example. The lowest of the people get it. It is read to them in clusters. A whole neighbourhood subscribes for it," (*Tree of Liberty*, 69.)
- ⁵¹ Arthur O'Connor. editor. *Beauties of the Press*, London, 1800, 1. This publication is a collection of articles from *The Press*, a United Irish newspaper printed in Dublin. This was published after the

newspaper was cited for seditious literature. In 1797 *The Press* bought the *Northern Star*, the United Irish paper from Belfast.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Genesis 2:7.

⁵⁴ Arthur O'Connor, editor. *Beauties of the Press*.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Chosen*, 102.

⁵⁶ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 62.

⁵⁷ Arthur, O'Connor, ed. *Beauties of the Press*, London, 1800, 34.

⁵⁸ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 62.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁶⁰ Whelan, "United Irishmen," 278, quoted from. 32 *DEP*, 21 Mar. 1797. [Dublin Evening Post],

⁶¹ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 65. quoted from *A Letter on the State of the Parties and on the Subject of Reform, addressed to the People*, (Belfast, 1796), 18.

⁶² Ibid. 64, quoted from Alexander, James, *Some Account of the First Apparent Symptoms of the Late Rebellion*, (Dublin, 1800), 19.

⁶³ Thomas Russell, *A Letter to the People of Ireland on the Present Situation of the Country*, Belfast: Northern Star Office, 1796.

⁶⁴ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 62.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁶⁶ O'Brien, "Spirit," 12.

⁶⁷ Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 62.

⁶⁸ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 90.

⁶⁹ Whelan, "United Irishmen," 284. Because of the heavy emphasis on orality in Irish popular culture, these United Irish strategies were successful in "making every man a politician": Thomas Addis Emmet. 74 T.A. Emmet, "Part of an Essay Towards a History of Ireland" in MacNeven, *Pieces of Irish History: Illustrative of the Condition of the Catholics of Ireland, of the origin and progress of the Political System of the United Irishmen, and of their Transactions with the Anglo-Irish Government*. (New York: Printed for Bernard Dornin, 1807), 77. See also J.S. Donnelly, "Propagating the Cause of the United Irishmen" in *Studies*, LXIX (1980), 5-23.

⁷⁰ Drennan, *Letters*, 72.

⁷¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

⁷² Each paper was said to have had an audience of at least 10 people. Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 66.

⁷³ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 132.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 113.

⁷⁵ Gillian O'Brien "'Spirit, Impartiality and Independence' The Northern Star, 1792-1797." *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*, 13 (1998), 23.

⁷⁶ Kevin Whelan, "The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture", in Dickson *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion*, 296.

⁷⁷ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 113.

⁷⁸ *Northern Star*, June 1, 1795, quoted in Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 59.

⁷⁹ David Dickson, "Paine and Ireland," in *The United Irishmen*, 140-1.

⁸⁰ William Sampson, *A Faithful Report of the Trial of Hurdy Gurdy: Tried and Convicted of a Seditious Libel in the Court of King's Bench, on the Testimony of French Horn, the Approver: with the Arguments of Counsel, and the Charge of the Learned Chief Justice to the Jury*. (New-York: Published and sold by Bernard Dornin, 1806. (Brooklyn [New York, N.Y.]: T. Kirk).

⁸¹ O'Brien, "Spirit," 13. O'Brien claims recent scholarship suggests that Russell may have had a part in writing this satire.

- ⁸² James Porter, *Billy Bluff and 'Squire Firebrand: or, a sample of the times, as it periodically appeared in the Northern star*, (Belfast, 1797). Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/servlet/ECCO>
- ⁸³ Thomas Russell and William Sampson, *The Lion of Old England, Northern Star*, 1793. The article was contributed anonymously (Thuente, 106).
- ⁸⁴ O'Brien, "Spirit," 13.
- ⁸⁵ Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics*, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1981), 16-7.
- ⁸⁶ See "Gaelic Language—Translation and Mediation" in Chapter 4 of this work.
- ⁸⁷ Jutikkala, Eino, *A History of Finland*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 201. These sentiments cost Arwidsson his job at the University in St. Petersburg, and his journal was suppressed (Ibid., 202).
- ⁸⁸ At this time there are efforts being made to preserve languages of other indigenous people; for example, those of the Native American Indians, as their cultural contexts are rapidly disappearing.
- ⁸⁹ Smith, *Chosen People*, 2. Smith adopted this opinion from Hobsbawm.
- ⁹⁰ When Noah Webster published his *An American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828, it placed American English as a national language, distinct from England.
- ⁹¹ *Bolg an tSolair* means "'Bag of Goods' or 'Miscellany'," (Davis, 91).
- ⁹² Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 95. The magazine may have been discontinued due to the raid and later destruction of the *Northern Star* press.
- ⁹³ The addition of prayers to the magazine would serve to create a perceived religious union based on a single practice common to all religions—prayer.
- ⁹⁴ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 9.
- ⁹⁵ *Bolg an tSolair* preface iii-x, quoted from Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 96.
- ⁹⁶ Brooke, vi.
- ⁹⁷ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 10.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 9; Fox, *Annals*, 244-5.
- ⁹⁹ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 10.
- ¹⁰⁰ Lynch was the scholar who traveled to Connaught for Edward Bunting, to collect the Gaelic lyrics to airs in Bunting's collection. Not only was his trip funded by the McCracken family, but his ties to the United Irishmen were strong enough for authorities to suspect him of conducting United Irish business while on his cultural expeditions. O Casaide 1930; Fox 1911, 244, 254 [Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 9].
- ¹⁰¹ Victor Edward Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages: A Study of Linguistic and Cultural Conflict in Scotland, Wales and Ireland from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1983), 64-5. Durkacz states that providing grammars and dictionaries "established the pedigree of the Celtic languages [and] it did them a great service: it provided evidence to refute those who condemned the Celtic languages as barbarous dialects—an essential step in their cultural rehabilitation," (190). See also George Steiner's *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- ¹⁰² Lynch, Patrick, *The pentaglot preceptor; or elementary institutes of the English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Irish, languages. Vol.I. Containing a complete grammar of the English tongue ...* By Patrick Lynch. Vol. 1. Carrick, 1796. 1 vols. Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu:2047/servlet/ECCO>
- ¹⁰³ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 95.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 94.
- ¹⁰⁵ Preface of *Bolg an tSolair*, quoted in Thuente, 95.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ It wasn't until the nineteenth century that nationalists pressed to revive the language. A language league was established in 1877.

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- ¹⁰⁸ George Petrie, *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. Cooper, David, ed. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 1.
- ¹ Emphasis mine. (Dublin Society of UI “we have though little about our ancestors and much of our posterity.” See also Whelan, *Tree of Liberty*, 59.
- ¹⁰⁹ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 4.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹¹¹ Michael Largey says of Haitian music, that “composers attempted to write classical music that was both culturally unique and musically universal.” (*Vodou Nation*, 5).
- ¹¹² Boydell, *The United Irishmen*, 50.
- ¹¹³ This was a similar situation to that of America, where English tunes were used to carry new American lyrics, such as “The Star Spangled Banner,” sung to the tune of a popular British drinking song, “To Anacreon in Heaven.”
- ¹¹⁴ Boydell, *The United Irishmen*, 50. numbers quoted from McNally.
- ¹¹⁵ See Whelan’s chapter on “Republic in the Village” in *Tree of Liberty*, 59-96. Though Whelan believes the United Irish fell short in the “colonization of popular culture,” he gives examples of attempts they made in various genre of popular culture. He believes they overestimated their ability to “elide the divisiveness of the Irish past and religious differences concealed their popular potency and conceded them to conservatives as a political weapon that could be used against them.” (95). This fed into the development of the Orange Order which, Whelan claims, appealed “to disunited rather than united Irishmen,” (96).
- ¹¹⁶ *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* Vol. 1 1986, Andrew Carpenter, ed., 37.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁸ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 10.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93-4. James Porter, author of the United Irish satire *Billy Bluff*.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 93. In Bunting’s 1840 volume, he complains that Irish music was seen as “plaintive and melancholy,” (18).
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 94.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, *Northern Star*, “The Irish Bard”, 16 May 1792.
- ¹²³ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁴ Charlotte Jacklein, “Rebel Songs and Hero Pawns: Music in *A Star Called Henry*”, *New Hibernia Review/ Iris E’ireannach Nua*, 9:4 (Winter, 2005), 129.
- ¹²⁵ This celebration included the Belfast Harpers’ Festival.
- ¹²⁶ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 7.
- ¹²⁷ Bunting states there were three smaller attempts: “Burke Thumoth, in 1720, another by Neill of Christ Churchyard, soon after, and a third by Carolan’s son, patronized by Dean Delany, about 1747,” (1840, 4.
- ¹²⁸ Georges-Denis Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900*. Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967, 38.
- ¹²⁹ Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 36. Kathleen Ni Houlihan, as translated into English represents an old woman seeking the help of young Irishmen, to free Ireland from English rule.
- ¹³⁰ A series of cartoons featuring “Paddy” appeared after in New York during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes for Irish immigrants. A collection of these cartoons were presented to the Michigan State Museum by John and Selma Appel. They also published them in a book titled: *Pat-Riots to Patriots: American Irish in Caricature and Comic Art*, (East Lansing, Michigan: MSU Museum, 1990).
- ¹³¹ Foster, *History*, 243.
- ¹³² Zimmerman, *Songs*, 38.
- ¹³³ This image of a cap above the Irish harp radiating like the sun is shown on the frontispiece of Bunting’s 1840 volume of *Ancient Music of Ireland*. See Figure 10.6 of this work.

- ¹³⁴ Zimmerman, *Songs*, 38. Translations of the French revolutionary song “The Marseilles March”, sung in the 1803 rebellion was in *Paddy’s Resource*, as well as translations of “Ca ira” and “The Carmagnole.”
- ¹³⁵ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 3.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid., 56. Thunte claims, “Bunting’s collections were well known to United Irishmen. For example, a note to a song entitled “Oh Union For Ever” that was printed in the United Irishmen’s Dublin newspaper the *Press* on January 1798 said, “Such persons as are not in possession of the national musick [sic] may sing it to the tune of Logie of Buchan,” a widely-known Scots tune. “The national musick” refers to Bunting’s work.” Also Thomas Russell and T. A. Emmet had copies of Bunting’s 1796 volume in prison. William Drennan contributed to the 1809 edition.
- ¹³⁷ Roy Johnston, *Bunting’s Messiah*. (Belfast: Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society, 2003), 42.
- ¹³⁸ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 125.
- ¹³⁹ Ibid., 126. Tone’s song, “A New Song Addressed to Irishmen,” was sung at the dinner in 1792, concluding the harpers’ festival and the fall of the Bastille celebration.
- ¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 127.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid., 132.
- ¹⁴² Ibid.
- ¹⁴³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Though opera was popular, those melodies were considered too elite and pop culture, 133.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 90.
- ¹⁴⁶ This was the tune sung by revolutionaries led by Robert Emmet in the 1803 uprising.
- ¹⁴⁷ Zimmerman, *Songs*, 39.
- ¹⁴⁸ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 152.
- ¹⁴⁹ Zimmerman, *Songs*, 39.
- ¹⁵⁰ Altenmüller, “Music in Your Head,” *Scientific American*, 14, no.1 (2003): 26.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵² Ibid.
- ¹⁵³ Davis, *Music*, 100.
- ¹⁵⁴ Whelan, Chapter 21 “The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture,” in Dickson, 284.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 283.
- ¹⁵⁶ Frank Llewelyn Harrison, “Music, Poetry and Polity in the Age of Swift.” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr* 1 (1986): 62.
- ¹⁵⁷ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 127.
- ¹⁵⁸ Adams, *Printed Word*, 6.
- ¹⁵⁹ Whelan, chapter 21 “The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture,” in Dickson, 284.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁶¹ Altenmüller, “Music,” 31.
- ¹⁶² Garvin, *Evolution*, 17.
- ¹⁶³ Catherine Nash, “Embodied Irishness: Gender, Sexuality and Irish Identities”, in *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*, Brian Graham, ed., 116.
- ¹⁶⁴ Sampson, *Billy Bluff*, 10. Originally published as a serial satire. This quote appeared in the *Northern Star*, 2 Sept. 1796. Whelan, “United Irishmen,” 283.
- ¹⁶⁵ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 132.
- ¹⁶⁶ Zimmerman, *Songs*, 38.
- ¹⁶⁷ Whelan, “United Irishmen,” 283; Sampson, *Billy Bluff*, 11.
- ¹⁶⁸ Whitely Stokes accompanied Wolfe Tone to the Meeting of Belfast Harpers in 1792.

¹⁶⁹ Stokes, Whitley, 1763-1845. *Projects for re-establishing the internal peace and tranquillity of Ireland*. (Dublin: printed for James Moore, 1799), 41-42.

¹⁷⁰ Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*, New York: Viking, 1999.

¹⁷¹ Jacklein, Charlotte. "Rebel Songs and Hero Pawns: Music in *A Star Called Henry*". *New Hibernia Review/Iris Eireannach Nua*, 9:4 (winter/ Geimhreadh, 2005), 134.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁷⁶ Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*, 123.

¹⁷⁷ Jacklein, "Rebel Songs," 138.

¹⁷⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 24-25. Fox states that this is the air to which Moore composed his "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," but it was actually written to the tune "The Little Red Fox." Moore, 1895.

¹⁷⁹ Ironically, the lyrics to this song, published around 1790, were written by Leonard McNally (1752-1820) in honor of his fiancée, Miss Janson, of Richmond Hill. McNally, the defense attorney employed by the United Irishman, was posthumously found to be an informant for the British government. Not only did McNally betray Lord Edward Fitzgerald in the 1798 Uprising, but he also defended such United Irishmen as Robert Emmett, who was executed for the 1803 Uprising, betraying them by simultaneously selling the contents of their cases to the British prosecutors.

CHAPTER 7

The Meeting of Belfast Harpers' (1792)

BACKGROUND

When the United Irishmen formed in November of 1791, they immediately formed strategies to advance cultural nationalism throughout Ireland. As we have already seen, nationalist elites aimed to create a nation from all sectors of people living in Ireland. Because of conflicts between religions, races, and social classes; they unleashed a literary campaign that focused on the declining Gaelic culture. Focusing on cultural elements of the past promoted a unity built on antiquity that de-emphasized other conflicts. Because Irish nationalists symbolically identified with Gaelic culture, they began an initiative to preserve and reinvent elements of that culture: music, poetry and language. They glorified these elements to unite masses toward an ideological viewpoint

and political agenda; they used the threat of imminent threat of oblivion to motivate them to action.

Combining the Anglo-Irish antiquarian vision of an Irish Golden Age with eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideology, nationalists constructed their own interpretation of Irishness with which to define the nation. In the last chapter, we saw the way the United Irishmen conducted their literary campaign. Though their literature was prolific, they realized that reading the literature was not enough; Irishness needed to be performed—in ceremony, through singing, parading, drinking toasts and other forms of performance to bond comradeship and motivate involvement.

One such cultural performance was the Belfast Harpers' Festival of 1792. This festival was to feature the ancient bard, his music, and his poetry, elements central to elite construction of Ireland's glorious past. In retrospect, this festival is seen as largely conservational, preserving Irish music in somewhat of a folk revival as that experienced in the 1960s. This was not the case. This festival was highly political. The simultaneous setting with the anniversary of Bastille Day, celebrating the French Revolution supports that. Yet by 1911, even C. M. Fox, Bunting's biographer, downplayed the political association of the festival in her *Annals*. After describing the events surrounding the festival, she "dismissed" the political and turned to the harpers as if it were a separate event.¹ It was not. The festival was central to national politics; because the bard was central to national politics. This chapter describes the political motivation to combine nationalist ideology with the Belfast harpers and their music. The initiative was not merely to preserve the culture, but to create the nation. The following chapters,

discussing the Bunting volumes derived from the festival, indicate the political outgrowth of the festival.

While the festival was not as politically overt as the debates and revolutionary songs, it represented cultural nationalism at its most poignant expression. It brought together the last remnant of harpers—"ancestors of our most ancient bards."² Yet these harpers, stripped of the idyllic glory presented by Walker and Brooke, stood emblematic both of Ireland's ancient glory and its struggling present at the hand of a disinterested Parliament that favored English interests.

Nationalists attempted to coalesce the nation by presenting a Golden Age that flourished before the English invasion. The decline of this Golden Age was seen as a result of English oppression, brought about in part by legislation against customs defined as Irishness: among them, the Gaelic language, methods of warfare and, bardic poetry. The successive bans against bardic poetry, particularly during the reign of Elizabeth, gave credence to the powerful influence attributed to the bard.

Because much of bardic poetry was seen as uncompromising resistance against the English, the ancient bard was an apt icon to represent the national voice. As the bardic tradition had all but vanished, nationalists saw the opportunity to "revive and perpetuate"³ this element of Gaelic culture. Through the festival, they revived and reinvented a cultural arena where radical rhetoric was welcomed and esteemed.

Walker and Brooke had already substantiated the bardic stature in literature; they rooted the bard in cultural antiquity, and also reinforced the continued longevity in the poetry of contemporary bards. The concept of antiquity embedded in contemporary poetry was crucial to substantiating the ancient roots of the nation. Nationalists needed to

establish both the ancient foundations of the nation as well as the ability to contemporaneously compete culturally among European nations. Walker and Brooke chose Carolan to represent the bardic link between the ancient and the cosmopolitan; the Belfast harpers reinforced that link by performing his music.

Nationalists, building on antiquarian works, adopted the bard and his poetry as symbolic national imagery. Via the festival, not only Carolan's reappearance substantiated the bardic tradition, but additional contemporary links to antiquity emerged: the festival produced bards in the flesh, tangible representations of the tradition. They authenticated the continued legacy throughout Ireland's history, and also its victimization by cultural hegemony.

Nationalists believed the key to Ireland's future would be found in its past, particularly the multidimensional bardic past. The bard of United Irish literature served to symbolize masculine strength, prosperity, honor, status, and martyrdom. He was an important symbol to bring before a public that needed to make cultural connections before adopting a collective identity. The Belfast harpers represented both the idyllic Golden Age symbolism and the poignant reality of cultural decline. The combination of these dichotomies formed the foundation of cultural nationalism. Presenting it to the public in a tangible, accessible way for acceptance was the only hope for political success.

The Harpers' Festival was one of the earliest projects planned by United Irishmen. Believing Irish music to be a strong cultural boundary, the festival was intended to gather the remaining harpers together to transcribe the music they played before it was lost and forgotten. This festival would not only be Irishness preserved, but

it would also be Irishness performed, demonstrating the union of Ireland's Golden Age with political ideology.

These nationalists, many of whom were attorneys, were well aware of the influence and precision of rhetoric to present their case to the public jury. Through cultural nationalism, they projected the vision of a future Golden Age by reformulating the ancient pattern. Nationalists constructed both the plan for the future and the pattern from the past; they constructed the nation by combining the two. In this instance, they used the festival as a common meeting ground.

In a circular distributed in December 1791 (Figure 7.1), certain nationalists linked “the honour, as well as the prosperity of their country” to the revival and preservation of Ireland’s “ancient Music and Poetry.” Considering the few remaining fragments to be “monuments to the refined taste and genius of their ancestors,” nationalists appealed to “men of refinement and Erudition” for support:⁴

Some inhabitants of Belfast, feeling themselves interested in everything which relates to the honour, as well as the prosperity of their country, propose to open a subscription, which they intend to apply in attempting to revive and perpetuate *the ancient Music and Poetry of Ireland*. They are solicitous to preserve from oblivion the fragments which have been permitted to remain, as monuments of the refined taste and genius of their ancestors.⁵

The circular then described their plan to gather the harpers whom they considered to be repositories for these “monuments” of refined culture:

In order to carry this project into execution, it must appear obvious to those acquainted with the situation of this country, that it will be necessary to assemble the HARPERS, those descendants of our ancient Bards,⁶ who are at present, almost exclusively possessed of all that remains of the Music, Poetry, and Oral Traditions of Ireland.⁷

And to preserve "the most beautiful and interesting parts of their knowledge",⁸

the committee proposed to hire a Gaelic speaker and competent musician to transcribe the music and poetry performed by the harpers.

We are informed, that some inhabitants of Belfast propose to open a subscription, which they intend to apply in attempting to revive—*The Ancient Music and Poetry of Ireland*. They are solicitous to preserve from oblivion, the few fragments which have been permitted to remain as monuments of the refined taste and genius of their ancestors.

In order to carry this project into execution, it must appear obvious to those acquainted with the situation of this country, that it will be necessary to assemble the **HARPERS**, those descendants of our ancient Bards, who are at present, almost exclusively possessed of all that remains of the Music, Poetry, and Oral Traditions of Ireland.

It is proposed, that the Harpers should be induced to assemble at Belfast, (suppose on the first of July next) by the distribution of such prizes as may seem adequate to the subscribers: and that a person well versed in the Language and Antiquities of this nation, should attend, with a skilful musician to transcribe and arrange the most beautiful and interesting parts of their knowledge.

An undertaking of this nature, will undoubtedly meet the approbation of men of refinement and Erudition in every country: and when it is considered, how intimately the *Spirit* and *Character* of a PEOPLE are connected with their National Poetry and Music, it is presumed, that the Irish Patriot and Politician, will not deem it an object unworthy his patronage and protection.

Figure 7.1. Announcement of subscription to hold the Belfast Festival in July 1792. Circular distributed in December 1791, Courtesy Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

The organizers assumed “men of refinement” would understand “national poetry and music” to be cultural boundaries shaped around the “spirit and character of a people.”⁹ In this circular, they instructed the reader that Irish patriotism is demonstrated not only by financial support, but also by protecting, rescuing, if you will, these “monuments” of Irishness “from oblivion”:

An undertaking of this nature will, undoubtedly, meet the approbation of men of refinement and erudition in every country. And when it is considered how intimately the *Spirit* and *Character* of a PEOPLE are connected with their National Poetry and Music, it is presumed that the Irish Patriot and Politician will not deem it an object unworthy his patronage and protection.¹⁰

Along with the circular, ads were placed requesting harpers to attend. The appearance of the harpers would serve the dual role of contributing to the collection of national airs in the music they played while also serving to authenticate that same music.¹¹

To gather as many as possible, the ads were placed in the two Belfast newspapers, the *National Journal*, and newspapers in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Kilkenny, Galway, Sligo, and Derry.¹² The ad from the *Belfast Newsletter* reads:¹³

National Music of Ireland

A respectable body of the inhabitants of Belfast have published a plan for reviving the ancient music of this country, and the project having met with such support and approbation as music is sure success to the undertaking; *performers on the Irish Harp* are requested to assemble in this town on the 10th day of July next...[emphasis in original]¹⁴

Besides advertising for the festival and requesting support, these ads were part of the United Irish plan to educate the public regarding the “real” identity of Irishmen. The advertisements promoted the refinement that Gaelic culture exhibited in its music and poetry. They were a tacit defense against barbaric stereotypes that would naturally be dismissed by enlightened men. Since Ireland’s refinement was said to be found in

vanishing elements of culture, nationalists intended to preserve them. They assumed the incentive for preservation would attract the universal encouragement and approval of enlightened men “in every country.”

Music and poetry symbolized, as in Brooke’s *Reliques*, the refinement and genius in Ireland’s history before English colonization, a time that exhibited national honor and prosperity.

Because the festival emphasized preservation, entertainment and skill were secondary. The guidelines for the fifteen festival judges stated it was not to be solely a talent competition, as previous festivals had been, but the means by which to collect the most ancient airs of the harpers, ones that had not been recorded elsewhere:

In order to revive obsolete airs, it is an instruction to the judges on this occasion, not to be solely governed in their decisions by the degree of execution or taste of the several performers, but independent to these circumstances, to consider the person entitled to additional claim, who shall produce airs not to be found in any public collection, and at the same time deserving of preference, by their intrinsic excellence. It is recommended to any harper who is in possession of scarce compositions to have them reduced to notes: that the Rev Mr Andrew Bryson of Dundalk be requested to assist, as a person versed in the antiquities of the nation, and that Mr William Weare, Mr Edward Bunting and Mr John Sharpe be requested to attend as practical musicians.¹⁵

The festival was set for July 1792. Though it was held under the auspices of the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge, the festival was in reality part of the United Irish agenda. It was common, under the pressure of English authority, to establish reading societies for the purpose of gathering for more political ends. Captain McNevin, reporting from Carrickfergus in 1795, described the political motivation behind some of the literary societies: “The United Irishmen, being prevented from meeting publicly, have established clandestine societies who are well supplied with inflammatory

publications, some calling themselves Book-Clubs, Literary Societies and Reading Societies.”¹⁶ The title of the Society for Promoting Knowledge¹⁷ clearly expressed the aim of United Irishmen who were “dependent on a literate populace”¹⁸ to educate the masses. Whelan states that the “United Irishmen encouraged popular education, set up Sunday schools and plebeian book clubs in east Ulster in 1780s and 90s.”¹⁹ The Society for Promoting Knowledge established the Linen Hall library, where Thomas Russell, prominent United Irishmen, served as librarian. The library, though moved from its original location, still remains on Donegall Square and is known for its large collection of Irish national literature.

In the months preceding the festival, the United Irish newspaper, *The Northern Star*, published several poems that highlighted the bard. The bardic voice sounded in defense of an oppressed Ireland, that looked forward to the same hope of freedom enjoyed by America and France.²⁰

There were several United Irish leaders, as well as independent nationalists, who were dedicated to the preservation of Gaelic tradition. Among the leaders was Dr. James McDonnell, the leading physician in Belfast. He chaired the organizing committee of the festival and was its major financial contributor. McDonnell had been born a Catholic, but later became Presbyterian. His education began at a hedge school, in one of the Red Bay caves.²¹ Later, he studied medicine in Edinburgh, a major center for the propagation of Enlightenment ideology McDonnell was from a mixed, Scot and Irish, marriage: his mother, a Stewart of Ballintoy; and his father, a descendant of Alexander McDonnell, who lost his life leading an uprising in 1647.²² In 1778, McDonnell’s father employed the harper Arthur O’Neill, who lived with them for two years, instructing the boys on the

harp. This may account for the interest McDonnell showed throughout his life in reviving the harp tradition in Ireland. Though he never officially affiliated himself with any political organization, Dr. McDonnell participated in Irish nationalism throughout his life.²³ His patriotic endeavors were numerous and joined by others more radical than he. The festival committee consisted of four members of the Society for Promoting Knowledge; three of them—Henry Joy,²⁴ Robert Bradshaw,²⁵ and Robert Simms—were also members of the United Irishmen.²⁶

GRANARD FESTIVALS

It is important to note that the Belfast festival was not an isolated event. A decade earlier, there had been three other festivals in Granard, Co. Longford, in 1781, 1782, and 1783.²⁷ The festivals were sponsored by James Dungan, a native of Granard who was living in Copenhagen. The festivals provided an elaborate venue where the harpers gathered and performed. Because each ended with a grand ball, they attracted a large public audience. They were held with hopes of attracting attention to the harpers, increasing their patronage, and to recruit new harp students. Nevertheless, the new European music had too much of a hold on the tastes of the public. The music of the harpers had become obsolete, and the harpers themselves were an anachronism, removed from their positions as honored members of society.

The first festival attracted only five harpers and the second only seven. Duncan attended the third and last festival, which was the “most splendid of the three.”²⁸ There were nine harpers who came and more than 1000 in attendance.²⁹ Prizes were awarded at all three festivals, but at each one they were awarded to the same harpers—Charles Fanning, Arthur O’Neill, and Rose Mooney—creating jealousy and feelings of resentment among the others. Those who did not receive any monetary compensation suffered the great expense of traveling to the festival. Because of this, O’Neill took up a collection for those who did not win awards.³⁰ Despite the large attendance in 1783, these and other contentions precluded having another festival.³¹

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THE BELFAST MEETING OF HARPERS

It was almost ten years later that the Belfast Festival was held. To encourage participation, the Society for Promoting Knowledge stressed that *all* participants in the festival would receive monetary reward in addition to their prizes. They also appealed to a sense of loyalty to the time honored tradition that was fading into oblivion. In his memoirs, O'Neill quoted the newspaper ad requesting attendance as encouraging the harpers "to show their patriotism for their love of Ireland, and to bring their instruments with them."³²

The Belfast Festival was the fourth and final attempt to gather the harpers together to revive the Irish harp and its music. It was held on July 11-14, 1792 in conjunction with the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille.³³ Thousands gathered for the celebration.³⁴ For "a number of the inhabitants of Belfast," the celebration of French independence was "to express their love of Liberty, and their wish to see it established in every country."³⁵ They hoped to arouse a desire for Irish independence in the general public that was based on cultural distinctiveness. July 12, 1690, though, was also the anniversary of William's victory at the battle of the Boyne. So while revolutionary songs were played in the streets, "The Boyne Water" was playing in the background,³⁶ suggesting a problematic anniversary for unifying Protestants and Catholics. As the harpers prepared their harps in the Exchange Rooms of Belfast, the streets filled with expectant visitors to the celebration. On the first day, there was a Volunteer parade down High Street. Townsmen joined the procession hoisting banners and "emblematic paintings."³⁷ (Figure 7.2)

Fox described the events on the first day:

Amid popular enthusiasm a procession winds its course along the High Street, going by one bank of the river, ... There is a review in the field on the Falls Road, a convention, and, finally, a banquet. This is, in short, a muster of the Irish Volunteers, who have already made history.³⁸ The occasion of their assemble is to celebrate the fall of the Bastille, and declare themselves in favour of Catholic Emancipation and the Rights of Man.³⁹



Figure 7.2. Procession of Belfast Volunteers in High Street, 1793

(John Carey 1861-1943 © The Estate of John Carey 2008)

Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast

Photograph reproduced courtesy the Trustees of National Museums Northern Ireland)

This picture is also cited as "Volunteer Demonstration, Bastille Day, 14 July 1792."

On Bastille Day, the 14th, the parade ended with three cannon blasts and a delegation at Linen Hall⁴⁰ to "settle the affairs of the Nation."⁴¹

With political excitement going on around them, the ten Belfast harpers performed on their harps.⁴² (Figure 7.3) They played for three days while “ladies and gentlemen of the

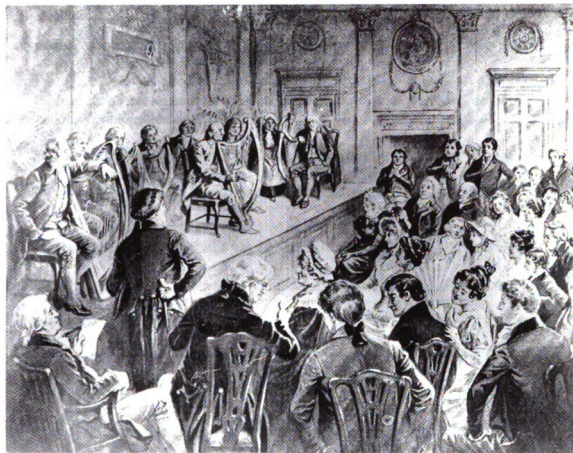


Figure 7.3. The Celebrated Irish Harp Festival held in the Exchange Belfast on the 12th July 1872. (© Ulster Museum 2008 Collection Ulster Museum, Belfast
Photograph reproduced courtesy the Trustees of National Museums Northern Ireland)

first fashion in Belfast and its vicinity” wandered in and out of the Exchange Rooms.⁴³ Among the spectators were Wolfe Tone, Whitely Stokes, Napper Tandy, and John Keogh, all prominent nationalists. It was during that time that Bunting transcribed the music they played. The competition and adjudication took place the fourth day.⁴⁴

Though the harpers were brought together to represent Ireland’s exalted musical culture, not all were taken with the event. Wolfe Tone was less than enthused about the

harpers he heard at the festival. He attended all three days and recorded these words in his diary:

July 11th: Rise with a great headache; stupid as a mill-horse. All go to harpers at one; poor enough; ten performers; seven execrable, three good, one of them, Fanning far the best. No new musical discovery; believe all the good Irish tunes are already written...

July 12th: Rise again with a headache resulting from late hours...do not know what to do...lounge to harpers.

July 13th: Rise again with a headache...Belfast not half so pleasant this time as the last; politics just as good or better; everything else worse...generally in low spirits...the harpers again, strum, strum and be hanged...⁴⁵

Tone's perpetual headache would naturally play into his lack of enthusiasm.

Gráinne Yeats attributes his disinterest to exhaustion, lack of sleep, and stress concerning the accelerating political atmosphere of the celebration.⁴⁶ Perhaps another component would be the fact that the music would have been unfamiliar and anachronistic to Anglo-Irishmen, who in general preferred European music. The *Paddy's Resources* songbooks were sung primarily to English tunes, as this was their familiar heritage.⁴⁷ That would also explain the popularity of Carolan's cross-over music with the general populace. It was because of this popularity that the Belfast harpers performed Carolan's music at the festival—fifty years after his death. In fact, almost half of the music performed for the competition was attributed to Carolan.

Of the three musicians requested to attend, only Edward Bunting was there to transcribe. Bunting was fascinated with the harpers, their music, and their modes of performing; particularly with Denis Hempson, who at 97, was the oldest of the harpers. Hempson still performed on a wire harp with long fingernails. The other harpers,

deriving income from other sources, including their farms, could not maintain long fingernails and so adopted the European technique of playing with the pads of the fingers.

Arthur O'Neill, another of the harpers, still lived as a gentleman harper, though playing in the contemporary style. O'Neill became an important source for Bunting and other proponents of the harp. Bunting stated that O'Neill was from the County of Tyrone, "a district still full of poetry and genius, in the year 1734."⁴⁸ Since O'Neill was the harper who had derived patronage from the McDonnells, Dr. McDonnell took this opportunity to spend time with and commend his friend.⁴⁹

Of the ten harpers who attended the festival, six were blind, as this was a profession in which the blind could participate. O'Sullivan states that the profession was largely children of the aristocracy who were blinded by smallpox, as Carolan was.⁵⁰ Rose Mooney was the only woman among them. Female harpers were rare, but she was an excellent player, winning awards at all the Granard festivals and in Belfast.⁵¹

Bunting recorded the names of the Belfast harpers and songs they played for the competition in his 1840 volume.⁵²

DENIS HEMPSON, (blind,) from the county of Derry, aged 97 years, (but there is reason to believe he was older by several years,—see his memoir,) played “The dawning of the day;” “Ull a condo wo,” or “The county of Leitrim.” Authors and dates unknown.

ARTHUR O’NEILL, (blind,) from the county of Tyrone, aged 58 years, played “Green woods of Truagh;” author and date unknown, and “Mrs. Crofton,” by Carolan.

CHARLES FANNING, from the county of Cavan, aged 56, played “Car a Ceann dilis,” or “Black-headed deary,” author and date unknown; “Rose Dillon,” and “Jig,” (Carolan; “Colonel O’Hara,” (Carolan.)

DANIEL BLACK, (blind,) from the county of Derry, aged 75, played “The receipt for drinking whiskey,” (Carolan; “Sir Festus a Burke,” and “Thomas a Burke,” (Carolan.)

CHARLES BYRNE, from the county of Leitrim, aged 80, played “The old Truagha,” author and date unknown; “Oganioge,” very ancient; author and date unknown.

HUGH HIGGINS, (blind,) from the county of Mayo, aged 55, played “Slieve Gallen,” ancient, and “Madam Cole,” (Carolan.)

PATRICK QUIN, (blind,) from the county of of Armagh, aged 47, played “The rocks of pleasure,” ancient; “Carolan’s devotion,” and “Grace Nugent,” (Carolan.)⁵³

WILLIAM CARR, from the county of Armagh, aged 15, played “The dawning of the day,” ancient.

ROSE MOONEY, (blind,) from the county of Meath, aged 52, played “Sir Charles Coote,” “Mrs. Judge,” and “Mrs. French,” or “Fanny Power,” all by Carolan.

JAMES DUNCAN, from the county of Down, aged 45, played “Molly Bheag O,” author and date unknown; “Morning star,” and “Catherine Tyrrell,” ancient.

