School of Design and Art

Redressing the Silence: Photography, Memory and the Great Famine

Paul Anthony Matthew Carpenter

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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Paul Carpenter

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ABSTRACT

Since its invention, photography's ability to stand as a silent proxy to the absent subject that it both represents and monumentalises has captivated us. It is this paradox that has compelled our use of the medium to comprehend a past being swept away by inexorable change. In recent years, this enigmatic trait has also been deployed to examine how the social catastrophes of modernity are thought about, commemorated and remembered.

Following developments in postcolonial scholarship and the representation of trauma, this thesis contemplates how reading the silences that encompass the Great Famine (1845-1852) might, by uncovering the event's traces, provide insight into the life, culture and resistances of the "other" obliterated by it. Central to this undertaking is an investigation of the forgetfulness for this watershed that emanates through photography itself. Surprisingly, given that the Famine occurred during a period that saw significant advancements in the medium, many of which were instigated by Ireland's colonial elite, the Anglo-Irish Ascendency, no photographic image of this event is known to exist.

In keeping with photography's internal contradictions, this thesis is informed by a body of aftermath photographs of the Famine that have been produced by me. By enticing the viewer/reader into a state of ambivalence for historicist interpretations into the Famine, this creative production, featuring places of absence, loss and forgetting, acknowledges how through the recognition of silence we bear witness to how this trauma plays out in the present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I also wish to thank my families in Australia and Ireland, particularly my wife, Kelley. This project has involved many challenges. The time devoted to fieldwork, travel and writing was great. Throughout this process, Kelley has been my constant support. I could not have completed the project without her.

Most of all, I thank the many anonymous people that helped me in Ireland. The assistance they gave me in tracking down local memories and forgotten places was invaluable. I am indebted to their generosity and insight.

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Figure 1. ***The Crag Graveyard, Clonconnane, County Limerick, 2012*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 1) depicts the site of an unbaptised children's graveyard in one of the small rural townlands that merge between the parish boundaries separating counties Limerick and Clare in the west of Ireland. In the Gaelic language, these places are known as *cillin*. They can be found throughout the country and are often, as is this site, the remnants of Neolithic settlements or ancient burial places. Due to their metaphysical associations, they are often referred to as "forts" or "fairy forts".[1] Some believe these places still hold tremendous emblematic power and fear that, by encroaching on them, they might resurrect a ghost from the past. Apart from legislation introduced to prohibit their destruction, this belief has assured their existence in a country that, up until the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (hereafter referred to as the 2008 GFC), was experiencing its most recent period of accelerated change.

[1] Forts, or ringforts, are circular in construction with their circumference, as with the Crag Graveyard in Figure 1, marked by stones. Many of these forts, also known as *lios*, serve as *cillin*. In rural Ireland, these names are often used synonymously.

Yet the *cillin* conceals a memory that drenches both this place and its representation in a brooding silence. During the Great Famine of 1845 – 1852 (known outside of Ireland as the Great Irish Famine or the Irish Potato Famine), the site, as confirmed by local memory, was used to inter strangers and those who, for various reasons, could not be buried elsewhere. Here, the photograph (Fig. 1) develops another connotation, where photography's ability to be a spectre-like double for the absent subject it represents the image gestures to the memory of those who by being swept away by the Famine were denied a place in Ireland's assent to modernity.

The Contagion arrives

The first reports of blight came in September 1845 when the virus *Phytophthora infestans*, which ravaged the potato in America and Western Europe, caused a substantial part of the Irish crop to rot in the ground. Apart from the sweet, pungent smell released by the decaying tubers, a scent Sir William Wilde (Oscar Wilde's father) described as "once perceived not easily forgotten", its arrival was unheralded.[2] By November, reports from the remote west and south-west counties told of food shortages and distress. Initially observed as a one-off visitation, Sir Robert Peel's issuing of food aid, contravening his governing Tories' conviction in the natural laws of the free market, helped avert widespread starvation. However, following the collapse of Peel's government to Russel's Whigs in July 1846 and their subsequent deployment of *laissez-faire* initiatives as the principal form of relief, this ideological conviction in the free market would have devastating consequences when the contagion returned later that same year.[3]

In a colonial dominion haemorrhaging both capital and intellectual wealth following the 1801 Act of Union, this belief in the ability of the free market to sustain the starving whilst stabilising a hyper-inflated food market brought ruin to millions.[4] Surpassing any other event that has shaped Ireland's jagged political, cultural and cartographic contours, the Famine is as inscribed upon the Irish psyche as much as its ruins, graveyards and forgotten places punctuate the country's landscapes. Additionally, by depopulating the countryside, the Famine fundamentally altered Ireland's social composition. The sweeping demographic

[2] Wilde, William. 2005 (1856). "Table of cosmical phenomena, epizootics, epiphitics, famines, and pestilences in Ireland." In *Famine and Disease in Ireland,* edited by Leslie Clarkson and Margaret Crawford. London: Pickering & Chatto. 265.

[3] For a summary of Britain's laissez-faire interventions during the Famine, see Ó Gráda, Cormac. 1989. *The Great Irish Famine*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[4] Ibid. Most historical sources note that the Famine caused one million deceased and over two million forced immigrations. These figures are calculated from variations between the censuses of 1841 and 1851.

changes that came in its wake heralded the joint ascent of the Catholic Church and a powerful Anglicised Catholic farming and merchant class as the country's principal cultural and political power brokers. As seen in the photograph (Fig. 2), this was a rise to power symbolised in the massive church building projects that, post the 1829 Act of Catholic Emancipation, emblazoned the horizons of Ireland's physical and imaginative landscapes with bell towers and steeples.[5]

Figure 2. ***St. Mary's Cathedral (Roman Catholic), Kilkenny Town, County Kilkenny,2008*** (Author)[6]

By accelerating changes that were already occurring in Irish society since the early 18th century, the Famine also opened up Ireland to industrialisation, immigration, and the demise of the country's once prolific subsistence agricultural economy. Still today, the shadow cast by this trauma is never far away. As the defining event of modern Irish history, the Famine generated a set of historical distinctions that typify both the country's troubled relationship with the past and ambivalent encounter with modernity; what the author Luke Gibbons has

[5] For an account of these and other changes brought about by the 1829 Act of Catholic Emancipation, see Keenan, Desmond. 2002. The Grail of Catholic Emancipation 1793 to 1829. Xlibris Corporation.

[6] A number of significant Church buildings, such as St. Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny Town, which was one of the most expensive architectural constructions erected during Ireland's "long 19th century", were built at the time of the Famine.

described in examining Ireland's liminal position on the pan-European/global stage as "a First World country, but with a Third World memory".[7]

Photography as a "third space"

Returning back to the photograph (Fig. 1), the image marks both a starting point and a point of departure from objectivist modes of conceptualising the past by uncovering the unrecognised milieu of history provided through the examination of memory. In this thesis, I deploy the tension between these two forms of evoking the past to examine how the Famine is conceptualised, represented and remembered in the present. Pivotal to this analysis will be the theoretical constellation Homi Bhabha has described as the "Third Space".[8] Along with Bhabha's concepts of "hybridity" and "liminality", the third space has been a useful analytical tool in the study of the ever-changing flux that is culture and how the reading of texts is a process of "negotiation".[9] Such is the space, the third space, argues Bhabha, of Salman Rushdie's writings, in-between and beyond the dichotomic formations of Islamic fundamentalism and Arab intellectual liberalism.[10] It is also the space of the English miners' wives during the UK coal miners' strike of 1984-1985. Situated in-between the intransigence of Thatcher's "New Right" and a politically fractured Left, they were offered, by their marginality, the opportunity to think and respond in alternative ways to the forces that had constrained them and their communities.[11]

Taken in the fast-fading light of a winter's day, the photograph (Fig. 1) is evocative of the third space explored through this thesis. Liberated from the closure of monumentalist interpretations of the past, I suggest that it is from within this space that marginalised and overlooked aspects of the Famine are exposed. It is also from within this third space, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, where the ideological underpinnings of the Famine are revealed. In this sense, I examine the Famine neither as a natural disaster nor as a fortuitous act of ethnic cleansing. However, in examining the event's ideological underpinnings, it is not my intention here to add specifically to our historical comprehension of the event itself. The avalanche of texts and symposiums that have been

[7] Gibbons, Luke. 1996. "Introduction: Culture, History and Irish Identity." In *Transformations in Irish Culture 3*. Cork: Cork University Press.

[8] Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge. 56.

[9] Ibid., 38.

[10] Ibid., 322-325.

[11] I refer here specifically to critical interpretations of Bhabha's concept of the third space. See Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala. 2011. "Digging women: towards a new agenda for feminist critiques of mining." *Gender, Place and Culture* (1): 1-20.

generated in recent years have forged many new understandings. Rather, through this thesis I seek to explore what authors, creative practitioners and people reflective upon the turmoils of their own individual and collective life experience have identified to be a continuing silence surrounding the Famine.

Reflective of recent shifts in the analysis of historical trauma, especially in respect to the Holocaust and its memory, I explore the silences that surround the Famine not as a means of apprehending its origins but to examine how its traces might be recognised in the present. I argue that although difficult to detect, it is in the potential meaning dislodged from these silent remnants where we come to observe the Famine as one of the first great social catastrophes of modernity. Mindful of the ghosts that haunt the *cillin* in the photograph (Fig. 1), I undertake this third space appraisal in recognition of how in silence we encounter a past that echoes with the mute redress of its untold stories and forgotten memories.

Methodology

Given the elusive nature of the subject matter this thesis explores, I will apply a set of definitions to describe the main social collectives that made up Ireland's 19th-century demographic landscape that may seem excessively broad. So as to tease out the ideological underpinnings of the Famine and its silencing, I depict the two dominant Irish social groups, the colonial ruling class and the colonised Irish, in polarising terms. While I do not diminish the complexities that constituted these groups, this technique is deployed to allow a more nuanced critique of the subject matter examined to emerge. For instance, in describing Ireland's colonial class, I utilise terms such as the "coloniser" and the "colonial elite". Again, these are general terms and encompass a diverse range of cultural groupings, including English, Scottish and Anglo-Norman colonists to Ireland. However, in acknowledgment that collective who, due to their shared belief in the principals extolled by their church, the Anglican Church of Ireland, I make particular use of the descriptor "Ascendency".

Ominously for the Ascendency, the Famine marked a turning point for its fortunes in Ireland. Though the influence the Ascendency wielded had started to wane with the 1801 Act of Union, the demographic upheavals instigated by the Famine sounded its death knell. Unlike the aristocratic classes of Britain, some of whom adjusted to the vagaries of bourgeois commerce, the Ascendency failed to pay sufficient heed to the political and economic circumstances that arose from the Industrial Revolution. By confining themselves to their

palatial estates and amusements abroad, the Ascendency's inability to adapt its ideological vision contributed to severing Ireland's colonial overlords from their political power base.[12]

It is also towards uncovering a shared ideological vision that informs the descriptive terminologies I have used to examine the subjugations of the colonised Irish. Predominantly Catholic (although in a way quite different to that which emerged after the Famine), as a means of identifying the diverse collectives that constituted the colonised Irish, I refer to them throughout this thesis as "native". Taking its cue from postcolonial studies, I use the descriptive title "native" as a way of identifying the social upheavals and dichotomic perspectives of the coloniser. But in recognition of the massive class of peasants who thrived in both populous and cultural life up until the Famine, I also deploy the term "other".

Living outside the abstracts of monetary economies, the "other" was immersed in a subsistence agricultural economy built around the cultivation of the potato. Landless, they gained access to potato seeding plots by working the fields of large farmers and their subtenants as cottiers.[13] Though this way of life had supported millions over an extended historical period of time, their existence was thrown into disarray when landlords utilised the chaos that followed successive potato crop failures during the Famine to consolidate their property holdings. Through eviction and other forms of state-sanctioned terror, the terrains that had sustained the "other" were cleared to accommodate intensive pasturage farming practices.[14]

Given to roaming during times of distress, the term "other" is also used as a means of describing the psycho-cultural characteristics of the Irish peasantry. In all ways, the native "other" was an outsider in the nation's linear ascent to modernity. Begrudging of their colonial overlords, I argue that while the Famine brought about the inhalation of the "other", it was the ideological formations of the coloniser that silenced them. Paradoxically, although the Ascendency and their Irish "other" were separated by religion, ethnicity and language, as

[12] For a historically grounded summary on the Ascendency's reluctance to adapt to the political economy of industrial commerce, see Garvin, Tom & Andreas Hess. 2009. "Tocqueville's Dark Shadow: Gustave de Beaumont as Public Sociologist and Intellectual *Avant La Lettre*." In *Intellectuals and their Publics: Perspectives from the Social Sciences,* edited by Christian Fleck, Andreas Hess and E. Stina Lyon. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.

[13] For an account of peasant life in pre-Famine Ireland, see O'Neil, Kevin. 1984. *Family and farm in pre-famine Ireland: the Parish of Killashandra.* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

[14] For a summary of land management practices in Ireland before and after the Famine, see Grey, Peter. 1999. *Famine, Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society, 1843-1850.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

the two classes that were impacted the most by the Famine, this catastrophe proved just how closely they were intertwined.

By examining the major social collectives in colonial Ireland through terms as "coloniser", "native" and "other", I do not deny the mixed loyalties and beliefs that embodied Ireland's complex relationship with colonialism. To view the Irish as being entirely unwilling participants in Britain's colonial project would be an oversight. In many ways, the Irish were leading propagators in dispensing the harsh realities of British imperialism. Albeit that the Irish were not always willing "foot soldiers of empire", there can be no refuting that they played a sizable role in securing Britain's political and mercantile ambitions abroad.[15] Even Irish organisations that, in their genesis, were ideologically opposed to Britain's hegemonic project propagated it, nonetheless, through the fulfilment of their missions. One only has to look at the evangelising activities of the post-Famine Catholic Church in Ireland to realise this incongruous relationship. In its global export of a fiercely sectarian brand of Catholicism through its teaching of the English language, the Church disseminated Britain's colonial worldview far beyond the capabilities of any imperial institution.[16]

Reading history through the parallel text

Central to this thesis' exploration of the Famine and its historical silencing will be a selection of photographic works produced by me over the duration of this project.[17] These photographs both inform and were informed by this thesis. Depicting ruins (both contemporary to the Famine and post the 2008 GFC), burial sites, and locations of state, colonial and radical memory, the images were exhibited as part of a show titled *Redressing the Silence* at the John Curtin Gallery in Perth, Western Australia in December 2013 (Appendix Five).[18] Utilising the conventions of landscape photography, these images were, for the greater part, photographed in the liminal, third space light between dusk and the darkness of evening. By providing an aesthetic tension evocative of the uncertainty that exists between objectivist history and memory, the photographic production is presented here to be read as a "parallel text".

[15] See Valente, Joseph. 2010. *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922.* Illinois: University of Illinois Press. 19.

[16] I am informed here by the author Tim Pat Coogan's suggestion that Ireland was subject to "two forms of colonialism, those of Mother England and Mother Church". See Coogan, Tim Pat. 2000. *The Story of the Irish Diaspora: Wherever Green is Worn.* New York: Pelgrave. ix.

[17] Two photographs that are part of this thesis, Figure 4 and Figure 56, were sourced from a project I produced in 2002.

[18] Appendix Five is presented as a PowerPoint presentation on DVD.

A much-utilised reference in the methodologies of linguistic and literary theory, the parallel text, is best known as an accompaniment to a reader's first or preferred language.[19] Presenting a linguistic or historical pairing, the parallel text provides the reader with a platform for comparative analysis through the act of negotiating meaning. Though still principally the reserve of literary scholars, over the past three decades the interpretative possibilities produced by the parallel text have seen it applied to a diverse range of cultural productions. One of the most informative of these studies is that of Mishra, Jeffery and Shoesmith's 1989 paper "The Actor as Parallel Text in Bombay Cinema".[20] By analysing the performances of the Indian actor Amitabh Bachchan as a parallel text, the authors pry open an interpretative space through which the reader can comprehend the nuanced cultural imaginings that exist between India and its global diaspora.

Though my use of the parallel text is less Bollywood than that pursued by Mishra et al, it will, nonetheless, be applied as a means of unpacking the ways in which photographs alert us to the social conditions that underpin their production. In this definition, I borrow from Karl Marx's "camera obscura analogy".[21] Long fascinated by photography's interpretative possibilities (for a man whose life was one of near abject poverty he had his photograph taken a surprisingly large amount of times), Marx perceived in the inverted, upside down image of the camera obscura a representation of the means by which ideology acted on the body. For Marx, the social relations of capitalism were never straightforward. So concealed were they by the representations of modern society that they needed to be viewed against their orientation. Despite the positivism that sometimes marred his thinking, Marx had in his genius realised how when photography was perceived in opposition to its psychological alignment, it allowed the viewer to recognise the ideological forces that surrounded them.

Expanding upon Marx's analogy, by utilising my own and sourced images through this thesis as a parallel text, I provide space for the reader to encounter the Famine in a profoundly

[19] See Veronis, Jean, ed. 2000. *Parallel Text Processing: Alignment and Use of Translation Corpora.* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

[20] Mishra, Vijay, Peter Jeffery and Brian Shoesmith. 1989. "The Actor as Parallel Text in Bombay Cinema." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11 (3): 49-67.

[21] Along with Marx, several philosophers, including Nietzsche and Fraud, had speculated on how the camera obscura could reveal aspects of the human social and psychological disposition. See Kofman, Sarah. 1999. *Camera Obscura: Of Ideology.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. In following Marx, I am led to the work of the sociologist Paul Paolucci. See Paolucci, Paul. 2001. "Classical Sociological Theory and Modern Social Problems: Marx's Concept of the Camera Obscura and the Fallacy of Individualistic Reductionism." *Critical Sociology* 27 (1): 77-120.

different way. This contact occurs at two levels. First, these images provide either an illustrative accompaniment or point of ironic reference to the concepts raised by the thesis. The photographic medium is readily accessible for this type of reading; it forms one of our most common understandings of its pragmatic orientations. Secondly, and more significantly, a selection of these images is presented to be read through the representational field known as "aftermath photography".[22] Following the author Ulrich Baer's examination of photographs taken of uncommemorated sites from the Holocaust, these images seek, by depicting traces of the Famine, to provoke a "forgotten memory" of this event.[23] In using the term "forgotten memory," I refer to the recall that will allow the viewer to comprehend how this trauma resonates in the here and now.

Grounded in psychoanalytic theory, Baer contends that, as opposed to "witnessing", which requires an observer to be in proximity to an event, the reader of aftermath photography is afforded the opportunity to give testimony to its existence as a "secondary witness".[24] Though historically removed from the originating event, through the interpretation of its aftermath images the reader is empowered to acknowledge the shock waves that continue to emanate from it.[25] Further, building upon Walter Benjamin's provocations on photography, this form of witnessing, which Baer describes as a process where the reader comes to "bear witness", provides the viewer of aftermath photography an encounter with the trauma of the past outside the closure of dominant historiographic texts.[26] For Baer, the impact of these conservative readings on the Holocaust has contributed to preserving the silences and revisionist sentiments that surround it.

Although the Holocaust and the Famine are comparable only as singularities, I suggest that there is much to gain in uncovering the silences that surround Ireland's decisive encounter with history and what Adorno and Horkheimer describe when analysing the Shoah as the "new barbarism" of modernity.[27] Principally, by investigating these events through their representations, the reader is offered an insight into the underpinning ideological actions that

[22] For an overview of aftermath photography, see Campany, David, ed. 2007. *Art and Photography*. London: Phaidon.

[23] Baer, Ulrich. 2005. *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1972. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Herder and Herder. 32

inform the practice of historical silencing. Henceforth, in recognition of the third space opened up by this thesis and its accompanying creative production, I refer to the reader as the viewer/reader. This descriptive terminology is utilised in recognition of Bhabha's contention that the third space is a site from where meaning is recognised as being inherently unstable: it is never tied down.[28]

Figure 3. ***Glenamaddy Workhouse, Glenamaddy, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)

My use of the term the viewer/reader is also informed by the conversations I had with people during the exhibition *Redressing the Silence*. Over the course of several dialogues, people noted to me how the photographs allowed them to reconnect with their forgotten memory of the Famine. In the main, these recollections were related to familial accounts and the generational dislocation brought about by immigration. This memory retrieval was most pronounced, these people told me when viewing photographs of the institution synonymous with the Famine: the Workhouse (Fig. 3). During one of these discussions, a viewer/reader (a second generation Irish immigrant from Clayton in Manchester) told me how as a child she would overhear her grandparent's hushed recollections about relatives being confined in these ghastly places. In the act of interpreting photographs, this

[28] Bhabha, *The Location.*

viewer/reader had engaged in a process whereby bearing witness to the Famine she came to recognise how this catastrophe played out in the present.

Commemorating the silence

During the mid-1990s, coinciding with the discriminatory and unduly brief period of economic prosperity ushered in by the Celtic Tiger, the Famine was invoked through a series of observances to mark its sesquicentennial. Setting in train a cycle of remembrance that continues today with cautious preparations for observing the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the Famine was remembered throughout Ireland and the diaspora. Notwithstanding the controversies that surrounded the event, notably, as can be detected from the speeches of President Mary Robinson (Fig. 4), about how the commemoration slipped from being a memorial to that of a "celebration" of the state and its perceived successes, the sesquicentennial was hailed as a belated but welcomed response to a silence many believed had long shrouded the Famine.[29]

Figure 4. ***The Mary Robinson Tapestry Rug, Dame Street, Dublin, 2002*** (Author)[30]

[29] The authors Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling have identified a lexical tension in the speeches of President Mary Robinson during the sesquicentennial. In several major public pronouncements, Robinson's description of the commemoration shifted from being a memorial for a national trauma to that of a "celebration" of the perceived successes of the state. See Keohane, Kieran and Carmen Kuhling. 2003. "Millenarianism and Utopianism in the New Ireland: the Tragedy (and Comedy) of Accelerated Modernization." In *The End of Irish History?* Edited by Colin Coulter. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 126.

[30] Along with cultural productions such as Riverdance, the Mary Robinson tapestry rug (displayed in the shop front window of Pars Oriental Carpet Gallery for a number of years) epitomised the garish sentimentalism that concealed the traumas of Irish history during the time of the Celtic Tiger.

Incited by the theoretical paradigms that emerged following the "ethnographic turn" in European historiography during the 1980s, the sesquicentennial also witnessed an upsurge in academic, artistic and media interest in the Famine.[31] Through seminars, publication and exhibition the Famine was contemplated in many new, thought-provoking ways.[32] Such was the level of interest in the Famine that theorists from fields outside the remit of Irish Studies were compelled for the first time to consider it seriously. Of the many edifying inclusions to come from this continuing multidisciplinary reappraisal of the Famine, the methodologies produced by literary and postcolonial theory have been some of the most informative. By examining the Famine through the cultural, social and political distinctions that separated Ireland's colonising elite from their native Irish "other", these paradigms helped cast a critical light on the circumstances that initiated the event. Refuting claims made by conservative historians, who have perceived the Famine within Malthusian terms, these emergent systems of thought examined this watershed as a dire – though preventable – calamity brought about by the state's unquestioning belief in economic rationalism.[33]

Though the scholarly analysis that arose from the sesquicentennial gave rise to a nuanced set of approaches to examining the Famine, these endeavors continued, nonetheless, to omit a silence long disregarded by historians and social scientists alike. Despite photography being practised in Ireland within weeks of the release of the daguerreotype process in September 1839, no photographic record of the Famine exists. The harrowing scenes of eviction, starvation and death graphically reproduced from James Mahony's famous field sketches for the *Illustrated London News* are unaccounted for in the photographic archive. Ironically, although photography had developed in Ireland relatively early on account of its anomalous social status as a colony, the event that epitomised the country's disastrous political union with Britain, what Lord Byron described as "the union of a shark with its prey", is absent from

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[31] By my use of the term "ethnographic turn", I refer to those critical realignments in historical writing that since the mid-1980s have increasingly drawn from audience perception theory, ethnography, communication studies and Feminist studies (to name a few) as a way of examining how people and communities interact and encounter the life process. See Spiegel, Gabrielle M. 2005. *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn.* London: Routledge.

[32] One of the most enlightening of these new approaches came from a conference organised by the Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland in 1994. Held at St Patrick's College Maynooth, the conference looked at the Famine from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including views sourced from theological, feminist, demographic, literary and medical perspectives. See Morash, Chris and Richard Hayes, eds. 1996. *Fearful Realties: New Perspectives on the Famine*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

[33] This theme is examined by the gifted economic historian Joel Mokyr. He has produced one of the most rigorous assessments of the input of colonial capitalism upon the conditions brought about by the Famine. See Mokyr, Joel. 1985. *Why Ireland Starved: An Analytical and Quantitative History of the Irish Economy, 1800-1850*. Boston: George Allen and Unwin.

the photographic record.[34] The examination of the circumstances that brought about this curious silence will inform much of the analysis undertaken in this thesis and its accompanying creative production.[35]

Revisionism and reading the past

Needless to say, the examination pursued here in accessing the relationship between the Famine, its historical silencing and Ireland's colonial experience is contested. In many Irish institutions, this assessment runs contrary to that position advocated by the school of thought commonly known as historical revisionism. Sympathetic to the liberal imperialist interpretation of British history, in the revisionist mindset the Famine was brought about by the demise of the potato. Hence, like the death yielding catastrophes that ravaged medieval Europe, the Famine is conceptualised as an event that was beyond the capability of Ireland's colonial governors to have either predicted or mitigated for. Even after the recognition inspired by the sesquicentennial commemorations, revisionist authors still pay very little attention to the Famine and the circumstances that brought it about. For instance, in Patrick O' Mahony and Gerard Delanty's definitive revisionist text *Rethinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology*, they devote only two paragraphs to examining the social, political and economic conditions associated with the Famine.[36]

Predictably, revisionist thinking on the Famine corresponds with its view that the problems which plague Ireland's present are a result of the country's unnatural "obsession" with the past.[37] In the writings of revisionist authors, Ireland's history is seen as one that is outside the chronologies that have mapped the pathways of other modern nations. And if the past is a "foreign country", as L. P. Hartley suggests through his captivating examination of memory in *The Go Between*, then there can be no place more alien to modernity's decrees on

[34] For a summary of Byron's famous pronouncement, see Somerset Fry, Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry. 1988. *A History of Ireland.* London: Routledge. 213.

[35] Coming from a postcolonial perspective, my investigation of photography's absence from the Famine record differs from that recently employed by Emily Mark-Fitzgerald in her fascinating study of this subject. See Mark-Fitzgerald, Emily. 2014. "Photography and the Visual Legacy of Famine." In *Memory Ireland Volume 3: Memory Cruxes: The Famine and the Troubles*, edited by Oona Frawley. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

[36] It must be said that as the subject of O'Mahony and Delanty's investigation is the interactions between post-1950's Irish nationalism and identity in the contemporary present, their work is removed from the Famine. However, given the title of their volume and what they profess it to do, their lack of reference to the Famine does seem a remarkable oversight. See O'Mahony, Patrick and Gerard Delanty. 1998. *Rethinking Irish History: Nationalism, Identity and Ideology*. Hampshire, UK: Pelgrave. 49.

[37] Recently the conservative author Cillian McGrattan suggested that Irish culture is "obsessed with the past". See McGrattan, Cillian. 2012. *Memory Politics and Identity: Haunted by History.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 60.

evolutionary progression than Ireland.[38] Everywhere the conservative historian casts his eye is evidence of a past that has not yielded to the proclamations of the present. Analogous with the ruins that dot its physical terrains, Ireland's historical landscape is strewn with the debris of a native activism hell-bent on its destruction. Long held in check by its former colonial master, Britain, the adherents of historical revisionism posit that the seeds of this self-destructive trait in the Irish rest solely in the native's inability to "move on".[39]

Defining itself in response to the perceived threats posed by Republican Nationalism, historical revisionism in Ireland owes its origins to a group of British-trained Irish historians and members of Catholic clergy who founded the academic journal *Irish Historical Studies* (hereafter referred to as *IHS*) during the late-1930s.[40] Still in circulation today, the biannually published *IHS* is renowned for printing only five articles on the Famine up until the 1980s.[41] This lack of scholarly interest by revisionist historians for the Famine is symptomatic of their Anglo-centric view on Irish history. In the assessments of revisionist authors, the problems that have historically beset the country are laid firmly at the feet of the native. Due to the disturbing lack of nuanced opinion from Nationalists, particularly during "the troubles" of the 1970s and 1980s, revisionist authors felt justified in extolling what they describe to be their "value free" assessment of Irish history.[42] But all this was to change following the not insignificant advancements brought about by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.[43] With the Provisional IRA's cessation of armed resistance, even conservative commentators were forced to reassess the relevance of revisionist thought. In pluralist Celtic Tiger Ireland, revisionism's steadfast positions started to seem out of date. What's more, with former Republican

[38] Hartley, L. P. 1976. *The Go Between.* Harmondsworth: Penguin. 7.

[39] The phrase "move on" is used incessantly by British and Irish politicians when speaking about the traumas of Irish history. A search of the Parliamentary Debates page of the Houses of the Oireachtas (The National Parliament) website using this phrase will generate multiple results. See Parliamentary Debates – Houses of the Oireachtas. 2014. http://www.debates.oireachtas.ie/

[40] For an account on the historical revisionism in Ireland, see Brady, Ciaran, ed. 1994. *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

[41] The *IHS* is renowned for publishing only five articles on the Famine in its first one hundred issues, a period of 50 years. A similar silencing of the Famine can be detected in the journal *Irish Economic and Social History*. Between the years 1974 and 1987 the journal did not publish a single article on the Famine. These accounts are noted in Ó Gráda, Cormac. 1988. *Ireland Before and After the Famine: Explorations in Economic History, 1800-1925.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. 78.

[42] With respect to the study of Irish history, the much cited term "value free" was first introduced through the writings of T. W. Moody and R. D. Edwards. Founders of the journal *Irish Historical Studies*, Moody and Edwards envisaged a history of Ireland based upon a scientifically objective approach to reading a notion of the past that was free from the tarnish of "nationalist myth-making".

[43] For a comprehensive summary, see Bew, Paul. 2007. *The Making and Remaking of the Good Friday Agreement.* Dublin: Liffey Press.

activists playing leading roles in the power sharing assembly in Ireland's north, it was not nationalism that seemed unable to "move on" but the adherents of historical revisionism.

However, with the crushing of most forms of direct action through the state's implementation of austerity following the 2008 GFC, revisionist ideas have re-emerged through the ideological stances that connect all aspects of modern Irish society. Having advocates from the right, notably amongst Ireland's postcolonial political elite, and also the left, principally within the Democratic Left and Labour parties, the epicentre of revisionist thought today is to be found in what is both the postcode for the country's Dublin-based media conglomerates and a byword for bourgeois metropolitanism: D4.[44] Through the provocation of the D4 worldview, revisionist traits now permeate all state cultural productions. Nowhere is this veiled ideological gesturing more apparent than in the sanitized historical chronologies presented by the Irish heritage and tourism industries and in the programming of the national broadcaster, RTE.[45]

But revisionist discourses can also be found acting upon Irish society from outside the country. Ideologically, this is linked with a number of British university colleges, notably Peterhouse at Cambridge, which was the training ground for many mid-20th century Irish historians. Reflective of the D4 worldview, revisionism has also developed a media profile in Britain. Currently, the most pronounced expression of this opinion has been that advocated by the television presenter Jeremy Paxman. An unabashed apologist for British colonial imperialism, Paxman's "value free" assessment of Irish history has recently included a vitriolic denouncement of Tony Blair's redress for the Famine during the sesquicentennial commemorations.[46]

[44] With the implementation of a new national six-digit post code system in late 2015, the D4 nomenclature will come to an end; however, the district's metropolitan obsessions will no doubt remain.

[45] For an account of RTEs involvement in the revisionist view of Irish history, see Boyce, George D. and Alan O'Day. 1996. "'Revisionism' and the 'revisionist' controversy." In *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the revisionist controversy*, edited by George D. Boyce and Alan O'Day. London: Routledge.

[46] Unsurprisingly in Paxton's whitewashing of British imperialism for the ITV television series *Empire* (2012), he failed to dedicate a single sentence to Ireland's experience under colonisation. It is within this context that I access his commentary as being "value free". Although Blair's term as Prime Minister will be forever overshadowed by his decision to invade Iraq in 2003, his redress for the Famine (His speech, read by the actor Gabriel Byrne, stopped short of making a formal apology.) has been recognised as one of the symbolic achievements of his tenure. For an account of Blair's speech, see Grey, Peter. 2004. "Memory and the commemoration of the Great Irish Famine." In *The Memory of Catastrophe*, edited by Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Reading the silences

Much has been said regarding the presumption of silence surrounding the Famine. Perspectives on its sources, impact and level of intensity differ. The author and political activist Tom Hayden has suggested that there is a discernable "amnesia about the past" over the Famine.[47] Chris Morash has utilised the vernacular of theoretical physics to examine this silence by arguing that the Famine has been subsumed within a "black hole", one in which "few historians had entered".[48] Those questioning of this view sees any silence associated with the Famine as detectable only through the act of seeking it out. In this sense, silence is literally in the eye of the beholder. The historian James Donnelly adds to this perception by implying that should a "reticence" about the Famine be identified, it is, in his opinion, far too broad a theoretical leap from which to draw any conclusions from.[49] Moreover, he argues, to imply that there was a silence surrounding the Famine discounts what can be gleaned from the sources where it is mentioned.[50] For those who argue against the proposition that a silence has shrouded the Famine, the popular scientific maxim "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" sums up the various positions they hold on this matter.[51]

Certainly there was no silence surrounding the Famine as the event was being played out. Having occurred at a historical conjunction that witnessed both the rapid rise of print media and a readership endowed with an insatiable appetite for spectacle, the Famine was extensively reported on.[52] As can be read from the Famine accounts filed for *The Times* by the Dublin journalist William Howard Russell, many popular media conventions used in the reporting of news today can be traced directly to this event.[53] In many ways, the Famine was the first major calamity through which its media representation simultaneously captivated

[47] See Hayden, T. 1997. *Irish Hunger: Personal Reflections on the Legacy of the Famine.* Dublin: Wolfhound Press. 12.

[48] See Morash, Chris. 1995. "Entering the Abyss." *The Irish Review* 17: 175.

[49] Donnelly, James S., Jr. 2001. *The Great Irish Potato Famine.* Stroud, Gloucestershire. England: Sutton Publishing. 242.

[50] Ibid.

[51] In science, this maxim maintains that methodological limitations have produced a result that cannot be looked at as objective evidence of absence.

[52] Steve Taylor's comprehensive website Views of the Famine, lists full articles on the Famine published in the British and Irish press. See Contemporary newspaper articles and illustrations from the Great Hunger in Ireland, 1845-52. 2015. Views of the Famine. Accessed June 2, https://viewsofthefamine.wordpress.com/1846/10/

[53] William Howard Russell was a reporter for *The Times* of London. During the Crimean War, he gained fame for his dispatches from the frontline by telegraph. Though his writing from the Crimea was politically tainted, he probed the conflict far more thoroughly than the verbatim quotations from military officials that made up the accounts of his colleagues. For an account of Russell, see the introduction to Crawford, Martin ed. 2008. *William Howard Russell's Civil War: Private Diary and Letters, 1861-1862.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

and shocked people situated at opposite ends of the globe. However, in the years that were to follow this watershed fell into what many people have identified as a historical "muteness".[54] During and since the time of the sesquicentennial, this silence and its relationship with the concealment of other incidents of generational trauma in Irish society have received much critical attention.[55]

The author Niall O'Ciosain has offered some informative opinion as to how the presumption of silence surrounding the Famine might be understood. Writing in the *Irish Studies Review*, O'Ciosain argued that although silences have encompassed this event, they have been overstated.[56] Without citing any particular incident, he puts forward the case that the Famine's silencing reveals what he describes as "selective memories".[57] It is these discerning recollections, he suggests, that allow people and communities to recognise, to commemorate and, if they so choose, to forget an event in different ways.[58] Additionally, O'Ciosain contends that the act of silencing must be acknowledged within the context of how trauma as a lived experience shapes individuals' cultural and psychological being. Consequently, those who live through trauma do not feel the need to discuss endlessly or to relieve their experience so that that it somehow appears more real to them.

Perspectives on trauma have also informed the opinions of authors who argue that silences surrounding the Famine are indicative of a societal wide ontological disturbance induced by the shock of catastrophic upheaval.[59] The work of Cathy Caruth has been influential in these assessments. Writing from the perspective of psychoanalytic theory, Caruth contends that when trauma confronts individuals and communities they become speechless. Unable to comprehend the events that had instigated their feelings of consternation and shock, they are forced to live their lives in its shadow. But the trauma does not end with their passing;

[54] Muteness is a termed used by many writers when describing the traumatic after effects of the Famine. See Eagleton, *Heathcliff,* 13.

[55] The psychologist Geraldine Moan has drawn a connection between the trauma of the Famine and what she cites as ongoing physiological problems in present day Ireland. See Moan, G. 2002. "Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger: Legacies of history and the quest for vision." In *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, society and the global economy*, edited by Peader Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin. London: Pluto Press.

[56] See O'Ciosain, Niall. 1995. "Was there a 'silence' about the famine?" *Irish Studies Review* 13: 7-10.

[57] Ibid., 9.

[59] See Moan, "Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger".

even after many years have elapsed, through memory, Caruth argues, the psychological rupture instigated by the origin event returns to haunt their descendants.[60]

Building upon the work of Caruth and others, the authors who have examined the Famine's silencing from the perspectives of postcolonial and literary theory have, in turn, attributed this reticence to two compounding factors.[61] First, like the hushed quiet that afflicts all who are confronted by unspeakable trauma, the Famine was an event that defied description. As the accounts of travel writers reporting from Ireland note, those who observed the event's horrors found themselves gasping for words. The gaunt resignation they saw in the faces of cottier families contemplating death through their blighted crops mirrored these witnesses' inability to recount what they had seen. Secondly, by instigating in the Ascendency what amounted to a self-inflicted, psychological turmoil, the circumstances that gave rise to the Famine raised uncomfortable issues for its members. Could they have done more to prevent this tragedy? And was there somehow a connection between the annihilation of the peasantry and their slow but inevitable demise? For the Ascendency, these "unanswered questions" spawned a guilt-laden, cultural legacy.[62]

This cultural legacy bequeathed to the Ascendency has led several authors to propose that one of the most resonant sites for the Famine's silencing was through this class's literary productions.[63] Somewhat reflective of the incongruity through which the Ascendency represented their "other" by, after the mid-1850s the Famine becomes almost non-existent in the literature of Ireland's ruling colonial elite. During the sesquicentennial, these literary silences were examined from a number of perspectives, the most influential, and also controversial, being Terry Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*. In his close reading of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, Eagleton argued that the novel's indebtedness to the identity introspections of Anglo-Irish literature (the Brontë siblings were half-Irish by way of

[60] For an account of the influence of Cathy Caruth's work on Famine studies, see Lloyd, David. 2005. "The Indigent Sublime: Spectres of Irish Hunger." *Representations* 92: 152-185.

[61] These and other themes relating the Famine and its representations in Irish literature are discussed in Cusack, George and Sarah Judith Goss, eds. 2006. *Hungry Words: Images of the Famine in the Irish Canon.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

[62] The term "unanswered questions" is raised by number authors commenting upon the guilt-laden disposition of the Ascendency over the Famine. I refer to it here in a broader representational and cultural context with respect to Michael de Mie's contention that the occurrence of the Famine in a "country politically united with the most economically dynamic nation in the contemporary world" has left a "political legacy that continues to persist". See De Nie, Michael Willem. 2004. *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882.* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press. 84.

[63] For a comprehensive analysis of this position, see Fegan, Melissa. 2010. "The Great Famine in Literature, 1846-1896." In *A Companion to Irish Literature, Volume 2*, edited by Julia M. Wright. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

their father, Patrick) suggested that the Famine's silencing stemmed from the Ascendency's antagonistic relationship with the native.

Informed by his previous excursions into Irish history, Eagleton argues that, although the Ascendency's perception of the Irish was consequential of the country's political and religious turmoil, its origins were ideological and based on underlying structural differences in its use of power. Opposed to the cultural tolerance that marked the Ascendency's governance in other parts of the Empire, in Ireland they were manifestly unable to install the consensual mechanisms necessary for them to have secured their hegemony. Confronted by a native whom they perceived as uncivilised, the Ascendency's failure to win the heart, mind and, most importantly, the soul of the Irish implored them to pursue more coercive means of control. Fueled by sectarian intolerance, in the years just prior to the Famine this social disaffection the coloniser held for the native produced an unbridgeable cultural gap between these protagonists. I argue here that it is towards examining this gap that we must direct our attention to if we are to comprehend the nature of the Famine's silences and the ideological circumstances that brought them about.

The structure

Following Eagleton's reading of *Wuthering Heights*, in Chapter one I examine photography's absence from the Famine record as symptomatic of the cultural estrangement that arose from the Ascendency's failed ideological project in Ireland. In making this evaluation, I draw comparisons between revisionist readings of the Famine and how these ideologically tainted views have informed conventional explanations for photography's silencing of the event. Utilising the themes of identity erasure and ambivalence explored by Emily Brontë, and also her brother Branwell's famous "Pillar Portrait" painting as a parallel text, I then explore the cultural dissatisfaction the Ascendency imposed upon the native by analysing Lord William Gregory's infamous "quarter acre" clause. I argue that the ideological mechanisms that saw the "other" obliterated due to the violence unleashed by Gregory's bill are interconnected with the cultural anxieties that underpinned the Revival project instigated by his wife, Lady Augusta Gregory. Through the Revival's construction of the archetypal Irish peasant, the memory of the "other" brought to ruin by the Famine was silenced as a means of the Ascendency appeasing its conscience.

The relationship between photography, cultural estrangement and silence is further scrutinised in Chapter two when I explore the early history of the photographic medium in

Ireland. Again, searching for the ideological underpinnings that led to the greater silencing of the Famine, I examine the contribution Ireland's colonial elite made to photography's development by deconstructing the belief systems that directed their gaze. After documenting the social and scientific influences that motivated the astronomer Lord William Rosse's, I demonstrate through examining the photographic productions of Francis Edmund Currey and Dr. William Despard Hemphill how the medium permitted members of the Ascendency to erase their memory of the Famine. Taken in the years immediately after the event, by expurgating the political and economic circumstances that had given rise to this calamity, Currey and Hemphill's images demonstrate how the Ascendency deployed photography in the same manner as its literature. Effectively, when photography is read as "cultural activity" that reflected the Ascendency's greater fears, prejudices and anxieties, the medium can be seen to have offered it another way of silencing the past.

In Chapter three I continue to scrutinise the Ascendency's gaze by evaluating the photographic practice of the Irish landlord, John Shaw Smith. The principle source of this appraisal will be the examination of Shaw Smith's travel diary dated December 1850 – July 1852. This unpublished document is archived at the Edinburgh University Library. An obscure figure in the early history of photography, Shaw Smith is credited with a voluminous amount of work following his photographic Grand Tour of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East during the final stages of the Famine. Strangely, however, his catalogue is conspicuously lacking in Irish content. Utilising Shaw Smith's photographs as a means of uncovering the cultural orientations that directed his gaze, I speculate on the ideologically bound articulations that led to the Irish absences in his catalogue. By making a comparative analogy between the post-Enlightenment anxieties at play in Branwell Brontë's Pillar Portrait and the famous ophthalmic encounter between the Scottish travel writer Alexander Somerville and the starving tenant farmer, Thomas Killakeel, I argue that the absence of Irish content within Shaw Smith's catalogue and photography's silencing from the Famine record can be read synonymously. Located in the process of gazing back through history, in Killakeel's spectre-like depiction we find an "other" whose disturbing presence would have compelled the coloniser to have averted their photographic gaze.

Chapters four and five are interrelated by their thematic context and the creative production that informs this thesis. Extending on Ulrich Baer's conjectures on forgotten memory, in chapter four I explore how aftermath images taken at Famine sites have the ability to reveal overlooked aspects of this event. Be they taken either intentionally, as is the case with my

creative productions, or inadvertently, as is a family photograph I deconstruct, when read critically these images have the potential to prompt in the viewer/reader powerful "secondary witnessing" encounters with the Famine. Through the representational aesthetics of the sublime, which have an intriguing Irish connection by way of the Anglo-Irish writer Edmund Burke, I then embark on a photographically led process whereby the viewer/reader is empowered to offer their testimony into the Famine. This examination is informed by a comparative analysis between the Famine's silencing and the ideological motivations that concealed both the Holocaust and the terrifying Ukrainian Famine of 1930 – 1933.

In the concluding part of Chapter four, I explore the contested understandings surrounding James Mahony's famous Famine era depiction of Bridget O'Donnel for the *Illustrated London News*. Drawing on Maud Ellmann's *The Hunger Artists,* which suggests the possibility of reading the famine ravaged body for the forces that subject the voiceless to hunger, I deconstruct O'Donnel's representation to demonstrate how the secondary witness might recognise the event's unregistered history. This analysis is assisted by a photograph I have taken off a Republican memorial to the 1981 Long Kesh Hunger Strikes. Situated in the borderlands between County Donegal and the statelet in Ireland's north, I demonstrate through the critical reading of this image how the recovery of forgotten memory exposes the blurred lines that lie between history and how we remember the past.

Integral to both chapters four and five will be a discussion of the approach I had undertaken in sourcing the Famine sites examined through this thesis. Following Loïc Wacquant's application of Bourdieu's ethnographic process, I became aware of these locations either through dialogue with locals or by uncovering their forgotten memory during email conversations.[64] Opportunistically, on account of the expediential growth of the Internet, I was able to utilise a variety of online sources, notably the mid-19th century maps of the Ordinance Survey and Googles' Street View, to locate these sites by constructing a series of digital landscapes. I have described this process in Appendix Two. Hence, my position researching sites in Ireland from the other side of the world did not prove to be the disadvantage it would once have been. This concern was raised during Candidacy.

Chapter five builds upon the themes of witnessing, the sublime and the retrieval of forgotten memory by undertaking an ethnographic led investigation of that aspect of the Irish

[64] I have been greatly influenced by Wacquant's techniques of social immersion and participant observation throughout this project. See Wacquant, Loïc. 2002. "Taking Bourdieu Into the Field." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 46: 180-186.

landscape most evocative of the country's fractured history, the ruin. I argue that the ubiquitousness of the Irish ruin allows these tumbling edifices to be read as a parallel text. Much in the way of Ulrich Baer's assessment of aftermath photography, I demonstrate how, through examining its representation, the ruin allows the viewer/reader to enact a recovery of the lost past. Even when these remnants have been incorporated into the glass and steel monuments of consumer culture, the ruin continually throws up surprises. In the presence of the ruin, we bear witness to a past that is never complete.

Chapter six continues to appraise the act of secondary witnessing by examining the silences that have enveloped the 1879 Knock apparition event. Dismissed by skeptics as a hoax produced by a magic lantern, and extolled by its supporters as a Divine endorsement for the religious orthodoxy that emerged in Ireland after the Famine, in this chapter I offer an alternative explanation for the vision by probing its traces within the archive. Pivotal to this assessment will be my utilisation of Walter Benjamin's conceptualisations on mimesis. I argue that an understanding of mimesis allows the secondary witness to experience an echo of the Famine from within the vision. Far from being either an elaborate forgery or another episode in the churches' ascent as the moral barometer for the Irish state, this trace from the past marks the Knock event as a discontinuity in linear history. Coming in the wake of the Famine the visions' silence can be read, I suggest, as a response to the aftershocks emitted from this tragedy and the interpretative possibilities inherent with the new sensory mediated technologies of modernity.

In the final chapter, Chapter seven, I extend the assessment of silence by examining a little known and much less understood series of early Irish calotype photographs from the William Henry Fox Talbot Collection. Photographed in and around Dublin and County Wicklow, these images, which remain difficult to access, are archived in several British institutions. Referring back to the absences identified in Chapters one and two, when considering the locations depicted in these scenes, and the time frame for their production, there is good reason to believe that if these images cannot be described as Famine photographs they have, nevertheless, offered critical insights into this event. Moreover, reminiscent of Jacques Derrida's phantasmagorical reflections in *Archive Fever,* when examined as a parallel text, these images provide us with a glimpse of the "other" swept away by the Famine. In so doing, they become, as does the archive where they are entombed, a memorial to both them and the past to which they belong.

Given the abstract nature of the subject matter examined here, and the use of photography as a research methodology, it is necessary that this investigation be thorough, particularly when the thesis undertakes a comparative analysis of little known or long forgotten historical materials. Indeed, so layered will this analysis be that the viewer/reader may at times feel, to quote Bhabha, burdened by the "dead hand of history".[65] This approach is most pronounced in Chapters six and seven. However, in these instances I ask the viewer/reader to persevere with the thesis' methodology and allow the past to have its reckoning. Akin to Foucault's "archaeological" reading of history, the traces of the past are never given up easily;[66] they require a methodical sifting of detail. Either overlooked or dismissed by objectivist assessments of history, it is through the process of both critically and creatively analysing the traces of the past where the viewer/reader is offered the opportunity to bear witness to how its trauma plays out in the present.

[65] Bhabha, *The Location,* 6.

[66] I refer here to Foucault's concept of excavating the traces of the past in a manner akin to an archaeological dig. See Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Books.

Chapter 1

Silencing the Other: Revisionism, Ideology and Photography's "surprising" absence from the Famine record

Figure 5. ***Victoria's Bronze Ghost, George Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2011*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 5) depicts John Hughes' statue of Queen Victoria, the monument that once stood outside Leinster House in Dublin. Banished to a council depot in order to save it from being "blasted" out of history (the fate that befell the majority of colonial era shrines in Ireland), the statue was re-gifted by the Irish state to Australia on the occasion of the country's 200th anniversary of white colonisation in 1988, where it is now installed in the heart of Sydney's business district. For many years, Victoria looked down upon the Irish as a guiding mother. Maternally protective of her Hibernian subjects, she provided succor to the troubled and half-wild native. However, judging by her stern facial expression, which the TD Noel Lemass claimed to have rendered this "the most ugly statues of that royal lady", Victoria was not happy with her Irish brood.[67] Although they were less than a day's travel away from metropolitan London, by their noisy resistances and

[67] Noel Lemass made this remark in his capacity as a member of Dail Eireann. See Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates, Volume 273 - 28 May 1974. Accessed October 15, 2014, http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0273/D.0273.197405280063.html

unconventional ways of living the Irish appeared foreign. Unwilling to yield to the hegemony of the country's ruling colonial elite, the Anglo-Irish Ascendency, within the dichotomies that informed the coloniser's worldview the Irish were perceived as an unruly "other" who needed to be silent and consent to their subjugation.

The photograph (Fig. 5) contextually frames an idea that informs this chapter's exploration of the practice of historical silencing in Ireland and how this activity has manifested in the memory, commemoration and conceptualisation of the Famine. Taking its critical rhetoric from postcolonial and literary theory, I argue that, corresponding with what Terry Eagleton has identified in his reading of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* as the absence of the Famine from late 19th century Anglo-Irish literature, a similar silencing of this watershed can be detected from within the photographic archive. Despite photography being practiced in Ireland within weeks of the medium's technical details released by the French state in September 1839, no Famine related photographic reference to this calamity is known to exist.