One harper who was expected to attend, but did not show, was Patrick Linden, the harper whose poetry appeared in Brooke’s *Reliques*.⁵⁴ O’Neill, who received a personal invitation from Dr. McDonnell, saw the value in having Linden at the festival as he “could read and write Irish very well.” O’Neill “imagin[ed] that he would be a great acquisition to this celebrated harpers’ meeting in Belfast.”⁵⁵ Linden didn’t believe he was well dressed enough to accompany O’Neill. O’Neill, who had “plenty of old clothes,”⁵⁶ gave him a suit to wear to the festival. Linden was “so proud when he got

them that he rambled through the neighborhood of Ballynagleragh...in so volatile a manner that when [O'Neill] expected him...he did not appear.”⁵⁷

O'Neill was disappointed on several accounts. Older harpers, including O'Neill, experienced various ailments. O'Neill suffered so from rheumatism that he hoped other harpers like Linden would shoulder much of the responsibility of performing. O'Neill had expressed his own “incapacity” to his friend Mr. Reilly, who, as O'Neill describes, “would take no excuse and swore vehemently that if I did not go freely he would tie me on a car and have me conducted to assist in performing what was required by the advertisement [to show their patriotism].” In the invitation to O'Neill, Dr. McDonnell explained the “nature and purport of this Ball, which was to show a specimen of patriotism and national ardour to the rest of the Kingdom.” After the festival, Dr. McDonnell took all of the harpers to dinner. The nature of the relationship between O'Neill and the McDonnells was such that O'Neill then traveled to stay with one of Dr. McDonnell's half-brother for two months “for the benefit of the water,” and then to another half-brother for a few weeks.⁵⁸

OUTGROWTH OF THE FESTIVAL

Bunting was so enthused by the harpers, that after the festival, he traveled across Ireland collecting more airs. In addition, he spent time with Denis Hempson and Arthur O'Neill, from whom he notated different ornamental techniques and technical terms; he even learned to play the harp himself. Though his study of harp performance was likely limited to his research, Thuente said he instructed Thomas Russell on the harp.⁵⁹

After the festival, the Society for Promoting Knowledge, at the suggestion of Dr. McDonnell, offered patronage to publish Bunting's collection of "Old Irish Music"; they considered it "superior to any hitherto published."⁶⁰ John Magee believes the airs, "An Chúilfhionn," "Casadh an tSugáin, Eibhlin a Rún," "Róisín Dubh," and "Tabhair dom do lamh," collected to be "among the very best of [Ireland's] traditional music."⁶¹ He also believes they would have been lost if not for Bunting's efforts.⁶²

Bunting eventually published three anthologies of Irish music in 1796, 1809, and 1840. Without them, little would be known about this festival, the Granard festivals, or the harpers; most of the details were recorded in Bunting's 1840 volume. George Petrie⁶³ claimed "the assembly of the harpers roused his enthusiasm and gave him an uplifting aim in life."⁶⁴ Both Bunting and Dr. McDonnell hoped the festival and subsequent volumes would revive the harpers' tradition. Perpetuation of the bardic tradition was considered a defining boundary of the nation.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MEETING OF HARPERS

If the Granard festivals did not renew interest in the legendary bards, the Gaelic Revival of the 1780s did. The declining status of the remaining harpers, positioned them for political exploitation. We have seen in antiquarian works, like those of Walker and Brooke, that when defining elements of a culture decline, they are typically extracted from history by nationalists and reinvented to conform to political ideology.

Preservation, the touchstone of cultural nationalism, became a sign of national interest and political pursuit. Irish nationalists severed identification with English roots and symbolically identified with Gaelic culture, but only after it had declined to the point that the “peasant” stigma wouldn’t threaten their class standing. Brooke’s *Reliques* was also instrumental in transforming the image from that of stigma to honored culture. Only after that time could they claim elements little known to the elite classes, to adopt and appropriate, reinvent and use to define Irish nationality.

The underlying message of the nationalists seemed to indicate that the real Irish only existed in elite interpretation of antiquity. Irish in the Gaeltachts were not considered expressions of “real” Irishness. Their customs needed to be collected and reinterpreted by the elite. Then they could be redistributed to the masses for cultural performance.

Though elites gave a nod to the Enlightenment ideals of equality and classless society, they were not interested in relinquishing their class privilege and elite voice. Cultural nationalism expressed itself through the elite voice. At best, they hoped to move all classes up a few rungs on the ladder, while maintaining their relative positions.

Their interest in the bard brought together opposing impression. The morphing of the ancient bard with contemporary harpers was an interesting unifying symbol. The ancient bard had elite privileges; antiquarians placed him second in rank to the king.⁶⁵ Commoners would have had little if any access to him. The role of itinerant bard would have been similar in that they performed for the elite. Many commoners would have gone their whole lives without ever seeing a harp.⁶⁶ So, by presenting the bard as accessible to all, the elites were inviting the common man into an elite privilege.

The type of music they performed was different too. Yeats describes Ireland as having three genres of music: folk, Western Art Music and the Harpers' tradition.⁶⁷ Before the baroque era, the harpers' music was considered Irish art music.

Ireland had a strong musical interest, but like other countries, it centered around the new concert venue and European baroque music. The distinction between cosmopolitan art music and the harpers tradition was dramatic. Because of the decline in patronage, harpers began to find work wherever they could. As noted earlier, many left the profession altogether. Others adopted folk music, and performed dance music for commoners rather than after dinner music for elites. Their music for the most part, became a mixture of genre and styles.

Though nationalists constructed a bard that reached across class boundaries, the ancient bard, from most eras was projected as being inaccessible to peasant classes—both in social structure and musically. There had once been a distinction between harp music, which traditionally served as Irish art music, and the folk music of the commoners. The harpers were no longer able to maintain their elite distinction. This is where the Belfast

harpers functioned as transcending class boundaries, economically and musically from their ancient counterparts.

The bards here carried a dual symbolism. They at once embodied the elite, cultured, refined historical concept of the bard, presented in histories like Walker and Brooke's; while at the same time, they expressed the same condition in which nationalists believed Ireland to be—abandoned in favor of English/European culture.

Nationalists drew on these two opposing views. On one hand, the United Irish were drawing on the glory days of bardic power, and the harper stood as a representation of those days. On the other hand, the reality of the low position of harpers at this time created pathos that placed them in the human condition—the condition of Irish culture, on the brink of sinking into oblivion, and in need of being rescued.

This festival sought preservation of the Gaelic past through the ancient bardic tradition. Though nationalists typically brought forward elements of a golden past to embolden the concept of Irishness, if the image they cared to promote about Irish bards was that of a Golden Age, these harpers fell far short. They were no longer a class of elites, and few had time to develop the intricacies of the harp. Because there were few patrons of the harp left, harpers made their living in other ways, not so lucrative. Yeats described their appearance as plain, dressed in “grey homespun”; only O'Neill and Higgins “added a little gaiety in the form of silver buttons on their coats.”⁶⁸

Though a contemporary account described the music as “an agreeable soft music very like to the notes of harpsichord”⁶⁹ and claimed, “You can't imagine anything sweeter than the music;”⁷⁰ the vision of the harpers was this: “Figure to yourself this group, all either blind or lame, sitting on a stage erected for them at one end of the

Exchange Ballroom, indifferently dressed...and the ladies and the gentlemen of the first fashion in Belfast and its vicinity looking on and listening attentively, and you will have an idea of how they looked.”⁷¹ Yeats described them as a “band of old, crippled players” that were “a pale shadow of that illustrious company that had gone before.”⁷² She continued to add that they were “poor players and poor singers. They used their finger pads instead of their nails to pluck the strings, thus giving a muffled tone and depriving the sound of its most distinctive characteristic, the clear, bell-like tone.”⁷³ The condition of the tradition created pathos and urgency for rescuing a part of Irish cultural that had played such an integral part for centuries.

The declining condition of the harpers could have reinforced a backward, old-fashioned Gaelic stereotype, reflecting negatively on the Gaelic culture rather than enhancing it. In order to obscure the dichotomy between historic esteem and the present plain appearance, nationalists, including Bunting, used nostalgic rhetoric that dressed the harpers in ancient cultural garb. By distancing them from the present by linking them with the past, they presented them as performers of a dying culture of antiquity rather than old-fashioned anachronisms in the present.

Their prudence allowed them to make use of all facets of bardic illusions, past and present. Through print media, national events and ideologies were interpreted to the masses. Just as Brooke used the combined perception of historicity and esotericism, in regards to Gaelic type, nationalists romanticized and esotericized the decay of the bard, while still rooting the tradition in ancient history.

At the festival, the harpers served to tangibly represent a perception of Gaelic culture as it was simultaneously being created by their presence.

Though nationalists campaigned to preserve Gaelic cultural elements, in reality, Gaelic culture had not died out in the west. Yet it was not to the remnant of living culture to which the nationalists turned for their pattern. It was to antiquity, to a silent populace whose participation in nationalism could be staged under the direction of elites—who were, by and large, Anglo-Irishmen.

Though there were pockets of living Gaelic culture, some felt that it was not to their advantage to highlight them; in some parts of Ireland, the “low-class” stigma was too strongly attached. But Belfast and the Dublin Pale, centers of political activity, were removed from the Gaeltachts. Therefore, to de-emphasize the living culture in favor of an imagined one, nationalists focused on decline and antiquity. Nationalists created a crisis in culture by proclaiming Gaelic elements in imminent threat of oblivion. Oblivion became the faceless enemy of Gaelic culture and the survival of the Irish nation.

The harpers represented a living, tangible embodiment of Ireland’s bardic tradition in a state of decay. They, like the Gaelic culture, were struggling to fight their demise. Their condition mirrored the larger condition of those living in Ireland, abandoned by Irish Parliament and in need of fraternal support to rise above their condition. Both the nation of Ireland and its culture were in need of rescue.

Nationalists believed it to be their role to rescue the Golden Age. Building on antiquarian validation of Ireland’s ancient culture, nationalists believed the glory of the Golden Age was to be found in their music. Thus, the cultural distinction of Ireland depended on preserving the music of the harpers.

Therefore, it was the music that became the outgrowth of the festival. As a commodity, it was collected, packaged and distributed to as many as possible.⁷⁴ Though

a variety of songs were published in United Irish newspapers and songbooks, the festival songs were particularly important; they were from the harpers' tradition.

There had to be a balance between authenticity and cosmopolitan, historicity and accessibility. The music needed to be in some way accessible to the public in order to be embraced and stand as something with which to be identified. Oral tradition was seen by some as an illiterate form, and only accessible to those of the tradition. Placing the festival music in printed score placed it within reach of the amateur parlor musician. Festival music published in Bunting's volume served the dual role of representing an authentic oral tradition that was able to adopt cosmopolitan dress in score and aesthetic. Thus, printed score became the new context of the oral tradition.

The decline of the harp and rise of the pianoforte influenced public tastes, perhaps those of the judges as well.⁷⁵ Elites, and many of these were, owned pianofortes and were familiar with the popular music. Fanning, playing "The Coolin", won first place. Though this was considered an ancient song, it was also a popular piece for pianoforte.⁷⁶

Building on European fascination with exotic music extended the reception of Ireland's national music beyond the boundaries of Ireland. This cultural interchange on an international scale was important to nationalists who looked to participate in the European community in more economic and governmental ways. But before that would happen, Ireland needed to shake the colonial hegemony and be seen as a distinct nation able to govern itself. Reinventing the declining culture to be seen as equal or superior to others would speak to the European community, but something more urgent was in need to convince the masses in Ireland. Ireland needed to be seen as a nation in need of rescue.

For nationalists, the harpers were a symbol of declining national glory. Ireland was subject to English hegemony in the same way the Irish harpers were subject to European musical hegemony. Their music had been rejected in favor of European Art music. The harpers served as a metaphor for Ireland, expressing both a golden past and a struggling present, not a profession to be revived. Though there were some like Dr. McDonnell who wanted to revive the harp, the fact that it was suffering played more to the advantage of the nationalist pathos than a revival would have done. Evoking a national sentiment in the form of masculine chivalry would stage the revolutionary rescue. To support the case of nationalism, cultural elements must be struggling to survive.

During the course of the next few years, the United Irishmen were able to establish an urgency that propelled men to rise up and give their lives for the nation of Ireland.

As the poignant drama unfolded, six years after the festival, in July 1798, there were again activities in the Assembly Rooms where the harpers performed: the Rooms served as courtrooms for the trials of participants of the 1798 United Irish rebellion. The leader of the Antrim rebellion, Henry Joy McCracken, foster brother to Edward Bunting, was tried and found guilty of high treason. That day on High Street, the crowds did not watch the Bastille Day procession as they had six years before, but the public hanging of Henry Joy McCracken.⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

The United Irish rebellions demonstrated the powerful effects of United Irish propaganda. The festival itself combined art and politics within that larger movement of human expression.

The Belfast Festival served as a platform for performing Irish culture, both as a reminder of its “ancient” glory, and of its present pathos. It was not only instrumental in preserving traditional and popular music of Carolan, but it also provided a platform from which Irish musical culture could be observed. This festival was an important experience in building a public concept of Irishness.

The Belfast Festival and the events surrounding it together supported a national identity meant for public participation. The festival focused on a declining culture in need of rescue; the Bastille celebration focused on a present people in need of liberation. The Belfast harpers made living connections to an ancient past.

The current state of harpers was not embraced by the public. Their contemporary position paled in comparison to the image created by Walker, Brooke, and Gray. Bunting would be added to those authors. His presentation held the double-sided view of the harpers. The one side symbolized glorious strength, and position of golden age; the other, the decline and inability to maintain itself, the need for protection and preservation.

The Bunting volumes, inspired by the festival, had far reaching effects in spreading Irish nationalism in the context of a bardic musical canon. The information we have of the festival and the harpers is through Bunting’s incentive: his remembrances in the 1840 volume and O’Neill’s memoirs, which Bunting arranged, from which we have many anecdotes about the festival and harpers of the era. The melodies he preserved were

embraced by English and Irish alike. Providing tangible musical scores allowed them to perform the role of Irish bard in their own parlors. Thomas Moore set some of his poetry to melodies from Bunting's collection. They enchanted audiences then, and they still capture the hearts of those worldwide who embrace Bunting's melodies as authentic Irish music.

Had Bunting not published his volumes of music spawned from the festival, the Belfast Festival might have been relegated to footnotes, if remembered at all. White describes the role the larger movement played in preserving not only the music, but the history of the festival itself:

If the Belfast festival had not been part of a wider movement of the spirit and mind, it would have taken its place as a curiosity, an emblematic object of delight, a three-day wonder, and not much more. But the festival was indeed otherwise: the music it brought to life was part of that "interior history of Ireland" which Edmund Burke identified in his decisive condemnation of the Ascendancy mind. So also was the aged, preponderantly blind and impoverished gathering of itinerant harpers which assembled in the ballroom of the Exchange Rooms in Belfast, in order to perform "some of the most ancient airs now nearly obsolete".⁷⁸

From these men and their harps, nationalists brought forward a canon of national music whose boundaries stand strong today. The man to whom most credit is given for saving Ireland's music from oblivion was the nineteen year old festival scribe, Edward Bunting.



Figure 7.4. Edward Bunting. Frontispiece from Charlotte Milligan Fox's *Annals of the Irish Harper*, (1911). Reproduced from the original held by the Department of Special Collections of the Michigan State University Libraries.

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EDWARD BUNTING

Bunting⁷⁹ was nineteen when the committee hired him to transcribe the harpers' music. Even at that young age, he was well known in Belfast. He had, for eight years, held a position as organist at St. Anne's cathedral with Mr. Ware and served as deputy teacher to Ware's piano students.⁸⁰

Bunting moved to Belfast in answer to an advertisement placed by Mr. Ware for an apprentice:

Wanted, an Apprentice from the age of nine to twelve, by William Ware, Organist of St. Ann's church, Belfast. A Fee is required. None need apply who cannot be well recommended, and who has not a Taste for the Musical Profession.⁸¹

His older brother Anthony made the arrangements. Anthony was an organist and piano teacher in Drogheda. Bunting lived and studied with Anthony for two years after his father died.

There is not much known about Bunting before he moved to Belfast. He was born in Armagh in 1773, the product of a mixed Anglo-Irish marriage: his father was a mining engineer from England and his mother, who died when he was young, was of Gaelic lineage. She descended from Patrick Gruana O'Quinn who fought and died in the great Irish rising of 1642.⁸²

Edward was the youngest of three boys. Anthony was born in 1765 and John in 1776.⁸³ All three became organists, studying in Armagh at the Primatial Cathedral of Ireland. At a young age, Edward excelled on the piano and organ. The opportunity to work with Mr. Weir and study at the conservatory shaped his future career.

Belfast, was the political hub of northern Ireland. The McCracken family, who took Edward as a foster child, was among the most prominent Presbyterians in Belfast

and central to Belfast politics. Captain John McCracken was a wealthy merchant and ship owner, and his wife Ann Joy, was the daughter of Henry Joy, a descendant of Huguenot refugees and founder of the *Belfast News-letter*, a newspaper founded 1737.⁸⁴ Bunting remained there as part of the family for the next thirty years.⁸⁵

The McCrackens had six children, but Bunting was closest in age to John and Mary. Mary remained one of his closest confidants throughout his life.⁸⁶ Much of the information about Bunting's later life was found in letters between the two.

Although Bunting never affiliated himself with a political organization, his life became intertwined in Belfast politics. Many of his close friends were prominent United Irishmen who were eventually exiled or executed for participating in rebellion. The McCracken's youngest son, Henry Joy, became a staunch patriot in the United Irishmen. He had the distinction of becoming one of the first prisoners in Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin. He was arrested in 1796 and contained there for 15 months. He was later arrested and executed for leading the Antrim rebellion in 1798. There were at least three ballads titled "Henry Joy McCracken" memorializing him.⁸⁷

When the Society for Promoting Knowledge planned the Harpers' meeting, Bunting was a logical candidate for transcribing the event. They contacted four musicians,⁸⁸ but for reasons unknown, Bunting was the only one who attended the meeting. Roy Johnston suspects that since the other three were quite busy with their careers, they would not have desired to be involved with a project as extensive as transcribing Irish harp music. For one, Johnston says, it was a "specialized role" for which their musical training would likely not have prepared them. For another, "the political dimensions it might acquire" might have been daunting.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Ware

left it to his assistant to attend and perform the job. Had Bunting not desired the job, said Johnston, “he was in no position to decline...if he wanted to pursue an adult career in music with the good report of the Belfast townspeople.”⁹⁰ Johnston believes that any one of the musicians would have made professional transcriptions of the music to conform to the desires of the organizers, but Bunting likely exceeded any expectations they might have had. His experience with the harpers’ meeting truly became a life’s passion. For the next fifty years he traveled Ireland, collecting music from harpers, singers and pipers. His excursions were partially funded by the McCrackens and Dr. McDonnell.

Besides his study at the conservatory, and his position as organist and teacher, Bunting also spent time with two Belfast harpers: Arthur O’Neill,⁹¹ and Denis Hempson. Bunting learned as much about the technical aspects of performing the harp as he could. He eventually published three volumes of “Ancient Music of Ireland” in 1796, 1809, and 1840, the latter providing an extensive glossary of harpers’ terms, tunings, ornamentations and other information pertaining to the old tradition.

Although he is most famous for saving Irish music from “Oblivion”, Bunting had an excellent reputation apart from that. He enjoyed a prominent career as an organist and director in Belfast. According to Johnston, “St. Anne’s and the ancient music apart, the prime position which Ware enjoyed in Belfast musical life at large had passed to Edward Bunting well before the end of the decade.”⁹² His job at Rosemary Street allowed him time to “devote himself to his song collecting.”⁹³

In 1813 he premiered an elaborate production of Handel’s *Messiah* in Belfast. Fox believes this spread his fame to Dublin, where he moved four years later.⁹⁴ He was

appointed organist at St. Stephen's Chapel and later at St. George, and taught in the "higher circles" of Dublin.⁹⁵

There were two reasons that drew Bunting to Dublin: first, his brother Anthony had been there for some time and they had always remained close, and secondly, he was attached to a former Belfast resident, Miss Mary Anne Chapman. Miss Chapman had moved to Dublin with her mother to run a ladies' school there.⁹⁶

Bunting and Miss Chapman were married in 1819; they had son, Anthony the following year. They also had two daughters, Sarah and Mary.⁹⁷

When Bunting decided to publish his third volume of Irish airs, his wife was actively involved, as Bunting's health was failing. For a year His wife diligently copied the manuscripts for publication.⁹⁸ The publication of this volume in 1840 summed up Bunting's life's passion.

The illness he suffered while compiling the 1840 volume, finally consumed him. One December evening, 1843, as he was going to bed, Bunting sat down on the stairs candle in hand, and expired.⁹⁹

Bunting will ever be lauded as the man who saved Irish music from Oblivion; his legacy continues as so much of the music compiled in those anthologies are enjoyed today.

This advertisement from the *Belfast News-Letter*¹⁰⁰ expressed the impact he had on Belfast culture:

We cannot overlook the advanced state of Music within the last 15 or 20 years. Instead of the number of instruments being limited to a very few, there are now few genteel families in which that delightful art has not been introduced as a necessary female accomplishment. Under the directing taste of one of the best performers in this kingdom on the Organ and Piano Forts, *Subscription Concerts* have been instituted by a few gentlemen, on

a plan as extensive and liberal as is...The musical world has been already indebted to the professional gentleman alluded to, for the first part of a collection of the most ancient airs of a nation famed through Europe from the earliest ages for the melody of the Harp.

¹ Fox, *Annals*, 5.

² Circular, Dec. 1791, Courtesy, Linen Hall Library.

³ Bunting, 1796, 1.

⁴ Circular, December 1791. Discussed by Fox, *Annals*, 98.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Those patriots who circulated this flyer were Anglo-Irish and refer to the bards, typically Irish Catholics, as “our” bards, adopting them as their heritage.

⁷ Circular, December 1791.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bunting, 1840, 62-3.

¹¹ Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 49. The father and son folksong collectors of the 1930s, John Sr. and Alan Lomax, sought to “promote their vision of America’s musical past.” They created a “cult of authenticity” by recognizing the power of presenting “living vernacular musicians—‘actual folk’” to authenticate the music they played. Filene states that “In doing so they produced a web of criteria for determining what a “true” folk singer looked and sounded like and a set of assumptions about the importance of *being* a ‘true’ folk singer.”

¹² Yeats, *Harp of Ireland*, 13.

¹³ The *Belfast Newsletter* was owned and run by Henry Joy, the uncle of Henry Joy McCracken. Established in 1737, it is the oldest English language newspaper still in publication.

¹⁴ Belfast Newsletter, 26 April 1792. Courtesy Linen Hall Library.

¹⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 99.

¹⁶ Whelan, Kevin Whelan, “The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture.” In *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism, and Rebellion*, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan, eds. (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1993), 280, quoted from . Andrew MacNevin (Carrickfergus) to—, 9 July 1795, in Digest of Evidence on the United Irishmen (PRO[L], HO/100/58/190).

¹⁷ The Belfast Reading Society began in 1788; in 1792, the year of the Festival, the name was changed to the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ The poems are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, “Literary Nationalism.”

²¹ Magee, *Heritage*, 11.

²² Fox, *Annals*, 7-8. Alexander McDonnell was a Scottish chieftain who found refuge in Ulster in 1639. He fought with Sir Felim O’Neill, descendant of Arthur O’Neill, in 1642. He was killed in battle with Lord Inchiquin in 1647 (John O’Hart, *Irish Pedigrees*, (Dublin: Gill, 1880)), 530.

²³ Dr. McDonnell, “the father of Belfast Medicine,” helped found the Belfast Reading Society, the Belfast Medical School, the Belfast Dispensary, Belfast General Hospital, the first hospital in Ireland dedicated to the treatment of fevers, the National History Museum.

²⁴ Cousin to Henry Joy McCracken. Yeats, *Harp of Ireland*, 12.

²⁵ Bradshaw was Secretary and Treasurer of the Society.

²⁶ Henry Joy and Robert Simms were founding members of the United Irishmen. Robert Simms was one of the proprietors of the *Northern Star*, the Belfast United Irish newspaper.

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- ²⁷ More information about the Granard festivals can be found in Bunting's 1840 volume; Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 10-12; Tom; John Magee, *The Heritage of the Harp*, 9.
- ²⁸ Bunting, 1840, 62.
- ²⁹ Ibid..
- ³⁰ Magee, *Heritage*, 9.
- ³¹ Bunting, 1840, 61-2.
- ³² O'Neill, *Memoirs*, 329.
- ³³ Yeats, *Harp of Ireland*, 16-7.
- ³⁴ Magee, *Heritage*, 12.
- ³⁵ *Belfast Newsletter*, 26 April 1792.
- ³⁶ Fox, *Annals*, 4.
- ³⁷ Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 16.
- ³⁸ The Volunteers were instrumental in procuring Home Rule in 1782.
- ³⁹ Fox, *Annals*, 4.
- ⁴⁰ Linen Hall housed the Belfast Library and served as the meeting place for the Society for Promoting Knowledge.
- ⁴¹ Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 16-7.
- ⁴² There was also a harper from Wales, but this was specifically intended to record Irish music.
- ⁴³ Magee, *Heritage*, 12.
- ⁴⁴ Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, 17.
- ⁴⁵ Tone, *Writing*, 208-9, 212-13.
- ⁴⁶ Yeats, *Belfast Harpers' Festival*, 21.
- ⁴⁷ For more about *Paddy's Resources*, see Chapter 6, "Literary Nationalism" of this work.
- ⁴⁸ 1840, 80.
- ⁴⁹ In 1809, Dr. McDonnell began a harp school in Belfast with O'Neill as the schoolmaster.
- ⁵⁰ Bunting, 1840, 60; Edelstein, *Fair Melodies*, 4.
- ⁵¹ The appearance of Rose Mooney confounds the male gendering of the bard by nationalists like Walker and Bunting. Outside of Brooke's *Reliques*, the bard is assumed to have a masculine voice.
- ⁵² Bunting, 1840, 63-4. Bunting gives more thorough biographical sketches on pages 67-82; Yeats gives the list of harpers in *The Harp of Ireland*, 60-69.
- ⁵³ Patrick Quinn was chosen to perform for a Carolan tribute at the Rotunda in 1809.
- ⁵⁴ Though Linden did not attend the Festival, Bunting included tunes in his volumes that he later acquired from him.
- ⁵⁵ Arthur O'Neill, "Memoirs," in Donal O'Sullivan's *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*, (Cork, Ireland: Ossian Publications, 2001), 329.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Thunette, *Harp Re-Strung*, 9.
- ⁶⁰ Magee, 16, quoted from The minutes of the Society, 7M 1793. (do I have the quote?)
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 14.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Petrie eventually became Bunting's successor in the collection of Irish music.
- ⁶⁴ Fox, *Annals*, 16.
- ⁶⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 1786, 5.
- ⁶⁶ As a harpist, one of the most frequently stated comments at my performances is, "I've never seen a real harp in person." That would have been the case in Ireland.

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- ⁶⁷ Yeats, *Complete Works*, 3.
- ⁶⁸ Yeats, *Harp of Ireland*, 17-8.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, 19. In the 1960s, when Sean O’Riada began bringing Bunting’s tunes to public performance, he performed on harpsichord, believing it to be the closest sound to the wire-strung harp which was no longer being made.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, 19.
- ⁷¹ Ibid, 19 quoted from an unnamed contemporary source.
- ⁷² Ibid, 21.
- ⁷³ Ibid, 21.
- ⁷⁴ An ad placed in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 Nov. 1797, stated the price was set low so that the “Work may get into the most general circulation as the best means of preserving the collection for he longest time.”
- ⁷⁵ When the awards were given, they awarded the same three as had won at the Granard Festival.
- ⁷⁶ Yeats, *Belfast Festival*, 19; Bunting, 1840, 90. “Coolun” was a tune from the time of Henry VIII, and referred to English legislation banning Irish customs of dress. This tune was also performed by Denis Hempson. Bunting conveys Thomas Moore’s explanation of the tune: During the reign of Henry VIII “an Act was passed prohibiting the wearing of those long locks of hair on the back of the head so designated, ‘on which occasion a song was written by one of our bards, in which an Irish virgin is made to give the preference to her dear Coulin (or youth with the flowing locks) to all strangers.” Patrick Lynch claimed the Act was dated as early as A. D. 1295. Bunting quoted the Act as stating “the English, being in a manner degenerate, have of late clothed themselves in Irish raiment, and having their heads half shaved, nourish and prolong the hair from the back of the head, calling it *Culan*, conforming to the Irish as well in face and aspect as in dress, whereby it oftentimes happens that certain English, being mistaken for Irishmen, are slain, albeit that the slaying of an Englishman and the slaying of an Irishman are crimes which demand different modes of punishment” (1840, 90).
- ⁷⁷ McCracken was one of the earliest members of the Society for Promoting Knowledge. He died owing the library £1.30. In September 2001, one of his descendants paid the debt.
- ⁷⁸ White, *Keepers Recital*, 38. Internal quote: Fox, 103.
- ⁷⁹ The most referenced source for biographical information about Bunting is found in Fox’s *Annals*; for more information on Bunting’s illustrious career, see Roy Johnston’s, *Bunting’s Messiah*, (Belfast: Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society, 2003).
- ⁸⁰ Fox, *Annals*, pp. 11-2, cf. *Dublin University Magazine*, 1847.
- ⁸¹ ⁸¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 28 September-2 October, 1781, quoted in Johnston, *Bunting’s Messiah*, 1.
- ⁸² Fox, *Annals*, 10.
- ⁸³ Johnston, *Bunting’s Messiah*, 2.
- ⁸⁴ The *Belfast Newsletter* has the “longest history of any English language newspaper in the world.” Ruth Johnston, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/yourplaceandmine/belfast/newsletter.shtml> (accessed 12 October 2008)
- ⁸⁵ Thunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 8.
- ⁸⁶ See Mary McNeill, *The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: A Belfast Panorama*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1960.
- ⁸⁷ Terry Moylan, *The Age of Revolution: 1776 to 1815 in the Irish Song Tradition*, (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, Ltd., 2000), 81-84: “Henry Joy McCracken” by Mrs. Eileen Keaney: “Henry Joy McCracken” by Henry Joy McCracken and another person is also found in R.R. Madden’s *Literary Remains of the United Irishmen of 1798*, (Dubin: James Duffy & Sons Ltd, , 1887) Madden explains that this ballad was written to settle some differences between two groups of United Irishmen; “Henry Joy”, according to Moyer, was attributed to several different writers, including William Drennen. This is a love ballad that subsequent evidence indicates was written by Mary Bodle by whom Henry Joy fathered a child. Henry visited the Bodle home at Cave Hill often and it was there that Henry Joy was kept in hiding until his arrest. McNeill explains that after his death, Mary Ann McCracken discovered Henry Joy’s young daughter and reared her as her own (*Mary Ann McCracken*, 194

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- ⁸⁸ Johnston, *Bunting's Messiah*, 43. The four were: Reverend Bryson, Mr. Ware, John Sharp and Edward Bunting.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ A Belfast harper and teacher of James MacDonnell.
- ⁹² Johnston, *Bunting's Messiah*, 47.
- ⁹³ Fox, *Annals*, 47.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 61.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 64, 66.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 62.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., 82.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 302.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 80.
- ¹⁰⁰ Johnston, *Bunting's Messiah*, 60, quoted from *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 May 1805.

CHAPTER 8

1796 Volume I

A General Collection of the
Ancient Irish Music
Containing a Variety of
Admired Airs
never before Published and also
The Compositions of Conolan and Carolan
Collected from the Harpers &c in the different
Provinces of Ireland,
And adapted for the Piano Forte,
With a Prefatory Introduction
By
Edward Bunting

Dublin

Bunting's 1796 volume played a significant role in cultural nationalism, serving both as an embodiment of Irish music and the bardic harpers' tradition, and as a cultural representation of the Irish nation. This volume and the second *Paddy's Resource* were

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published the same year as the first United Irish rebellion. Their appearance at this time demonstrates the role Irish music played as a cultural foundation from which to express deep national sentiments. With this volume, Bunting began to develop a canon of Irish national music. These national melodies were distributed not only throughout Ireland, but also across England and Europe. It was important to define national boundaries not only to the Irish, but also to the European community, making the statement that Ireland was not “English”; Ireland was “Irish.” Bunting not only needed to convince the Irish of their cultural identity, but Ireland, as a nation, needed to be accepted by those outside its borders.

It is important to note who the nationalists were who constructed these boundaries of Irish identity. It was Ulster elites who encouraged and supported this volume. Together with Bunting they reinforced the role Anglo-Irish writers played in defining the boundaries of Irish identity. Yet, this was not only an effort to define and preserve Irishness, but also to “revive and perpetuate”¹ the songs of the harpers’ tradition. This was the “first general collection of [Ireland’s] national airs,”² works that were on the brink of sinking into oblivion. The airs were collected because of the “rapid decrease of numbers of itinerant Performers” and the “consequent decline of that tender and expressive Instrument.”³ As an extension of the Belfast Festival of 1792, this volume reinforced the prominent role music played not only in defining Irishness, but also in performing Irishness. Bunting brought these melodies into the homes and lives of the Irish people, bringing the Golden Age into their present.

Bunting introduced the Irish people to their national music in a manner which was accessible: tangibly—in written score, and aesthetically—in contemporary style. The

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format of musical arrangements was suitable for parlor performance, making the volume attractive throughout Ireland, England and Europe. Presenting Irish music in contemporary style served as a civilized representation of Irish culture; the music and the bard stood as both national and cosmopolitan. Though presented stylishly, it was also distinctly Irish.

Bunting believed that the “Music of a Country and its language are analogous,” having “idioms and characteristic delicacies in both;”⁴ therefore he reinforced the distinctiveness of the Irish language visually. He presented the song titles first in Gaelic type and then again with a slightly bolder English translation beside it. (Figure 8.1)



Figure 8.1. “Planxty Kelly” by Carolan, from Bunting’s 1796 *Ancient Irish Music*, illustrating Bunting’s use of Gaelic text for the title.

Language is a prominent cultural boundary. In this case, very few who could afford this text would have known the Gaelic language, but the inclusion of it visually in the title reminded the performer that they were participating in and performing an ancient Gaelic heritage.

Charlotte Milligan Fox described this volume as an “epoch-making”⁵ work. Though Irish music had been included in a few works, this was the first anthology dedicated to Irish Music. Bunting’s volumes are considered today as definitive sources of authentic Irish music, particularly that of Irish harp music. This 1796 volume was the

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smallest of the three he published; it contained a three page Preface and sixty-six tunes.⁶ There had been a four-year time span between the festival and this publication. During that time, Bunting toured part of the “Kingdom” to compare his manuscripts with other harpers and to collect additional tunes from other musicians, from harpers to “songsters.”⁷

The timing of this volume coincided with intense political activism, namely the first United Irish rebellion. The amount of information Bunting accumulated during the four-year tour and which he included in the other two volumes gives credence to the opinion that he was pressed to publish this volume. Nationalists, understanding the power of music and song, wanted the circulation of this volume to reinforce Irish culture embodied in its music. The Society for Promoting Knowledge, who also sponsored the Belfast Festival, orchestrated the timing of this volume,⁸ wanting to promote a national sentiment among the Irish of all classes. Mary Helen Thuente equated the two organizations when stating that this volume was a work of the United Irish Society.⁹

Though the Society pressed for publication, they were not prepared to finance the costs. It was Thomas Russell,¹⁰ librarian for the Society, who secured a loan from the Society, which Bunting later repaid.¹¹

The Preface illustrates Bunting’s participation in cultural nationalism. He constructed cultural boundaries in the form of Irish music and musical tastes. He used the symbols of the bard, the harp, Irish music and poetry, and the Gaelic language to define Irishness. By using the antiquarian measurements of authenticity, purity, antiquity, and homogeneity, Bunting asserted the primacy of Irish music as national

validity. He stressed the need for preservation of Irish culture in its music, “To rescue [the music] from oblivion.”¹²

Bunting also used musical tastes to identify Irishness. In his opinion, acceptance of this volume indicated one’s relationship to Irishness. He offered the volume to the public “tribunal” to judge, stating that the music in his volume would be “studied with increasing delight” by those with “pure and unadulterated” Irish tastes; only they would be “capable of admiring strains which lead directly to the heart.”¹³ Bunting was tacitly instructing the reader that identity with Ireland was recognized by an acceptance of these tunes as the embodiment of authentic Irish music.

Similarly, near the end of his preface, Bunting instructed the reader to the degree of respect they needed to show this music. This respect was based on the long established tradition of the “veneration” of Irish music by, not only Irish ancestors, but also by “foreign nations.”¹⁴ This suggested that one manner of performing Irishness was seen in the veneration of their music. By recognizing this heritage of respect for *their* national music, Bunting was sure that their veneration would “correspond” to that of their ancestors: “The veneration in which the Music of Ireland, with every vestige of Irish antiquity, has been held by our ancestors, and the respect it has received for so many centuries from foreign nations, seem well calculated to excite corresponding feelings in their descendants.”¹⁵

To carry on this tradition of veneration, Bunting brought this music into the hands of the people. He placed the time honored music in printed score for use by parlor musicians. By this time, musical literacy had increased, especially among the upper classes, those who carried a strong voice in national concerns. Pianofortes were found in

most parlors and young women were encouraged to a certain level of proficiency on them. Arrangements of parlor music were readily received and commonly performed for informal entertainment.

The presentation of Irish music in printed score was an effective yet curious means of preservation. This format transformed the oral tradition of antiquity into a metaphoric contemporary experience. The antiquity of Ireland's bardic tradition entered elite parlors to be performed in much the same manner as the ancient bards had done, performers entertaining their guests after dinner.¹⁶ Bunting brought forward the ancient and then re-invented the bardic performance in ways to involve the Irish nation of the 1790s. As Brooke translated Bardic poetry in to the familiar dress of English, Bunting translated the oral tradition into the language of Western Art Music and its performance practice. He presented the old in the new, redefining the archaic in cosmopolitan terms.

Bunting presented Irish music as venerated from antiquity; but he also showed a continuous reverence for the bards from cultures of antiquity to the present. He presented the bards in a way that would be respected by those of culture and education through Ireland and the broader European community. Bunting began his preface with an assertion of the antiquity and superiority of Irish music as "one of the parent countries of that delightful art,"¹⁷ and then gave a brief account of the harpers' meeting of 1792, which led to the publication. When Leith Davis stated, "The burden of Walker's *Historical Memoirs* is to show the Irish bards as suitable subjects of history," she added, "A similar desire motivate[d] Bunting."¹⁸ While it was certainly true in this volume, it is even more evident in his later volumes. The 1809 volume included a "Historical and Critical Dissertation on the Harp"¹⁹ and in his 1840 volume, Bunting included the

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techniques which served to support the harpers' legitimacy as educated musicians, thus Ireland's cultural legitimacy.²⁰

Bunting went beyond Irish writers to secure "objective" validation of Ireland's musical superiority legacy in other cultures. Of course, he quoted Giraldus Cambrensis, whom he described as the "enlightened"²¹ Prelate of Henry II; enlightened because he established music as the cultural glory of Ireland. He also quoted the Welshman, Powell who credited Ireland with developing the Welsh musical tradition: "the Irish devised all the Instruments Tunes and Measures in use among the Welsh."²²

The motivation for this anthology of airs was preservation. When a culture is being subsumed into the culture of its colonizer as Ireland's was, preservation takes on a political mission of defining certain, usually ethnic, groups. According to this logic, without a culture there is no nation. In Ireland, the Gaelic language was giving way to English and musical tastes and concerts reflected European baroque rather than the traditional itinerant bard. For Ireland to be supplanted by English culture would place the Irish as second-class English subjects, rather than Irish citizens. Nationalists equated Irish identity with power; to lose one would be to lose the other.

Irish culture became a commodity to be preserved. Gaelic poetry, in general, had been given new status by James Macpherson and Charlotte Brooke. Irish poetry attracted the attention of United Irishmen who were scholars, and who were collecting and translating Gaelic manuscripts. There were some, like Thomas Russell, who studied the Irish language with Patrick Lynch in Belfast. These were some of the same men who supported the Belfast meeting and Bunting's anthology. Bunting claimed the motive of the meeting "was to procure, while yet attainable, the most approved copies of tunes

already in the hands of practitioners, as well as to revive and perpetuate a variety of others extremely ancient of which there were no copies extant and which were therefore likely to become extinct.”²³ His motivation for the anthology of airs was much the same, to “rescue them from oblivion, and to open a new source of Musical delight...as has for a long time been eagerly desired.”²⁴

Inherent in this impetus to “rescue” Ireland’s cultural music and poetry, is the need to rescue the political nation that is embodied in that culture. Ireland had a long history of being gendered as female. The nationalists’ plea to “rescue” Ireland’s national culture would have resonated with, as Catherine Nash put it, the “unequal power relations between England and Ireland.”²⁵ Nash states, “the representation of Ireland as a woman is a particular example of the gendering of nations in colonial projects of subordination and national strategies of resistance,”²⁶ such as rescue in the form of preservation—and rebellion. Nash cites the English colonial minister, Luke Gernon, who in Nash’s words characterized Ireland as a “wanton woman [who] evokes disgust and must be tamed,”²⁷ and in Gernon’s words, as a “young wench” having “the green sicknes [sic] for want of occupying,”²⁸ or one desiring colonization from England as a woman desires a husband. The Irish in turn characterized the invasion as a heavy violation.

Part of the chivalrous nature of Irish heritage that was presented by Charlotte Brooke in her *Reliques*, was brought forward as part of Irish identity, and as the land was typically gendered feminine, *she* was in need of chivalrous and masculine nationalists to rescue *her* from oblivion. This concept was imbedded in Irish colonial history and the references would not have gone unnoticed. Perhaps this is one reason Bunting did not

emphasize the participation of Rose Mooney at the Festival. Her appearance confounded the male gendering of the bard expressed by Walker and now Bunting.

While the United Irishmen provided Irish rebels opportunity to perform the chivalry that characterized Irishness, Bunting's passion for preserving the Irish culture embodied in these airs was not of a militant nature. The nationalist motivation for preservation was to create a passion for the culture that would motivate action. Bunting's political energy was placed in cultural practice, preserving and defining a nation. For Bunting, collecting Irish music was a passion; he made little if any profit on this or any of the three volumes he published. A Dublin printer pirated this volume; had his motivation been financial gain, this setback would likely have prevented the second two volumes.

Nevertheless, Bunting traveled across Ireland collecting tunes from various types of Irish musicians. He not only procured more tunes from some of the Belfast harpers, but also recorded methods, techniques and terminology related to the harp. Bunting traveled with the support of both the McCracken family with whom he lived and Dr. James MacDonnell.

Consistent with cultural preservation, Bunting built on the antiquity and authenticity of this music as a legitimate foundation for a nationalistic platform. Antiquity and authenticity, rooted in a Golden Age, are central to cultural nationalism, revealing as Anthony Smith states, the "true self" of the people.²⁹ Bunting imagined the Irish nation to have existed in elegance, long before other countries, including England, and who deserved the respect and recognition as such.³⁰ If antiquity ascertained legitimacy, then for Ireland to have existed before England, established their legitimacy above that of their colonizer.

Because the concepts of authenticity and purity are so central to cultural nationalism, Bunting made the bold claims that the harpers “seem[ed] never to have ventured to make the slightest innovation”³¹ to the tunes handed down through centuries, and that in transcribing them he was “cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies.”³² We will see below how impossible a task this was to be.

To prove the antiquity of the bardic tradition, Bunting used *Cambrensis* to place a highly skilled musical tradition in existence by the twelfth century. He also used a circular relationship between the airs and the history by using the airs to establish a historical connection to the living harpers while using the harpers to validate the airs, and place them in a continuance of the long tradition.³³ Bunting described some of these airs as being “of such ancient origin, that the names of the authors, and the era in which they were composed, are alike unknown.”³⁴ Later he quoted a harper saying, “They were more ancient than any to which our popular traditions extended.”³⁵ Ancient seemed to cover two to three hundred years at most.

It is not surprising that Bunting used *Cambrensis*’s quote to substantiate superiority in music established in antiquity. His highly complimentary account is the oldest, most elaborate description of Irish harpers. There was a pattern throughout the discourse between England and Ireland for the English to play a role in defining Irishness; colonizers generally do. Wanting the colony to meld into their own culture, the colonizer restricts elements that would identify them as separate. England banned elements of Gaelic culture such as bardic literature, Gaelic language, manner of horseback riding, etc. because they were “other” than English. By doing so, they solidified identifying characteristics of Irishness.

Just as the early statutes defined Irishness in terms of elements banned, the quote by Cambrensis appears to be the principle substantiation for the supremacy of the Irish bards in their cultural heritage. According to Bunting, this “enlightened Prelate,” a man “well acquainted with the fine Arts in general, and with Music in particular” made this glowing assessment of the Irish harpers even more credible by the fact that he was “not entirely free from the prejudices that were then entertained against the Irish.”³⁶ Bunting’s exalted praise of this man was surely intended to further substantiate his tribute to the Irish bards, but he is also the man who created the disparaging stereotype of barbarism that haunted the Irish for centuries.

Nevertheless, for Ireland to have possessed music of national origin beyond what history recounts, and to have been “celebrated for their music,” gave evidence for its right to exist as a sovereign nation. Bunting even claimed Ireland to be a parent country to musical culture, mirroring Charlotte Brooke’s metaphor of Ireland being the elder sister of England.

The preface to the 1796 volume begins:

It is an extraordinary fact, that although Ireland has from a remote antiquity, been celebrated for its cultivation of Music, and admitted to be one of the parent countries of that delightful art, the present is the first General collection of its national airs. Most of them are of such ancient origin, that the names of their authors, and the era in which they were composed, are alike unknown.³⁷

This was the first collection of Irish music of this size. Bunting mentioned three other attempts prior to this volume that were much smaller in scope and, except for Delaney’s publication of Carolan tunes,³⁸ were arranged for melody instrument rather than for “keyed instrument,”³⁹ which is idiomatically different from the harp. Bunting described them in a circular advertising his 1840 volume:

Before this time there had been but three attempts of this nature. One by Burke Thumoth in 1720, another by Neill of Christ Churchyard soon after, and a third by Carolan's son, patronised by Dean Delaney about 1747. In all these the arrangement was calculated rather for the flute or violin than for keyed instrument, so that the tunes were to a great extent deprived of their peculiar character, and as they were deficient in arrangement, so were they meager in extent. On the whole, the Editor may safely say that his publication, above alluded to, was the *first and only collection of genuine* Irish harp music given to the world up to the year 1796.⁴⁰

Bunting has been both revered for preserving traditional Irish harp music and criticized for tampering with the music's authenticity. Bunting claimed this to be a collection of "genuine Irish harp music," yet he collected tunes from musicians other than harpers, and also from "songsters." In addition, the music was arranged for pianoforte rather than for harp, which is quite different. Bunting attested to the authenticity of the pieces, as he transcribed them from "the last remnant...of aged men who knew about the harp,"⁴¹ and then traveled to compare realizations. Bunting claimed that the pieces recorded were "preserved pure and handed down unalloyed, through a long succession of ages"⁴² and believed the harpers performing had the "most approved copies of tunes."⁴³ He attributed a more perfect rendition from the most ancient of pieces (ancient meaning that those they learned from did not know the origin).⁴⁴ From a twenty first-century viewpoint ancient might mean the classical Greek period; for Bunting ancient would mean two to three hundred years at most.

Bunting compared music to language with its particular nuances and idioms. There is an interesting dichotomy presented here. While Bunting suggested that the "Music of a country and its language are analogous" because of their unique "idioms and characteristic delicacies,"⁴⁵ he neglected to account for the same comparison among musical instruments. While professing to treat the music with reverence for each

“unaltered” note, Bunting ignored the idiomatic differences between the piano and the harp. While harp and piano music look similar in score, there are certain idiomatic figures that do not transfer well between the two instruments. Clark states that, “while Bunting preserved many of Carolan’s melodies, the rapidly repeated bass notes and accidentals were not likely to have been produced on Carolan’s harp.”⁴⁶ O’Canainn maintains that because traditional composers composed on their instruments and transmitted it orally, “they will carry something of the character of the instrument on which they were composed.”⁴⁷ He states, “it is easier to play traditional music on traditional instruments than it is on non-traditional ones.”⁴⁸

Bunting stated that the harpers were “versed in the scientific part of their profession, that they had originally a view to the addition of *harmony* in the composition of their pieces.”⁴⁹ This must be the license with which Bunting used to arrange the pieces with contemporary harmonies. He added chromatic tones consistent with popular aesthetics and arranged the pieces in various keys. He included keys with as many as four flats or sharps which would not have been played on diatonic instruments,⁵⁰ where the use of any chromatic tones would have necessitated retuning those strings. Janet Harbison describes Bunting’s arrangements as having harmonies similar to those of “Haydn, Handel, and Mozart.”⁵¹ Davis observes Bunting’s statement as “odd”⁵² when she writes:

The traditional music is most valuable when it is seen to be a retrospective reflection of currently admired musical qualities. Bunting suggests that Irish music was the point of origin for current European music, but he can make this assertion only by projecting contemporary aesthetics back onto the Irish music.”

Here we see that the treatment of the music was not as important as the perception Bunting gave as being Irish and progressive in antiquity. Davis observed that both Walker and Bunting, “even though they emphasized the natural and spontaneous aspects of Irish music, ultimately concentrated on presenting it as reputable for scholarly study,”⁵³ rather than emphasizing the exotic or ethnic nature of the music.⁵⁴ While this is true, the exoticism of Irish music was part of the popular appeal at the time and would have been advantageous in the distribution, yet accessibility in terms of familiarity dictated the arrangements.

Bunting assured the reader that the old musicians treated the music “with the utmost reverence, as they seem never to have ventured to make the slightest innovation in it during its descent.” He based this statement on harpers living a distance from one another performing the “same tune in the same key,”⁵⁵ with the same kind of expression, and without a single variation in any essential passage, or even in any note.” This is a curious claim of “consistency” between the musicians to prove authenticity.

There are at least two reasons to doubt such a tight consistency between harpers. First, the harpers would have enjoyed providing their own touches of individuality to the pieces, and two, oral tradition precludes the type of consistency Bunting asserted. George Petrie,⁵⁶ Bunting’s successor in the collection of Irish melodies, comments on this reasoning. He believes vocal renditions to be more accurate since the words would necessarily structure the melody and rhythm, while instrumental versions are more prone to be improvisational.⁵⁷ While debating the accuracy is not the focus of this study, examining the construction of authenticity is significant. It would be unlikely that the harpers would have played pieces identically—that would defeat presenting their own

artistic style. While it is unlikely that there would be great rewrites, execution of ornamental interpretation would be uniquely theirs.⁵⁸

Bunting was more than downplaying individual style in this instance; he denied it. While Bunting claimed this to accentuate purity and authenticity, Davis suggests that this “renders native Irish culture essentially homogenous and static.”⁵⁹

He suggested that the more homogenous the harpers are, the more authentic—to have the same four pieces produced by four different harpers from different parts of Ireland verified the tune. In addition to validating the music’s authenticity, Bunting may also have been, as Benjamin Filene suggests, preserving “delicate remnants from a bygone era...from being trampled by the pernicious forces of change.”⁶⁰

Nationalists believed the disappearance of the Gaelic culture would leave them even more vulnerable to English hegemony. This was a change that Bunting did not want to take place. Despite Bunting’s claim of homogeneity within the collection, he did reserve the right to transform the music to fit contemporary aesthetics.

It is sufficient to state that, if Bunting’s claims that the harpers would have performed a “pure” arrangement of the tunes passed down for centuries were true; he nevertheless filtered them through his conservatory training. To many of the songs, he added accidentals, creating arrangements sounding like eighteenth-century European art music. To Bunting, this was not inconsistent with authenticity; it would be another fifty years before performance practice would become a topic for study.⁶¹ Bunting ultimately strove to provide music that had a universal appeal.⁶²

To attract attention in such a powerful way as to meet, approve, and embrace Irish national culture, Bunting had to be careful in the presentation. While considering the presentation of this work, Bunting made a number of decisions. Many of these decisions were compromises necessary when publishing works that combine politics and art.

Bunting had to make the decision of how to present the musical samples. His manuscripts indicate that he emphasized the melody line with only sporadic bass lines. His notes explained tunings, ornamentation, etc., but most of the musical transcripts are rather bare.⁶³ One exception is the arrangement of “The Foggy Dew.” (See Figure 8.2)

Davis claims that Bunting sought to “capture the antimodernity of the native music within a thoroughly modern medium as he shifts the music from a context of oral transmission to the realm of print culture.”⁶⁴ Bunting wished to present the nationalistic ideal of antiquity and authenticity, but to be received by the public, it needed to be in a form they could embrace. First, if Bunting was to preserve the music, it needed a “container” in which to preserve it. A musical score served that purpose. The music needed to be accessible to musicians, many of whom would be elite amateur musicians, who entertained on parlor keyboards. But the most important reason might be to provide the public with a “container” that not only preserved Irish music, but one in which the national culture could be embodied. To equate Irish music with national culture, which

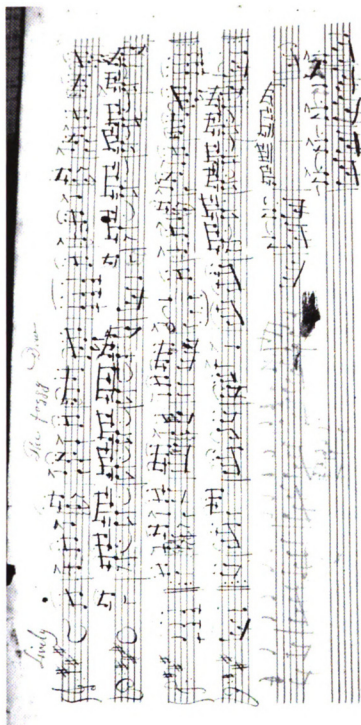


Figure 8.2. Bunting manuscript transcription of "The Foggy Dew" from MSS 29. Photo by Kelly Yoakam, used with permission from Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

the United Irishmen and Bunting aptly did; and then to place that preserved culture in a binding that could be “owned” by the populace, created a material representation of the Irish nation from which the people could perform Irishness in their own parlors, reinventing the role of the bard in themselves and identifying themselves with the nation of Ireland, whether they were Irish, English or European.

Bunting’s presentation appealed to elites across Europe. Nationalists hoped to position themselves in such a way to be recognized as equal within the European community, thus securing their support of an independent Irish nation. Identifying Ireland with musical superiority within European circles was one step in that direction. This volume of music, received in England and Europe, played the same role Charlotte Brooke chose for her translations of poetry: as ambassadors from Ireland to the rest of the civilized world. What these ambassadors succeeded in carrying to the outsiders was an introduction to a national repertoire of Irish music, embodying the culture and skill of a polished and refined nation, rooted in antiquity and responsible for the musical cultures of other nations, including that of their colonizer.

PRESENTATION

How does one present Irish harp music to the public when few at that time owned or had interest in the harp? And why, when the majority of those who did play the Irish harp were blind or didn't read music produce written scores? And how could he present it in a way that would both attract the Irish to embrace it as their heritage and get Europeans to embrace it as an enviable culture. In short, how to show that "ancient Irish culture was not that of barbarians but that of a people superior in at least some ways to the people of England."⁶⁵

Bunting skirted those questions by publishing an anthology of music arranged for keyboard. Of course, there were compromises inherent in that decision, but arranging for keyboard made the music widely accessible. The number of families who owned pianofortes was increasing. Bunting needed to create simple arrangements that could be played by amateur musicians. The readers were able to be interactive performers, not just admirers.

While nationalists made a gesture at including all classes, there was not one mode, other than perhaps the newspapers that resonated with all classes at once. Bunting's volume, which was an embodiment of the Irish people, was primarily available to the elites who could afford both a pianoforte and the purchase of sheet music, which according to Williams, was "not open to the working-class pocketbook."⁶⁶

Enlightenment concepts of equality placed the role of bard within any patriot's grasp. In the past, only elites would have had access to the harp; itinerant bards, of elite stature themselves, performed in manor houses of aristocracy and rarely outside of that

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sphere. With the high rate of literacy at this time, this volume had the potential to extend the music of the bards to *all* classes.

The appearance of *Paddy's Resources*, a nationalistic songbook,⁶⁷ this same year indicates the powerful effect the United Irishmen expected song to have on motivating national sentiment. While they hoped both publications to cross all sectors of society, the reality was that *Paddy's Resources* appealed to the workingman, while Bunting's volumes appealed especially to the elite. Both publications used bardic imagery to support cultural nationalism, and what better symbol to unite the Irish than with "their" own music from an exalted bardic heritage.

The volume was a success, though not necessarily for Bunting. A Dublin publisher pirated the anthology, taking away considerable income from Bunting.⁶⁸ Yet, the music found its way into the parlors of not only the Irish, but also the English and became popular on the continent as well. At the close of the eighteenth century, England became a culture of leisure in which reading and music making played a major role. The proliferation of the presses provided more material to read; the economic boon, much at Ireland's expense, provided the leisure. Bunting took advantage of the Romantic Movement with its emphasis on exoticism. Irish culture, as an exotic fascination, became a commodity—particularly in sheet music.⁶⁹ The skill of the harpers that was initially recorded for the King of England by Cambrensis could now be reenacted in English parlors.

For his arrangements, Bunting chose pieces he could adapt to contemporary aesthetics, making them more accessible to the people. Michael Largey cites Tara Browner to illustrate similar ways nationalist composers use ethnic melodies to their own

ends:⁷⁰ Browner refers to Indian melodies, Largey to Haitian, and the same application is apparent in Bunting's volume. Browner claims, the melodies were seen as "exotic raw materials that expressed shared universal human emotions, not as products created from a specific musical tradition with its own aesthetic."⁷¹ Bunting saw Irish melodies as "strains" that "lead directly to the heart,"⁷² yet he cast them in a European cultural setting. His motive was not to preserve it as a museum relic—but to resuscitate a dying element in the national culture he was attempting to revive.

For Bunting's purposes, it was imperative to keep this music alive in whatever form would be most acceptable to the masses. Those masses were choosing European culture over Irish, many being transplants from England with English ties. An attraction to European Baroque music was the primary reason for the decline in the harpers' tradition and Bunting couldn't afford to offer them what they had already rejected; he needed to dress it in cosmopolitan garb. The reason Carolan was accepted was that he was already cast in a cosmopolitan image.

THE EMBODIMENT OF THE BARD IN CAROLAN

Authenticity and purity are high claims of Bunting's volume. Bunting addressed the issue of authenticity in the bardic tradition and then provided a contemporary embodiment of that role in the figure of Turlough O'Carolan. Of the ten harpers present at the festival, Carolan was the only one who received attention in Bunting's preface. Carolan had been chosen for that role by the three authors in the first part of this study: Oliver Goldsmith, Joseph Walker and Charlotte Brooke. With almost a third of the tunes in this volume being attributed to him, Carolan is sustained by the historic tradition, and the tradition is brought to popular, contemporary context by his cosmopolitan figure, drawing a broader European audience. Carolan's music brought the declining bardic tradition into a living musical tradition, as the remaining harpers adopted his music as a large part of their repertoires. Mary Helen Thuente reflects significance of Carolan in this statement:

The music and songs of the Irish harper Carolan (1670-1738) represented the survival of what many believed was an ancient bardic tradition, as well as a popular living musical tradition that appealed to all classes and religions. Carolan embodied the antiquarian, the elite, and the popular dimensions, as well as the potential political significance, of the eighteenth-century interest in Irish music.⁷³

Bunting's choice of Carolan as the embodiment of the ancient Bardic tradition was possibly one of the compromises Bunting made when choosing a harper to embody the role. The harper most representative of the old style was the 97-year-old Belfast harper, Denis Hempson (c.1695-1807).⁷⁴ As previously mentioned, Hempson still performed by the old tradition, with fingernails on a wire-strung harp rather than with pads of the fingers.

Turlough O'Carolan's place is secured in Irish national iconography because of his relationship to both antiquity and modernity. His lineage within the bardic tradition cannot be challenged; yet his music spoke to Bunting's contemporary musical culture. Carolan was praised for his imitation of the Italians⁷⁵—baroque string players performing and composing a *new* genre of music—with little to no resemblance to Irish music.

Bunting plays on this dual image of Carolan:

In Carolan's Concerto (No. 42) and in his Madam Cole (No. 16) the practitioners will perceive evident imitations of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer he happily copied. In the ancient air *Grach gan fios*, or Love in Secret (No. 14) he will be charmed with one of the most pleasing strains that any country has produced; it is accordingly so old, that not trace could be discovered of the century [in] which it was produced.⁷⁶

Carolan's "cross-over" music was popular with patrons and harpers alike. Denis Hempson, the 97-year-old harper at the festival—refused to play any of Carolan's music—precisely because it was too modern.⁷⁷ Hempson stated further that the music he played—traditional harpers music—was "not understood" by the other harpers, much less the public.⁷⁸ Hempson stood out as an anachronism of the representation Bunting and the nationalists pursued. Reaching all classes required a popular symbol, precluding Hempson, in favor of Carolan. Carolan was born of subsistence farmers, blinded by smallpox, apprenticed into an elite class, and generally endeared to Irish audiences.⁷⁹ Carolan embodied an image of heritage that was malleable—representing, as we have seen, a Milesian connection (Walker), cosmopolitan (Italian musical influence), masculine (Goldsmith), medieval chivalry (Brooke), and now a conduit of an Irish national musical repertoire.

While Carolan's image served well, the most significant reason for excluding Hempson was the fact that he was still living. A living icon doesn't serve well, as human frailties can tarnish the image that can be romanticized after death.⁸⁰ At the time of Bunting's publication, Hempson was already one hundred years old. Ten years later, in 1806, Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, published her novel *The Wild Irish Girl*. In a lengthy, three-page footnote, she supplied Rev. G.V. Sampson's letter regarding his visit with Hempson July 3, 1805.⁸¹ Though Sampson's opinion of him was positive, the physical appearance of Hempson, "the man with two heads,"⁸² would not project the strong image nationalists wanted identified with Irishness, despite his proficiency as the last of the old tradition. Carolan, no longer living could be remembered in the prime of his career; Hempson existed in his aged body, even though in "good health and spirits, though in his hundredth and ninth year."⁸³ Rev. Sampson mentioned in his letter that Hempson played at the Belfast festival "under the patronage of some amateurs of Irish music" and that Hempson recalled "with the honest feeling of self love, 'When I played the old tunes, not another of the harpers would play after me'." Though Hempson believed the other harpers did not understand him, this statement indicated that he believed they did revere the old music. Sampson states his praise of Hempson's "best old style in his statement that "Mr. Bunton, the celebrated musician of that town was [there] the year before [1805]...noting his tunes and his manner of playing, which is in the best old style."⁸⁴ Hempson died in 1807.

It is interesting to note that while Carolan served as the embodiment of the bard during Hempson's lifetime, Bunting opened his 1809 volume with a full page engraved portrait of Denis Hempson, which is the only portrait in the work. In the 1840 volume,

Bunting gives accounts of all of the Belfast harpers, but the most glowing account was that of Hempson:

...who realized the antique picture drawn by Cambrensis and Galilei, for he played with long crooked nails, and in his performance, 'the tinkling of the small wires under the deep notes of the bass' was peculiarly thrilling, took the attention of the Editor [Bunting] with a degree of interest which he never can forget. He was the only one who played the very old—the aboriginal—music of the country; and this he did in a style of such finished excellence as persuaded the Editor that the praises of the old Irish harp in Cambrensis, Fuller, and others, instead of being, as the detractors of the country are fond of asserting, ill-considered and indiscriminate, were in reality no more than a just tribute to that admirable instrument and its then professors.⁸⁵

The image of Carolan had been established on his lineage with the ancient bardic tradition in general and contemporary compositions. By 1840, Bunting not only imagined Hempson as the realization of Cambrensis's portrait, but also offers Hempson as validation for Cambrensis's description of the Irish bard against his "detractors."

In line with the bardic tradition, Bunting includes some covert messages against England in this volume that might not be readily apparent to casual readers. Many are stated as Bunting described a handful of the more prominent tunes. One of the most explicit is in the notes to the song "Summer is Coming." Bunting gives convincing evidence that this song Dr. Burney claimed to be the "first piece of Music ever set in score in Great Britain," was not English, but Irish, asserting, "The extreme improbability of its being borrowed by the ancient Irish, from a country that has no national Music of its own (the Welsh excepted) is sufficiently evident."⁸⁶

Bunting also gives notes to the air "Parting of Friends."⁸⁷ Because of the mention and description, this is likely the air—there two such airs in his collection—he played for

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Wolfe Tone on the eve of his exile to America; the tune to which Tone's wife, "overcome with the pathos of the music,"⁸⁸ left the room in tears. He says of the air:

[It] is considered very ancient. It is often played by Harpers as the audience is about to depart, and it is a popular opinion that it was composed while the Irish groaned under the oppression of the Danes, and were forced to conceal themselves in caverns and sequestered places.

This is an example of the covert manner in which Bunting engages in national rhetoric. The parallel between Ireland's suffering under the English, while Tone was forced to hide in exile is striking. Though many readers would not have known the personal background of the tune, they would surely understand rehearsal of Irish oppression, and when they played it, they would remember not only the Danes of the past, but the English of the present. Leith Davis states, "Several of Bunting's digs at English policy in Ireland echo the concerns of the United Irishmen to educate the Irish population in the history of their oppression."⁸⁹ Even outsiders, when playing this tune would identify with the Irish condition, which is precisely what nationalist patriots hoped for.

The personal connection for Bunting would be poignant and bears expanding as an event that shaped Bunting then and in the future. He was one of the few intimates with Tone's family, June 11, 1795, the night before their exile. Fox mentions the others there as Thomas Russell, Samuel Neilson, and the McCrackens,⁹⁰ most likely Henry Joy McCracken and his brother William.⁹¹

I have been for some time in this town, I have been greatly caressed,
That did not last long till notice was taken of me,
NO two things on earth I account to be more grievous
Than the death of friends and the separating of companions.⁹²

Fox, Bunting's biographer questions the prophetic nature of this song choice, as two of those present died at "the scaffold" and one "in a condemned cell."⁹³ By the time of this publication, Tone was exiled and Russell and Neilson were imprisoned.

The reverence shown to this volume by nationalist writers and patriots illustrated the way in which it served as a material representation of the "nation." Thomas Russell carried this volume to prison after his arrest that same year.⁹⁴ While imprisoned, Russell continued his national involvement by collecting tunes from prisoners for Bunting's collection.⁹⁵ Later that year, as a young Thomas Moore played "The Fox's Sleep" from this volume, Robert Emmett⁹⁶ leapt to his feet shouting "Oh that I were at the head of twenty thousand men marching to that air."⁹⁷⁹⁸ Later, Thomas Moore, known for his nationalistic poetry, set many of his patriotic lyrics to melodies from this volume. For years, poets like Samuel Lover set their words to Bunting's airs. Sydney Owenson, writer of nationalist novels like *The Wild Irish Girl*, also published a collection of "Twelve Original Hibernian Melodies"⁹⁹ including songs from this work.

Though Bunting held close associations with revolutionaries, Bunting's participation in Irish nationalism avoided militant revolution; Bunting's political energy was placed in cultural practice. He stressed preservation and perpetuation of Irish culture by encouraging those in the south to hold harp festivals similar to the one in Belfast. He says of the music of Ireland that had been venerated by both Irish and foreigners for centuries: "Shall we suffer them to perish in our hands at the close of perhaps the last century in which a single new ray of light can be struck out amidst the gloom, with which time envelops the earliest and often the most interesting of its works?"¹⁰⁰ Bunting links Irish nationalism to the larger context of human history, indicating that the demise of

Irish culture embodied in the Irish airs would be a loss to the history of mankind as a whole: “In paying them all due attention, we do not merely gratify the natural feeling of national pride; we are tracing the progress of the human mind, and endeavouring to restore a page in the history of man.”¹⁰¹

Fox states that even though Bunting did not make money from the publication of this volume, “Others followed in Bunting’s tracks and gleaned the reward of his labours.”¹⁰² She credits Bunting for giving “the material and inspiration to Moore for his Irish Melodies, which are known and sung in every country of the civilized world.”¹⁰³ And it was the publication of Moore’s first *Irish Melodies* that were the likely motivation for the timing of the second volume of Irish airs.

¹ Bunting, 1796, Preface, i.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 23.

⁶ The original Preface has three pages; the 1969 edition also provides a four-page modern resetting of the Preface for easier reading. Page references for Preface notes in this work will be indicated by the year of publication.

⁷ Bunting, 1796. Preface, iii.

⁸ There were high hopes that his rebellion would end English rule in Ireland. A prominent United Irishman, Wolfe Tone, had gone to France at his exile to enlist troops from France. Ships and troops arrived for the battle. Fierce weather prevented their landing. Though they were within arms reach, they were trapped in Bantry Bay, helpless as the Irish were slaughtered. The foiled surprise caused the English to be more vigilant against future unrest.

⁹ Thuermer, *Harp Re-Strung*, 187; Davis, *Music*, 99.

¹⁰ Dr. McDonnell helped Russell secure the position as librarian for the Society (Fox, *Annals*, 20). McDonnell also kept Russell for a time when English authorities were looking to arrest him. (Ibid., 40).

¹¹ Fox, *Annals*, 19.

¹² Bunting, 1796, 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ This was done on a much broader scale by Thomas Moore.

¹⁷ Bunting, 1796, 1.

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- ¹⁸ Davis, *Music*, 125.
- ¹⁹ Bunting, 1809, 1-32.
- ²⁰ Bunting, 1840, Chapters 1 and 2.
- ²¹ Bunting, 1796, Preface, 2.
- ²² Ibid., 3.
- ²³ Ibid., 1.
- ²⁴ Ibid., i. 1969 edition.
- ²⁵ Nash, "Embodied Irishness," 111.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Smith, *Chosen People*, 190.
- ³⁰ Bunting, 1796, Preface, i.
- ³¹ Ibid., ii.
- ³² Ibid., i, 1969 edition. It was likely Dr. McDonnell who cautioned Bunting in regard to musical purity. Welch, 46.
- ³³ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 49: "living musical tradition."
- ³⁴ Bunting, 1796, Preface.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Bunting, 1796, Preface.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ These were published jointly with Carolan's son and are more idiomatic to the harp than Bunting's volume, yet there are only twenty three pieces in the publication.
- ³⁹ Fox, *Annals*, 23 quoted from a circular distributed in 1840.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.. (emphasis mine)
- ⁴¹ Bunting, 1796, Preface.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Bunting, 1796, Preface.
- ⁴⁶ Clark, *Irish Harp*, 94. The patriotic impulse of political preservation was to rescue and disseminate the music for use, not to constrain it as static. McCann explains (*Music and Politics*, 55-6) that the "From the perspective of contemporary ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, and folk enthusiast, these collectors were guilty of the errors of their time: setting pianoforte accompaniments, manipulating original notation to create what were regarded as correct harmonies, and sanitizing texts...the Festival in Belfast in 1792, bears some resemblance to folk revival practice...The reason for the interest was undoubtedly informed by patriotism."
- ⁴⁷ O' Canainn, *Traditional Music of Ireland*. 1.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.
- ⁴⁹ Bunting, 1796, ii.
- ⁵⁰ Clark, *Irish Harp*, 93.
- ⁵¹ Harbison, *Legacy*, 116.
- ⁵² Davis, *Music*, 99.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 125.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 125.
- ⁵⁵ The same key would be likely since the instrument in diatonic, and had specific tunings.