Building upon Eagleton's reading of Brontë's *magnum opus* as a novel shaped by the introspections and cultural anxieties synonymous with 19th century Anglo-Irish literature, after identifying the revisionist-informed explanations for photography's absence from the Famine record, I will then evaluate Lord William Gregory's "quarter acre" clause. I argue that Gregory's bill – which by unleashing the forces of the free market upon the starving during the Famine contributed to obliterating the "other" from the landscape – exposes the resonant historical circumstances that underpin the event's silencing. Significantly, these circumstances were, I suggest, ideological and based upon a fundamental distinction in the coloniser's use of power in Ireland. Although Anglo-Irish Colonial administrators were renowned abroad for their ability to rule the native by consent, the same could not be said of their governorship in Ireland. On the home front, the Ascendency's attempts at presiding over the Irish were an abysmal failure. In addition, by its incapacity to coax the Irish into its worldview, the Ascendency was implored (in its mind) to use coercion as its dominant means of control. Fueled by the native's unwavering resistances, the tensions that transpired from the Ascendency's use of violence led, in part, to the collapse of its hegemonic project in Ireland and the deep-seated cultural estrangement that characterised this class's interaction with its "other".

The historical complexities surrounding the Ascendency's cultural estrangement from its "other" are further explored when I examine the claim made by several authors that Emily Brontë's character Heathcliff was an Irish Famine refugee. There is, to be sure, anecdotal evidence suggestive that Brontë's positioning of Heathcliff as an outsider was in some part consequential of her family's troubled relationship with its Irish identity.[68] Although Heathcliff's Hibernian origins remain speculative, when the character is read for his cultural ambivalence we perceive the same ideologically driven understandings that within the coloniser's mindset conferred upon the Irish their perpetual status as "other".

This postcolonial inspired interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* is again pursued when I examine a photographically-recovered spectral element from Branwell Brontë's famous "Pillar Portrait" painting. I suggest that when Brontë's image, known as "Branwell's Ghost", is read as a parallel text, it opens up an interpretative possibility by which to examine the Famine's photographic silences. When, for example, Branwell's Ghost is studied with reference to Marx's camera obscura analogy, the image provides a means of comprehending how photography's silence during the Famine and the event's absence from the canon of late 19th century Anglo-Irish literature are interrelated. Though not without distinctions, both these historical absences can be interpreted as expressions for the penetrating cultural estrangement Ireland's colonial elite held for their "other". Moreover, come the eve of the Famine, this ideologically bound cultural disaffection would produce an unbridgeable gap between these protagonists. It is this gap, one evident through a close reading of the Anglo-Irish author Maria Edgeworth's much quoted "looking-glass passage", that we must comprehend in order to appreciate the circumstances that have led to the greater silencing that has surrounded the Famine.

Finally, after unpacking the historical conditions that led to the collapse of the Ascendency's hegemonic project in Ireland, I revisit Lord Gregory's "quarter acre" clause. I argue that silences surrounding this episode during the Famine find their ideological equivalent in the memory recovery project instigated by his wife, Lady Augusta Gregory, and the authors of the Celtic Revival. Through the Revival's invention of the mythical Irish "peasant", which found its most emphatic articulation in the work of William Butler Yeats, the cultural estrangement the Ascendency held for its "other" came back to haunt it. Cast from a culturally homogeneous block, the prodigious social diversity of the rural Irish poor, and

[68] For a summary of the dilemmas faced by the Brontës with respect to their Irish identity, see Chitham, Edward. 1993. *A Life of Emily Brontë.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

their ability to thrive in conditions of rapid change, was subsumed by the Revival's hermetically conservative views on tradition. Through the Revival's all-encompassing cultural narrative, the "other" their forefathers had abandoned during the Famine came to be silenced in a different way.

Revisionist understandings in contemporary photographic debate

Remarkably, given the diverse speculative terrains encompassed by contemporary photographic debate, few authors have ventured to comment as to why no photographic record of the Famine exists. Those who have are resolute in their belief that, although this absence may seem "surprising", it can be accounted for on historical grounds alone.[69] Such was the case when the acclaimed Irish filmmaker George Morrison (*Mise Éire* (1959) and *Saoirse?* (1961)) argued that photography's absence from the Famine record was due to one principal factor: since the medium at that time was predominantly a metropolitan pursuit its exponents were, he claimed, geographically removed from the sites where the Famine occurred.[70] Though Morrison is correct in his assumption that the early medium in Ireland was practiced mainly in the country's cities and large market towns, by insinuating that the Famine occurred only in isolated, rural areas he does expose his viewpoint's indebtedness to the mandates of historical revisionism.

In an attempt to downplay its significance, a characteristic of the revisionist position has been that, since the potato blight was more prevalent in remote parts of the country, the Famine was not the historical watershed claimed in nationalist discourses.[71] It must be stated that this allegation is wholly incorrect. The very archive revisionist authors cite in making this hypothesis suggests otherwise. Given that the Famine occurred throughout the country, the event was a national catastrophe; nowhere was spared from its devastation. And although Ireland's Famine experience was typified by considerable regional variation, the event was witnessed on the streets of Belfast and Dublin just as it was in any remote

[69] Chandler, Edward, and Peter Walsh. 1989. *Through the Brass Lidded Eye: Photography in Ireland, 1839 – 1900.* Dublin: Guinness Museum. 10.

[70] Morrison, George. 1979. *An Irish Camera*. London: Macmillan. 4.

[71] This claim was made by the economic historian and revisionist author L. M. Cullen, when he wrote that "The Famine was less a national disaster than a social and regional one". See Cullen L. M. 1972. *An Economic History of Ireland Since 1660.* London: Batsford. 132. While I would position Morrison's opinion on the reasons that instigated photography's silencing from the Famine record as being informed by revisionist interpretations of Irish history, I do not, however, propose that he is a revisionist. Rather, I suggest that such is the proliferation of conservative thinking on the Famine that even those who, like him, hold dissenting political opinions have by advocating conventional wisdom accepted revisionist traits unquestioningly.

townland or village.[72] Further, by inferring that it was the blight that had brought about the peasantry's demise during the Famine, the revisionist position situates this class's erasure as an incidental event in Ireland's chronological advancement to modernity. Citing methodologies derived from Malthusian demography, revisionist authors have, in their examination of the Famine, depicted the rural Irish poor as a remnant of the past whose over-representation in Ireland's population of 8.1 million had made their eradication a sad but nonetheless forgone conclusion.[73]

Ironically, however, the alleged architect of the revisionist view regarding the demise of the peasantry, Thomas Malthus, held quite a different opinion on this subject. Writing in the *Edinburgh Review* on the rapidly changing social situation of post-union Ireland, Malthus suggested that, far from diminishing in size, the peasantry had the potential to exceed upwards of "*twenty millions* of people".[74] But what weighted heavily upon Malthus' mind regarding his prediction was not the likelihood of the peasantry expiring on account of their numbers, but rather their incalculable potential for political dissatisfaction. Thriving on the cultivation of a single crop, the potato, the peasantry's ability to prosper outside the abstracts of Britain's free market economy was viewed by Malthus as a clear and visible threat. And whilst Malthus must be read for the biases that clouded his judgment, by depicting the Irish peasantry contrary to their representation in revisionist discourses, he presents them as a transformative force that, by their adaptability to conditions of fundamental change, were definitely modern.

Despite the erroneous summations that underpin most revisionist opinion on the Famine, its philosophic assessments persist. The author Carey Schofield shares this same mindset in her summary as to the reasons that brought about photography's absence from the Famine archive. In her introduction to the antiquarian Sean Sexton's publication *Ireland in Old Photographs*, Schofield argued that the logistics of having to haul "bulky photographic and development equipment" across the country would have been an impediment to Famine

[72] For a comprehensive cartographic survey of the Famine and its impact on Ireland nationally, see Kennedy Liam, L. A. Clarkson, E. M. Crawford and P. Ell. 1999. *Mapping the Great Irish Famine: A Survey of the Famine Decades.* Dublin: Four Courts Press.

[73] This figure of 8.1 million has been calculated from variations between the censuses of 1841 and 1851. It is mentioned in numerous sources. However, several authors have criticised this amount. They claim that Ireland's population on the eve of the Famine was more than likely higher than 8.1 million. For a discussion of these and other census inaccuracies, see Ó Gráda, Cormac. 2006. *Ireland's Great Famine: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

[74] Malthus' comment from the summer 1808 edition of the *Edinburgh Review* was cited from Lloyd, David. 2007. "The Political Economy of the Potato" *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 29 (2): 316. The italics are from the original source.

photography.[75] By implying that the medium's early exponents in Ireland would have to have traveled far from the metropolitan to have witnessed the Famine, Schofield reiterates the same blinkered conservatism that informs Morrison's and other popularly held conceptualisations for the medium's absence. In turn, by referring to the periphery, Schofield cites what is the revisionist explanation for Britain's culpable failure to feed the starving during the Famine. Again, according to the revisionist position, this situation occurred not due to a lack of political free will on behalf of the coloniser but was solely a consequence of Ireland's remoteness and underdeveloped infrastructure. Hence, in the revisionist mindset, the gross indifference shown by many colonial functionaries during the Famine is exonerated on historical grounds. Revealingly, just shortly after the Famine, these very same issues of geographical isolation and infrastructural impediment proved to be far less of a problem when Britain extended all its considerable energies into undertaking the disastrous Crimean War campaign (1853 – 1856).[76]

So entrenched is the revisionist mindset in the authors who have commented upon photography's absence from the Famine record that, even those who have recognised a social dimension for this silence seem obliged by the weight of conventional wisdom to locate their premise within positivist notions of historical progression.[77] Such was the case for Edward Chandler and Peter Walsh in their extensive exhibition catalogue *Through the Brass Lidded Eye: Photography in Ireland, 1839 - 1900*, when they argued that this reticence must be seen in light of how media representations were being constituted at that time. And although newspapers did not carry photographs until the advent of the half-tone printing process in the 1880s, photographers were, nonetheless, influenced by what they depicted and the narrative formations they used. Unlike news reporting today, which, the authors write, records "every event from the monumental to the trivial", mid-19th century media agents portrayed disasters such as the Famine as spectacles far removed from the world of their audiences.[78]

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[75] Sexton, Sean. 1994. *Ireland in Old Photographs,* text by Carey Schofield. Toronto: Bulfinch Press. 13. This volume, written by Carey Schofield, is an illustrated compendium of Sean Sexton's eminently valuable collection of early Irish photographs.

[76] There can be no denying that Britain outlaid great expenditure upon issuing Famine relief in Ireland. The author Ciarán Ó Murchadha claims that this amounted to approximately £*8 million.* Considering the period, this is quite a substantial sum. However, only a few short years later Britain far exceeded this amount by spending over £69 million on its futile Crimean War campaign (1853 – 1856). For an account of these staggering differences, see Ó Murchadha, Ciarán. 2011. *The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony 1845-1852*. London: Continuum International.

[77] By my mention of "conventional wisdom", I do not refer to any finite body of thought on this subject; no such defined position exists. However, there is a common view expressed by the authors who have voiced an opinion upon photography's absence from the Famine record that concurs with revisionist outlooks on this catastrophe.

[78] Chandler and Walsh, *Through the Brass.*

Even though these revisionist informed authors are right in assuming that early photography's technical limitations would have hampered the recording of Famine images, their failure to acknowledge other dimensions for this silence provokes serious questions. One question that comes to mind, and is consequential of our greater comprehension of the social circumstances that underpinned the Famine, is what impact Ireland's ambiguous standing as a colony had upon this absence? In order to comprehend how ideological factors relating to Ireland's position as a colony might have impacted upon photography's absence from the Famine record, I advance here a methodological thread woven through one of the most informative publications to emerge during the sesquicentennial commemorations, Terry Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*.[79]

By imploring us to consider the intriguing possibility that Heathcliff, the dark protagonist of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights,* was an Irish Famine refugee, Eagleton opens up the archetypal English novel to be read for a different set of understandings. When, for example, *Wuthering Heights* is examined for its allegoric references to Ireland and the Brontë family's troubled relationship with their Irish identity, there emerges the possibility of studying the work for the same absences the Famine wove through the fabric of late 19th century Anglo-Irish literature. Further, when scrutinised within the critical theoretical frameworks that have continued to emerge since the sesquicentennial, *Wuthering Heights* provides insights into the power dilemmas and resulting cultural estrangement faced by the Ascendency in colonial Ireland. In contrast with their governance in other parts of Britain's empire, where, due to their political prowess, the coloniser would often rule by consent, in Ireland their inability to entice the native into their worldview required that they use coercion as their primary means of control. By impacting upon the already troubled historical relationship between these two protagonists, this distinction in the use of power would, as I will show, contribute to the coloniser's habitual misreading of their native "other".

Ideology and the failure of colonial power in Ireland

Although the cultural ambivalence the coloniser held for the native was a direct result of tensions arising from their feudal-like system of land management in Ireland, this well examined history only explains one side of Ireland's experience under colonisation. Authors

[79] Eagleton, Terry. 1995. *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture.* New York: Verso.

writing from within the postcolonial perspective, notably Eagleton, contend that these historical tensions were amplified by a penetrating psychological anxiety in the mind of the coloniser due to their inability to entice the native into their hegemony. While British elites had, since the origins of their global colonial project, utilised coercion to secure their power ambitions, with the achievements of parliamentary democracy, they increasingly turned towards more consensual means of maintaining control. In the enlightened political atmosphere that followed slave emancipation and other hard-fought liberal reforms, consensual power not only struck a positive moral chord amongst British elites but it provided colonial administrators with an institutional mechanism to exert control over the empire.[80]

Figure 6. ***Statue of Sir John Pope Hennessy holding a copy of the Mauritian Constitution, Port Louis, Mauritius, 2012*** (Author)[81]

Emulating its invaluable contribution to the scientific, philosophical and cultural development of the Empire, a history the revisionist author Stephen Howe suggests has yet to be written, the Ascendency also played a crucial role in the institutionalisation of

[80] For an overview of these colonial power mechanisms, see Eagleton, Terry. 1988b. *Nationalism, Irony and Commitment.* Derry: Field Day Theatre Company Limited.

[81] I thank my colleagues at the Charles Telford Institute in Moko, Mauritius for first informing me on John Pope Hennessy's connection with the island.

Britain's consensual power project.[82] This nurtured brand of interventionism was foremost in the dynamics that constituted Anglo-Irish Colonial administration abroad. By navigating the contested political terrains between native elites, their subordinates and Whitehall, Ascendency figures such as the remarkable Cork colonial administrator, Sir John Pope Hennessy (Fig. 6), effectively put a brake on the need to use violence during times of conflict.[83] Opposed to the ridicule that surrounds the memory of their English peers, many Ascendency administrators are still highly regarded in the postcolonial states in which they once served.[84] However, though the Ascendency yielded great influence within Britain's consensual power project, the circumstance that permitted them to exert their command overseas occurred outside the ineptitude that typified their rule in Ireland.

Alienated from the Irish Catholic elite by their ethnicity and linguistically removed from the Gaelic speaking peasantry, the Ascendency were manifestly unable to enact the cultural affiliations necessary to have enticed the native into their ideological project. At every twist and turn in the coloniser's beleaguered relationship with the colonised, their inability to subdue the native implored them (in their mind) to use escalating amounts of force. In turn, this dysfunctional relationship had a compounding two-fold impact upon the political and social interactions between the coloniser and the colonised. First, the coloniser's dependency upon coercion significantly increased the already dour historical tensions that existed between them and their "other". By stoking the fire of disenchantment, the coloniser's violence fueled the native's ambitions for self-determination. Secondly, given the prejudicial dichotomies that informed the Ascendency's ideological belief system, tensions brought about by the use of coercion contributed to a situation where the coloniser would routinely misinterpret the cultural disposition and intentions of the colonised. This misreading would have dire consequences during the Famine when the

[82] Howe, Stephen. 2000. *Ireland and Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[83] Sir John Pope Hennessy's career is a testament to the cultural investment Ireland's colonial elite made in the consensual power model. During the long period of soul-searching that followed the Indian Mutiny (1857), Hennessy advocated a top-down restructuring of the colonial service. One of only a handful of Catholics to have counted amongst the Ascendency, Hennessy's Governorships in Britain's far-flung dominions, especially Mauritius, are remembered today for their openness and cultural tolerance. For an account of the life of John Pope Hennessy, see Lowe, Kate and Eugene McLaughlin. 1992. "Sir John Pope Hennessy and the 'native race craze': Colonial government in Hong Kong, 1877 – 1882." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (2): 223-247.

[84] See Jeffery, Keith, ed. 1996. *An Irish Empire?: Aspects of Ireland and The British Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

coloniser's perceptual impairment caused them to misconstrue the "material life conditions" that underpinned the native's existence.[85]

This relationship between the coloniser's ideology and their actions during the Famine has been examined by a number of authors.[86] These have, in the main, centered upon identifying how the coloniser's conviction for free market capitalism implored their use of laissez-faire interventions during the Famine.[87] By upholding that the public works and the workhouse were the only fit and proper forms of state sanctioned relief, the coloniser revealed the essence of their sociopolitical worldview. However, though the investigation presented here is informed by these studies, my principle concern is into comprehending what impact the coloniser's ideologically informed misrepresentation of the native had upon the silences that have surrounded the Famine.

One of the most contentious and little understood historical episodes brought about by the coloniser's misreckoning of the native can be found in Lord William Gregory's parliamentary enactment of his infamous "quarter acre" clause during the Famine. Still a point of conflict in nationalist conceptualisations of this watershed, the "quarter acre" or "Gregory clause" legislated that only those tenants who lived on allotments of one quarter of an acre or less were entitled to state relief. In addition, by offering landlords a legally framed economic incentive to consolidate their property interests, the "Gregory clause" secured both the collapse of the Irish Poor Law system and opened the floodgates on the mass evictions that occurred during the Famine.[88] Strangely, although he is fondly remembered in several former British colonies (notably Sri Lanka, where he was Governor from 1872 – 1877), through his parliamentary ratification of the "quarter acre" clause we get a sense of the belief system that clouded the coloniser's perception of the native. When seen in the light of the silences examined here, Lord Gregory's bill exposes not just his class's culpability in

[85] In this statement I refer here to Marx's concept of the conditions necessary for the economic reproduction of material existence. See Marx, Karl. 2014. "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy." Marxist Internet Archive. Accessed, July 27, https://www.marxist.org/archive/marx/works/1859/ctitique-pol-economy/preface.htm.

[86] For a summary of this position and the greater role of political ideology in creating famine events, see Keneally, Thomas. 2011. *Three Famines: Starvation and Politics.* New York: Public Affairs.

[87] See Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. 2001. *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Books.

[88] The Irish Poor Law was co-funded by the British Exchequer and the Poor Law rate. The rate was the amount of money Landlords were obliged to give in order to fund local workhouses and other forms of state relief. The amount was calculated on a number of factors, including the amount of tenants that inhabited a landlord's property. However, as evicted tenants were not part of this calculation, the situation emerged during the Famine where landlords used eviction to not only consolidate their property interests but also to reduce their legal and moral obligation to fund relief. For a concise historical breakdown of the Irish Poor Law, see Gray, Peter. 2009. *The Making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815-43.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

this event but also how the Ascendency's ideological worldview implored it to take such punitive actions against its "other".

Facile analogies

While Eagleton's interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* is deserving of its accolades, his methodology, which, as he claims, is deployed to expose hidden revisionist traits in popular cultural and media conceptualisations of the Famine, has, nevertheless, attracted controversy.[89] Of the several authors who have censured his approach, the Irish cultural theorist David Lloyd has been most strident in his criticism. Prior to Eagleton's very public rows with Richard Dawkins, Lloyd was his staunchest detractor.[90] In his review of Eagleton's book for the Irish Studies journal *Bullán*, Lloyd castigated him for making what he described as "facile analogies" between Brontë's novel and the historical circumstances that surrounded the Famine.[91] Echoing Eagleton's condemnation of leading English Marxist intellectuals, notably Raymond Williams, Lloyd also condemned his volume for being inspired by "a British leftism" that was, he wrote, "all too beholden to metropolitan liberalism for its critical rhetoric."[92] Ultimately, it was Eagleton's use of the master political narrative, Lloyd suggested, that had transformed what may have been a well-intentioned work into one that merely bolstered the revisionism it sought to unmask.

Embedded in cultural theory, Eagleton's reading of *Wuthering Heights* offers a divergent view on Irish history, literature and the Famine. As an outsider (although Eagleton has Irish ancestry he is in fact English) he navigates the contested terrains of Irish history with the independence of thought granted to the interloper. The details that many Irish writers either stumble upon or choose to ignore are examined with the discernment that comes to those who view the world from beyond the frame.[93] However, while Eagleton's approach as an outsider enables some salient observation, he does place undue emphasis on analogy.

[89] In a quote now famous in Irish Studies, Martin McQuillan gave a tough in cheek criticism of Eagleton's use of analogy and his Irish heritage by stating that if Eagleton were to be described as a '"Post-Marxist"' that he would in reaction "cough up his pint of Guinness". See McQuillan, Martin. 2002. "Irish Eagleton: Of Ontological Imperialism and Colonial Mimicry." *Irish Studies Review* (1):36.

[90] Eagleton and Dawkins had had several public sparring matches. This stems from Eagleton's review of *The God Delusion,* where he criticised Dawkin's authority to discuss the philosophy of religion by stating: "Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology". See Eagleton, Terry. 2006. Review of *The God Delusion*, by Richard Dawkins. "Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching." *London Review of Books.* Accessed December 21, 2012, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n20/eagl01_.html.

[91] Lloyd, David. 1997. "Cultural Theory and Ireland." *Bullán* 3 (1): 91.

[92] Ibid., 90. Raymond Williams supervised Eagleton's PhD. But following Eagleton's embracement of critical theory, he scorned Williams' for his formalist perspective.

His evaluation of what he sees as a historical parallel between Irish revolutionary socialism and that which flourished in the early years of the Soviet Union is a case in point. By citing a vague story which claims that the last survivor of the 1905 Potemkin mutiny, Ivan Beshoff, made his way to Galway to open a chipper (a fish and chip shop), Eagleton's analogies tend to overstretch his summations (Fig. 7).[94]

Figure 7. ***Beshoff's Chipper Restaurant, O'Connell Street, Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

Compelling it might be, Eagleton's version of Ivan Beshoff's story is, however, not entirely accurate. Contemporary accounts confirm that on leaving Russia, Beshoff ventured not to Galway but Dublin, where he opened a chipper in 1914. The Bishoff chain of restaurants holds this claim to this day. Nevertheless, given that Eagleton's maternal family hail from County Galway, and he claims to spend time there, the source of his recollection might relate to a graphic depiction of this story he may have stumbled upon. In the mid-1990s, as I remember, there was a chipper opposite Monroe's Tavern in Galway City. On the walls of this well-patronised establishment, alongside motion picture stills from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, was a chronicle of Beshoff's epic tale. Could it be that, disorientated by pints of "plain" (Guinness) and the chipper's vinegar infused historical haze, Eagleton failed to recognise far more significant connections between Ireland and revolutionary socialism?[95] For instance, what impact had the Irish feminist Mary Burn, who was Fredrick

[94] Though Eagleton's analogy is a footnote, it does, however, provide a sense of his methodological approach. See Eagleton, *Heathcliff,* 239.

Engels informant and partner in Manchester, have on the discourse formations that led to the formation of the early Soviet state? [96]

Despite its shortcomings, by allowing *Wuthering Heights* to be examined as a work entwined in the ideological dilemmas faced by the Ascendency in colonial Ireland, Eagleton's reading provides a framework by which to comprehend a dimension for photography's Famine silencing omitted from revisionist interpretations. Principally, by ignoring Ireland's complex relationship with colonisation – being both a "home country" of Britain but in all essential regards a colony – the revisionist position has overlooked what impact the coloniser's cultural estrangement from the Irish might have had upon their perceptual readiness to have taken Famine images. Due to the colonisers' failure to induce a sense of affinity in the native, their relationship with the colonised was one marked by a mutually felt discontent. And if "discontent be", as Oscar Wilde reminds us, "the first step in the progress of a man or a nation", then for the Irish it abounded.[97] Correspondingly, for the country's colonising elite, this cultural dissatisfaction produced a flawed perception in their minds, whereupon all aspects of the native's appearance, political economy and culture were perceived as "other" to the virtues that governed their presence in Ireland. What I argue here is that, although photography's absence from the Famine record might be explained on historical grounds, the medium's silencing has had the unintended result of placing in critical focus the cultural and political incongruities by which the coloniser perceived their "other".

Wuthering Heights and the "other"

Published in 1847, the year eulogised in folk memory of the Famine as "Black 47", reading the character Heathcliff for his potential Hibernian origins in *Wuthering Heights* exposes a curious representational parallel with the prejudicial beliefs through which the Ascendency perceived their native "other".[98] Reared as a son by old Mr. Earnshaw after he "picked up"

[96] The Irish feminist Mary Burn (Byrne) is deserving of much closer historical attention. She lived in Salford and is said to have met Engels on his arrival in Lancashire in 1842. It was Burn who introduced Engels on the horrors of industrial Manchester. The couple lived together until Burn's death in 1861, but on account of their beliefs they never married. Marx, who was a notorious social conservative, disapproved of their relationship. After Mary's passing, Engels commenced a relationship with her sister, Lissie. The two eventually married when Lissie was on her death bed. See Delany, William. 2001. *The Green and the Red: Revolutionary Republicanism and Socialism in Irish History: 1848-1923.* New York: Writer's Showcase.

[97] The quote is taken from Wilde's play *A Women of No Importance.* See Wilde, Oscar. 1970. *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde.* London: Collins. 456.

[98] The term Black '47 is attributed to what is widely regarded as the bleakest part of the Famine. It was the year following the second failure of the potato crop in 1846. The term had transcended into popular memory, particularly in the United States where it has been adopted by the country's leading Celtic-punk act, Black '47. For a comprehensive account of the potato crop failures, see Donnelly, *The Great Irish.*

the dusty street urchin from a Liverpool street, Heathcliff's precarious social position was inherently that of the Irish. The kindness old Earnshaw lavished upon Heathcliff as a young child, and instruction not to persecute him was in stark contrast to the degradation he suffered at the hands of his spiteful adoptive brother, Hindley. Dark, recalcitrant and speaking "gibberish",[99] the character Heathcliff is a study in cultural contrast.

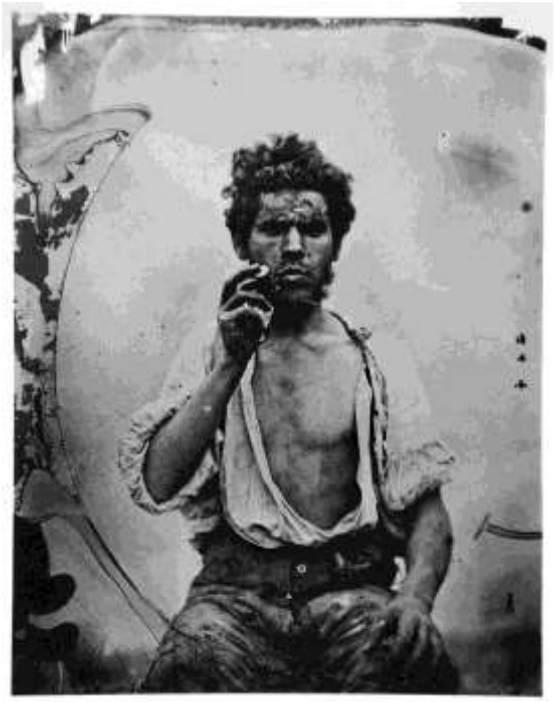

Figure 8. **Unnamed Irish labourer from the Sexton Collection**

(Photographer unknown, circa 1855)

Remarkably, when reading Brontë's descriptions of Heathcliff as a dark outsider, I cannot help but perceive a thematic link between her depiction of him as "other" and the mysterious photograph of an itinerant Irish laborer from the Sexton Collection (Fig. 8).[100] A nameless subject, this image, which dates from just after the Famine, is one of the earliest known photographic studies of a member from the many diverse social collectives that made up the rural Irish poor. Significantly, as can be recognised from his swarthy appearance, within the photographic frame little distinguished him from the natives that captivated the imagination of 19th-century travel writers. Moreover, by flaunting his social incongruity to the camera, the physical similarity of the Irish labourer to Brontë's portrayal

[99] The reference to Heathcliff speaking "gibberish" is from Brontë, Emily. 1995. *Wuthering Heights.* London: Penguin Classics. 42.

[100] Carey Schofield notes in her description of this image that it is a copy of a long lost daguerreotype. However, the fluid like eddies on the left hand side of the photograph suggest that the original was captured on a wet collodion plate. See Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs.*

of Heathcliff divulges, I suggest, both the possibility of her protagonist's Hibernian origins and the culturally ingrained system of physiognomic beliefs that constituted the colonial worldview.[101] As can be discerned from this and other images from the early history of photography, before the workhouse and the factory had robbed the inhabitants of the British and Irish Archipelago of their connection with nature, they were as dark as any "other" living on the Empire's periphery.

Figure 9. ***The Brontë Parsonage, Haworth, Yorkshire, 2012*** (Author)

But what does this comparative relationship between Brontë's descriptions of Heathcliff as "other" and the image of the Irish labourer in the photograph (Fig. 8) tell us? When read for the possibility of uncovering an overlooked past they reveal a great deal. For beyond the superficial physical similarities, Brontë's novel discloses, I suggest, that it was not just Heathcliff's appearance that defined him as "other" – it was his liminality. Put another way, when the character Heathcliff is read for the possibility of him being Irish we see that it was his insider/outsider cultural status that was to haunt him all his life. As a boy he was

[101] There has been spirited speculation about Heathcliff's background. On page 58 of the 1995 Penguin Classics edition of *Wuthering Heights,* Brontë describes Heathcliff as a "Lascar"; on page 42 she states that he was a "gypsy brat". Nelly Dean also provides a clue to his origins when she asserts on page 67, concerning Heathcliff's appearance, that "your father was Emperor of China and your mother an Indian queen". Ultimately, however, Brontë keeps her readers in suspense regarding his background, always alluding to him being "dark". This reference has led to suggestions that Heathcliff may have come from Africa. In Andrea Arnold's intriguing filmic depiction of *Wuthering Heights* (2011), Heathcliff is unambiguously of African descent. Oddly, the Irish living in mud cabins, not unlike those on the West African plains, were often referred to in the accounts of British travel writers as "Hottentots". Heathcliff's potential Celtic origins can also be read from Peter Hammond's 1978 BBC television adaptation of *Wuthering Heights.* Played by the Scottish actor Ken Hutchison, in this series Heathcliff is depicted with the appearance and mannerisms characteristic of conservative representations of Irish Travellers.

persecuted for it; so ruthlessly that it caused him to flee into exile. Even when Heathcliff returned to the Heights as a man of means, he could not escape the torment of his cultural disposition. His prosperity, the source of which always remained hidden, had neither tamed his temperament nor the manner of his ways. Lacking the moral attributes of characters set in Victorian era rags to riches tales, Heathcliff was both corrupt and corrupting. His vindictiveness, gambling and unconventional living arrangements, as Mr. Lockwood observed when he stopped at the Heights as an uninvited guest,[102] branded him with that diabolical cultural trait Thomas Carlyle pronounced when denigrating the Irish to be "the sorest evil this country has to strive with".[103] Similar but different, in many ways Heathcliff might just be the quintessential Irish "other".

While Eagleton's suggestion that Heathcliff was Irish had generated a good deal of interest during the sesquicentennial, his theory, however, offers nothing new. The author Winifred Gerin first raised this possibility in her 1971 biography of Emily Brontë.[104] Alongside a reproduction of James Mahony's famous Famine scene from the *Illustrated London News* (hereafter referred to as *ILN*) "Boy and Girl at Cahera", Gerin claimed that Brontë had based the character of Heathcliff on the dark aliens her brother, Branwell, had described seeing to her after he visited Liverpool in August 1845.[105] On sabbatical from the family home at Haworth (Fig. 9) following a series of opium-induced psychotic episodes, Gerin suggested that the timing of Branwell's visit to the Merseyside port, just as the Famine had broken out, would have provided him with the opportunity of witnessing the first waves of Irish refugees fleeing this catastrophe.

There can be no doubting that Branwell Brontë would have seen numerous Irish in Liverpool. Post the 1801 Act of Union, the port became an epicenter in the passage of seasonal workers and nomads that resulted from Ireland's absorption into Britain's free market economy. The German travel writer Johann Georg Kohl observed this human cargo when he visited Britain and Ireland during the winter of 1842.[106] Writing from Dublin, Kohl

[102] Mr Lockwood, who along with Nelly Dean narrates *Wuthering Heights*, was Heathcliff's tenant at Thrushcross Grange. On his second visit to the Heights, Lockwood arrives during a fierce storm and is refused lodging by Heathcliff. After being ushered away to a small room, he has a frightening supernatural encounter with the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw.

[103] I have sourced Carlyle's comments from Lloyd, David. 2011. *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800-2000*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 32.

[104] See Gerin, Winifred. 1971. *Emily Brontë*. Oxford: Clarendon.

[105] Ibid.

[106] See Kohl, J. G. 1844. *Travels in Ireland*. London: Bruce and Wyld.

recollected that Liverpool was inundated by Irish moving back and forth between Ireland and Britain.[107] However, though Branwell would have observed a great many Irish, they would not have been Famine refugees. Despite the fascinating interpretative possibilities open up by this scenario, Branwell's visit to Liverpool was far too early for him to have witnessed the deluge brought about by this event. As the historical record attests, the Famine exodus did not commence until after the second failure of the potato crop during the summer of 1846 – when the full impact of Britain's laissez-faire approach to relief began to bite. Regrettably, as the revisionist author Roy Foster alludes to in his writing on Nationalist myth making, the case for the character of Heathcliff being inspired by the flight of Famine refugees can only ever be a fictional possibility.[108]

Granted that Heathcliff's Celtic heritage may be in need of closer scrutiny, *Wuthering Heights* does, nonetheless, have one indisputable connection with Ireland; Patrick Brontë, Emily's father, was Irish. An Anglican minister who long harboured parliamentary aspirations, Brontë came from a poor farming family in Drumballyroney, County Down.[109] In an act of cultural stealth employed by Ascendency figures from the politician and philosopher Edmund Burke to the Duke of Wellington, Brontë actively concealed his Irish identity.[110] Changing his name from Prunty (O'Prunty or O'Pronntaigh in Gaelic) before arriving at Haworth, Brontë's life was dominated by his staged pretences at being English.[111] Never so contemptuous was this cultural "shape shifting" than on the occasion Brontë's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls, who heralded from Killead in Country Antrim, asked for his daughter Charlotte's hand in marriage. Echoing the physiological torment Brontë subjected his children to on account of their ancestry, he rebuked Nicholls' request not simply because of his lowly social standing as a "poor… curate" but because he was a "poor… curate" who also happened to be "Irish".[112]

[107] Ibid.

[108] I refer here to Roy Foster's argument that the nationalist worldview is not just indebted to an archaic understanding of the past but is a reading of history based upon fiction. See Foster, Robert Fitzroy. 2001. *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland*. London: The Penguin Press.

[109] Welch, Robert. 1996. *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[110] For an account of Edmund Burke's postulations with being "an Englishman", see Clarke, J. C.D. 2001. *Edmund Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France: a Critical Edition*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[111] Welch, *The Oxford,* 65.

[112] Dinsdale, Ann. 2006. *The Brontës at Haworth*. London: Frances Lincoln. 37.

Though Patrick Brontë's acts of cultural duplicity were elaborately staged, they fooled no one but himself. In a twist to the old adage "what the English can never remember, the Irish can never forget",[113] the subject of the Brontë's humble origins was one about which their social rivals always took great pleasure in reminding them. Such was the case when, after Branwell was involved in a ruckus with his father's political opponents on the Haworth hustings, he was confronted by a burning effigy of himself holding a potato.[114] Recalling the caricatures of Daniel O'Connell that appeared in the xenophobic publication *Punch,* where the Home Rule leader's head had metamorphosed into a "lumper" potato (the variety most associated with the Irish peasant), the Brontës' Irishness was a scar they could never conceal.[115]

Branwell's Ghost

Poignantly, in one of several instances where the allegory of *Wuthering Heights* met with the real life theatrics of the Brontës*,* the novel's themes of cultural ambivalence, absence and identity erasure converged in the biography of Emily's desperately forlorn brother, Branwell. Home tutored by his father after the tragic death of his two older sisters much was expected of him as the only Brontë boy. This optimism seemed, at first, well founded. In his youth Branwell displayed all the attributes thought to have coincided with one destined to make their mark in life. But living with his father's unbridled ambitions and the literary prowess of his younger sisters proved difficult for him. His attempts at writing were restricted to a series of anonymous prose and a pitiful beggar's ticket scribbled out just before his death in 1848 as a penniless, drug-addicted alcoholic.[116]

A social outcast whose wanton self-destruction mirrored what the theorist Anthony S. Wohl sees as a concealed psychological stalemate within mid-Victorian society, Branwell's fanciful life circumstances also encountered photography.[117] In an attempt to sever himself

[113] This axiom has many variations. Christopher Hitchens, who had locked horns with Eagleton on several occasions, traces this version to the writings of the English social historian George Malcolm Young. See Hitchens, Christopher. 2000. *Unacknowledged Legislation: Writers in the Public Sphere*. London: Verso. 98.

[114] Barker, Juliet. 1994. *The Brontës,* London: Abacus. 314.

[115] What is interesting about the O'Connell caricatures in *Punch* is that of the many types of potato available in Ireland at that time, the "Liberator" is identified with the variety most associated with the Irish peasant, the "lumper". Due to its prolific yields and adaptation to poor Irish soils, the lumper made up the majority of Ireland's potato crop in the years prior to the Famine. However, though the lumper was bountiful, it was also, tragically, the variety most susceptible to the blight *Phytophthora infestans.* See O' Gráda, Cormac. 1993. "The Lumper Potato and the Famine." *History Ireland* (1): 22 – 23.

[116] For an account of Branwell's writing, see Gerin, Winifred. 1961. *Branwell Brontë.* London: Thomas Nelson.

[117] See Wohl, Anthony S. 1978. *The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses*. London: Croom Helm.

from his father's purse strings, and to pay the enormous slates he had accumulated at pubs in and around Haworth and Bradford, he took up painting just as the daguerreotype was ravaging that industry.[118] Mimicking his doleful literary efforts, Branwell painted with all the sincerity befitting of a bad portrait miniaturist. His most recognisable work, the "Pillar Portrait", hints at the identity erasure that obsessed the Ascendency (Fig. 10). Akin to the attempts by Stalinist era retouchers to rewrite the past by removing Leon Trotsky's representation from historical scenes, in this painting Branwell's likeness was brushed out with the addition of a clumsily rendered column. His presence beneath this pentimento was revealed after the artwork was subject to infrared photographic examination in the 1960s.[119]

Figure 10. ***Photographic reproduction of the "Pillar Portrait" by Branwell Brontë (1833 - 4)***

Majority opinion holds that Branwell had painted out his image during one of the depressive bouts that plagued him in his final years.[120] The pressure of having to live with his father's thwarted ambitions, together with the humiliation he brought to the family name after his scandalous affair with Mrs. Robinson (the wife of a local cleric), had finally gotten the better of him. However, following a detailed examination of the painting's

[118] Details surrounding Branwell Brontë's painting career remain uncertain. The Brontë scholar Christopher Heywood suggests that Branwell had ceased his art practice in 1839. See Heywood, Christopher. 2009. "The Column in Branwell's 'Pillar' Portrait Group." *Brontë Studies* 34 (1): 1-19. However, Terry Eagleton, on the other hand, suggests in his reading of Emily's novel that her brother had commenced his painting career in 1839. Either way 1839, the year photography's invention was announced to the world, is a significant date in the summation of both authors.

[119] For an account of the infrared examination of this painting, see Campbell, Marie. 2001. *Strange World of The Brontës.* London: Sigma Press.

[120] For one of many views on this subject, see Smith Kenyon, Karen. 2003. *The Brontë Family: Passionate Literary Geniuses.* Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company.

provenance and technical execution, the Brontë scholar Christopher Heywood claims that this whitewashing was not executed by Branwell but, rather, by his sister, Charlotte.[121] Heywood contends that prior to her eagerly awaited visit from Elizabeth Gaskell in 1853, who described this work as "common-looking", Charlotte had expurgated her brother's representation in an attempt to eliminate his memory.[122]

Lost for many years after Arthur Bell Nicholls (who would later marry Charlotte) had taken the painting back home with him to Ireland, due to the pillar rendering's deterioration over time, and photography's proficiency at peeling back the layers of history, Branwell's image is now revealed as an eerie silhouette.[123] The only detail not eliminated from this photographic remnant, known as "Branwell's Ghost", was its creator's piercing left eye. Heywood speculates that this peculiar effect came about due to a combination of the paintings poor storage in Ireland and Charlotte's haste in working with an unfamiliar medium.[124] However, though "Branwell's Ghost" might amount to little no more than a historical curio, when examined as parallel text the image does, in a Brontë-esque kind of way, expose the ideological interconnections that underpin the Famine's silencing. What I argue here is that, analogous to Eagleton's thesis on the absence of the Famine from the canon of late 19th century Ascendency writing, photography's silencing of this catastrophe can be read as consequential of the failure of this class's ideological project in Ireland. And whilst issues surrounding the early medium's technical limitations would have been detrimental to the recording of a Famine scene, our inability to locate even the most transitory photographic reference to this event is suggestive of the social mechanisms that had brought about it's silencing.

In making this comparison between the reading of Branwell's spectral-like image and the ideological conditions that underpin the Famine's silencing, I do not wish to draw, as David Lloyd asserts of Eagleton's analysis of *Wuthering Heights*, "facile analogies" between photography's absence and the circumstances that have concealed the event's painful

[121] Heywood's research is convincing. The only doubt I have in my mind, however, is his suggestion that Branwell Brontë was an "accomplished" painter. For anyone who has ever seen Branwell's paintings at the Brontë Museum in Haworth, they are akin to a chamber of horrors. See Heywood "The Column".

[122] Gaskell's remark is from a letter to an unknown recipient dated September 1853. See Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn. 1997. *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 249.

[123] See Heywood "The Column". Heywood's paper notes this process in some detail.

[124] Both Branwell and Charlotte Brontë received training in oil painting from the noted Leeds artist William Robinson. See Walker, Michael. 2003. "William Robinson – An Artist of Distinction."*Brontë Studies* (28): 161 – 166.

memory.[125] Rather, by serving to extend the analytical possibilities that have emerged since the sesquicentennial, the recovery of Branwell's Ghost through photography grants us a measure of the cultural apprehensions the Ascendency held for their "other" following the collapse of their hegemonic project in Ireland. Just as Marx had seen in the camera obscura's inverted, upside down image the means by which ideology concealed the social relationships of capitalism, through the critical reading of Branwell's Ghost we enact a historical recovery of the conditions that belie the Famine's silencing. It is towards examining the circumstances that brought about this reticence, and the role played by colonial hegemony in the silencing of the "other", that I direct my attention to below.

The looking-glass

Applauded by several authors, notably Arnold Kettle, as a veiled socio-economic criticism of English society at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, when *Wuthering Heights* is read by way of the Brontës' identity predicament it exposes a sense of the cultural animosity that dominated the Ascendency's interactions with its native "other".[126] As documented in the correspondence of the Anglo-Irish author Maria Edgeworth, whose use of the genre of the historical novel is said to have inspired Brontë's writing, in the years preceding the Famine the Ascendency had become remarkably dispassionate about the plight of the native.[127] In a letter to her brother, Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, dated 19 February 1834, Edgeworth, whose nuanced characterisations of the Irish contrasted the cajoling buffoons of literary and Music Hall representations, professed that she was now incapable of inscribing the native into her stories.[128] Referring indirectly to the movements for Catholic Emancipation and Home Rule, Edgeworth declared that the country's heightened political atmosphere had distanced her from those she had once written about so caringly.[129] No longer a curiosity, the native had become restless. The blame for this transformation, she went on to suggest, rested solely with the Irish, for the reverence the natives once held towards their benevolent masters was now long gone; in its place, Edgeworth claimed, stood a

[125] Lloyd, *Bullán.*

[126] See Kettle, Arnold. 1960. *An Introduction to the English Novel – Volume One:* New York: Harper Torch Books. Eagleton, too, has explored this dimension of Emily Brontë's writing. See Eagleton, Terry. 1988a. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontë's*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press.

[127] See Gerin, *Emily Brontë.*

[128] This famous letter appears in a number of publications on the life of Maria Edgeworth. See Colvin, Christina, ed. 1971. *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England, 1813-1844*. Oxford: Clarendon.

[129] For an account of Maria Edgeworth's disharmony in the context of the Ascendency's relationship with the native, see Corbett, Mary Jean. 2004. *Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790 – 1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

vulgar discontent through which the Ascendency was perceived by the Irish as the source of all their considerable complaints.

Figure 11. ***The Shadow of King Billy on the Queen Square, Bristol, 2012*** (Author)[130]

Maria Edgeworth's avowal that her enmity towards the Irish was brought about by the native's contempt for the Ascendency was not solely indicative of her class perceptions (which by the 1840s would harden to accommodate sectarian dogma) but also reflected the elements that made up Ireland's pre-Famine demographic composition. As the class producing the country's landlords, lawyers, scientists and judges, the Ascendency yielded an influence disproportional to their size.[131] In life, as in death, the Ascendency and its representations cast an imposing shadow across the landscape (Figs. 11 & 12). Yet in some ways this presence was misleading and served to mask the influence of forces working upon Irish society from the outside. The crippling economic recession that occurred in Ireland following the cessation of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 illustrates just how vulnerable the country was to these external influences. In only a few short months, the enormous demand Britain had placed upon Irish agricultural production to sustain its war effort with France collapsed as European markets reopened following the end of

[130] William of Orange's statue on Dublin's College Green, another Ascendency shrine that has been "blasted" from history, was struck to celebrate his victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Draped in the regalia of an all-conquering Roman emperor, the statue's triumphalism epitomised the Ascendency's monumentalisation of its history.

[131] Some estimates suggest that the Anglo-Irish Ascendency comprised of as little as 2000 families. See Curtis, L. P. 1970. "The Anglo-Irish Predicament." *Twentieth Century Studies*, 4: 46-62. Anthony Malcomson has argued that Ascendency can be perceived in even more limited terms. Although they had diverse ethnic origins constitutive of English, Anglo-Norman and old English settlers, their social process as a class was limited to those families that sat in the Irish Parliament. See Malcomson, Anthony. 1978. *John Foster: The Politics of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

hostilities.[132] And while the Ascendency's passion for frivolous pursuits had always heightened its visibility, its conspicuousness was exaggerated by the lack of any sizable middle class in Ireland prior to the Famine. Except in Ulster, where a small rural bourgeois had developed around the economies of plantation agriculture, in the rest of the country the middle class were desperately thin on the ground.[133]

Figure 12. ***Henry Cheere's monument to Robert the 19th Earl of Kildare, Christchurch Cathedral (Church of Ireland), Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

This lack of a homegrown bourgeois was to have two notable effects on the Ascendency's fortunes and how they were perceived by the native. First, in contrast with England, where the influence of the middle class had caused the aristocracy to divert their capital interests into industrial commerce, in Ireland the country's landed elite kept up their old ways. Engels observed this when travelling through Ireland with Mary Burn in the spring of 1856. Writing to Marx, Engels noted that, unlike in Britain, where the gentry had become "wholly bourgeoisified", in Ireland the Ascendency amused themselves in all manner of "diversion … up to their eyes in depth".[134] Secondly, the scarcity of a homegrown bourgeois amplified the Ascendency's presence to a point where they had become a looming target; so much so that, as can be sensed from the writings of Nationalist authors, notably John Mitchel, the

[132] See O' Gráda, Cormac. 1994. *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780 – 1939.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[133] See Connolly, Sean. J., Robert A. Houston and Robert J. Morris, eds. 1995. *Conflict, Identity and Economic Development: Ireland and Scotland, 1600 – 1939.* Lancashire: Carnegie Publishing.

[134] See the letter Fredrick Engels to Karl Marx, Manchester, 23 May 1856. Marxist Internet Archive. http://www.marxist.org/archive/marx/works/1856/letters/56_05_23.htm.

Ascendency were perceived by the Irish as "tyrants".[135] Significantly, when considering the cultural estrangement noted in Maria Edgeworth's letter, it was this belief in the Ascendency's mind that the Irish had seen it in such negative terms that caused even the most enlightened amongst this class to distance themselves from the native.

Though revealing, to the critical eye, Maria Edgeworth's letter holds far greater understandings for uncovering the silences examined here. In a statement that predicted both her and Pakenham's later connection with the early history of photography, she concluded her correspondence with this now famous statement:[136] "to look at their faces in the looking-glass … would only break the glass, and curse the fool who held the mirror up to nature".[137] In what has become known through literary studies as the "looking-glass passage", in this statement Edgeworth reiterates that the political and social upheavals that had swept the country had caused such alarm amongst Ireland's colonial elite that even those who, like her, once held moderate views towards the native now felt alienated from them.

Paradoxically, by her use of a photographic metaphor, Edgeworth alluded to the ways by which the ideological mechanisms this chapter has demonstrated were in no small way responsible for the Famine's silencing to have occurred. Comparable to the social anxieties that forced Charlotte Brontë to chance her hand at oil painting, they were a similar, though differently articulated, gesture to the manifest cultural estrangement the coloniser held for the colonised. In this sense, Edgeworth's photographic analogy is both prophetic and illuminating. Not only does it recognise the ideological contentions that prompted her inability to represent the native, but it also acknowledges how these cultural comprehensions would reemerge when the "other" was recovered by the authors of the late 19th-century Celtic Revival. As I demonstrate below, the writers who were haunted by

[135] See Mitchel, John. *1861. The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps).* Glasgow: Cameron Ferguson. John Mitchel was an Ulster Presbyterian and a writer for the nationalist newspaper, *The Nation*. He had an astute sense of how Ireland's colonial domination was central to the circumstances that gave rise to the Famine. Mitchel summed this situation up in his famous quote "The Almighty, indeed, sent the blight, but the English created the Famine". After being transported to Van Diemen's Land for his role in the Rising of 1848, he escaped to America where he later became an advocate for the cause of the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War. Remarkably, the connection between the horrors that both the black slaves of America and the Irish were subjected to, which during the early stages of the Famine were publically articulated in Ireland and Britain by the runaway slave and statesmen Frederick Douglass, eluded Mitchel's perception.

[136] Maria Edgeworth was a friend of the scientist and photographic pioneer Sir John Herschel. She notes having seen several of his early experiments with the medium. Upon attending the opening of Richard Beard's daguerreotype studio in London upon in May 1841, Edgeworth also became one of the first people in Europe to have a portrait taken in a commercial setting. Additionally, her brother, Pakenham, who is also an important (though unrecognised) figure in the early history of photography may have been the first person to practice the medium in India. See chapters two and seven of this thesis regarding Michael Pakenham's photographic practice.