⁵⁶ Petrie was Bunting's protégé, who published an anthology of Irish music after the famine. His work is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ Petrie, *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. David Cooper, ed. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 16. From Petrie's 1855 publication. Cooper states Petrie believed "tradition melody, in its purest form, was bound to the original Gaelic text for which it was composed" for singers.

⁵⁸ Harbison, *Legacy*, 116.

⁵⁹ Davis, *Music*, 97.

⁶⁰ Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 138.

⁶¹ Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica*, 74. Chanan charges modern musical study of taking on a "fetishistic search for authenticity in the performance of pre-classical music."

⁶² At this time, presenting music that had been "universalized" brought it widespread acceptance, by those within and without the borders of Ireland. Michael Largey discusses the importance of universal acceptance of Haitian art music in his book, *Vodou Nation*, 4-5. Composer/arrangers have to navigate the boundaries of presenting a national music that is unique to the nation, yet aesthetically accepted by the broader audience of Western cultures. Music that made them stand out as "other" nationally, but "equal" culturally and politically. See also Thomas Turino's discussion of "Twin Paradoxes" in *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2000).

⁶³ In 1959, when Donal O'Sullivan published his massive work on Carolan, he included an anthology of all works attributed to Carolan to that time. One of his main sources was Bunting's manuscripts. Faced with the same decision, but for very different reason, O'Sullivan chose to record from Bunting's manuscripts the melody line only. O'Sullivan was providing a scholarly work on Carolan and compiled as many primary source materials as possible, leaving the reader to interpret for themselves. It functions quite like a reference book. Donal O'Sullivan, *Life Times*.

⁶⁴ Davis, *Music*, 97.

⁶⁵ Williams, 'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream, 23; Andrew Carpenter, Changing Views of Irish Musical and Literary Culture in Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Literature," In *Irish Literature and Culture*. Ed. Michael Kenneally. (Savage, MD.:Barnes and Noble, 1991) 5-24.

⁶⁶ Williams, 'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream, 32.

⁶⁷ *Paddy's Resource* is discussed more in Chapter 6, "United Irish Literary Nationalism."

⁶⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 23.

⁶⁹ Williams, 'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream, 4-5.

⁷⁰ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 133.

⁷¹ Tara Browner, "'Breathing the Indianist Spirit': Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the 'Indianist' Movement in American Music." *American Music* 13, no. 3 (1997): 270.

⁷² Bunting, 1796, 1.

⁷³ Thunete, *Harp Re-Strung*, 49.

⁷⁴ In his 1840 volume, Bunting claims that it was Hempson who "realized the antique picture drawn by Cambrensis and Galelei," 3.

⁷⁵ Corelli, Vivaldi, and Geminiani were composers he particularly admired.

⁷⁶ Bunting, 1796, Preface.

⁷⁷ Bunting, 1840, 73. Yeats states that Hempson did play Carolan's music, yet none that he performed for the Belfast Meeting were composed by Carolan, *The Harp of Ireland*, 44.

⁷⁸ Bunting, 1840, 83.

⁷⁹ As discussed in chapter one, by 1760, Goldsmith professed the adoration the Irish showed for this particular bard.

⁸⁰ Whisnant, "Sandino," 237.

⁸¹ Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 199-202. Bunting prints the same letter in his 1840 volume, 73-6.

⁸² Bunting explains the "two heads" to be "in allusion to an enormous excrescence or wen on the back of his head" (1840, 74).

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- ⁸³ Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 202. This quote was from Owenson after correspondence from him.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 201.
- ⁸⁵ Bunting, 1840, 3.
- ⁸⁶ Bunting, 1796, 4.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 4.
- ⁸⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 22.
- ⁸⁹ Davis, *Music*, 100.
- ⁹⁰ Fox, *Annals*, 22.
- ⁹¹ These two are mentioned together quite often in United Irish history.
- ⁹² Fox, *Annals*, 22.
- ⁹³ Ibid. In 1798, Henry Joy was hanged for leading the Antrim rebellion and Wolfe Tone committed suicide in his cell before his scheduled execution. Thomas Russell was hanged for his role in the 1803 rebellion.
- ⁹⁴ Wolfe Tone, Thomas Russell, and Samuel Neilson were the primary leaders of the United Irishmen in Belfast. Samuel Nielson and Thomas Russell were arrested in 1796 in a raid of the *Northern Star*. Russell was kept imprisoned without a trial until his exile to Hamburg, Germany in 1802. In 1803, he took part in Robert Emmett's rebellion, for which they were both executed.
- ⁹⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 21.
- ⁹⁶ Robert was the younger brother to Thomas Emmett who was imprisoned along with Russell. Robert Emmet led the 1803 rebellion for which he and Thomas Russell were executed.
- ⁹⁷ Fox, *Annals*, 24-25.
- ⁹⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 25. Fox states that this is the air to which Moore composed his "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," but it was actually written to the tune "The Little Red Fox." (Moore, 1895).
- ⁹⁹ Sidney Owenson, *Twelve Original Hibernian Melodies with English Words, imitated and translated from the Works of the Ancient Irish Bards, with an introductory Preface and Dedication*, (London: Preston, 1805). She praises the Belfast Festival for the preservation of Irish music.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bunting 1796. Preface, iv. 1969 edition.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Fox, *Annals*, 24.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 9

1809 Volume I (Second Volume Published)

A General
Collection of the
Ancient Music of Ireland,
Arranged for the Piano Forte;
Some of the most admired
Melodies are adapted for the Voice,
To Poetry chiefly translated from the
Original Irish Songs,
by
Thomas Campbell Esq.
and
Other Eminent Poets:
To which is prefixed a
Historical and Critical Dissertation
on the Egyptian, British and
Irish Harp

By Edward Bunting

Bards of other times! Ye on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise,
strike the Harp in my hall, and let me hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of
grief; it is like the shower of spring when it softens the branch of the oak,
and the young leaf rears its green head. Raise the song, and strike the
Harp! Send round the shells of joy! Let some grey bard be near me to tell
the deeds of other times, of kings renowned in our land, of chiefs we behold
no more.—such was the song of FINGAL in the days of his joy: his thousand
bards leaned forward from their seats to hear the voice of the king.

OSSIAN

Bunting opened his 1809 volume of “Ancient Music of Ireland” volume by calling the reader to the Irish Golden Age of Ossianic poetry. The Golden Age was central to cultural nationalism, and this volume, with its “Dissertation on the History of the Harp” provided the reader with an intellectual passport with which to embrace such a time: a time when Ireland maintained sovereignty; when the fame and nobility of these sovereign Irish Kings and Chieftains were praised by the tongues of bards, their voices accompanied by their harps. This was a strong reinforcement of the Irish nation in the face of three failed rebellions (1796, 1798, and 1803) and subsequent Act of Union (1801).

While the 1796 volume served as an embodiment of the nation of Ireland, rooted in a Golden Age, this volume brought that Golden Age into the parlor, reinventing the bardic role. In the discourse surrounding cultural nationalism, Bunting again provided a material representation of cultural Ireland captured in musical score and this time accompanied by lyric poetry. Nationalists promoted the nation in its music; the public performed it.

The enthusiasm for cultural nationalism and Gaelic antiquity was reflected in the success of Bunting’s first volume (1796)¹ and Thomas Moore’s publication of *Irish Melodies* (1808); and both were made more fashionable by Continental fervor for

Macpherson's *Ossianic* poetry. Bunting's first volume introduced elites to the music, and Thomas Moore created lyrics for many of those tunes.

This volume contained seventy-seven airs, thirteen of which were repeated from his 1796 volume, as well as a dissertation on the history of the harp. In this volume, Bunting provided a nationalism that answered the situation of the failed United Irish rebellions and the Act of Union: that despite the Act of Union, Ireland had been and *still was* a nation in its own right, backed by the history and culture. The two parts of this volume reinforced those qualities: the first part, the "Historical and Critical Dissertation on the Egyptian, British and Irish Harp," guided the reader to an intellectual foundation of the authenticity and superiority of Irish culture, legitimizing its position among classic cultures; the second part, the anthology, invited the reader to insert themselves into that culture, performing the role of Irish bard in their own parlors.

In bringing together art and politics to audiences of both Irish and non-Irish descent, Bunting had to navigate the delicate boundaries of "otherness" and inclusiveness. He needed to reinforce the distinct nature of Irish culture in support of the "nation" to those both within Ireland and those without. This was conveniently done as Irish history and music had the attention of English and European elites interested in exoticism. However, exoticism carried its own inherent pitfalls. The mystery and intrigue of exoticism excited the imagination and captured interest, but it also carried with it the taint of lower-class peasantry. In order to move the reader from observer to participant, Bunting needed to package Irish culture in venerable dress that both reinforced the distinctiveness of Irish culture while also "universalizing" it for acceptance by "others."² Though representing a nation of all classes, by including a dissertation in

“scientific history” and an anthology of parlor music, Bunting placed this volume in the cultural aesthetics accepted by literate, cultured Europeans.

This volume, more so than the others, was concerned with popular tastes.³ The conflict between Bunting’s antiquarian nature and the popular market are clearly seen between the presentations of the Dissertation and the anthology: the Dissertation followed largely the antiquarian pattern established by Walker, the Brookes and O’Halloran—uncovering the Golden Age in creating a nation; the anthology mimicked the romanticism of James Macpherson and Thomas Moore—romanticizing the nation in the present.

Appealing to the popular fascination with Gaelic antiquity, Bunting opened the preface with a passage from *Ossian*, both reclaiming Ossian for Ireland, while simultaneously legitimizing the romantic Golden Age in the context of his historical Dissertation. The success of both Bunting’s volumes and Thomas Moore’s *Melodies* was strongly influenced by the popularity of Macpherson’s *Ossian* cycle.⁴ By this time, Macpherson’s works, particularly *Fingal*, were popular and accepted, even though known to be largely fabricated. Macpherson served to confirm that people, as Hume claimed, “believe what they want to believe,”⁵ and the Golden Age imagery captured the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century imagination and desire for roots, perhaps with the hope of transporting a portion of that age to their own parlor.

The conflict over *Ossian* authenticity did not affect Europe to any great extent; it was predominantly contained within the British Isles, between Irish and Scottish claims of ownership of the tales. The fact that Macpherson fabricated the majority of the work did not negate the fact that it was loosely, and in romantic style, based on legitimate

fragments of ancient poetry. Furthermore Herman believed Macpherson to have “launched European Romanticism” and spurred an interest in medieval poetry that had long been considered barbaric.⁶ He convinced the public that tales and poetry from antiquity were superior to contemporary poetry, creating a vast market for his work. If that were not the case, the success of his poetry would not have depended on hiding under the cloak of antiquity.

Others after him, more scrupulous in their research, like Charlotte Brooke, presented poetry that fed the literary aesthetic for epic poetry while authenticating the Irish history of artistic poetry. Across Europe, where most audiences had no quarrel about ownership, Macpherson’s works were well read and adored, influencing such poets as Lord Byron, Goethe, Sir Walter Scott and others, creating an even greater audience.⁷

Though Macpherson generated interest in relics of Gaelic culture, the question of authenticity was an issue among antiquarian scholars. Nationalist writers could not afford to let the public question the Golden Age itself. As shown earlier, when Charlotte Brooke presented this chivalric era through her Gaelic selections, she provided the original texts in Gaelic typeset as cultural validity. The typeset not only served to prevent the impression of English mediation through Anglicized type, but showed a level of scholarship inherent in Gaelic studies. Much the same way, Bunting mediated the Golden Age within the boundaries of scholarly evidence. In his “Historical and Critical Dissertation on the Egyptian, British and Irish Harp,” Bunting presented the nostalgic and glorious, satisfying popular taste—and national symbolism, while rooting it in “scientific” historical information.

To root these romantic references in truth and authenticity, a large portion of the Dissertation is dedicated to a history of the harp around the world. This was an impressive work of thirty pages, with illustrations of various harps throughout antiquity, pipes,⁸ a drum and a brass trumpet.⁹ (Figures 9.1 and 9.2)

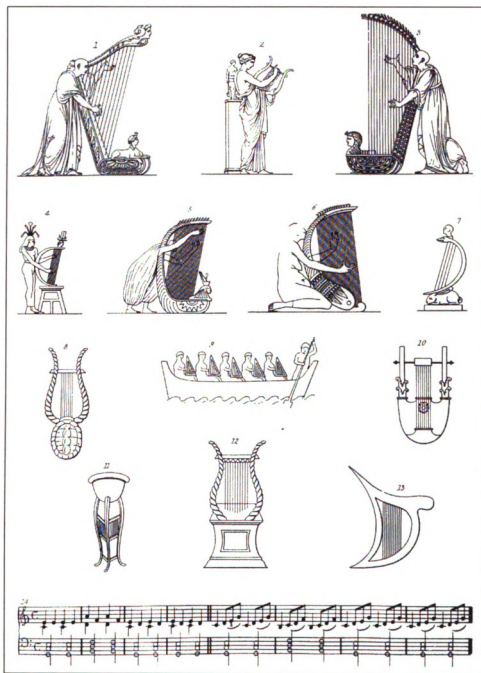


Figure 9.1. Plate III in Bunting's 1809 volume. Harps of antiquity.

He gave a scholarly account of the history of harps with extensive references and footnotes. He favorably compared the history of the Irish harp with histories from such cultures as Persia, Israel, Greece, and Rome, reinforcing the prominent position of Irish music in global history.¹⁰ This prominent position was all the more supported by the objectivity Bunting presumed from non-Irish historians: “Most of the testimonies...are borrowed from other nations, and, of course, carry additional

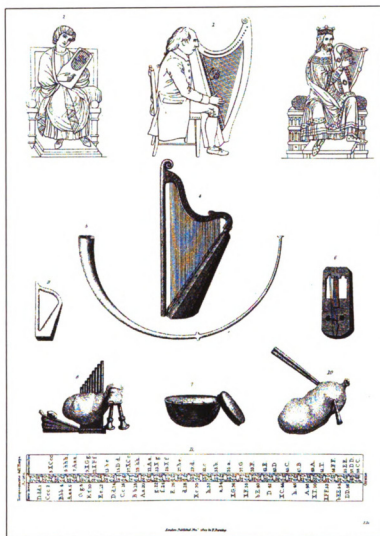
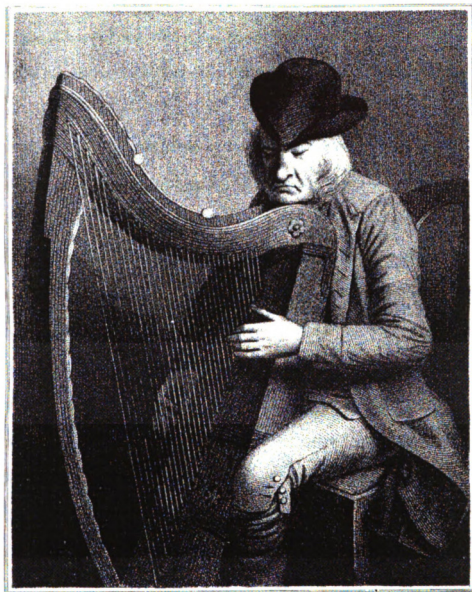


Figure 9.2. Plate IV in Bunting's 1809 volume. Figure 1 of this Plate is Arthur O'Neil, 3 is King David.

weight in favour of the claims of this country.”¹¹ Of course, he includes Cambrensis,¹² this time with more lengthy quotations. Bunting saw no end to the glories to be found surrounding the Irish harp as he stated, “It is certain that the farther we explore, while yet any light remains, the more highly is Irish bardic minstrelsy extolled.”¹³

Separating the preface from the dissertation was a large engraving of Denis Hempson; this was the only portrait in the 1809 volume.¹⁴ (Figure 9.3) Because of



Engraved from an Original Drawing by F. Scriver.

H E M P S O N

THE HARPER OF MAGILLIGAN, COUNTY OF L' DERRY.

London Published by F. Bunting Novr 1809.

Figure 9.3 Denis Hempson, one of the Belfast Harpers. The single portrait from Bunting's 1809 *Ancient Music of Ireland*.

Hempson's death in 1807, he was then available to ascend to the role Carolan had played. Carolan was of course mentioned and several of his pieces included, but the emphasis showed to him in the 1796 volume was not as pronounced in Bunting's 1809 volume.

Even though the anthology was designed around popular tastes, the dissertation remained antiquarian. Though Carolan's position was secured within the writings of Walker, Brooke and Bunting's 1796 volume, Bunting began in this work to displace Carolan from the iconic image embodying Irish nationalism in favor of Hempson.

This becomes even more apparent in the 1840 volume. This is mentioned in more detail in the preceding chapter, but in this volume Bunting drew a clearer distinction between Denis Hempson, who provided Bunting with "specimens of the funeral cry, or *caoine*, and *cronan*, of the ancient Irish, an old lesson and prelude, played in this kingdom for generations, and latterly by Dennis Hempson"; and a "modern lesson" from Carolan "for [the] purpose of contrast."

This same year, 1809, a commemoration concert was planned at the Rotunda to honor Carolan. Patrick Quin, one of the Belfast harpers, was chosen to perform Carolan's music on the harp.¹⁵ James Hardiman described the concert:

It was chiefly composed of his [Carolan's] own popular pieces, and with the impetuosity natural to Irishmen, was held twice in the same week, but never since repeated. His fame, however, depends not on "piled stones," or musical commemorations. He lives in his own deathless strains. And we may safely predict, that as long as the charms of melody shall hold their sway over the human heart, so long will his countrymen remember and revere the name of Carolan.¹⁶

Though Carolan remained the favorite of the general public, he began to lose his appeal as the bardic embodiment for Bunting, whose antiquarian tastes leaned more

toward Hempson, who though younger than Carolan, still performed in the old manner which Carolan neglected in favor of his own unique style. Carolan's style was influenced by his desire to please public tastes and secure patronage, much the same way Bunting did in the anthology.

Bunting desired to appeal to popular tastes as well as supply as many non-Irish sources to substantiate his theories as much as possible; this desire makes it less curious that Bunting opens the Dissertation with a quote from an Englishman. The initial quote, offset from the text, comes from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*:

Give me some music:—now, good morrow, friends:—
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,
That old and antique song we heard last night...
[it] dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age."¹⁷

This excerpt captures Bunting's opinion that it is the "old and antique song" embodying the "old age" that moved the listener. Bunting claimed, "It has been said that the *oldest* Irish tunes are the most perfect, and history accords with this opinion."¹⁸ Bunting had no qualms about using Shakespeare for substantiation, for, as he stated in the footnote, "Shakspears's [sic] fidelity to historical truth gives a value to what he has written, which is not due to many poets." While this is high praise for Shakespeare, it seems an indictment on poets in general, among them the Irish bard who is central to Bunting's volumes—and bardic poetry, a prime element marked for preservation.

Though Bunting's quote from Shakespeare allows the English its poets, in the footnotes on the same page, Bunting reinforced England's lack of national music; and to Bunting, that is a prime criterion for establishing antiquity: "One of the most certain criteria of the antiquity of a nation, is its being possessed of a native or original music."¹⁹

His quote by John Brown is even more pointed. He goes further to say that the Irish, the Welsh, and the Scottish were nations—England on the contrary, was merely an assemblage of nations, rather than *being* one herself: “the Irish, Welsh, and Scotch are strictly native, and accordingly *have* a music of their own...the English, on the contrary, are a foreign mixture of lately established colonies, and in consequence of this, have no native music.”²⁰

The first account in the Dissertation established bardic antiquity, having been written in the first century C.E., and also expressed the role Bunting believed bards, and patriots, were to play in international affairs. The account represented the early United Irish characteristics of the bard: fearlessness, powerful persuasion, and civility. Consistent with Bunting’s personal political beliefs, the bard stands in power to rescue the nation; he exerts this power, not in military force, but in diplomacy. This had been the original doctrine of the United Irishmen, yet during the nineteenth century, as Thuente pointed out, “It became increasingly difficult to be considered an Irish patriot unless one was a revolutionary.”²¹ The source of the account is Diodorus Siculus, writing in 45 C.E. He described the bards as they “slept in between hostile armies, standing with their swords drawn and their spears extended ready to engage,” yet “by their eloquence, as by irresistible enchantment” were able to prevent bloodshed by convincing the warriors to “sheath their swords.”

Bunting doggedly returned to the antiquity and prominent influence of harp, “the earliest instrument on record, the delight of the Northern countries; the music of Ireland from remotest ages; and of Britain under the British, Saxon, Danish, and Norwegian kings,”²² and then offered proof for his claim of “parenting” other musical traditions with

technical information given in Welsh texts. Since, as Bunting showed in his 1796 volume, Welsh harp traditions were brought from Ireland; for him to establish the sophistication of the Welsh tradition, he simultaneously endorsed their mentor, Ireland. Bunting provided a full-page list of “The Twenty-four Measures of Welsh Music.”²³ (Figure 9.4) This list gives performance information such as “lulling music,” “vintage music,” “calling strain,” “soft strain,” “warlike music,” etc.²⁴ The terms are arranged in columns comparing the Welsh and Irish orthography; they are titled “Welsh Manuscript,” “Irish in Roman Characters,” “Irish in its own Characters,” and “Translation of the Irish by Theoph. O’Flannigan, Esq. Trin. Coll.”²⁵ The inclusion of Gaelic—and Welsh—type in the work visually illustrates that the work is scholarly, culturally distinct, and other than England.²⁶ In the 1796 volume, Bunting quoted the Welshman Powell, who claimed that “all the instruments Tunes and Measures in use among the Welsh”²⁷ were derived from the Irish. In this volume more than one lengthy quote is taken from Powell, who, while explaining the source of the Welsh terms, also established the skill and sophistication of the Irish musicians:

Gruffydh ap Conan brought over with him from Ireland divers cunning Musicians in to Wales, who (he boldly asserts) devised in a manner all the Instrumental Music, that is now used: as appeareth, as well by the Books written of the same, as also by the names of the tunes and measures used amongst them to the date.²⁸

It was in the footnote of the 1809 volume, rather than in the text that Bunting placed the term’s connection to the Irish harp and their illustrious origins. He gave the translation from an issue of *Welsh Archaeology* [sic]:

The twenty four Measures of Welsh Music.			
Welsh Manuscript	Irish in Roman characters	Irish in its own characters	Translation of the Irish by Mr. Thomas O'Flanagan Esq. Dublin
1 Mac y mwn hir	Magham in ttr	Mažarm in ttr	For the Coast plains
2 Cor ffuar	Cor finn fhuar	Cop finnfuar	The cool shade
3 Cors geflff	Cor ceodhlata	Cop ceodhlata	Lulling Music
4 Rhinard	Rinnard	Rinnard	High point
5 Cor Altan	Cor altan	Cop altan	Little joints Music
6 Treisi hili	Treisi uilenn	Treisi nleinn	Fence of Elbow
7 Wrasach	Iffasach	Iffasac	Willow's
8 Cordia tylach	Corloteghlach	Cop do težlac	Flowerfield
9 Cor Tinnia	Cor ffincahain	Cop ffincahain	Travels Music
10 Cor Wrog	Cor fairchogaidh	Cop fairchogaidh	Warlike Music
11 Corsidh	Corsidh	Copidh	Pacific Music
12 Brath yn gogol	Brathanasgol	Brata na szol	Forest Strain
13 Flam gur gargaen	Flam gur gnaigain	flam gur gnaigain	Mountain Strain
14 Mac y mwn byrr	Maghamanmbirr	Mažman mbirr	Watery plain Strain
15 Calchan	Calchan	Calcan	Calling Strain
16 Brat Odileg	Bruth dhon Druidoig	Brut dhon druidoig	Soft Strain
17 Truaghul Mawr	Truaghgholmor	Tpuzol mor	High swelling Strain
18 Tuidyr Bach	Tuidhirbhaghac	Tndir bazac	Tenderly offed Strain
19 Mac y mawr gwyn	Maghamoinwlin	Maža moimmin	Flowery plain Strain
20 Toidyr	Taeideach	Taerdeac	Flowing tide Strain
21 Halyr	Hidir	Hidir	Land strain
22 Mac y Delgyr	Macadoilge	Macadoilge	Paintive waters Strain
23 Yr allan Hyfryd	Airathlaniffad	Yn aelan iffad	A full repetition
24 Ahrach	Allmarach	Ullmarac	Foreign Strain

Figure 9.4. Table of musical terms Bunting used as a visual representation of the uniqueness of the Gaelic language and sophistication of the Irish harpers.

These are the twenty-four measures of instrumental music, all according to the rule of metre, as they were composed in a congress before many doctors of the art, of Welshmen and of Irishmen, skilled in the art in the time of Gruffyd ab Cynan, and these were entered in the books by command at the same time, and were thence transcribed the eleventh day of May, one thousand—. ²⁹

These quotations reinforced Bunting's assertion that the Welsh harpers' tradition was an Irish initiative, that it was sophisticated and treated with scholarly reverence; it was well thought out by "doctors of the art" and those "skilled in the art." As an antiquarian, Bunting stated his delight in this new "species" of source material to confirm both the antiquity and influence of the Irish harp:

We are thus presented with an historical incident nearly of 700 years standing, establishing, by a new species of testimony, the affirmation of ancient Welsh and Scottish annalists: that the instrumental music of Wales was, in king Stephen's time (about A. D. 1135), at least *settled* and *improved*, if not introduced, by a body of Irish bards, called to that country by one of their princes. ³⁰

Besides the influential role the Irish harp played in Welsh tradition, Bunting quoted Vincentio Galilei, who, in his *Dissertation* (1581), credited the Irish for the harp in use in Italy: "Among the stringed instruments now in use in Italy, the first is the Harp, which...was brought to us from Ireland (as Dante says) where they are excellently made...[and was] descended from the royal prophet David."³¹ Bunting continued to reinforce the Irish harp's prominence throughout the *Dissertation* with other examples. To Bunting, the extensive historical documentation not only confirmed Ireland's legitimacy to stand among classical cultures as a "parent country"³² to other musical traditions, but it also introduced the Irish to *their* heritage and invited them to take their place in the lineage, singing in parlors—as bards of old had done.

PRESENTATION

The presentation of the volume as a whole and the song portion in particular, reflects the conflict between the antiquarian and the musician. Bunting's original plan was to present an extensive antiquarian volume, one that "superceded the necessity for others,"³³ one that would bring the Irish Golden Age into the parlors of peoples throughout Ireland and Europe, again, in Brooke's words, as "ambassadors"³⁴ in Ireland's behalf. Although those claims were made throughout the dissertation, what Bunting actually accomplished was a volume, on the one hand, of genteel drawing-room pieces, appealing to sentimental European romanticism, and on the other hand, a treatise so "repulsively learned," claimed Fox, as to inhibit the "chance of suiting the tastes or purses of the class of society which had bought the earlier work" and that "among the higher classes there was then too little of Irish taste to incline them to receive it."³⁵ The balance Bunting had found in the first volume had been lost in this one because of his desire to treat it as a commodity.³⁶ In his 1840 volume, Bunting returned to that balance.

Here, the appeal to a European audience prompted Bunting to legitimize his association with Irish music based on his knowledge of cosmopolitan musical aesthetics; at the same time, he seemed to tacitly encourage the reader, as he did in the 1796 volume, to purify their tastes of sophisticated European aesthetics in order to enjoy this music: "Conversant as he [Bunting] is in the compositions of the Italians and German schools, he is convinced that where public taste is pure, the original music of Ireland will be heard with delight."³⁷ His example regarding Geminiani's unsuccessful attempt to "compose a *second strain* to the charming Scottish air, 'The Broom of Cowden Knows,' seemed to reinforce that view, as the "famous composer" was apparently unable to relate to the

“idiomatic delicacies” of this music.³⁸ On a different note, Bunting attempted to connect Irish music to European aesthetics. He used Italian tempo markings in both the 1796 and this volume, and Davis interprets the following quote by Bunting as a claim that “Irish music anticipated European musical theory.”³⁹ “What is more extraordinary, most of the pieces for the Harp are in full harmony and counterpoint.”⁴⁰

Bunting abruptly backed away from the topic of musical aesthetics to claim the value of the music was in the fact that they had never been published before. The 1796 volume had been aimed at “reviving and perpetuating” the harp, which was largely unsuccessful;⁴¹ this volume was aimed at “preserving” the music and the tradition of performance of Irish music. Thuente explains, “the original goal of attempting to ‘revive and perpetuate the ancient Music and Poetry of Ireland’ in fact became largely an effort at preservation.”⁴² Bunting reinforced this thought by pointing out that regardless of the reception of the music, what mattered most was that this music had been preserved—the songs which had never been published before, had now been rescued before they “vanished”:

Whatever the success of this work may be, the compiler has satisfaction in reflecting, that the greater part of it consists of airs never published before, and that it was his lot to arrest their flight when on the point of vanishing for ever.⁴³

Though Bunting sounded defensive about the reception of this work, the insecurity he exhibited may, in fact, reflect the ambiguity he experienced in regard to the concessions he made.

There was a thirteen-year lapse between Bunting’s two volumes. In explaining the delay of the volume, he stated that his hope was to present an exhaustive antiquarian

work to gather provincial airs, along with songs lyrics in English translation with corresponding Gaelic texts. The following quote expressed his intentions:

...the editor was desirous to render the collection so extensive as to supersede the necessity for others; to collate the airs of different provinces with each other; to procure translations of some of the finest songs, and for several of the airs best adapted for the purpose to give English words with an instrumental accompaniment. To these he wished to annex the original poetry in the Irish character. His aim was to form a collection which would comprehend, as nearly as possible, all that is valuable in the ancient music of this country.⁴⁴

Apparently, this volume did not meet standards he set for a comprehensive work.

He not only titled it volume one, but just before he published the 1809 volume, he wrote

Mary McCracken, "it is my intention to publish my second [1840] volume directly."⁴⁵

The direction of this volume changed after the 1803 rebellion and then again after the publication of Moore's *Irish Melodies* in 1807 and 1808.

Bunting originally planned to include translations from Patrick Lynch,⁴⁶ whom he hired to collect lyrics for the tunes for this volume of Irish music. Lynch was the "person versed in the Irish tongue"⁴⁷ mentioned in the preface of this volume. Lynch was the Irish language teacher in Belfast under whom several United Irishmen, including Thomas Russell, had studied. He was also the editor of the United Irishmen's Gaelic language magazine *Bolg an tSolair*. In 1802, Lynch traveled extensively for weeks collecting tunes and lyrics. In a letter to Bunting in care of John McCracken, Lynch enclosed "a list of 150 songs with the names of the persons and places, where I got them, for Mr. Bunting's use." Along with the English translations, Lynch had written the original texts in elegant Irish script. (Figure 9.5) Bunting was elated with them.

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The next year Thomas Russell, though exiled, returned to Ireland to take part in Robert Emmet's rebellion. After the rebellion, Russell was hidden by a family in Drogheda⁴⁸ until his move to Dublin where he was finally arrested. Shortly before the trial, Lynch was arrested and pressured to confirm evidence against Russell, for which he was hanged for high treason. Fox claimed he "had not the stuff of a hero in him,"⁴⁹ but as Russell's lawyer was the English informer, Leonard McNally, the situation is speculative. Lynch was remorseful, stating, "I had regard for the man; he was my friend."

Ḵ'annaḴ Ḵooep

Ḵ' mion hōm lābāyḴe ar ʔs mīuḴ Ḵ'eim
 Ḵ' nāyḴe Ḵeannānīla Ḵ' nōy Ḵ' cēayḴ
 a bīōnḴ ar a mbāyḴe ar ar bīuāc loē pīḴ
 tām bīuācē mār cāyab' me lām lēy
 Ḵ'ar Ḵ'āzā me an fōḴūl nō Ḵ'o Ḵ'ab' me Ḵ'o hācḴ'arēac
 Ḵ'annāḴ Ḵ'o hēcāpāc Ḵ' me ar a bānāyḴe
 Ḵ'uaḴḴam an tē a bīayḴab' lēac Ḵ'pē
 a Ḵ'earḴa līmō na mīdān nḴlāc
 Ḵ'ad Ḵ' an ānḴep ar tōb a cūaḴm
 Ḵ'na mīḴe Ḵ'ear bōl a Ḵ'eāz Ḵ'a Ḵ'pāb'
 Ḵ' Ḵ'annāy Ḵ' Ḵ'eannānīla a nōlōb' Ḵ'a nōuāḴ
 Ḵ'uaḴḴ, ar mīayḴe Ḵ' aḴle
 Ḵ' cēayḴē Ḵ'ar tḴeḴēac an mīayḴdīon bḴeāz Ḵ'āḴānā
 mīon cḴōidē na hēpīḴōn an Ḵ'earḴa Ḵ'ear Ḵ'alānta
 olāyḴē a Ḵ'layḴe Ḵ' na Ḵ'eannāyḴē Ḵ'ayḴlḴ
 Ḵ'a tūayḴm Ḵ'annāyḴ nḴ Ḵ'ayḴb'

Figure 9.5. Gaelic Text to Carolan's "Fanny Power," written by Patrick Lynch. Photo from Bunting's Manuscripts, © Kelly Yoakam. Used with permission from Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The execution of his friend, resting on evidence given by Lynch, affected Bunting deeply and terminated his relationship with Lynch. This would be reason enough for the volume to be delayed. White discusses the tension Bunting must have felt to use those texts: "To have fair copies⁵⁰ of so much (Gaelic) text to hand and yet to withhold that text from publication is sufficient evidence of Bunting's distress."⁵¹ One wonders if Bunting would have attempted another volume after this disappointment had it not been for the

appearance of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. The success of Moore's *Melodies*, which included eight of the twelve airs from Bunting's earlier volume without crediting him, added to the grief of his situation. White suggests the possibility of an added disappointment when he states, "Whether or not all of this was complicated by a rejected offer from Moore to write verses to the new airs is open to conjecture,"⁵² and adds, "Petrie, however insists that 'it is certain that he deeply regretted, when it was too late, that had not secured the aid of the great lyrist'." Even so, Petrie doubted "the two instruments so differing in character would have run long together in smooth harmony'."⁵³

It was the appearance of Moore's *Melodies* that further influenced the tone of this volume. The exclusion of the Irish originals mimicked even more the format of Moore's *Melodies*. However, two other anthologies were also published about this time that would have also influenced Bunting's shift toward popular appeal: Sydney Owenson's *Twelve Hibernian Melodies* (1805)⁵⁴ and Smollet Holden's *Collection of Favorite Irish Airs Arranged for the Harp*⁵⁵ or *Pianoforte*. Fox claimed that Bunting saw "the advantage of popularizing the airs by turning them in to drawing-room songs" and "determined to try and rival Moore."⁵⁶ This further divided his attention between antiquarian and popular objective. Moore emphasized a contemporary nation while Bunting maintained the antiquarian desire of connection to a Golden Age.

The effects on Bunting from the betrayal of Lynch, both personally and professionally cannot be overstated. The circumstances dramatically affected the presentation of the volume and likely the postponement of the publication. Nevertheless, Bunting was anxious to see this work in print. Determined to produce a marketable

work, Bunting spent a considerable amount of time in London overseeing the process. In letters Bunting wrote to Mary McCracken in 1808 and 1809, he recorded the events in the process of compiling and publishing the volume.⁵⁷ Bunting was particularly concerned about the cost of the publication, fearing he would never make enough to cover the printing cost, which he barely did.⁵⁸ This would also explain some of the compromises he made between an antiquarian pursuit and one that would be marketable. “I am anxious to have everything done in the best manner,” he told Mary, “I have gone too far to recede, otherwise I should, from the difficulty of the undertaking, give it up altogether.”⁵⁹ “I think my book will have something to recommend it, as all the airs contained in it, with the exception of fifteen, have never appeared in any previous publication.”⁶⁰

Davis states that Bunting “was much more concerned than previously with presenting the music as commodity,”⁶¹ intending it to be marketed widespread. It was more extensive than the 1796, which had sixty-six airs. In this volume there were seventy-seven, thirteen of which were repeated from the 1796 volume. The visual aspect of the book was important to Bunting. Its appearance was “attractively fashioned to highlight Irish culture.”⁶² Davis describes it as having a “dark green cover embellished with gold, a title page that features a stylized shamrock border (Figure 9.6), and a text supplemented by illustrations of a variety of harps and harp players.” Within the text Bunting included Gaelic type, representing visually the embodiment of Gaelic culture



LONDON, Printed & Sold for the Editor by Clementi & Comp., N°26 Cheapside,
and all other Music Sellers in the United Kingdom.