[137] Kelleher, Margaret. 1997. ""Philosophick Views"? Maria Edgeworth and the Great Famine." *Eire-Ireland* 32 (1): 41-62.

what Claire Nally describes as the "repressed guilt" the Ascendency held for their role in the Famine had, through its literary construction of the Irish peasant, silenced the "other" in a fundamentally different kind of way.[138]

New forms of silencing

Though the cultural ambivalence Maria Edgeworth notes in her letter to Pakenham had its origins in the social and political upheavals that had beset Ireland since the late 18th-century, these events alone fail to explain the level of animosity the Ascendency held for their Irish "other". The historical relationship between English landlords and their tenants illustrates this point. While the English tenantry had greater rights than Irish peasants extensively (and after the successes of political democracy never again saw uprisings matching those of the Digger (True Leveler) insurrections of the 17th century)[139] their relationship with the landlord class could hardly have been described as harmonious. Periodic conflict, as reflected in Heathcliff's dealings with his tenants, was far from the exception.[140] Moreover, by the 1840s, the unprecedented demographic changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution had largely undone the social contract Charles Stuart Trevelyan and other British commentators on "The Irish Crisis" claimed to have constituted a morally binding force between English landlords and their tenantry.[141]

Divided though the Ascendency were from the Irish by their language, ethnicity and culture, the sphere of influence that would have offered them the means by which to entice the native into their hegemony was simply not open to them. This domain was, of course, religion. In all matters, religion framed the conflicting worldviews that separated these protagonists apart. So rigid was this confessional divide that it allows the excessively broad binaries of "coloniser", "colonised", "native" and "other" to be applied with a degree of analytical precision. As might be gathered from the evangelically fueled violence used to suppress young Heathcliff's resistance to his baptism, religion also held the key to the

[138] See Nally, Claire. 2009. *Envisioning Ireland: W. B. Yeats's Occult Nationalism.* Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang. 166.

[139] See Ager, A. W. 2014. *Crime and Poverty in 19th Century England: The Economy of Makeshifts.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

[140] I refer specifically to Heathcliff's dealings with his tenant, Mr Lockwood, at Thrushcross Grange.

[141] My reference here is to the claims made by Charles Stuart Trevelyan in his publication *The Irish Crisis*. Apart from its sweeping generalisations, Trevelyan's work is notorious for asserting that at the time of writing, late 1847, the Famine had ended, **–** when in fact it had just entered a new and even more terrifying phase. Trevelyan was Secretary for the Treasury and Head of Famine relief measures in Ireland. See Trevelyan, C. E. 1848. *The Irish Crisis.* London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans.

coloniser realising their power ambitions in Ireland.[142] Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that had the Ascendency established a connection with the native via faith, they would have initiated through religious observance an affinity that their centuries-long coercive project was incapable of achieving.

Though the coloniser's attempts to convert the native were met with a resounding failure, they did not come about due to a lack of trying. By appointing the Church of Ireland as the Established Church, together with the imposition of Penal Laws, tithes and proselytising missions, the Ascendency invested considerable effort into separating the Irish from their spiritual yoke, Catholicism.[143] As their experience in Britain's far-flung dominions had proven, once the soul of the native had been won, their hearts and minds would soon follow. But in Ireland, the Ascendency's efforts to divorce the native from their religious beliefs only served to distance these protagonists further apart. Fashioned by a shared past, so closely connected were the Catholic Irish with their faith that it influenced their entire existence. Religion was the lens through which they took meaning from the world. The underlying strength of this bond should be measured, I suggest, not by the ability of the Irish to adopt introduced devotional practices, as one author has argued,[144] but how, even when a sizable Catholic middle class emerged after the Famine, it had (at least until the social revolutions of the 1960s) a measured secularising influence upon the country as a whole.

More than any of the power plays that dominated the cultural, social and political landscapes of colonial Ireland, the antagonisms held by the two principal religious confessions defined the historically troubled relationship that existed between the

[142] Emily Brontë does not make reference to Heathcliff's christening directly. Through the voice of Nelly Dean, she only mentions that the name "Heathcliff" served for "both" the character's "Christian and surname". Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* 43. Therefore, the reader is led to presume that Heathcliff was baptised. However, in Andrea Arnold's filmic interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* (2011) much more is made of this ceremony. In a scene set inside a Methodist church, Heathcliff stands in front of the baptismal font oblivious to the ritual he is about to undertake. All proceeds according to plan until, on account of Heathcliff's adverse reaction to having water poured over his head, he is manhandled. During the ensuing struggle, Heathcliff breaks away and runs off onto the moor. Upon returning to the Heights, Heathcliff is confronted by old Mr. Earnshaw, who assaults him in a fit of evangelical rage. Significantly, in Arnold's portrayal the viewer is left with the impression that Heathcliff was baptised in name alone. Like the Irish, he never quite became part of the fold.

[143] Mid-19th century Irish Catholicism was never a homogenous block. It was both structured along the parameters set by ecclesiastical orthodoxies and, as Raymond Gillespie has demonstrated through his study of early modern religion in Ireland, a system of "negotiated" belief that was subject to significant local, regional and historical variances. Nonetheless, by offering its adherents the affinity a shared sense of faith provides, Catholicism afforded the Irish a notion of collective identity. See Gillespie, Raymond. 1993. *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[144] I refer here to the Emmet Larkin's claim that due to an ecclesiastical reformation undertaken by the Catholic Church in Ireland in the years during and after the Famine that a "Devotional Revolution" took place. See Larkin, Emmet. 1972. "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875." *American Historical Review* 77 (3): 625-652.

coloniser and the native. Whilst these adversaries, following the culmination of Penal Laws in the early 19th century, may have had good reason to anticipate an improvement in their situation, during periods of conflict the coloniser's inability to implement their authority by consent implored them to employ (in their minds) progressively more repressive means of control. It was from this compounding mix of social estrangement and escalating violence that on the eve of the Famine had produced the insurmountable cultural gap that separated the coloniser from their "other". Significantly, what I argue here is that to glean a greater understanding of the circumstances that surround the Famine's silencing, we must examine the cultural divide between these two protagonists. It is within this gap, as Maria Edgeworth alludes to through her "looking-glass passage", where the ideological beliefs that brought about the generational muzzling of this event are to be found.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the cultural divide evident from Edgeworth's letter was solely an outcome of the coloniser's coercive project. Though inflammatory, these actions only reveal part of the story regarding the mechanisms that instigated the Famine's silencing. As the historical record attests, the relationship between these protagonists was significantly worsened by the disastrous social, political and economic impediments the Ascendency imposed upon the native. Time and time again, the Ascendency's cultural estrangement from the Irish prompted it into actions that contributed to widening the already substantial fissure that separated it from its "other". Even the Ascendency's most liberalising officials initiated undertakings that were to have such a grievous impact upon the native that they have either been whitewashed by conservative historians or buried beneath repentant cultural memory projects; again, the actions of Lord Gregory during the Famine are necessary to scrutinise here. The husband of the Anglo-Irish dramatist Lady Augusta Gregory, whose late 19th century Celtic Revival sought to redefine Irish culture as a reaction to modernisation, it was Lord Gregory's parliamentary enactment of the "quarter acre" clause that his biographers – including his wife – have either glossed over or disregarded out of hand.[145]

[145] The political circumstances that informed Gregory's enactment of the quarter acre clause are still some of the most historically contentious and little examined aspects of the Famine. Lady Gregory barely addresses them in her account of his life. See Gregory, Augusta. 1894. *Sir William Gregory, K. C. M. G., Formerly Member of Parliament and Sometime Governor of Ceylon. An Autobiography.* London: John Murray. Similarly, Gregory's biographer, the historian Brian Jenkins**,** has been hard pressed to explain them, preferring instead to focus upon Gregory's patronage of the Arts. In his lengthy work, Jenkins devotes two pages to an uncritical assessment of the "Gregory clause". See Jenkins, Brian. 1986. *Sir William Gregory of Coole.* Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: C. Smythe.

The co-founder of the early Irish state's most influential cultural institution, the Abbey Theatre, Lady Gregory was an avid writer, folklorist and collector.[146] Her prodigious memory recovery project at the Gort Workhouse and the townlands surrounding the Gregory demesne at Coole Park in County Galway had a profound philosophical impact upon William Butler Yeats' conceptualisation of the archetypal Irish peasant. Through Lady Gregory's memory archive and Yeats' obsession with the Occult, the "other" forged by the Celtic Revival was a culturally homogenous figure shrouded in the mists of the "Celtic Twilight".[147] Hence, by being struck from the same block, the cultural diversity characteristic of the diverse social collectives that made up the rural Irish poor was expunged in favour of an all-encompassing ideological narrative.

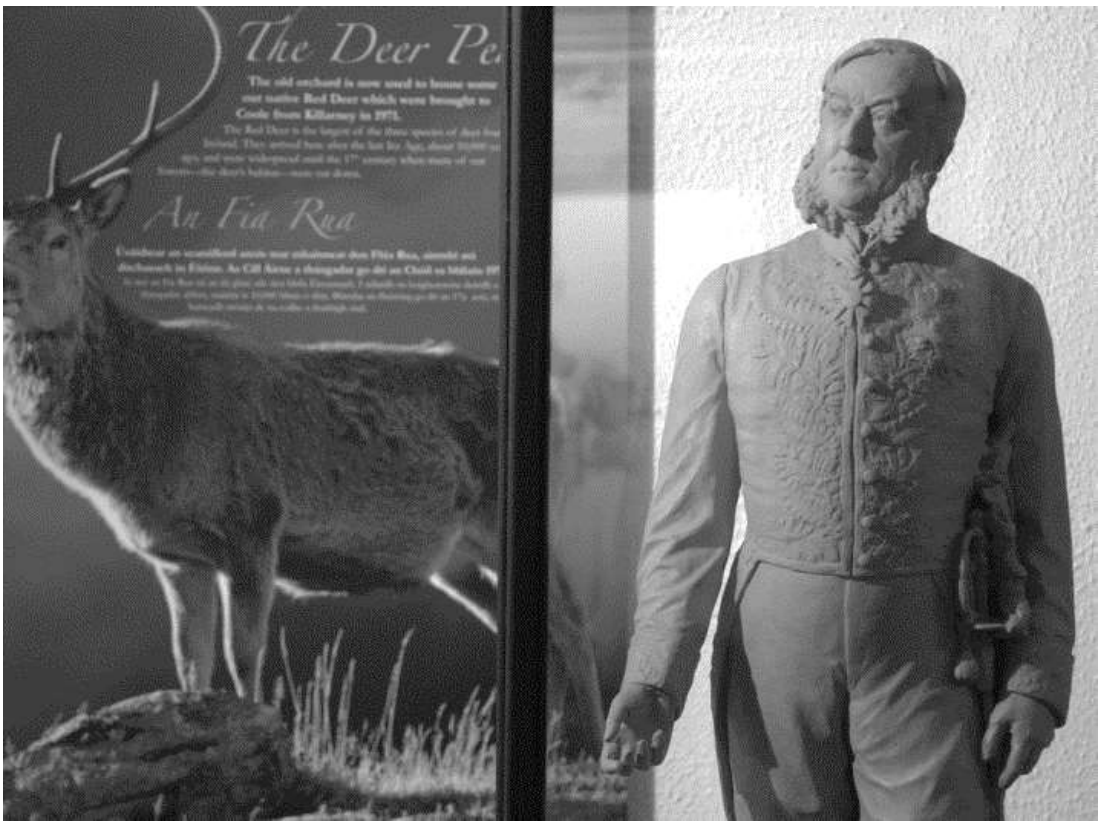

Figure 13. ***Maquette of the statue dedicated to Lord Gregory in Colombo, Sri Lanka***, ***located at Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)

But the enthusiasm shown by Revival authors for uncovering Ireland's primordial past failed to inspire their curiosity for more recent happenings, in particular the role played by their

[146] For a comprehensive account of the life of Lady Gregory, see Kohfeldt, Mary Lou. 1985. *Lady Gregory: The Women Behind the Irish Renaissance.* New York: Atheneum.

[147] The Celtic Twilight is another name given to the authors that made up the Irish Literary Revival. See Hirsch, Edward. 1991. "The Imaginary Irish Peasant." *PMLA* 106 (5): 1116 – 1133.

foundress's husband in eradicating the "other" that had given rise to their cultural memory project. Of Lord Gregory's Famine heirloom, the authors of the Revival had fallen on a deafening collective silence. The figure whose legislative exploits represented the modernisation forces the Revival was a reaction against was absent. And where the Ascendency had led, others would follow. As can be detected in the easily missed corner that houses his representation at Coole Park (Fig. 13), now a museum run by the Irish Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Lord Gregory's act of political appeasement is an untold story. Within the ideological formations of a postcolonial state whose existence was predicated upon the effacing of the "other", Lord Gregory is better remembered as a patron of the arts. When set against the ideological circumstances outlined here, the Revival's efforts to resurrect the "other" Lord Gregory played such a decisive role in annihilating strike a particularly bitter and painful irony.

However, the annulment of Lord Gregory's Famine legacy tells us something about the endurance of the reticence that continues to surround this event into the present. In Lady Gregory's recovery of the memory traits her husband played such a momentous role in extinguishing, we glean how silences surrounding the Famine are not just enmeshed with the repressed guilt that underlined the Ascendency's tormented recollection of their "other" but are also a culturally ingrained response to its system of ideological beliefs. Though the writers of the Revival were historical actors responsive to the tribulations of their times, indeed several authors have utilised this approach to justify Yeats' flirtations with fascism.[148] The "other" that emerges from the Revival's cultural productions was far removed from the pre-Famine native who, as Maria Edgeworth noted in her looking glass passage, defied representation.

Similarly, by being portrayed as married to the soil, the Revival "other" was a figure whose desperate poverty and squalor was concealed beneath the mask of tradition.[149] Analogous to their forefather's literary construction of the cajoling native, the Revival "other" was a fictitious character whose extermination during the Famine was made more palatable for

[148] One of his least examined of Yeats political affiliations is his association with the Irish Army Comrades Association, the Blueshirts. Consisting primarily of police and other Free State supporters, the Irish Army Comrades Association was a rightwing group who identified with European fascism. Some fought with Franco's Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. Most authors note that Yeats involvement with them was misguided and brief. However, Elizabeth Cullingford has suggested that his association was much closer than is popularly presumed. She writes of Yeats having personal relations with several of the group's leaders and composing marching songs for their rallies. See Cullingford, Elizabeth. 1981. *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism.* London: Macmillan.

[149] This reading of the rural Irish poor being married to the soil also finds resonance in the construction of the "peasant" through the discourses of Michael Davitt's Land League (1879 – 1883). See Hirsch, "The Imaginary Irish Peasant".

the Ascendency by an unfounded belief that the native was oblivious to the forces that had conspired against them. What is important to realise here is that silences surrounding the Famine, including those within the photographic archive, did not come about due to either a sense of malevolence or, as I investigate in Chapter two, a lack of "social consciousness" on behalf of the coloniser (although many members of the Ascendency would be found sadly wanting of this latter quality). Rather, the "other" brought to ruin by the Famine, and then later resurrected by the Revival, was subjected to a blatant form of historical expurgation. Not unlike the layers of paint that have obscured Branwell Brontë's photographically recovered memory, the "other" that emerges through the historical haze of the Celtic Twilight is only a glimmer of their former self. Immersed in myth, the ability of the "other" to be, as Malthus suggested – modern – was subsumed by the Revival's ideological commitment to the social relations of colonial capitalism.

However, in spite of these historical complexities, when the Ascendency's photographic productions are scrutinised for their ideological underpinnings we encounter an "other" whose absence is felt more keenly than is their contrived presence through the Revival. Here I refer, again, to Marx's camera obscura analogy and how when critically read, photography exposes the means by which ideology acts upon the body. Paradoxically, this recovery**,** which I undertake in the next chapter, has an ironic and unintended connection with Ireland's status as a colony. Unlike in Britain, where photography's development was restricted by patent, due to Ireland's liminal position in the union, the medium emerged without legal impediment. As I demonstrate by examining a selection of Ascendency photographs taken after the Famine, this uncharted history compels us to question further the prevailing wisdom as to why no Famine photographs exist.

Chapter 2

Silencing the Gaze: Photography and its Emergence in Colonial Ireland

Figure 14. ***The Leviathan of Parsonstown, Birr Castle, Birr, County Offaly, 2010*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 14) depicts the famous telescope known as the *Leviathan of Parsonstown* at Birr Castle in County Offaly. Built at the height of the Famine by Lord William Rosse (1800 - 1867), during the mid-19th century the instrument played a pivotal role in the debates that were redefining the study of science along secular and religious lines. Long since stripped off its optical capabilities, the Leviathan now has the appearance of a Cromwellian siege machine about to assault the castle battlements. Ironically, Rosse's family, the Parsons, were Elizabethan colonists to Ireland. Their properties were conferred to them on account of their undying support for the Tudor state. For this loyalty, the Parsons were handsomely rewarded; the lands surrounding their demesne are some of the most fertile in the whole of Ireland, the rents from which they accumulated their enormous fortune. It was also this legacy to colonisation that allowed Rosse to construct the Leviathan and, after a lacklustre career in politics, to take up the starry-eyed pursuit of astronomy. Arguably the highlight of the Ascendency's cultural fascination with science and technology, the Leviathan was also a testament to Rosse and his class's enduring belief in the

philosophical significance of gazing. Through the gaze and its modern ocular-mediated technologies, Ascendency scientists substantiated the system of beliefs that afforded them their knowledge about the world and esteemed place in it.

Expanding upon chapter one's examination of colonial hegemony and the Famine's silencing, in this chapter I analyse the Ascendency's contribution to the early medium and its relationship with the principles that according to Mary Louise Pratt (1992) and Jonathan Crary (1990) situate the individual in a reciprocating relationship with modernity through the act of gazing. As we shall see, photography was a pursuit the Ascendency were eminently qualified for, one that due to licensing incongruities consequential of Ireland's irresolute position in Britain's Union allowed them, as Chandler (2001) suggests, to practice the medium with little or no legal impediment. It is also towards understanding this colonial anomaly and its connection with the early history of photography in Ireland that I explore the institution that Donnelly (1996) suggests is synonymous in the "public memory" with the social deprivation of the Famine*:* the Workhouse.[150] I demonstrate that when read as a Foucauldian allegory, the Workhouse, which has an unrecognized connection with the early history of photography, emerges as a site where the contradictions that belie the country's insider/outsider status as a colony resonate through the silences that are the continuing aftershocks of these frightening places.

Finally, after examining Anglo-Irish photographic production as a "cultural activity" that reflected the Ascendency's greater fears, prejudices and anxieties, I scrutinise a selection of agricultural images produced by the Ascendency photographers Francis Edmund Currey and William Despard Hemphill in the wake of the Famine as a parallel text. Although these images might only be a remnant of the past, I demonstrate how*,* when read with reference to Marx's camera obscura analogy*,* they alert us to the way in which the Ascendency utilised photography to carry out a virulent form of historical erasure. Reminiscent of the silences detected by Eagleton in his reading of *Wuthering Heights*, through its photographic gaze the Ascendency set about expurgating the memory of the "other" that perished during the Famine.

[150] Donnelly, James S., Jr. 1996. "The construction of the memory of the Famine in Ireland and the Irish diaspora, 1850-1900." *Eire-Ireland* 31 (1): 26-61.

The emergence of photography in colonial Ireland

Long a pawn in its larger neighbour's power stratagems, following the 1801 Act of Union Ireland effectively became a "home country" of Great Britain.[151] As part of the Union, Ireland gained recourse to some of the most progressive social and political initiatives initiated by the Westminster system. Under Union, Ireland was also afforded the same civil liberties and access to Parliamentary process as Scotland and Wales. Considering the state of political governance in Europe during the early 19th century, this was not, as revisionist historians reiterate with neurotic consistency, a minor concession.[152] However, Ireland's insider status within Britain's empire never quite eclipsed the "otherness" that came with the country's colonisation. Though the Irish were, as was Shackleton on the ice sheets of Antarctica, gallant in their service to the realm, they remained, like Captain Nolan and his dreadfully worded instruction to send the Light Brigade in on the guns at Balaclava (Balaklava), muddled in their thinking.[153]

Ireland's liminal standing as a "home country" of Britain, while remaining in all essential regards a colony, has attracted the attention of a many authors. Publications such as Scott Brewster's edited *Ireland in Proximity* have by examining this inconsistency greatly informed our understanding of the cultural, social and physiological ambivalences given rise to by Union.[154] But one area surrounding Ireland's variable constitutional standing that has attracted far less critical attention has been the provision of patent law. Be it by implementation or design, British patents issued to protect the dominant English market had an indefinite legal standing in Ireland. So much so that, in combination with the country's comparatively smaller economy, this patent anomaly led to many who sought the protection an English patent would bring not to extend its application to Ireland.[155]

[151] For a comprehensive overview of political governance in Ireland following the Act of Union, see Keogh, Daire, and Kevin Whelan, eds. 2001. *Acts of Union: The Causes, Contexts, and Consequences of the Act of Union*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

[152] For an example of this position, see chapter three O'Mahony and Delanty, *Rethinking Irish History.*

[153] Captain Louis Edward Nolan was born in Canada but was Irish by his father, Major Babington Nolan. Nolan's second-hand instruction to send the Light Brigade into the field at Balaclava has been the subject of debate for many years. For an account of Captain Nolan and other Irish connections with the Crimean War, see Murphy, David. 2002. *Ireland and the Crimean War.* Dublin: Four Courts Press.

[154] Brewster, Scott, Virginia Crossman, Fiona Becket, and David Alderson, eds. 1999. *Ireland in Proximity: History, Gender, Space.* London: Routledge.

[155] Prior to the Patent Law Amendment Act of 1852, English patents often had an ambivalent status in Ireland. For a discussion of English patent law with regards to photography, see Hannavy, John. 2013. *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*. New York: Routledge. 1054.

Though Ireland's insider/outsider status in Britain's Empire dogged its economic development, irregularities in patent law had the unintended consequence of promoting the early emergence of photography in the country. For reasons that remain uncertain, the licensing restrictions William Henry Fox Talbot had levied upon the application of his technique in England and Wales were not imposed in Ireland (Talbot was the inventor of the negative/positive photographic process known as the calotype).[156] Relatedly, unlike the legal impediments France enforced upon England for the use of Louis Daguerre's rival photographic process - the daguerreotype, photographers in Ireland had unrestricted access to a medium that offered superior imaging and archival capabilities over the calotype.[157] This lack of juridical impediment enabled the Belfast engraver, Francis Stewart Beatty, to produce the first historically verifiable photograph in Ireland shortly after the daguerreotype process was released to the world in September 1839.[158] Reminiscent of the earliest known photographs taken in North America, produced within days of Daguerre's manuscript arriving in New York, this timeframe indicates that Beatty must have had some prior familiarity with the technical principles of photography.[159]

Unencumbered by the legal obstacles that suppressed the medium's development in England, in Ireland, photography seemingly had unlimited possibilities. The satirist and part-time travel writer William Makepeace Thackeray was alert to photography's potential in Ireland when touring through the country during the summer of 1842. Writing from the Killarney races, Thackeray noted that, due to the assemblage of all manner of Irish classes and ethnicities, the occasion was one where "[a] daguerreotype would have been of great service to have taken their portraits". [160] But it was not photography's knack for recording

[156] Chandler suggests since Ireland was in an economic recession during the mid-1840s, Talbot saw no reason to extend his calotype patent there. However, as the calotype patent was also not extended to Scotland, which had a thriving market economy, we must assume in principle that it was not just for economic reasons alone that Talbot did not extend his patent to Ireland. See Chandler, Edward. 2001. *Photography in Ireland: The Nineteenth Century*. Dublin: Edmund Burke.

[157] For a discussion of the legal restrictions enforced by Talbot and the French state on photography, see Gernsheim, Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. 1955. *The History of Photography from its earliest use of the camera obscura in the eleventh century up to 1914.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. As evident from the proliferation of daguerreotype studios in Europe and North America through the 1840s, and the mesmerising, crystal clear nature of these productions, Daguerre's process produced a far superior and eminently more archival image than Talbot's calotype.

[158] Beatty may have also been the first photographer to have produced a daguerreotype in the British and Irish archipelago.

[159] Banta, Melissa. 2000. *A Curious & Ingenious Art: Reflections on Daguerreotypes at Harvard*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

[160] Thackeray, W. M. n.d. *The Irish Sketchbook.* London: Collins. 148. For an account of Thackeray's statement concerning the early history of photography in Ireland, see Muirithe D. O. 1998. "W. M. Thackeray and the Daguerreotype: Ireland in 1842." *History of Photography* 22 (1): 79 – 80.

distinctiveness that motivated its early practitioners in Ireland; it was the medium's untapped commercial possibilities that caught their attention.

During the early 1840s, Francis Stewart Beatty, along with a motley crew of British and European journeymen, was quick to exploit photography's commercial possibilities in Ireland by establishing portrait studios in the country's principal cities. Working predominately with the daguerreotype process, the greatest demand for this new craze came from Dublin's petty aristocrats and minor gentry. Unfortunately, however, far from being professional undertakings, many of these early commercial ventures were managed by operators whose ambitions outshone both their aesthetic and business acumen. One of the most notorious of these identities was an unknown artist who went by the pseudonym, Horatio Nelson.[161] By taking up photographic retouching after the daguerreotype had cut short his career as a third-rate portraitist, Nelson exacted upon his client's representations what Walter Benjamin later mockingly described as "the bad painter's revenge on photography".[162]

Still, the Dublin photographic scene was not one of total mediocrity. Far brighter lights, such as the flamboyant Hungarian inventor "Professor" Leone Glukman, were also attracted to Dublin due to Ireland's patent free photographic status and the city's relative, though faded, post-Union prosperity.[163] By far the most technically proficient amongst this group, Glukman gained fame after mounting an elaborate electric light spectacular on Sackville Street to mark the occasion of Queen Victoria's state visit to Ireland in 1849. Drawing current from a "Maynooth Battery", Glukman's performance was a precursor to the Nationalist-inspired lantern projection shows of the 1880s, where the city's Georgian streetscapes became a backdrop for scenes of eviction and other politically motivated photographic content.[164]

[161] Kennedy, Tom. 1980. *Victorian Dublin.* Dublin: Albertine Kennedy Publishers Ltd. 14.

[162] Benjamin, Walter. 1985. "A Small History of Photography" (1931), in *One Way Street and other Writings*. London: Verso. 246.

[163] Gersheim explains that many press advertisements from the 1840s described daguerreotypists as "Professors". For Glukman and others, the description seems to have stuck. See Gernsheim, *The History,* 114.

[164] For a summary of the use of the lantern in Nationalist spectacle see Cullen, Fintan. 2002. "Marketing National Sentiment: Lantern Slides of Evictions in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland." *History Workshop Journal* 54: 162-201. The "Maynooth Battery" was invented by the Maynooth professor Fr. Nicholas Callan. Callan has a curious connection with the silences examined in this thesis through the Knock apparition event of 1879. See Chapter 6 of this thesis.

Photography and the development of a "social conscience"

With regard to the absence of Famine photographs and the practice of these commercial practitioners in Ireland, it has long been assumed that, on account of the early medium's inhibitive costs, they would have had their attention directed elsewhere. In the words of the Irish Photographic historians Edward Chandler and Peter Walsh, there were few "financial incentives" at the time for them to have captured such content.[165] Though monetary concerns may have proven an active disincentive for capturing Famine photographs, Chandler and Walsh suggest that the medium's silence during this calamity was underpinned by one far more elemental factor: "In the 1840s", they write, "it just was not fashionable to have a social conscience".[166] The authors ground their assertion in an Irish context by referring to a group of anonymously authored photographs taken of Dublin's notorious slums during the early 1900s.[167] Prior to the work of these socially minded advocates, whose images helped, they claim, "alleviate the suffering" of the city's residents, this dimension of the medium went largely unnoticed.[168]

Fig. 15. **William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher, Kilmainham Jail (1848)** (Attributable to Leone Glukman)

Fig. 16. **The faked O'Brien and Meagher portrait (n.d.)**

[165] Chandler and Walsh, *Through the Brass*, 11.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Presumably, Chandler and Walsh refer here to the photographs of John Cooke. His work is well documented. In 1913, the year of the industrial dispute known as the Dublin Lockout, Cooke produced a photographic account of Dublin's appalling inner city slums for a report submitted to the city's Housing Inquiry. See Corlett, Christiaan. 2008. *Darkest Dublin: the story of the Church Street disaster and a pictorial account of the slums of Dublin in 1913*. Dublin: Wordwell Ltd. Curiously, Chandler and Walsh also omit to mention the social advocacy of the Ulster photographer David Hogg. Active at the turn of the last century, Hogg's portrayal of the plight of children attending Belfast's ramshackle National School system is credited with alerting authorities to the need for urgent reform. Along with depictions of industrial life in Ireland's north taken by his more famous brother, A. G. Hogg (which include a fascinating study of the Titanic under construction), these images are still to be fully appreciated by historians. See Hill, Myrtle and Vivienne Pollock. 1994. "Images of the Past: Photographs as historical evidence." *History Ireland* 2 (1): 9- 14.

[168] Chandler, *Photography in Ireland,* 23.

While the liberal reform that Chandler and Walsh refer to was, at the time of the Famine, still some decades away, commercial photographic practice in Ireland should not be seen as being devoid of social orientation. Given sufficient monetary incentive, the entrepreneurial nature of these early photographers would have motivated them well before the reformers they preceded to capture social content. What these early photographers lacked in technical and aesthetic judgement they more than adequately made up for in a desire to make a profit from this exercise. The famous 1848 gaol portrait of the Young Irelanders William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher is just such an example. Condemned to death for their roles in the failed rising of that year (and later commuted to transportation to Van Diemen's Land), O'Brien and Meagher were photographed inside Dublin's Kilmainham Gaol on the eve of their sentencing (Fig. 15).[169]

Several authors now credit the O'Brien and Meagher image to Glukman, who, according to one of these writers, Edward Chandler, held nationalist sympathies.[170] Certainly there is, considering the fate that potentially awaited them, an air of unperturbed defiance in the poses adopted by these "gentleman" revolutionaries.[171] Symbolically framed by the coercive apparatus of the state in the forms of a gaoler with his key and a soldier standing either side of them, the image (Fig. 15) is best known as the source of the well-known lithographic representations of O'Brien and Meagher; these have, in turn, inspired a number of civic sculptures around the world. But the original photograph, long since lost, must have had some wider social recognition. Such was the popularity of the O'Brien and Meagher lithographs that the image was later faked for commercial sale by having actors re-enact a similar though compromised arrangement (Fig. 16).[172]

[169] The occasion when the O'Brien and Meagher photograph was taken is uncertain. Some accounts suggest that the image was photographed prior to the pairs' sentencing, see Hill and Pollock "Images of the Past". Other accounts, notably University College Cork's Multitext Project website, contend that the image was captured just before their transportation. See Prisoners at Kilmainham Goal. 2013. "Multitext Project in Irish History". Accessed March 23, http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Prisoners-_at_Kilmainham_Goal_c1848.

[170] Chandler, *Photography in Ireland,* 24.

[171] William Smith O'Brien's maternal family were Anglo-Irish landowners from Limerick; Thomas Francis Meagher's family, who were Catholics, ran a successful merchant business based in Newfoundland and Waterford. After escaping penal servitude for America, Meagher became a decorated general in Abraham Lincoln's Union Army during the Civil War. Significantly, as men of means, O'Brien and Meagher's imprisonments in Tasmania was not as brutal as that afforded to other Irish activists, notably the Fenians.

[172] It needs to be said that the photograph attributable to Leone Glukman (Fig. 15) is the original. A close examination of the famous lithographic representations of O'Brien and Meagher, which can be accurately dated to the late 1840s, suggest that the photograph (Fig. 16) was a staged recreation of the Glukman image. Similarly, a technical inspection of the image (Fig. 16) reveals its existence as a replica. The photograph's augmented lighting, together with the backdrop and hand drawn lines representative of a flagstone floor (which have multiple vanishing points) are indicative of a copy. Tellingly, in the need for the facsimile to follow what it represents, it is noticeable that in the reproduction of the original the jailer holds his key in a more pronounced way.

The O'Brien and Meagher portrait forgery has fooled many experts, including Denis Gwynn, an authority on the Rising of 1848. The eminent photographic writer and collector Helmut Gernsheim was also deceived by this image when he printed the counterfeit version in his proclaimed first edition of *The History of Photography*.[173] Still today, the faked version of this image is acknowledged by some historical anthologies as authentic.[174] Including James Robinson's contentious photographic re-enactment of Henry Wallis' famous painting "The Death of Chatterton", the O'Brien and Meagher forgery is but one in a long line of graphic piracies carried out by the medium's early exponents in Dublin.[175] Importantly, apart from this image being the earliest known photographic representation of an Irish historical event, its existence opens up the possibility that a Famine scene taken as a curio for lithographic reproduction might one day be found buried in the archive.

The Workhouse and the practice of historical silencing

Notwithstanding photography's early emergence in Ireland, few images from this period have survived. What exists today is fleeting, with most known examples archived in collections outside the country. Its rarity can be gauged by the fact that not a single photograph attributable to Francis Stewart Beatty (1806 – 1891) has yet to be identified. Oddly, in one of many ironies that surround photography's absence from the Famine record, the medium's silencing reverberated loudly through the sombre life passage of Ireland's first photographer. Prior to photography becoming commercially viable with the advent of Frederick Scott Archer's wet collodion process in the early 1850s, Beatty, like many early practitioners, was unable to make a profit from the medium. Despite several business ventures, one of which involved Talbot, Beatty drifted in and out of photography, returning periodically to engraving to supplement his hand-to-mouth existence.[176] Sadly, after investing a lifetime in a medium that would omit him from its history, Beatty died a pauper in the North Dublin Union Workhouse (Fig. 17). During the late 1980s, a campaign

[173] Gernsheim mentions that he acquired this photograph from Professor Denis Gwynn and that it was taken at Clonmel Prison in County Tipperary. Presumably he also sourced his information about the image from Gwynn. The image does not appear in any subsequent edition of either this or any other work by Gernsheim. See Gernsheim *The History.*

[174] The faked version of this photograph also appears as the original on historical websites. See Waterford History. 2012. "Waterford Ireland." Accessed April 6, http://waterfordireland.tripod.com/thomas_francis_meagher-patriot.htm.

[175] For an account of the controversy that surrounded Robinson's photographic re-enactment of Wallis' "The Death of Chatterton", see Greenhill, Gillian B. 1981. "The Death of Chatterton, or Photography and the Law." *History of Photography* 5 (3): 199-205.

[176] Beatty discusses a proposed business arrangement to Talbot in a letter dated 23 Jan 1860. See Brewster, David. David Brewster to William Henry Fox Talbot (#5201), 04 Mar 1845. *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot Project.* http://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/.

was launched to install a permanent memorial to him at the former workhouse site, now the headquarters for the Legion of Mary, however, nothing has become of this. But the passing of Ireland's first photographer in the institution that has become synonymous with the Famine can be read, I suggest, as an allegory for perceiving the ideological mechanisms that have contributed to both the reticence that surrounds this event and the broader practice of historical silencing in Ireland.

Figure 17. ***The Legion of Mary Centre, Dublin, formally the site of the North Dublin Union Workhouse, 2010*** (Author)

Far from being a historical coincidence, the site where Beatty passed away was also the location from which the German writer Johann Georg Kohl penned what some authors claim to be one of the most objective first-hand accounts of the Irish Poor Law in action.[177] Visiting the North Dublin Union during the desperately cold winter of 1842, Kohl describes the institution in minute detail. Of note is his depiction of the machines that fuelled the workhouse's unremitting, industrial grind, such as the massive boiling kettle capable of preparing, he wrote, up to "1670 pounds of potatoes" at a time.[178] Similar to the workhouses of Europe, Kohl was taken aback at the chastisement imposed on the native's body to curtail their "free, wild, nomadic" ways.[179] But what struck Kohl the most on his

[177] Kohl travelled extensively throughout Ireland, Britain, Europe, Russia and America. In Ireland, his reflections are sharp and free from the biases that impeded many of his British contemporaries. Moreover, writing in 1842, his work offers an invaluable insight into how people lived their lives on the eve of the Great Famine. For an account of the significance of Kohl's reflections on the Irish Poor Law, see Davis, Richard P. 1988. *The Young Ireland Movement.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillian and O'Connor, John. 1995. *The Workhouses of Ireland: The Fate of Ireland's Poor*. Dublin: Mercier Press.

[178] Kohl, *Travels*, 280.

[179] Ibid., 158.

visit to the workhouse was the deafening quietness of the people entrusted to its care. Although they may not have been "half-naked, and half-starved"[180] which, he remarked, was the "usual condition of the Irish pauper", the system of institutional assessment that scrutinised their every move was for them a great "struggle of [the] soul".[181]

As a location of institutional repression, Kohl's account of the Irish workhouse embodies what Michel Foucault would later describe in *Discipline and Punish* as the state's "disciplinary mechanisms" of power.[182] Building on his hypothesis that power is a phenomenon that is acted out performatively, Foucault saw the workhouse (along with the prison) as a site where by transcending its authority into spectacle the state integrated the individual into its organisations of social and economic reproduction. However, distinct from older monarchical systems reliance on public performance, notably in the spectacle of execution, Foucault recognised a different kind of pageantry at play in the regulatory practices of the modern state. In the state's new disciplinary mechanisms of control, power, Foucault suggested, was enacted on the body through the chronological ordering of time and space, the division of labour, and, above all, the regulation of activity by observation.[183] As can be detected from Kohl's descriptions of the North Dublin Union, the Irish workhouse emerges as a site where through silence the state exercised its authority.

Though Kohl's observations on the Irish workhouse are informative, in some ways they add little to what we already known about these places. Including the insights of the French aristocrat and social commentator Alexis de Tocqueville, who, after visiting the nearby Dublin House of Industry in 1835 (later to become the South Dublin Union Workhouse) described it as "the most hideous and disgusting aspect of destitution" he had ever encountered, the scene Kohl paints is one we have become all too familiar with.[184] Nonetheless, where Kohl allows us to grasp the connection between the workhouse and the broader practice of historical silencing in Ireland is that, by his understanding of political economy, he notes a distinction in the Irish Poor Law that had eluded other writers.

[180] Ibid., 279.

[181] Ibid., 281.

[182] Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.

[183] Ibid.

[184] De Tocqueville writing predates Kohl by some nine years. He visited Ireland shortly after the implementation of the Irish Poor Law in 1833. See de Tocqueville, Alexis. 1990. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland July-August, 1835*, translated and edited by Emmet Larkin. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press. 24.

Although the English and Irish Poor Laws were built on the same reformist principals, the ghastly horrors that characterised the workhouses of Britain were, he declared, no match for the orchestrated "system of terror" that governed those likeminded institutions in Ireland.[185] When read as a metaphor for the practice of historical silencing, Kohl's account of the "terror" that distinguished the Irish and the English workhouse apart exposes how, even in their liberalising endeavours, the coloniser was ideologically compelled to extract authority on the colonised through the use of coercion.

But the Irish workhouse experience, much like the country's insider/outsider status in Britain's empire, beheld a much more culturally regulative form of silencing – one which might have escaped Kohl's Germanic ear. In a scenario repeated through the National School system and the use of disciplinary devices such as the "tally stick", given that English was the vernacular of the workhouse, the Irish voice was reduced to a series of hushed whispers.[186] This culturally resonant silencing was also detected by de Tocqueville when he visited the Dublin House of Industry. The repartee and verbal jousting that, as he noted during his travels, was the natural disposition of the native was nowhere to be heard. Within the walls of the workhouse, the people interned there, de Tocqueville wrote, "do not talk at all".[187] Expecting neither "fear, nor hope for anything from life", for these silent ones, their only expectation, he added, was "to die".[188]

Building on the analysis pursued in chapter one, what I argue here is that, when the Irish workhouse is examined as an allegory for historical silencing, it emerges as a site where, through the coloniser's use of coercion, the ideological mechanisms that had suppressed so many other aspects of the Famine are revealed. As might be read from both Kohl and de Tocqueville's observations, for those who reluctantly exchanged the starvation of the Famine for the social deprivations of the workhouse, they became subject to the mute forgetfulness that befalls all those who are forced not to speak.

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[185] Kohl, *Travels*, 278.

[186] The "tally stick" was a corporal device used to silence the Gaelic voice. It had equivalents throughout the colonised world, notably in Australia. In 19th-century Ireland, the device was worn by children around their neck in the English speaking National School system. Upon every occasion a child was heard to utter an audible Gaelic word, the stick would receive a notch. At the end of a set period, usually a day, the notches would be counted and the child hit with the stick for each language incursion. See Ó Croidheáin, Caoimhghin. 2006. *Language from Below: The Irish Language, Ideology and Power in 20th-century Ireland*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

[187] De Tocqueville, *Alexis de Tocqueville's,* 25.

[188] Ibid.

Tragically, however, this connection between the workhouse and the ideological mechanisms that had given rise to the broader practice of historical silencing in Ireland continues today. In a scenario repeated throughout the postcolonial world, with the emergence of the Irish Free State in 1922 many of its core functions transpired in institutions that were a carbon copy of those that had existed under the previous regime. This process, which was, more-or-less, a consequence of the state's lukewarm attempt at extracting itself from the systems of political and social reproduction implemented by the coloniser, has led to some shambolic representations. Anyone who has ever seen the numerous Victorian era pillar boxes in Ireland camouflaged beneath copious layers of green paint would have witnessed this act of postcolonial dissimulation.

Yet the Irish state's reproduction of the institutions established under the older regime has implications that run far deeper than mere cosmetic changes. Again, the systematic brutality of the workhouse and, as de Tocqueville observed, the institution's silencing of the oppressed voice stand out here. Due to many of these sites being transferred to the Church in order that it might carry out its pastoral function, generations of Irish clergy have felt compelled in adopting the disciplinary mechanisms of the workhouse to perfect the coercive techniques instigated by the coloniser. Through the suppression of the institutional abuses that have rocked the Irish Church and State in recent years, we glean how the "terror" Kohl had witnessed and, no doubt, also Francis Stewart Beatty, Ireland's first photographer, perpetuates into the present.[189]

The Ascendency's legacy to photography

Not to be outdone by the commercial ambitions of their much despised class rivals, photography also became a pursuit amongst members of Ireland's Anglo-Irish elite.[190] Utilising Talbot's calotype process, practitioners from the country's landlord class, including Maria Edgeworth's brother, Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, whom may have been the first photographer to practice the medium in India, employed photography to complement their established interests in science and scientifically led historiographic enquiry.[191] From the sanctuary of their demesnes and, for Pakenham, the fertile fields of Saharunpur in northern

[189] Kohl, *Travels*, 278.

[190] The minutes of the Dublin Photographic Society reveal the seething class resentment the Ascendency held for their aspiring bourgeois reviles. See Chandler, *Photography in Ireland,* 26.

[191] For an account of Michael Pakenham Edgeworth, see Jacob, Michael G. 2000. "Michael Pakenham Edgeworth (1812 – 1881): pioneer Irish photographer." *History of Photography* 24 (2).

Uttar Pradesh, Anglo-Irish scientists utilised photography's referential capabilities to examine the same phenomena that intrigued their more professional counterparts in Britain and Europe.

Though Ireland's tenuous economic situation often limited the Ascendency's field of enquiry, through their expertise in mathematics, physics and engineering, members of this class became renowned in the observational disciplines. It is this not inconsiderable endowment to optical science that all photographers still refer to today. Be it utilising an exposure meter that traces its origins to the Dublin mathematician Professor J. Alfred Scott's *Actinic values of light table,* or discerning a colour tint from the light temperature system first devised by the Belfast physicist Lord William Kelvin, the *Kelvin Scale*, the Ascendency's conviction in the ability of vision to reveal empirical facts about the world survives to this day.[192]

Aside from its invaluable, though largely unrecognised contribution to photography, the Ascendency conferred another legacy on the medium that is even less well known. Buried in the archives of the Royal Society in London is evidence that a member of Ireland's colonial ruling class may have forestalled the medium's invention by a good many years. We learn of this ill-fated endowment to the history of photography in a passage written by Sir John Herschel. Shortly after the announcement of the daguerreotype's invention to the world, Herschel read a paper to the Royal Society in which he recollected the experiments of a long forgotten Scottish woman scientist named Elizabeth Fulhame. In this, the first of several essays Herschel presented to the Society on the subject of photography, he noted that in the late 1700s (1780 to be precise) Fulhame had perfected a technique for producing patterns on fabric by exposing solutions rich in metallic particles to the sun. Half a century before Talbot's famous "light drawings", the precursor to the calotype, Fulhame had come exceedingly close to realising what would become early photography's most prolific maxim – "fixing the shadows".[193] Alas, Elizabeth Fulhame missed her opportunity to strut the historical stage after her husband (Dr. Thomas Fulhame), an obscure Anglo-Irish

[192] See Chandler, *Photography in Ireland.* Though wanting for critical analysis, Chandler's volume still provides a comprehensive chronology of the early history of photography in Ireland.

[193] The expression "fixing the shadow" was used extensively in mid-19th century publications on photography. Along with "fixing shadows", there were several variations on this phrase. These would all appear to relate to Talbot's idiom "the art of fixing a shadow" from his pamphlet "Some Account of the Art of Photographic Drawing …" See Mitchell, W. J. T. 2005. *Want do Pictures Want?: the lives and loves of Images.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

physician, dismissed her invention for lacking any practical application, causing her to abandon the idea.[194]

Though the case of Elizabeth Fulhame exposes yet another of the many cultural contradictions that abounded within Anglo-Irish society, the Ascendency's legacy to photography resonates far deeper. Mirroring how the architectural "eye-catcher" (Fig. 18), and other similar structures, inscribed the Ascendency's aesthetic visions on the landscape, through the study of photography, Anglo-Irish scientists reiterated their belief in the centrality of the gaze to the emerging modernist worldview. As Mary Louise Pratt has described in her study of 19th century travel writing, the appearance of things and the power hierarchies that separated the observer from what they surveyed were all psychologically aligned by the authority enacted through the gaze.[195] And while the visual sense had been in ascension since the Enlightenment, with the invention of photography and its claim to ophthalmic truth, the gaze assumed the mantle in all manner of assessment, regulation and control. As Jonathan Crary suggests in his historical appraisal of the modern observer, when the subject was exposed to the powerful, ocular technologies of modernity they became psychologically integrated with the systems of regulatory thought propagated by the state.[196] These were the same emergent systems of sensory orientation, I suggest, that through the Ascendency's experimentation with photography constituted the reciprocating process of looking and worldview formation that made-up their gaze.

[194] Apart from the source quoted by Herschel, very little is known about Elizabeth Fulhame. Larry Schaaf mentions that Fulhame's last known whereabouts comes in a letter written by her husband from France in early 1803. It appears that the Fulhames were living in Paris at the time, possibly looking for financers to back one of their projects. Moreover, this date, early 1803, is significant in that it is only a few months before Napoleon's infamous French *arête,* whereupon several hundred Britton living in France were interned, some for a many years, by the French state. Could it be that prior to the patent restrictions imposed by France and England upon their respective national claims to photography's invention that Elizabeth Fulhame was caught up in a bigger political contest? For an account of Elizabeth Fulhame, see Schaaf, Larry J. 1992. *Out of the Shadows: Herschel, Talbot and the Invention of Photography:* New Haven: Yale University.

[195] See Pratt, Mary Louise. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* New York: Routledge.

[196] Crary, Jonathan. 1990. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press

Figure 18. ***The Bellevue Folly (eye-catcher), Lawrencetown, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)

Anglo-Irish photographic production as a "cultural activity"

Whilst the influence the Ascendency had on photography was indebted to science, its photographic productions, like those of its brow-beaten professional rivals, should not be seen as lacking the "social conscience" Chandler and Walsh claim was absent from the medium at the time of the Famine.[197] Whatever an open definition as to what having a social conscience might mean, I suggest that the photographic practice of these privileged enthusiasts was clearly more than the parlour activity some authors, notably Carey Schofield, have implied.[198] The subject matter they photographed, together with the interests that sustained their creative productions, attests to a broader understanding of the medium. For example, one site of Ascendency photographic production that speaks to its social identification with the medium is the stereoscopic views of the Anglo-Irish surgeon William Despard Hemphill. Commencing in the early 1860s, Hemphill, who, as a surgeon, was a member of the new, aspiring middle-class and not the landed gentry, extended on his pre-existing photographic practice to take up the manufacture of stereoview images.

[197] Chandler and Walsh, *Through the Brass*, 11.

[198] Although Carey Schofield acknowledges the contribution made by Ireland's colonial elite to the development of photography, by stating that it undertook the medium "as a recreation" she overlooks the broader social implications of photography's practice for the Ascendency. See Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs*, 13.

Figure 19. ***William Despard Hemphill, Steroview of Western View, Athassil Abbey (1860), from the Sexton Collection***

An important development in the history of modern media, the stereoscopic process, allowed the viewer, by looking at a dual image through a binocular viewfinder, to perceive in the flatness of photography the illusion of depth.[199] Produced predominately for postcard sized presentations, some enterprising entrepreneurs, including Hemphill, also applied stereoscopic photography to illustrate books, in the process paving the way for the multimedia productions of today. But what is most interesting about Hemphill's stereoscopic images, and indicative of the Ascendency's social awareness of the medium, was the subject matter he photographed. Unlike Irish stereoscopic productions from the early 20th century, which, more often than not, feature the country's cities and sites of industrial development, Hemphill's eye is directed almost solely towards Ireland's landscapes and ancient ruins (Fig. 19). Ironically, by documenting the country's archaic past at the expense of the enormous changes heralded by the Famine, Hemphill's stereoscopic photographs gesture to the cultural apprehensions that would later compel the creative productions of the Celtic Revival.

When considering the social and historical complexities interwoven through Hemphill's stereoscopic productions, I argue that, following Nicholas Whyte's assessment of Anglo-Irish scientific enquiry, although Ascendency photographic production satisfied many

[199] This optical illusion was achieved by a camera system that had two lenses placed at a distance equivalent to the natural deviation of human vision. On exposure, the camera would produce two scenes that although identical had a slight difference in alignment. When these images were then viewed through a stereoviewer, this variation created a sensation of depth in the mind of the viewer.

diverse needs it was, above all, a "cultural activity".[200] Similar to its long established interests in science and technology, when read as a cultural activity, Ascendency photographic production emerges as a site that reflected this class's fears, prejudices and anxieties. This relationship can be detected by analysing not just what Ireland's colonial elite photographed, but also what they choose to ignore. As I demonstrate below, in the years that followed the devastating upheavals brought about by the Famine, Anglo-Irish photography became a site for a resonant historical erasure. Within the photographic frame, the Ascendency's memory of this tragedy, and the ideological mechanisms that they as a class were foremost in initiating, were concealed beneath a thinly coated photographic veneer.

But before attempting to understand what implications the Ascendency's cultural awareness of photography might have had upon the medium's silencing during the Famine, we must first comprehend how the gaze, particularly in its scientific orientations, cemented this class's worldview. Sharply divided along denominational lines (few Catholics counted amongst its early practitioners), prior to science becoming a professional endeavour in Ireland with the liberalisation of the country's universities and colleges in the late 19th century, its practice provided the Ascendency with a cultural refuge from the political storms that prevailed throughout its reign.[201]

One historical example that illustrates this reciprocating relationship between the Ascendency's gaze and its scientific discourses can be found in examining the impact Lord Rosse's astronomical observations had upon the controversial evolutionary theory the *Nebular hypothesis*.[202] In its most simplified form, the *Nebular* theory claimed that the solar system had evolved from a state that was far removed to its present. Rebuking Newton's assertion that the Earth was perfect, "unchanged since creation", Sir John Herschel, following his father, Sir William Herschel, claimed that the evolutionary forces that had shaped the cosmos could be detected from the luminous vapours that circulated through the night sky.[203] For Herschel, to map these heavenly bodies through the 40-foot telescope

[200] Whyte, Nicholas. 1999. *Science, Colonialism and Ireland*. Cork: Cork University Press. 40.

[201] For an account of the Ascendency's scientific practice, see Herries, Davies and L. Gordon. 1985. "Irish Thought in Science." In *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions*, edited by Richard Kearney. Dublin: Wolfhound Press.