Figure 9.6. Title page of Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the ancient Music of Ireland* (London: Clementi, 1809). Reproduced from the author's 1969 facsimile of the original.

Bunting inserted Gaelic type in the dissertation and in the titles of songs, giving both the Gaelic and English titles as in the 1796. Yet in the 1796, the Gaelic title appeared first, beside the English title and was less prominent; in this volume, Bunting presented three titles: one in Gaelic type, one in a transliteration of Gaelic type, and an English translation. The Gaelic type is large, bold, and centered above the Anglicized Gaelic and English titles which appear side-by-side, much like a subtitle. (Figures 9.7 and 9.8)



Figure 9.7. "The Summer is Coming" from Bunting's 1796 *General Collection of Ancient Irish Music*



Figure 9.8. "O'Rourke's Feast" from Bunting's 1809 *Ancient Music of Ireland*

As far as the lyrics are concerned, had he, like Brooke, wished to establish the authenticity of the original poetry, he would have included those texts. He stated that he originally planned to include the Gaelic texts, an antiquarian tendency. Though circumstances redirected Bunting's plans about the poetry, there were Gaelic texts available for inclusion, had he wished. There are a few reasons they may not have been included. There were financial and time constraints and this was one concession he could

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make. This decision could have been influenced in part by the format of Moore's *Irish Melodies* that were so successful. He could also have been concerned about the public's reception of Gaelic texts. There were multiple audiences, from Old Irish tenants to European elites. Few, if any would speak Gaelic. Bunting made concessions in his use of authenticity, yet still aimed to root the nostalgic glory in a present reality that the anthology brought to practical application.

Bunting's attempt to combine scholarship and popular appeal may have been what attracted the censure of George Petrie in this article appearing in the *Dublin Magazine* in 1847:

It is most probable...that considering the dilatoriness of Bunting's habits, the appearance of this [second] volume was somewhat hastened by the publication and extraordinary success of the first and second numbers of Moore's 'Irish Melodies', and it is certain that a natural spirit of emulation excited him to attempt a vain rivalry with it by the adaptation of English words to most of the vocal airs, and by a more successful one, by an expensive splendour of typography, not to be found in the musical publications of that poet—for it is easier to command good paper, engraving and printing, than good poetry.⁶³

Here, Petrie, Bunting's eventual successor, reinforced the effect Moore's publication had on this volume. George Petrie, understood Bunting's position to be antiquarian and that his work "could not be improved by rash emulation of romantic individualism."⁶⁴ Bunting had been emotionally invested in the works presented in the 1796 volume and was frustrated at Moore's omission of an acknowledgment. Fox claimed Bunting's appeal to Thomas Campbell for poetry was "to attempt rivalry with Moore, by translating some of the Gaelic lyrics."⁶⁵ Unlike Moore, whose popularity was only just beginning, Campbell was already a huge success, from his publication *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), the poetry of which addressed the French Revolution, the

Partition of Poland, and slavery—topics linked with nationalism, human rights and national independence.

Bunting related to Mary a meeting between Bunting, Campbell, and Power, the publisher of Moore's *Melodies*, indicating the disingenuous nature Bunting believed Power to have:

...This evening, Mr. Campbell and I intend beginning our selection of songs. I cannot help observing, that I cannot be expected to entertain very friendly feelings towards Power (Stevenson's publisher), connected as he is in the success of a work decidedly *stolen* from what I have been labouring for so many years to produce, and which I look on as my undoubted property. He endeavours to persuade every one that Moore's work and mine do not clash. Certainly they *do* clash, *unfortunately for me*.⁶⁶

The situation of Bunting scrambling for lyrics when he had so many from Lynch was unfortunate. Campbell was difficult to work with⁶⁷ and, according to Petrie, another disappointment for Bunting in the end. The following is Petrie's assessment of Campbell's contribution:

If the well of Campbell's genius ran deep and clear, it was exceedingly difficult to pump anything out of it...after a long delay...Bunting was obliged to content himself with two indifferent songs and permission to use two of the poet's ballads written long previous to the agreement, and which however excellent they confessedly were in their way, were entirely out of place in a collection of Irish melodies.⁶⁸

Indeed, it did seem "out of place" to begin an anthology of Irish music with Campbell's Scottish "A Chieftain to the Highlands Bound." Other contributors did not necessarily project the antiquarian Irishness of bardic masculinity attested to in the dissertation. According to Fox, Miss Balfour transformed the masculine tunes into polite parlor renditions: "she sat down to modify the Gaelic songs of love and war and drinking

in to something more delicate,”⁶⁹ reminiscent to the way C. Brooke constructed polite translations of bardic poetry in her *Reliques*.

Transforming the masculine image of drinking songs into genteel lyrics motivated this comment from Davis: “The drinking songs suggest a seamless connection from the ancient bardic community to the more recent halls of the Gaelic chieftains and finally to the gentlemen’s clubs that would have been frequented by Anglo-Irishmen like Swift and Baron Dawson.”⁷⁰ Fox believed the translations to be awkward. Lynch had been a native speaker and Bunting’s first choice as translator. Fox said of the Belfast writers that they “endeavoured to remould the Gaelic translations by their standard” of “accustomed conventions.”⁷¹

Bunting accumulated translation from several sources, including former United Irishmen. Here Fox list the other translators with brief notes:

Dr. Drennan,⁷²...Mr Boyd, “the celebrated translator of Dante,” Mr M’Neill, Robert Emmet, Thomas Russell (in a very sentimental eighteenth century style), Gilland (a fairly good song-writer), and Stott, a County Down man, who enjoyed the doubtful distinction of being mentioned in Lord Byron’s satire on “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,” as “groveling Stott.” Poems by Dean Swift and Campbell are copied as adaptable for the music.⁷³

The inclusion of translations by Drennan, Emmet, and Russell directly linked this volume with United Irish ideology.

This volume, unlike his first, included lyrics, stressing the combination of poetry and music of Irish culture. The poetry Bunting used for lyrics either fit the air musically or was omitted. He used other poetry on its own, with no connection to the music.

Bunting was adamant that the music was to remain intact and that words were to fit the music, not the other way around.⁷⁴ In notes to the poets, Bunting provided “a specimen

verse in the metre suited to the music” in order to keep the music intact.⁷⁵ Bunting criticized Moore for altering the melody to fit the words.⁷⁶ Moore in turn had no qualms about adjusting the music rhythmically to accommodate the poetry. Furthermore, he believed his poetry to be songs, and for years refused to let them be printed without musical score.⁷⁷

By adding lyrics in a poplar anthology format, Bunting clearly wanted to engage the reader, not just enlighten them to the history. Bunting invited the reader into the world of Irishness by including lyrics in their own language, English, as Thomas Moore had done in his *Irish Melodies*.⁷⁸ The performer could enter into the rich history of the harp tradition that Bunting provided in detail in the dissertation.

In this work particularly, Bunting arranged the music for parlor performance. Published over a decade later, Bunting’s arrangements were more sophisticated than in his first volume. Though Petrie criticized the poetry used, he recognized the skill Bunting used to present parlor arrangements that would appeal in beauty as well as cultural significance:

...notwithstanding the want of merit or so-soishness generally of the words associated with so many of the airs, this volume was not only a beautiful, but a truly valuable one; and though, as a whole, it was not so rich in melodies of the finest character as his first volume, it yet contained very many in no degree inferior—equally new to the public, and moreover arranged with such an exquisite grace, skill and judgment, as at once placed its Editor, in the opinion of the musical world, in the foremost rank of British Musicians, and as the most accomplished of those of his own country.⁷⁹

Keyboard music was in great demand. Many families owned keyboards and it was considered an elegant parlor instrument, on which refined young women performed

with adequate skill.⁸⁰ Roy Johnston quoted from an article in the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1805 describing the state of popular music and the advancement toward gentility:

We cannot overlook the advanced state of Music within the last 15 or 20 years. Instead of the number of instruments being limited to a very few, there are now few genteel families in which that delightful art has not been introduced as a necessary female accomplishment. Under the directing taste of one of the best performers in this kingdom on the Organ and Piano Forte, *Subscription Concerts* have been instituted by a few gentlemen, on a plan as extensive and liberal as is compatible with a select and genteel auditory... The musical world has been already indebted to the professional gentleman alluded to, for the first part of a collection of the most ancient airs of nation famed through Europe from the earliest ages for the melody of the Harp.⁸¹

An etiquette book from the Regency period, the author (“a lady of distinction”) implores “*simplicity* to be the principle and the decoration of all their actions as it should pervade them in the dance, so it should imbue their voice and action in playing and in singing. Let their attitude at the piano, or the harp,⁸² be easy and graceful.”⁸³ Williams suggests that the music for which families gather around the piano was “relatively easy to perform; simple harmonies, limited vocal range, and easily sung intervals.”⁸⁴ There was no need to make complicated arrangements of the tunes, for women were the primary parlor musicians, and to be too skilled appeared vulgar.⁸⁵

Because the role of women played so prominently in the performance of parlor music, the masculinity of the bardic role portrayed by antiquarians, and in the dissertation of this volume, was compromised in the parlor setting. The bardic role is reinvented and the songs in this volume are mediated primarily through female musicians, performing “domesticated”⁸⁶ music in the parlor. Davis confirms, “the authentic, ancient, masculine image of the nation that appears in the 1809 volume is problematic.”⁸⁷

Though Bunting refers to the performers of the work as “he”, the majority would actually be women, and they confined to their homes.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, women became a bardic voice. Davis describes the transformation of the United Irish symbol of feminism: “Bunting’s collection, unlike the songs of the United Irishmen, feature women not just as symbols of nation but rather as performers.”⁸⁹

While this is true, the family often stands as a representation of the nation. For the typical Irish family to be characterized as circled around the piano, performing Irish recitations of Irish travails, would be consistent with the United Irish ideal of educating the masses about Irish oppression.

In fact, the bards themselves were not public performers, but performers for court or in the parlors of elite aristocrats. Those in Bunting’s day who could afford a pianoforte and the time to learn to play were of the upper class of society. The difference is that the gender of the performer had become female rather than male, as was the case with Brooke’s *Mäon* and, as shown below, Owenson’s *Glorvina*; both were female bards. This anthology made it accessible to the burgeoning group of parlor musicians who could insert themselves in the historical legacy of bardic tradition, singing the glories of Ireland, in a culturally updated context.

The reinvention of the bard in female terms, beginning with Charlotte Brooke was displayed even more so by Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan),⁹⁰ both in her *Twelve Hibernian Melodies* (1805) and her novel *The Wild Irish Girl* (1807). *The Wild Irish Girl* was widely popular, expressing the popular taste in Gaelic romance throughout the arts. This novel was read by the audience most likely to purchase Bunting’s 1809 volume. Though Owenson’s image of the bardic voice would contrast the one portrayed in the

dissertation of Bunting's volume, hers would be the more pervasive image in the mind of the general public. The heroine of the novel, Glorivina, who played the harp, reinforced the female reinvention of the bardic voice. Owenson, like C. Brooke in *Mäon*, placed the "bardic" role in the hands of a woman. Owenson, herself played the harp and sang.⁹¹

Owenson presented her version of cultural nationalism in an acceptable female venue—the novel. Though she has extensive scholarly footnotes,⁹² her scholarship did not escape the boundaries of footnotes as Brooke's did. The harp in the novel, promoting cultural nationalism, played a prominent role as a symbol of old Catholic Gaelic aristocracy of which Glovinina's father reflected the stereotype represented as anachronistic and reduced to poverty.

Like Thomas Moore, Owenson was Catholic. She presented the face of Irishness as Gael, Catholic and grossly underestimated by those who despised it. The hero was an English rogue, son of an absentee landlord—the prominent villain in nationalistic literature, sent to the Irish countryside for reform. His arrogance and superior attitude gave way to an understanding and rapture with Irishness that drew him to leave England and embrace Ireland as his home.

The sentiment of Irishness winning the hearts of even the English was a typical one in nationalistic novels. The English, when once confronted with Irishness—are believed to be overwhelmed with its value and superior ways; just as Brooke believed, if introduced, England and Ireland would enjoy "a cordial union."⁹³ Owenson professed "her aspiration was to make her native country known, and to dissipate political and religious prejudices that hindered prosperity."⁹⁴

Owenson's Glorvina represented the transformed bard of Bunting's anthologies.

In a real way, Bunting beckoned the English to engage in the discourse on Irish identity—on the side of the Irish—in much the same way Glorvina charmed the Englishman Horatio. Bunting was a major player in the discourse in the negotiation of Irish identity, both directly and indirectly, and he did succeed in engaging the English through his volumes. Across England and Europe, families performed in their parlors, singing the glories of Ireland. Imagine the English sitting around the pianoforte singing such phrases as “And thy harp-striking bards sing aloud with devotion,/ Erin ma vourin! Erin go bragh! (Ireland my darling! Ireland for ever!)”⁹⁵

In the post Act of Union atmosphere of suspicion, it was not prudent to insinuate political ideologies of national independence or insurrection. Yet, Bunting was able to camouflage nationalistic ideology within an artistic, cultural context. Art and politics mutually inform one another, as both often express similar individual and societal ideals. Politics may be considered a more forceful expression of those sentiments, while art often carries these sentiments in a more ambiguous or covert manner. What reveals the messages in art is the understanding of the symbolic vocabulary inherent in the work. Meanings within the symbolic expression can create highly intense predictable reactions from the observer. Using art is one way to express cultural ideologies reflecting attitudes and beliefs that are not permitted to be expressed outside of those boundaries.⁹⁶ Though the post Union atmosphere discouraged the expression of overt nationalism, Bunting's inclusion of translations by prominent United Irishmen was especially poignant as Robert Emmet and Thomas Russell stood as martyrs for the cause.

Bunting's grief for Russell led him to dismiss Lynch's translations. Without the translation and in light of Moore's popularity, Bunting turned to Thomas Campbell. His desire to capitalize on Campbell's popularity set him up for another disappointment. As Petrie stated, the four pieces of poetry Bunting accepted from Campbell were less than adequate for his purposes, yet there was little option, but to use them. Bunting accepted two that were written for the volume, and settled for two that had already been written.⁹⁷ The first tune of the volume, a Scottish tune, ambiguously appeared as though Bunting was extending or dissolving the national boundaries of Ireland to include Imperial ones. Campbell's "A Chieftain to the Highland's Bound,"⁹⁸ was about Ullin, one of Macpherson's bards of Fingal. Campbell's "Twas the Hour When Rites Unholy,"⁹⁹ was equally out of place in an Irish music anthology. This song was set in Turkey during the Crusades. An "English knight" captured in Transylvania obtained an "eastern bride" from a "Turkish palace."¹⁰⁰ Campbell's lyrics, "To the Battle, Men of Erin," which he wrote for this work might have been an attempt to dissuade English suspicion as to the loyalty of the Irish. This song depicts the Irish soldiers fighting with the English against France in the Napoleonic war. Campbell eulogized the strength and perseverance of the "right true Irish band."¹⁰¹ Davis suggested this "would serve to alleviate any potential English fears about the kind of alliance between the Irish and the French which occurred during 1798."¹⁰² Appearing in this volume just six years after the last rebellion may have ambiguously awakened the pathos still felt by remaining nationalists, especially with the inclusion of United Irish poets.

It is important to remember that these poems were quickly gathered and were not Bunting's original intent. By dismissing Lynch's texts, Bunting turned the anthology

from an antiquarian pursuit to a popular one. His appeal to Campbell as a contributor was one of compromise in an attempt to rival Moore in popular attention. Bunting's original plan was the use of Irish texts, collected and translated by Irishmen. The circumstances around Lynch placed Bunting in a precarious position. He had already invested a considerable sum of money in Lynch's translations. Now he was faced with finding way to advance the volume in spite of the changes. The rivalry he attempted with Moore did not produce the volume he originally intended. Yet, Bunting wanted to remind the public of his role in preserving these the airs, especially since Moore neglected to do so.

Bunting was not the only one in Ulster who felt slighted at the omission of his name in Moore's *Irish Melodies*. Moore published twelve songs in this volume, eight of which were set to music from Bunting's 1796 anthology.¹⁰³ Despite the reverence Moore held for the volume and the prolific use of Bunting's music, he nowhere credited Bunting in the book. That oversight was not likely intentional, though. Mary Helen Thuente suggests that he didn't credit Bunting because he "believed tunes to be common cultural property of all Irishmen."¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, Bunting was quite offended and so were many of his supporters in Belfast. On the eve of the publication, a banquet was held for Bunting that, as C.M. Fox states, turned out to be in part an "anti-Moore demonstration."¹⁰⁵ Prominent members of Belfast society stood up to praise those whose efforts were important to the preservation of Irish music and poetry—Moore was conspicuously left out, which in turn deeply affected Moore. A rivalry between the two continued for the next thirty years.¹⁰⁶

Despite the lack of direct collaboration, their combined influence strongly supported the Irish nation in significant ways.

CONCLUSION

Bunting was a major player in the discourse in the negotiation of Irish identity, both directly and indirectly. His 1796 volume provided inspiration and music for the subsequent publications of Irish anthologies by Smollet Holden, Sydney Owenson and Thomas Moore. This volume not only influenced them, but also emulated them. The decision to publish according to popular taste rather than his antiquarian impulse, brought about the creation of a volume that provided extensive scholarship of Ireland's glory—the Irish harp and the bards who played it, as well as an anthology of newly published music collected throughout Ireland and at the Belfast Festival accompanied by English lyrics, with which the performer could reenact the role of Irish bard in his, or probably her, own parlor.

The dissertation provided the historical information of a Golden Age that validated the nation of Ireland despite the failed rebellions and Act of Union. Bunting not only called the reader to learn about that nation, but to participate in its culture by recreating the role of Irish bard within their own parlors, singing about Ireland as did the bards of old. Not only did Bunting engage the Irish in performing their cultural identity, but he also engaged the English and Europeans to participate in reinventing Irish cultural tradition in the form of the bardic voice, affirming the cultural identity of Ireland in their own homes. The cultural validation Bunting provided in his dissertation affirmed the impact Irish music had in developing the music of other cultures, and their skill in doing so. Personal circumstances pressured Bunting to change his original plan for one that, though appealed to popular tastes, presented a compromise in the authenticity he emphasized in his antiquarian work.

As a musician, Bunting served a unique role in cultural nationalism, known for his work in preserving Irish national music. While the 1796 volume served to embody the nation, this volume provided two things: an extensive dissertation on the history of the harp, and a second anthology of Irish national music.

It would be thirty years before the next volume was published, but that volume would again express the balance that Edward Bunting sought between the antiquarian nature and his musicianship.

¹ The success of Bunting's volume was not monetary for Bunting, as it was pirated immediately after his publication. The success was the reception it received among those who purchased it, and those like Thomas Moore who were influenced to produce complimentary works based on this volume.

² Michael Largey discusses this phenomenon at length in his book, *Vodou Nation*. Haitian elites, in an effort to distance themselves from Americans during the US occupation turned to Haitian peasant music as a defining characteristic of their culture. The two dilemmas they faced were the same ones experienced in Bunting's day—one, the elites carried a distaste for peasant music, and two, to package it respectably for the global community, it needed to be "universalized" to resonate with those of other cultures.

³ White, *Keeper's Recital*, 38.

⁴ Macpherson died in 1796, the year of the first rebellion and the publication of Bunting's first anthology. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

⁵ Herman, *Scots*, 296.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The information about the bagpipes, he received in a letter from Joseph Walker dated Sept. 1808. Fox, *Annals*, 223.

⁹ The illustrations created for this work have been widely published in clip art books. Since there was no means to make personal copies at that time, many of the original texts are missing the illustrations, particularly in the 1840 volume; they were cut for framing or to be sold as artwork.

¹⁰ Bunting indicated a link between Irish harpers and King David. This image along with that of King Brian Boru, provided regal validation from both a pre-invasion Gaelic tradition and a Judeo-Christian tradition with which ethno-religious groups could identify.

¹¹ Bunting, 1809, 1.

¹² The quote of Cambrensis appears in Chapter 1 of this work.

¹³ Bunting, 1809, 1.

¹⁴ There was also a line drawing of O'Neil within a grouping of pictures, including King David on page 31 of the dissertation; but no picture of Carolan.

¹⁵ Bunting, 1840, 82.

¹⁶ James Hardiman *Irish Minstrelsy*, lxviii.

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- ¹⁷ Bunting, 1809, 1.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 7.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., Dissertation, 1 fnt.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 177.
- ²² Bunting, 1809, 13.
- ²³ Ibid., 21.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Bunting, 1809, 21. This is the same O'Flannigan who assisted Charlotte Brooke.
- ²⁶ What interested scholars about these terms was the fact that they were transliterated into both Welsh and Irish at the time of recording, so that the terms were understood simultaneously in both languages.
- ²⁷ Bunting, 1796, 3.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Bunting, 1809, 20.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 23.
- ³¹ Ibid., 24.
- ³² Bunting, 1796, 1.
- ³³ Bunting, 1809, i.
- ³⁴ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.
- ³⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 47.
- ³⁶ Davis, *Music*, 101.
- ³⁷ Bunting, 1809, iii.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Davis, *Music*, 105.
- ⁴⁰ Bunting, 1809, 3.
- ⁴¹ A harp school was begun in 1807, the same year Denis Hempson died. Arthur O'Neil served as the school master until it closed in 1813 for lack of students and patronage. Incidentally, Dr. James McDonnell served as patron for one of the boys from the school.
- ⁴² Thuente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 55.
- ⁴³ Bunting, 1809, iii.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., i.
- ⁴⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 226.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 41 and White, *Keeper's Recital*, 42, give details about Bunting's relationship with Lynch.
- ⁴⁷ Bunting, 1809, 1.
- ⁴⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 40. Fox assumes that Bunting arranged for Russell's concealment in Drogheda where Bunting's brother Anthony lived, and where he visited often.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 41.
- ⁵⁰ The "fair copies" were described in O'Sullivan's *O'Carolan*, "A Short account of Bunting", xvi: "Lynch had made fair copies, in a beautifully clear script, of most of the songs he had obtained, and these he had translated into English prose. No use, however, was made of the material thus prepared, and the only allusion to Lynch in the Preface is contained in the distant, if not contemptuous phrase, 'a person versed in the Irish Language'" (Bunting, 1809, 1).
- ⁵¹ White, *Keepers Recital*, 42.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 42, quoted from Petrie, "Our Portrait Gallery, No. 41. Edward Bunting", *The Dublin University Magazine*, 29 (January, 1847): 64-73, 70.
- ⁵⁴ Owenson used music from Bunting's 1796 volume and did recognize him in the forward of this work.

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- ⁵⁵ The harp mentioned here would not be the Irish harp, but the newly developed single action pedal harp, the precursor to the concert harp used today.
- ⁵⁶ Fox, *Annals*, 44.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 223-6.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 47.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 223, Dublin, Sept 21, 1808.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 226. London, Oct. 7, 1809.
- ⁶¹ Davis, *Music*, 101.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ White, *Keepers Recital*, 41, quoted from Petrie's "Edward Bunting," 70.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 42.
- ⁶⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 223.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 224. London, March 8, 1809.
- ⁶⁷ Davis, *Music*, 106; Fox, *Annals*, 223-4.
- ⁶⁸ Fox, *Annals*, 47.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 45. Though Charlotte Brooke presented a more subdued impression of the Gaels, their masculinity was reinforced in their chivalry.
- ⁷⁰ Davis, *Music*, 104.
- ⁷¹ Fox, *Annals*, 45.
- ⁷² William Drennan, one of the architects of the United Irishmen. More about him is mentioned in Chapter 5, "United Irish History," in this work.
- ⁷³ Fox, *Annals*, 45.
- ⁷⁴ Bunting, 1840, 1-2.
- ⁷⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 46.
- ⁷⁶ Bunting, 1840, 2.
- ⁷⁷ Thomas Moore, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*, 10 Vols. (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1840-1841), 3:219. In his notes, Moors stated, "Though an edition of the Poetry of the Irish Melodies, separate from the Music, has long been caaled for, yet, having , for many reasons a strong objection to this of divorce, I should with difficulty have consented to a disunion of the words from the airs, had it depended solely upon me to keep them quietly together,"
- ⁷⁸ Moore's first volume of *Irish Melodies* was published in 1807 and 1808.
- ⁷⁹ Fox, *Annals*, 47.
- ⁸⁰ *Regency Etiquette: The Mirror of Graces (1811)* by a Lady of Distinction, 193-6. Jane Austen, 87.
- ⁸¹ Bunting's *Messiah*, 60, quoted from Belfast News-letter, 21 May 1805.
- ⁸² The harp here mentioned is the single action pedal harp, not the Irish harp.
- ⁸³ *Regency Etiquette*, 194.
- ⁸⁴ Williams, 'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream, 33.
- ⁸⁵ Jane Austen book, 87.
- ⁸⁶ White, *Keepers Recital*, 44.
- ⁸⁷ Davis, *Music*, 104.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 118.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Robert Owenson, Sydney's father, was an actor who portrayed the part of Carolan in a pageant in the play *The Shamrock* (Thuyente, *Harp Re-Strung*, 51). Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson) took up a s ubscription for a monument to be made for Carolan. The large, white marble bas-relief holds a prominent position in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (Fox, *Annals*, 121).

⁹¹ Lady Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs: Autobiography, Diaries and Correspondence*, vol. 1, (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1862). Extracts from *Lady Morgan's Memoirs* (1862), states that Owenson was known in society as "Glorivina" (277). A description of her illustrates the similarity between her impression and that of Glorivina: "[S]he sang well and played well, both on the piano and the harp—she danced like a fairy (an Irish fairy be it understood)...Full of Irish fun and Irish spirits she was entirely bewitching" (283).

⁹² Along with notes about Bunting, one footnote, describing the Belfast harper Denis Hempson, was three pages long. This note was reproduced in full by Bunting in his 1840 volume, 73-5.

⁹³ Brooke, *Reliques*, vii.

⁹⁴ Owenson, *Memoirs*, 284.

⁹⁵ Bunting, 1809, 65.

⁹⁶ There is a portrait of a recent major hanging in the City Hall in Belfast. The portrait is embedded with overt and shadows of symbology. When asked about the symbols, the guide replied that she was not allowed to discuss it, as the images contained highly charged meaning. (Kelly Yoakam, Belfast, 22 July 2005)

⁹⁷ Fox, *Annals*, 47, quoted from Petri, "Edward Bunting," 70.

⁹⁸ Bunting, 1809, 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰² Davis, *Music*, 107.

¹⁰³ Moore published 124 melodies in his volumes: 21 tunes came from Bunting's 1796 collection and 17 from his 1809 collection. Theunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 186.

¹⁰⁴ Theunte, *Harp Re-Strung*, 187.

¹⁰⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 48-9.

¹⁰⁶ Bunting ended the feud in the preface of his third publication (1840), 5. Moore responded in kind in the preface of his 1843 publication.

CHAPTER 10

1840 Volume II (Third Volume Published)

PART I

The
Ancient Music
Of
Ireland
Arranged for the
Piano Forte.
To which is prefixed
A Dissertation on
The Irish Harp and Harpers,
Including an Account of the
Old Melodies of Ireland.
By Edward Bunting
Dublin: Hodges and Smith
1840

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Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the high degree of early civilization and national glory laid claim to by the Irish people, it has never been questioned that, in the most remote times, they had at least a national music peculiar to themselves, and that their bards and harpers were eminently skilful in its performance.¹

Edward Bunting, 1840

These opening words reflected Bunting's return to his antiquarian passion: the preservation of a uniquely distinct and authentic national music of Ireland. Throughout the discourse of Irish identity, the praise of Cambrensis for the Irish bard is brought forward to validate Ireland's Golden Age and to reinforce Irish musical superiority. Bunting, as shown in his opening words, continued to define Ireland's glory in term of the skill of the Irish bards and harpers. This volume, in particular, illuminated the technical skill of the harpers.

Bunting's passion for Irish melodies began with his involvement at the meeting of the Belfast Harpers in 1792. This volume appeared over forty years later and over thirty years after the 1809 anthology. Here, we find the culmination of his life's work: antiquarian scholarship, musicianship, and personal reflection on a truly meaningful part of his life.

The dedication of this work has been disconcerting and puzzling to many, and was completely occluded from the 1969, 2000 and 2005 reprints of this volume. Bunting dedicated this volume of *Ancient Music of Ireland* to Her Majesty the Queen of England—Queen Victoria. Initially, this measured act appears inconsistent with cultural nationalism and has been interpreted as an acceptance of the larger Imperial community. This chapter, by examining the dissertation and the dedication pages, will demonstrate that even the dedication is consistent with Bunting's desire to promote the Irish nation as superior and

separate from England, and that Bunting did indeed return with a passion in this volume to establish Ireland's unique and superior position with regard to its most prominent cultural asset—its music.

This is a massive work, with 151 airs, and a six-chapter dissertation addressing all aspects of the harp. Bunting never tired of his desire to promote the harp during his lifetime and continued to work together with Dr. McDonnell in that pursuit. At the time this volume was published, Bunting and McDonnell were the only participants from the Belfast Festival still alive. The fact that Bunting moved from Belfast to Dublin necessitated their collaboration to be primarily through letters, many contained in Bunting's manuscripts. Charlotte Milligan Fox published those letters in her work *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (1911). The letters show the continued influence Dr. McDonnell had on Bunting throughout his work and the effort both put forth to showcase Ireland as a nation of its own, with definite cultural boundaries.

While Bunting continued to express cultural nationalism by stressing the prominence of Irish music and bardic tradition, in this volume, he approached it in a different way. Consistent with the new discipline of scientific archaeology, Bunting deconstructed the bard of the Golden Age, giving a scholarly scientific analysis of his music and performance technique, bringing Golden Age harp music into nineteenth-century aesthetic justification.² Along with the scholarly information, Bunting gave nostalgic accounts of the Belfast and Granard Festivals, along with biographies of prominent Irish harpers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Among the “differences of opinion”³ referred to in the opening passage regarding the nature of Ireland’s early civilization, was the addition of the Catholic voice to the discourse involving Irish identity. With the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, Catholics began to claim position as the only “real” Irish. This shift in identity, ironically, used Anglo-Irish writings to challenge the Anglo-Irish position within the boundaries of Irish cultural identity. A recent prominent work that echoed Brooke’s translations of Gaelic poetry and that challenged Anglo-Irish position was James Hardiman’s *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831). With this third volume, Bunting reinserted a Protestant voice in the discourse of Irish national identity, reminding the reader that the Anglo-Irish had a long tradition of identification with Irish culture, and that it was an Anglo-Irishman who preserved the music of Ireland.

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OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

This work is divided into two parts: the first, a six-chapter dissertation; and the second, an anthology. The first two chapters, “Of the Characteristics of Irish Melody” and “Of the Method of Playing, and Musical Vocabulary of the Old Irish Harpers,” give an overview of technique, tunings, Gaelic and English translations of “Ancient Irish Musical Terms.” Though Bunting was promoting the uniqueness of Irish music, he explained ancient techniques in terms of nineteenth-century music theory. It is important to remember that Bunting was an accomplished musician and musical director in the Belfast area. Though passionate about presenting the airs in a national context, Bunting participated in numerous productions with contemporary artists, and directed the massive debut of Handel’s *Messiah* in Belfast. He would naturally have filtered much of his musical opinions through his conservatory training in western art music. Nevertheless, his intent with the melodies in this volume was to prove the cultural uniqueness—the Irishness—by whatever means were credible and scientific.

The third chapter combines the contributions of two of Bunting’s protégées, both of whom promoted cultural nationalism in significant ways throughout their lives. “Of the Antiquity of the Harp and Bagpipe in Ireland,” begins with a three-page introduction by Samuel Ferguson, a barrister and Gaelic speaker. Ferguson gave a brief account of the harp during the fourteenth century and back to the time of Cambrensis in the twelfth century. Though there was much more information given in Bunting’s 1809 volume, this introduction highlighted archeological iconography. The body of this chapter, “Memoir of Ancient Irish Harp Preserved in Trinity College,” was contributed by George Petrie, an artist, antiquarian, and

Bunting's eventual successor in the collection of Irish music. This was a lengthy, twenty-page account of the Trinity harp. In this account, Petrie discounted myths of its origin as well as providing information about other harps found in Irish history. He used early Irish iconography to suggest the Irish harp to be rooted in ancient Egyptian culture. The last two pages were dedicated to the history of the bagpipe, tracing its origins in Ireland to an earlier time than Cambrensis. Resting on the belief that a native music defines the nation, concepts of antiquity and authenticity are crucial to Ireland's claim to "a place of distinction at the board of nations."⁴ These two writers reinforced antiquarian elements of antiquity and authenticity with the newly emerging discipline of scientific archaeology. They provided evidence for their claims primarily by using the iconography in statues and illuminated manuscripts, in addition to manuscripts themselves.

The fourth and fifth chapters, "Of the Various Efforts to Revive the Irish Harp" and "Anecdotes of the More Distinguished Harpers of the Last Two Centuries," bring the Golden Age from myth to historical reality. Bunting gave a brief description of a few events organized to create interest in the harp. He also gave information about two harp societies that began with the incentive of the Belfast meeting—both failed from lack of patronage and students. McDonnell hoped that through this last volume, there might yet be a successful revival of the harp.⁵ When Bunting gave anecdotes about seventeenth and eighteenth-century harpers, primarily from Arthur O'Neill's memoirs, he brought the focus of his 1796 volume from that of a bardic lineage reaching into antiquity, even the to time of Augustus,⁶ to more recent bards, who had a recorded history. Bunting

particularly set out to establish the harpers from the Belfast meeting, from whom he acquired most of the authentic airs found in these volumes. Bunting rested in the assumption that though the ancient history of the bard was already established, it was becoming clouded by romantic notions rather than historic authenticity. In his quest to authenticate the bardic image, Bunting dispelled romantic notions of Gaelic myths by providing verifiable figures who stood as near contemporaries to the readers.⁷

The Sixth chapter, “Notices of the More Remarkable Pieces and Melodies of the Collection,” highlights pieces from each of the three classes of airs contained in the anthology: the “very ancient,” the “ancient,” and the “modern.” Hempson was the repository for the very ancient music, which Bunting defined as “consisting of *caoinans* or dirges, and of airs to which Ossianic and other very old poems are sung.”⁸ Carolan began the designated modern time that ended with Stirling.⁹

Interestingly, while Bunting used Carolan to represent antiquity in his first volume, making no mention of Hempson; in this volume he assigned Carolan to the modern classification and brought Denis Hempson forward to represent the bard of antiquity.

The anthology contained similar elements to the first two volumes: Irish melodies, rooted in Gaelic culture; an oral music tradition transformed into written score; and parlor music arranged for pianoforte which connected the performers to the bardic tradition and the imagined community of Gaelic culture. After combining poetry and music in the 1809 volume, with this one, Bunting returned

his focus to that of preserving the music and included few lyrics. He also omitted the Italian tempo markings seen in the first two volumes and replaced them with English indications: “with spirit”,¹⁰ “quick and distinctly,”¹¹ “rather slow and gracefully”,¹² etc.