[202] For an account of the social impact of the *Nebular hypothesis* during the 19th century, see Moru, Iwan Rhys. 2005. *When Physics Became King*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[203] Though John Herschel's name is associated with the *Nebular hypothesis*, he was not the vocal advocate of the theory his father, William, was. Even in his conversations with Darwin he was noncommittal. This caution may be due, as the historian

built by his father at Slough was to behold the embryonic material that created the universe (Fig. 20).[204] Applauded by humanist scholars, Darwin mentioned him in his introduction to *Origin of Species*;[205] what Herschel perceived through his gaze became a bitter bone of contention for Rosse and other religious scientists. During the debates that ensued surrounding the *Nebular* theory, the views expressed by these opposing camps would shore-up the increasingly divergent understandings that were redefining the study of science along secular and religious lines.[206]

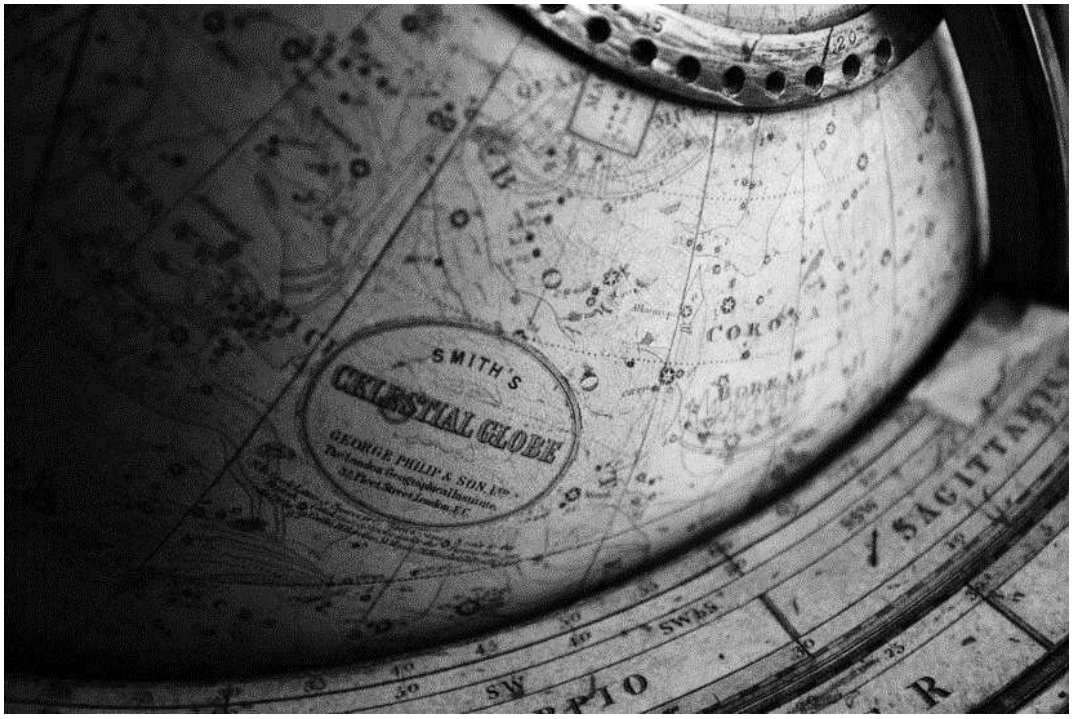

Figure 20. ***Smith's Celestial Globe, Herschel Astronomy Museum, Somerset, Bath, 2012*** (Author)[207]

John Lankford has suggested, to the theory being such a "highly charged political issue". But considering the great effort and expense Herschel undertook in traveling to South Africa and rebuilding his father's telescope design in Capetown, so as to view the cosmos from the Southern Hemisphere, the fact that he never discounted the theory is indicative of the cautious optimism he held for his father's most brilliant work. See Lankford, John, ed. 1997. *History of Astronomy: An Encyclopaedia.* New York: Routledge. 222.

[204] The author and scientist John Le Conte noted in an article for the *Popular Science Monthly* that John Herschel's celestial gaze not only allowed him to see what his father had seen but also an insight as to how the telescope allowed the viewer to recognise the past that connected the entire universe. See Le Conte, John. 1873. "The Nebular Hypothesis." *Popular Science Monthly*. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Popular_Science_Monthly/Volume_2/April_1873/The_Nebular_Hypothesis

[205] Though Darwin does not mention him by name, his famous introductory quotation "that mystery of mysteries" is widely regarded by historians of science to refer to John Herschel. See Herbert, Sandra. 2005. *Charles Darwin, Geologist.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

[206] The Scottish writer and astronomer Hector MacPherson notes that Sir David Brewster, who, apart from being one of the leading scientific minds of his time, was also an elder in in Free Church of Scotland, described the Nebular theory as "a dull and dangerous heresy". See MacPherson, Hector. 1909. "Theories of Celestial Evolution." *Popular Astronomy* 17: 418 – 423. http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1909PA.....17..418M.

[207] For both Hershel and Rosse, mapping the globe and mapping the universe were but one and the same thing.

Although Rosse did not take a literal interpretation of *Genesis*, before the controversies over monkey fossils shook the relationship between the Church and science, he, like many of his learned associates, believed that in all matters, even Evolution, God's Divine hand was self-evident to the eye.[208] Backed by his immense personal fortune, this cultural conviction motivated Rosse to challenge Herschel and the *Nebular* theory utilising his massive 72-inch Leviathan telescope at Birr in County Offaly and the referential capability of the daguerreotype. However, despite being unable to successfully expose a photographic plate, after mapping the observable universe through the inclement Irish sky Rosse declared, to the praise of his brethren, that the nebula was not, as Herschel had pronounced, a celestial miasma; rather the glimmer that had captured his revival's eye was the light from countless stellar systems located millions of miles away.[209] Though science provided Rosse with the technology to chart the universe, it was his ideological convictions that let him interpret what he had seen.

Figure 21. ***J. H. Foley's statue of Lord Rosse at Birr, County Offaly, 2010*** (Author)

[208] I speak of Evolution here within a pre-Darwinian sense.

[209] Though Rosse was unable to expose a celestial image utilising the Leviathan there is, however, evidence in a letter from Sir David Brewster to William Henry Fox Talbot to suggest that Rosse's friend Dr Thomas Woods, who was an Anglo-Irish physician, achieved this feat utilising a technique described as a Katalysotype. See David Brewster to William Henry Fox Talbot (#5201), 04 Mar 1845. *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot Project.* http://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/.

Silencing the Gaze

Returning back to the central theme of this chapter, I argue that it was this relationship the Ascendency had with its gaze, as exemplified by Rosse's celestial ponderings, which problematises reasons given by historicist assessments as to why no Famine photographs exist. Though Ireland's ruling colonial elite were eminently capable of taking Famine photographs, by their actions they seemed effectively unwilling to do so. And albeit that photography could reveal for the Ascendency the conditions it believed had brought about its fated position in the world, the medium might just as easily conceal the debilitating cultural doubt that inflicted its collective psyche over the Famine. Similar to how historical silences surrounding the Famine had weaved their way through the pages of late 19th century Anglo-Irish literature, what I suggest here is that, when Ascendency photographic production is recognised as a cultural activity, we observe how the perceptual dilemmas this class held for its gaze found an expression in a photographic purging of detail. This silencing is evident not just in the absence of photography from the Famine record but also, as I investigate in chapter three, the indifference shown by Ireland's colonising elite for visual art practice. Like the representational ambivalences Maria Edgeworth alludes to in her famous "looking-glass passage", discussed in chapter one, the Ascendency's inability to confront its role in bringing about the Famine prompted it to erase the past photographically.

Figure 22. ***Image attributable to Francis Edmund Currey and John Gregory Crace (1853), from the Sexton Collection***

Though Ireland's early history of photography is depleted of visual references, the act of photographically expurgating the country's past is detected by the scattering of images that make up the catalogue of the Land Agent Francis Edmund Currey. Now part of the Sexton Collection, these images were taken in 1853, just after the Famine, on the Duke of Devonshire's Lismore estate in County Waterford. Featuring scenes in and around the demesne, the series also includes an erringly strange portrait study of two middle-aged couples (Fig. 22).[210] Schofield explains that these images formed part of an exceedingly rare Irish pictorial genre that featured nostalgic views of the countryside and pictures of rural workers – particularly "peasants".[211] Photographed in a glasshouse studio built by Currey, the subjects of his study are ambiguously portrayed. In some regards, they resemble agrarian workers while in others, due to their contrived appearance, they appear like "blacked-up" minstrels preparing for a bizarre act of cultural mimicry. In association with other scenes photographed on the demesne, Currey depicts a landscape of tranquil, rural harmony where order is maintained through the collecting of rent and the authority enacted in his gaze.

Undeniably, as Devonshire was an absentee landlord (he rarely travelled to Ireland), Currey yielded supreme authority on the estate. And judging by his indulgence for photography, Currey was a man who aspired to higher social standing. Yet his image (Fig. 22) is deceiving, for the subjects of Currey's gaze are not rural workers or "peasants", as Schofield suggests; they were more than likely tenant farmers – one of the dominant classes to emerge after the Famine. Hence by their social and linguistic integration into the mid-19th century Irish monetary economy, the people who pose for Currey's camera would have been culturally far removed from the absent "other" obliterated by the Famine.

[210] Carey Schofield credits this image to the English architect John Gregory Crace. During the early 1850s, Crace carried out a number of extensive interior design changes to Devonshire's property. Apart from the few images Schofield credits to Crace, I have found no other acknowledgement for his practice as a photographer. I suggest, therefore, that Crace would have contributed to this production while Currey was the creative director. Indeed, without mention of Currey's name, the Getty Images listing on its copy of this image states that Crace was a "Contributor" to this production, not its author. See The Getty Images. 2013. http://www.gettyimages.com.au/detail/news-photo/irish-tenant-farmers-in-the-duke-of-devonshires-news-photo/3375763.

[211] Schofield in Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs*, 15.

Figure 23. **William Despard Hemphill (1865), Lady Blessington's Bath, Clonmel, County Tipperary**

Oddly, considering the rarity of this rural Irish pictorial genre identified by Schofield, when these images are critically read as a parallel text their presence suggests that the absence of the "other" from Ascendency photography was a historical phenomenon that stretched from the origins of the medium in Ireland right through to the post-Famine period. Again, this repetitive form of cultural erasure can also be detected by examining a series of Albumen print images produced by William Despard Hemphill.[212] Photographed during the late 1850s, before he embarked upon his stereoscopic project, in these photographs Hemphill takes a backward glance upon rural Irish life – one no doubt inspired by emerging bourgeois aesthetic visions for the countryside.[213] And just as Ireland's burgeoning middle classes were finding their political voice, Hemphill's gaze also had a noticeable ideological bent. We observe his unequivocal doctrinal allegiances in a photograph of a rowboat taken near his home at Lady Bellisinton's Bath in Clonmel, County Tipperary (Fig. 23). Here the picture's compositional alignment directs the viewer's eye towards an ensign (the British maritime flag) on the stern of the vessel.[214] Hemphill was no agitator for Home Rule; as is

[212] Similar to Talbot's calotype process, the albumen print produced a positive image on paper from a photographic negative. From its invention in the mid-1850s, it was in continuous use up until the 1890s.

[213] These images also form part of the Sexton Collection.

[214] There clearly is a flag at the stern of this boat; however, due the calmness of the day, it is hard to detect what type it is. The ensign acknowledgement noted here is with reference to a description of this image held by the University of Glasgow. See Hemphill, William Despard. 2014. "Lady Blessington's Bath." University of Glasgow, Special Collections. Assessed August 16, http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/detail_c.cfm?ID=96521. Schofield, on the other hand, describes this image not

recognisable in his stereographic views of Ireland's ancient ruins, Hemphill wore his ideological heart on his sleeve.

Figure 24. **William Despard Hemphill (1857), from the Sexton Collection**

But what is by far most intriguing about Hemphill's catalogue is a farmyard scene depicting two young women milking a cow (Fig. 24). Positioned centrally to the camera, one of these women glances unnervingly back towards the viewer. Judging by the outbuildings in the photograph, this property was worked by a tenant farming family, not unlike the subjects that appear in Currey's portrait (Fig. 22). When read for its overtly sentimental take on the social relations of commercial agriculture in Ireland, the photograph appears to anticipate Eamon de Valera's infamous reference to the "comely maidens" in his 1943 St. Patrick's Day broadcast.[215] However, owing to his portrayal of late 1850s rural Ireland as a cattle ranch, Hemphill exposes the erasure that underlies the Ascendency's gaze, whereby directing our attention away from scenes of tillage and eviction his photograph attempts to naturalise the lethal ideological forces that gained their political supremacy during the Famine. In

as an ensign but as a Union Jack. See Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs*, 29. Upon close inspection, there clearly is a linear design in the top corner of the flag, indicating, therefore, that it is an ensign.

[215] De Valera's speech for an Irish cultural renewal that looked backwards to the past while still making claims to an industrial future has been analysed and parodied for many years. But his reference to the "comely maidens" is ambiguous. The words he utters in the sound recording of this speech are unclear. Indeed, in the several on-line transcripts of his speech De Valera clearly states "homely maidens". Nonetheless, his intent remains the same.

Hemphill's photographic vision, the rhythms of capitalism come as naturally to the viewer/reader's eye as does the agricultural cycle or Ireland's absorption into Britain's Union.

Screaming out from the past

Admittedly, it is all too easy when examining the Currey and Hemphill photographs to overextend their reading. Forming what is a now a tiny extant record of early photography in Ireland, we have little else with which to compare them. Akin to the faked O'Brien and Meagher portrait (Fig. 16), these images were deliberately staged. As mentioned, the subjects for Currey's portrait study, (Fig. 22), were not "peasants"; they were tenant farmers, people he would have been familiar with from his dealings as Devonshire's land agent. Comparatively, Hemphill's portrait of the young women milking the heifer, (Fig. 24), might be seen as having little meaning beyond its creator's naïve attempts at pictorialism – a reprieve from pressures that directed his medical gaze. Certainly this would be, as Schofield has suggested, a popular understanding of this image.[216]

Yet, in the manner Marx implores us to perceive the actions of ideology by reorientating our view to the camera, it is by looking backwards at the seemingly inconsequential details within Currey and Hemphill's images where the predicaments that underlie the Ascendency's gaze scream out from the past. By depicting their subjects as inveigling rural workers, both Currey and Hemphill allude to perceptions of the "other" portrayed in pre-Famine Anglo-Irish literature. As their choice of subject matter reveals, Currey and Hemphill are either unwilling or unable to confront the malicious political economy that had utterly transformed the country over just a few short years.

Free from ethnic, religious and social division, by enticing the viewer/reader into a state of silent forgetfulness, Currey and Hemphill's photographs conceal the traumatic upheavals brought about by the Famine. Commensurate with the ideological underpinnings that, as was noted in the examination of the workhouse, have instigated the broader practice of historical silencing in Ireland, these are representations where the aftershocks emitted by this calamity have been hastily brushed over. And though the Ascendency's photographic gaze knew neither earthly nor celestial boundaries, when construed as a means of concealing this classes' institutional violence, it became a site for a resonant cultural

[216] See Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs.*

anxiety. As can be detected from the disquiet that cloaks Currey and Hemphill's images, the respite photography offered these elite practitioners was eclipsed by the premonition of an absent "other" staring back at them. It is this dizzying vision of the "other" peering back from the depths of history that I will direct the viewer/reader's attention to in the next chapter by examining an unrealised psychological dimension for photography's absence from the Famine record.

Chapter 3

Returning the Gaze: John Shaw Smith and the Haunting Premonitions of Early Photography

Figure 25. ***Famine eviction site, Tonabrocky, County Galway, 2010*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 25) depicts a rain-sodden plot in the small rural townland of Tonabrocky in County Galway. Located just outside Galway City, the plot is an abandoned place. Its sole use is to graze cows over the summer months; their hoof indents are visible in the foreground. Upon entering this scene the viewer/reader's gaze is directed towards a pile of rocks that take up the middle of the picture; they appear to collapse inwards upon a raised mound of earth. Like the spider web of dry-stone wall that forms the boundary of this irregular plot, the rocks seem to lack order or reason; the dereliction of this scene, together with the picture's brooding overtones, leaves an uneasy impression on the viewer/reader's mind, as if they had, to quote Walter Benjamin in the absence that haunts Eugene Atget's photographic streetscapes, stumbled across "the scene of a crime".[217]

[217] Benjamin, "A Small History," 256.

Without a doubt, the viewer is justified in their uneasiness about this photograph on realising that the pile of stones in the centre of the image is the remnants of a Famine era eviction. In local memory, the ruin is said to have been the site of a cottiers cabin. Made from mud and straw, this dwelling was circular in construction with a conical thatched roof, the stones that now mark its ruination providing a sturdy foundation.[218] Nestled in the rolling Galway hills, the cabin would have been more like the "Hottentot" huts described by travel writers on the south-west African plains than the gabled cottages generally associated with the Irish peasantry.[219] These structures once covered the length and breadth of the land. Those that remain, as with the cabin in the photograph (Fig. 25), appear only as collapsed mounds of rubble returning to the earth from which they once came.

Yet this historical chronology offers little respite for the viewer, for, upon closer inspection of this scene, she becomes aware of an existential discontinuity buried deep within the photographic frame. Replicating the trepidations of romanticist landscape painting, the self-awareness that comes to the viewer/reader through the authority invested in the gaze is displaced by the apprehension of a ghostly "other" staring back at them. Building on the ideological critique and themes of absence, silencing and cultural erasure examined in the previous two chapters, it is this uncanny presence peering back from the past that I turn my attention to here. Compounding the cultural estrangement the coloniser held for the native, I argue that by dislodging the epistemological certainties that came with the gaze, the contemplation of this eerie "other" would have proven to be an active disincentive for the acquisition of Famine photographs.

Orienting the Gaze

In chapters one and two I outlined the primary reasons cited by historical commentators for photography's absence from the Famine record. These included the early medium's technical inadequacies and, concerning commercial practice, a distinct lack of "financial incentives" for photographers to have taken such content.[220] I also argued that most conventional understandings of photography's silencing during the Famine were tainted by

[218] I make this claim on personal observation and inspection of the ruin. Local memory in and around the townland confirms that this was the site of an eviction during the Famine.

[219] Many colonial-era correspondents made analogies between the "Hottentots" and the Irish. They were seen to share similar wild, untamed characteristics. See Rawson, Claude Julien. 2001. *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492-1945*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

[220] Chandler and Walsh, *Through the Brass*, 11.

one of revisionisms most controversial claims – that, like the Famine itself, photography at that time was an isolated practice. Its geographic dissemination was not sufficiently dense to have probed the isolated pockets of the country where the Famine had struck. Undeniably, these explanations cannot be dismissed out of hand. Given that photography was in its infancy during the Famine, logistical constraints and other operational restrictions associated with the period would have contributed to the medium's silencing. Although this conventional reasoning might be accurate, it fails to consider how Ireland's peculiar insider/outsider relationship with colonisation, as well as the Ascendency's estrangement from their native "other", might have impacted the medium. After all, it was the Ascendency, which, on account of its cultural and scientific understanding of the new optical technologies of modernity was the class most likely to have photographically recorded a Famine scene.

Crucially, as I showed above, it was the Ascendency's gaze that framed its worldview. In all manner of celestial pondering, landscape orientation and empirical assessment, the Ascendency perceived the world through the authority they enacted from the act of looking. At a time before secularising interests reshaped the modern scientific imagination, its gaze provided Ireland's colonial elite with both proof of the Divine's existence and moral atonement in times of crisis. Moreover, as is documented in their various texts, for the coloniser the gaze also marked their only direct communicative contact with the colonised, one they were especially observant to. In a bout of glimpses and their steely return, the meaning of the native's gaze would teeter between being a sign of benign submission to one of open defiance. These divergent meanings, as Homi Bhabha reminds us through his concept of "sly civility", were recognised by the coloniser being alert to the slightest change in the native's expressive eyes.[221] However, during the time of the Famine even this uneasy cultural understanding was upended on account of the event's incomprehensibility. Compounded by their antagonism against the native, for the Ascendency, its gaze became a point of radical cultural doubt.

In this chapter, I continue to explore photography's absence from the Famine record as symptomatic of Ireland's colonially induced liminality by again referring to critical interpretations of *Wuthering Heights*. After examining the photographic practice of the Irish landlord and Grand Tourist John Shaw Smith, I consider how an overlooked dimension

[221] Bhabha, *The Location*, 86.

of photography's silence during the Famine is suggestive of what Beth Newman has alluded to in her reading of *Wuthering Heights* as a reversal of the gaze.[222] Though the gaze confirmed for the coloniser their cultural dominance over all that they surveyed Heathcliff's defiant backward glances show that, when it was returned at them, it was an experience met with a mixture of apprehension and fear. More significantly, Newman suggests, by the coloniser's returned gaze exposing them to the gross indifference they held towards their "other", this was an encounter where they felt compelled to look away.

It is this act of the coloniser averting their gaze, I argue, that is pivotal to unpacking the ambiguities and contestations that surround photography's silence during the Famine. It resonates through the glaring Irish absences that punctuate Shaw Smith's photographic record: even though he had produced a considerable body of work over the few years he practiced the medium, his catalogue contains only a handful of Irish scenes. I propose this aversion of the gaze is also culturally interconnected with what Luke Gibbons has identified as a little understood absence of visual art enquiry in Ireland. Though the country is renowned the world over for its contributions to literature, Gibbons argues that the same cannot be said for Ireland's endowment to the visual arts, since up until the recent present this historical benefaction has amounted to very little.

But this compulsion in the coloniser to look away is not just detectable from the critical reading of visual texts. Its traces can also be found in documented historical sources. Such is the case in David Lloyd's close reading of the much cited Famine era meeting between the Scottish travel writer Alexander Somerville and the starving "phantom farmer" Thomas Killakeel. When caught in Killakeel's return of his gaze, Somerville (who is representative of the coloniser) experiences a point of ontological collapse.[223] Not only did Somerville come to reckon with his classes complicity in the events that played out around him, but through the starving native's eyes he glimpsed a frightening modern darkness. As can be read from romanticism inspired creative productions, including the photographically recovered image of Branwell's Ghost, overshadowing the coloniser's belief in the unwavering march of progression was a premonition that this unstoppable momentum would bring about their undoing. Replicating the historical discontinuity inherent in the reading of photograph (Fig. 25), what I suggest here is that, in contemplating the ghost, we envisage the trepidation

[222] Newman. Beth. 1990. "The Situation of the Looker-On: Gender, Narration, and Gaze in Wuthering Heights." *PMLA* 105 (5): 1029-1041.

[223] Lloyd, David. 2005. "The Indigent Sublime: Spectres of Irish Hunger." *Representations* 92 (1): 152-185.

that seized the coloniser when they caught their gaze returned through to the eyes of the "other".

John Shaw Smith and the Colonial Gaze

One of the great difficulties that arises from pursuing the hypothesis presented in this thesis is the sheer lack of photographs taken in Ireland at the time of the Famine. Though photographers working in Ireland were not burdened with the patent restrictions that curtailed the medium's early development in England, their numbers were by no means staggering. Certainly nothing compared to the throngs that descended upon Paris during the same period. The Cork economic historian J.J. Lee bests sums up this situation by arguing that the net production of photography in Ireland throughout the Famine amounted to a "trickle".[224] With so few operators and a now tiny extant record to which to refer, the fact that no Famine photographs are known to exist might not be entirely unexpected.

However, there is one figure, the Irish landlord and archaeologist John Shaw Smith, who, when considering his prodigious output, technical competency and extensive travels with the medium of photography, compels me to look at this absence more intently. Unknown until Helmut Gernsheim first brought attention to his work in the 1950s, Shaw Smith was a member of the new landowning elite to emerge in Ireland during the late 1840s and early 1850s. After consolidating vast stretches of property bankrupted during the Famine, some of these landlords, notably Benjamin Lee Guinness, would later transform their class allegiances and fortunes by seizing the investment opportunities offered through industrial commerce.[225] But for Shaw Smith, any similar ambition he may have had was thwarted by a succession of failed business ventures and his untimely suicide in 1867. Nonetheless, between 1850 and 1852 Shaw Smith pursued his interests in archaeology and historiographic enquiry when he undertook a monumental photographic Grand Tour of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Curiously, although Shaw Smith's photographic output was remarkable for its time (he took over three hundred calotypes on his overseas excursion), his Irish content was minuscule by comparison.

[224] Lee, J.J. 1994., introduction to Sean Sexton, *Ireland in Old Photographs.* Toronto: Bullfinch Press. 7.

[225] The Landed Estates Data Base notes the John Shaw Smith purchased his property at Clonmult in County Cork as a "sporting estate" from the Commissioners for the sale of Encumbered Estates in 1854. See NUI Galway, Landed Estates Database. 2013. http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie:8080/LandedEstates/jsp/estate-show.jsp?id=3139.

Following closely in the footsteps of the French photographer Maxime Du Camp's mission for the *Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, during his Grand Tour Shaw Smith produced one of the earliest comprehensive photographic studies of the Holy Land.[226] Distinct from Du Camp's secularly inspired examinations commissioned by the French state, Shaw Smith's photographs, many of which featured biblical sites, were taken for private consumption. Assisted by a new calotype process he had developed for the dry, arid conditions of the desert, in many regards Shaw Smith's photographs surpass the pioneering achievements of his more famous contemporary.[227] Some historians, including Gernsheim, have argued that Shaw Smith was the first photographer to have photographed the mystical rose coloured city of Petra;[228] this accolade, however, belongs to the Scottish physician Dr George Keith, who captured Petra's ruins using the daguerreotype process in 1844.[229]

Remarkably, the only documentation of Keith's much-underrated achievement survives as a series of lithographic reproductions in the devotional publication *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion*.[230] Written by Keith's father, the Reverend Alexander Keith, in this text photography's veracity which, as the preface noted, "could neither be questioned nor surpassed", authenticated for believers the self-evident truth of the Bible. Likewise, for those who "could not themselves visit" these places, the same fundamentals of Christian faith might be realised, the author suggested, through the act of gazing upon their representations.[231]

Correspondingly for Shaw Smith, as he notes in his travel diary entries, it was also through the act of gazing upon the sites of scriptural history where he re-confirmed his knowledge

[226] There are of course others but where Shaw Smith's catalogue is unique is the sheer number of views he had taken.

[227] Gernsheim mentions that to avoid the problems experienced by his contemporaries working in the hot, dry conditions of the desert, Shaw Smith developed a technique of exposing moist calotype paper in the camera. See Gernsheim, *The History*. 114.

[228] Ibid., 132. Though Shaw Smith photographed Petra some years after George Keith, he does have one distinguishing and unrecognised first to his credit. By printing an image of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia mosque into the detail of a Turkish street scene, Shaw Smith appears to have been, many years before the Dadaists, the first photographer to have mastered the art of montage. A reproduction of this image can be found in Taylor, Roger. 2007. *Impressed by Light: British Photographers from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[229] Gernsheim made this claim regarding Shaw Smith being the first to photograph Petra through several early editions of his publication *A Concise History of Photography.* In later editions, he does mention Keith's work.

[230] Alexander, Keith. 1859. *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy.* London: T. Nelson and Sons.

[231] Ibid. The anonymous author of the preface to this publication mentioned that prior to the 1844 trip with his son, the Reverend Keith, who was part of the circle that surrounded David Brewster, had tried unsuccessfully to photograph in the Holy Land with the calotype process. The second quotation regarding the viewing of images from these sites, "could not themselves visit", is sourced from a contemporary of Keith, the Glasgow photographer John Cramb. See Eyal Onne. 1980. *Photographic Heritage of the Holy Land 1839 – 1914.* Manchester, England: Institute of Advanced Studies.

about the world. Coinciding with the haemorrhaging of Ireland's population during the final years of the Famine, Shaw Smith's optical ponderings provided him the measure for constant analysis and introspection. Through his gaze, the discourses that elevated his position of power over that of the cultures he observed were made transparent through the natural order given to the eye. But these mid-19th century empirical atonements aside, Shaw Smith's gaze was also a site/sight where aggressive mercantile and imperialist discourses became entwined. As can be read from his diary, Shaw Smith scrutinised these foreign places through that lens described by some cultural theorists as the "colonial gaze".[232] Though aligned with the beliefs that underlie all facets of the modern optical perspective, where Shaw Smith's acts of visual scrutiny differed was in the licence they conferred upon Britain's hegemonic ambitions. Compelling in its moral penances, through his colonial gaze Shaw Smith beheld the logic of the great civilising venture he and his class had undertaken.

Foreshadowing the desire that John Urry observes in the contemporary tourist's longing to acquire all that they see, Shaw Smith's acts of visual contemplation were also unashamedly possessive.[233] Beyond the fragmented patches that denoted Britain's far-flung dominions on the atlas, all was for the taking, as when in Egypt he caught a glimpse of the antiquarian Giovanni Belzoni's tag on a temple wall and "had serious thoughts of taking [it]" away with him.[234] Through his gaze, Shaw Smith reconfirmed his perceived position of power while neutralising the motives of a British political economy determined to make commercial gain. But Shaw Smith's gaze was also subject to the whims of those who, like him, were wedded to the colonial project, such as when, after traveling to Pozzuoli on the Italian Amalfi Coast to see the town's famous Roman marbles, he was bitterly disappointed to discover that they "were all transported elsewhere".[235]

[232] The most comprehensive account of the colonial gaze comes from Mary Louise Pratt's informative examination of this phenomenon. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes.*

[233] Urry, John. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies.* London: Sage.

[234] Shaw Smith, John. The Diary of John Shaw Smith. Unpublished diary, GB 237 Coll-20, 1850-1852. Centre for Research Collection, The University of Edinburgh. A collection of Shaw Smith's photographs and two diaries are held in the Edinburgh University Library. The diaries are unpublished. The earliest dates from 1849. The latter, which I refer to here, details his Grand Tour. It is dated December 1850 – July 1852. This diary is in the form of an old typed manuscript. The page references provided here are as they appear in this copy.

[235] Ibid., 11.

To gaze is to know

Intriguingly, Shaw Smith's travel diary also hinted at another reason for his unrelenting gaze – a reason not unfamiliar to other members of Ireland's ruling colonial elite. Though Shaw Smith hailed from Rostrevor in County Down, in his diary he constantly alluded to being English.[236] Upon rising to leave Alexandria's famous ruins, it was not an African dawn he awoke to but "a beautiful English October morning".[237] This same indelible "love of country" can also be detected when Shaw Smith visited the Maltese capital of Valletta.[238] As a British colony, it was defended by "our soldiers"[239] with its tidy streets contrasting those of other "Eastern towns" which were all, he noted, typically "dirty".[240] Again in Valletta, when he called upon the Church of St. John of Jerusalem, he passed by its ornate altars to gaze solely on the interior that was, he remarked, "similar to our Saxon style".[241] Peculiarly, Shaw Smith's unabashed sense of Englishness, of using English thematic narratives to comprehend the locations he gazed upon, was matched only by his staggering lack of Irish references. Throughout his long, self-deceptive account there are none.

Undeniably, it is this absence of Irish references from Shaw Smith's diary that is the most confounding aspect of this document and also the gaze that it represents. Despite encountering scenes through his journey that he would have been familiar with in Ireland – ruinous landscapes, the appalling poverty of the people – Shaw Smith offers no such analogy. Similarly, the opportunity to reiterate his Enlightenment convictions about the new, burgeoning industrial landscapes of his native County Down also went begging. And whilst the possibility remains that Shaw Smith may have either been born in England or had English parental lineage (and so would have been culturally removed from the Ascendency), his lack of acknowledgement for the situation of Ireland runs contrary to that of other mid-19th century English diarists and travel writers abroad. Far from being absent, Ireland was

[236] There has been some conjecture as to John Shaw Smith's nationality. Several unreferenced on-line sources claim that Shaw Smith was born in England. This presumption may be true. The only published authors to write on his life, Maria Antonella Pelizzari and Brenda E. Moon, both claim that he was born in County Cork. See Moon, Brenda E. 2004. "Mr and Mrs Smith in Greece, Egypt and the Levant." In *Travellers in the Near East*, edited by Charles Foster. London: Stacey International., and Pelizzari, Maria Antonella. 2000. "The Inclusive Map of John Shaw Smith's 1850–1852 Photographic Tour." *Visual Resources* 16: (2000): 351-375. Interestingly, the Landed Estates Data Base mentions that Shaw Smith was from Rostrevor in County Down and purchased his Estate in Clonmult, County Cork in 1854. It might be this later connection to Clonmult that led both Pelizzari and Moon to claim that Shaw Smith was from Cork.

[237] Shaw Smith, The Diary, 54.

[238] Ibid., 11.

[239] Ibid., 36.

[240] Ibid., 127.

[241] Ibid., 35.

an all too familiar reference. In every vice and cultural deficiency to be found in any part of the world, an equivalent if not worse example already existed in Ireland.[242]

Admittedly, any assessment of Shaw Smith's gaze within the greater context of photography's absence from the Famine record might be easily dismissed when taking into account the nature of his travel diary. Unpublished and with the only known copy being an aged transcript archived at the University of Edinburgh, Shaw Smith's diary is a chronicle of contradictions. In some respects, the document offers an informed, though patronisingly suspicious, assessment of the native, while in others, principally when the author looks past the "wild looking black people"[243] to gaze upon what they perceive to be an empty landscape, it is testament to the worst aspects of imperialist indifference.

Further complicating issues regarding the worth of Shaw Smith's diary as an interpretative source into the complexities that underlined his gaze is that the document was co-authored by his wife, Mary (nee Richardson), who came from Lisburn in County Antrim. Her entries can be detected throughout the diary. She writes intently when Shaw Smith was either away taking photographs or incapable of transcribing their experiences (such as the occasion when, during a cross-cultural encounter with "two Armenians", "John", Mary wrote, "eat such a dose of hashish" that he was in bed for two days).[244] But his voice can still be heard, as when he recounts processional rites from High Mass at St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Here he discusses Roman Catholic ecclesiastical observances with a considerable degree of understanding. Indeed, for a member of Ireland's landed aristocracy he possessed a remarkable knowledge of his oppositional confessional's liturgical rites. This theological comprehension might indicate that Shaw Smith had undertaken some form of religious training. As with the means by which he acquired his extraordinary photographic skills, Shaw Smith's formal education remains unknown.

Though difficulties surrounding the authorship of Shaw Smith's diary may warrant due caution, where the document provides its most revealing testimony is when read in conjunction with his photographic catalogue. A case in point is his calotype image of the

[242] In his study of 18th and 19th-century travel writing, Glen Hooper explains how British travellers to the continent often likened the scenes they encountered with comparisons to Ireland rather than England. Much like their peers travelling to Africa, Ireland provided a familiar reference with all that was seen as backward and wanting for progress. See Hooper, Glen. 2005. *Travel Writing and Ireland, 1760 – 1860: Culture, History, Politics*, Hampshire; Great Britain: Pelgrave Macmillian.

[243] Shaw Smith, The Diary, 71.

[244] Ibid., 133.

Athenian ruin *The Choragic Monument of Lysicrates* (1851). Dedicated to a theatrical performance staged in antiquity, in the wake of the social upheavals that followed the French Revolution, the *Choragic* entered the imagination of Britain's new empire-building elite. The political and religious calamities that had transformed liberal notions of civilisation from a reverence for the Roman/Christian past to the veneration of all things Hellenic saw the monument become an emblem of a new humanist inspired vision of history. Such was the esteem held for the *Choragic* that its likeness was replicated in state gardens throughout the world (Fig. 26) and in the civic edifices that adorned the grimy industrial towns of England's north. Despite the *Choragic's* immediate appeal as a sight on the growing list of Grand Tour destinations, in time the ruin developed a much more formidable cultural association. In the eyes of a colonising elite eager to attain symbolic capital, the *Choragic* became a transformative site that allowed them to bridge the immense historical distance that separated the classical past from the new dawn of civilisation being heralded by the British Empire.

Figure 26. ***Walter McGill's replica of The Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, New South Wales, 2009*** (Author)[245]

[245] Walter McGill's replica of the Choragic, formerly located in the Governor's mansion, is a staging point for many Byron inspired commemorations. Unfortunately, as these events are imperialist in their political orientation, they ignore the freethinking that was central to Byron's thought.

It was this same longing to bridge the past and to justify Britain's colonial ambitions that can be read in Shaw Smith's photograph of the *Choragic.* Though this image is dwarfed by his renderings of the Acropolis and the Parthenon, a clue left by Shaw Smith's hand discloses his intentions. Written on the back of the photograph in perfect copperplate script, Shaw Smith noted that "the ruins of the house where Byron lived" could be seen.[246] Here, Shaw Smith's reference to Byron and, by extension, myths surrounding the warrior poet's death in the fight for Greek sovereignty are indicative, I suggest, of the cultural assumptions that informed his gaze. To be sure, this detail might be easily dismissed if it was not for the fact that Shaw Smith's image of the Choragic is the only photograph from his catalogue where he writes a place-based narrative description to accompany the title. Hence, his caption is loaded with meaning. Of the Shaw-Smith images held in both the National Library of Ireland and the Kodak Eastman Collection (online), all but the *Choragic* are listed with a location title alone.[247]

But this is not the only intriguing facet surrounding Shaw Smith's gaze that might be gleaned from his photographic rendering of the *Choragic*. Due to his evident longing to be English, I suggest that a more immediate motive for his acts of visual pondering was a need to confirm his identity. Two referential details immersed within this photograph stand out in this regard. First, by locating Britain within the wider mid-19th century geopolitical landscape, Shaw Smith's depiction of the *Choragic* alluded to the existence of a mysterious "other" outside the photographic frame. Shadowing the Empire's strategic interests in the Middle East, this "other", in the form of the Ottoman Empire, had jeopardised the identity project advocated by British colonial elites. Second, as a means of confronting this foreign menace, Shaw Smith's reference to Byron also called to mind popular imperialist discourses used to vindicate Britain's expansionist objectives because they advanced Enlightenment reasoning. Here, the *Choragic*'s transformation from ruin to symbol for the Empire's grand civilising ambitions saw Shaw Smith's image enter a wider political metanarrative – one that

[246] My reading of Shaw Smith's *Choragic* image has been informed by research conducted on a positive copy of this photograph by Maria Pelizzari. See Pelizzari, "The Inclusive Map". It was Pelizzari who first noted Shaw Smith's use of the place based annotative title on the *Choragic* image. However, by not realising this is the only photograph taken by Shaw Smith where he includes a place-based descriptive annotation in his title, she underestimated the significance of her discovery. His other images are titled as if read from a travel guide.

[247] I base this claim on an extensive study of Shaw Smith's print record held by the National Library of Ireland and the Kodak Collection at George Eastman House. Shaw Smith's reference to Byron appears on a positive copy of the *Choragic* held at George Eastman House. The collection was acquired by Helmut Gernsheim during the 1950s. See Shaw Smith, John. 2014. "John Shaw Smith Series." George Eastman House. Accessed May 16, http://www.geh.org/ne/str091/jssmith-html/m198116830180_ful.html.

through his gaze validated these objectives whilst redeploying the cultural preconceptions that underpinned emerging British notions of identity.

Irish absences in Shaw Smith's catalogue

Notwithstanding Shaw Smith's remarkable, though brief, photographic career had generated a voluminous amount of work, his practice conceals an intriguing anomaly. As I have indicated above, Shaw Smith's catalogue is bereft of Irish images. The few Irish scenes that appear to have been taken by him are of views near his Dublin seaside residence at Blackrock and the ancient ecclesiastical settlement of Glendalough in County Wicklow.[248] Edward Chandler suggests that this absence can be explained by the fact that Shaw Smith's return to Ireland coincided with a change in technology that saw him, along with many of his contemporaries, abandon the medium. This innovation, which from its introduction in 1851 led the way for photography's rapid commercialisation, was Fredrick Scott Archer's wet collodion process. Lacking the enthusiasm to engage with a medium that had succumbed to the pursuits of its commercial practitioners, Shaw Smith's Irish images were, Chandler suggests, experiments procured to support his Grand Tour. Much like Du Camp, who gave up the medium after returning from Egypt, Shaw Smith's Grand Tour was his one and only sustaining photographic interest.[249]

Chandler's suggestion regarding the absence of Irish scenes from Shaw Smith's photographic catalogue does have merit. His synopsis corresponds with a similar movement away from the medium by some English and Scottish exponents associated with Talbot's calotype. Disenchanted by the new commercial orientated photographic processes, many of these early practitioners, including Shaw Smith, retired from the medium to resume their interests in archaeology. However, though the historical record backs Chandler's claim, he does overlook what effect the cultural chasm that existed in Anglo-Irish society for art-based social enquiry might have had on Shaw Smith's decision to cease his photographic practice. In contrast with Britain, where the integration of art with the prevailing literary and aesthetic discourses of the day saw many photographers take to

[248] Ibid. There are 15 Irish scenes attributable to John Shaw Smith. Apart from images taken at Blackrock and Glendalough, these include photographs of sites in and around Rostrevor in County Down.

[249] Although Shaw Smith appears to have retired from photography after his Grand Tour, he still maintained some interest in the medium. For instance, there is record that in 1867, just before his death, Shaw Smith commissioned a photographic portrait of a 105-year-old man who lived near his estate in Clonmult, County Cork as a gift for Queen Victoria. See the article "Longevity." 1867. *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review* 4: 361. The reference to Du Camp's retirement from photographic practice is noted in Schwartz. Joan M. 1996. "The Geography Lesson: photographs and the construction of imaginative geographies." *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1): 24.

pictorialism following the medium's commercialisation, in Ireland no such similar transition occurred.[250] Comparable with the careers of the desperately few painters to emerge from the Ascendency prior to the Celtic Revival, the cultural affiliations that would have extended to Shaw Smith the opportunity to take up art-based photographic pursuits following his Grand Tour did not exist in Ireland.

Remarkably, this lack of art-based social enquiry in Ireland has attracted only modest scholarly attention. Of the few authors who have examined this silence, the cultural theorist Luke Gibbons has been the most forthright in his opinion. In a country acclaimed the world over for its mastery of words, Gibbons declared that "the absence of a visual tradition in Ireland [is] equal in stature to its powerful literary counterpart".[251] Commenting on how photographic representations of Ireland during the mid-1980s still came predominately from the outside looking in, Gibbons suggested that this reluctance by the Irish to utilise visual descriptors introspectively was not on account of their once prolific oral traditions but rather indicative of a remnant from their colonial past. A decade before the cultural hedonism ushered in by the Celtic Tiger; Gibbons argued that the trauma which marked Ireland's colonisation had brought about a historically resonant visual abyss.

When reading John Shaw Smith's photographic catalogue one cannot help but get a sense of the visual abyss Gibbons alerts us, not simply due to his collection's wanting in Irish representations but because it lacks the self-assured imperial references that accompanied his images from the Grand Tour. Contrary to the historical redemption that underpinned his rendering of the *Choragic*, Shaw Smith's Irish scenes offer no such recovery: they are a catalogue of a lingering cultural doubt. Scratch their faded surface and they expose the colonial-induced psychological burden Gibbons argues had instigated in the Irish a historical aversion to visual art practice. As revealed through the anxious silences that interrupt Shaw Smith's catalogue, for the coloniser this burden yielded an acute perceptual dilemma. It is this dilemma through which the Irish absences within Shaw Smith's photographic inventory need to be examined. By averting his gaze, Shaw Smith implies that the absent "other" embodied by the *Choragic* photograph was one which for him was far less arduous a proposition to dwell upon than the starving "other" in Ireland being obliterated by the

[250] For a detailed analysis of how aesthetic transitions in British art integrated with the discourses of the State, see Tobin, Beth Fowkes. 1999. *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting*. London: Duke University Press.

[251] Gibbons, Luke. 1986. "Alien Eye: Photography and Ireland." *Circa* 12: 10.

Famine. The native whose life and culture are absent from Shaw Smith's travel diary was silenced again through his photographic gaze.

Returning the gaze

Curiously, the resonance that I have suggested exists between the Famine's absences and the act of gazing, as detected through John Shaw Smith's photographic catalogue, strikes an intriguing representational parallel with the tropes employed by Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights.* Through the gaze and its performance, the novel's plots unfold. In Brontë's verbal sketches of the Yorkshire Moors, literary and visual landscapes collide. Her descriptions of framing points such as the Penistone Crags compel readers to situate themselves in these locations and to ponder the psycho-historical traumas they conceal. Much like the sublime sense that compelled Wordsworth to examine the relationship between memory and loss in wild, remote places, these are sites to be contemplated with the eye.

Figure 27. ***The Deserted Village, Slievemore Mountain, Achill Island, County Mayo, 2008*** (Author)

Full of sky and scoured light, Brontë's landscapes are startlingly reminiscent of those places in the west of Ireland most devastated by the Famine. For anyone who has ever walked the lonely trails on Achill Island (Fig. 27), Brontë's descriptions of the Moors surrounding Top

Withens (Fig. 28) (allegedly the site that inspired her setting for Wuthering Heights)[252] might be seen to have transcribed the terror that inflicted Ireland during the Famine to another landscape that was likewise transformed by the actions of history: Yorkshire. Akin to the villages in Ireland lay to ruin by the Famine, in the remnants of the flax weaver's cottages that dot the Moors, the viewer/reader is alerted to the political and economic forces that emptied these landscapes of human life. Inscribed by violence, these are places of overbearing silence, where through the imposition of the gaze the viewer/reader perceives at first-hand modernity's unquenchable desire for change.

Figure 28. ***Top Withens, Stanbury Moor, West Yorkshire, 2012*** (Author)[253]

As Winifred Gerin has speculated, these connections between Ireland and the Yorkshire Moors might well have entered Emily Brontë's mind upon reading newspaper accounts of the Famine.[254] Accompanied by James Mahony's illustrations of landscapes drenched in destruction, these reports may have brought Emily back to the times when as a young child

[252] Gerin, *Emily Brontë*.

[253] Over the years, authors have proposed sites that may have inspired Emily Brontë's depiction of Wuthering Heights. Brontë's biographer, Winfred Gerin, suggests that the Elizabethan era ruin Top Withens on the Stanbury Moor is the most likely location. It is a site Emily and her siblings would have been familiar with in their youth. See Flintoff, Everard. 2006. "The Geography of Wuthering Heights." *Brontë Studies* 31 (1):37 – 52.

[254] Ibid.

she wandered the heaths around Haworth with Branwell and her sisters.[255] Carefree times but also occasions, as revealed through her diaries, which sparked an intense curiosity for nature and the pain that belies the human existence. Similar to Shaw Smith's visual contemplations on remote and distant lands, Brontë's use of the gaze is most profound when she locates this act within emerging modernist concepts of the picturesque. Here again the comparison between the west of Ireland and the Yorkshire Moors is most fitting, for the emergence of the "picturesque" in Irish travel writing appeared, as Kevin Whelan reminds us, in the wake of the Famine.[256] In a cruel twist to the philosophies of liberal humanism, the gaze came to situate the viewer and their subjectivity in the landscape only after the "other" had been eradicated from it.

The gaze is also pivotal to the power plays that situate Brontë's characters in *Wuthering Heights*, notably those acted out by Heathcliff. In his youthful rebelliousness and rancorous return to the Heights, Heathcliff's gaze beheld a strange out-of-worldliness, one Nelly Dean was all too familiar with when she described his eyes as "a couple of black fiends … like devil's spies".[257] But beyond Brontë's use of the gaze as a point of dramatic tension, Heathcliff's return of sight instils that quality of resistance that Eagleton's and other critical readings of *Wuthering Heights* compel us to explore. Outside of open rebellion, in Heathcliff's return of sight we see how the "other" confronts the power relations that have conspired against them.

Further, when the character Heathcliff is read for the possibility that he may have been Irish, his acts of ocular sly civility induces what Beth Newman has suggested being a reversal of the gaze.[258] Uncovering what she sees as a veiled proto-feminist critique of power in Brontë's text, Newman suggests that when closely read, *Wuthering Heights* reveals that the authority which permits the observer to categorise, judge and discern the subject of their gaze is momentarily overturned when they are confronted by the sight of the "other" staring back.[259] Possibly the most hardhearted of these ocular performances occurred, I suggest, on the occasion when Heathcliff was apprehended by Edgar Linton at

[255] Ibid.

[256] Whelan, Kevin. 2004. "Reading the Ruins: The Presence of Absence in the Irish Landscape." In *Surveying Ireland's Past: Multidisciplinary Essays in Honour of Anngret Simms,* edited by Howard B. Clarke, et al. Dublin: Geography Publications.

[257] Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* 66.

[258] Newman, "The Situation".

[259] Ibid.

Thrushcross Grange following a rendezvous with Catherine. Though backed by two armed footmen and having a good reason (in his mind) to chastise the troublesome gypsy, Linton was compelled by Heathcliff's menacing glare to look away.[260] By Heathcliff gazing back into the eyes of the authority that had persecuted him for being "other", Linton's only response was one of pathetic inaction.

The Crisis of Representation

Ironically, Eagleton's reading of *Wuthering Heights* (and in part also Newman's) as a work that, by reversing the colonial gaze, allows for insights into the silences that surround the Famine aligns his thinking with the poignant speculations on Ireland's traumatic colonial past offered by David Lloyd. In a re-reading of Rey Chow's seminal work *Writing Diaspora* (1993), Lloyd claims that it is not the coloniser's gaze that determined the references by which they constructed their worldview: rather it is the return gaze of the "other" that forced them into an awareness of the temporalities that underlined their position of power. Lloyd explores this quandary by scrutinising one of the most recognisable visual motifs to have arisen from the Famine: the spectre. Liminally placed between life and death, nature and culture, stories of encounters with the "walking dead" at threshold places such as *cillin* survive in folk-memory accounts of the Famine (Fig. 29).[261]

Figure 29. ***Cillin at Stonepark South, County Roscommon, 2010*** (Author)

[260] See chapter 14 Brontë, *Wuthering Heights.*

[261] For an account of the phenomenon of "walking dead", see Kelly, John. 2012. *The Graves are Walking*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. The *cillin* at Stonepark South in County Roscommon (Fig. 29) is one of many such places associated with these encounters.

The image of the Famine spectre also haunts the narratives of the coloniser; possibly the most unnerving are those observations made by travel writers, who, upon encountering Famine victims, perceived in their tormented bodies a vision of death incarnate. But for the coloniser, the Famine victim's presence revealed something far more frightening. Through the spectre's ability to collapse the confines of socially defined space – to cross the existential divide – it's fleeting glance marked what was for the coloniser a point of ontological collapse. The fixed coordinates of perception, memory, meaning and identity that sustained the coloniser's worldview spiralled into free-fall the instant they met their return of sight through the eyes of the starving "other".

During what amounted to an experiential "moment of terror", the coloniser, Lloyd suggests, was confronted not just by the "precariousness" of their life situation, as the representation of the spectre brings to us all, but by two confounding realisations.[262] First, by their entwinement in an economic and political order that had escalated a severe but containable agricultural emergency into a cataclysm beyond imagining, the spectre personified in the body of the starving native alerted the coloniser to their culpability in this tragedy.[263] Second, though providential meditations on the Famine provided the coloniser solace when they attempted to justify its horrors, they were, nonetheless, tormented by a lingering, cultural doubt.[264] As Heathcliff's premonition that "a change is coming and I am in its shadow" testifies to;[265] at the heart of modernity there lurked a fearsome darkness. For the coloniser, these compounding realisations culminated in what Lloyd describes as a "crisis of representation" the instant they came face-to-face with the Famine spectre.[266] When caught in the gaze of this haunting "other", the coloniser beheld the catastrophe they feared would befall them too.

[262] Lloyd, "The Indigent Sublime," 164.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* 378.

[266] Lloyd, David. 2005. "The Indigent Sublime: Spectres of Irish Hunger." *Representations* 92 (1): 152-185. One cannot mention Lloyd's reference to the Famine as a "crisis of representation" without drawing parallels with the same epistemological dilemma Theodor Adorno sees in the Holocaust. For an overview of Adorno's statement and its relationship with the representation of the Holocaust, see Cohen, Josh. 2005. *Interrupting Auschwitz: art, religion, philosophy.* New York: Continuum. Certainly several authors have made this analogy, notably the English historian A. J. P. Taylor, who in his review of Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-1849* for the *New Statesman* made an analogy between the Famine and the Holocaust by stating that "all Ireland was a Belsen." It is not my intention here to explore this analogy in any detail. For an account of Taylor's reference, see Donnelly, *The Great Irish,* 121.

Lloyd evokes this ontological reckoning by recalling the charged Famine era encounter between the Scottish travel writer Alexander Somerville and the starving, near death small tenant farmer Thomas Killakeel**.** More than any other of the distressing scenes that confronted Somerville during his travels through Ireland, Killakeel's spectre-like appearance and attempts, along with his children, to dig out "oat stubble" from a Limerick hillside traumatised him.[267] Foretelling of their imminent demise, Somerville wrote that Killakeel and his children's efforts with the spade were akin to "breaking [the] ground for their own burial".[268] Here, Somerville's recollection unnervingly brings to mind another of James Mahony's graphic representations for the *ILN*, "Searching for Potatoes in a Stubble Field" (Fig. 30).[269] This image depicts a mother and her two children desperately sifting the soil of a cleared potato plot. Unable to receive "outdoor relief", they are destined to die.

Figure 30. **James Mahony, "Searching for Potatoes in a Stubble Field" (*ILN*)**

Though Somerville was taken aback by this scene, its wretchedness only served to reinforce his belief that the solution to Ireland's calamity lay in the peasantry's integration into an economy based on agricultural rationalisation. Similarly, when Killakeel boldly suggested to him that his predicament was the result of "too many landlords above his little piece of

[267] Snell. K.D.M, ed. 1994. *Alexander Somerville: Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 152.

[268] Ibid.

[269] It is uncertain if this illustration can be attributed to James Mahony. Several authors, including Chris Monash, believe this to be his work. However, as this illustration is dated 1849, it is two years later than the period Mahony is known to have been active with the *Illustrated London News*. Just as historical details are unclear regarding the authorship of this image, aesthetic distinctions also provide few clues. As designs that appeared in the *Illustrated London News* were woodcut illustrations compiled by artists, stylistic resemblances between this and artwork thought to have been executed by Mahony must be read with caution.

ground" (an explicit reference to the practice of rack-renting), Somerville hurriedly dismissed the native's rationale for lacking due reason. Reaffirming the fiscal empiricism of his fellow Scot, Thomas Carlyle, for Somerville the only way Ireland could ever discipline its tragic history was through the tried and tested mechanisms of the Victorian political economy. However, Somerville's reprise to economic rationalism was shortly lived. No sooner had he turned his head away from pondering these sentiments than he experienced a "crisis of representation" when he met the "phantom farmer" face-to-face. In a scene resounding with the trepidation conjured-up by Heathcliff's menacing backward glance, it was not the trauma of the native's famished disposition that instigated Somerville's "moment of terror" but how, as he wrote, Killakeel's unremitting gaze scrutinised:

> The innermost pores of my body for food to eat and for seed oats. It moved through the veins with my blood, and finding no seed oats there, nor food, searched through every pocket to the bottom, and returned again and searched the flesh and blood to the very heart; … gazing at me as if to see what the lean spirit might find; and it searched the more keenly that he spoke not a word.[270]

Figure 31. ***Famine graveyard on the outskirts of Athea, County Limerick, 2012*** (Author)[271]

[270] Snell, *Alexander Somerville*, 153.

[271] It is hard to tell where in County Limerick the Famine-era encounter between Alexander Somerville and Thomas Killakeel occurred. Somerville does not mention the site, although his account does suggest that this meeting occurred close to the estate of William Smith O'Brien (the leader of the 1848 Rising) in Cahermoyle and the market town of Newcastle West.

Outside of Somerville's need to satisfy a readership developing a taste for all manner of spectacle, here the conspiring tensions that underpin the coloniser's worldview and the psychic calamities that ensued when their gaze was returned at them have a distinguishable photographic resonance. With the precision of a medical imaging scanner, Killakeel's return of gaze dissected Somerville's inner being for the moral fibre that sustained his belief in the Enlightenment project. On this windswept Limerick hillside, possibly not unlike that seen in the photograph (Fig. 31), the occult-like nature of early photography conflates with the mortifying return of the Famine victim's gaze. In Somerville's crisis of representation, we catch a glimpse of the reciprocating metaphysical anxieties and colonial induced othering omitted from historicist explanations of photography's absence from the Famine record.

The ghost within the photographic frame

For us living through what some critics have labelled the "post-photographic era",[272] Killakeel is a figure for who we might find readily available comparisons from the global image archive. Sadly, these are depictions that, through their dissemination in media texts and even more disturbing confluences with art, as seen in James Nachtwey's photographs from the Sudanese and Somalian famines of the 1990s, we have now become desensitised to.[273] But in his cold, stony silence, Killakeel's spectre-like representation still commands our attention. A shadowy portent, Somerville's description of the "phantom farmer" might even suffice for our lack of a photographic record of the Famine. Curiously, however, there is a photographic image taken contemporary to the recent present that, due to its social and historical conditions of production, allows us reach back through to the crisis of representation Somerville gazed upon. Here, again, I return to the dizzying vision of Branwell's Ghost and how, when critically read as a parallel text, the image reveals an unintended but nonetheless ironic connection between the Famine's incomprehensibility and photography's absence from the event.

Situated between these sites, the hilly townlands that surround Athea on the Limerick to Listowel road are not unlike the location Somerville describes.

[272] I refer here to how the distinctions that mark the differences between film and digital photography have caused commentators to question the meaning that can be derived from the medium. See Mitchell, William J. 1994. *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-photographic Era.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

[273] There can be no doubting the sincerity of James Nachtwey's motivations for photographing African famines. In his interview for the PBS documentary *War Photographer,* Nachtwey describes the moral dilemmas he has faced when photographing these events and, importantly, how these images are produced to inform the world about the need for urgent action. Nevertheless, upon reading Nachtwey's images in glossy magazines and on the walls of art galleries, one cannot help but wonder just what exactly they are supposed to inform us about? See Frei, Christian. *War Photographer*, directed by Christian Frei (New York: First Run/Icarus Films, 2003), DVD.

Figure 32. ***Branwell Brontë's "Pillar group" at the Black Bull Public House, Haworth, Yorkshire, 2012*** (Author)[274]

In Branwell's piercing left eye (the only facial detail that has survived his image's expurgation), the past and the circumstances that surround the Famine re-emerge abruptly in the present. Peering back at us through the layers of paint that have concealed his memory, in the reading of Branwell's Ghost a space emerges between photography and the Famine that allows us to mention their names in the same breath. For just as Catherine Linton returned to the Heights as a ghostly portent, by stretching the limits of representation the Famine and photography are interconnected by an intense form of haunting. I suggest it is not by mere coincidence that, at a historical junction which attested to the rise of photography and the social disaster brought about by the Famine, both these phenomena were popularly perceived as inhabiting spectral-like forms.

Floating above the clumsily rendered depiction of his sisters, Branwell's Ghost is strangely reminiscent of the ectoplasmic productions that fixated the imagination of the generations born in the wake of the Famine. It is from this era, one in which Sigmund Freud mused over in his concept of the "uncanny", where, for the viewer/reader, the act of visual contemplation became bound up in a new, intense anxiety. In Freud's uncanny, the

[274] Including the Black Bull Public House, Branwell Brontë was a regular at pubs in and around Haworth and Bradford.

viewer/reader is seized by the fear of optical castration – to be "robbed of one's eyes".[275] Far from liberating the individual from the trepidations of the past, for Freud, the gaze became the site of a modern repression, where its contemplation crippled the viewer/reader's self-awareness and knowledge of the world.[276] In the gaze – as in photography – the demons that caused our ancestors to tremble in the dark returned to haunt us in more frightening forms.

But fear persists

Although photography's absence from the Famine record was no doubt a consequence of its historical limitations, by focusing solely on the medium's perceived restraints, the dominant historical perspective has discounted the influence other factors may have had on this silencing. In the previous two chapters, I examined how the cultural estrangement brought about by the failure of the coloniser's ideological project in Ireland was but one of these contributing influences. Through this chapter, I have scrutinised a much more elusive but nonetheless interconnected variable, the means by which metaphysical anxieties associated with photography's invention had affected its silencing during the Famine. And while the medium was applauded as a means of edifying empirical truth, its mimetic prowess beheld an alarming contradiction. As examined in critical interpretations inspired by Walter Benjamin's and Roland Barthes' contemplations on photography, the medium's emergence during the mid-19th century reinforced fears about the physical and moral sustainability of the Enlightenment project.[277] Echoing the anxieties of romanticist landscape painting, by centring the viewer/reader's awareness to the illusionary perspective of the picture frame, photography generated in their mind an unnerving sense of doubt. Analogous with the apprehensions that underpinned Emily Brontë's portrayals of the Yorkshire Moors, when lost in the soft darkness of early photography, the viewer/reader was seized by the premonition of an impending catastrophe.

But this was not the only perception about early photography that has gone unacknowledged by historicist understandings of the medium's Famine absences, for prior

[275] Fraud, Sigmund. 2014. The Uncanny (1919). Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Accessed July 28, http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf.

[276] I am led to my thinking on the relationship between the gaze and Freud's notion of the uncanny by the work of the psychoanalyst, artist and author Bracha Ettinger. See Ettinger, Bracha L. 2006. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

[277] For a summation of these thoughts, see Yacavone, Kathrin. 2012. *Benjamin, Barthes and the Singularity of Photography.* New York: Continuum International.

to its capitulation to the state, the photograph possessed unparalleled emblematic power.[278] Coinciding with the re-emergence of the spectre as a representational trope in Victorian era British and Irish writing, photography was, as Eduardo Cadava remarks, a metaphor for the transcendent.[279] By its strange motion blurring and exposure inconsistencies, photography presented a trace of an unseen reality beyond vision. Echoing Barthes' observations on Alexander Gardener's famous portrait of the American Civil War assassination conspirator Lewis Payne, "He is dead and he is going to die"[280], Cadava writes that the photograph is a "grave":[281] in its frame lies a cemetery for the departed and also, more frighteningly, a place for our own return after death.[282] And even if we do not subscribe to a belief in a spectral world, we must still acknowledge that the only ontological possibility for the existence of the ghost is within the photographic frame.[283]

Photography's ability to resurrect beliefs in ghosts was an attribute not lost on its early subjects. After having her daguerreotype taken at Richard Beard's Regent Street studio in May 1841, Maria Edgeworth penned one of the earliest known accounts produced by a sitter as to the unnerving experience of being photographed.[284] In a letter to her sister, Edgeworth wrote that she found photography to be a "mysterious operation" – one that, through its strange lighting anomalies, had the effect of making all those it surveyed "look like spectres".[285] For Edgeworth, photography's referential pragmatism did little to diminish its indefiniteness. Not unlike the haunting premonitions witnessed in the Famine victim's gaze, in photography there lay a threshold between this realm and the next. Silent and

[278] In my use of the statement "capitulation to the state", I refer to Siegfried Kracauer's notions on the simultaneous rise of the State and the interpretative systems photography has become implicated in. Kracauer, Siegfried. 1993. "Photography" (1927). *Critical Inquiry* 19 (3): 421-436.

[279] Cadava, Eduardo. 1997. *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

[280] Barthes, Roland. 1993. *Camera Lucida*. London: Vintage. 95. By way of Helmut Gernsheim, Alexander Gardener and John Shaw Smith share a connection. Maria Antonella Pelizzari mentions that when she was examining correspondence at the University of Texas at Austin, she discovered that Gernsheim had traded to the Chicago collector Scott Boyer the majority of his Shaw Smith collection for the second volume of Alexander Gardner's *Sketchbook of the Civil War*. See Pelizzari, "The Inclusive Map," 354.

[281] Cadava, *Words of Light.* Cadava cites this metaphor throughout his text.

[282] Ibid.

[283] I am guided in making this statement by Cadava's informative writings on photography.

[284] For an account of the chronology of the famous daguerreotype portraits of Maria Edgeworth taken at Richard Beard's studio, see Jacob, Michael G. 1994. "A Visit to Mr. Beard's." *The Daguerreian Annual.* I thank Mr. Jacob for supplying me with a copy of his fascinating paper.

[285] These quotes are from Maria Edgeworth's letter to her sister, Fanny Wilson, dated Tuesday, 25 May 1841. See Colvin, *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England,* 594.

perplexing, for those who have ever found themselves lost in the space of a photograph, this is an experience not that far removed from us today.

Writing in her informative *Photography and Its Critics*, Mary Warner Marien traces this uncanny element within photography to the origin myths propagated by the medium's founding fathers. As can be read from both Daguerre's *Historique et Description des Procédés du Daguerréotype* (1839) and Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* (1844-1846), by omitting both photography's social underpinnings and their own technical contribution, the medium came to be acknowledged not as an invention but as a discovery.[286] Mirroring the reaction of audiences to the illusions of the diorama, photography appeared on the scene as if by magic.[287] Further, Marien suggests that giving weight to this metaphysical comprehension of the medium was photography's underlying reference to a state of otherness outside its frame. Like the mysterious man Daguerre's partner Charles Chevalier claimed to have encountered before the invention of photography, and whose knowledge of the proto-medium surpassed his own, by its strangeness the photograph heralded a state of existence beyond the temporal present.[288]

This ethereal dimension within photography was not the only dark connotation that inhabited the early medium. By underscoring the grave uncertainties many who lived during the 19th century held for modernity (a sentiment still shared today), photography harboured an ominous vision. Conflicting with the unrivalled material prosperity and social cohesion promised by the other celebrated technical innovations of the modern age, in the photograph there lurked a ghost that was the harbinger of death and decay. When seen as a metaphor, as Marien writes, for "apocalyptic loss", photography's latent vision, its reminder of modernity's ever-present destructive potential, might be seen to have replicated the fear that scrutinised Somerville through to his very organs.[289] Evocative of

[286] Marien, Mary Warner. 1997. *Photography and Its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid. Marien refers to the story of a mysterious young man who approached Daguerre's optician, Charles Chevalier, in his Paris shop. Chevalier, eager not to give away his collaboration with Daguerre, cautiously engaged the man in conversation. This meeting occurred at a time when Daguerre was experiencing problems retaining detail in his productions. To Chevalier's surprise, so the story goes, the young man produced a bottle of solution that he claimed allowed him to fix the image on paper. But before Chevalier could establish the man's identity, he vanished into the Parisian streets. Marien suggests that the man Chevalier referred to was Hippolyte Bayard. Bayard, who may yet one day be proven to have been the inventor of photography, produced a paper positive photographic process. Variations of this story are noted in several late 19th-century pamphlets on photography.

[289] Ibid., 170.

the physiological torments of Anglo-Irish literature, through Killakeel's return of the gaze, Somerville chanced upon a photographic-like vision of the calamity he feared would also befall him. Perhaps this memory came back to haunt Somerville in his final days. In a scenario that reverberates with the troubling scenes he had reported on in Ireland, after exhausting his working possibilities in England, Somerville migrated to Canada, only to die there in a freezing cold woodshed and, much like Killakeel before him, starving and in dire poverty.[290]

Considering the thorny relationship the Ascendency had with its photographic productions, where the medium echoed this classes' greater societal fears, it seems fair to suppose that the crisis of representation which afflicted Somerville on that windswept Limerick hillside might have just as easily affected those photographers who may have either stumbled upon or imagined recording such a scene. Augmented by apprehensions for the sustainability of the Enlightenment project, what I suggest here is that by contemplating the other's ghostly return of the gaze, the coloniser would have caught sight of the circumstances by which they contributed to bringing the Famine about. Torn between their compounding feelings of resentment, guilt and shame for the failure of their ideological project in Ireland, the coloniser would have felt compelled to avert their gaze.

There are, as we have seen, precedents for this abhorrence for the gaze. Luke Gibbons noted a curious parallel to this phenomenon in what he identified as a colonial-induced absence for visual art enquiry in Ireland, traces of which, he argued, lingered in Irish society up until the recent present. [291] This aversion, I suggest, also resonates in the Irish silences that occupy John Shaw Smith's photographic catalogue. Though given over to the reflexive contemplation that came with the gaze, in Ireland he seemed compelled to look the other away. Similarly, as Shaw Smith's travel diary attests, even when abroad the country's dire situation was far from his mind. Throughout his epic Grand Tour, he fails to give it even a passing mention. More tellingly, in his Irish absences Shaw Smith denies both the brutal set of realities his class had imposed upon the native and the cultural tensions that underpinned his identity dilemma – the combination of which played no small part in motivating his photographic odyssey.

[290] Including K.D.M. Snell, who edited Somerville*'s Letters from Ireland,* several other authors have made a similar analogy.

[291] Gibbons, "Alien Eye".

“Shape shifting” identity

Reading into Shaw Smith’s catalogue, we find ground from which to speculate that photography’s absence from the Famine record was not brought about solely, as the revisionist inspired historical perspective contended, by either the medium’s early technical inadequacies or difficulties surrounding its conveyance. The technological and logistic hurdles Shaw Smith overcame during his travels cast doubt on these explanations. Moreover, as can be seen when examining the belief systems that underpinned his gaze, a far less recognised dimension of this silence resides in the existential anxieties that inflicted the coloniser. And although these dilemmas might complicate our understanding of the Famine’s silencing, when critically read as a type of third space analogy they allow for an enticing interpretative possibility to emerge. Compounded by what David Lloyd describes as the “moment of terror” that seized the coloniser when encountering the Famine victim’s return of gaze, these experiential complexities negate the need, I suggest, to identify the national affiliations of the early photographers who practiced in Ireland. And despite many of these practitioners being British, the Ascendency’s “shape shifting” identity – their expressed desire to be English – provides ground by which photography’s absence from the Famine record can be examined through the critical formulations offered here.

Unbridled by the blinkered assessments of conservative historiography, from these speculative terrains we find a location in which to envisage how the existential crisis that inflicted the coloniser upon encountering their return of sight might have impacted upon what they chose to and chose not to photograph. Bridging the whole of the coloniser’s cultural productions, especially their literature, this was a crisis born not just from trauma, as Somerville’s account suggests, but from an apprehension that in modernity there lurked an indescribable blackness. And though this premonition existed well before the 1840s, with the invention of photography it found an expression within the contours of the photographic frame. Still, resonant and infinitely haunting, it is this anxiety that l direct the viewer/reader’s attention to in the next chapter, where I examine how the photographic recording of forgotten sites from the Famine provides a means of bearing witness to the event.

Chapter 4

Witnessing the Silence: Forgotten Memory and its Representations

Figure 33. ***Eamon Mahoney hunting at Ballymoney, Gorey, County Wexford (early 1980s)*** Rita Mahoney [292]

The photograph (Fig. 33) once held pride and place in the parlour of my mother's house in Mandurah, Western Australia. My parents retired to this seaside community after many years spent either thinking about or physically moving back and forth between Ireland and Australia. Long after this house and its inhabitants have gone, the memory of this photograph still fascinates me. Taken during the early 1980s, in this faded image is depicted my eldest maternal uncle, Eamon Mahoney. He was photographed by my aunt, Rita, while hunting in the forest near the rural market town of Gory in County Wexford, now a sleeper suburb on the South Dublin commuter belt. With a loaded gun in his hand, my uncle is captured on a cold winter's day looking forward into the trees. Although, truth be told, the forest where he stalks his prey is not a forest; rather it is one of the many

[292] I thank my cousin, Caroline O'Keefe (nee Mahoney), who now lives in Canada, for providing me with a copy of her father's photograph.

commercial hardwood plantations established by the Irish state in an effort to curtail the country's rapidly plummeting rural economy. I remember these places as open fields before immigrating to Australia as a teenager in the early 1970s. Obscuring ruins and stories from long ago, these plantations have become so densely wooded that they bring to mind the dark, impenetrable forests described by early travellers to Ireland. The memory of the past has been concealed by the shadows of trees.

Taking inspiration from Ulrich Baer's investigations into "aftermath photography" and "secondary witnessing", in this chapter I continue to explore the Famine's historical silencing by examining how this event has been depicted, commemorated and remembered. Following debates surrounding the representation of the Holocaust, I suggest that, by the state's presentation of the Famine at commemorative sites and through the media as an event beyond comprehension, its actions have galvanised the amnesia that already surrounds this event.

Drawing again from Marx's camera obscura analogy, I will refer to my photographic work throughout this and the next interconnected chapter. These images, which are assembled as a PowerPoint presentation in Appendix Five, were the accumulation of several periods of time spent in the field. Featuring images of ruins and other related sites contemporary to both the Famine and post the 2008 GFC, these photographs are presented here to be read as a parallel text. Refuting claims made by revisionist historians that the Famine was a localised event, these images were taken across the length and breadth of the country. They shift from the micro to the macro and include townlands, villages, cities and also sites in the country's north, Ulster.

Photographed with aesthetic references to the sublime as deliberated on by the 18th-century Anglo-Irish writer and statesman Edmund Burke, I suggest that the act of gazing upon these images situates the viewer/reader in a photographically-mediated state of apprehension. Even if they are unfamiliar with the horrors that occurred at these places, the viewer/reader is alert to a presence that cannot be denied. Unburdened from the closure of historicist interpretations into the Famine, here the viewer/reader might contemplate through photography what Maud Ellmann suggests is the historical, political

and social circumstances that underpin the interconnections between famine, starvation and hunger.[293]

This correlative relationship between hunger and the socially induced conditions that force the repressed to starve is nowhere more explicit than in the contested meanings that arose following the re-emergence of James Mahony's famous Famine era depiction of Bridget O'Donnel. Sketched by Mahony to accompany his dispatches from the field for the *ILN*, during the sesquicentennial O'Donnel's image became entwined with a set of conservative political opinions that were conceptualising the Famine as an event beyond human reckoning. By divorcing the Famine from its social underpinnings, O'Donnel's image had, as the cultural theorist Margret Kelleher suggests, abetted in reviving older colonial-era perceptions into the event. However, when O'Donnel's image was depicted alongside that of figures from nationalism and revolutionary socialism as part of Belfast city's famous mural art project, her representation exposed the blurred lines that lie between monumentalist history and how we remember the past. It is these blurred lines that I examine here.

Photography and secondary witnessing

Returning back to the image of my uncle hunting (Fig. 33), the significance of this photograph, and for me its ability to be read as a parallel text, was reinforced by the surrounding devotional cards, Celtic kitsch and items of Nationalist iconography my mother devoted a great deal of time to. Hardly a week would go by when she would not be cleaning and rearranging them. Apart from family acquisitions, these items were gifted from friends who on returning from Ireland felt obliged, indeed compelled, to provide additional pieces for her collection. Building up year after year, so layered had my mother's menagerie of porcelain and brightly coloured plastic become that regular visitor, predominantly other Irish immigrants, would take great amusement at establishing which items had found new, though transitory, prominence. Was it the Belleek China salt and pepper shakers fashioned as Irish round towers, *The Quiet Man* themed wind-up musical cottage, or maybe the framed copy of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic that had become the focus of my mother's attention? The silent contemplations spurred on by these

[293] Ellmann, Maud. 1993. *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing & Imprisonment.* London: Virago Press.

objects were, to cite Jacques Derrida's *The Work of Mourning*, an act of grieving by those forced to flee their past.[294]

Once commonplace in Irish households, since Ireland's most recent episode of accelerated modernisation, these items of kitsch and nationalist sentiment have fallen from favour. In a country where political appeasement is regarded by many to be the preserve that separates the broader collective from the tribulations of Irish history, these objects are now seen as being representative of a misappropriated or overtly nostalgic sense of the past, hence their banishment from Irish homes. But in the parlours of the diaspora, where they still reside unhindered, these items have become a reliquary for the past and its forgotten memory.[295]

Photographed while standing astride a run of furrows (locals refer to them as "drills"), this image of my uncle hunting (Fig. 33) has developed a strong emblematic association for me. Beyond the vocabularies Susan Sontag suggests are shared by photography and hunting ("load," "aim," "shoot"),[296] his knowledge of the landscape greatly assisted my development of this project, particularly in its early phases when I was investigating holy wells and ecclesiastically unsanctioned apparition sites (Fig. 34). Although I had returned as an adult to live in Ireland during the 1980s, until recent years my familiarity with the country's terrains extended from Dublin's "Wild West" suburbs to the ferry terminals that ushered us to the cursory but nonetheless captivating amusements of the then English First Division Football League.

Since undertaking this project, my understanding of the Irish landscape has grown by observation and in conversation with the people I have met when investigating the silent and abandoned places of the Famine. Of these guides, I have found priests and gravediggers to be if not always the most obliging certainly the most knowledgeable of informants. For separate reasons, they have an interest in these places (Fig. 35). I remain indebted to their insights. Still, although I gained greatly from my experiences during fieldwork, I always felt the need on my regular returns to Ireland to consult with my uncle. In contrast with my scholarly comprehension of the Irish landscape, Eamon's, to quote

[294] Derrida, Jacques. 2001. *The Work of Mourning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[295] I refer to the debates surrounding the deeper cultural and historical readings of kitsch. For a summary of kitsch in an Irish context, see Lloyd, David. 1996. "The Recovery of Kitsch." In *Distant Relations,* edited by Trisha Ziff. New York: Smart Press.

[296] Sontag, Susan. 1990. *On Photography.* New York: Anchor Books. 14.

Bourdieu, was that of a "virtuoso".[297] My tentative navigations in Wellingtons and all-weather gear were no match for the ease by which he, a man in his 70s, traversed stonewalls, bogs and electrified fences. Likewise, his understanding of these terrains, as opposed to mine, was based on the accumulation of local knowledge and contact with the memory traits associated with rural "right of ways".

Figure 34. ***Our Lady of Kerrytown Shrine, Kerrytown, Dungloe, County Donegal, 2006*** (Author)[298]

Figure 35. ***A Place Known only by Priests and Gravediggers: The Rossmada Famine burial site Parteen, County Clare, 2012*** (Author) [299]

[297] The Bourdieu reference is cited in Susen, Simon, and Bryan S. Turner, eds. 2011. *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays*. London: Anthem Press. 234.

[298] The shrine of Our Lady of Kerrytown is dedicated to a series of alleged visions of the Virgin Mary during the mid-1930s. Including allegations that the visions were produced by a lantern, Kerrytown shares parallels with the Knock apparition narrative.

[299] I first learnt about the Rossmada site from gravediggers in Limerick City. It does not appear on any historical or present day Ordinance Survey Map. It takes the form of a large mound covered with trees and has many local stories associated with it. I discuss this site in Appendix Two.

The term “right of ways” is that given to the custom in Ireland, one challenged through several recent High Court cases, of land owners allowing people entry to their property to access a walking trail or historic site. But more often than not, my uncle’s knowledge of these places came from literally stumbling on them when hunting or searching for dogs spooked by the sound of gunfire (Fig. 36). Oddly, somewhat reflective of my family’s journey to Australia, it was upon one such occasion of my uncle looking for a lost dog that my aunt took this photograph of him (Fig. 33) and sent it on a trajectory that led from the fields of Ballymoney to the outermost reaches of the diaspora.

Figure 36. ***A Place for Lost Dogs: The Clonattin Graveyard, Gorey, County Wexford, 2012*** (Author) [300]

But it is not solely these anecdotal contemplations that still enchant me about my uncle’s photograph. Moreover, it is how the recognition of a remnant from the Famine which lies buried within the photograph’s referential detail announces the possibility of photography opening an interpretative space where the viewer/reader might witness this trauma. While this detail is obscured by the ash trees and the blurred quality of the image (my aunt’s usually steady hand seems to have abandoned her on that cold day), once pointed out the viewer/reader is given access to how, through enacting a type of mediated, photographic witnessing, a traumatic element of Ireland’s past abruptly re-emerges in the present. As can

[300] After hours of searching for a lost dog, my uncle stumbled upon this remnant from the past. Once a fort, during the Famine it was used as a graveyard. For many years, the site was impenetrable with growth. A recent clean-up by a local commemorative group has revealed the size and historical significance of this site.

be seen from my uncle's gait, the furrows that cause him to hold his stride in this way are abandoned potato ridges from the time of the Famine.

Still evident in the landscape today, the ridge system of cultivation allowed for the potato's widespread distribution throughout Ireland. Even when sown in the poorest soils, this relic of much older agricultural practices saw the tiny white flower of the potato plant blossom throughout the land. Described in colonial era accounts as "lazy beds" – a reference to a prejudicial belief that the native was indolent – this imaginative form of subsistence agriculture nourished millions and provided generations of cottiers and labourers with a sustainable and meaningful existence.[301] However, though the potato ridge system allowed for prolific yields, following successive years of blight and the country's terrifyingly swift transformation from tillage to a pasturage/proto-industrial economy these places were abandoned. They now stand as a mute reminder of the country's traumatic encounter with immigration, selective industrialisation and the other ghosts of modernity ushered in by the Famine. But it was this recollection of the Famine buried deep in my uncle's photograph that ensured his image always held pride and place. Ironically, in amongst the devotional ephemera, Celtic kitsch and items of nationalist iconography that took refuge in my mother's parlour lay a "forgotten memory" of the catastrophe that gave these objects their meaning. And though this memory was never verbally acknowledged, at least not on any of my visits, it was constantly reaffirmed by my mother's rearranging of this image and the myriad of objects that surrounded it.

Photographing Trauma

In my recognition of forgotten memory and of how photography, too, can be instrumental in recalling past tragedy, I am inspired by Ulrich Baer's examination of overlooked Holocaust sites from Mikael Levin's photographic essay *War Story*.[302] This study forms a part of Baer's ground-breaking *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma.*[303] Photographing extermination camps and other sites of Nazi atrocity that his father, Meyer, had visited as a correspondent during WWII, the places Levin draws or attention to remain unrecognised in both official Holocaust memory and the ideologies of the postwar states in

[301] See Whelan, Kevin. 1996. *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish Identity 1760-1830.* Cork: Cork University Press in association with Field Day. Though Whelan's publication has a particular focus on the 1798 Rebellion, it provides a fascinating account of the life of the peasantry before the Famine.

[302] Levin, Mikael, and Meyer Levin. 1997. *War Story*. Gina Kehayoff Verlag.

[303] Baer, Ulrich. 2005. *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

which they are now located. Shrouded in the looming darkness of conifer trees, as recognised in Levin's image, "Nordlager Ohrdruf, 1995.", (Fig. 37), the air hangs heavy over scenes that can only be described as sites of acute absence. In fact, so devoid are these images of referential markers that the only clues the viewer/reader has into the crimes committed at these places is Levin's father's diary accounts and his photographic references to the sublime. Citing the historical connections between early photography and romanticist painting, Baer suggests that Levin's formalist approach to photographing these scenes has the effect of leaving his viewers unable to derive meaning from them. Perplexed by the lack of referential prompts within the frame, the viewer/reader becomes apprehensive for what is before them. But it is also from this disorientated state, Baer contends, whereby interrogating the image and its accompanying text the viewer/reader allows for the "absent memory" of this trauma to re-emerge.[304]

Figure 37. **Mikael Levin, "Nordlager Ohrdruf, 1995."**

Building upon his comprehensive knowledge of photography and trauma studies, Baer suggests that through enacting a powerful form of "secondary witnessing", Levin's images situate the viewer/reader in a space where they might unearth memories of an overlooked past.[305] Grounded in psychoanalytic theory and debates surrounding the representation of the Holocaust, Baer contends that as opposed to "witnessing", which requires an observer

[304] Ibid. Baer uses the term "absent memory" throughout this and subsequent publications.

[305] Ibid.

to be in proximity to an event, "secondary witnessing" can occur when a viewer/reader experiences the aftermath of a catastrophe through interpreting its representations.[306]
The Art historian Jonathan Kear offers further insight into the ability of photographs to provide the viewer/reader with powerful post-memory experiences. Writing on the documentary producer Chris Marker's filmic examinations of the Hiroshima bombing, Kear suggests that through the reading of media texts produced in the wake of a calamity we encounter the event in a process where we come to "bear witness".[307] And though the viewer/reader, as in "secondary witnessing", might be either culturally or historically separated from the calamity, they are prompted when interpreting its representation to recognise how its trauma resonates in the present.[308]

Importantly, these mediated forms of witnessing described by both Baer and Kear, where trauma is encountered through its representation, imply that by their cultural dissemination they are created with reference to a set of historically recognisable aesthetic conventions. As Baer describes in his critique of Levin's images, this is a treatment that leads the viewer/reader to a space that is reflective, rather than being violent or confrontational. Quoting from the Irish writer Brendan Kennelly's poem *Proof* (a text that exposes the folly of assessing human existence by empirical means), Baer contends that the graphic representation of trauma runs contrary to our epistemological comprehension of the past.[309] In a similar manner to how dominant historical texts distance people from the events they claim to represent, the gratuitous depiction of trauma, Baer suggests, produces a sense of disbelief in the potential secondary witness.[310]

But the concept of secondary witnessing is not without its critics. Conservative commentators view this form of memory as an incursion on the past to which they alone are the gatekeepers to. The historian Stephan Howe, who openly challenges the contention that Ireland's history can be considered that of a colony, dismisses secondary witnessing outright. Similarly, Howe is also skeptical of writers from the diaspora who, through the

[306] Ibid.

[307] Kear, Jonathan. 2007. "A Game that must be lost: Chris Marker replays Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mom amour*." In *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture,* edited by Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, London: Wallflower Press.

[308] Ibid.

[309] Kennelly, Brendan. 1980. "Proof." *In Contemporary Irish poetry: an anthology*, edited by Anthony Bradley. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[310] Baer, *Spectral Evidence.*

notion of post-memory, which sees the individual grieve for the memory of trauma they are separated from, to have been wounded by the Famine.[311] He is supportive, instead, of the Irish revisionist author Roy Foster's view that post-memory experiences are inspired by an atavistic neurosis for modernity.[312] Yet where Howe saves his most considerable vitriol for post-memory, what he describes as "transmitted trauma",[313] is in claiming that by being unduly influenced by suggestion, particularly through the media, it has the end effect of distorting history. Unsurprisingly, although his partner's family members are generational survivors of the *Shoah,* Howe views post-memory and other non-canonical ways of remembering the past with contempt.[314]

Whilst Howe's criticism of post-memory might be rejected as a voice from the fringes of conservative historical writing, when considered with regard to how the secondary witnessing experience can be distorted by media texts – which is one of his implied premises – his reproach does, nonetheless, send an ominous warning. The controversies that surround Steven Spielberg's motion picture *Schindler's List* exemplify this problematic dimension of secondary witnessing. These and other issues concerning the representation of the Holocaust have been examined by the literary critic Geoffrey Hartman. In his volume *The Longest Shadow*, Hartman contends that by historically framing the Holocaust through the narrative formations of a Hollywood text, *Schindler's List* reduced one of the defining traumas of the 20th century into a media spectacle.[315] Additionally, by favoring the voice of Oskar Schindler over those who endured this terror, Hartman suggests that Spielberg's production had reinforced the status imposed on them by the Nazis as anonymous victims.[316] And whilst Hartman argues that texts such as Claude Lauzmann's documentary *Shoah*, which provides those who lived through the Holocaust a voice by leaving their videotaped oral testimony, such is modernity's desire to subjugate the past that our relationship with it is severed. Disconnected from the events of history, and unable to comprehend their enormity, our memory of them slips into a hushed absent-mindedness.

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[311] Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, x. For an account on post-memory see Marianne Hirsch. 2012. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.

[312] See Foster, R. F. 2002. *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland.* New York: Oxford University Press.

[313] Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, x.

[314] Ibid.

[315] Hartman, Geoffrey. 1996. *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[316] Ibid. The film *Schindler's List* has an Irish connection by way of the County Antrim actor, Liam Neeson, playing the role of Oskar Schindler.

Reading absence

Although problems associated with secondary witnessing are not easily dismissed, Baer argues that when reading aftermath photographs as trauma texts the viewer needs to be alert for not only their explicit referential details but also the elements that are absent from them. For Baer, the recognition of absence in aftermath photography allows the viewer/reader to comprehend the historical forces that seek to distance us from history. But this does not mean that the viewer/reader is left stranded; building on Benjamin's photographic provocations, Baer contends that when faced with the representation of absence, the viewer/reader is presented with the opportunity to bear witness to the forgotten past.[317]

With regard to how the absences in Levin's images of forgotten concentration camps might insight the viewer/reader to bear witness, Baer claims that it is in the actions of the historical forces that have sought to erase the remaining traces of these atrocities where photography becomes testament to their memory.[318] Tempered by aesthetic references to the sublime, the acts of effacement committed at these sites cloak Levin's photographs in a troubling calm. Contrasting the watchtowers and incineration blocks synonymous with official sites of Holocaust memory, these are featureless terrains that might be situated at any undisclosed location. Apart from the memory traits that have plucked them from the forgetfulness of history, the only clue they offer into their ghastly past are the trees that have been planted to conceal them from view.

Strangely enough, it is in these acts of arborist concealment that cause me to reflect again on my uncle's photograph (Fig. 33) and the Famine silences that lie within its frame. Although the ash trees which overshadow the potato ridges were not planted there as an act of erasing the past, they have, nonetheless, achieved the same result. In fact, these plantations have become so widespread in Ireland that they now conceal many remnants from the Famine. For example, near the summit of the Kilronan Mountain in County Roscommon a conifer plantation shrouds a Famine grave in historical shadow. Locals from the nearby village of Ballyfarnon claim that the people interred at this site, more than likely a family, retreated to the high slopes of the mountain as it was above the "Briar Line".

[317] Baer, *Spectral Evidence.*

[318] Ibid.

Taking its name from the tangle of thorny weeds and nettles known in Ireland (and also Britain) as *briar*, it was believed that the blight *Phytophthora infestans* was ineffective above this point. Sadly, however, owing to the desperately poor yields produced from this soil, these people perished. Covered in freezing fog for much of the year, during the mid-1990s the site was felled and a memorial erected when a local recollection of the grave and its story resurfaced. The sites clearing, as might be read in the light that breaks through the trees in the photograph (Fig. 38), allowed for the forgotten memory of this tragedy to resurface.

Figure 38. ***Famine Burial site on the Kilronan Mountain, Ballyfarnon, County Roscommon, 2008*** (Author)

But my discussions in Ballyfarnon village about the memory surrounding the Kilronan Famine grave generated mixed responses. Some people mentioned that it was the sesquicentennial commemoration that had reawakened a long-lost recollection of this site. Others stated that since the grave was close to a disused mine, its existence was well known. And just as the memory of the grave generated mixed responses, so too opinion differed on how it was found. Again, some people believed that the grave's whereabouts was local knowledge. But there was another story circulating the village that had an ecclesiastical dimension to it. In this account, told to me at Shivnan's Horseshoe Bar, the

grave is said to have been rediscovered by an anonymous priest, hence the memorials altar-like configuration and the Mass that occurs there each year.

Yet the historical light that silhouettes the Famine grave tells us as much about forgotten memory as it does regarding the circumstances of the people interred here. Like memory itself, forgotten memory cannot be read from within the linear cause and effect formulations of historicism. In a similar manner to how silences surrounding the Famine had obscured the grave's existence for many years, forgotten memory reveals just as much as it conceals. A critical reading of the memory trait associated with the site exposes this reciprocity. What I wish to alert the viewer/reader to in this statement is that the "Briar Line" referred to by villagers when reciting the story about the grave does not appear in any scholarly literature on the Famine or associated memory accounts; it is solely a local recollection. And although expert opinion is divided as to the origins of the blight, most learned accounts indicate that its source was either in the Peruvian Andes, the home of the potato or on the high slopes of the Mexican mountain ranges.[319]

Figure 39. ***Famine Burial site, Lisnabinnia, Ballymoe, County Galway, 2008*** (Author)

Of course, the Peruvian Andes and the Mexican mountain ranges are environments of extreme altitude; not the hills, such as Kilronan, which at a height of a little over 450 meters suffices in Ireland for being called a mountain due to the lack of any more elevated terrain. Therefore, I suggest that the people who perished on the slopes of Kilronan were forced

[319] For a comprehensive scientific account of the origins of the blight, see Ristaino, Jean Beagle. 2002. "Tracking historic migrations of the Irish potato famine pathogen *Phytophthora infestans." In Microbes and Infection* 4 (13): 1369-1377.

there not due to blight (or at least not directly) but by a far more insidious contagion in the form of landlord property consolidation. Most likely, the people buried at this site were victims of eviction. Such was the case throughout the country when after being thrown off their plots the dispossessed were forced to seek relief in either the workhouse or to cultivate the potato in some of the most inhospitable terrain imaginable.

Figure 40. ***Signpost near the top of Kilronan Mountain, Ballyfarnon, County Roscommon, 2008*** (Author)

But this does not mean that the story of the Kilronan grave was the "false memory" alluded to by revisionist authors.[320] I have visited several of these sites over the duration of this project, including one in the townland of Lisnabinnia, County Galway (Fig. 39), commemorated by the Irish American activist group "Irish Holocaust".[321] Indeed, so numerous are these places in oral descriptions from the Famine that they must have totaled an indeterminable amount. Consequently, the Kilronan commemoration begs the question: why is it that this place, and not the countless others throughout the country, should be remembered in this way? I suggest that the answer rests in the contestable nature of forgotten memory and how, concerning the Famine, it discloses the differences

[320] The term "false memory" – which means the memory of an event that did not occur – has been used by several Irish revisionist historians, notably Roy Foster, to comment on what they perceive as historical inaccuracies in Ireland's acknowledgement of its traumatic past. See Foster, Roy. 2008. *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change from 1970*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 180.

[321] Apart from making contributions to high school curriculums in the United States, the Irish Holocaust project has been involved in the mapping and commemoration of forgotten grave sites from the Famine. In 2008, I visited one of these places in Lisnabinnia, Ballymoe, County Galway, and spoke with locals there. As can be found in many oral testimonies, in Lisnabinnia there is a site where several families who perished during the Famine are believed to have been buried (Fig. 39). It is said that after their passing, the people were entombed when locals, fearing disease, toppled their cabins over them. A memory of this event is said to have re-emerged during transatlantic telephone conversations in the 1980s. Two small roadside plaques commemorate these people. However, though the Irish Holocaust project is to be commended for its endeavours, the inflammatory opinions expressed by some of its members, together with the group's alignment of the Famine with the Shoah, serves only to confirm revisionist criticisms of nationalist historiography. See the website www.irishholocaust.org.

that surround people's understandings of this tragedy. In the story of the Briar Line there lies a dialectical tension between the longing to remember and a desire to forget. Above this imaginary contour, we find a location, as seen in the photograph (Fig. 40), where the memory of the Famine is given a place to hide. In amongst the trees and the fog, the gravesite, a microcosm of that seen throughout the country, is shrouded in a misty forgetfulness.

The Sublime and Photography

Inspired by Loïc Wacquant's interpretation of Bourdieu's ethnographic process, the photographs presented throughout this thesis, and in the Appendix Five presentation, evolved from a grounded approach to conducting research.[322] The photographs were also the result of certain technical considerations. Originally captured using black and white film, due to difficulties in acquiring stock, and the advances made in camera technology over recent years, the majority of these photographs were created as digital images. But regardless of their means of acquisition, these photographs are indebted to our historically bounded notions of the sublime.

In referring to the sublime, I speak to our shifting, cultural understandings on encountering the awe-inspiring qualities of the natural world encompassed through the philosophic summations of aesthetics. More a state of consciousness than an emotion, although it is often associated with a charged encounter with the latter, Kantian interpretations of the sublime see this enigmatic trait as a psychological disposition produced when a subject's perception is overwhelmed by a comprehension that alludes their reason.[323] An echo of all that is wild and exotic, the sublime is inextricably linked with our notions of mortality and death. By its grandeur, the sublime is also testament to an imagined reality unbounded by the transience of material existence. Being both temporal and infinite, the sublime has been used by artists and writers to comment on religion, philosophy, ethics and broader societal anxieties – notably in the 19th century debates over the influence of science on the course of human existence.[324] Still today, as a quality beyond the ego and notions of social collectivity, the sublime is used to critique all manner of human endeavor, from the

[322] Wacquant, "Taking Bourdieu Into the Field".

[323] See Clewis, Robert R. 2009. *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[324] For a summary of how the sublime was used during the 19th-century debates concerning the influence of science on human existence, see Lightman, Bernard. 2009. *Victorian Popularizers: Designing Nature for New Audiences.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

phantasmagorical absurdities of late capitalism to, as seen in Baer's reference to Levin's photographs, the implausibility of the Holocaust.[325]

Poignantly, Baer's exploration of Levin's photographs through the evocations of the sublime offers a peculiar Irish resonance. Although he does not develop this point, it is not by mere chance, I suggest, that the aesthetic legacy Baer cites as being central to the violence alluded to through Levin's photographs has its origins in the tribulations that have inscribed Irish history. In this statement, I refer specifically to Edmund Burke's contemplations on the sublime.[326] For Burke, the sublime was that quality "productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling".[327] A devout Protestant and Whig whose egalitarianism caused him to support initially the French Revolution and then, on hearing reports of *La Terreur*, make a hasty retreat, Burke contended that the ultimate source of the sublime rested in "God".[328] Thus, as a characteristic of the Divine, the sublime was to be found most readily in nature. To experience the exhilarating mix of beauty tainted by the fear that was the inspiration of God's creation was, according to Burke, to encounter the sublime in its most elemental form.[329]

Figure 41. ***A conifer plantation conceals a site from a Famine eviction at Ballinglass, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)

[325] My reading on the aesthetics of the sublime has been informed by Luke White's influential paper on the artist Damien Hirst for the Tate Gallery's The Art of the Sublime project. See White, Luke. 2014. "Damien Hirst's Diamond Skull and the Capitalist Sublime." The Art of the Sublime. Accessed September 27, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime.

[326] Burke, Edmund. 1824. *A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* London: N. Hailes.

[327] Ibid., 34.

[328] Ibid., 68.

[329] Ibid.

While Burke's conceptualisations on the sublime reiterated much of his predecessor's thinking, he had, however, offered one important distinction that remains with us in our present day understandings of this elusive attribute. Though the Divine was still its fundamental source, Burke suggested that the sublime could be analogous to nature when found encapsulated in the art object.[330] Far more accessible than nature, or for that matter, God, in Burke's mind the sublime was not so much a "pleasure" to behold as it was a "tranquillity tinged with terror," one which when sourced from the art object could be experienced at the whim of the spectator.[331] The perilous journeys embarked on by 18th-century poet-adventurers to encounter the sublime in wild, uncharted places might just as easily be had, according to Burke, in the galleries of London and Paris.

It is also to this aesthetic quality that Burke described as a "delightful horror"[332] that I make reference to in the photographs that inform this thesis by unpacking a characteristic shared by both photography and abject hunger. Much like the reading of the photograph, hunger is a state that is endured in silence. And though hunger shares the same hushed quiet of shock, its silences are different.[333] Those who experience its torment are destined not to speak. Before extracting its lethal toll, hunger subjects those who are deprived of food to a deafening muteness: their screams become inaudible. As seen in the devastations that marked the Famine, customs, beliefs and even language itself became a distant murmur. By exploring silence through a Burkean inspired notion of the sublime, the photographs presented in this thesis situate the viewer/reader in a space where they might bear witness to the Famine by uncovering the shards of its forgotten memory (Fig. 41).

Forgotten Memory

From my perspective too, the act of photographing the overlooked sites of the Famine also constituted a recovery of forgotten memory. On the occasion of photographing Edward Delaney's Famine memorial at St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, I was reminded of my first brush with this trauma as a child. This recollection occurred while on a visit to The Green

[330] For a summary of Burke's notions of the sublime in nature and art, see Dwan, David, and Christopher J. Insole, eds. 2012. *The Cambridge Companion to Edmund Burke.* Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press.

[331] Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry,* 142.

[332] Ibid.

[333] I am reflective of David Lloyd's thoughts in his work "Closing the mouth: disciplining oral space." See Lloyd, David. 2011. *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

with my father and brother. After wandering away from the ponds, we came across Delaney's sculptures (Fig. 42). Erected in 1967 (the year following the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising), this was the first large-scale civic memorial dedicated to the Famine in Ireland.[334] Our visit occurred just after the monument's unveiling when curiosity was at its height. The memorial formed part of a broader historical dedication produced by Delaney that included a representation of 1798 rebellion leader Theobald Wolf Tone, popularly regarded as the father of Irish Republicanism.

Figure 42. ***Edward Delaney's Famine Memorial, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, 2008*** (Author)

Evocative of the Famine's minor status at that time in the state's discourse, by facing onto Merrion Row, one of Dublin's premier thoroughfares, it was Wolf Tone's representation that held center stage. Curiously, the orientation of Delaney's Famine memorial also exposed the forgetfulness for this event in the annals of Republicanism. Reminiscent of other silences in Irish revolutionary nationalism, notably the voice of women, although the Famine is perceived in Republican historiography as a watershed, for many years the event

[334] For a comprehensive summary of the monuments dedicated to the Famine, see Crowley, John. 2007. "Constructing Famine Memory: The Role of Monuments." In *Heritage Memory and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape,* edited by Yvonne Whelan and Niamh Moore. Hampshire. England: Ashgate Publishing.

was omitted from its eulogising of the past.[335] But given the persistent whispers that surfaced with the memorial's unveiling, it was the Famine commemoration that captivated people's imagination; so much so that on our visit to the site I recall there being several other families there whose children, like my brother and I, approached the statues with due caution. Abstract and strange, they stood out from the post-colonial malaise that suffocated Dublin in the 1960s. Indeed, it was at this point that I became aware of an unspoken affliction within Irish society when I asked my father what these figures were. He replied (as I recall) that this was a memorial to the people who died during the Famine. But it was not his response that prompted my forgotten memory about this event. Moreover, it was the look of disbelief on the faces of the other adults present when I proceeded to ask him – what was the Famine?

Figure 43. ***Rowan Gillespie's Famine memorial at the Custom House Quay, Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

Out of sight at the back of The Green, Delaney's Famine memorial sits awkwardly within the commemorations dedicated to this event in recent years. Unlike the contemplation evoked by this site's use of abstraction, the civic memorials constructed during and since the

[335] David Lloyd has stressed that within the historiography of Irish nationalism the Famine was "sidelined" for many years in favour of a reading of the past that focused upon the resistances of figures such as Daniel O'Connell, the Fenians and the Land League. See Lloyd, "The Indigent Sublime," 173.

sesquicentennial are characterised by an aesthetic realism that viewers struggle to understand. An example of this can be found in the reading of Rowan Gillespie's Famine monument on the Custom House Quay (Fig. 43). Located outside the much maligned International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), which post the 2008 GFC has come to symbolise the colossal failure of the "Irish economic miracle", [336] in Gillespie's design we observe a visual pragmatism that fosters only incomprehension. Once accessed, as I noted in the conversations I have had at this site over the years of my research, people felt abandoned by these representations, as if they had nowhere to go with their thoughts and feelings about this tragedy.