While Bunting desired for people to perform this music, to “perpetuate and revive” it, this was a scholarly work of preservation and cultural validation to the international community. Dr. McDonnell urged Bunting to explain the necessity of aural transmission: The nuances of Irish music could not be learned from a book, but had to be learned aurally:

I am very much obliged and pleased with your account of the audible sounds per second. Be sure to explain fully your own ideas as a musician and a philosophical reasoning man about the whole subject, and endeavour to show how it happens that other musicians, although expert and learned in their art never are able to play a Scotch or Irish air with any effect by any mode yet discovered of committing them to writing. Just as we see that no person can speak any living language merely by book knowledge, I never heard an Irish air played properly by a person who did not hear it played or sung by an Irish person, or by one like you taught in that manner.¹³

However important the aural transmission may have been in presenting an authentic Irish sound, the expediency was limited. The audience to which he presented this work would have had an aural familiarity with western music, thus parlor arrangements were easily accessible to them.

Since, Bunting acknowledged the audience to be English speakers versed in the Western music tradition, the use of Gaelic was minimal, only as symbols of authenticity. The only Gaelic type in the anthology appeared in the opening index that cross-referenced the Gaelic and English titles and lyrics to one song.¹⁴ This served as the only visual reminder to authenticate these songs as Gaelic. In

contrast to the other two volumes there was only one song title, and it was in English. The Gaelic titles in the cross-reference, appeared with both the transliteration of the titles in English letters and the English translations. The first index listed the airs in alphabetical order according to their Gaelic titles, giving precedence to the Gaelic titles. There were three columns: "Names in Irish Character," "Names in English Characters" (transliterated from the Gaelic), and "Translation." The second index alphabetized the English titles.

THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS

This was Edward Bunting's last work. He was ill during the production and his wife worked incessantly copying and Samuel Ferguson on the typeset. Bunting died two years later. His antiquarian impulse is seen in this third volume, as he used music to establish the antiquity and authenticity of Irish culture.

He determined for his last work, "as he was the first to give to the world a regularly arranged selection of our national airs, to terminate his labours by leaving behind him a complete, uniform, and, he trusts, very nearly perfect, collection of native Irish music."¹⁵ Bunting believed "musical remains" to be the best assessment "of the genius and sentiment...mental refinement and social progress of our remote ancestors;"¹⁶ and the study of "musical antiquity" to be "just as important as civil or military, or...ecclesiastical antiquity."¹⁷ Bunting suggested that music was what introduced the reader to the soul of their ancestors, not merely the acts that they performed. He stated:

to ascertain their exploits in war, or their progress in the arts of building and tillage, it surely must afford an equal share of pleasure to the reflective inquirer to become acquainted with the men themselves, and with their general turn of mind and sentiment in the very notes and cadences by which they gave expression to their ruling passions.¹⁸

These are the sentiments with which Bunting compiled this final volume; and he was not alone. Bunting surrounded himself with, and influenced men who were dedicated to promoting the Irish nation. The three who worked most closely with him were Dr. James McDonnell, Samuel Ferguson, and George Petrie.

DR. JAMES MCDONNELL, THE ETERNAL OPTIMIST

Because Bunting was in Dublin during the formation of this volume, we have much correspondence between him and Dr. McDonnell in Belfast. These letters reveal the intimate relationship the two shared, the constant encouragement McDonnell gave Bunting in his pursuit of what McDonnell termed “Literary History of Music”, which he believed no other country to have undertaken. In the letters, they also discuss music and authenticity, which had been from the beginning, a crucial concern for Bunting and McDonnell.

In a letter dated October 26, 1836, Dr. McDonnell asked about some tunes Bunting had that were composed for the doctor’s great-great-grandfather Sir Alexander MacDonnell, a prisoner, executed by Cromwell’s army. McDonnell hoped these would be included in Bunting’s next volume.¹⁹ He referred to this publication when he added:

When you publish your music, which I now never expect to see, as I am so old and you so indolent, be sure to print some commentary upon the tunes, stating all the conjectures that you can form about them, and this desire which I felt of preserving some record of what I call the “Literary History of Music,” which seems never to have been done with any care in any country...²⁰

James McDonnell maintained an interest in the preservation of Irish music and perpetuation of the harp tradition until his death. We get an insight to the depth at which the doctor supported the harpers’ tradition, in his efforts to establish the harp school in Belfast and by assuming patronage for his own harper. When he received a letter from Bunting regarding the progress of his final volume, McDonnell again revived enthusiasm for preserving the harp tradition. In a letter to Bunting, September 10, 1839, he expressed this enthusiasm:

Dear Bunting,--You will scarcely believe how much the receipt of your letter has raised my spirits, 'tis the best cordial I got since I saw you, and I now think the publication of this volume may be the means of yet reviving this Society,²¹ for as Rainey was better than O'Neill, and as there was yet two persons nearly as good as Rainey, besides the Master, why need one despair that others might not succeed? Mr. Price is the gentleman, at present, fondest of the instrument.²²

This optimism followed a letter by James McAdams announcing the closure of the Dublin harp school. After the closure of the Belfast Harp School in 1813, there seemed little hope for revival. Then in 1819, patronage came from Irishmen living in India. The school established by their patronage operated from 1819 through 1893.

In the same letter, we see that McDonnell maintained a harper from the school. He refers to him in this letter and again in 1840:²³ "He [Mr. Price] gave my little harper, Pat Murney, a guinea the other day, and has sent for him again, where I have consigned him to Captain King and the ladies, who are all taken with him..."²⁴

He continued to suggest material for Bunting to include in the book. MacDonnell was closely involved in the publication of this volume as well. Several of his letters to Bunting indicate that he was reading the manuscript before publication and suggested numerous additions to the book.

As a national endeavor, McDonnell believed the volume needed to be accessible to the reader and serve to deepen their patriotism. After proofing Bunting's Preface, MacDonnell expressed two concerns (Aug 16, 1840): first, he didn't believe that Bunting gave enough explanation about music theory for "persons unacquainted with the Language of Musicians."²⁵ While he appreciated Bunting's scholarship in authenticating the music, it was important for the public to identify with and understand its value themselves.

The second criticism had to do with a deeper expression of patriotism. He believed that music and language were the strongest connections to patriotic feelings. This was a strong belief acted on by the United Irishmen fifty years earlier, and which McDonnell continued to hold strong. He believed it important to provide music to a nation from which they could express life experiences within the confidence of their connections to a nation:

In the next place, you say nothing of the spirit of patriotism, and the actual utility in a national point of view, of keeping alive all opinions, customs, and innocent prejudices, which bind mankind to their country, wherever that may be, whether it be the Deserted Village, or the mountain that leads them to the storm—these when early cherished, act like instinctive impulses, and carry with them a magic charm, they are delightful in prosperity, console us in adversity, they accompany us in the city, or in the wilderness—when old, we dote upon them. Now there are no associations or feelings of this kind so strong as those connected with music and language.²⁶

Dr. James McDonnell championed Bunting in this last work. He believed Bunting to be the last hope of preserving information about the harp tradition they saw fade away during their lifetime. Despite the closure of the harp school, McDonnell nevertheless, maintained hope that through Bunting's volume a revival of the harp might be possible.

Expressing his optimism in a letter, McDonnell insisted that Bunting use whatever influence and patronage at his disposal for distributing this work. Even so, he did not want Bunting to compromise the distinct nature of national music, encouraging him to expand it:

I have a great desire that you should endeavour to keep the instrument as well as the music alive, and you are perhaps the only person who can now do it...Do not rest content with what you have done, but use the name and influence you have obtained in augmenting the volume, both in notes, words, and prefatory matter, particularly expanding that part respecting the "essential

differences” between the music of different nations, with the causes of those differences; for this is the point in which the connection between this art and the history of mankind is most connected.²⁷

McDonnell respected Bunting’s need for patronage and support. This volume was a monumental project, and costly. He was pleased to gain the support, and a print, of novelist Charlotte Elizabeth, author of “The Siege of Derry.” She apparently did not hold to one political view, enjoying both Irish music and writing some Orange ballads; but her notoriety was advantageous to the work. Bunting relayed the triumph to MacDonnell, who responded:

Dear Bunting, I return both the letter and this print. It is a great matter to have enlisted such a person as this in your favour, for although she be so perfectly heterodox in politics that I can conceive nothing more perverted and dangerous, yet the warmth of her heart and her love for some things in Ireland might be turned to advantage if she could be prevented from her vile orange railing.²⁸

Bunting and McDonnell were content to enjoy the patronage of Charlotte Elizabeth, if not the political ambiguity. The previous quote confirms their aversion to unionist ideology, but also that they did not discriminate among the supporters of the Irish national music tradition. Furthermore, Bunting and McDonnell were not softened in their nationalistic viewpoint by accepting her patronage. This is also true of the dedication to the Queen described below. With the Queen, patronage was important, but as a nationalistic work, her permission for the dedication was even more significant.

Bunting and McDonnell remained now, as much as ever, committed to sustaining the distinct culture of the Irish in ways that supported its ability to join the European community as equals, regardless of its position in a unified Britain. Two other men concerned with “sustain[ing] the reputation of the country”²⁹ joined Bunting in this volume: Samuel Ferguson (1810-1886) and George Petrie (1790-1866).

SAMUEL FERGUSON AND THE PROTESTANT VOICE

Ferguson was a barrister and writer who financed his education at Trinity College by contributing articles to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Though he translated Gaelic poetry and contributed to antiquarian journals throughout his life, it was his poetry that attracted the attention of the public, earning him the distinction of nineteenth century's most prominent Ulster-Scot poet. Ferguson was born the year after Bunting's 1809 volume. Fox believed Ferguson, whose translations of Gaelic poetry were likely influenced by Bunting, to have "realized [Bunting's] ideal of a translator."³⁰

In this volume, it was not primarily for Gaelic proficiency that Ferguson was included; there was little Gaelic. But as a Gaelic speaker, Ferguson affirmed the Anglo-Irish connection to Gaelic culture; and he was outspoken on Anglo-Irish participation in Irish nationalism as the addition of the Catholic voice began to turn the tables on Irish identity. Ferguson joined Bunting in asserting Anglo-Irish right to Irish identity.

From the time of the 1798 rebellion Irish identity continued to be renegotiated. By 1840, the negotiations were not only between the Irish and the English, but also, as Máire Mhac an tSaoi describes it, between two "nations in this island"³¹: the Old Catholic Irish and the Anglo-Irish. Some Catholic writers, rather than seeing an advantage in working *with* Protestants, began to resent the comfort Anglo-Irish enjoyed identifying themselves as Irish. After passage of the Catholic Relief Act in 1829, Catholic scholars came forward in the negotiation, redefining the face of Irishness to exclude Anglo-Irish—who were not "real" Irish.³² The irony is that when Irish culture had all but "faded into oblivion," as Brooke stated, from the neglect of the Irish;³³ it was the Anglo-Irish who preserved it and created an Irish identity. Just as nationalist writers of the 1790s used

antiquarian literature to bolster their position in the Irish nation, certain Catholic writers began using the same literature to exclude those writers from claiming that identity.

The 1840 volume follows the successful publication of James Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831). James Hardiman (1782-1855) was a Catholic writer who, like Joseph Walker and George Petrie, worked at Dublin Castle in the Public records office.

Minstrelsy followed Brooke's format of recording English translations of Gaelic poetry and their original Gaelic texts printed in a typeface designed for the publication.³⁴ While *Minstrelsy* built on the works of Walker and Brooke, it also re-imagined the Irish bard and his poetry. Concurrent with Walker and Brooke, Hardiman presented the bard as a patriotic icon: "if patriotism, genius, and learning, are entitled to regard amongst mankind, no men were ever more deserving of national honour than the ancient bards of Ireland."³⁵ He described them as "a proscribed and persecuted race, their very language interdicted, and yet from those outlawed bards, and in that denounced language, do we find specimens of poetic talent, which would do honour to any country."³⁶ Hardiman, like Brooke, sought vindication for these men of "brilliant quality":

[I]t is time to make reparation to the memory of these injured men, whose learning and genius would have been cherished and hounoured, and held in "devout reverence" in any country under heaven except their own.³⁷

Hardiman did indeed present the bard as revered, patriotic, and brilliant. Yet, while Walker and Bunting presented the bard as a unifying symbol belonging to all Irishmen, Hardiman distinguished them from among the descendants of English, claiming, "the bard was 'mere Irish.' They thought and spoke and wrote

in Irish. They were, invariably, Catholic, patriots, and jacobite.”³⁸ Seamus Deane believes:

The two most strategically important sections in Hardiman’s work are the first, which gives pride of place to Carolan [who was Catholic], and the third, “Jacobite Relics.” Hardiman made the important cultural-political connection between eighteenth-century popular opposition—led by O’Connell—to the Union.³⁹

The popularity and scholarship of Hardiman’s work jeopardized Anglo-Irish identification with Gaelic history, and thus their inclusion in the Irish nation and right to lands acquired through plantations. Leerssen claims Hardiman’s “Jacobite relics” to be “the most explosive portion” of the book:

The anti-English *aislingí* of penal times were now reproduced in full, and the Hidden Ireland was finally allowed to reach the ears of the Irish public-at-large in its own voice...hot on the heels of Catholic Emancipation...it conjured up a most threatening picture: that of a peasantry which was vocal, politically informed and conscious, disaffected and anything but naïve, anything but satisfied with their humble lot in life.⁴⁰

Ferguson submitted four successive articles to the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1834,⁴¹ viciously attacking Hardiman’s sectarian possessiveness of Irish culture, when the “superstitious and pernicious” doctrines to which they so “stubbornly adhere—[were] doctrines to no small extent responsible for the debasement of their natures and the degradation of their condition.”⁴² Though Ferguson speaks from his ascendancy position, Hardiman argues that “Ferguson has ventured already a long way into enemy country and come closer to them in his heart than clearly, as an enlightened Protestant gentleman of the day, he cares to admit.”⁴³ She continued, “Language and antiquarianism have betrayed him; the material he approached as a scholarly pastime—made fashionable in

the preceding generation by Bishop Percy and Miss Brooke—has captured his imagination and will dominate all his subsequent literary achievements.”⁴⁴

In the end, Ferguson attributed Hardiman’s *Minstrelsy* as: “the pious labours of a man, who, however politically malignant and religiously fanatical, has yet done such good service to his country in their collection and preservation, that for her sake we half forgive him our own quarrel.”⁴⁵

Bunting used this volume to address the Catholic situation and his historic validation as an Anglo-Irishman to identify with Irish history. Anglo-Irish settlers, he believed, had a long reputation of Gaelic inheritance. Bunting reminded the reader of the consistency in Anglo-Norman history to adopt the “native manners” of the Irish. The early settlers attracted the description “*Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores*”⁴⁶ (more Irish than the Irish). “The new residents introduced by the Plantation of Ulster,” Bunting continued, emulated those of the feudal period, who became “more Irish in proportion as their power was less disputed,” and “began almost immediately...to blend the manners of the two countries, infusing...Irishism into the mixture.”⁴⁷

By publishing this volume, Bunting not only reinserted himself in the discourse with the English, but he also challenged the Catholic voice. Bunting’s reappearance at this time reminded the readers that it was Anglo-Irish initiative that preserved Gaelic culture, and it was an Anglo-Irishman who rescued Irish music from oblivion.

GEORGE PETRIE, FATHER OF IRISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL NATIONALISM

George Petrie⁴⁸ was a strong endorsement. He was well established for his antiquarian interests and the leading figure in Irish archaeological nationalism. As somewhat of a Renaissance man, Petrie, was a painter, musician, historian, journalist-editor-publisher of his own periodicals, music collector, founder of several societies, and president of others. John Hutchinson describes Petrie as “a complex and multifaceted intellectual who combined the functions of scientist, cultural revivalist, moralist and propagandist.”⁴⁹ Until the time this volume was published, Petrie served as head of the antiquities division in the Topographical Department of the British funded Irish Ordinance Survey. Petrie staffed his department with members of the Royal Irish Academy.⁵⁰ Two of those men were John O’Donovan,⁵¹ one of Ireland’s greatest scholars, and Eugene O’Curry,⁵² a translator of Irish manuscripts and who later became professor of history and archaeology at the Catholic University of Ireland.⁵³ O’Curry’s lectures on Irish antiquity were collected and published in two volumes titled, *On Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish* (1873).⁵⁴

For the Survey, these men not only mapped out the counties of Ireland, detailing the geography, but they also included archaeological descriptions of historical remains in each area.⁵⁵ Because of the nature of their work with the Survey, they were able to aid the Royal Irish Academy in acquiring a collection of “Celtic fine arts of the ‘Golden Age’, which had been discovered by farmers, including the Tara brooch and the Armagh chalice (both dating from the eighth century).”⁵⁶ Archaeological nationalism established “the material basis of an Irish national identity,” expanding “the stock of national symbols” to include “the round

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tower, Celtic cross, Ardagh chalice and Royal Tara brooch, Hiberno-Romanesque styles of architecture, the illustrative manuscripts of the Book of Kells and many sacred sites.”⁵⁷ The Trinity Harp was one of those symbols. Petrie’s *Memoirs* of the Trinity harp gives an example of the research he did that earned him the title “father of Irish archaeology.” His most prominent work in this area appeared five years later was his research of “Round Towers of Ireland” (1845).

Before his involvement with Bunting’s volume, Petrie co-founded⁵⁸ two antiquarian journals: *The Dublin Penny Journal* and the *Penny Journal*. In *The Dublin Penny Journal*, Petrie echoed Brooke’s determination for Irish literature produced in every aspect from Ireland. The publication began in 1832 with this mission statement:

It is an Irish undertaking altogether—Irish paper—Irish printing, the woodcut was done expressly for this number by an Irishman—Clayton—and we therefore claim Irish support. The expense...is great; but very moderate profits will suffice us, if our countrymen only second our endeavour to wipe off the stigma which has, we do trust falsely been affixed to Irish spirit and to Irish literature.⁵⁹

Though Petrie served many roles in promoting cultural nationalism, it was as an illustrator of guidebooks for the tourist industry that Hutchinson believes Petrie held his greatest influence. His watercolors, along with other topographical artworks “popularized Irish scenic and historic sites...present[ing] an image of Ireland as place of historic drama, natural beauty and romance.”⁶⁰

Hutchinson describes Petrie as both a “scientific deymythologiser” and “an historical mythologist.”⁶¹ He argues that while Petrie “overturned earlier archaeological fantasies about the pagan origins of round towers,” for example; he simultaneously “construe[d] historical evidence in terms of mythic patterns (for

example of a Golden Age).”⁶² The expansion of national symbolism provided nationalists such as Daniel O’Connell and Thomas Davis’s Young Irelanders with material to use, according to Hutchinson, in “flags, journals, manifestos, advertisements and political meeting to justify Irish political claims for autonomy.”⁶³

It was Daniel O’Connell, a Catholic attorney, who successfully organized the campaign for Catholic emancipation, passed in 1829. His second campaign at this time, to restore the Irish parliament alarmed the British government. This political activity coupled with the emerging archaeological evidence of a pre-Norman “Golden Age” supplied by the Ordnance Survey motivated an abrupt end to their funding in 1840.⁶⁴ Despite the loss of funds in this area, these men continued to promote cultural nationalism through the Royal Irish Academy and in many other venues. It was O’Curry and O’Donovan who proposed the Irish language dictionary that was produced by the Royal Irish Academy.

Petrie’s participation with Bunting fulfilled a long term desire of preserving Ireland’s musical heritage as well. The greatest tribute Petrie paid to Bunting was to continue the pursuit of collecting Irish music. In 1855, Petrie published his own anthology of Irish music, *The Petrie Collection of Ancient Music of Ireland*. This was the only publication sponsored by the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, which he founded in 1851.⁶⁵ Also on the board were Eugene O’Curry and John McDonnell, M.D., son of James McDonnell.⁶⁶ Petrie had begun collecting Irish melodies before he met Bunting and hoped to someday publish them. He recalled, “I thought such expectation

likely to be realized when...I formed a close intimacy with the late Mr. Edward Bunting... shortly after the publication of the second volume.”⁶⁷ Petrie published a generation later, after Bunting had firmly established the authenticity and prominence of Irish music. With its position secure, Petrie was then able to admit to the difficulty of determining the “true” version of a melody. He reluctantly criticized Bunting for his dismissal of singers as the most reliable source of “settings...which would have any stamp of purity and authenticity.”⁶⁸ He continued to claim that some of Bunting’s arrangements were an “absurd indulgence of barbarous licenses and conventionalities” that obscured the melodies.⁶⁹ Yet Petrie acknowledged Bunting for his contribution to the country by preserving its national music: “[T]he labours of Mr. Bunting, whose zealous exertions for the preservation of our national music should entitle his name to be for ever held in grateful remembrance by his country.”⁷⁰ This praise fulfilled Bunting’s desire to be counted among “those worthy Irishmen” who “sustained the reputation of the country.”⁷¹ Petrie, who criticized Bunting’s methodology of presenting authentic music, never questioned Bunting’s zeal in buttressing the nation by supplying proof of its national music.

BACKGROUND OF THE MUSIC

Bunting believed that music “of all those [subjects] involved in Irish history, is the one most capable of being handled with certainty and precision,”⁷² and he approached this work from the standpoint of an antiquarian and a music scientist. Consistent with antiquarianism, Bunting defended the antiquity, authenticity and the longevity of Irish music. In the Preface, Bunting set out first to establish the authentic purity of the music he presented in each of his volumes. Believing that national culture is validated through authenticity, Bunting was adamant about the accuracy of music handed down through the ages. He even claimed music to be superior to poetry in authenticity, as “poems and histories, when orally delivered, will, from time to time, be corrupted and interpolated.”⁷³ Though oral transmission is known to “corrupt” even music, Bunting dismissed this idea asserting, “the case is totally different with music. A strain of music, once impressed on the popular ear, never varies.”⁷⁴ He believed that music should never be altered to fit the words, but that words were to fit the music: “[Music] may be made the vehicle of many different sets of words, but they are adapted to *it*, not it to *them*.”⁷⁵ Though largely a romantic notion, Bunting offered the following assertion of the unchallenged authenticity of music:

...so universal, especially among country people...and airs...so intuitively acquired, that when a melody has once been divulged in any district, a criterion is immediately established in almost every ear; and this criterion being the more infallible in proportion as it requires less effort in judging, we have thus, in all directions, and at all times, a tribunal of the utmost accuracy and of unequalled impartiality (for it is unconscious of the exercise of its own authority) ...governing the musical traditions of the people and preserving the native airs and melodies of every country, in their integrity, from the earliest periods.⁷⁶

It is from this point of view that Bunting used circular reasoning: He substantiated the authenticity of the music by its purity—and its purity by its authentic source—the peasantry. It is this “transmission of tunes in a perfect state from the earliest times” that assured a national music of the utmost authenticity, rooted in a lineage of antiquity, despite the fact that oral transmission creates alternate versions. Bunting criticized those who altered the music to accommodate poetry, such as Sir John Stevenson, Thomas Moore’s collaborator. Bunting set Stevenson’s arrangement in contrast to those to which “the musical collector or antiquary confined his search,” that of “the native districts” where “he may always be certain of the absolute and unimpeachable authenticity of every note he procures.”⁷⁷ Bunting stated that “changes in the actual frame and structure of our melodies have never been attempted” by the Irish who know genuine Irish music, but only by those who have heard “altered tunes” arranged by ones who had “never heard them in the original state; as in the instance of Sir John Stevenson’s supposed emendations of the Irish melodies” attached to the “excellence of Mr. Moore’s accompanying poetry.”⁷⁸

While this statement censored Stevenson’s use of music; it praised Thomas Moore’s poetry. This acknowledgement of Moore’s excellence signaled a turn in the thirty-year feud between the two men. Bunting laid blame on Stevenson, though Moore claimed it was his decisions in setting the poetry that effected the melodic “distortions,” describing the great extent to which he was involved in the musical arrangements. In a journal entry dated 15 July 1840, Moore credited Bunting for recognizing him as well as exonerated Stevenson for his supposed musical alterations:

Considering the thorn I have been in poor Bunting’s side by supplanting him in the one great object of his life (the connection of his name with

the fame of Irish Music) the temper in which he now speaks of my success (for some years since he was rather termagant on the subject) is not a little creditable to his good nature and good sense. Speaking of the use I made of the first volume of airs published by him he says: "They were soon adapted as vehicles for the most beautiful popular songs that perhaps have ever been composed by any lyric poet."⁷⁹

...He lays the blame of all these alterations upon Stevenson, but poor Sir John was entirely innocent of them; as the whole task of selecting the airs and in some instances shaping them thus, in particular passages, to the general sentiment, which the melody appeared to me to express was undertaken solely by myself.⁸⁰

As Bunting followed Moore's 1808 *Melodies* with his 1809 *Ancient Music*, Moore followed this 1840 volume with a collection of poetry in 1841. Though Moore wrote a journal entry that Bunting's 1840 melodies were "a mess of trash,"⁸¹ he praised Bunting in his fourth volume published in 1841:

There can be no doubt that to the zeal and industry of Mr Bunting, his country is indebted for the preservation of her own National Airs. During the prevalence of the penal code the music of Ireland was made to share in the fate of its people. Both were alike shut out from the pale of civilized life; and selfdom anywhere but in the huts of a proscribed race could the sweet voice of the songs of other days be heard.⁸²

Despite the debt owed Bunting for preserving the National Airs, Moore credited himself for bringing Bunting's melodies to public notice: apt justification for taking "liberties" with the melodies:

Had I not ventured on these very admissible liberties many of the songs now most known and popular would have been still sleeping with all their authentic dross about them in Mr Bunting's first volume.⁸³

This illustrates the awareness Moore had of the contrast between their ideologies. Moore appealed to public tastes, Bunting was concerned with authenticity. Moore set his national poetry to airs he presumed to be an authentic national repertoire, established in large part by Bunting. Moore provided the

public esteem, Bunting provided Moore with the “authentic” vehicles in which to transport his poetry.

The attention Bunting gave to Moore’s work appears that he was campaigning for political preeminence. Both claim to be performing a national service, yet they view their service very differently. Bunting’s antiquarian interest did not serve him well in the market place. Moore believed compromise expedient to wider distribution. He wanted his poetry to see sales for political and economic reasons. Bunting attempted a compromise with his second volume and regretted it. Bunting saw Moore much like the editor of *The Citizen* who in 1839 summed Moore up this way:

Moore has devoted so much of his time to [the service of the young English gentlepeople]; instead of working for his own country, which admitted of, and greatly needed a nobler and more strenuous devotion of life to literary toil. Had he spent the last forty years of his life in Ireland, and worked but half as hard, to supply a few of her many wants, as he has been compelled to do for the booksellers in England, his position in Ireland and in Europe, had been far different now. Instead of being, as it were, the ambassador of the national genius in England, he might have been for a time, its honoured chieftain at home.⁸⁴

Moore danced between the two countries as Ireland’s national poet. Moore brought the sentiment of Irish suffering into the parlors of the colonizer, yet so romanticized that the confrontation went unrecognized. Bunting on the other hand joined those who would imagine a restoration of a pre-invasion culture. Davis remarks on the contrast between Moore and Bunting:

Moore identified the true essence of Irish music with the time of colonization, while Bunting sought to locate Irish music in a time before colonization...Irishness for Moore, is a state of tension and translation rather than a static state of authenticity.⁸⁵

Bunting saw the hybridity of colonial Ireland as compromising the purity of the tunes. While most in his collection were after the colonizing moment, there was no ambiguity on Bunting's part as to the strength of Ireland as a nation. While Bunting focused on the homogeneity of Irish music, Moore, according to Davis, "depict[ed] the Irish nation as a site of contestation and hybridization."⁸⁶ Davis contrasts Bunting and Petrie's antiquarian interest with Moore's acceptance of an established repertoire:

In contrast to Bunting before him and Petrie after him, Moore is not concerned with identifying his immediate source for the tunes with which he works...Moore himself was not trying to construct a genealogy...nor was he concerned with establishing the authenticity of the tunes. Rather he was more intent on representing them as a generally known body of material, a body of material that was hybrid by nature...⁸⁷

Davis points out, "The one genealogical connection that Moore did seek to make was to Carolan...that Carolan for Moore is himself a figure of hybridity...a figure of an Ireland already invaded."⁸⁸ In the preface to his third volume, Moore characterized Carolan as reflecting a time "when our poor countrymen were driven to worship their God in caves, or to quit forever the land of their birth—like the bird that abandons the nest which human touch has violated."⁸⁹ This reflects one ethnocentric difference between Catholic and Protestant writers. The Irish Catholic writers center their sentiment on the colonizing moment when their identity as a nation was suppressed by the dominator; the Anglo-Irish Protestants centered their writings in a pre-invasion past that would unify their identity as the colonized. At this point that unity was being shaken by Catholic writers who stressed the division between the old Catholic Irish and their Anglo-Irish suppressors.

While Moore focused new poetry on romanticizing tensions of the past, rather than preservation, White describes Bunting as presenting a "straightforward equation between systematic preservation of the cultural past and political well-being in the

present.”⁹⁰ Bunting believed the well-being of Ireland’s political state to be jeopardized by romantic notions that would feminize Ireland in the eyes of the European community, and Moore had developed a reputation of feminizing the nation.⁹¹

The English began projecting a feminized image of Moore that served, in some minds, to reflect on Irishness,⁹² an Irishness that had taken great pains to contain images of masculinity and strength. Attempts at gendering were strategically navigated by nationalists, for, as Mary Jean Corbett explains, “[I]n the English-Irish context, gender provides perhaps the most fundamental and enduring discursive means for signifying Irish political incapacity.”⁹³

White stated that political ideology dictated the representation of both the historic ethnicity of Ireland and of its music. Bunting and Moore presented two contrasting views. Bunting, especially in this volume, presented a scientific analysis of Irish music, emphasizing cultural validation, while Moore used Irish melodies to romanticize the nation:

The understanding which existed between the idea of “Ireland” in the ethnic repertory and the idea of “music” in the Irish imagination (above all in the imagination of Thomas Moore) was one determined by politics.⁹⁴

Robert Chambers, a collector of Scottish folk-songs contrasted Moore and Bunting even further:

Were we to institute a literary comparison, we could say that Moore’s *Irish Melodies* had about them all the fascination of poetry and romance, Bunting’s collections all the sterner charms of truth and history. When we hear Sir John Stevenson’s *Irish Melodies* played by a young lady on the pianoforte, or even on the pedal harp, we do not hear the same music, which O’Cahan, Carolan and Hempson played. It is as much altered as Homer in the translation of Pope. For the true presentment of this music to modern ears we require the old sets as preserved in the volumes of Bunting and “The Irish Harp” played by an Irish harper.⁹⁵

Chambers reinforced the masculine-feminine contrast between Bunting and Moore. He also censured the out-of-place context of young ladies performing on the piano or pedal harp, which is a much different instrument than the Irish harp played by the Belfast harpers. Yet, the criticism assumed an imagined context of masculine Irishness that Bunting successfully projected in his volumes; the reality is that Bunting's music was also arranged, not for harp, but for pianoforte, and would have left much the same impression in performance as Stevenson's. As White suggests, politics informs the imagination.

Moore contrasted the masculine image Bunting attempted to engender about the bard with a more genteel presence. Although Moore performed his own music in parlors of the elite, much the same way an itinerant bard would have done, the pianoforte was not the masculine instrument the Irish harp was imagined to be.

The time between Moore's first appearance with his *Irish Melodies* in 1809 and 1840, he had acquired quite a reputation and widespread popularity. His lyrics had become popular drawing room music. Moore had become a showman himself. He exhibited a charisma that motivated his publisher to expand their contract beyond the publication of his volumes to include the performance of his "Melodies" in elite parlors where, as Davis claims, he "came to represent Ireland to the English."⁹⁶ While this was an effective marketing tool, it was not the image of Irishness that many nationalists desired.

An example of Moore's affective performance is seen in a letter from Mrs. Willis (1843) who, Fox tells us, saw him perform at Lady Blessington's home. This account illustrates the captivating impact of Moore's poetry—when he delivered it. In

performance he had the ability to affect drama that engaged the listener. On another note, it also, indicates the improvisational nature of his performance, that he did not perform the pieces as written in his volumes. The volumes were intended for amateur musicians, of which he was not. He was very much a professional, musically and lyrically. Here is the account of Willis's rapture:

My letter is getting long and I have not time to describe his singing. It is well-known, however, that its effect is only equaled by the beauty of his own words and for one, I could have taken him into my heart with delight. He makes no attempt at music. It is a kind of admirable recitative in which every shade of thought is syllabled [sic] and dwelt upon, and the sentiment of the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids and starting your tears if you have a soul or sense in you. I have heard of a woman's fainting at a song of Moore's, and if the burden answered by chance, to a secret in the bosom of the listener, I should think from its effect on so old a stage as myself, that the heart would break with it. We all sat round the piano and after one or two song of Lady Blessington's choice, he rambled over the keys awhile and sang, "When first I met thee" with a pathos that beggars description. When the last word had faltered out, he rose, took Lady Blessington's hand, said "Good-night," and was gone before a word was uttered. For a full minute after he had closed the door no one spoke. I could have wished myself to have dropped silently asleep where I sat, with the tears in my eyes and the softness upon my heart.⁹⁷

The romantic nature of Moore's performance obscured the political nature of the poetry. This was the type of sentimental nationalism that Bunting rejected: one that reduced Ireland to a sentimental image that invited sympathy from the colonizer, rather than displaying the pre-invasion strength of a sovereign nation.

While this account emphasizes Moore's enchanting manner, it also describes the manner in which he performed. Performing with an "admirable recitative" indicates that Moore did not perform the music in song as he and Stevenson arranged them. Fox also believed that Moore performed much differently from the music he and Stevenson

arranged for publication. The description Fox gave was one that reflected the extemporaneous performance of bardic tradition:

From this description, borne out by others that have come down to us, we feel that Moore never marred the beauty of the airs by the ornate quasi-Italian preludes and movements of Stevenson, but that he improvised as he went along, a chord here, a chord there, to emphasise [sic] a word and assist interpretation, leaving the clear stream of melody to flow on undisturbed.⁹⁸

Though Moore assumed the role of the Irish bard to the English, both Bunting and Chambers recognized the feminization of that role in his performance. Leith Davis believes Bunting addressed the feminization of the melodies in his comment that the tunes set with Moore's poetry "assumed new dress." She states:

Because of Moore, the ancient tunes have been put into new "dress"; they have become subject to the whims of fashion. Furthermore, according to Bunting, Moore has replaced the spirit of the people with the cult of the poet, a process he regards as unnatural and alien to the true sense of the music.⁹⁹

In her book *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender*, Davis sums up the characterization of Moore reflected in the image of Ireland:

With Moore, whom Charles Gavan Duffy dubbed the "pet of the petticoats," as its representative, the Irish nation was viewed not just as feminine but as emasculated and therefore as incapable of the kind of judgment necessary for national self-determination. Moore's hybridized "truly National" project brought Irish patriotism from the podium to the parlor, as Daniel O'Connell suggested, but is also provided a means by which the English could disregard that patriotism as too "pretty."¹⁰⁰

Bunting continued to project a masculine image surrounding the Irish music tradition. He rejected the romantic images of Irish culture, in favor of ones grounded in history and also comparable with the larger western art culture.

Bunting and Moore were rivals who expressed nationalism from two vantage points: romanticism and science. The romanticism in Moore's national music affected the hearts of people; Bunting's scientific analysis grounded it.

Bunting's main goal was to prove the purity and authenticity of Irish music; the poetry he saw as secondary. Besides the authenticity of the music itself, Bunting attributes his method of collection to contribute to the faithfulness of the airs. Even so, his earlier claim that music is pre-eminent to lyrics, would preclude authenticity passed down from the "songsters" from which he collected much of his music.