This same sense of abandonment through the use of realism was also observable in the conversations I had at John Behan's sculptural commission for the National Famine Monument at Murrisk, County Mayo (Fig. 44). Standing at the foot of Croagh Patrick (Ireland's Holy Mountain), the sculpture is a realist depiction constructed from an assemblage of leaping bronze skeletons that take the form of a "Coffin Ship".[337] Representative of what Behan claims to be the countless people who died fleeing the Famine on route for America, this treatment has, however, reduced the event and its memory to a surreal curiosity. Akin to the dilemmas Hartman has identified in the representation of the Holocaust, the aesthetic tropes presented at these and other Irish Famine memorials has contributed, I suggest, to suspending people's comprehension of the event. Additionally, by reducing the Famine to a spectacle, the realistic depiction of trauma at these sites has constrained the ability of those who visit them to either encounter this calamity as a secondary witness or to recover their forgotten memory from the cycles of amnesia they induce.

Photographing absence

Though secondary witnessing is a valid research methodology in the literary and imaging arts, the same cannot be said of conservative historians. As was noted in the appraisal of Stephan Howe's denigration of post-memory, these alternative forms for recovering the past are at times viewed with suspicion. Resisting institutional pressure to consign history into a series of chronological narratives, the researcher of forgotten memory seeks to meet

[336] For a summary of the fiscal situation that contributed to the "Irish economic miracle", see O'Sullivan, Michael J. 2006. *Ireland and the Global Question*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

[337] "Coffin ship" is the name given to the overcrowded, disease-ridden hulks that took people from Ireland to North America during the Famine. The name is synonymous with Famine memory, particularly in the United States. See Donnelly, *The Great Irish,* 33.

with the past in a dialogue.[338] But the researcher of forgotten memory and the historian do, nonetheless, share a working methodology that escapes the frowning gaze of the latter. Just as the historian must validate her sources to give weight to her assertions, so too must the researcher of forgotten memory face the same onerous responsibility. How reliable is this information? Are its origins known? And whose voice is being heard? These and other questions must all be given due diligence.

Figure 44. ***The National Famine Monument, Murrisk, County Mayo, 2006*** (Author)

Similarly, for the photographer who seeks out sites of forgotten memory, the onus of this responsibility requires them to establish the validity of the location depicted. Is the site historically relevant to the Famine; and if so by which means? These questions are more or less answered when taking photographs at state-sanctioned sites of Famine memory where the imposition of historical narratives, as seen at National Famine Monument in Murrisk (Fig. 44), infuses these places with meaning. Eulogised, the recognition of these sites lends to the sublime aesthetic. But where the selection of a site, like that of narrative, is more problematic is when photographing sites of absence – places where the erosion of time and the silencing that is the product of historical erasure merge. As can be read in Levin's photographs of uncommemorated Holocaust locations, when absent, the historical lineage between the site and the trauma that inscribes its past is less determinable. Imitating the

[338] In making this statement, I am informed by Baer's writing on forgotten memory. See Baer, *Spectral Evidence.*

superficial pretenses Hartman sees as formative in popular media representations of the Holocaust, the photograph's aesthetic references to the sublime become but an end in itself.

True to the nature of bearing witness, for me the recovery of forgotten memory at the Famine's overlooked locations was a solitary activity. As opposed to the sites of sanctioned Famine memory I had visited, which were generally well attended during commemorative events (and on occasions by researchers undertaking fieldwork), at these places of forgotten memory I was struck by the lack of people there. This absence, I suggest, has implications for how we think about and remember the Famine. For those who bear witness to the Famine at official sites of commemoration, it serves to confine their acts of memory within the regulatory discourses of the state.[339] Consequently, when channeled by its cultural apparatuses, the state can be seen to deploy the collective trauma of the Famine to ratify its canonised version of history.

Similarly, for researchers seeking to uncover Ireland's past, their absence from these places of forgotten memory has by favoring particular versions of history concealed the disturbing knowledge that they harbor. Here I am mindful of an observation made by the gifted Israeli historian Guy Beiner after researching the oral Famine testimonies from the Irish Folklore Commission Archives at University College Dublin during the mid-1990s. At a time when revisionist authors were openly hostile to oral testimony, Beiner noted after working in the archive for many months that "apart from a couple of stray passersby" he never met another historian.[340] The professed custodians of history who cast disdain on the voices he sought to hear were missing. Strangely enough, Beiner's experience in the Folklore archives was not unlike my own when visiting the places of forgotten memory I have examined. Except for a fleeting occasion when I met a Dublin photographer at a *cillin* on the Aughinish peninsula in County Clare (Fig. 45), during the entire period of my research I never saw a soul.[341] Much like the archive, sites of forgotten memory are excruciatingly quiet places.

[339] I am influenced here by Pierre Nora's thought provoking examinations of history and memory. See Nora, Pierre. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire." *Representations* 26: 7–24.

[340] See Beiner, Guy. 2007. *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory*. Madison: University of Wisconsin. Xi.

[341] On the occasion I chanced upon meeting a Dublin photographer on the Aughinish Peninsula, the only time I had met anyone at these sites of forgotten memory, our conversation was abruptly cut short by the storm that can be seen massing in the background of the picture (Fig. 45).

Figure 45. ***Cillin (grave for unbaptised children and strangers), Aughinish Peninsula, County Clare, 2012*** (Author)

Memory and silence

Before returning to examine how, when aftermath representations of the Famine are read as a parallel text, they provide insights into overlooked aspects of the past, it is necessary to first unpack the relationships that underpin the interconnections between memory, silence and trauma. To be sure, these compounding associations do raise an epistemological impasse when we realise that although the Famine was the defining episode of modern Irish history when examined in the cold, critical light of demographic analysis, the famine event that occurred following the freezing European winter of 1740-41 was far more devastating. Sometimes referred to as the "forgotten famine", on account of its absence from the commemorative and historical record (Fig. 46), it is estimated that the event led to the death of over one-third of the country's population.[342] During a period of a little more than 12 months, and at a time before emigration provided an escape route for the hungry, Ireland's population was reduced from approximately 2.4 million to just over 1.5

[342] Dickson, David. 1998. *Arctic Ireland: The Extraordinary Story of the Great Frost and Forgotten Famine of 1740-41.* Belfast: White Row Press.

million.[343] It is on account of this staggering mortality that the famine of 1740 - 1741 is known in Gaelic as *Bliain an Áir* – Year of Slaughter.[344]

Figure 46. ***A solitary relic from the Famine of 1740-41: Connolly's Folly, Barrogstown West, County Kildare, 2012*** (Author)[345]

Of course, the pronounced mortality variances between the famine of 1740 – 1741 and the Great Famine of 1845 – 1852 does raise the all too rarely asked question: why is it that the latter tragedy, and not that which occurred several generations prior, has left such an

[343] Ibid.

[344] It is doubtful if the people who survived the famine of 1740 – 1741 described it as *Bliain an Áir.* The name does not appear in the few accounts that depict the event contemporary to its occurrence. Much like the Gaelic phrase used to describe the Great Famine of 1845 – 1852, *An Gorta Mór*, which roughly translates to *The Great Hunger*, the term *Bliain an Áir* would seem to have been constructed closer to the present day. Indeed, with respect to the Famine, Terry Eagleton mentions in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* that the origins of *An Gorta Mór* can be traced to Patrick Kavanagh's epic long poem, *The Great Hunger* (1942) and Cecil Woodman-Smith's historiography, *The Great Hunger* (1962). More tellingly, the dispute that erupted in the Irish press over the naming of *The Great Hunger*, where Kavanagh accused Woodman-Smith of plagiarism, is representative of the slippage that exists between memory and how we think about the past.

[345] Built as a landlord funded famine relief program following the severe winter of 1740-41, Connolly's Folly now commemorates an event some authors claim to have had a far greater demographic impact on Irish society than the Great Famine. Apart from its aesthetic alignment of the landscape, as a folly it served no function. For an account of the famine of 1740-41, see Dickson*, Artic Ireland*.

indelible mark on Irish history? Surely it must be more than the latter event coinciding with the ascent of print media and the concerns that dominate the contemporaneous present! The reasons for this distinction, I propose, are two-fold.

First, by augmenting the already trenchant political and market forces unleashed on Ireland by colonial modernity, the Famine of 1845 – 1852 instigated an unheralded period of cataclysmic change. As the event that brought about Ireland's devastatingly swift entry into modernity, the Famine can be traced as either the origin event or point of structural transformation for all the institutions that define the country today.[346] It is no overestimation to say that the Famine made Ireland modern.

Secondly, unlike those who survived the famine of 1740 – 1741, who by and large kept up their allegiance with the Gaelic language, those who either endured the Great Famine or were born in its wake witnessed not just the industrial scale reorganisation of agriculture and political economy, but also the exponential advancement of the English language.[347] During the years that followed the Famine, the Irish language entered into a period of historical capitulation. In all manner of secular, religious and day-to-day discourse it was the English voice that came to be heard. In combination with the traumatic shock brought about by the Famine, this unprecedented linguistic shift left its generational survivors unable to articulate their understandings about this tragedy into words. Such was the impact of Ireland's defining encounter with modernity that it defied the ability of language to describe it.

The Irish author Sean de Freine also noted this relationship between the trauma instigated by the Famine and the inability of people to speak. Writing in the mid-1960s, before historians began to take a serious interest in the Famine, de Freine wrote that it was not this calamity's devastating mortal impact that instigated the reticence that had long surrounded it, but the resulting loss of language when "a silence, such as had never before

[346] For an account of the effect the Famine had on the social structure and institutions of Ireland, see Keenan, Desmond. 2006. *Post-Famine Ireland: Social Structure: Ireland As It Really Was*. Xlibris Corporation.

[347] The fact that the Great Famine brought about the near on collapse of the Gaelic language in Ireland is widely accepted by historians. It can be proven statistically. Over the period of several decades, the population shifted from being bilingual and monolingual speakers of Irish and English to use predominately the English language. Significantly, this was a change that due to Ireland's political and economic absorption into Britain's expanding sphere of influence had been occurring prior to the Famine. Some authors claim that this decline in the Irish language can be dated back to the 17th century. See Johnson, Nuala C. 2001. "From time immemorial: narratives of nationhood and the making of national space." In *Timespace*, edited by Jon May and Nigel Thrift. London: Routledge. However, the linguist Raymond Hickey, amongst others, has argued that although there is little statistical documentation, what evidence does exist suggests that far from weakening that even in the late 18th century the Irish language was thriving. See Hickey, Raymond. 2002. *A Source Book for Irish English*. Philadelphia, PA: J. Benjamins Publishing.

been known in Ireland, descended abruptly throughout … the land".[348] Though the Famine, de Freine argued, had profoundly affected those who lived through it, its most explosive impact was upon the cultural practices of the peasantry, when, in the span of a single generation, whole populations lost the ability to speak with their native tongue.[349]

Figure 47. ***Famine eviction site, Carn, Killare, County Westmeath, 2012*** (Author)

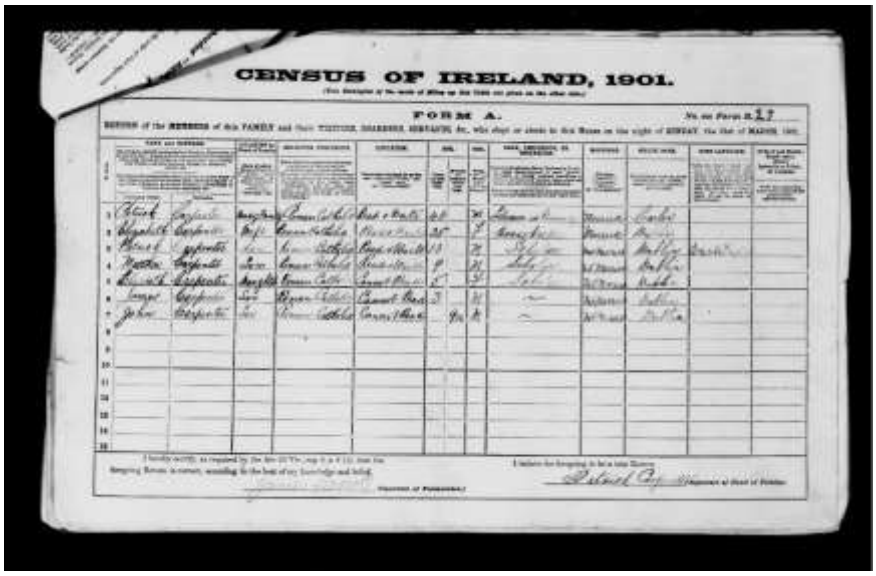
But crucially, de Freine stressed that silences surrounding the Famine should not be seen as a cultural unwillingness by people to confront with the trauma of the past; this has been a theme commented on by a number of conservative libertarians, notable Bob Geldof.[350] To be more precise, what de Freine suggested was that the practice of historical silencing in Ireland is contextually bound to the loss of the Gaelic language. In the waves of forgetting that followed this tragedy, place names, stories and the possibilities of existence outside the vulgarities of capitalist modernity became muted. Reminiscent of the Famine eviction ruins that still dot the Irish landscape (Fig. 47), this violently, aggressive linguistic upheaval is evident when reading data from the 1901 censuses (Fig. 48). In the section on household language use, the country's transformation from a society of Gaelic and bilingual

[348] De Freine, Sean. 1965. *The Great Silence*. Dublin: The Mercier Press.64.

[349] Ibid.

[350] The musician and social commentator Bob Geldof has consistently taken a conservative view to the reading of Irish history, especially with respect to the interpretation of postcolonial discourses and nationalism. Recently he articulated this thinking in his public support for the pro-Unionist camp during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.

Gaelic/English speakers to one that predominately spoke only English can be mapped out with clinical precision.[351]


CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

FORM A.

Figure 48. ***Extract from the 1901 Census of Ireland*** [352]

Silence and its representations

Poignantly, in one of several historical coincidences that allow a comparison to be drawn between the Famine and the other social catastrophes of modernity, just as de Freine had made his pronouncement on language loss the Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi was lamenting the amnesia that had seen the Holocaust "reduced to silence".[353] And although this forgetfulness had many complex causes it was underpinned, Levi suggested, by the inability of language to comprehend overwhelming trauma.[354] Much like the Famine, this failure to grasp the Holocaust's terror had ushered the arrival of a hushed absent-mindedness. In the process its victims, especially those who had relocated to Israel as refugees, were marginalised by a state that saw no place from them in its foundation

[351] The original forms completed by Irish households for both the 1901 and 1911 censuses are available on-line. The National Archives of Ireland. 2014. Census of Ireland 1901/1911 and Census Fragments and Substitutes, 1821-51. Accessed July 27, http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/

[352] This 1901 Census of Ireland was undertaken as part of the greater demographic survey of the British Union. Unique to the Census of Ireland was a question regarding the use of the Irish language. This question was spurred on by a perception in the minds of British demographers that Ireland's path to modernity could be measured by the increased use of the English language. This Census example noted here, which was completed by my great grandfather, Patrick Carpenter, follows this trajectory. However, the document also indicates a curious historical anomaly. While both my great grandparents and their younger children spoke only English, their eldest son, who also named Patrick, was fluent in Irish. How this came about remains a family mystery.

[353] Levi, Primo. 1996. *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Touchstone. 87.

[354] For an account of Levi's thoughts on silence and trauma, see Zelizer, Barbie. 1998. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

narrative.[355] As Levi implies through his writing, the crimes committed against those who survived the horrors of the concentration camps did not end after they passed through the prison gates; they continued in the gross indifference shown to them in what Levi refers to as the "ever-repeated scene of the unlisted-to story".[356]

Of course, it goes without saying the analogy I have drawn between the Famine and the Holocaust is not presented here in an attempt to reduce their complexity. These tragedies are clearly different, notably in the ways they have been silenced. Unlike the institutional suppression that surrounded the Holocaust or, for that matter, the frightful Ukrainian Famine of 1930 – 1933, the "Holodomor", the Famine, by contrast, was extensively reported on in Parliamentary papers and through the global press. In fact, so sustained were accounts coming out of Ireland that, by polarising much public opinion, they had generated a phenomenon several authors have described as "famine fatigue".[357] Amongst Russell's Whigs, these biased understandings helped confirm a widely held view that the Famine was a check on a race whose unrestrained fertility and refusal to accept the natural laws of the free market had brought about its ruin. This perception was bolstered by evangelical extremists who believed that the Famine was a providential atonement in which, as Charles Edward Trevelyan infamously stated, "Supreme Wisdom has educed permanent good out of transient evil". [358]

Even though the Famine and singularities such as the Holocaust and the Holodomor are located poles apart, by their depiction in the minds of the intellectual elite of their day they do share some common ground. The observations made by the Anglo-Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw while travelling through Ukraine (formerly the Ukraine) during the early stages of the Holodomor is worth considering here. Credulous to the propaganda being fed to him by his Stalinist advisers, in a letter published in *The Manchester Guardian* in March 1933, Shaw claimed that the peasants were not starving. Rather, they were just

[355] For a summary on the silencing and denial of Holocaust memory in post-WWII Israel, see Fracapane, Karel, and Matthias Hass. 2014. *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*. http://unesco.unesco.org/images/0022/002259/22593e.pdf

[356] Levi, *Survival In Auschwitz*, 60. It should be noted that Levi is guarded in his comments on the Israeli state. Indeed, the passage quoted here is from his recollection of a dream that haunted him during and after his time in Auschwitz. Nonetheless, his volume, as does his poetry, strongly alludes to the silencing of survivor testimony in Israel and other countries, particularly the United States. For an account on Levi and the silencing of Holocaust survivors by the state, see Fletcher, Martin. 2010. *Walking Israel: A Personal Search for the Soul of a Nation*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books.

[357] For a view of this phenomenon, see De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy.*

[358] This infamous statement was pronounced by Trevelyan in the opening page of his publication *The Irish Crisis*. See Trevelyan, *The Irish Crisis,* 1.

experiencing one of the agricultural fluctuations that periodically struck the region.[359] In addition, he wrote, any attempt to criticise the Soviet state was a slur on the altruism of its great leader, Stalin. So committed was Shaw to Stalin's ideological vision that when travelling he continued to indulge in his lifelong passion for photography. Ironically, in his silencing of the political circumstances that were annihilating the Ukrainian peasantry, Shaw reiterated the same callous disregard his forefathers had shown the Irish during the Famine.[360]

Figure 49. **James Mahony, "Bridget O'Donnel with her children", *Illustrated London News*, 1847**

Although Shaw's Holodomor denial exposes the ideological actions that through the activity of historical silencing interconnect this event with the Holocaust and the Famine, when these calamities are examined by way of their representations we do, nevertheless, bear witness to the distinctions that render them apart. Unlike the representational

[359] See Shaw, George Bernard. 2014. "Social Conditions in Russia." Gareth Jones' Memorial Website. Accessed July 14, http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/bernard_shaw.htm.

[360] Shaw's most empathic Holodomor denial comes in his 1934 play *On The Rocks.* A black comedy set against a background of political chaos in London, in the preface to the play Shaw wrote concerning the famine and what he saw in the Ukraine "… I must not suggest that this has occurred all over Russia; for I saw no underfed people there; and the children were remarkably plump. And I cannot trust the reports; for I have no sooner read in *The Times* a letter from Mr Kerensky assuring me that in the Ukraine the starving people are eating one another, than M. Herriot, the eminent French statesman, goes to Russia and insists on visiting the Ukraine so that he may have ocular proof of the alleged cannibalism, but can find no trace of it." This quotation appears in the preface to Shaw, George Bernard. 1993. *The Complete Prefaces/ Bernard Shaw*, edited by Dan H. Lawrence and Daniel J. Leary. New York: Allen Lane.

suppressions that surrounded the Holocaust and the Holodomor, just as the Famine was occurring in Ireland, its depictions were being disseminated across the world by a revolutionary new imaging technology: the graphic picture press.[361] Through the pages of the *ILN*, readers were both captivated and repulsed by images of emaciated bodies and other scenes of abject horror. Fashioned through the same media filters that produced the physiognomically coded characterisations of the Irish in *Punch*, these representations have come to fill the void left by photography's absence from the Famine record. And of the many images circulated by the *ILN,* one in particular, that of James Mahony's depiction of a gaunt, half naked Bridget O'Donnel with her children (Fig. 49), continues to influence how the Famine is thought of today.

By far the most recognisable of Mahony's illustrations from the Famine, O'Donnel's image inspired many high profile memorial projects in Ireland and the diaspora during the sesquicentennial. Depicted on stamps, book covers and in countless magazine and newspaper articles, O'Donnel came to be seen as a figure of intense, forlorn and pity – a metonym for the nation's most profound loss. However, through the process of commemoration, her representation also became entwined in the contested systems of meaning given rise to by the act of remembering. An example of this occurred when O'Donnel's image appeared in the trans-American departure lounge at Dublin airport during the height of the Celtic Tiger boom in the mid-1990s. Suspended in the liminality of the departure lounge, O'Donnel's representation was subsumed by the gaze of a jet-setting, international elite and the redemptive-historical narratives propagated by the state.[362] The distance separating her tormented representation from the nation's newly acquired wealth was a testimony to global capitalism's triumph in divorcing Ireland from the tribulations that marked its past.

The cultural theorist Margret Kelleher has identified a similar set of issues surrounding the reading of O'Donnel's image (Fig. 49). Kelleher attributes this to what she sees as a historical slippage between the colonial era and present day conservative conceptualisations of the Famine. In her breakthrough *The Feminization of Famine*, Kelleher suggests that by depicting the Famine through the personification of the female form, the

[361] John Plunkett provides a fascinating study of the impact the picture graphic press on the Victorian mind. See Plunkett, John. 2005. "Optical Recreations and Victorian Literature." In *Literature and the Visual Media*, edited by David Seed. Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer.

[362] See McLean, Stuart John. 2004. *The Event and its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 196. I have used McLean's reference to O'Donnel's image appearing at Dublin airport. I do not recall having seen it there.

image of Bridget O'Donnel has revived the "othering" inherent in the coloniser's gaze.[363] Trapped between Victorian-era gender distinctions and the perceptual dichotomies of the coloniser, the figure of the starving female has once again become a metaphor for the breakdown of order. Just as O'Donnel was unable to satisfy either her children's hunger or, as was relentlessly pursued by male travel writers gazing on the starving female body, her sexual appetite, the Famine, Kelleher argues, continues to be perceived within a shifting moral terrain.[364]

From the determinism that once typified providential assessments of this catastrophe, the Famine now occupies a mindset dominated by neo-liberal understandings of the past. Kelleher contends these have had two notable impacts upon how the event is popularly perceived. First, by being portrayed as an incident beyond the realms of human agency, the Famine has become detached from its political underpinnings. Reflective of revisionist inspired explanations into the event, through this lens the Famine is recognised as an incident that defies description. Secondly, through the re-emergence of colonial era perceptual dichotomies, those who either died or endured the Famine's most formidable onslaught have been consigned to a state of perpetual victim-hood. Much like the reception of O'Donnel's image, by being perceived as the voiceless causalities of history, the rich and culturally nuanced life of the "other" has been jettisoned.[365]

Though Bridget O'Donnel was typecast during the sesquicentennial as a victim, in Ireland's north her image generated quite a different set of understandings when it appeared as part of Belfast's famous mural art project.[366] Coinciding with the Irish state's endeavour to extract the political sting out of the Famine, when depicted on the walls of the city's red-brick terraces, her representation propelled the countries past and present into a head-on collision. Alongside images of the hunger striker and Sinn Fein parliamentarian Bobby Sands and other Irish identities from Revolutionary Socialism (notably Ernesto (Che) Geavara Lynch),[367] Mahony's image of O'Donnel entered the bastion of republican iconography.

[363] Kelleher, Margaret. 1997. *The Feminization of Famine: Expressions of the Inexpressible?* Durham: Duke University Press.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Ibid.

[366] I thank staff from An Chultúrlann in Belfast for their correspondence on the city's mural art project and also as to which representations were depicted during the sesquicentennial. For an account of this ongoing project, see Rolston, Bill. 2004. "The War of the Walls: political murals in Northern Ireland." *Museum International* 56 (3): 38-45.

[367] Much is made by Republican commentators as to Ernesto (Che) Geavara Lynch's Irish heritage. His paternal grandmother is believed to have been from Cork. His father, Ernesto, is reported to have said about Che's heritage that "in my son's veins

Reminiscent of the pre-Famine agrarian insurgents that struck fear in the hearts of Ireland's colonial elite, by transcending the dichotomies of the colonial gaze, O'Donnel became a figure to be reckoned with. Stoic in her silent suffering, the repression that had inscribed O'Donnel's withered body became a validation for radical Nationalist identity and prompted, for some, a forgotten memory of the social conditions that had brought the Famine about. It is on account of these divergent meanings, I suggest, that Mahony's image of O'Donnel marks what Maud Ellmann argues in *The Hunger Artist* to be a representational conjunction where through the depiction of the body we bear witness to the historical forces that subject the repressed to starvation.[368]

Taking in part its title from Kafka's *A Hunger Artist*, Ellmann demonstrates how, when critically read, the representation of the starving body exposes the viewer/reader to the social, economic and political complexities that underpin the interconnections between hunger, starvation and famine.[369] Utilising the death of Bobby Sands during the 1981 Long Kesh Hunger Strikes to explore this relationship, Ellmann argues that it was not until the global media "swarmed" on Belfast to depict the newly elected member of County Fermanagh's starving body that the world began to take an interest in this deadly stalemate.[370]

Certainly Ellmann is correct in her assumption that there has been a silencing surrounding the activity of hunger striking in Ireland. Prior to the momentous events of 1981, Republican hunger strikes attracted only moderate media attention. Indeed, the IRA hunger strikes of the early 1920s against the British and then Irish Free State appear to have received far more press coverage than the divisive 1972 campaigns in Belfast's Crumlin Road Prison.[371] But with the tragic circumstances that marked the hunger strikes of 1981, Republican strategists played their trump card when they utilised the representation of the starving body to advance their political objectives.

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flowed the blood of the Irish rebels." However, it is hard to find the source of this quote. I cite it as it appears in Artuso, Kathryn Stelmach. 2013. *Transatlantic Renaissances: Literature of Ireland and the American South.* Newark, Del: University of Delaware Press. 4.

[368] Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists*.

[369] Ibid.

[370] Ibid., 17.

[371] An internet search of the digital archives of the British and Irish press demonstrates the media silences that have accompanied pre-1981 hunger strike events.

Employing a tactic that was as brilliant as it was terrifying, by promoting Sands' election campaign from his death bed, Nationalist politicians made visible to the world the historical forces they were unable to reveal by any other means. Along with Sands' poignant letters, the quiet disbelief people felt when reading the image of his withered body mirrored their inability to comprehend the events that were occurring behind the prison walls.[372] All this was played out against a background where the silence that was the acute condition of those who starved was juxtaposed to the deafeningly loud demonstrations that erupted upon their passing. But so confronting were the images of Sands and the other activists who took part in the protest that they also revealed to the world the ominous moral dilemmas leaders from opposing political camps were incapable of dealing with.[373] Meanwhile, for the government in Ireland's south, which effectively sat on its hands throughout the crisis, the representation of Sands' skeletal body side-lined a state that had, in an effort to maintain its authority, systematically silenced dissident opinion. Contrasting the suppression of Republican activists on British television, where their voice but not their image would appear, the Irish national broadcaster, RTE, transmitted their representation with a narrator's verbatim voice-over.[374]

Though Sands and O'Donnel's representations are separated by history and reproduction techniques, when interpreted as parallel texts we are alerted to Ellmann's conjecture that, when critically read, the image of the starving body reveals the entrenched ideologies that subject their referents to hunger. The ideologies that Ellmann had controversially described in making a comparison between the Famine and the hunger strikes of 1981 as "genocide by neglect" are to be found inscribed upon the human body.[375] Further, and by way of drawing an analogy between the theoretical explorations of Ellmann and Baer, I suggest that when the circumstances that surrounded the reception of the Sands and O'Donnel images are critically read, they permit the viewer/reader to bear witness to the political contradictions that surround the Famine's silencing.

[372] For compressive and critical study of the hunger strike, see Ross, Stuart F. 2012. *Smashing H-Block: The Popular Campaign against Criminalisation and the Irish Hunger Strikes 1976-1982.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

[373] Recently the representation of the starving body, and the events of the 1981 hunger strikes has been critically reappraised by Steve McQueen in his motion picture *Hunger* (2010).

[374] For an account of these and other state censorships imposed by RTE, see Corcoran, Mary P., and Mark O'Brien. 2005. *Political Censorship and the Democratic State: The Irish Broadcasting Ban.* Dublin: Four Courts Press.

[375] Ellmann, *The Hunger Artist*. 11.

Figure 50. ***Roadside memorial to the 1981 Long Kesh Hunger Strike near Lough Nasnunida, County Donegal, 2006*** (Author)

In making this statement, I draw the viewer/reader's attention to the critical space of witnessing inherent when evaluating the photograph (Fig. 50) as a parallel text. Depicting a roadside memorial commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strikes, the photograph features the now familiar snap-shot images of Sands and the other activists who died during the protest. Contrasting their gaunt and heavily bearded representations when on hunger strike, the informality of these images is not unlike viewing the faces of the dead in a family photograph album. Forever gazing back at us from the past, to look at them in happier times is, as Derrida states, to "repeat and recall" the "instituting violence" that brought about their demise.[376] In every laughing moment before the camera, this tragedy is repeated. But more poignantly with respect to the Famine, the location where the photograph (Fig. 50) was taken is on a bog; for it was on the vast bogs of Ireland where those who were denied a place in the country's ascent to modernity went to die.[377] Alongside the ominous, dark clouds that gather above the memorial, when viewed through the aesthetic conventions of the sublime we bear witness when reading the photograph

[376] Derrida, Jacques. 1996. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 79.

[377] For an account of the places people went to die during the Famine, see Ó Murchadha, *The Great Famine.*

(Fig. 50) to the Famine as a seismic rupture that continues to reverberate through the historical landscape.[378]

However, there is another reading inherent in the photograph (Fig. 50). Located in the borderlands that separate County Donegal from the statelet in Ireland's north, when interpreted within the frameworks Baer acknowledges in the reception of aftermath photography, the viewer/reader is given the opportunity, as Benjamin announced, to "brush history against the grain".[379] In making this statement, I refer to both the revisionist inspired silencing of this event and that far less recognised reticence from within the discourses of Irish Republicanism. As noted when reading the forgotten memory entwined in Edward Delaney's memorials at St. Stephen's Green, although the Famine is perceived in Republican historiography as a watershed, for many years the memory of this event was omitted from its acclamations for the past.[380] Evocative of Primo Levi's observations on the prejudices directed against Holocaust survivors after the war, in Republican narratives starvation only mattered when it was enacted on the body as a form of political resistance.[381]

Much like the story of the Briar Line on the Kilronan Mountain, the photograph (Fig. 50) is a reminder of how the recovery of forgotten memory exposes the blurred lines that lay between history and how we remember the past. This form of remembering, as we have seen, is never straightforward. For in the desire to invoke the past there is also, as Ernest Renan reminds us in his study of modern nationalism, the need for "forgetfulness".[382] To be sure, there is a palpable sense of this forgetfulness in the photograph (Fig. 50) where, through the nation's progression to self-determinacy, the memory of the "other" that perished in these places has been jettisoned. Similarly, in the silence that marks the border's absence, we encounter a historical shadow evocative of the trees that shroud the traumas in the photograph of my uncle hunting (Fig. 33) and Mikael Levin's depiction of the Nordlager Ohrdruf concentration camp (Fig. 37). In the absent presence of the border, we

[378] In making this statement, I do not discount the contemporary historical issues that brought about the hunger strikes of 1981. Rather, picking up from Ellmann's thinking, I wish to point out the underpinning social interconnections between these different forms of starvation.

[379] Benjamin, Walter. 1996. "On the Concept of History" (1940). In *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, edited by Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press. 392.

[380] See Lloyd, "The Indigent Sublime," 173.

[381] Ibid.

[382] The Renan reference is cited in Hosking, Geoffrey. 2014. *Trust – A History.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. 111.

bear witness to the ideological forces that have, by silencing the Famine, consolidated their political power agendas.

Extending on the theoretical terrains explored by Ellmann and Baer, it is this legacy of the Famine and how this might be read through aftermath photography that I continue to investigate in the next chapter by examining what is undoubtedly the most recognisable marker for Ireland's fractured past – the ruin. In contradiction to monumental modes of memory, I argue that the image of the Irish ruin, both in its historical and present day forms, challenges the viewer/reader to critically re-access their understanding of history and how, through silence, the past interrupts the present.

Chapter 5

Reading the Ruins: The Famine and its Inscriptions

Figure 51. ***The Balrothery Workhouse (in ruin), Balrothery, North County Dublin, 2008*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 51) was taken in an abandoned field off the old Dublin to Belfast road in County Dublin. During the Famine, this was the site of the North Dublin Union, Balrothery Workhouse. Long since having served any agricultural function, the field's desertion and proximity to the M1 motorway has facilitated its use by Traveller families as a campsite over the summer months. The ruin that takes up the centre of the picture frame, which once served as the workhouse chapel, provides these people with stabling for their horses. During Ireland's economic boom, the ruin was earmarked for destruction by speculators with far more extravagant equine interests – thoroughbred racing – to make way for a Euro Disney styled amusement park.[383] Predictably, however, so ill-conceived was this project that it failed to clear the first hurdle. The ruin's transition from an abandoned Famine site to a proposed Celtic Tiger Wonderland and back into a state of perpetual dereliction provides the viewer/reader with a text in which to read modern Irish history by. But as opposed to texts generated by monumental forms of memory, where ideological

[383] See the article "Theme Park Plans for Famine Site; Mass Grave Holds 11,000." *Sunday Mirror,* August 31, 2003.

forces actively conceal less privileged voices when confronted by the ruin we bear witness to the past that refuses to be put to rest.

The aftermath of ruins

In the previous chapter, I examined the means by which the viewer/reader might perceive through the representation of the famished body what Maud Ellmann suggests to being the social, economic and political factors that underpin the interconnections between hunger, starvation and famine. Underscoring this investigation was Ulrich Baer's contention that, when aftermath photographs of historical trauma are read by a viewer/reader for their absences, they allow them to bear witness to the event by uncovering its forgotten memory. With respect to the Famine, this journey into the socio/political underpinnings of hunger and forgotten memory was initiated by what several authors have identified as the ideologically tainted understandings that embody popular media and state sanctioned representations of this event. Building on the observations of Margaret Kelleher, I suggested that these interpretative dilemmas were exemplified by the re-emergence during the sesquicentennial of James Mahony's depiction of Bridget O'Donnel for the *ILN.* By portraying the Famine as an event beyond comprehension, O'Donnel's representation as a voiceless victim had, I argued, limited our ability to bear witness to this watershed and how it impacts on the present.

Granted that Mahony's depiction of O'Donnel raises serious questions with respect to how the Famine is thought of and remembered today, by his portrayal of an element of the Irish landscape synonymous with the tribulations that mark the country's past, he nonetheless provided an alternative metaphor for conceptualising this event. We see this surrogate reckoning for the Famine in Mahony's sketches of the villages of Skibbereen and Kilkee, where our attention is drawn to scenes of abject ruination. Again in Mahony's illustration of Moveen, the horrors of the Famine are revealed through the depiction of a once densely populated landscape that had been systematically cleared off the peasantry. All that remained of these communities were derelict cabins and abandoned fields.

Following Amartya Sen's reasoning as to why people starve during famine events, and Walter Benjamin's conceptualisations on allegory and the reading of history, in this chapter I examine the marks that have inscribed Ireland's proliferation of ruins. Foremost in this investigation will be a body of aftermath photographs taken be me of ruins associated with the Famine, these include Ascendency mansions, architectural follies and abandoned relief

projects. Expanding on Ellmann's critique of the body, this deconstruction is assisted by a comparative analysis of a photographic image from Alexander Rodchenko's documentation of Stalin's horrifying White Sea-Baltic Canal project. I demonstrate the means by which, when studied allegorically, these seemingly discordant images offer the viewer/reader an insight into how, in the manner that the starving body can be read for the historical, political and social forces that have inscribed it, so too Ireland's ruins might be interpreted as a Famine text. Further, when this work is read alongside the ruins that mark the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy in the form of the country's ghost estates, the viewer/reader is given an insight into how silences surrounding the traumas of Ireland's past are a perpetuation of the ideological forces that gave rise to the Famine.

A country deluged by ruins

Though Mahony's sketches for the *ILN* would have been familiar to those who travelled to Ireland in the years immediately after the Famine, nothing quite prepared them for the experience of gazing on its ruins. We gain a sense of this disbelief from reading Fredrick Engels correspondence when he travelled through Ireland with Mary Burns during the spring of 1856. Writing to Marx, Engels noted how due to "emigration and clearances … whole villages are deserted".[384] Apart from "priests, lawyers, bureaucrats" and "lords of the manor" the "countryside", he wrote, "is a complete wilderness unwanted by anybody".[385] But it was the spectacle of the ruin that haunted him the most. When confronted by the ruin, Engels remarked that he "never imagined … the famine could be so tangibly real".[386] Despite the efforts of "big farmers" trying to remove ruins from their properties, so common were they that the landscape, he added, was "strewn" with them.[387]

Collapsed roofs and broken down walls, of all the images that conjure up the tribulations of history, few evoke more response than the ruin. Many see them as a macabre relic from the past; akin to venerating the remains of dead saints, ruins are an affront to the modern sensibility. Certainly this is the impression given by James Joyce, one of the most consummate of modernist thinkers, when he witnessed the hordes of tourists gazing at Rome's dilapidated architectural relics. In a letter to his brother, Stanislaus, dated 25

[384] See the letter Engels to Marx, 23 May 1856. http://www.marxist.org/archive/marx/works/1856/letters/56_05_23.htm

[385] Ibid.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid.

September 1906, Joyce likened the activity associated with viewing ruins to that of a "man who lives by exhibiting to travellers his grandmother's corpse." [388]

Though contentious, the ruin in Ireland is much less a morbid reminder of the past than it is a signpost as to how this past stalks the present. A common point of spatial orientation in the landscape, few places are without them. Early travellers to Ireland were intrigued by the country's ruins. As can be read from the Welsh monk Giraldus Cambrensis' account of his 12th century expedition to Ireland, *Topographia Hibernica,* it wasn't just xenophobia that punctuated his travelogue but also his observations on the country's ruins.[389] Wherever he cast his eye was evidence of the native's irrationality and refusal to embrace civilisation. Similarly, travellers to Ireland in the modern period had also seen the country's ruins as representative of a recklessness they believed had inflicted the indigenous mind. Thackeray noted this trait in his *The Irish Sketchbook*, when passing through Limerick town he wrote:

> High and low, in this country, they begin things on too large a scale. They begin churches too big and can't finish them; mill and houses too big, and are ruined before they are done; letters on sign-boards too big, and are up in a corner before the inscription is finished – there is something quite strange, really, in this general consistency.[390]

Still today, those who venture to Ireland feel compelled to draw analogies between the country's fractured history and its ruins. In his famous LP cover design for U2's *The Unforgettable Fire* (1984), the Dutch photographer Anton Corbijn photographed the ruins of Moydrum Castle in County Westmeath to accompany what many critics believe to be the band's finest musical achievement (Fig. 52). In reinventing themselves following the phenomenal success of their third studio album*, War* (1983), U2 took a Janus-faced look forward by gazing back on Ireland's past. Oddly, concurring with Luke Gibbons' assertion, noted in chapter three, that up until the recent present the photographic representation of Ireland was a record of the outside looking in, it was a photographer from the Netherlands who produced one of the country's most recognisable place-based images. Unfortunately

[388] See the letter James Joyce to Stanislaus Joyce dated 25 September 1906, in Joyce, James. 1975. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, edited by Richard Ellmann. London: Faber and Faber. 108.

[389] For a comprehensive summary of Giraldus Cambrensis' account of his travels through Ireland, see Smith, Angele. 2008. "Written Off the Map: Cleared Landscapes of Medieval Ireland." In *Landscapes of Clearance: Archaeological and Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Angele Smith and Amy Gazin-Schwartz. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

[390] Thackeray, *The Irish Sketchbook,* 170.

for Corbijn, however, by utilising the exact same camera position, lens selection and optical treatment employed by the English photographer Simon Marsden to photograph Moydrum Castle for his publication *In Ruins: The Once Great Houses of Ireland* (Fig. 53), he was accused of plagiarism.[391]

Fig. 52. **Anton Corbijn,**
***U2, The Unforgettable Fire,* 1984**

Fig. 53. **Simon Marsden,**
***In Ruins: The Once Great Houses of Ireland,* 1980**

Topical though Corbijn's plagiarism might have been, particularly U2's hushed out of court settlement with Marsden, what the Moydrum Castle incident acknowledges most readily is that ruins in Ireland are historically contested. Be they either, as depicted in the photograph (Fig. 54), the attempts by ecclesiastical authorities to silence the aura of ancient passage tombs, or, as noted in the photograph (Fig. 55), the defacement of Holy Wells on the country's sprawling housing estates, Irish ruins are sites where meaning is being continually inscribed and reinscribed. Even the seemingly benign act of photographing ruins is to announce a certain way of thinking about the past. As the photographs that accompany this thesis attest, ruins beckon to a history that is never complete. The ivy that suffocates them is but a curtain raiser for their unrehearsed performances to come. In ruins, the uncertainties we hold about the past and how this past might upstage our future are announced in tumbling, moss covered stone.

[391] For an account of this incident, see McCormick, Neil. 2006. *U2 by U2.* London: Harper Collins. As noted in the images of Moydrum Castle above, there can be no doubt that Corbijn had followed Simon Marsden's superior composition far too closely.

Figure 54. ***Traffic Roundabout on the Garavogue Villas Housing Estate, Sligo Town, County Sligo, 2010*** (Author)[392]

Figure 55. ***St. Patrick's Well (in ruin), Finglas, County Dublin, 2006*** (Author)[393]

[392] The passage tomb on the Garavogue Villas Housing Estate in Sligo Town has undergone multiple historical inscriptions. Currently, it is encircled by a traffic roundabout. Local people claim that the roundabout came about as a compromise after road crews working on the estate in the 1940s refused to bulldoze the site for fear of inciting the past; however, given the estate's layout, this is scenario is unlikely. But the most perspicuous inscription upon the ruin came during the Marian year of 1954 when a local parish priest installed the Calvary scene. Intriguingly, such was the emblematic power of this ruin, and the want of the priest to send it back into the past from which it came, that it required the most symbolically charged representation from the canon of Catholicism to contain.

[393] Unlike the abandonment characteristic of other former places of religious devotion in Ireland, St. Patrick's Well in Finglas, Dublin has received so much undue attention from the nearby council estate that the site is now surrounded by a fortified cage. The well now appears more like a Belfast Police barrack prior to the Good Friday Agreement than a site of local historical significance.

Notwithstanding the endeavours of Irish authorities to contain the ruin's emblematic power, such are their connection with the torments that mark the country's past that they never cease to shake the foundations of the present. This was the case when, at the turn of the 21st century, plans were drawn up to incorporate Kilkenny town's long abandoned workhouse ruin into a major new retail development, the MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre.[394] Applauded by community leaders as a means of accommodating the town's past into what they believed would be Ireland's illustrious future, developers set about the task of merging the ruin into their grand design. But true to the ruin's ability to overshadow our most elaborately thought out plans, during the site excavation process workers discovered a mass grave from the Famine. Lost from local memory and the historical record, it appears that in times of extreme mortality during the Famine, deceased from the workhouse were buried on the institution's grounds. Such was the size of this discovery (several hundred people were interred there) that work on the project ceased while the town was forced to contemplate its traumatic Famine experience. Ominously, considering the longing of developers to inscribe their free-market visions on the ruin, the mass grave was located beneath the shopping centre's food emporium. The sustenance that had been denied the hungry in life was to come to them in abundance after their death.

Photography and ruins

Evocative and haunting, ruins hold a peculiar fascination for photography. Like graveyards, they are silent places away from the distractions of the everyday. Early photographers, too, were attracted to this quality. In the stillness of the ruin, they found a site in which to contemplate the medium's strange idiosyncrasies. But where the ruin provided its most captivating attraction for photography's early exponents was how the remorse that penetrated its cracks mirrored the melancholic darkness that shrouded the photograph. Analogous to the ghoulish Victorian era pursuit of post-mortem photography, in the photograph the ruin found both an accomplice and a way of dislodging its spatial constraints. Regardless of its former function – a castle, a workhouse, a church or a factory – through its photographic representation the ruin heralds the dereliction that awaits us all.

Photography's fascination with the ruin is not unique; it has a parentage. Historically speaking, the medium's curiosity for the ruin stems from painting and, in particular, Romanticist inspired depictions of the immutable struggle between Nature and Culture.

[394] As its name implies, MacDonagh Junction was once a railway station; it was named after Thomas MacDonagh, a leader in the Easter Rising of 1916. For a brief overview of the mass grave discovery, see the article "Kilkenny to get two €300 million shopping centres." *Irish Times*, November 7, 2007.

The carnage left by these combatants is observed in the late 18th century works of the Parisian painter Hubert Robert (Robert des ruines), where the viewer/reader's gaze is directed to scenes of abhorrent devastation. Inspired by his visits to archaeological digs, one method Robert employed to emphasise the sublime nature of the ruin was to depict how it would appear in distant millennia.[395] We see this in his portrayal of sites from Egyptian antiquity, where monuments still intact today are toppled by the blitzkrieg of linear time. With the addition of artists and other ruin watchers from the distant future gazing on these scenes, Robert's images are, to quote the surrealist poet Benjamin Péret, the "ruin of ruins".[396] But where Robert conjured up the ruin's most frightening omnipotence was when he portrayed sites from modernity in advanced states of decrepitude. This spectacle awaits the viewer/reader in his famous 1796 painting of the Louvre. Titled *Imaginary View of the Grande Galerie in the Louvre in Ruins*, here the structure's magnificent, vaulted ceilings have collapsed in to expose an open blue sky. At a time of great social anxiety with the events of the French Revolution unwavering and its Industrial counterpart quickly gaining momentum, in Robert's depiction of the Louvre we see that the principal institution of Enlightenment philosophy has been reduced to a pile of rubble.[397]

Though ruins in Ireland might be as self-evident on the landscape as in any other part of the world, the country's sheer proliferation of them has ensured that they remain unmistakably different. David Lloyd has commented on this distinction by suggesting that the Irish ruin is a testament to the tribulations that exist between cultures.[398] Echoing the torments that constitute the country's history, the Irish ruin, he argues, is the outcome of the countless waves of invasion and political upheaval that have besieged its past.[399] He contends that this palimpsest-like state has rendered the Irish ruin impervious to modernity's mantras on progression. And whilst some of the country's ruins have resigned to the whitewashing of the tourist and heritage industries, notably Blarney Castle (Fig. 56), the vast majority of

[395] Robert had travelled to Herculaneum and Pompeii to study its ruins. See Dubin, Nina L. 2010. *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert.* Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute.

[396] For a comprehensive account of Péret's use of this phrase, see Baker, Simon. 2012. "Ruins: the Ruin of Ruins' – Photography in the 'Red Zone' and the Aftermath of the Great War." *In Fighting Words and Images: Representing War Across the Disciplines,* edited by Stephan Jaeger, Elena Viktorovna Baraban and Adam Muller. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[397] Robert's painting of the Louvre in ruins, and other selections from his catalogue of work can be viewed at the comprehensive art website Web Gallery of Art, http://www.wga.hu/index.html.

[398] Lloyd, David. 2004. "Ruination: Allan deSouza's Irish Photography." *Third Text* 18 (3): 263-272.

[399] Ibid.

them barely conceal the wounds that mark their destruction. Much like the inscriptions that mark the starving body, it is this wound within the Irish ruin that allows the critical reading of its aftermath representations to expose how the ideological forces that instigated the Famine also sought to erase its memory.

Figure 56. ***Tourist Advertising, Blarney Castle, Blarney, County Cork, 2002*** (Author)

By suggesting that critically reading the photographic representation of the Irish ruin informs us as to the ideological manoeuvrings that gave rise to both the Famine and its silencing, I draw on the work of the acclaimed Indian economist Amartya Sen.[400] A witness as a young boy to the horrors of the 1943 Bengal famine, Sen has scorned the ways in which institutional authorities act when dealing with incidents of mass hunger. This, he claims, is piecemeal, and when compounded by bureaucratic ineptitude extracts a devastating human toll. But where Sen is most critical of the mechanisms adopted by the state during famine events is how its reliance on capital forms of relief (notably by direct money distribution to the poor) forces the starving to compete for food on a hyper-inflated market. Even when there may be adequate food available (as he demonstrates in his analysis of the Bengal famine), Sen argues that it is not severe calorie depravation that causes the marginalised to starve in famine events; rather it is the state's undeviating

[400] I refer here to the ideas raised by Sen in his first major writing on famine. See Sen, Amartya. 1983. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

pursuit of its ideological objectives that exposes them to the worst oppressions of the capitalist system.[401]

Several authors, including the historians Leslie Clarkson and Margaret Crawford, have utilised Sen's economic rationale to examine the circumstances that gave rise to the Famine in Ireland.[402] Significantly, these assessments have once again highlighted how the country's subservient position as a colony of Britain had made it susceptible to the severe consequences produced by this event.[403] Though not referring directly to Sen's work, the Irish singer-songwriter Sinead O'Connor (Fig. 57) seemed to pick up a thread from his thinking when she proposed in her 1994 song *Famine* "that there never really was" such an event in Ireland.[404] More controversially, O'Connor suggested that the country had sufficient food to feed the starving but that it had been "shipped out" to fuel Britain's industrial development.[405]

Figure 57. ***Sinead O'Connor, Blues & Roots Festival, Fremantle, 2008*** (Author)

[401] Ibid. In his study of the Bengal famine, Sen exposes not just the complicity of the British colonial system in dealing with this tragedy but also the ideologically bound circumstances surrounding the "entitlement" of people to food.

[402] See Clarkson, L. A., and Margaret E. Crawford. 2001. *Feast and Famine: Food and Nutrition in Ireland 1500-1920.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[403] For an articulation of this view, see Kinealy, Christine. 2006. "At Home with the Empire: the Example of Ireland." In *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World,* edited by Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[404] O'Connor, Sinead. 1994. "Famine," In *Universal Mother*. Compact Disc. Ensign/Chrysalis.

[405] Ibid.

Admittedly, evidence supporting O'Connor's allegations is scant. Forming the backbone of Nationalist opinion on the Famine, it flies in the face of conventional wisdom. Even writers who are discerning in their historical assessments on the Famine claim that, though food was shipped out of Ireland during this crisis, it was disproportionate to the calorie deficit brought about by the blight.[406] And whilst people in Ireland were open to O'Connor's assertion, the memory of her previous high-profile acts of political resistance, notably when she tore up a photograph of Pope John Paul II on US television, had distanced them from her claims. However, with growing academic interest surrounding the shipment of food during the Famine, some authors, notably Christine Kinealy, have argued that this issue requires urgent critical review.[407]

I suggest it is in the ruin where the ideological ghosts that haunt the Famine have left their most indelible mark. As a critical reading of Sen's work in accompaniment with the images presented here and in Appendix Five implies, in ruins we find that the relief measures undertaken by colonial administrators during this calamity were not carried out as an act of benevolence; rather they were a proxy by which the state reiterated its world view. An illustration of this can be found when reading photographs of the canal ruins at the village of Cong in County Mayo as a parallel text. Known the world over as the setting for John Ford's 1952 Hollywood motion picture *The Quiet Man*, during the Famine the village and its surrounding townlands was the site of a major relief project.[408] As with many similar undertakings throughout the country, those who were judged able to work were condemned to toil hard for money to purchase food. After the collapse of Peel's government to Russel's Whigs in July 1846, this, along with the workhouse, was the principal form of state-funded relief.[409]

The canal owes its conception, and also much of its funding, to Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness. Now eclipsed by the commercialisation of his grandfather's memory, Arthur Guinness (the founder of the family company), it was Benjamin Lee who transformed what was a regional

[406] See Donnelly, *The Great Irish,* 215.

[407] Christine Kinealy has mentioned this in her published works. For a brief overview of this see Kinealy, Christine. 1997. "Food Exports from Ireland." *History Ireland* 5 (1): 32-36.

[408] For a summary, see Duffy, Patrick J. 2007. *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes.* Dublin: Four Courts. 144.

[409] See Crossmam, Virginia. 2006. *Politics, pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

porter business into a global brewing empire.[410] A friend and hunting partner of the Prince of Wales, Guinness saw the canal as integral to his greater vision of industrialising this remote part of Ireland. However, as site engineering for the project was poorly thought out, the canal was destined to failure. So porous was the local bedrock that, when the lock gates opened, water soaked straight into the ground, leaving the project and its labyrinth of infrastructure in ruin.[411] Obscured by the tour bus parking bays, the abandoned lock ruin seen in the photograph (Fig. 58) now stands as a silent reminder of the failure of Victorian political economy to feed the starving. In the ruins of the Cong Canal we see that the ideological beliefs that, as Sen suggests, force people to starve during famine events have cut a rift through the region's physical and cartographic landscape.

Figure 58. ***The Abandoned Cong Canal Lock (in ruins), Cong, County Mayo, 2012*** (Author)

Regrettably, the circumstances surrounding the people who toiled on the Cong Canal remain a mystery. Little research has been carried out in this episode from the Famine; however, we do catch glimpses of them from the historical record. One of these, printed in the London *Morning Chronicle*, described the gulag-like conditions they worked under and

[410] See Lynch, Patrick, and John Vaizey. 1960. *Guinness's Brewery in the Irish Economy 1759-1876.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[411] When William Wilde toured through Cong in the mid-1860s, he noted, with respect to the canal being deficient of water, "that little boys may be seen playing marbles on the bottom". See Wilde, William. 1867. *Lough Corrib, Its Shores and Islands.* Dublin: McGlashan & Gill. 36.

how the canal was but one in a long list of "unproductive public works".[412] The correspondent, who was nameless, appears to have arrived at Cong when, due to ongoing funding problems, the workers were forced off the project and back into a state of "destitution".[413] More tellingly, the reporter noted how by labouring hard on a scheme which had little to do with the "production of food", these people and "their families" were "doomed … to starve".[414] Likewise, a local memory of the labourers who worked on the canal has also lapsed into a hushed forgetfulness. On one of my trips to Cong, an official informed me that, after I enquired about them, "you'll find The Quiet Man museum more to your liking". Although this man was not derogatory, his comment had, nonetheless, reiterated the same benign sentimentalism that, through the commodification of Irish culture, has seized so much of the country's historical memory in recent years.

Yet in spite of the people who worked on the Cong Canal being overlooked by history, I suggest that when the viewer/reader interprets the ruins of this project as aftermath photographs, they allow for their forgotten memory to re-emerge in the present. In making this statement, I refer to Walter Benjamin's concept in "Theses on the Philosophy of History" to the ruin being an allegory for reading history.[415] This notion is best summed up in Benjamin's much cited reading of Paul Klee's painting "Angelus Novus", when he defines the historical process as a "catastrophe" that piles up "ruin upon ruin".[416] Underpinning Benjamin's claim as to the allegoric standing of the ruin was his belief that what captivated us the most about them was not so much their "irresistible decay", but the inherent contradiction they are beholding to.[417] At the intellectual level, the ruin challenges us to consider the fragility of material existence; Benjamin's thoughts on this are again articulated in his interpretation of Klee's painting and the "storm" that he sees as the

[412] The reference to Cong in the *Morning Chronicle* was an extract from an unnamed Galway paper (There were three Galway newspapers operating at this time). This extract accompanied an article on the changes brought about by industrialisation in the north of Ireland. See the article "Distress of a Hand-Loom Weaver." 2013. *Morning Chronicle*: Monday, October 23, 1848, http:newspaperarchive.com/uk/Middlesex/London/morning-chronicle/1848/10=23/page-2.

[413] Ibid.

[414] Ibid.

[415]Benjamin, Walter. 1940. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Marxist Internet Archive. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm.

[416] Ibid.

[417] Benjamin's discussion of ruins and allegory is from his work *The Origins of German Tragic Drama.* I have cited his quotation as it appears in Pollock, Griselda. 2013. *Visual Politics of Psychoanalysis: Art in Post-Traumatic Cultures.* London: I. B. Tauris. 81.

consequence of modernity's desire for incessant "progress".[418] At another level, the sensual, the ruin allows its viewer/reader a contemplative encounter with the sublimity that marks the intractable passage of time. Evocative of his ponderings on the dialectic reading of the photograph, here Benjamin presents a double-take, whereby dissolving the distance that separates us from the past the ruin offers an organic though alarming, vision of history.

Armed with the interpretive possibilities inherent in Benjamin's perception on allegory, I suggest that we glean something about the forgotten people who toiled at Cong by reading aftermath images of its ruins in accompaniment with a body of work that documents a similar ideologically enacted trauma. I speak here of Alexander Rodchenko's photographs of Stalin's infamous White Sea-Baltic Canal. The acclaimed highlight of the first Soviet five-year plan (1928 – 1932), the canal was constructed by gulag detainees undergoing "corrective labour" for alleged crimes against the state. Over the early course of the three-year scheme, Rodchenko travelled to this remote region to document the project for various governmental publications. But carefully hidden from Rodchenko's highly edited images are the tens of thousands who died in an endeavour that was an unadulterated failure.[419] In a scenario strikingly similar to that at Cong, due to the depth of the waterway being restricted by the geological strata, the canal could not carry the ocean going vessels it was designed to accommodate.[420] Today it is navigated only by small boats and foreign tourists taking barge holidays. In the collective Russian memory, the project, as does Rodchenko's photographs, has come to symbolise the imperiousness of a corrupt system of doctrinal belief.[421] Contrasting the influence his aesthetic has had on liberal art programmes the world over, Rodchenko's photographs have also been used to question what role he played in suppressing this tragedy.[422]

Despite the standing of Rodchenko's photographs as propaganda for the "Dear Comrades"' megalomaniac ambitions, when the raw versions of his images, as seen in (Fig. 59), are read

[418] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy".

[419] For an account of the failure of the canal project, see Malia, Martin. 1994. *Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia.* New York: The Free Press.

[420] Ibid.

[421] For a summary on how Rodchenko's images are perceived, see Mattick, Paul. 2003. *Art In Its Time: Theories and Practices of Modern Aesthetics.* London: Routledge.

[422] For a detailed account of this Rodchenko's photography on this project of, see Wolf, Erica. 2008. "The Visual Economy of Forced Labor: Alexander Rodchenko and the White Sea-Baltic Canal." In *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*, edited by Valerie A. Kivelson and Joan Neuberger. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

with respect to what we might glean about those who laboured on the Cong Canal, we discover an emblematic connection evocative of Maude Ellmann's critique of the representation of the body discussed in chapter four. What I propose in this statement is that when informed by Benjamin's expressions on allegory, the viewer/reader can detect from the gaunt faces of the gulag detainees in Rodchenko's photographs the same ideologically bound inscriptions that would have characterised the demeanour of the workers at Cong. And though the people who experienced these social disasters are separated by history, through the allegory of ruins and the referentiality of photography we can see that it was only by the degree of coercion directed against their bodies that distinguish them apart. When considering the issues surrounding the representation of the Famine at state-sanctioned sites of commemoration in Ireland deliberated on in the previous chapter, the aftermath images of the canal ruins at Cong provide a historic but startling encounter with this forgotten past.

Figure 59. ***Alexander Rodchenko, 1933, White Sea-Baltic Canal***

The Big House in ruin

Of all the ruins that abound in Ireland, one stands out as the Irish ruin par excellence – the Ascendency manor house. Much like the plantation houses of the Americas, Anglo-Irish life centred on the estate mansion. In Ireland, these are more commonly known as the "Big House", though, as Ellmann has pointed out, the "Big House" did not acquire its prominence by mimicking the scale of the English manor house.[423] In fact, the Irish equivalent was, by comparison, relatively small. Rather, Ellmann proposes that where the Big House assumed its "bigness" was by the sense of order it imposed in the minds of the

[423] Ellmann, Maude. 2003. *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

people who lived near it.[424] Indeed, so prominent was the Big House on the country's physiological landscapes that the familial intrigues that occurred behind their walls were the topic of conversation throughout the land and the subject matter for the introspections of Anglo-Irish literature.[425] Even the Ascendency's early photographic productions, as can be read in the work of Countess Mary Rose Rosse (who was married to the astronomer Lord Rosse), echoed an inward looking world that stretched no further than the demesne gates. But the Big House was to also factor into the Ascendency's undoing, where the staggering cost of their construction, together with the questionable fiscal circumstances of the estate system, forced many families into bankruptcy.[426] The historian Roger Sawyer has suggested that the generational debt born by the Ascendency for building their mansions is one far less understood factor that contributed to the Famine.[427]

Figure 60. ***Ardfry Castle (in ruins), Oranmore Peninsula, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)[428]

[424] Ibid., 46.

[425] Vera Kreilkamp has provided a comprehensive study of the Big House genre in Anglo-Irish literature. See Kreilkamp, Vera. 1998. *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*. Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press.

[426] For an account of the questionable fiscal circumstances of the Ascendency estate system, see chapter four of O' Gráda, Cormac. 2000. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

[427] Sawyer, Roger. 2002. *We Are But Women: Women in Ireland's History*. London: Routledge.

[428] Unlike other nearby Big House sites, Ardfry Castle was not burnt down during the political turmoils of the 1920s. But reflective of the adage "art imitating life", the building did, however, receive significant fire damage when it was used as a location for John Huston's 1973 motion picture *The Macintosh Man*. During a scene involving the actor Paul Newman, a fire that was lit for dramatic effect got out of control and burnt the roof down.

In contrast with the lack of impediment by which I negotiated the sites that make up the creative productions in Appendix Five, accessing the Big House ruin was difficult. With the majority of these derelict remnants to Ireland's colonial past incorporated into pastoral leases, their present day owners are reluctant to allow people, particularly photographers, anywhere near them. This issue of access occurred, allegedly when Corbijn and U2 visited Moydrum Castle. After being denied admission to the site, they are said to have literally "jumped the fence". Poignantly, this phrase has gained much greater currency in Ireland as more and more of the countryside is being swallowed up by a new wave of land enclosure.

Property owners cite various reasons for restricting access to view ruins. Most claim that these sites are unsafe, making them legally liable for injuries. This rationale cannot be denied. Rural newspapers regularly report incidents of farm animals being hurt by falling debris when sheltering amongst ruins. Another explanation given to me by locals is that the owners of these sites fear that they might catch the Exchequer's eye when calling for a revision of rural property taxes. This may have been the case during the reign of the Celtic Tiger, when a number of these sites, including Ardfry Castle in County Galway (Fig. 60), were listed for development as luxury apartments.[429] But post the 2008 GFC these ruins, along with many of the properties they occupy, are near worthless.[430]

The "ruin of ruins"

The irrefutable sign of the coloniser's failed hegemonic project in Ireland, when reading the Big House ruin as a historical text the viewer/reader bears witness to how the fissures that mark Ireland's past unpick at the threads of the nation's historical tapestry. While many Ascendency houses fell into ruin on account of their owner's changing fortunes after the Famine, a great deal more were destroyed by the actions of resistance activists during the Irish War of Independence (1919 – 1921) and the disastrous Civil War (1922 – 1923) that followed.[431] Ardtully Castle in County Kerry (Fig. 61) is but one of many such sites that exemplify this process of reading the Big House ruin as a historical text. Built at the height of the Famine in 1847, Ardtully was set alight by anti-treaty forces in 1921. The blaze is said

[429] The pre-2008 GFC website promoting the redevelopment of this ruin is still available on the internet. See Ardfry House & Courtyard. 2014. http://ardfry.ie.

[430] For an account of the decline in Irish rural property, see Drudy, Patrick J and Michael L. Collins. 2011. "Ireland: from boom to austerity." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 4 (3): 339-354.

[431] For a detailed summary of Big House burnings during these conflicts, see Donnelly, James S. Jr. 2012. "Big House Burnings in County Cork during the Irish Revolution, 1920." *Eire-Ireland* 47 (3 & 4): 141-197.

to have illuminated the sky for several nights.[432] Similarly, Moydrum Castle, the site of Anton Corbijn's photographic plagiarism, was also burnt to the ground in retaliation for outrages inflicted against locals by the Black and Tans.[433] Here, the vision of the Big House in flames echoes with that element evocative of Revolutionary Nationalism, where only through the destruction of the old regime can the nation be reborn – a sentiment immortalised in the phrase from Irish rebel singing, "the red blaze of freedom".[434]

Though the memory of the Big House ablaze might stoke the embers of nationalist remembrance, when the aftermath photographs of these crumbling edifices are examined as a parallel text they yield much more than a recollection of their destruction. When immersed within the representational sublime of the Big House ruin, the viewer/reader is permitted to bear witness not only to the ideological forces that gave rise to the Famine, but also how these same tenets of unbridled capitalism reappeared through the economic contagion that led to the collapse of the Celtic Tiger. Much like the blight of the 1840s, the contagion spread throughout the land; nowhere was spared, with arguably its most recognisable manifestation being found in the country's proliferation of ghost estates.

Figure 61. ***Ardtully Castle (in ruins), Ardtully Demesne, County Kerry, 2012*** (Author)[435]

[432] Though I had heard several versions of this story when speaking with locals, this reference to the night sky being illuminated by the burning manor house featured in each one.

[433] The local historian Phil Tomkins provides an account of the burning of Moydrum Castle. See Tomkins, Phil. *Twice a Hero: From the Trenches of the Great War to the ditches of the Irish Midlands, 1915-1922.* Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Memoirs Publishing.

[434] The phrase "the red blaze of freedom" is from Peader Kearney's song *Erin Go Bragh*.

[435] Reflecting the concealment of history seen at many other former Ascendency sites in Ireland, establishing the period Ardtully Castle was constructed is dependent upon the source consulted. In publications from the nearby town of Kilgarvan,

As seen in Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain (the other members of the acronymic national collective known as the "PIGS" or "PIIGS"),[436] the ghost estate is a deserted place, hence its lexical association with haunting.[437] Built by venture capitalists on dubious hedge fund loans, Irish ghost estates can be found in large towns and remote rural areas miles away from social infrastructure and employment. Replicating a pattern of naming that dates from the late 1970s, many Irish ghost estates have English titles, with generic labels such as "Cottage Hill" (Fig. 62), "The Mews" and "The Terraces", historically divorcing them from the townland locations they inhabit.[438] To be sure, those that are habitable are often entombed behind razor wire capped walls, awaiting the long anticipated economic recovery. Scores remain no better than a "builder's tip"[439] or, as in the manner of the Ascendency Big House, they have been set alight, their destruction fuelled not by political activism but through the intoxicating effects of cheap cider on disaffected youth. Reflective of the analogy pursued above, between the Famine relief ruins at Cong and the nameless faces that haunt Rodchenko's photographs of the White Sea-Baltic Canal, today the Irish ghost estate stands as a memorial to the state's continual disregard for the people that inhabit its jagged borders.

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the castle is said to have been built after the Famine. This claim corresponds with the dates noted on a number heritage websites. However, the most authoritative source to the dating of buildings in Ireland, *The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage*, precisely locates the structures construction to the year recognised as the bleakest period of the Famine – 1847.

[436] For an examination of the economic circumstances surrounding the "PIGS" and "PIIGS" acronyms, see Kalbaska, A., and M. Gatkowski. 2012. "Eurozone sovereign contagion: Evidence from the CDS market (2005-2010)." *Journal of Economic Behaviours & Organization* 83 (3): 657-673.

[437] For a comprehensive summary of the ghost estate phenomenon in Ireland, see Aughey, Arthur, and John Oakland. 2013. *Irish Civilization: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

[438] See Kearns, Robin A., and Lawrence D. Berg. 2009. "Proclaiming Place: Towards a Geography of Place Name Pronunciation." In *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*, edited by Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing.

[439] My reference to a "builder tip" is from William Wall's insightful poem *Ghost Estate*. See Wall, William. 2011. *Ghost Estate.* County Clare: Salmon Poetry.

Figure 62. ***"Cottage Hill" (Ghost Estate), Loughrea, County Galway, 2012*** (Author)

Extending on Benjamin's notion of ruins and allegory, there is another Ascendency site, one which lay at the bottom of the Big House garden, that, when read in accompaniment with the ghost estate as a parallel text, allows the viewer/reader to recognise how the ideological forces that had instigated the Famine also provoked its silencing. Here I refer to the Ascendency's passion for enticing its visions of history through the construction of shame ruins and architectural follies. Apart from these sites projecting their aesthetic vision upon the landscape, their embodiment, either Gothic or classical, also epitomised the dialectic tensions that informed the Ascendency mind. In the gothic folly could be found a text that reiterated this class's belief in the sequential advancement of civilisation, each subsequent era rising from that which had come before. Meanwhile in the classical folly (a conspicuous but less common site on the Irish landscape) was etched a fear that the Enlightenment project, likewise their endeavours in Ireland, would come to an end. In sight of the bog, as shown in the photograph of The Temple at Cong (Fig. 63), for the Ascendency, the classical folly's crumbling Corinthian columns gestured to the atavism it believed lay at the heart of the native's unruliness.

Figure 63. ***"The Temple" (Architectural folly, in ruins), The Neale Estate, Cong, County Mayo, 2012*** (Author)

Though they are situated apart historically, I suggest that when comprehending the divergent understandings of the Ascendency folly and the ghost estate we encounter the same entrenched ideological forces that led to the amnesia that has surrounded the Famine. Through the allegory of ruins and the interpretative possibilities offered by aftermath photography, we see that the Ascendency folly and the venture capitalist ghost estate share a common ancestry. By their expressed desire to silence the past – yet announce it in a manner evocative of Robert's paintings – these edifices are the "ruin of ruins".[440] Inscribed on their walls is a text that contradicts positivist interpretations of history. In the Ascendency folly this longing to consign the past to oblivion was concealed beneath the aesthetic treatments of romanticism where, like Anglo-Irish literature, the fears that encroached on the coloniser's mind were deliberated on only through metaphor. Again in the present day phenomenon of the ghost estate, the yearning to forget is gesticulated to in the minimalist visions encapsulated by architectural models on the High Street (Fig. 64). When bearing witness to the ghost estate and its historical predecessor in the Ascendency folly, the words Thackeray uttered just before the Famine come to mind:

[440] I refer, again, to Simon Baker's critique of Péret's term the "ruin of ruins". See Baker, "Ruins".

“They begin churches too big and can’t finish them; mill and houses too big, and are ruined before they are done; … there is something quite strange, really, in this general consistency.”

Figure 64. ***Abandoned real estate office, Clongriffin (Ghost Estate), Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

Chapter 6

Mimesis, Silence and the Apparition at Knock [441]

Figure 65. ***Statuary reflections in the window of the Church of the Apparition, Knock, County Mayo, 2006,*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 65) depicts the reflection of shrine statuary in the main window at the Church of the Apparition in Knock, County Mayo. The church and the accompanying Basilica to Our Lady of Knock is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. She, along with several other heavenly personages, was alleged to have appeared here on a cold, wet night in August 1879. Unmoving and floating in mid-air, the statues were crafted with reference to the official testimonies given by the witnesses to this event, who had all stated that the apparition was silent – there was no message. Set against the lounge bars, bed and breakfast establishments and religious shops that proliferate present day Knock, the photograph can be read as a text. Within its frame, the viewer/reader observes the village's transformation from a desperately poor, rural backwater to an international site for Marian

[441] A shorter version of this chapter appeared in the Summer 2011 edition of *New Hibernia Review*. I thank the editors for allowing me to reproduce it here. See Carpenter, Paul. 2011. "Mimesis, Memory and the Magic Lantern: What Did the Knock Witnesses See?" *New Hibernia Review* 15 (2): 102-120.

devotion. More crucially, when critically interpreted, the unnerving photographic hush that shrouds this scene allows the viewer/reader to comprehend the apparition's deeper historical ramifications and connection with the muteness that surrounds the Famine.

Exploring the Silence

Explanations concerning the silence that has enveloped the Knock apparition are polarised. Devotional writers have tended to see it as a transcendental aspect to the vision; such was the apparition's spiritual significance that mere words were unable to describe it. Sceptics have, on the other hand, cited that the vision's silence is evidence of an elaborate hoax, executed by an operator working with a magic lantern. Ironically, though having divergent origins, it has been these divided views that have framed how the apparition has been represented and perceived in the popular imagination. Hence, when observed through this dialectic, the ability of the vision to be read for deeper understandings has rested upon a tightrope balanced between rationalist and ecclesiastical comprehensions of silence.

In recent years, a third opinion has emerged regarding the silences at Knock which has sought to draw an analogy between the event and the devastating social and linguistic upheavals incited by the Famine. Without adjudicating on the veracity of the apparition, this view is summed up in a question posed by the Wicklow author Kevin Whelan. Upon examining the possibility that James Joyce's *The Dead* might be read as a Famine text, Whelan asked with regard to the absence of a message from the Blessed Virgin at Knock: "In the midst of a community in rapid transition between two languages, in which should she have spoken?"[442]

In the previous chapters of this thesis, I utilised sourced images and my photographic productions to examine how when read critically photography might tease out overlooked aspects of the Famine. In this chapter, I will, as a means of further pondering the relationship between photography, silence and the Famine, extend this investigation to examine the August 1879 Knock apparition. Regarded by some as the defining event of 19th century Irish Catholicism,[443] following the apparition's cautious ecclesiastical recognition, the Knock devotion became synonymous with the moral conservatism that dominated Irish social life up until the 1960s

[442] Whelan, Kevin. 2002. "The Memories of "The Dead."" *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 15 (1): 59 – 97.

[443] See Rynne, Catherine. 1979. *Knock 1879 – 1979*. Dublin: Veritas. Writing from a position in support of the apparition, Rynne presents a comprehensive summary of the event.

Significantly, occurring in the wake of the Famine, the Knock witnesses were for the greater part people whose ontological reckoning was undergoing a fundamental change. As the historian Emmet Larkin's "Devotional Revolution" thesis suggests, the witnesses' mindset was in a state of rapid transformation between the pre-Famine traditions of the past to a worldview being forged by modernity.[444] As opposed to the linear chronology Larkin has proposed, by following Marx's camera obscura analogy I will critically revise the accepted sequence of events alleged to have occurred at Knock.

Pivotal to this re-conceptualisation of the apparition will be an examination of the vision's photographic characteristics, in particular, the historical and cultural understandings encapsulated in what has become known as the "Magic Lantern Theory". Further, by utilising Michael Taussig's interpretation of Walter Benjamin's conceptualisations on mimesis, I will, after appraising several long forgotten traces of the apparition from the archive, offer a new interpretation into its silences and relationship with the Famine. I propose that the key to revealing the Knock event is in unlocking the connection between the witnesses' sensory awareness of technology and the ability of mimesis to transform memory. Though this chapter might appear to veer away from the topic at hand, unpacking the apparition, nonetheless, allows us to recognise how, through the investigation of silence, photography exposes the overlooked aspects of history.

Motionless but alive

On the night of 21 August 1879, during the early months of the Land War and amidst an approaching agricultural crisis that was being compared with the Great Famine, an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary was reported to have appeared outside the south gable wall of the remote village church at Knock, County Mayo. Floating in mid-air with her eyes and hands raised toward heaven, Mary's appearance, as described by witnesses to a Church endorsed Commission of Enquiry, resembled devotional images attributed to Bernadette Soubirous's vision at Lourdes (1858), an event that "had evidently been much talked about" at the time.[445] However, at Knock, unlike Lourdes and other nineteenth-

[444] Although Larkin does not discuss the Knock event in his "Devotional Revolution" thesis, he does include an illustration of the apparition in his article, thereby situating the vision within the pastoral and ecclesiastical reformation undertaken by the Catholic Church in Ireland in the years during and after the Famine. See Larkin, Emmet. 1972. "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–1875." *American Historical Review* 77 (3): 625–52.

[445] This statement is taken from a report by Rev. Dr. Francis Lennon to Archdeacon Cavanagh and the Commission of Enquiry into the Knock apparition. As I note below, the report is undated, but its reference to a feast day suggests that it was written in 1880. Taking the form of a long handwritten letter, the report is archived in the Tuam Archdiocesan Archives, Box 108,

century French Marian visions, Mary was not alone. On her right, bowed with his hands clasped in prayer, was her husband, St. Joseph. On her left, dressed in the robes of a bishop and holding a book as if preaching, stood St. John the Evangelist. Some witnesses, but not all, also claimed to have seen an altar upon which rested a lamb and a cross. Unexplainably, although it had been raining heavily that evening, the ground beneath the tableau remained "quite dry". For more than two hours, twenty or more people witnessed what they later described as "appearances", "likenesses", or "statue-like" figures that, despite remaining "motionless", appeared to be "alive". One witness, Patrick Walsh, who was working in his field more than half a mile away, described seeing not representations but rather "a large globe of golden light". Situated "above and around the chapel gable", such was the luminance that radiated from this body that Walsh "thought" he had never seen "so brilliant a light before".[446]

From the outset, the Knock event was beset by rumours that the vision was not miraculous in origin. Given that all who had sight of the gable wall reported seeing something, and that there was no message, suggested that a natural explanation was at hand.[447] Further inflaming suspicion among those unconvinced by published accounts of the apparition were the witnesses' convoluted descriptions of the event. Sceptics were quick to propose that the witnesses' apparent disbelief for what they had seen, but poise in describing their experience with references to the images of saints, indicated that a clerical intercession had occurred.[448] A local memory of the witness Dominick Beirne Snr's encounter with the vision supports this claim. While Beirne had no hesitation recognising the Blessed Virgin, the confidence by which he identified the other figures in his official statement evaded him on

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Archbishop Gilmartin B4/9- i/4, Second Commission of enquiry into the Knock apparition. I thank the staff at the Tuam Archdiocesan archives for allowing me access to a copy of this letter and to the other records they hold on the apparition. I refer to this report below as Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

[446] Statements from the witnesses are sourced from McPhilpin, John. 1904. *The Apparitions and Miracles at Knock. Also, The Official Depositions of the Eye-Witnesses.* Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son. 56–81. These statements were originally published in two editions of the *Weekly News* during February 1880. The "alive" description is taken from John Curry's testimony to a tribunal answering to the Second Commission of Enquiry into the Knock apparition held in 1936. See Walsh, Michael. 1959. *The Apparition at Knock: A Survey of Facts and Evidence.* Tuam: St. Jarlath's College. 56.

[447] It is worth noting that unlike at Knock, Marian apparitions are generally not seen by all in proximity to the event. For a summary on some of the defining characteristics of 19th-century Marian apparitions, particularly the gender, age, social and ethnic disposition of those who claim to have witnessed these events, see Harris, Ruth. 1999. *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age*. New York: Penguin Viking.

[448] For instance, the suggestion that the witnesses' statements had been filtered by clergy was raised at the turn of the 20th century by Michael McCarthy. See McCarthy, Michael. 1904. *Priests and People in Ireland.* Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co.

the night of the vision. Uncertain about the strange presences he had seen, Beirne was recalled many years later to have thought they were no other than "God Almighty". [449]

New interest in Knock

The circumstances that instigated the interpretative anomalies surrounding the apparition and their connections with the events that played out at the time have been examined by Eugene Hynes.[450] In his 2008 study (the first book-length critical analysis of the apparition), Hynes suggests that a crisis of clerical authority at Knock, coupled with the widening divisions between priests, tenant farmers, and landlords during the Land War, provided the occasion by which clergy named the presences alleged to have been seen by the witnesses. Commencing shortly before the apparition, the Land War instigated a series of direct actions that dramatically changed the social and political landscape of late 19th century rural Ireland.[451] Moreover, with the intercession of the Land League to secure the rights of tenant farmers against the intimidation of property owners, the ability of clergy to act in their traditional role as intermediaries between these parties was stifled. For the Knock parish priest Archdeacon Bartholomew Cavanagh, these events, which culminated in his public denunciation of the League from the pulpit, contributed to severing him from many amongst his flock.[452]

Though the Knock apparition epitomises the waves of change that swept Ireland in the post-Famine period, it should not be assumed that how the witnesses interpreted the event was the result of a top-down process where priests attributed ecclesiastically sanctioned identities to the vision. This interpretation has informed the perception of the apparition in Larkin's Devotional Revolution model.[453] As Hynes contends, those who gathered at the gable wall, particularly the group that would establish themselves as the leading witnesses, had, by means of their interpretative dispositions, clerical allegiances, and belief in local folkloric traditions, also contributed to how the apparition came to be imagined.

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[449] For an account of this local memory, see Edward McLoughlin's statement, Box 108, Archbishop Gilmartin B4/9–i/4, Second Commission of Enquiry into the Knock Apparition. Edward McLoughlin was Dominick Beirne's son-in-law. He recalled this account when giving testimony to the Second Commission of Enquiry in 1936.

[450] Hynes, Eugene. 2008. *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Cork: Cork University Press.

[451] See Jordan, Donald. 1994. *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Jordan explores the wider implications of the Land War on the Mayo political and social landscape.

[452] See Hynes, *Knock*, chapter 8.

[453] Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution".

The Magic Lantern Theory

One early conjecture that claimed to explain the apparition's peculiar physical characteristics was that the vision had been created by a projection device. Known as the "Magic Lantern Theory", this hypothesis, which is more a recurring explanation for the Knock event rather than an ordered thesis, contends that the apparition was an image disseminated by lantern projection. Though the theory has several variants, in the main its proponents claim that the lantern's presence at Knock was part of an orchestrated hoax.[454] Surprisingly, outside the objections raised by devotional writers, the Lantern Theory has attracted little critical attention.[455] I argue that rarely cited descriptions of the apparition's optical and luminance attributes, together with the phantasmagorical experiences noted by the witnesses, confirm that longstanding rumours regarding the presence of a lantern at Knock are substantially true. The proof, some of which has never been subject to review, is compelling.

Two rarely cited descriptions of the apparition given by the witnesses, and seemingly without the mediation of their priests, confirm the logic of the Lantern Hypothesis. On his visit to Knock in February 1880, T. O'Connor, the Limerick newspaper man and photographer, wrote, with respect to the vision, that the light on the gable wall did not illuminate "the places around or outside the circle of the apparition."[456] Here, O'Connor mentions two points that would indicate that a lantern had been present. First, the concentric pattern of light that created what he described as a "semi-circle" was an optical attribute of early lantern systems.[457] Curiously, in a representation of the apparition attributable to O'Connor and to the Claremorris nun Sr., Mary Patricia Bodkin, which is still being reproduced in devotional material today, the tableau is depicted within just such a

[454] It should be noted that besides the Lantern Theory, several other hypotheses have attempted to explain what the Knock witnesses had seen. These have, in the main, focused upon hallucination. In one infamous footnote, a writer suggested that due to the witnesses' consumption of "Indian meal" during the agricultural crisis of 1879 that the apparition was a mass hallucination induced by the nutritional disease, pellagra. This theory has been disputed by James Donnelly in the first comprehensive scholarly study of the apparition. While material conditions in Knock at the time of the vision were dire there was no evidence, Donnelly argued, to suggest that the witnesses had been reduced to this diet. Donnelly, James S., Jr. 1993. "The Marian Shrine at Knock: The First Decade." *Eire-Ireland* 37 (2): 58.

[455] Hynes examination of the Lantern Theory in his comprehensive study of the apparition is an exception to this absence. See Hynes, *Knock*, 211–214.

[456] See O'C [onnor], T. 1880. "The Apparition at Knock." *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*, February 17. 3. O'Connor seems to have had no impediment when he interviewed people at Knock. In his account, he talks quite freely. This access is opposed to other journalists who appear to have been directed by clergy to the most reliable witnesses. O'Connor signed his articles off as T. O'C. I have used parenthesis to reference his name in footnotes.

[457] See O'C [onnor], T. 1880. "The Apparition." *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*, February 13. 3. For an account of the light pattern cast by early lantern systems, see Brewster, David. 1868. *Letters on Natural Magic: Addressed to Sir Walter Scott.* London: William Tegg.

semi-circular contour (Fig. 66).[458] Second, O'Connor's reference to the apparition not illuminating the spaces "outside the circle" concurs with one of the principal physical characteristics of projected light sources: when a projector lens is focused to its point of maximum sharpness, the light it casts does not illuminate its surroundings. This dark magic still captivates us today whenever we view a motion picture in the cinema.

Figure 66. ***Photographic devotional card with composite image of the apparition (Contemporary to 1880) 2008,*** (Author)[459]

A similar proto-cinematic reading can be detected from an account written by the journalist and clerical insider John MacPhilpin when he first broke the story of the apparition in the *Tuam News* on 9 January 1880. Although MacPhilpin does not mention it, he had undoubtedly known about the vision for some time owing to his uncle, Canon Ulick Bourke (who was the founder of the *Tuam News*), serving on the Church's Commission of

[458] I base this opinion on my knowledge of photographs taken at Knock by T. O'Connor and also the Castlebar merchant and photographer Thomas Wynne during the early months of 1880. Indeed, Wynne has a sizeable collection of images from Knock. Although there is little evidence to confirm that Sr. Bodkin had advised upon the depiction of the apparition scene, iconographic resemblances between this image and the tableau that appeared in the *Weekly News* on Saturday, 7 February 1880, an image from a printer's woodcut that is believed to have been drafted by Sr. Bodkin, have led me to this conclusion. I thank the staff at the Sisters of Mercy Archive in Dublin for alerting me to the work of Sr. Bodkin.

[459] This photographic image, attributable to T. O'Connor and Sr. Bodkin, has been an important element in how the Knock event has been imagined. In his letter dated 14 June 1880 to Fr. Daniel E. Hudson, the editor of the Irish-American Catholic devotional paper *Ave Maria*, Fr. Edward Murphy, an early supporter of the shrine, appears to have sent a copy of this photograph along with a report of his visit to Knock as a means of validating the vision. Murphy's report was later published in the periodical's editorial, and with the support of *Ave Maria* helped propagate interest in Knock from America. Again during the early 1930s the picture resurfaced when the vision and its representations were long forgotten. Murphy's letter to Hudson is archived at Notre Dame University, Indiana. See Murphy to Hudson, 14 June 1880. (X-2-f - A.L.S. - 4pp. - 16mo. - {1}). Regrettably, though this image is mentioned in the online descriptions of the Notre Dame University archives, it now appears to have been lost. I thank staff from Notre Dame University for their correspondence and conducting a search for this photograph. For an account of the image's resurfacing during the 1930s, and how it helped Knock's supporters reimagine the vision, see Coyne, Judy. 2004. *Providence My Guide*. Cork: Mercier Press. 24.

Enquiry.[460] Recollecting the strange luminosity described by the witnesses, he wrote that the church gable wall was bathed in "a white flickering light".[461] Revealingly, this "flickering" is the tell-tale signature of the lantern.[462] It is also a detail that both past and present-day advocates of Knock are at pains to contradict by reiterating that "the apparition did not flicker or move in any way."[463]

Paradoxically, apart from MacPhilpin's description of the apparition's flicker endorsing the proposition advanced by the Lantern Theory, it also provides an insight into a sensory experience encountered by the witnesses in their claim that the "statue-like" figures appeared to be "alive".[464] Marina Warner, in *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*, notes a similar response to the lantern's oscillations from audiences witnessing the spectacular qualities of the phantasmagoria. In the eerie darkness of the picture show, and with acute anticipation, this flickering, Warner suggests, endowed the still figures projected on the screen with "that quality of conscious life" found to be so lacking in the inert – "animation".[465]

The Commission of Enquiry

We can assume that suspicions a lantern may have been involved in the Knock event were foremost in the mind of priests on the Church endorsed Commission of Enquiry when they summoned a report from the Maynooth Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Rev. Dr. Francis Lennon.[466] Citing long extracts from David Brewster's influential *Letters on*

[460] Canon Bourke is known to have worked closely with his nephew on a publication described by the historian John White as "the semi-official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Tuam." See White, John. 1999. "The Knock Apparitions and Pilgrimage: Popular Piety and the Irish Land War." PhD. diss., Boston College. 82.

[461] See McPhilpin, John. 1880. "Apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Chapel of Knock, near Claremorris." *Galway Vindicator and Connaught Advertiser*, January 14. McPhilpin's report originally appeared in the *Tuam News* on 9 January 1880. The original report seems to be no longer extant in any Irish archive.

[462] See Brewster, *Letters on Natural Magic,* 158. Several other historical texts have also discussed the "flickering" effect produced by the lantern.

[463] See Sacred Destinations: Knock Shrine. 2011. Accessed January 17, www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/knock-shrine. This claim also appears on several devotional websites dedicated to Marian apparitions.

[464] Apart from its mention in the official witness statements, this claim also appears in a variety of Knock devotional material.

[465] Warner, Marina. 2006. *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Oxford University Press. 148. On the occasion of the centenary of the apparition, Marina Warner published a fascinating paper on the Knock event and the social prejudices faced by Irish women. See Warner, Marina. 1979. "What the Virgin of Knock Means to Women." *Magill*, September.

[466] The circumstances by which Fr. Lennon came to be at Knock are unclear, although he does mention in the opening sentence of his report to Fr. Cavanagh that he writes "[a]t the request of your Commission". See Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

Natural Magic,[467] Lennon examined a number of explanations including "Collusion," "Deception," and "Ocular delusion."[468] Incredulous to the suggestion that some form of "supernatural agency" was involved at Knock, Lennon found no evidence to support a lantern being present, concluding instead that a "phosphorescent substance" applied by the hand of a "skilful artist" provided a much better explanation for what the witnesses had seen.[469] Further, he claimed, the position of the building, together with the difficulty of concealing such an apparatus, made the lantern supposition "morally speaking impossible".[470]

Though Lennon's explanation is brief, we can deduce by its reference to the orientation of the building that he refers to the church's position on a small rise. This gradient, he argued, rendered the use of lantern projection "highly improbable."[471] Presumably, as devotional writers have pointed out, given that some of the witnesses had come into contact with the tableau, their bodies would have eclipsed a light source projected from such a low angle; in the process alerting those gathered at the gable wall to the projection device.[472] Over the years, some writers have assumed that Fr. Lennon, as has been credited to the memory of the principle witness, Mary Beirne, conducted experiments at Knock with a lantern.[473]

Lennon's report, addressed to the Knock parish priest and chair of the Commission of Enquiry, Archdeacon Cavanagh, is one of only two sets of original documents thought to have survived from this investigation.[474] The other is what would appear to be the original testaments (unsworn) of the witnesses Judith Campbell, Dominick Beirne, Sr., and Margaret

[467] See Brewster, *Letters on Natural Magic.* His study detailed the workings of several popular lantern illusions from the Victorian stage.

[468] See Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

[469] Ibid. Devotional authors have largely dismissed Fr. Lennon's phosphorus theory, see Rynne, *Knock*. 65.

[470] See Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

[471] T O'Connor also dismisses the use of lantern projection due to the "conditions necessary to produce (such) images" being "absent". See O'C [onnor], T. 1880. "The Apparition." *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*.

[472] See Walsh, *The Apparition*, 66; also Rynne, *Knock*, 70–71. Bridget Trench claimed in her official witness testament to haveing touched the tableau when she attempted to "kiss . . . the feet of the Blessed Virgin". See McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 74.

[473] Mary Beirne's first mention of lantern experiments at Knock is noted in Coyne, Liam. 1935. *Knock Shrine*. Galway: O'Gorman Printinghouse. 55. These tests, which have been credited to Fr. Lennon, have been selectively referred to by both devotional writers and sceptics.

[474] The documents of the commission, along with the entire archive of Archbishop John MacHale, are reputed to have been either lost or destroyed. Some authors claim that it was MacHale who had instigated the commission. For a summary of what is believed to have happened to MacHale's vast archive, see Bane, Liam. 1993. *The Bishop in Politics: The Life and Career of John Mac Evilly*. Westport: Westport Historical Society.

Beirne, dated 8 October 1879.[475] It has long been believed that this date was the one and only occasion the commission sat. However, given the arbitrary nature of the investigation, exemplified, as Hynes has noted, by procedural inconsistencies in two of these statements, it can also be safely inferred that the business of the commission, along with the taking of testimonies, was conducted over a longer period.[476] This extended timeframe is suggested by the devotional writer Sr. Mary Francis Clare, "The Nun of Kenmare", when she notes in her memoir of Knock that the officiating priests of the commission met with Fr. Cavanagh on 8 November 1879.[477] What the November meeting was about, like so many other details concerning the operation of the commission, remains unknown. More importantly, as the original witness statements concur, thereabouts, with the authoritative version of the apparition, they indicate that the Knock event came to be imagined in the weeks that followed the vision of 21 August 1879 and not the months leading up to their publication in February 1880.

Memory of the lantern

Championed by sceptics, both secular and clerical, memory of the lantern has re-emerged throughout the Knock Shrine's turbulent history. The theory's survival is attested by its inscription in socio/cultural forms of memory such as literature. One of the most resonant examples is found in Joyce's *Dubliners,* when the character Mr. Kernan declares regarding the upcoming renewal of his baptismal vows, "I bar the magic-lantern business".[478] For Kernan, a reluctant convert to Catholicism on marriage, the lantern represented everything he found objectionable in his adopted religion. Lacking the reason of his Protestant tradition, in Kernan's mind the lantern stood for an incorrigible set of beliefs that advocated the simultaneous recognition of "the banshee and the Holy Ghost".[479]

[475] An account of these statements can be found in a series of exchanges between Eugene Hynes and John White. See White, John. 1996. "The Cusack Papers: New Evidence on the Knock Apparition." *History Ireland* 4 (4): 39–44. See also Hynes, Eugene. 1997. "A Chalice in a Bog, or Fool's Gold?" *History Ireland* 5 (1): 11, and White's reply to this article in the same issue.

[476] Though all signed a close inspection of the statements reveals that the signatures of Judith Campbell (signed Judy) and Dominick Beirne, Snr., are written in the same hand as the scribe. Eugene Hynes discusses this anomaly as part of a filtering process, where, directed by the suggestion of priests, the witness testimonies developed to fit "the conclusions they [clergy] had reached." See Hynes, *Knock*, 185. I wish to thank the forensic experts who generously gave me their professional opinion on these signatures when I independently sighted these similarities in May 2007.

[477] Clare, Mary Francis. 1882. *Three Visits to Knock*. New York: P. J. Kennedy. 68. Sr. Mary Francis Clare was known in secular life as Margaret Anna Cusack. After leaving the Church, she reverted to her former name. Authors regularly use both names when discussing her involvement with Knock.

[478] Joyce, James. 1967. *Dubliners*. St Albans, England: Triad/Panther Books Ltd. 157.

[479] Ibid. Mr Kernan's reference to "the banshee and the Holy Ghost" was directed at his wife's beliefs.

Comparably, Michael McCarthy, the controversialist author and contemporary of Joyce, also drew upon this memory of the lantern in his polemic *Priests and People in Ireland.* After examining the witness Patrick Hill's statement, McCarthy claimed that the young boy's reference to a "dark mearing" separating St. Joseph from the Blessed Virgin indicated that what he had seen was a composite image disseminated by lantern projection.[480] In order to conceal this device from the locals, whom McCarthy described to have been "as ignorant as the natives of mid-Africa",[481] the lantern, he claimed, was housed in the sacristy with its light projected onto the gable wall by way of "an over-hanging mirror arrangement" mounted outside the church.[482] By shielding the space below where the apparition was alleged to have appeared, this "mirror arrangement", McCarthy suggested, offered an explanation for the witnesses' claim that despite it raining that night the ground beneath the tableau remained "quite dry".[483]

Coincidently, this "arrangement" McCarthy discusses, which corresponds with that used in the famous Victorian illusionist trick *Dr. Pepper's Ghost*, where, with the aid of "smoke and mirrors", the lantern conjured-up the spectres of the phantasmagoria, provides additional validation for his claim. But in my mind, the evidence that supports the involvement of a lantern most comes from a story noted in *The Irishman* on 21 February 1880. Here a correspondent wrote that a young witness, whose description resembles that of Patrick Beirne (another member of the extended Beirne family at Knock), was alleged to have touched the Virgin's eyes with "his fingers".[484] To his surprise, the witness observed that after removing his hand "two dark spots remained for a brief space and then resumed their former appearance".[485] This apparent optical illusion, one familiar to patrons of that present-day phantasmagoria, the nightclub, bolsters claims regarding the presence of a lantern at Knock. When a viewer observes the passage of a body through the light pulsating miasma of the dance floor, they will perceive a fleeting shadow. Not unlike the retinal sensation you experience when closing your eyes to the sun, *The Irishman* account strongly

[480] McCarthy, *Priests*, 239.

[481] Ibid., 234.

[482] Ibid., 244.

[483] Ibid. McCarthy refers to Judith Campbell's description of the space beneath the apparition as being "quite dry".

[484] See "The Apparitions at Knock." 1880. *The Irishman*, February 21, 534.

[485] Ibid.

suggests that what this witness observed on him touching the Virgin's eyes was an afterimage produced by a projected light source.[486]

In 1979, coinciding with John Paul II's pastoral visit to Ireland, the memory of the lantern was resurrected by the Trinity College psychologist David Berman.[487] Having been alerted to the existence of an "intelligence report" on Knock archived at Dublin Castle, Berman alleged that the apparition was "engineered" by Fr. Cavanagh in order to resolve a crisis of clerical authority stemming from his support of property interests during the Land War.[488] Subscribing to a method of indirect projection, Berman claimed that in order to conceal the lantern the device was "mounted from the nearby schoolhouse", whereupon on the night of the apparition an operator used it to cast slides featuring images of "statuary" onto the church's gable wall.[489] These projections, he claimed, accounted for both the "statue-like" descriptions given by the witnesses and the tableau's unorthodox mix of religious elements.[490] In time, Berman concluded, these details will expose the apparition as a hoax when a researcher observant to the Knock story locates a lantern slide approximating the descriptions given by the witnesses in their statements.[491]

Though Berman's interpretation of the Lantern Hypothesis may be plausible, by underestimating the mechanical complexity of such an undertaking he does highlight an implied assumption within the theory: that due to the witnesses' lack of understanding of the sensory mediated technologies of modernity, they would not have recognised the lantern's projection as a copy. Analogous to pre-industrial people's first contact with the lantern in other parts of the colonial world, the villagers would presumably have interpreted its strange luminosity as miraculous.[492] This premise is supported by a story collected at Knock during the mid-1930s. After inquiring into Mary Beirne's memory of the

[486] Though the analogy I present here refers to contemporary strobe lighting, which is quite different from the projection sources available at the time of the apparition, the "flickering" of the lantern would have produced a similar illusionary "afterimage". I thank Mr. Glen Lawson from the Department of Physics at Curtin University for his insights into the optical distortions produced by projected light sources.

[487] Berman, David. 1979. "Papal Visit Resurrects Ireland's Knock Legend." *The Freethinker* 99: 147.

[488] Berman, David. 1987. "Knock: Some New Evidence." *British and Irish Skeptic* 1 (1): 9.

[489] Berman, "Papal Visit," 147 - 148.

[490] Ibid., 147.

[491] Ibid. Berman claimed that such an image might be found in either an archive or old trade catalogue featuring "slides of statuary and religious subjects".

[492] See Landau, Paul. 1994. "The Illumination of Christ in the Kalahari." *Representations* 45: 26–40. In this intriguing paper, Landau examines the Rev. Ernest Dugmore's use of the magic lantern as a proselytising tool in the Kalahari Desert during the 1920s.

apparition, the Notre Dame priest and author Fr. Leo Ward was told of an incident that occurred in the village involving another sensory mediated technology: the gramophone. At the turn of the century, so the story goes, an American tourist came to Knock and played one from his sidecar after Mass. Staggering in a malaise induced by their pre-industrial technical literacy, Ward reports that "for two or three hours" the villagers "couldn't figure where the voices were coming from".[493] Such was the impact of this experience on the villager's sensory awareness that when the tourist returned to repeat this prank they reacted, Ward noted, in an identical manner.[494]

Notwithstanding the credible impact of the witnesses' cognitive recognition of new media and the evidence regarding the conflict between Fr. Cavanagh and the Land League (which has been well documented), Berman's theory suffers from one fundamental flaw. But the flaw does not lie in his account of the mechanical execution of a hoax.[495] Until proved otherwise, this always remains a possibility. Rather, the problem with Berman's theory is his lack of acknowledgement of the circumstances by which the plot orchestrated to mask this alleged deception was to have occurred. In a society embroiled in abject conflict, where the relationship between the farming classes, priests, and landlords entered a uncharted realm of uncertainty with the Land War, the speculation that the lantern's presence at Knock was part of an elaborate deception – one conspicuously absent from local memory – is implausible.

Indeed, if Fr. Cavanagh had instigated the apparition, as Berman maintains, why was it not staged at the nearby church at Aghamore? Aghamore was, after all, part of Knock parish at the time. Besides, Aghamore possessed a feature that made it eminently more suitable for staging such a ruse. Unlike the rising terrain at Knock, the chapel at Aghamore is built on level ground with its south gable wall, mirroring the interior of a cinema, fronting a steeply banked, natural amphitheatre (Fig. 67).[496] By providing a site where a single operator could

[493] See Ward, Leo Richard. 1939. *God in an Irish Kitchen*. London: Sheed and Ward. 270. Fr Leo Ward was an Irish-American priest who travelled to Knock during the mid-1930s. He interviewed people there. The date of his visit is not mentioned, but details in his account suggest that the year was 1936. The story of the gramophone was given to him by Mr O'Connell, who was a son of the witness Mary O'Connell (nee Beirne).

[494] Ibid.

[495] My own experiments with both direct and indirect projection, and knowledge of optics from twenty years' experience as a professional photographer, have led me to conclude that while this technique would have been possible it is, however, highly unlikely. Outside a stage managed setting, the difficulties encountered in casting an image by these means are so numerous that a regime of site-specific testing would have been required to have concealed a lantern.

[496] A high stone wall (which appears on the Ordnance Survey Map) separating the grounds of Aghamore church from surrounding fields would have afforded additional concealment for a lantern and its operator.

cast a projection without a sophisticated technical infrastructure in hand, this natural attribute would have circumvented the intricate social complicity that Berman and other proponents of the Lantern Hypothesis have long alluded to, but consistently failed to explain.

Figure 67. ***The south gable wall of St. Joseph's Chapel, Aghamore, County Mayo, 2010*** (Author)[497]

"Other 'Apparitions'"

Though the Lantern Theory has created more layers of complexity than it presumes to resolve, its endurance over time is more attributable to what have been described as "Other 'Apparitions'" different from the August 1879 event.[498] In the days prior to news of Knock breaking in early January 1880 and the hysteria-filled months that followed, pulsating lights – sometimes accompanied by images of the Blessed Virgin – were alleged to have been seen both inside and outside the chapel. In scenes described by a visiting journalist as the "highest pitch of religious excitement", the mere suggestion that these lights were present prompted, according to the reporter, spontaneous visions and outbursts of devotional zealotry.[499] Regrettably for the shrine, by being published alongside

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[497] Constructed in the cruciform design that characterised many small rural churches built in Ireland post the 1829 Act of Catholic Emancipation, apart from some internal cosmetic features and the later addition of a Sacristy on the south gable wall, St. Joseph's, Aghamore resembles how the church at Knock would have looked like at the time of the apparition, or as the devotional writer Catherine Rynne suggests "[what] Knock would still be today had nothing happened on 21 August 1879," see Rynne, *Knock*, 9.