Bunting believed his method of collecting to be both unique and successful. Believing music from the "remotest" areas to be the most authentic,¹⁰¹ he traveled the countryside for melodies. He considered his work to be "an opportunity, never, perhaps, enjoyed by any other musical compiler, of rendering himself thoroughly acquainted with the genius and habits of the old native people of the country."¹⁰² Bunting's travels placed him in the homes of those "in the remotest parts of Tyrone and Derry in Ulster, and of Sligo and Mayo in Connaught."¹⁰³ The melodies he collected there, he considered to be Ireland's national music. He believed that confining his search to "the native districts...he may always be certain of the absolute and unimpeachable authenticity of every note he procures."¹⁰⁴

Though Bunting was successful in other music venues, collecting music consumed a great portion of his life and heart. Bunting promoted the national image by presenting melodies he believed would redeem the tarnished reputation of Ireland created by Cambrensis. Bunting hoped that these volumes would serve to do such a service for

Ireland that the Irish would remember him among others who also “laboured” for the “reputation of the country.”¹⁰⁵ He expressed that hope in this passage:

The hope of being thus enable, by reviving the nation music, to place himself in the same rank with those worthy Irishmen whose labours have from time to time sustained the reputation of the country for a native literature, had, the Editor admits, no inconsiderable share in determining him on making the study and preservation of our Irish melodies the main business of his long life, and, he is free to confess, the same hope still animates him in giving these, the last of his labours, to the public.¹⁰⁶

The whole thrust of this volume was to elevate the Irish image by establishing a national musical repertoire for the nation of Ireland. There was no element of succumbing to the larger empire. Bunting truly loved these airs, and he loved them as part of a national sentiment, believing them to be the most accurate representation of the Irish nation. He pursued them with an “ardour...for nearly fifty years” and it was “a strong innate love of these delightful strains for their own sake” that kept him occupied for so long: “a love for them which neither the experience of the best music of other countries, nor the control of a vitiated public taste, nor the influence of advancing years, has ever been able to alter or diminish.”¹⁰⁷

¹ Bunting, 1840, 1.

² Brooke also wished to highlight Ireland’s genius in the area of science.

³ Bunting, 1840, 1.

⁴ Petrie’s *Memoirs*, in 1840, 59.

⁵ Though he never saw this revival in his lifetime, he would be please that these volumes contributed to the international revival of the Irish harp and examination of Bunting’s volumes during the 1970s.

⁶ Bunting, 1796, 3.

⁷ These were harpers who participated in the Belfast Harpers’ Festival. The list of harpers and songs they played from this provided in Chapter 7 of this work, “The Meeting of the Belfast Harpers,” 241.

⁸ Bunting, 1840, 7.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹¹ Ibid., 73.

¹² Ibid., 99.

¹³ Fox, *Annals*, 279. Fox noted that “The Doctor would have favoured the “Direct Method” of teaching languages, and the study of traditional singing now advocated by the Gael League.”

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- ¹⁴ Bunting, 1840, i-vi, 32.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 11.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 2.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ “Macdonnell’s March” is No. 112 in the 1840 collection. The march is discussed in the Dissertation, 91-2 and included in the anthology, 83.
- ²⁰ Fox, *Annals*, 274-5.
- ²¹ The Belfast Harp Society.
- ²² Fox, *Annals*, 277.
- ²³ Dr. MacDonnell purchased the harp for Murney for 8 £, 290.
- ²⁴ Fox, *Annals*, 277.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 290.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 291.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 279.
- ²⁹ Bunting, 1840, 2.
- ³⁰ Fox, *Annals*, 46.
- ³¹ Máire Mhac an tSaoi, *Minstrelsy*, v.
- ³² Foster, *History*, 459.
- ³³ Brooke, *Reliques*, vi.
- ³⁴ Like Brooke, Hardiman created his own typeface (See Figure 4.2) Chapter 4, “Charlotte Brooke,” 135.
- ³⁵ Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, xxi.
- ³⁶ Ibid., xxiv.
- ³⁷ Ibid., xxv.
- ³⁸ Ibid., xxv.
- ³⁹ Deane, *Strange Country*, 218, note 19.
- ⁴⁰ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, 178.
- ⁴¹ Máire Mhac an tSaoi, *Minstrelsy*, v.
- ⁴² Samuel Ferguson, *Dublin University Magazine*, 1834, quoted in Máire Mhac an tSaoi, *Minstrelsy*, v.
- ⁴³ Máire Mhac an tSaoi, *Minstrelsy*, v.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.; White, *Keepers Recital*, 61, quoted from “Hardiman’s Irish Minstrelsy”, *The Dublin University Magazine*, 4 (July-December 1834), 153.
- ⁴⁶ Bunting, 1840, 67.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Petrie’s major biography is found in William Stokes’s *The Life and Labours in Art and Archaeology of George Petrie* (London: Longman, 1868). More recent information can be found in Sheehy’s *The Rediscovery of Ireland’s Past: The Celtic Revival (1830-1930)* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).
- ⁴⁹ John Hutchinson, “Archaeology and the Irish Rediscovery of the Celtic Past”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7, no.4 (2001): 509.
- ⁵⁰ Two of the founding members of the Academy were Charles Vallancey and Sylvester O’Halloran.
- ⁵¹ A letter from Dr. McDonnell indicated that O’Donovan was involved with Bunting’s volume. Fox, 289.
- ⁵² O’Donovan and O’Curry were brother-in-laws married to sisters and collaborated on several cultural projects.
- ⁵³ Established 1851.

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- ⁵⁴ O'Curry, Eugene, Dr. W.K. Sullivan, ed., *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*. Dublin: Williams and Norgate, 1873. Vols. 1 and 2. These appeared after the failed Fenian uprising in 1867.
- ⁵⁵ These three men established several archaeological societies; the Irish Archaeological Society, they established in 1840.
- ⁵⁶ Hutchinson 508. Sheehy 1980: 17.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 510.
- ⁵⁸ With Caesar Otway
- ⁵⁹ *Dublin Penny Journal*, 1, no. 2 (July 1832): 3. For more about the significance of Gaelic typeface, see Chapter 4, "Charlotte Brooke: *Reliques*," in this work.
- ⁶⁰ Hutchinson, "Archaeology," 509-10; Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival (1830-1930)*, (London: Thames and Hudson, c1980), 22-4.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 509.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 509.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 510.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 508.
- ⁶⁵ George Petrie, *Petrie's Complete Irish Music: 1582 Traditional Melodies*, (New York: Dover, 2003), reprint from 1902 and 1905.
- ⁶⁶ John O'Hart, *Irish Pedigrees; Or, the Origin and Stem of the Irish* (Dublin: McGlashun and Gill, 1876-8), 531.
- ⁶⁷ Petrie, *Complete*, vi.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, x.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, x-xi.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.
- ⁷¹ Bunting, 1840, 2.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ Bunting, 1840, 2.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ Internal quote: Bunting, 1840, 5.
- ⁸⁰ Fox, *Annals*, 29.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 32, quoted from Moore Volume 4, 1841.
- ⁸³ Fox., *Annals*, 29.
- ⁸⁴ Davis, *Music*, 164, quoted from *The Citizen: A Monthly Journal of Politics Literature and the Arts*, (December 1, 1839), 88.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 144-5.
- ⁸⁹ Moore, *Works*, 4:120.
- ⁹⁰ White, *Keepers Recital*, 38.
- ⁹¹ Davis, *Music*, 164. Chapter 7, "In Moore's Wake: Irish Music in Ireland after the *Irish Melodies*", 164-185.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*

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- ⁹³ Ibid., 162, cf. Mary Jean Corbett *Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing*, (Cambridge 2000), 16.
- ⁹⁴ White, *Keeper Recital*, 37.
- ⁹⁵ Fox, *Annals*, 79, cf. Robert Chambers, *Chamber Edinburgh Journal*, (19 September 1840). Specific date not in Fox—White?
- ⁹⁶ Davis, *Music*, 142.
- ⁹⁷ Fox, *Annals*, 30.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Davis, *Music*, 113.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 163. Internal quote: in Charles Gavan Duffy, “Thomas Moore,” in Deane, *Field Day Anthology*, 1:1251. Anthology of Irish writing. 3 vols. (New York: Norton, 1991).
- ¹⁰¹ Largey, *Vodou Nation*, 3. Peasantry is often considered the most authentic source of national culture.
- ¹⁰² Bunting, 1840, 10.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 2.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER 11

1840 Volume II (Third Volume Published)

PART II

THE DISSERTATION

The Table of Contents shows the ambitious nature of the volume:

Preface

- I. Of the Characteristics of Irish Melody
- II. Of the Method of Playing, and Musical Vocabulary of the Old Irish Harpers
- III. Of the Antiquity of the Harp and Bagpipe in Ireland
- IV. Of the Various Efforts to Revive the Irish Harp
- V. Anecdotes of the More Distinguished Harpers of the Last Two Centuries
- VI. Notices of the More Remarkable Melodies and Pieces of the Collection
- Index to the Airs.

From Walker to Bunting there was the dichotomy between presenting the bard as both a “natural” self-taught musician, unschooled in western theory; and as

producing harmonic structures that rivaled western music. Both aspects attempted to balance Golden Age authenticity with the ability to compete in a cosmopolitan community.

Bunting balanced the image of a Golden Age by giving a more scientific and technical perspective to the bardic tradition. Though Dr. McDonnell cautioned Bunting about presenting the material in a manner too erudite for the reader, it is, nevertheless, very technical and emphasizes Bunting's scholarship. He hoped to associate Ireland with music that contained innate sophistication within a self-taught tradition that predated corresponding western theories.

Believing that the image of Ireland had become too romanticized, in this last anthology of "Ancient Irish Music," Bunting deconstructed bardic history and technique and placed it in a scientific context. Bunting set out to present, what he believed to be the authentic Ireland, one that was flexible, real, and tangible.

On the one hand, there was a certain status attributed to the harpers by presenting them as "self-taught." Bunting indicated that harpers at the beginning of the eighteenth century had an innate sense of harmony. He assured, "The modern musician will be surprised to find such an admirable arrangement by a person ignorant (as it is presumed all the Irish harpers at the beginning of the eighteenth century were) of modern musical science."¹ By claiming them "self-taught" he reinforced that they were not educated in continental musical schools and that this music was local and distinctive.

On the other, examining the tunings of the harpers, technical execution of performance, vocabulary of harp components and technical terms, Bunting removed the

bardic image from the mystical world of fantasy and placed him in the context of practical musician, on par with his European counterpart.

The thoroughness of his information inspired Bunting to write to Mary McCracken, 10 January 1840: “Everything relative to Irish music is known, and the musical people may by this new light shown to them, compose away as much as they please in the Irish style without fear of going wrong.”²

In Chapter I, “Of the Characteristics of Irish Melody,” Bunting explored the scientific analysis of Irish music by navigating the delicate boundaries of same and other. He detailed the distinctiveness of Irish music in sound and form. Yet for Bunting to validate the distinction of Irish music as cosmopolitan rather than exotic, it needed to withstand comparison with European music on western terms. Bunting described Ireland’s music as distinctly Irish, yet able to rival European schools.

Bunting’s conservatory training legitimized his authority to scientifically analyze Irish music. He had been well established in the musical society of Belfast, a major center in Ireland along with Dublin. McDonnell insisted that he capitalize on his reputation, both as a music director and as an established authority of Irish music that he himself rescued from oblivion. His ability to analyze the airs according to western standards, positioned them as distinctly Irish, yet able to fall within the larger class of European styles of music. He first searched for characteristics which distinguished them as Irish.

Bunting confronted the misconceptions of Irish music held by some authorities³ who “urge[d], the only assignable characteristics of genuine Irish melody [were] those of omission,”⁴ that “the omission of the tones of the fourth and seventh [were] the grand

characteristic which marks all Irish melody.”⁵ After dismissing their opinion with, “These conclusions [are] gratifying...to nations which have no genuine music of their own to boast of,”⁶ he explained:

Now, the fact is, that these omissions are not the true tokens of our national and ancient music. They occur in some airs, not in all; and yet all are equally characteristic, all equally Irish, and some, marked by the uniform presence of both these tones, are the most Irish and the most ancient of all.⁷

While he admitted to a class of airs that fit that definition, he resisted identification with omissions which he called “deficiencies,” and argued that another, more Irish, characteristic is the repeated appearance of the Subdominant, or Major Sixth scale tone. He claimed those melodies characterized by omissions were composed on ancient pipes that could not produce those tones and went on to present a “more elaborate class of airs”⁸ in which omissions do not occur:

the feature which in truth distinguishes all Irish melody, whether proper to the defective bagpipe, or suited to the perfect harp, is not the negative *omission*, but the positive and emphatic *presence* of a particular tone; and this tone is that of the Submediant, or Major Sixth.⁹

Bunting argued that the identifying presence of this tone is what “stamps the true Scotie character (for the Irish are the original Scoti) on every bar of the air in which it occurs.” He claimed this tone characterized the music so much so “that the moment this tone is heard, we exclaim, ‘that is Irish Music’.”¹⁰

Bunting maintained that Irish music uniquely affected both the physical and emotional state of the listener, and also believed those physical sensations attributed to the music would one day be scientifically accounted for. He suggested that new technology, such as the Kaleidophone,¹¹ might uncover a scientific explanation for the “peculiar and deeply delightful sensations” felt when this chord was “struck in a

sequence of musical sound.”¹² Bunting argued that the “searching tone of the emphatic Major sixth” in fact redeemed those airs “defective in the fourth and seventh” tones.¹³ It was this distinctive presence Bunting believed to cause the “sensations which thrill every ear, and may truly be said to touch the ‘leading sinews’ of the Irish heart.”¹⁴

He reiterated the effects of the Major Sixth as “that touching and tingling sensation” by those who “recognize the proper voice of the Land of Song.”¹⁵ Again Bunting instructed the reader as to aesthetics which appeal to those who are truly Irish. In a similar way to the 1796 volume, Bunting defined boundaries around musical tastes. Bunting forcefully confronted notions of Irish barbarism, and stressed that “the sweet and perfect harmony” would be evident to those with “cultivated ears and civilized assemblies”:

The Irish school of music is, therefore, not a school of omissions and affected deficiencies, drawing its examples from the tones of a barbarian bagpipe, but a school of sweet and perfect harmony, proper to a harp of many strings, and suited in its intricate and florid character to cultivated ears and civilized assemblies.¹⁶

Bunting stressed that the distinct nature of “Irish melody” with “its own peculiarity of structure and arrangement” was even more pronounced “in the very old class of airs.”¹⁷ After Bunting analyzed a typical chord progression in a manner consistent with his conservatory training, he measured the purity of the structure by its ability to be harmonized in contemporary style: “The most ancient, it may be observed, will be found more easily harmonized than those of a more modern date; a certain indication of the greater purity of their structure.”¹⁸

In a letter to Mary McCracken, Bunting expressed excitement at having found a corollary to modern Irish modulation in Cambrensis’s writings:

Since I wrote you I have found out another main article in Irish music, namely the extraordinary coincidence, between the modulation as described in 1172 by Cambrensis and that now found out by your humble servant, being the identical same, as appears in our tunes this day, giving an antiquity to them of nearly seven hundred years.¹⁹

Bunting used Cambrensis to validate the antiquity and high level of sophistication attained by the Irish harpers during the twelfth century. Concentrating on Cambrensis's terms "*diapente* and *diatesseron*" to buttress his own structural analysis, Bunting suggested the distinctive nature of a "genuine Irish tune" to already have been well established by the twelfth century. In light of this evidence, Bunting posed this weighty question:

Would it, then, be too much to surmise that that writer was, himself, acquainted with these peculiarities in the structure of Irish melody, which have so long eluded the search of modern musicians, and that this famous account of Irish music in the twelfth century which he has given us, is actually a scientific description of the modulation of a genuine Irish tune, as preserved to the present day?

The fact that the melodies could be scientifically analyzed at such an early date placed it on par with, if not preeminent, to European music.

In Bunting's 1796 volume, he claimed purity of the music by the homogeneity of the airs, having been collected from different areas in Ireland without the slightest variation. In this volume, he claimed the antiquity of airs such as "The Green Woods of Truigha" was "proved both by its structure, and by the fact of its being known by so many different names in different parts of the country."²⁰ In this case, variety rather than homogeneity is used to prove antiquity.

Bunting compared the "infinitely varied and artful... arrangements" of harp tunes with "the vigorous productions of the modern German school."²¹ Yet despite the strong

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resemblance between the two schools, Bunting reminded the reader that with the appearance of the Submediant, the airs “still sound equally Irish.”²²

Bunting concluded this chapter by claiming “for the Ancient Irish school of music the credit of a very elaborate, artful, and refined style of composition.”²³

In Chapter II, “Of the Method of Playing, and Musical Vocabulary of the Old Irish Harpers,” Bunting refuted romantic notions that weakened Ireland’s image and presented a scientific collection of musical vocabulary that was unique to the Irish tradition yet comparable to European musical science.

Bunting claimed “the world has been too apt to judge of our music as of a peculiarly plaintive character, partaking of our national feelings in a political point of view, and melancholy in proportion to the prospects of its composers.”²⁴ Walker promoted this melancholy sentiment in his *Memoirs* when he explained that the bards were so weary from oppression that they were typically unable to reach above a minor third.²⁵

Bunting offset the languorous impressions of Irish music by citing the “spirited, lively and energetic” music of the Belfast harpers to be “much more with the national disposition, than the languid and tedious manner...played among fashionable public performers.”²⁶ Bunting was likely including Thomas Moore in this sketch when he accused their “false conception of sentiment” to distort the melody “as to be all but lost.”²⁷

Rather than using the music to prove the effects of the invasion and domination, as Walker had done, Bunting used the music, as Benjamin Filene suggests, to

“demonstrate the vitality” of Ireland’s past that could also be transferred in the form of parlor music to the present.²⁸

Bunting rejected the romantic sentimentalism attached to the harpers’ music in favor of the skill and sophistication respected in the cosmopolitan musical community. He lauded the technical agility of the harpers who exhibited an “extra degree of art” that “astonished and delighted the musicians present.”²⁹ The degree of precision in “these elegancies of execution” was significant to Bunting for two reasons: First, he believed them to be from “high antiquity,” and secondly, he was able to extract from the harpers’ information “technical terms” in the Irish language from which he composed a “pretty full digest of ancient Irish musical science.”³⁰

For these catalogues of information, Bunting relied on the authority of five Belfast harpers who, coming from different parts of the country, and having studied with different instructors, nevertheless, “exhibited a perfect agreement in all their statements.”³¹ They all attributed “the old tradition of the art as their only authority” and were “quite at a loss to explain their method of playing by any other terms.”³²

In the same manner that Bunting established the purity of the melodies by claiming homogeneity, he claimed purity for the Irish musical language. It was this similarity of agreement between the harpers that validated the authenticity and longevity to Bunting, since the structure necessitated having taken roots before dispersion. He was persuaded that the “mode of execution, with their proper designations, were invented by the Irish people themselves”; they were developed “independently of any assistance from the modern school” and had “no prototype or parallel whatsoever in the continental

vocabulary,” except, he added, with the Welsh, “who are admitted to have derived much of their skill in music from Irish instructors.”³³

Bunting believed the musical language of the Irish to be ancient, while “the language of modern musicians” to be invented at a “comparably recent period by the continental nations,”³⁴ again attributing a much longer scientific musical structure for the Irish than for the more acclaimed continental structure.

Bunting cited the demise of the harp tradition as existing “since the reign of Queen Elizabeth.”³⁵ He claimed the Belfast meeting to be “the expiring flicker of the lamp that once shed its luster over Christendom.”³⁶ While he claimed only to have caught “some straggling rays” of the harpers’ flame, he considered them “brilliant enough to show how illustrious an instrument the Irish harp has been in former ages.”³⁷

The appendices of this chapter consist of: 1. “The Different Kinds of Irish Harps” (Figure 11.1),³⁸ 2. “The Strings of the Harp,” 3. “Scale of the Irish Harp of Thirty Strings, Tuned in the Natural Key, Termed “[Gaelic]” or *half note*,” 4. “Graces Performed by the Treble of Left Hand,” 5. “Double Notes, Chords, Etc. for the Left Hand,” and 6. “The Time,” “The Mood,” and “The Key.” (Figure 11.2).

In addition, Bunting included an extensive “General Vocabulary of Ancient Irish Musical Terms.” Similar to the index in the anthology, the terms are provided in three columns: Irish, Roman transliteration, and English translation.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF IRISH HARPS.

NAMES IN IRISH CHARACTERS.	NAMES IN ENGLISH CHARACTERS.	EXPLANATION.
CLAIRSEACH,	Clarsech,	The common harp.
CINNARO CRUIE,	Cinnard-Cruit,	The high-headed harp.
CROM-CRUIE,	Crom-Cruit,	The down-bending harp.
CEIRNIN,	Ceirnin,	{ Supposed to be the portable harp, used by the priests and religious people. ^a
CRAIFCIN-CHRUIE,	Craifin Cruit,	Crafin's harp, (a man noted in Irish legends.)
LUB,	Lub,	A poetical name of the harp.
THE PARTS OF THE HARP.		
COM,	Com,	Its waist or belly.
COR,	Cor,	The pin board.
CRU NA D-CEO,	Crunated,	{ Shoe of the strings, the piece of brass on the sound board, through which the strings pass.
AN FOIRSHNADH,	Aufhoirshnadhain,	The wooden pegs to which the strings are fastened.
LAMHCRAINN,	Lamchraun,	The front pillar.

Figure 11.1. List of "The Different Kinds of Irish Harps," found in Edward Bunting's 1840 volume of *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 20.

THE TIME.

NAMES IN IRISH CHARACTERS.	NAMES IN ENGLISH CHARACTERS.	TRANSLATION.	EXPLANATION.
TRÉBHUIÑNEACH, . .	Trebhuinneach, . .	Treble rapid. . .	{ Irish jig time, used in the old dancing airs, &c., which were performed with great vivacity and vigour. { Lamentations for particular families, with words. { Marching time, also the time of the ancient melodies in general. { Time of the music composed in compliment to the deceased patrons of the harpers, without words, but by no means slowly played. { "Phurt" frequently consisted of two parts, first, <i>Na phurt</i> , introductory, and <i>Malart Phonck</i> , changing the position of the hands, the right hand playing the treble and the left the bass.
CUIGRATH,	Cuigrath,	Dirge time.	
CRUAIDHCHLEASACH,	Crudhchlessach, . .	Bold, heroic. . . .	
CUMHATH,	Cumhadh,	Lamentation. . . .	
PORT,	Phurt,	Time of the lessons.	

THE MOODS.

ADHAN TRIREACH, .	Alhbhan-trirech, .	The three moods, .	Or species of music.
GEANTRAIDHE, . . .	Geantraidheacht, .	Love.	{ Music of a graceful and expressive order.
GOLLTRAIDHE,	Golltraidheacht, .	Exciting sorrow. .	
SUANTRAIDHE,	Suantraidheacht, .	Soothing.	Melancholy music.
LUINNEACH,	Luinneach,	Merry, jovial music.	Sleepy, composing strains.
			{ Supposed to apply to the Luinigs of the Highlands of Scotland.

THE KEYS.

LEITHGHLEAS,	Leath glass, . . .	Half note.	{ The leading, or next note to the "response," to the "sisters," forming the proper key of the harp, being G natural, one sharp.
FUIGHEALL MOR, . . .	Fuigheall-mor, . .	Great sound. . . .	
FUIGHEALL BEAG, . . .	Fuigheall-beg, . .	Lesser sound. . . .	{ Formed by raising C natural (a semitone higher) to C sharp. Seldom used. { Supposed to be high bass, or flat key.
AON-FUIGHEALL, . . .	Uan fuigheall, . .	Single sound. . . .	

Figure 11.2. Definition of Harp Terminology: "The Time," "The Moods," and "The Keys." Found in Edward Bunting's 1840 volume of *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 28.

These appendices capture the ancient Irish science of execution on the harp. Gaelic terms, distinct from continental ones, established the distinctive nature of Irish music; presenting them in Gaelic type carried the distinction and authenticity associated with cultural validation; and the translation mediated them to the cosmopolitan reader, primarily those in possession of a pianoforte and the means for instruction. The fact that the terms could be catalogued gave credence to their scientific nature, bringing association of comparable continental structure, distinctly Irish but equally scientific.

The depth of information allowed the reader to assume amateur-expert status in his knowledge of this ancient tradition, thus embedding a greater identification with the subject of Irish music.

Bunting again brought the oral tradition into codex form: beginning with the first volume, he placed the music from an oral harp tradition in printed score; and now with this volume, the method. While this transforms and crystallizes the tradition, it also preserved it for future study. Bunting preserved the last remnant of that great tradition from those harpers at the Belfast meeting.

The digests compiled from these harpers, served as “further evidence of the richness, as well as independence of the Irish language...a wonderful mass of musical acquirements in an apparently self-taught community.”³⁹

Chapter III consists of two parts: “Of the Antiquity of the Harp and Bagpipe in Ireland” by Samuel Ferguson and “Memoir of Ancient Irish Harp Preserved in Trinity College” by George Petrie. Both Ferguson and Petrie used archeological iconography to appeal to the reader’s sense of scientific analysis with which to judge the Irish musical tradition.

While Bunting presented analysis of the music, Ferguson, and more so Petrie, present analysis of the instrument, bringing it from a vague history shrouded with myth and legend to the present as a tangible instrument rooted in the newly emerging disciplines of scientific archaeology and iconography. This chapter was necessary to establish historical roots of the instruments, both harp and bagpipe.

While Ferguson dealt with the harp in general, providing an image from Cambrensis's illuminated manuscripts,⁴⁰ (Figure 11.3) Petrie focused on the Brian Boru, or Trinity harp. In his "Memoir," Petrie dispelled myths of origin and placed it not in the eleventh century with Boru, but properly in the fourteenth. Even so, the association of King Brian Boru with the Trinity harp will remain deeply embedded in its mythology. Despite the error in origin, it was still the "oldest harp now remaining in Europe."⁴¹



Figure 11.3. Image of harper from an illuminated manuscript of Cambrensis, from Bunting's 1840 work.

Petrie noted that "the celebrated Arthur O'Neill...played [the Brian Boru harp] through the streets of Limerick in the year 1760," just after the Macpherson's works made a sensation and the same year Goldsmith wrote his essay on *Carolan*.

Petrie assigned the role of the Trinity harp to have been in ecclesiastics. He used the testimony of Cambrensis for support, despite Cambrensis's claims against the Irish of utter faithlessness. Petrie stated that the type of harp was represented on ancient stone crosses of the "eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries."⁴²

Petrie reveres the Trinity harp as a "truly national monument of antiquity."⁴³ This is the harp that represents Ireland on its coinage and official documentation. Petrie

detailed the construction of the harp, the type of wood, number of strings and so on. By doing so, he validated the historicity and science of construction of the instrument.

It was the “work of an expert artist,” he claimed:

...of exquisite workmanship: the upright pillar is of oak, and the sound-board of red sawn; the extremity of the forearm of harmonic curved bar is capped in part with silver, extremely well wrought and chiseled. It also contains a large crystal set in silver, under which was another stone, now lost.⁴⁴

Bunting had detailed engravings of the harp from different angles. (Figure 11.4.)

Petrie’s description of this harp served to evoke images of an exquisite Golden Age that traversed time. This tangible relic provided archaeological evidence with which

Petrie, according to the ability Hutchinson ascribed him, was able to scientifically “de-mythologise” the harp while simultaneously creating a historical mythology around it.⁴⁵



Figure 11.4. Left side view of the Trinity Harp. Found in Edward Bunting’s *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840). Used with permission by Carl Johnson.

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The most startling discovery presented by Petrie, though, is an image from a sculpture dated before the ninth century in Kilkenny that resembles a C-shaped Theban harp. (Figure 11.5.). Petrie declared this iconography indicated, “the startling presumption that the Irish have had their harp originally out of Egypt.”⁴⁶



Figure 11. 5. Image of Egyptian C-Shaped harp from Petrie's *Memoirs*, in Bunting's *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840).

At this time in particular, nationalists hoped to trace Irish roots to ancient cultures like Egypt. Dr. McDonnell urged Bunting in several letters to consult linguistic authorities about relationships between the Irish

language and those of ancient cultures. In one such letter just prior to the publication of this volume, McDonnell wrote:

Make Finerty examine all the Greek and Latin words upon the monochord, and get someone to find out the Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and German, but above all the Sanscrit words to discover whether the Irish terms which you have got can be turned into any Oriental language.⁴⁷

Petrie was able to make an Egyptian connection with this stone image. Petrie claimed this image to be of great significance: “for it is the first specimen of the harp without a fore pillar that has hitherto been discovered out of Egypt.”⁴⁸

While Petrie presented further evidence about the history of the harp and the bagpipe, he ended with this segue into the next chapters:

The bagpipe still flourishes among us; but, as the harp is now irretrievably gone, it seems a duty to our national instrument to conclude the history of its decline and fall by adding an account of the various efforts made for its revival, as well as some notices of the last of that race of minstrels, composers, and musicians, whose performance on it has given Ireland one of the strongest claims she has yet asserted for a place of distinction at the board of nations.⁴⁹

In Chapter IV, “Of the Various Efforts to Revive the Irish Harp,” Bunting recalled the meetings and harp societies that were undertaken to promote the harp tradition. He described the Granard and Belfast Festivals, which are detailed in Chapter 7 of this work, “The Meeting of the Belfast Harpers and Edward Bunting.”

Bunting also mentioned the two harp societies established: the *Belfast Irish Harp Society* that was conducted from 1807-1813 and a Dublin Harp Association that began in 1819 under the patronage of Irishmen living in India that continued until 1839. Arthur O’Neill headed the Belfast school and Mr. Rainey, nephew to Scottish poet Robert Burns, conducted the school in Dublin. Rainey had been a pupil in the Belfast school under O’Neill.

Both schools closed for lack of interest. The instructors of the Dublin school prolonged the closure for a while, and deliberated about taking up a private subscription, but by that time the students were unable to obtain lucrative performance venues. John McAdam, in a letter dated 30 July 1839, described discouraging situation: “the young harpers can only earn their bread by playing in hotels, where they are too liable to contract fatal habits.”⁵⁰

Because McDonnell believed “the spirit of patriotism” was strongly embodied in “music and language,”⁵¹ he campaigned to revive the Harp School, appealing to Daniel O’Connell if necessary. In a letter to Bunting prior to this publication, McDonnell

reminisced about the United Irishmen who helped with the Belfast meeting as he reiterated his continued desire for a Harp School:

I therefore argue that the Harp School should be revived, and if no other party of more moderate people take it up, I will urge M'Adam, Bell, Tenent & Co., to appeal to O'Connell to adopt it; but I would gladly see it resumed by such people if we had them as Joy, Bradshaw,⁵² and Williamson, Fulton and M'Cracken, with Bunting at their head.—Your affectionate friend, J. MacDonnell.⁵³

Having seen the end of the bardic tradition occur during his lifetime, Bunting suggested another title for Chapter IV could have been “The Decline and Fall of the Irish Harp.”⁵⁴

Chapter V, “Anecdotes of the More Distinguished Harpers of the Last Two Centuries,” comprises Bunting’s nostalgic memories of the harpers whom he knew.⁵⁵

While the first two anthologies emphasized the bardic lineage of antiquity to the earliest times, this one demythologizes that image by introducing harpers that have a recorded history.

Bunting gives brief biographies of 23 harpers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; most of the information was provided by Arthur O'Neill in his memoirs and some by Denis Hempson.⁵⁶ Most of the biographies are no more than a paragraph, with the exception of lengthier ones about Carolan, O'Neill and Hempson. In fact, Leith Davis points out that in Bunting’s attempt to masculinize the tradition, he combined the biographical information about the two female harpers to five lines.⁵⁷

Davis also claims that while Thomas Moore promoted the cult of poet, Bunting promoted the cult of the bard.⁵⁸ While this was true in his earlier volumes, in this one, the emphasis is not as strong. In 1796, the bard was an accessible symbol following the Belfast meeting. By 1840, there were no more bards and too much time had passed to

remember them with more than nostalgia. Even Bunting's record is clothed in nostalgia rather than current relevance. It was a reminder of the final attempts at preservation. Though the glory of the bardic tradition had indeed faded—the music had not; For Bunting, it still lived and breathed Irish culture.

Bunting presented the bardic lineage in the figures of those who could be named and located in a specific time, rather than myths from a nebulous antiquity. That is the same type of scientific evidence presented by Ferguson and Petrie, whose evidence was dated and located.

There is little, if any of the mythic Golden Age in this volume. There are no quotes from Macpherson, or legends of chivalry. There is the nostalgic recollection on the part of Edward Bunting, and anecdotes of a few harpers that bring the bard into the realm of human experience and contemporary history.

In the first two volumes, Bunting placed the Irish bard in the remote Golden Age of ancient lineage; in this volume, he removed them from a romantic context to present them as a “harmless race of men,”⁵⁹ men whom he knew, touched and apprenticed under. Bunting loved Denis Hempson. Hempson was a strong mentor, and one whom Bunting connected to the ancient bardic lineage. To Bunting, Hempson “realized the antique picture drawn by Cambrensis and Galilei”⁶⁰

As a young man at the Belfast meeting, Hempson was as intriguing to Bunting as he was archaic to a potential patronage—and his fellow harpers. But it was not Hempson who embodied the bardic image in the first volume. The harper who Fox claimed “fill[ed] a large place in public estimation,”⁶¹ was Turlough O'Carolan. Hempson had been acquainted with Carolan. He was in his forties when Carolan died. Perhaps that

was one of the reasons he was not as taken with Carolan's music as those of the next generation who learned it after his death. Hempson was one of only two Belfast harpers who lived during Carolan's time, and was two or three generations removed from most of the harpers there.

In this volume, Bunting chose to embody the ancient tradition in the figure of Denis Hempson. It was not until after Hempson's death in 1807, that he became eligible for elevation to an iconic figure. To Bunting, Hempson represented the ancient melodies and authentic practitioner. Consequently, Hempson served as the primary mediator between antiquity and contemporary scholarship.

From 1760 the image of Carolan had grown and developed a standing position as the embodiment of the Irish bard. With this 1840 volume, Carolan was replaced in that position by Denis Hempson and to a lesser degree by Arthur O'Neill.

In the 1796 volume Bunting spoke favorably of Carolan's "imitation of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer is happily copied."⁶² In the 1840 volume he described composition of Irish music as having been "infected" by "the taste for Italian music, introduced by Geminiani and Corelli...especially those of Carolan." He stated further, "The public has been much too apt to regulate its estimate of Irish music by the standard of Carolan's performances."⁶³

Though Bunting placed cameos on the title page of this work, the two harpers Bunting chose to represent the tradition were Hempson and O'Neill. Noting the nostalgic sentiment of much of the volume, it is understandable that Bunting chose the two harpers who he knew well, who had mentored him through this meaningful portion of his life.

These men represented to him personally, the bardic tradition he watched finally disappear.

Bunting lamented the demise of the harpers. As he recalled, it wasn't until the end of the eighteenth century, "since the commencement of the political disputes: that many of the Irish "nobility and gentry [had] been conforming again to the English model...which has, alas! Brought about the utter ruin of the Irish harp."⁶⁴ He noted with poignancy that though:

the abandonment of Irish manners had already begun; yet even the passing glimpses of society in Ireland, as it was from sixty to a hundred years since, which these anecdotes afford, give what it is hoped will be found an amusing, if not instructive, insight into the habits and tastes of certainly the most warm-hearted, and the most grotesquely, and at the same time pathetically, humorous people on the face of the earth.⁶⁵

Of those he knew at his fateful meeting with the Belfast harpers, he gave this elegy:

All the best of the old harpers—a race of men then nearly extinct, and now gone for ever—Denis Hempson, Arthur O'Neill, Charles Fanning, and seven others, the least able of whom has not left his like behind, were present.⁶⁶

In Chapter VI, "Notices of the More Remarkable Pieces and Melodies of the Collection," Bunting provided extensive information on the airs including background information, musical example, and justification for their dates and inclusions. For the Ossianic air, "The Lamentation of Deirdre for the Sons of Usnach," the oldest of the collection, Bunting retold the legend over five pages.⁶⁷

Bunting included pipe tunes as well as harp tunes in this section, yet arranged all of them for pianoforte. Bunting realizing he addressed an audience familiar with Western Art music tradition. In the preface, he stated that his goal was to provide these airs in

“true harp style, for piano forte.”⁶⁸ The reality, though, is that the anthology contains harp melodies in true *keyboard* style for the piano forte, and the melodies are not easily transferred to the harp.

Yet Bunting and Delaney’s arrangements are the primary examples of harp music left to us. Scholars today, critical of Bunting’s authenticity are also filtering through their own notions of authenticity. The practical aspect though, is that the arrangements are idiomatic to the piano, not to the harp. While there are gestures toward idiomatic elements, the arrangements nevertheless reflect the style of the day.

Because of the importance of these airs, though, the late Derek Bell, harper for the Chieftains gave Bunting this acquittal:

I am most grateful to Bunting for collecting, preserving and saving theses wonderful tunes from total extinction; and for at least occasionally trying to write down exactly what the harpers actually played, however fragmentary it all was; and since a little intelligence, knowledge and discretion can enable any sensible musician to get rid of Bunting’s musical errors of judgment, I readily forgive him most of these.⁶⁹

This dissertation contained an enormous amount of detail concerning the harp tradition. Bunting’s primary objective was too preserve whatever was known at the time about the music and techniques of the harpers. Had Bunting been seeking public reception, as he had been with the previous volume, he would not have included the amount of technical detail he did here. This was a work of preservation and the most extensive and detailed information on the execution of the Irish harp available today. This volume has been reprinted a number of times for this information. If it were for the music alone, the other two would likewise have been reprinted with it; there were only 39 repeats from the other volumes in these 151 melodies.

BUNTING'S DEDICATION TO QUEEN

Buxton, September 1839

My dear Doctor [McDonnell],—I have not replied to your letter earlier, having been in hopes of sending Mr. Bunting the Queen's sanction to dedicate his Work to Her Majesty, every post.

I finished a letter, to Her Majesty making the request, as soon as I received yours, but I presume that in the hurry of the Court moving from London to Windsor it has been overlooked.

I will write again on the subject in a day or two—in the meantime I answered your letter, in order that you may not complain of my not answering your letter.—Believe me, yours obediently, BELFAST⁷⁰

Buxton, 8 September 1839

My dear Sir [Dr. McDonnell],—perhaps you will be kind enough to give the enclosed to Mr. Bunting, as I am not acquainted with his address.

Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant his request to allow him to dedicate his Work to her.—Yours truly, BELFAST⁷¹

Buxton, 8 September 1839

Sir [Bunting],—I have received the Queen's commands to inform you, that she has been graciously pleased to approve of your dedicating the forthcoming Volume of your Irish Melodies, to Her Majesty.—I have the Honour to remain, yours obediently, BELFAST⁷²

London, 17 July 1840

Dear Sir [Bunting],—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a parcel containing three copies of your work. I yesterday had the honour of presenting those intended for her Majesty and Prince Albert, which they were graciously pleased to receive.—I also request you to accept my best thanks for the copy you were kind enough to present to me.—Allow me to remain, yours obediently, BELFAST⁷³



Figure 11.6. Dedication/Title page from Edward Bunting's *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840). Used with permission from Carl Johnson.

Unique to this volume is the dedication. Bunting dedicated this volume of “Ancient Music of Ireland” to Queen Victoria. It was not unusual for English and Irish writers to dedicate their works to the English monarchs, but it is important to understand that Bunting took great pains to receive permission from the monarch in order to place a dedication to her in the work.

In light of his determination to receive this permission, it is interesting that in the subsequent editions of this volume published by Walton’s in 1969 and 2005, and Dover in 2000, the dedication pages were omitted.

The question has been raised, in light of the centuries-long discourse between the two countries on Irish identity, why Bunting dedicated an anthology of Irish music to the Queen of England. The Act of Union was in place; English Parliament had granted Catholic Emancipation which, for the Anglo-Irish like Bunting, diffused some of their power.

Davis suggested that Bunting was appealing to a more imperial audience. Others have suggested patronage and monetary benefits. Had this been an appeal to the greater Empire, there would have been a striking ambivalence when taking the volume as a whole; for there is no other indication in the volume that Bunting compromised his national stance.

While issues of patronage and distribution were of concern to Bunting and McDonnell, I will demonstrate that the dedication to the Queen is consistent and arguably beneficial to Bunting’s promotion of Irish cultural nationalism. I will prove that this was a successful attempt in the discourse of Irish identity to secure the approval and acceptance of a distinct Irish musical heritage from the throne of England. Political

iconography and verbiage on the dedication pages prove Bunting's persistent promotion of the Irish nation through its national music.

I argue that by receiving permission to dedicate the volume to Queen Victoria, Bunting not only brought the Irish side of the discourse into a favorable light from the parlors of English, but now from the Palace; and by allowing the dedication, Queen Victoria was in a real way recognizing the separatism of the Irish nation within its distinct musical heritage.

There were two dedication pages affixed to this work. The first was highly ornate with iconography significant to Irish cultural nationalism. (Figure 11.6). The curious ambivalence at first sight of the title is resolved when one understands the surrounding symbolism. This page states only, "The Ancient Music of Ireland: Dedicated by Permission to Her Majesty the Queen by Edward Bunting." The second, less ornate title/dedication page set forth more precisely Bunting's position:

To
The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty,
This collection
Of the
Ancient Music of Ireland,
That Part of Her Majesty's Dominions which, from the Earliest Ages,
Has Been Pre-eminent
In the Originality and Purity of its Native Melodies,
Is,
Dedicated,
By her Majesty's
Most Dutiful and Grateful Subject and Servant
Edward Bunting

In his dedication to the Queen, Bunting did not give excessive laud to the Queen. On the contrary, he reiterated the pre-eminent originality and purity of Ireland's native

melodies. He reaffirmed that Irish music had “from the Earliest Ages...been pre-eminent” in her “dominions.” Bunting claimed Ireland to be the first among the colonies of the Empire, including England herself. Remember that within this volume, Bunting referred back to a statement made in his earlier volumes—that England had no national music of its own.⁷⁴ Here again, Bunting professed the pre-eminence of Irish music to be the dominant claim of Ireland; and that claim rested on the “Originality and Purity of its Native Melodies.”⁷⁵

Though not stated as firmly verbally, the first dedication page speaks strongly of Irish nationalism through its symbolism. The first glimpse of the dedication page with harps and harpers alongside the lion and unicorn, symbol of the united Britain, gives what Leith Davis suggests as an “ambiguous message...suggesting a pure lineage for Irish harp music but paradoxically placing it within the context of British imperial ideology.”⁷⁶ Davis describes Bunting as “weav[ing] images of Irish music into the symbols of British imperialism,” yet the only imperial symbol is the symbol of united Britain at the top of the page and then the text “Her Majesty the Queen.” While the text “Queen” is legible, “Her Majesty” stands in letters so ornate they are obscured in the fancy.

The actual focal point on the page appears to be “Ireland,” printed in a green type that stands out above all else on the page. There are flourishes of red woven around it accentuating it even more. “Ireland” is framed on either side by cameos of the harpers Hempson and O’Neill.

The symbolism is interesting to ponder; there appears to be no record in Bunting’s manuscripts for a definitive answer to the questions the symbols raise, but several of the images are self-explanatory. The text “Her Majesty the Queen” stands central and

underneath the symbol for united Britain and the English crown. The British crown stands center and uppermost on the page directly above the lion and unicorn, the text box and the Trinity harp below.

On either side of the textbox are the cameos of Hempson and O'Neill with Irish harps tied to them from above and below.⁷⁷ Directly beneath them are primitive harps. While Davis claims this is Bunting's attempt to connect the Irish harp to the classical lyre,⁷⁸ these harps are not lyre shaped. These are the C-shaped Egyptian harps to which Petrie linked the Irish tradition. (comparison in Figure 11.7)

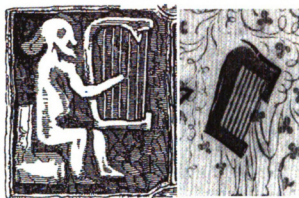


Figure 11.7. Comparison of Petrie's C-shaped Egyptian harp with those on the dedication page of Bunting's 1840 volume of *Ancient Music of Ireland*.

Above those four images on each side stands an Irish crown. Remember from United Irish history, that Irish crowns replaced the English crown in national symbolism. The original symbol of English rule over Ireland used on coinage was the female winged harp underneath an English crown. (Figure 6.2) Nationalists later replaced the mythical female harp with the Trinity harp and positioned it beneath the Irish crown (Figure 6.3), symbolizing its independent ruling power.

This iconography by Bunting was not arbitrary. The Trinity harp, representing Ireland is positioned directly beneath the English crown above, recognizing England's colonial power. Yet standing between the harp and the English crown is a cap—the cap of Liberty that was used in symbolism of the French Revolution and in the emblem of the

United Irishmen. (Figure 6.1) The light of Enlightenment, used in French Revolutionary and United Irish symbolism, radiates from The Trinity harp. The triangular shaped Trinity harp and radiant light is likely an allusion to the symbol of the French Revolution that comprised a three-sided triangle with the words, “Egalite,” “Raison,” and “Liberte” on each side, with the light emanating from the all-seeing eye of God who ordained human rights. (Figure 11.8) The symbol had been used in Roman Catholicism for the Godhead Trinity.⁷⁹

The new symbol represented God given rights. The Light of Enlightenment is often symbolically

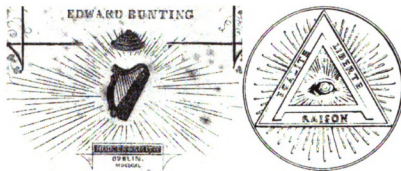


Figure 11.8. Comparison between Trinity Harp symbol on the dedication page of Bunting's 1840 volume and a French Revolution symbol of Enlightenment.

combined with Lady Liberty. Iconography depicts her with either a crown of seven rays, as on the American statue, “Liberty Enlightening the World”, better known as the “Statue of Liberty”, or surrounded by radiant light, as the harp and triangle.⁸⁰ Though it had been nearly forty years since the dissolution of the United Irishmen, Bunting mimics their revolutionary symbolism in the images that surround the “Queen”: a flourish of shamrocks envelopes all but the Trinity harp and its radiant light.

By granting Bunting permission to dedicate this volume to her, the Queen had to in some way embrace the volume's claim of an independent Irish culture that was separate, unique, and other than England. Rather than having adopted an imperial view,

Bunting obtained recognition from Queen Victoria for the national music of the nation of Ireland.

Though Walton's and Dover's reprints were mentioned earlier, there were actually six subsequent printings of Bunting's 1840 volume. The first was that printed by Walton's in Dublin in 1969. This collection contained all three of Bunting's volumes in one binding. The printing occurred after Ireland's independence and the formation of the Republic of Ireland. Interest for this reprint was likely motivated by O'Sullivan's publication of Carolan's life in 1959⁸¹ and the ensuing folk revival that focused on indigenous music. This and their 2005 reprint are the only collections that contain all three volumes. It is interesting that the highly decorative title page of the original 1840 volume was omitted and replaced with one of stylized print that excluded any mention of having been dedicated to the Queen of England. This exclusion may have been a twentieth-century symbolic break from colonial ties. Ireland, as an independent state, no longer needed the sanction of a country who no longer ruled them.

The next edition was an independent publication by Carl Johnson, a harpist in the Chicago area. The interest in Irish music around Chicago led to an interest in Bunting's volume because of the vast amount of information on the harpers' techniques, biographies of harpers, and account of the Belfast and Granard Festivals. After acquiring an original 1840 volume and while working as a printer, Johnson published three reprints of this volume, each twenty-five in number: in August 1995, July 1996, and May 1998. Each edition comprised the whole work, including the title-dedication page; the 1998 edition included it in full color. While these are now out of print, Dover Publications republished the 1840 volume in 2000; it also excludes the dedication pages to the Queen.

A LETTER TO MARY

Bunting expressed the final preparations for this volume in a letter addressed to

Mary:

To Mary McCracken 15 Dec 1839

Dear Mary,--I sent you a newspaper to put you in mind of your old friend, my work is now over, thank God, nearly put out of my hand and my poor wife's also, who has had a weary time of it; indeed, I may safely say for the last twelve months, the pen has never been out of her hand, copying, copying, back and forward, until both her heart and fingers were broken. As for me between the various annoyances, and other distressing things I have met, surely no one would believe how I have surmounted them, in my weakness of both mind and body without a single one to help me with their advice, except my own wise woman, and as but for her I could have done nothing, she has indeed been a good fortune to me—having to struggle with every wayward appearance of ill-health, and what was, I believe, worse on her than all, the extreme irritability of my temper, not improved by the many crosses and jostlings I met with in the publication of this herculean task, and a most dreadful task it has been to me all the time; but now it begins to lighten. The entire of the letterpress is finish by Ferguson, and right well he has done it. There is a life and spirit about it now which makes it interesting, as it is itself most entertaining to read. O'Neill's book written by Tom Hughes, has furnished the most delightful stories, which Ferguson has with singular dexterity turned and manufactured into beautiful narrative, altogether novel and simple and racy in a high degree.⁸²

CONCLUSION

We close with regret Mr. Bunting's volume because we believe that with it we take leave of the genuine Music of Ireland. It must not be regarded as a Musical publication alone, but as a National Work of the deepest antiquarian and historical interest.

—Robert Chambers

In the preceding words, we see Robert Chambers praise of Bunting's "National Work."⁸³ Again, this was a nationalistic work in artistic context.

In the 1796 volume, Bunting introduced the Irish to their musical heritage, ostensibly adding their voices to the discourse with the English, asserting Ireland as the "parent country" of musical expertise.⁸⁴

In the 1809 volume, after establishing the illustrious history of Ireland's musical culture, he handed the reader a passport to enter the Irish Golden Age. He invited them to assume the role of Irish bard (albeit on keyboard rather than harp), singing Irish glory in the parlors of the elite.

In this third volume, Bunting provided new songs with which to perform Irishness, but placed them in a scientific context, with analyses of the harpers' music, technique, and instrument. He connected the airs to the understanding of nineteenth-century musical aesthetics. He placed them in a legitimate musical context; yet he still presented attributes that were recognized throughout "all genuine Irish music", distinguishing native Irish melodies "from those of all other countries."⁸⁵

Bunting had returned in this volume to his antiquarian impulse: championing Irish music as refined, authentic and rooted securely in antiquity. He never strayed from his conviction of Ireland's preeminence in their music tradition. While he believed nationalists to embrace this work as a native repertoire, unique to this volume was the

success of Bunting to secure the recognitions of an Irish native repertory by the Queen of England.

We close the study of Bunting's volumes with a eulogy by George Petrie:

"Of the success of this work as a pecuniary speculation we are not in a position to speak. We believe, however, that its sale, though not equal to its deserts has not been inconsiderable(80)...but it was not for such reward that Bunting toiled, and its publication was, for the very few years which he survived it, not only a matter of the greatest happiness and consolation to him, but it excited him to devote the leisure of those years to the re-arrangement of the old airs and to terminate his labours by leaving behind him a complete uniform and he trusts very nearly perfect collection of Irish music. And thus with the ruling passion strong in death, he departed this life, as we trust for a better on the 21st December, 1843, aged 70 and was interred in the Cemetery of Mount Jerome."⁸⁶

¹ Bunting, 1840, 98.

² Fox, *Annals*, 303.

³ Though Bunting did not name him specifically, there is strong implication that he meant Charles Burney (1726-1814), an English music historian who was accused of ignoring Irish music in his *A General History of Music* (1789). (Hardiman, *Minstrelsy*, 1:ii,)

⁴ Bunting, 1840, 14.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. This is a reference to England. The concept of England being a combination of nations, rather than being a nation was established in the 1809 volume, 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. Bunting described the Kaleidophone as an "ingenious instrument [in which] upright wires, fixed at the lower extremity, being made to vibrate, a silvered head on the top of each catches the light, and exhibits the path of the vibrations. These paths are beautifully symmetrical, forming figures of great intricacy and variety." (Ibid.) The instrument was invented by Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875) who published a paper about it in 1827.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁴ Ibid. The sensations Bunting describes are similar to those expressed by Walker (in *Historic Memoirs*, 90): "[Irish music is] distinguished from the music of every other nation, by an insinuating sweetness, which forces its way, irresistibly, to the heart, and there diffuses an exstastic delight, that thrills through every fibre of the frame, awakens sensibility, and agitates or tranquillizes the soul. Whatever passion it may be intended to excite, it never fails to effect its purpose. It is the voice of Nature, and will be heard."

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 16.

¹⁸ Bunting, 1840, 16.

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- ¹⁹ Fox, *Annals*, 303.
- ²⁰ Bunting, 1840, 16.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* Walker credited bardic having “every tumultuous passion soothed to peace by the plaintiveness of the music—to impress on the minds of the auditors, a reverence and imitation of virtue.” (1818, 25)
- ²⁵ Walker, *Historical Memoirs*, 181-2: “Thus we see that music maintained its ground in this country even after the invasion of the English. But its style suffered a change... Such was the nice sensibility of the Bards, such was their tender affection for their country, that the subjection to which the kingdom was reduced, affected them with the heaviest sadness. Sinking beneath this weight of sympathetic sorrow, they became a prey to melancholy. Hence the plaintiveness of their music... that when they attempted to sing, it is not to be wondered, that their voiced, thus weakened by struggling against a heavy mental depression, should rise rather by minor thirds, which consist but of four semitones, than by major thirds which consist of five.
- ²⁶ Bunting, 1840, 18-9.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ²⁸ Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 138. Benjamin Filene describes the New Deal Folklorists in the United States. He claims that while the pioneer collectors studied folk song to “demonstrate the vitality of America’s *past*... Functionalism, in contrast, encouraged the New Deal folklorists to see vitality in folk forms.” They believed that if the people were singing “ancient British ballads, they did so because the songs helped them cope with problems they faced in their lives; and there was no reason to expect a song to cease performing this function anytime soon.” The survival of the tunes was seen “as a sign of that form’s extraordinary vitality and cultural utility. Where early collectors saw brittle relics, the New Dealers saw healthy regeneration.”
- ²⁹ Bunting, 1840, 19.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.* 20. The five harpers were Hempson, O’Neill, Higgins, Fanning and Black.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Bunting was reminding the reader of an edict by Queen Elizabeth instructing Lord Barrymore to execute the harpers he could find. Many harpers at that time left Ireland for the continent to begin teaching there.
- ³⁶ The reference to Christendom was likely a refutation of Cambrensis’s numerous accusations of Irish ignorance of the “rudiments of faith.”
- ³⁷ Bunting, 1840, 20.
- ³⁸ The bard Craftin, designated by “Craftin’s harp” in the list of harps, is the same bard C. Brooke used in her poem *Mäon*.
- ³⁹ Bunting, 1840, 29.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 40.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 42.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ⁴⁵ Hutchinson, “Archaeology and the Irish Rediscovery of the Celtic Past”, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7 no. 4 (2001): 509. This supports Largey’s explanation that myths “are available for use in a myriad of ways, some of which may be in direct contradiction with each other,” (*Vodou Nation*, 71).
- ⁴⁶ Bunting, 1840, 48.
- ⁴⁷ Fox, *Annals*, 280.

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- ⁴⁸ Bunting, 1840, 48.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 59.
- ⁵⁰ Bunting, 1840, 67.
- ⁵¹ Fox, *Annals*, 291.
- ⁵² United Irishman Robert Bradshaw served on the Belfast Festival committee and as editor of the *Northern Star* until his arrest in 1797.
- ⁵³ Fox, *Annals*, 291.
- ⁵⁴ Bunting, 1840, 60.
- ⁵⁵ For a list of the Belfast harpers and some of the music they played, see Chapter 7, "Meeting of the Belfast Harpers," in this work.
- ⁵⁶ Bunting, 1840, 68.
- ⁵⁷ Davis, *Music*, 114.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 113.
- ⁵⁹ Bunting, 1840, 61.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.
- ⁶¹ Fox, *Annals*, 260.
- ⁶² Bunting 1796, 4.
- ⁶³ Bunting, 1840, 9.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 67.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 67-8.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 83-8.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.
- ⁶⁹ Magee, *Heritage*, 24.
- ⁷⁰ Fox, *Annals*, 285. Lord Belfast was the grandfather of the Earl of Shaftesbury, who served as the president of the Irish Folk-Song Society in 1911.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 286-7.
- ⁷² Ibid., 287.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 289.
- ⁷⁴ Bunting, 1809, Dissertation, 1, fnt., "...the English, on the contrary, are a foreign mixture of lately established colonies, and in consequence of this, have no native music."; 1840, 14.
- ⁷⁵ Bunting, 1840, second title/dedication page.
- ⁷⁶ Davis, *Music*, 116.
- ⁷⁷ Note that these were two of the three cameos used in the harpers' biographical chapter. The third was Carolan, who is evidently no longer the embodiment of the bardic tradition.
- ⁷⁸ Davis, *Music*, 116.
- ⁷⁹ Ian Germani and Robin Swales, *Symbols, Myths and Images of the French Revolution: Essays in Honour of James A. Leith*, (Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada: University of Regina, 1998), 5.
- ⁸⁰⁸⁰ As in the symbol for Columbia Pictures.
- ⁸¹ O'Sullivan, *Life Times. Turlough O'Carolan: Life Times of an Irish Bard* (1959).
- ⁸² Fox, *Annals*, 302-3.
- ⁸³ Fox, *Annals*, 79, quoted from Robert Chambers, Scottish folk-song collector.
- ⁸⁴ Bunting, 1796, 1.
- ⁸⁵ Bunting, 1840, 7.
- ⁸⁶ Petrie, 1847, quoted in Fox, *Annals*, 79-80.

CONCLUSION

What matters is myth, not in the sense of fiction, but in the sense of a construction of the past elaborated by a political community for its own ends.

—Robert Gildea

Throughout this study, we witnessed the strategic construction of a national identity for the Irish. We examined the development of that identity as it emerged within Anglo-Irish literature of the 1780s. We saw how that identity was used in revolutionary literature in the 1790s and then in subsequent anthologies of Irish airs that were spawned from that period to create cultural boundaries that defined the nation.

In response to English neglect of their privileged position in Ireland, Anglo-Irish elites transferred their identification with England to create ties with Ireland. They realized though, that before they could establish legislative independence from England, there needed to be cultural independence from them, based on a unified Ireland. Yet to

bring about that unity within a viable culture, the Anglo-Irish needed to overcome two major obstacles: first, the ethno-religious divisions that existed between the Anglo-Irish and Catholic majority, and secondly, the deep seated negative stereotypes associated with the Irish. Therefore, antiquarian writers re-invented a cultural history in which all Irish shared roots—one that inspired pride within its members and engendered respect from the European community

We saw the way antiquarian writers brought forward elements from a pre-invasion Golden Age that rooted all groups of Ireland in an elegant antiquity, one that rivaled civilized cultures of Europe. While they brought forward many elements, Ireland's cultural boundaries were largely defined by bardic tradition: its music; its poetry—often described as subversive; the harp—which represented the nation; and a powerful masculinity portrayed in depictions of the bard. The bard, his music, and his harp carried multiple meanings that resonated in some way to each special interest group in Ireland. The bard's harp ultimately became the preeminent symbol to represent the nation of Ireland.

Though the harp might seem an unusual figure with which to define national sovereignty, the many different meanings suggested by the bardic figure provided an empowering and cultivated image with which to represent the Irish nation. Poetry and music are universal symbols of cultivation and civility.

Two significant images attached to the harp are those of King Brian Boru and King David, both regal warriors: Boru providing a Gaelic connection and David a religious figure familiar to both Protestants and Catholics. These images contain a strength and power that support the vitality of the nation and enliven national sentiment.

While these images provided a strength necessary in the portrayal of national identity, they were nevertheless shrouded with mystique and far removed from contemporary life. This mythology was accentuated during the mid eighteenth century as romantic literature began to include images of the bard that were dramatic and carried supernatural overtones.

Oliver Goldsmith confronted the bardic mythology surfacing in romantic literature by presenting the Irish harper Turlough O'Carolan as a subject for a popular essay. Goldsmith, though not intentionally a nationalist, had reason to present Ireland in ways that complimented it. Living in London as an Irishman, brought certain prejudices against him. Goldsmith demythologized the romanticized bard by presenting the near contemporary figure of Carolan as a gentleman musician, distinctively Irish yet able to compete culturally with figures like Geminiani and Swift. Irish veneration of one so established, not only demonstrated good taste, but positioned Carolan as a bardic icon.

Two decades later, as political tensions in Ireland increased, the discourse between England and Ireland accelerated. By the time Walker published his *Historical Memoirs*, the Volunteers had gotten favorable results with militant force. England's attempt to diffuse their power with restrictions only fueled the growing flame of liberty spreading throughout Europe. Victorious revolutions in America and France animated patriotic zeal all the more. The vision of a separate but equal nation to England intensified the discourse on Irish identity.

Cultural nationalism dominated antiquarian literature. We examined the development of cultural nationalism in Ireland as it centered around the writings of Giraldus Cambrensis. Placing Cambrensis's travelogue depiction in the center of the

negotiations structured the debate. It gave antiquarians both the accusation from which to vindicate themselves and the tribute to the superiority of an art that is universally esteemed—music, and in this case, specifically harp music.

Because Cambrensis's criticisms of barbarism and incivility were used as justification for English invasion, nationalists overturned those stereotypes in their literature by casting Ireland as culturally equal if not superior to England. The level of cultivation in their art, as recorded by Cambrensis, proved that Ireland's superiority in music had been established even prior to Cambrensis's writings. From relics of bardic poetry and music, nationalists proved an early cultivation of the arts that precluded barbaric elements in culture.

The intense praise of Cambrensis for the Irish harpers prompted nationalists to use the music of Irish harpers as a prominent boundary with which to define Irish culture. We saw the way antiquarians first began to use music and bardic images to define Irish culture when Walker distinguished the Irish bard from those of the greater British empirical culture.

Working with Charles O'Connor, Walker rooted the bard in antiquity, cast him as educated and refined, and capturing the mind and soul of a people. He took the figure of Carolan and elaborated on Goldsmith's history, placing Carolan as a representative of the venerated bardic order created in the body of *Historical Memoirs*.

Walker supported the dignity, masculinity and Irishness of the bardic tradition in his rendition of Carolan. Walker also included Irish melodies in the work to establish a connection between bardic performer and the reader, who would be familiar with at least a few of the tunes.

Walker's protégé, Charlotte Brooke built on Walker's image of the Irish bard with her *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. With her anthology of Gaelic verse translation, Brooke mediated between ancient Gaelic culture and an English speaking audience. While translations *included* the English, who were now privy to bardic poetry, the language barrier also *excluded* them by limiting the poetry to carefully chosen and artfully translated texts. Brooke included those texts that represented Irish history in terms respected by European polite society, while occluding those, or sanitizing those in translation that did not. She emphasized poetry that reflected refinement and civility. A part of that civility was the joint participation of men and women in national concerns.

She included poetry by Carolan that were expressions of appreciation for women, their wit and wisdom as well as their beauty.

We watched as Brooke tacitly reclaimed Ossianic poetry for Ireland with acts of fidelity not attempted by Macpherson. While Macpherson neglected to present original texts for the poetry he claimed to translate, Brooke accompanied her poetry with original Gaelic texts. She not only provided the texts, but presented them in a Gaelic typeset that visually captured the Gaelic language for the reader. Though the English reader could not read the Gaelic text, he nevertheless recognized the cultural boundary established by the distinctiveness both aurally and visually of the Irish language.

Brooke's presentation of bardic poetry became powerful symbols of ancient Irish culture. Brooke joined those writers in the discourse of Irish identity who shaped their evidence around the claims, positive and negative of Giraldus Cambrensis. The lasting influence of Cambrensis's words remained because they were in print. Brooke supplied translations used in the next decade by radical patriots in their literary campaign. Those

patriots, led by Anglo-Irish elites, used the bardic image to rally the masses toward rebellion. The intensity of the discourse accelerated with the rise of print media and widespread literacy.

Radical nationalists, building on antiquarian works, produced a wide range of literary genre promoting the nation of Ireland. They defined the nation by reinforcing both the unity of pre-invasion Golden Age and the post-invasion animosity toward England. By casting themselves as inheritors of an Irish Golden Age, they hoped to create a collective identity that would oppose English rule and establish Ireland as an independent nation.

We saw the prolific literary campaign launched by the United Irishmen. The most prominent symbol in their literature was that of the harp, which they chose as their motto. The bardic voice sounded throughout their writings, and a fitting symbol it was. The bard combined qualities of the sage, warrior, king, musician, and poet. The image of Brian Boru, attached to the harp, reminded the Irish of national courage exhibited by death in battle, as well as the regal elegance of the harper king. Boru's image will inevitably be attached to the Trinity harp, the official symbol of Ireland.

We saw, in addition to the literature, that cultural nationalists organized a meeting of harpers in Belfast to collect the music they played. They rallied support by appealing to the decline of the tradition in danger of sinking into oblivion; they appealed to those concerned with preserving art and culture. We examined the meeting of Irishness performed, as harpers provided a national repertoire of Irish airs. Because Carolan's compositions in imitation of Italian music were well received by patrons, all of the harpers at the festival knew Carolan tunes; most performed his music as competition

pieces. We also noted that these harpers, brought to represent the glorious tradition, also represented the rapid decline of that same tradition. Their fall from elite status as a result of cultural hegemony, served as a poignant warning to Irishmen, as their condition mirrored that of Irish culture giving way to English interests. Cultural nationalists understood the sober fact, that without a culture, there is no nation.

We saw that the impetus to preserve the cultural elements of music and poetry inspired the young organist, Edward Bunting, who transcribed the music of the harpers at the Belfast meeting. Under the guidance of the McCrackens, with whom he lived, and Dr. James McDonnell, active in Belfast society, Bunting produced three anthologies of Irish airs, a result of fifty years of collecting music from around Ireland and researching the technical applications of harp performance. This study demonstrated the way Bunting created significant national boundaries with music that both distinguished Irish music as unique and also culturally equal to western art music.

Bunting published three volumes of Irish airs that became increasingly nationalistic. Presented during three periods of national activity, Bunting continued to promote Irish music as distinct, ancient, refined and accessible to a cosmopolitan audience.

Though Bunting never associated himself with a political organization, he nevertheless participated with the more radical united Irishmen in the construction of Irish identity. Bunting's pursuit to distinguish Ireland lasted through his 1840 volume as another pre-famine nationalism was emerging.

Bunting's first volume appeared in 1796, the same year as the first United Irish rebellion; the timing indicated the importance placed on the power of music to engender

national sentiment in a people. Published along with *Paddy's Resource*, nationalists reached both the elite and working classes.

Though the anthology contained only a short preface, Bunting reinforced the supremacy of Irish music by claiming it as one of the "parent" countries of that art. Bunting chose Carolan to represent the bardic tradition, linking him with both antiquity and European baroque music. He included several Carolan tunes in this volume.

This first collection of Irish airs motivated patriots such as Wolfe Tone, Thomas Russell, William Drennan, and Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet; Thomas Moore used many melodies from this volume to set his politically motivated poetry.

Moore's first volume of Irish melodies sparked a rivalry with Bunting, who was offended by Moore's omission of credit for the tunes taken from Bunting's volume. We examined, in Bunting's second volume, his struggle between an antiquarian impulse to present authentic national music and poetry and his desire to compete with Moore for public attention. While the dissertation conformed to Bunting's fidelity to the authenticity and superiority of Irish music, the anthology did not. In this volume, Bunting began to establish Denis Hempson, now deceased, as the bardic representation in place of Carolan. Bunting believed Hempson to have remained true to the bardic tradition after others compromised the tradition to appeal to patrons.

Bunting originally intended to set the melodies to Gaelic texts collected by Patrick Lynch. By doing so, he would have satisfied his high standards for authenticity. The distressing execution of Thomas Russell, as a result of testimony provided by Lynch, inhibited Bunting from using the Gaelic texts he hired Lynch to collect. Instead, he used awkward settings of poetry by Thomas Campbell, sanitized translations from Mrs.

Balfour and a variety of other poems. Those contributed by William Drennan and written by Thomas Russell linked the volume back to the United Irish tradition that initiated the collection of music in the first place. This was a bold move, just a few years after the Act of Union and final United Irish rebellion that cast a blanket of suspicion across Ireland.

Thirty years later, we saw the completion of Bunting's life work. His 1840 volume was a massive work including articles by the poet Samuel Ferguson and George Petrie, an artist and scholar of cultural archaeology. Ferguson and Petrie added additional scholarly material concerning historical archaeology: Ferguson supporting the antiquity of the harp and pipes in Ireland and Petrie re-mythologizing the Trinity harp and also linking the Irish harp to Egyptian culture.

As Irish identity began another renegotiation, this time between Old Catholic Irish and Anglo-Irish, Bunting reinserted himself in the discourse. Catholic Emancipation empowered Catholics such as James Hardiman to redefine Irishness to exclude Anglo-Irish. In this volume, Bunting reminded Ireland that Anglo-Irish had earned a distinguished place in Irish history, not only as ones who early on became "more Irish than the Irish," but as ones who initiated the preservation of Irish culture as it fell on the brink of oblivion.

This volume elucidated the extent to which Bunting explored the technique of the Irish harp. He provided extensive tables of ornamentation, technical terms translated from the Gaelic and other information that is provided in no other work, and would have been lost had he not recorded it. This information, paralleling western musical science, positioned Irish music in a preeminent position again, able to sustain comparison with European standards.

In this volume, Hempson had fully come to represent the ancient bardic tradition to Bunting, as Carolan's music was too "infected" by Italian influence.

The most striking addition to this volume was the dedication to the English Queen Victoria. We examined the iconography and text of the dedication pages to establish congruency between presenting an anthology of Irish national music and dedicating those airs to the Queen of England. That examination proved that Bunting, rather than submitting to the larger empire, engaged the English monarch in the validation of an authentic Irish musical repertoire. The permission granted by the Queen to dedicate this volume to her, sanctioned the separation and distinct music of the nation of Ireland.

All of these Anglo-Irish writers participated in cultural nationalism in similar ways, structuring their arguments around the claims of Giraldus Cambrensis: they "remembered" a Golden Age that highlighted the refinement and civility of Irish culture—countering the negative stereotypes of barbarity; and they all presented Irish music as rooted in antiquity yet comparable to European culture.

All emphasized the figure of Carolan as the contemporary link between an ancient tradition and cosmopolitan musician, and this image was reinforced even more with his composition appearing in Bunting's volumes of national music. While Carolan's connection with Italian influences positioned him to reflect positively on Irish heritage during the establishment of a cultural identity, once that identity was established, the need for European hybridity ceased to exist and Denis Hempson, once considered too archaic for even his contemporary harpers to understand, became the final embodiment of bardic culture to Edward Bunting.

These nationalists set out to establish an Irish identity that would attract appreciation and respect beyond Irish borders, and they most certainly have. The reputation of Irish music grounded in these works has become legendary. The image of the Irish harp is firmly identified with Ireland. And though Bunting ultimately chose Hempson as the best representative of the ancient bard, Carolan had been so firmly established that his name today evokes “memories” of ancient Ireland during a time when bards performed their poetry to the music of harps tuned to freedom.

Bunting and McDonnell’s goal of reviving and perpetuating the harpers’ tradition in some ways has been realized since the 1970s. The number of harp makers and volumes of published harp music, idiomatic to the folk harp is swelling to incredible numbers. It is now rare to find someone performing on folk harp who does not perform Carolan tunes preserved from these volumes. The legacy of Bunting and Carolan is as strong today as it ever was, expanding the boundaries of those who enter into the bardic tradition performing music played by harpers in Belfast in 1792.

That this country, from an early period, was famous for the cultivation of the kindred arts of poetry and music, stands universally admitted. The works of the prejudiced Cambrensis, and the annals of Wales and Scotland, might be adduced in evidence of the fact; but we require not the aid of foreign proof, our domestic records supply abundant information on the subject.

—James Hardiman, *Minstrelsy* (1831)

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