[498] See Walsh, *The Apparition at Knock,* 99.

[499] See the article "Lady Day at Knock." 1880. *Irish Times*, March 26. 5.

descriptions of the August vision, these "Other 'Apparitions'" led to Knock being perceived as a place of multiple sensory phenomena, an association that later would seriously discredit the fledgling devotion.[500]

The proximity of these "Other 'Apparitions'" to the August 1879 event led the devotional writer Fr. Michael Walsh to ascribe them as a form of "spiritual mimicry". Mimicking the devil's ability to take on the appearance of the Divine, to become "the ape of God", the visions of 1880 were an attempt, Walsh claimed, to assume the representational prowess of the August 1879 apparition.[501] Though Walsh does not pursue his reference to "spiritual mimicry" in great depth, he has nonetheless, inadvertently provided us with a means of comprehending the circumstances by which the Knock event came to be imagined. Further, when examined utilising the theoretical framework offered by mimesis, Walsh's claim that the "Other 'Apparitions'" were copies of a defining origin event reveals, I suggest, a new interpretative possibility for perceiving the presence of the lantern at Knock and the vision's silences.

Mimesis

By using the term "mimesis" to evaluate the Knock apparition event, a term which can embody a broad range of theoretical concepts and ideas, I will draw upon Michael Taussig's exploration of the mimetic faculty based on his ethnography of the Cuna people of the Panamanian and Colombian jungles. In his publication *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*, Taussig presents Cuna culture as an assemblage of Animist, traditional and Christian belief systems. Living out the torrid existence that is the dual legacy of colonialism and modernity, theirs is a life of constant flux, merger and change**.** Much like the "History of the Senses", both the title and thesis underlying Taussig's work, the Cuna's history is one that offers no continuity. And whilst the spirit forces that brought the Cuna's belief systems to life were a world away from the historical confrontations faced by the villagers at Knock, the transitory social landscape Taussig explores would have been a place not that unfamiliar with them.

[500] A rumour persists in Castlebar Town today that these "Other 'Apparitions'" were staged by the town's eminent photographer, and commercial advocate for Knock, Thomas Wynne. The story suggests that Wynne had orchestrated a series of clandestine light shows so he might exploit the growing devotion.

[501] See Walsh, *The Apparition at Knock,* 99.

Taussig, taking his inspiration from Walter Benjamin's seminal 1933 paper "On the Mimetic Faculty," argues that mimesis – that is, the desire to mimic, to merge, and to imitate – is one of the most elemental aspects of modern human existence we have inherited from our ancestors' yearning to master Nature by "controlling its copy". [502] A faculty most acute in times of danger, this want of our ancestors to harness Nature's benevolence while limiting its destructive potential led them to mimic the world and everything they found in it with their full and uninhibited senses. Through the enactment of dance, performance and other ritualistic acts, mimesis had the effect of drawing the body and the mind together.

Traces of this longing to impersonate the forces that shaped the earth and the creatures that inhabited its landscapes, oceans, and firmament can be found in the origins of speech, language and art (to name a few), and in our ability to generate meaning by interpreting our observations, thoughts and ideas. Imitating our ancestors' once prodigious capability for perceiving similarities, what Taussig describes as **"**sympathetic magic", this yearning endures in our modern compulsion to look for order in chaos. Similarly, the residues of mimesis can also be found in certain cult practices, where through "contact" with an eminent relic or place, objects – including photographs – are mimetically transformed.[503]

But just as the transformative forces unleashed by modernity have altered every aspect of our existence, so too have these influences impacted our capacity to act in a mimetic fashion. Following Enlightenment science's ability, as the poet John Keats lamented, to "[u]nweave a rainbow", our mimetic faculty has dulled.[504] Hastening this decline, Taussig argues, has been the ability of the civilising processes to repress the imaginative free play typical of mimesis by subjecting it to what Adorno and Horkheimer describe as "organized

[502] Taussig, Michael. 1993. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge. 47. The paper "On the Mimetic Faculty" appears in Benjamin, Walter. 1996. *Selected Writings: Walter Benjamin, Volume 2 1927–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, translated by Rodney Livingstone and others. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

[503] For an account of the transformation of photographs in religious cult practices, referred to in anthropological circles as "miraculous photography", see Wojcik, Daniel. 1996. "Polaroids from Heaven": Photography, Folk Religion, and the Miraculous Image Tradition at a Marian Apparition Site.'' *The Journal of American Folklore* 109: 129-148. The miraculous photography phenomenon is an interpretative disposition where people translate the exposure and light ambiguities in photographs they have taken at religious sites to be the actions of Devine personages. This practice is a fringe activity associated, in the main, with non-sanctioned visionary sites in North America. However, I believe that this belief might have a wider cultural acceptance. Indeed, some pilgrim photographers I had spoken to at Knock jokingly referred to this practice when discussing their images. But the observation that has most intrigued me about this phenomenon occurred at the concluding rites of the 2006 Knock National Novena. The concluding rites mark a point where following the processional parade pilgrims hold up devotional objects to be blessed by an officiating Bishop. Apart from the usual trinkets pilgrims had with them that day, I also noticed people holding up their cameras.

[504] This reference is from Keats 1820 poem Lamia. See Keats, John. 1990. *John Keats: Poetry Manuscripts at Harvard: A Facsimile Edition*, edited by Jack Stillinger. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

control". [505] Writing from the shadows cast by Nazi tyranny, Adorno and Horkheimer suggested that by indulging in acts of ritualised violence, institutional society has incorporated mimesis into its systems of control. Through acts of mimetic fetishism, as seen in the pageantry of the state, the creative power of mimesis remains in us only as a distant memory.

Although the rise of the State and the institutions that disseminate its coercive function have arrested our mimetic faculty, mimesis is not dead. For anyone who has felt compelled to play air-guitar just as Jimmy Page hits his famous crescendo in *Stairway to Heaven* will know – the desire to mimic is infectious. With the arrival of what Taussig describes as "mimetically capacious machines" such as the camera, modernity's ability to juxtapose "the very old with the very new" instigated a transformation in our sensory awareness.[506] Mirroring the ascent of the visual technologies post the Enlightenment, these powerful ophthalmic mediums had the contrary effect of dampening our audio and tactile sensitivity whilst promoting the emergence of what Benjamin defined as the "optical unconscious".[507] In much the same manner as psychoanalysis exposed the inner workings of the mind, the camera's ability to freeze time and to bring the unforeseen into view revealed for us the existence of a reality beyond vision.

Accentuating the shift in our sensory perception from the sensual of the ancestral past to the dominance of the visual today, the advent of the optical unconscious embodied all the bizarre contradictions that Benjamin saw at the heart of the modern life experience. Indebted to progressive technology for its inception, this real yet imaginary optical sense was uninhibited by rationalist assessments on vision. Such was its detachment from post-Enlightenment thought that the ascent of the optical unconscious, Benjamin contended, beckoned for a resurgence of the mimetic faculty. It is this restorative but metamorphosed sensory awareness that underpins the ability, at least for some, to see the face of the Blessed Virgin on a piece of burnt toast auctioned on the internet or in the sky above Knock today.[508]

[505] See Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic,* 180.

[506] Taussig, *Mimesis,* 20.

[507] See Benjamin, "A Small History".

[508] In late 2009, Joe Coleman, a Dublin faith healer, claimed that the Blessed Virgin would appear in the sky above Knock. Following this announcement several thousand people arrived at the shrine hoping to see visions similar to those alleged to have appeared at Fatima in 1917. In scenes reminiscent of the "Other 'Apparitions'" of nearly 130 years before, many who

Mimesis at Knock

Albeit the alleged vision/s at Knock concur with Benjamin's speculations on the connection between mimesis and the optical sensory media of modernity, the desire to act out at the village stretches back well before the apparition of 21 August 1879. We gain insight into the mimetic life of pre-apparition Knock from the diary of a local named Daniel Campbell.[509] An immigrant to England during the Famine, Campbell was inspired to write on the identities and events of his youth after reading about the apparition in the British press. His descriptions of people such as the "fairy woman", Mary Meegh, who for a small fee and enough whiskey to induce a trance like state would tell fortunes, add to our understanding of life in pre-Famine Ireland.[510]

Figure 68. ***The fort at Meeltran on the N17, Knock, County Mayo, 2010*** (Author)

But where Campbell's diary glistens from the past is in that essence Taussig contends to be at the heart of mimesis, where through "Alterity" the "far away… (is) brought to the here-

claimed to have seen such visions were overtaken by hysteria. See Boland, Rosita. 2009. "'The Virgin Mary Is Very Angry . . . '." *Irish Times*, 28 October. 15.

[509] Campbell, Daniel. 1880. The Diary of Daniel Campbell. Knock Shrine Archive. Daniel Campbell was born in Knock in 1825. He was a relation to the witness Judith Campbell. He left Ireland during the Famine for England and never returned. His diary passed to his grandson, the Rev. Brother Philip Brennan. It was lent to Fr. John Baptist Byrne, who produced a typed version of the document for posterity, copies of which are archived at the Knock Museum and the National Library of Ireland, Dublin. Unfortunately the diary itself has vanished. There is some speculation as to where it is now. Money appears to have been a motive for its disappearance. My references to Campbell's diary are from the typed manuscript held in the Knock Museum.

[510] Ibid., 10. Surprisingly, apart from Eugene Hynes comprehensive analysis of Campbell's diary, this document remains largely unexamined.

and-now".[511] Campbell's account of the "pass" which permitted students to leave the village school exemplifies this relationship and also the contact dimension within the mimetic exchange. Under the tutelage of Master Waldron, a bedevilled teacher whose lack of fortitude allowed "Protestant Tracts" to infiltrate the school, the pass became symbolically loaded.[512] By its connection with Waldron and the congregational antagonism that colours much of Campbell's memory, the pass was mimetically transformed from a mundane object into a "human bone taken from the churchyard".[513]

Figure 69. ***Looking southwest from the fort at Shanvaghera to the Knock Shrine, Knock, County Mayo, 2010*** (Author)

In his diary, Campbell also notes how places, too, through contact with transcendental forces become sites of great mimetic potential. His reminiscence of the story of a "holy pilgrim" who in gratitude for the generosity of a local promised that "no plague or cholera should ever rage on Knock", sees the landscape reverberate with emblematic meaning.[514] This theme continues in Campbell's description of the numerous "Fairy Forts" and their

[511] Taussig, *Mimesis,* 40.

[512] Campbell, The Diary, 6.

[513] Ibid., 6.

[514] Ibid., 9.

associated *cillin* that dot the townlands in and around Knock.[515] Forts such as that located in the townland of Meeltran (Fig. 68), now obliterated by the N17, and at nearby Shanvaghera (Fig. 69), where beneath which lay a mysterious "cave", were believed by their association with magical practices to be points of contact with the spiritual world.[516] And while these sites attracted activities seemingly at odds with their reputation, Campbell describes how by being "tilled regularly" the fort at Shanvaghera took on an agricultural function: "[all] took good care to be off the ground before it grew dark".[517] Ironically, though the residents living near these sites today have no knowledge of Daniel Campbell, the memory of these places lingers; in particular how the fort at Shanvaghera was once tilled to grow potatoes, and was linked by a cave to a local promontory.[518] These recollections are a testament to the inalienable connection between mimesis and memory, a connection, I believe, is embedded in the Knock apparition accounts and the interpretative disposition of the witnesses.

Transforming mimesis

Though Daniel Campbell's Knock was an isolated place, it is wrong to believe the claims made by some sceptics that the village at the time of the apparition was an enclave resilient to change.[519] In many ways Campbell's account parallels the critical insights on mimesis given by Adorno and Horkheimer, where the authors argue that the faculty has not been eradicated from the historical landscape but distorted in such a way that it now serves a repressive function.[520] Still today we see this transformation in and around Knock with newly arrived spiritual practices that challenge the forms of witnessing espoused by the apparition narrative (Fig. 70).

Campbell's recollection of a scandal that occurred at Knock over the living arrangements between a widower and his female servant illustrates how State-like institutions, such as the church, bolster their hegemony by redirecting mimetic power through imitation.

[515] Ibid., 15

[516] Ibid. Several of the place names Campbell refers to in his diary do not correspond with those mentioned on the Ordinance Survey Map. For instance, when he discusses the fort in the townland of Meeltran (Fig. 68) he describes the location as Heemeel. When I asked locals about this place, they recognised the site, but not the townland name used by Campbell.

[517] Ibid.

[518] I am indebted to the locals who live in and around the townlands of Shanvaghera and Meeltran for their hospitality and insights.

[519] Over the years sceptics, notably Michael McCarthy, have made this claim.

[520] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic.*

Campbell writes that despite the widower being ordered by the parish priest, Fr. O'Grady, to end the relationship, he refused to send the woman away. Even the most virulent censure of this man by the famous Galway Archbishop Thomas McHale, who "cursed the ground on which he trod", failed to persuade him from his actions.[521] However, in time, Campbell wrote, the relationship did conclude when the woman eventually up and left her employer.

Figure 70. ***New forms of witnessing, Rathnaconeen, County Mayo, 2006*** (Author) [522]

However, this separation, or so the villagers thought, was not due to O'Grady and McHale summoning up the past, but by a curate, Fr. Grogan, who unassumingly asked the congregation at Sunday Mass "to join him in saying a few Hail Marys for the intention of separating these parties".[523] This beatitudinal inversion, where the prayers of a simple curate had more efficacy than the incantations of an archbishop, reveals how Church doctrines were transforming the mimetic faculty in pre-Famine Knock. Moreover, by taking place at Sunday Mass, the site that would become the principal location for the articulation of post-Famine Irish Catholic identity, Fr. Grogan's act demonstrated how mimesis was

[521] Campbell, The Diary, 13.

[522] Along with the controversial visionary Christina Gallagher's House of Prayer, other religious groups have come to the towns in and around Knock to pronounce new forms of mimetic interpretation and witnessing.

[523] Campbell, The Diary, 13.

being reshaped by ecclesiastically sanctioned notions of time, space and devotional practice. Coinciding with Daniel Campbell reading about the apparition in the British press, mimesis at Knock was undergoing yet another transformation. In the hands of a conservative church, the faculty's latent capacity for drawing the body and the mind together was channelled to advance its increasingly orthodox worldview. Even the appearance of the witnesses was subject to this restraint by imitation. Through the pages of the *Weekly News,* Mary Beirne (Fig. 71) and her cousin Dominick Beirne Snr (Fig. 72), who worked as "a cattle jobber", were seen to disregard their regional attire to emulate the appearance of middle class Catholics in Ireland's cities and large market towns.[524]

Fig. 71. ***Mary Beirne***

Fig. 72. ***Dominick Beirne Snr.*** [525]

Similarly, the representation of the apparition has also become a site of contested mimetic exchange. So as to solicit unequivocal meaning from the vision, shrine officials have endeavoured to establish a lineage between the personages alleged to have appeared at Knock and their ecclesiastically recognised aesthetic identity. An example of the representational tension surrounding the vision can be found in the commissioning of statuary for the Church of the Apparition. In 1960, after winning an international design competition, the renowned Cork sculptor Domhnall O'Murchadha set about producing statues for the shrine oratory (now the Church of the Apparition). However, just as he was finalising his plans, O'Murchadha was overlooked for this assignment in favour of the Italian

[524] The reference to a "cattle jobber", who is a buyer and seller of cattle, is from T. O'Connor, see O'C [onnor], T. 1880. *Weekly News.* February 13. 3.

[525] These illustrations, from the *Weekly News*, were more than likely detailed from photographs taken by the Limerick journalist and Knock advocate, T. O'Connor.

artisan Lorenzo Ferri.[526] As such, it is now Ferri's neo-classical marble reliefs that inspires the imagination of the "one and a half million" pilgrims who journey to Knock each year.[527]

Figure 73. ***Domhnall O'Murchadha, Our Lady of Ballyfermot (The Assumption), Ballyfermot, Dublin, 2010*** (Author)[528]

The reasons why O'Murchadha's concepts for Knock were rejected remain unclear. No record of his proposal or correspondence appears to have survived,[529] but his other creative productions provide a clue. A minimalist who worked predominately in granite and wood, during the 1960s O'Murchadha's designs attracted controversy (Fig. 73).[530] Mirroring reactions to the sweeping changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, many Irish Catholics found their divergence from the Baroque realism of conventional religious representations difficult to accept.[531] Such was the case when, in 1964, O'Murchadha took up a Lourdes commission at An Rinn in the Waterford Gaeltacht (Fig. 74).[532] After

[526] See Turpin, John. 2003. "Domhnall O'Murchadha: Sculptor with a Gaelic Vision." *New Hibernia Review* 7 (3). I am indebted to Professor John Turpin for his correspondence on Domhnall O'Murchadha's connection with Knock.

[527] While there can be no doubting that a great many people travel to Knock each year, supporters tend to exaggerate the shrine's popularity. The figure of "one and a half million" is reiterated in the devotional material. I was told by a very reliable informant that this number is based on the number of hosts, the Blessed Sacrament, consumed over a year plus and an estimate as to those who do not take the sacrament (pre-communion children, non-believers, visitors etc.). But given that pilgrims can receive communion several times on a single day, this rationale would tend to overestimate the figures.

[528] The statue Our Lady of Ballyfermot is one of many post-Vatican Two church commissions awarded to Domhnall O'Murchadha.

[529] See Turpin, "Domhnall O'Murchadha".

[530] Ibid.

[531] Ibid.

[532] Gaeltacht is the name given to State subsidised Irish-speaking areas in the Republic of Ireland.

researching the alleged visions at the Grotto of Massabielle, O'Murchadha depicted the Lourdes scene, not with Bernadette kneeling in a grotto, as she is commonly portrayed, but standing with the Virgin in a dialogue. This depiction, according to him, was more in keeping with the seer's original testaments.[533]

Figure 74. ***Domhnall O'Murchadha's, Our Lady and St. Bernadette (in background), An Rinn, County Waterford, 2012*** (Author)

Not surprisingly, after taking such a radical departure from convention, O'Murchadha's design generated fierce local opposition.[534] The scene was in stark contrast to the near-universal acceptance of shrines dedicated to Mary during the Marian year of 1954 (Fig. 75). By failing to engender the "sympathetic magic" that comes from recognising the similarity between a copy and its original, O'Murchadha's depiction of Lourdes (an event closely

[533] I am thankful to an anonymous correspondent for their fascinating insights into O'Murchadha's practice as a sculptor and the controversy surrounding his An Rinn commission.

[534] Ibid.

mimicked in Knock's foundation narrative) presented a symbolic form that, being located outside church sanctioned belief systems, had unbridled mimetic potential.[535]

Figure 75. ***Marian Year Shrine (1954), Murrisk, County Mayo, 2006,*** (Author)[536]

The Apparition as a copy

As the events at Knock transpired at a time when the sensory mediated technologies of modernity were still in their developmental stages, the re-awakening of the mimetic faculty has some critical relevance when appraising the apparition event and its silences. Similarly, if we concede that events of 1879 coincided with the dawning of a new mimetically inspired realm of understanding the visual, then we may concur with the speculative intent of the Lantern Theory: that the witnesses had seen an optical reproduction induced by a projection device. However, though mimesis may provide a sensory oriented approach to comprehending what the Knock witnesses had seen, it still does not explain the circumstances by which the lantern came to be at the village and to thread its way through the apparition narrative.

Notwithstanding this limitation, Taussig's reading of mimesis allows us to contemplate the presence of the lantern at Knock by suggesting an alternative chronology of events. Akin to

[535] Strangely, some of the representational ambivalences surrounding O'Murchadha's *commission must have rubbed off on* Ferri's designs too. After great expense, when the statues arrived at Knock they were promptly ushered into a barn. There they remained in their packing crates, unopened, for 17 years. For an account of the statues, see Coyne, *Providence.*

[536] During the Marian year 1954 (which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Catholic Church's declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception) statues of Our Lady were in such high demand in Ireland that Maurice O'Donnell, a proprietor of Dublin monumental works, is quoted to have said "I was making so many at that time, there was no time to dry them out before painting, so lots of the statues in the shrines around the country are still unpainted." This account was sourced from Colm Toibin's research into the moving statue phenomenon in Ireland during the 1980s. See Toibin, Colm. 1985. *Seeing is Believing: Moving Statues in Ireland.* Mountrath, Co Laois: Pilgrim Press. 23.

Benjamin's oft-cited analogy between history and photography, where the past "flashes up at a moment of danger", a mimetically inspired evaluation of the apparition account indicates that the lantern was a copy.[537] As with the incidents of "spiritual mimicry" described by Fr. Walsh, I argue that the strange features cited by the witnesses in their statements attest to them seeing an optical facsimile of some previous event. Comparable with their statements in other sources, the witnesses' insistence that they had seen appearances, likenesses and, in particular, statues – a claim Mary Beirne continued to espouse nearly sixty years after the event – suggests that they had seen copies of the Divine and not the exalted personages themselves.[538] Moreover, when seen in this light, where imitations assume the "character" and the "power" of the original, what Taussig describes as the "wonder of mimesis", we are permitted a tantalising glimpse at the singularity that was the apparition of 21 August 1879.[539]

Figure 76. ***Apparition scene from the devotional hymn sheet "Hymn to Our Lady of Knock" (n.d.)*** [540]

Courtesy of the Sisters of Mercy Provincial Archive, Galway City

[537] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy".

[538] During her interview with Fr. Leo Ward, Mary Beirne consistently referred to what she had seen as "statues". See Ward, *God in an Irish Kitchen*, 268–269. This description contrasts with Beirne's statement to the Second Commission of Enquiry, where she exclusively mentioned "figures." See Mary Beirne's statement dated 27 January 1936, Tuam Archdiocesan Archives Box 108, Archbishop Gilmartin B4/9–i/4, Second Commission of Enquiry into the Knock Apparition.

[539] Taussig, *Mimesis*, xiii.

[540] The hymn to Our Lady of Knock was dedicated to Lady Georgiana Fullerton. One of a number influential 19th century English Anglicans who converted to Catholicism, this dedication echoed attempts by early supporters of Knock to promote the shrine as a site of spiritual conversion. It was believed that by contact with the shrine Christians from other confessional belief systems would be mimetically transformed.

A remnant of this happening, which James Donnelly suggests was some form of "atmospheric phenomenon", remains etched in Patrick Walsh's statement that he saw "a large globe of golden light".[541] Such was the luminance of this mystifying body that Walsh "thought" he had never seen "so brilliant a light before". Perhaps it was this memory and not that which has become fixed in orthodox representations of the apparition that inspired a far lesser known depiction of the Knock event. In an illustration accompanying a long forgotten piece of devotional music composed by the Claremorris nun Sr. Bodkin, a dazzling sphere of light is seen to hover in front of the village church's south gable wall (Fig. 76). Lacking either figurative or ecclesiastical references, so illuminant was this light form imagined to be that it was depicted as outshining the radiance of the moon.[542]

Radiant and floating in space, the image from the devotional music sheet credited to Sr. Bodkin is uncannily evocative of the mysterious light source known in Irish tradition as a "will-o'-the-wisp". Outside of its folkloric references, the phenomenon is mentioned in Irish literary sources, notably in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.[543] Also known as "bog lights" on account of their appearance in marshy places at night, in a time when people traversed the landscape on foot these illuminations were not an uncommon site. Moreover, concerning Knock, this phenomenon was discussed as a possible cause for the vision by a journalist from *The Scotsman,* Joseph Watson, after he visited the shrine in mid-1880.[544] Watson notes that apart from this light source being dazzlingly bright, it also appeared to move when approached. Funnily enough, Watson's description corresponds with the witness Patrick Hill's statement to the Commission of Enquiry. Hill mentioned that when he "approached" the "figures" on the night of the apparition, they "seemed to go back a little

[541] See Donnelly "The Marian Shrine" 58. Strangely, no reports of an "atmospheric phenomenon" appear in either celestial or meteorological observations on this night. Walsh's statement is sourced from McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 38.

[542] I thank staff from the Sisters of Mercy Archive in Dublin for alerting me to this image, and also to the sisters at the Mercy Provincial Archive in Galway for permission to reproduce it here. The image appears in the devotional hymn sheet *Hymn to Our Lady of Knock.* See Sisters of Mercy. n.d. *Hymn to Our Lady of Knock.* Dublin: Pigott and Co. I also thank Sr. Teresa Delaney for her fascinating insights into the life of Sr. Bodkin. Although this image can be credited to Sr. Bodkin, her role in its creation may have been in art direction alone, as there was another nun at the Sisters of Mercy Convent in Claremorris, Sr. Mary O'Loughlin, who was a very gifted artist and charged with the task of illustrating the Convent's Diary of Sisters.

[543] Stoker, Bram. 2006. *Dracula – Literary Touchstone Edition.* Clayton Delaware: Prestwick House Inc. 302.

[544] I have found no reference to Watson's work in any literature on Knock. It is a third-person narrative about a young Scotsman named Alick, a Protestant crippled from birth, who travels to Knock after reading about the apparition in the British press. I first stumbled across this work when conducting archival searches on English and Scottish newspaper websites. Recently, Watson's account has been published by BiblioLife in Charleston, South Carolina. BiblioLife is a historic print document publisher. They claim to have scanned several hundred thousand texts. The title page of the copy I purchased reads: Joseph Watson, *The Shrine of Knock: A Story of the Irish Miracles of 1880*. London: W. Stewart & Co. The "will-o'-the-wisp" account is on page 36. Although Watson is observant of Knock and the events that occurred there, several glaring inaccuracies about the village indicate, I suggest, that he had written his account without visiting the village.

towards the gable".[545] Regardless of whatever the light source the Knock witnesses might have seen, it is a peculiar coincidence that it should have appeared outside a church.

Poised at what Benjamin described as one of the "turning points of history", where the optical unconscious awakened old ways of looking for similarities through the new sensory mediated technologies of modernity, how the witnesses conceptualised these two profound ocular experiences was, I argue, through a process of mimetic memory formation.[546] True to the nature of mimesis, in their minds these two events – the singularity and its mysterious copy – conflated and became one. It was by these means, I suggest, and not the projection of arbitrary devotional images, as David Berman has argued, whereby the apparition attained its contradictory ecclesiastical elements.[547]

Coincidently, just such a conflation of memory, as described above, can be found in Sr. Mary Francis Clare's description of an event that occurred at Knock on 8 November 1879. This was the night priests from the Commission of Enquiry gathered to convene with Fr. Cavanagh. Sr. Clare noted that as this meeting was taking place, a Mrs Kelly claimed to have seen a mysterious light "over the roof of the church". [548] The next day Fr. Cavanagh informed her that this light had also been seen by "a respectable man, named Walsh, who lives a little distance from the church".[549] In the rush to the conclusion that characterised much of Sr. Clare's authorly endeavours, she announced that this corroborating account provided "unimpeachable testimony" of the authenticity of Mrs. Kelly's vision.[550] Yet, this account – which, as we recall, was that of Patrick Walsh who, on 21 August 1879, saw "a very bright light … above and around the chapel gable"[551] – reverberates strongly with the hint of a mimetic merger. If this incident does not cast doubt on the timing of Walsh's vision, it has, then, by appropriating the memory of a happening that occurred nearly twelve weeks before, merged two separate events together.[552]

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[545] McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 32.

[546] Benjamin, "The Work of Art", 240.

[547] Berman, "Papal Visit".

[548] Clare, *Three Visits*, 69.

[549] Ibid.

[550] Ibid.

[551] McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 38.

[552] It should be noted that Sr. Clare was writing in 1882 about an event that occurred three years before. Likewise, her account of other incidents surrounding the apparition of August 1879 was also inaccurate. Nonetheless, Sr. Clare's description reveals

Figure 77. ***View of Knock Chapel (top right) as seen from Patrick Walsh's field (a decedent of the witness Patrick Walsh) in Ballinderrig, Knock, County Mayo, 2010*** (Author)

The evidence of memory

The ability of memory to merge all manner of recollections has always confounded researchers seeking to examine the Knock apparition within a linear, historicist framework. For those endeared to this positivist approach, even simple details concerning the apparition reveal only additional layers of confusion.[553] And yet, it is this indiscernible quality of memory – its mimetic nature – that enables us to recognise how a lantern projection could have occurred at Knock without it being part an elaborate ruse. In truth,

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the same process of reciting, retelling, and interpretation that constitutes the mimetic formation of memory. Furthermore, it cannot be discounted that what Mrs Kelly and the witness Patrick Walsh saw was one and the same thing, and that this occurred on 8 November 1879. Sr. Clare mentions that this was also the night that the group of priests meet with Fr. Cavanagh. Indeed, there appears to have been some tension between Sr. Clare and the witnesses, particularly Mary Beirne. Given Sr. Clare's background as an Anglican convert to Catholicism whose uncle, the Rev. W. B. Stoney, was a Protestant missionary during the Famine, the villagers would have been suspicious of her. Possibly Sr. Clare's advocacy for Mrs Kelly's vision came out of a sense of class empathy. The Kelly family were merchants who operated a hotel at Knock. They were also friends of Fr. Cavanagh and are known to have made sizable donations to local church projects. More importantly, the Kelly's epitomised the connection between wealth and financial support for the Church advocated by Sr. Clare. However, in the manner of other high profile 19th-century Anglican converts to Catholicism, notably Cardinal John Newman, Sr. Clare would have discovered a disparity between her apostolic comprehension of religion and how the villagers at Knock understood it. Like the absence of any protestant witnesses to the apparition (and they did live in and around the village), this is a dimension of the Knock story that has been overlooked by the church's canonical narrative. For a summary of the life of Margaret Anna Cusack, see Furguson, Catherine 2008. *Margaret Anna Cusack (The Nun of Kenmare) Knock November 1881 – December 188*3. Warrenpoint, County Down: Galebooks.

[553] Melvin Harris, a BBC investigative reporter, typifies this approach when after conducting a series of lantern experiments in the early 1980s, using a fabricated facade of the Knock chapel south gable wall, he claimed, despite the numerous complications his tests introduced, to have replicated the vision. See Harris, Melvin "Meeting Mary: Visions of the Virgin." In *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious Universe* (Time Life: 2009), DVD.

within the apparition story or, more rightly, the narrative formulated from the memory of Mary Beirne, just such an event exists in the experiments carried out by Fr. Lennon for the Commission of Enquiry. Taking place, as Beirne recollected, two weeks following the Commission's sitting on 8 October 1879, the proximity of Lennon's attempt at "spiritual mimicry" to the vision of 21 August 1879 is of no small importance.[554] What is important to realise here is that if the witnesses were uncertain about the origin event (as their testaments indicate), just when they were formulating in their minds what occurred on the night of the vision they would have encountered Fr. Lennon's mimetically capacious lantern.

Figure 78. ***Sketch of Fr. Francis Lennon by an unknown student***[555]

It must be said that Fr. Lennon remains something of an unknown figure. He appears to have been an intently private man who had an aversion to having his photograph taken. As such, the only visual representation that remains of him is a sketch made by one of his students (Fig. 78).[556] Born in Tyholland, County Monaghan, Lennon entered Maynooth Seminary at 14. He was a student and later colleague of the famous inventor Fr. Nicholas Callan. Shortly after Callan's death in 1864, Lennon took up his Chair in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, where he developed a reputation as a judicious scientist and teacher. What little is known about Lennon outside his brief encounter with Knock comes from

[554] Coyne, *Knock Shrine*, 55.

[555] Lennon's sketch is sourced from Cornish, Patrick J. 1995. *Maynooth College, 1795-1995.* Dublin: Gill & MacMillan.

[556] I am grateful to an anonymous informant, a member of the clergy, for his insights into Fr. Lennon.

reminisces of a former student, Joseph O'Connor. In his autobiography, *Hostage to Fortune*, O'Connor mentions that Lennon was well liked at the seminary. His "independence of spirit" and theatrical approach to laboratory experiments "endured him" with his students.[557] So much so that Lennon's maxim, "d'you observe", which he delivered on the penultimate stage of all his experiments, entered the popular lexicon of many seminarians. Unfortunately for Lennon, however, his critical demeanour also maligned him with theological authorities at Maynooth who would, O'Connor claims, overlook his application for more prestigious Chairs.[558] But these would have been the qualities priests on the Knock Commission of Enquiry were seeking in conducting their investigation. At a time when the village was ablaze with rumour, Lennon would have provided a systematic and objective assessment. It is more than likely for these reasons that Lennon's report, particularly its expressed suspicion for the apparition, has only ever been selectively referred to by shrine officials.

The alleged timing of Lennon's visit to Knock, occurring, as Mary Beirne recalled, sometime in late October 1879, presents us with a position from which to discern the apparition's photographic characteristics. Working under the Commission of Enquiry, Lennon's experiments would have provided the witnesses not only the opportunity to have seen a projection event at Knock without a deception taking place, but also the occasion for them to have been mesmerised by the lantern's ocular extravagances. As Lennon is known to have applied considerable technical rigor to his laboratory testing – he was, O'Connor suggests, a renowned showman – his lantern experiments would have incorporated a variety of projection configurations. Including direct and indirect light cast (these are strongly implied in his report), Lennon may have also examined arrangements similar to those detailed in his primary reference source, Brewster's theatrically themed *Letters on Natural Magic.* Might this citation to Victorian stagecraft account for the otherworldly experiences described by the witnesses?[559] And while the Maynooth scientist/priest would

[557] See O'Connor, Joseph. 1951. *Hostage to Fortune*. Dublin: Michael F. Moynihan Publishing Company. 116–119. O'Connor attended Maynooth to study as a priest, but he never took Holy Orders in the Catholic Church.

[558] It appears that Fr. Lennon's colleagues at Maynooth were not as broad-minded as he was. Some had a "fire and brimstone" view on the world. O'Connor describes how on the occasion of a theological debate amongst seminarians on retreat, a member of Faculty interjected their discussion to declare that "The floor of hell is paved with the skulls of bad priests." This pronouncement, which, as O'Connor's described, "burned itself" into his "mind", influenced his decision to leave the seminary. See O'Connor, *Hostage*, 121.

[559] In this statement, I refer to Marina Warner's claim in *Phantasmagoria* that due to their light oscillations, the optical devices of the Victorian stage, notably lanterns, animated the images perceived by their audiences. As noted above, the "flickering" effect produced by the lantern described in historical texts. In early lantern systems, this was the result of a flame emitted by an oil lamp or candle. However, Lennon's lantern would have been far more sophisticated and probably used limelight as an illumination source. This light would have burned brightly and produced a noticeable flicker. These lanterns were popular in

have attracted the attention of villagers accustomed to clergy being far less questioning of spiritual matters, given their preindustrial technical literacy it is uncertain as to how they would have perceived a lantern projection. Reminiscent of the story of the gramophone at Knock collected by Fr. Ward in the mid-1930s, the witnesses may have failed to recognise the mediated sensory relationship between the lantern and "the figures" that came to life before them. Had this been the case, the witnesses would have had no reason to have recalled, when questioned, if a light other than that which had appeared on this wall (the light emitted by the lantern) had been seen.[560]

Doubts still persist

Although Lennon's presence at Knock might situate the lantern within the mimetically inspired sequence of events proposed here, the timing of his visit to the village is far from certain. Apart from the memory of Mary Beirne, there is little other evidence to substantiate when this episode occurred. In fact, Beirne's memory is problematic when realised that her accounts were edited by shrine authorities so as to endorse their preferred version of events. During her interview with Liam Coyne (Liam Ua Cadhain), who, along with his wife, Judy, instigated a lay-led revival of the shrine fortunes in the early 1930s, Beirne makes no mention of Lennon. She states only that the lantern experiments occurred "a fortnight" after the "commissioners took her evidence".[561] This statement appears in Coyne's *Knock Shrine*, published in 1935. Fr Lennon's association with Knock, at least in the public domain, does not emerge until ten years later when cited by Coyne in his amended 1945 edition of this publication, *Cnoc Mhuire in Picture and Story.*[562] In a passage where Coyne alters Beirne's reference to the Knock event from "apparitions" to "apparition" – an effort no doubt intended to erase memory of the troublesome "Other

theatre and stage performances at that time. Moreover, limelight operation was a skilled trade that required expertise. Hence, the rumour that still circulates about the apparition being the result of an RIC constable experimenting with a lantern can be dismissed outright. In the Knock Shrine Archive, there is a typed two-page letter from an anonymous priest who claimed that Lennon's lantern was housed in the museum at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. The letter is undated and raises objections to the lantern theory and several other conjectures claiming the apparition was a hoax. More importantly, the letter states that Lennon's lantern utilised limelight illumination. I thank staff from the Knock Shrine Museum for providing me access to this letter. Regrettably, however, despite my numerous requests to St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, I have been unable to establish either the identity of the priest who wrote this letter or if the lantern he mentions still exists.

[560] Presumably the witnesses were asked if they had seen a light apart from that which had appeared on the church gable wall. The identification of additional light would suggest the presence of a lantern. Patrick Hill seems to have been asked just such a question when on speaking to a reporter from the Daily Telegraph he mentioned that he could not say "whether any light . . . except" that which appeared "on the wall" of the church had been seen. Hill's comments to the reporter appeared in the article "The Alleged Apparitions and Miracles in Ireland." *Daily Telegraph*, February 26. This article was later reprinted in the *Bay of Plenty Times*, 27 Haratua 1880. See "The Alleged Apparitions and Miracles in Ireland." 2011. Papers Past. http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=BOPT18800527.2.18&l=mi&e=-------10--1----0--

[561] Coyne, *Knock Shrine*, 69.

[562] I have sourced references to Coyne's 1945 publication *Cnoc Mhuire in Picture and Story* from a later American edition, printed in 1948, titled *Our Lady of Knock in Picture and Story.* New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co.

'Apparitions'" of 1880 – he added to her account that "Rev. Dr. Lennon … arrived with a magic lantern, to carry out some tests".[563] On account of Lennon's report not surfacing until the instigation of a Second Commission of Enquiry in 1936, Coyne's reference to him could be seen as part of a larger undertaking to sew up holes in the apparition story. These were gaps that would need to be filled-in if the shrine were ever to become the "Mayo Lourdes" aspired for by Coyne and his supporters.[564]

But where the timing of Lennon's visit to Knock becomes tricky is in a citation he makes at the end of his report. Signed the "Feast of Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel" (no year is mentioned), Lennon's reference refutes the confluences proposed here; as this feast falls on 16 July the report could not have been written in 1879, but, more likely, in 1880.[565] However, if this late date is taken at face value, as one historian has assumed,[566] an anomaly looms in an observation Lennon makes that indicates he arrived at Knock much earlier. Even though he interviewed and read statements from the four main witnesses, Lennon was oblivious to a well-documented element within the apparition story. After noting that the witnesses were "satisfied as to the supernatural character of the apparition", Fr. Lennon was astounded as to why "no one thought of acquainting the priest of it" (emphasis in original).[567] Yet, in her widely circulated witness statement published in the Irish press from February 1880, Mary McLoughlin, Fr. Cavanagh's housekeeper, clearly informed the archdeacon, after returning from the gable wall, "of the beautiful things that were to be seen". And considering the rarity of the event, she also told him that "it would be worth his while to go to witness them".[568] Given the voracious reading appetites of Irish priests during the mid-to-late 19th-century for the provincial and national press, it seems

[563] Coyne, *Our Lady of Knock,* 22. It is worth noting that in Coyne's 1935 publication *Knock Shrine*, he mentions that with respect to Mary Beirne's recollection on the testing of a magic lantern at Knock that "twenty priests … some of whose names she remembered distinctly" conducted these experiments. See Coyne, *Knock Shrine*, 55. Interestingly, the old typed version of Lennon's report, which is housed in the Tuam Archdiocesan archives, is inscribed with Coyne's handwriting.

[564] The first reference to Knock being a "Mayo Lourdes" comes from the devotional writings of Sr. Mary Francis Clare. In her second edition of *The Life of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God*, she makes this connection explicit by illustrating her writings on Knock alongside panels portraying Bernadette Soubirous' alleged visions at the grotto of Massabielle. See Clare, Mary Francis. 1880. *The Life of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God*. 2nd ed. London: Burns & Oates.

[565] Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

[566] John White states in his reply to Eugene Hynes's letter in *History Ireland*, and also in his Ph.D. dissertation, that Fr. Lennon arrived at Knock in July 1880 following an invitation by Bishop John McEvilly. See White *History Ireland* 5 (1): 11, and "The Knock Apparitions" 130. After consulting Corish, Patrick J. 1972. "Irish College, Rome: Kirby Papers." *Archivium Hibernicum* 30., and a letter archived in the Irish College, Rome from McEvilly to Tobias Kirby dated 14 June 1880 (KIR/1880/294), two sources mentioned by White, I have found no evidence to confirm his claim. I thank staff from the Irish College, Rome for providing me with a copy of this letter.

[567] Lennon to Cavanagh (1880?).

[568] McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 63–64. Apart from the version printed in McPhilpin, the witness statements also appear in Sexton, Thomas, 1880. *The Illustrated Record of the Apparitions at the Church of Knock.* Dublin: T. D. Sullivan.

unlikely that Fr. Lennon would have made such a statement months after the witness testimonies had been first published.[569]

Evidence for an early visit by Lennon to Knock also appears in John McPhilpin's nearly contemporary *The Apparitions and Miracles at Knock*. Arguing for the miraculous origin of the apparition, McPhilpin seems to have knowledge of Lennon's conclusions well before the late date indicated in his report. Published in March 1880, McPhilpin's text countered the objections of the vision's detractors utilising identical reasoning to that employed by Lennon. Initially covering collusion and deception as possible causes (as had Lennon), McPhilpin added "reflected light", "electric or magnetic currents", and "natural miasmatic gustations from the earth" to his arguments against lantern projection.[570] But it was not just McPhilpin's pursuit of this rationalist line that indicates he had a familiarity with the Maynooth scientist's findings. Echoing Lennon's painterly scenario, where some "skilful artist" applied phosphorus paint to the church's south gable wall, McPhilpin, in rejection of this theory, utilised the same synopsis by claiming that even in the hands of a competent "artist" this substance would have been far too volatile with which to work.[571]

Many years later Fr. Walsh also discerned this thread linking McPhilpin's devotional account with the findings found in Lennon's report. Underscoring McPhilpin's connection with the Commission by way of his uncle, Canon Ulick Bourke, Fr. Walsh declared that his knowledge of scientific matters was "uncommon for a layman" and served as evidence "that the Commission was in possession of expert information."[572] This claim is supported by a statement from a correspondent with the *Irish Times.* Reporting from Knock on the first anniversary of the apparition in August 1880, the unnamed journalist alleged "that several scientists, clerical as well as lay" were known to have travelled to the village "for the purpose of ascertaining whether the visions could have been produced by physical means".[573] When considering our limited knowledge of the events that occurred at Knock after the apparition, this is not an insignificant disclosure. What is important to realise here is that if the commission had access to the findings of these other "scientists" – findings

[569] For an account of the reading habits of priests and other professionals during the 19th century, see Legg, Marie-Louise. 1999. *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press 1850–1892*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

[570] McPhilpin, *The Apparitions,* 43–52.

[571] Ibid., 49. Thomas Sexton also examined this same scenario in his arguments against the speculations of sceptics.

[572] See Walsh, *The Apparition at Knock,* 38.

[573] See the article "Knock Revisited", 1880, *Irish Times*, August 24. 2.

that would have, in all probability, involved the testing of lanterns – then this "expert information" Fr. Walsh refers to, or more rightly the means employed to procure it, negates the need to establish the timing of Lennon's visit to Knock.

Nevertheless, though Lennon's arrival at the village is still an important factor in reconstructing the chronology of events that followed the vision of August 1879, our inability to precisely date his visit does not diminish evidence suggesting the means by which the apparition attained its photographic characteristics. Regardless of who carried out lantern experiments at Knock, whether it Lennon or the other "scientists" noted by the anonymous reporter from the *Irish Times,* both the witness accounts and other supporting testimony presented here indicate one undisputable fact: at some point between the appearance of an unidentifiable phenomenon and the compilation of the testimonies by priests from the commission, the witnesses encountered a lantern projection. Further, this lantern event, as is indicated by McPhilpin's reference in the *Tuam News* to "a white flickering light", must have occurred prior to his article's publication date of 9 January 1880.

Historical rupture

As with other authors who have claimed to present "New Evidence" into the Knock apparition, utilising mimesis as a theoretical tool to unravel the vision is a hypothetical venture.[574] Consequently, the deductions arrived at from such a methodology are governed by the broadness of the theoretical approach undertaken and the evidence that remains within the archive. However, when mimesis is understood as a perceptive capacity respondent to an individual's culturally bounded awareness of technology, the re-emergence of this faculty in the witnesses at a time that would have, for them, amounted to one of the "turning points of history" allows us to comprehend how the lantern illuminated the apparition story.[575]

Knock in 1879 was an environment engulfed in a series of political, social, and economic crises; the village was at a flash point. Following the August apparition this already trying set of circumstances was charged by unparalleled mystical expectation, one that clergy, who were experiencing their own dilemmas, struggled to contain. Moreover, for a people

[574] I refer here to the assertions made by John White and David Berman, who both claim to have found "New Evidence" into the apparition. See White, "The Cusack Papers: New Evidence on the Knock Apparition," and Berman, "Knock: Some New Evidence".

[575] Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 240.

with a preindustrial sense of technical literacy, the attempts by scientists, "clerical as well as lay", to replicate the miraculous vision by means of lantern projection confounded the witnesses' sensory perception. Further stifling the witnesses' comprehension of this technology, and contributing to the mimetic formations within the apparition story, were the other copies that followed the August apparition. These imitations, which, as can be detected from the witnesses' statements, included references by clergy to the aesthetic identity of saints, bewildered their recollection of events.[576] And like the mixed understandings that surrounded the reception of the "Other 'Apparitions'" of 1880, in the witnesses' minds the origin event and its mysterious technologically mediated facsimile merged into one.

Significantly, and the main reason for this chapter's detailed unpacking of the events surrounding the apparition, the lantern did not come to visually frame the Knock tableau – or not at least in the manner described by its detractors. Rather how the apparition came to be imagined was through a series of compounding historical, social, political, and religious circumstances. Some of these, as Hynes has demonstrated, were unique to the Knock local. But the lantern's presence cannot be denied. To borrow from Marx's camera obscura analogy, by examining the apparition through the inverted view cast by the lantern we are offered the opportunity to perceive the vision in a different light.

More than just a recollection, the lantern is a memory of the instant the witnesses' emergent mimetic faculty reconnected them with the unbounded imaginative possibilities that lay in the past. This is, I suggest, the governing principle behind Benjamin's unfinished conceptualisation of mimesis. And in the case of Knock, this is a past dominated by the momentous shockwaves of the Famine. In silence these tremors permeate every aspect of the event; from the ecclesiastically unorthodox descriptions given by the witnesses to Daniel Campbell's recollections of his childhood at Knock, the Famine lingers heavily over the apparition. Together with the "globe of golden light" seen by Patrick Walsh, the apparition is representative of a historical rupture, where the pre-Famine past collided with the witnesses' post-Famine present. It is the aftermath of this pile-up, I suggest, that remains indelibly etched on the apparition and its traces within the archive. Crucially, with regard to this thesis' endeavour in exploring the Famine and the practise of historical silencing, it is towards the

[576] By examining the witness accounts against the prevailing cultural, historical and religious circumstances surrounding the apparition, Hynes demonstrates how, through the processes of social construction and framing, the representations depicted in the Knock tableau developed over time. See Hynes, *Knock*, chapter 9, "The Social Construction of the Apparition".

reading of this archive and what it reveals about the past that I now direct my attention to in the final chapter.

Chapter 7

Glimpses of the Great Famine from the William Henry Fox Talbot Archive

Figure 78. ***The Pauper's Plot, Strokestown, County Roscommon***, ***2010*** (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 78) shows a pauper's plot near the site of the National Famine Museum in Strokestown, County Roscommon. During the Famine, the graveyard was used to bury the staggering number of deceased coming from the local workhouse. Today it is a forgotten place; even people who have lived here all their lives are oblivious to its existence – or at least this is what they claim. Contrasted with the renovated palatial splendour of the Famine Museum, which was once the home of Denis Mahon, Ireland's most notorious evicting landlord, the pauper's graveyard is neglected and overgrown. Unseen by the researchers and tourists who travel to the museum to attest to the State's canonical account of this tragedy, the pauper's plot holds no eminent documents or records – its only regular visitors being underage drinkers seeking its anonymity.

Curiously, the forgetfulness that shrouds the museum's transformation from a dilapidated relic of landlord despotism to the establishment charged with preserving memory of the Famine shares a curious parallel with what Jacques Derrida sees as an inherent contradiction within the archive.[577] Far from securing memory of the past, the archive, Derrida suggests, is a site that obliterates it. But more chillingly, by erasing the memory of the past the archive is beholding to a "spectral" dimension.[578] Like the pauper's plot in the photograph (Fig. 78), the archive is a place "haunted" by the ghosts of returning souls.[579]

In this final chapter, I continue to investigate the convoluted nature of historical silencing by again examining photography's "surprising" absence from the Famine record and its connection with the ideologically bounded cultural estrangement the coloniser held for their "other". This relationship will be examined by undertaking a forensic investigation of an anonymously authored and undated body of Irish calotypes from the William Henry Fox Talbot Collection. Rediscovered in Talbot's Lacock Abbey archive during the 1960s, the images are, in the main, depictions of Dublin's imperial monuments, and its sites of law, commerce and religion. In this, the first critical assessment of the collection, I propose that, considering both the places depicted in these images and the period the calotype was practiced in Ireland, there is good reason to suggest that at least some of these images might well be regarded as Famine photographs. This study, which apart from investigating the provenance of the collection also speculates on its authorship, bears this out. Ironically, the silences that have provided the occasion for this project's research might very well find a voice from within the photographic frame.

While these images are exceedingly difficult to date, there are, apart from the places depicted in them, only two facts that a visual appraisal can determine with any degree of certainty. First, owing to the tree foliage visible in a number of scenes, the majority of these photographs were taken in the early spring, the year or years remaining indeterminable.[580] Secondly, on account of their multiple formats (though many are trimmed, the uncut photographs fluctuate in graphic proportions), these images were more than likely

[577] Derrida, Jacques. 1996. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[578] Ibid., 84.

[579] Ibid., 85.

[580] This tree foliage can be seen the image *The New Square, Trinity College, Dublin* located in Appendix Three.

produced by several authors.[581] Additional evidence for this claim can be gained by accessing the aesthetic quality of the photographs from the collection. This varies from the unexceptional to the superb. Despite these difficulties, I suggest that when the collection is subjected to a comprehensive forensic unpacking, its existence raises one fundamental and multifaceted question: what do these images tell us about our connection to the Famine and the "other" who was silenced by the ideological forces that were the catalyst for this tragedy? But problematising this question is that the collection, like the Famine record, is housed in an archive that, as Derrida suggests, is a site that announces "the annihilation of memory" itself.[582]

Archive Fever

Writing on the transformation of Sigmund Freud's London home from a domestic realm of letters, thoughts and ideas to an exalted museum of psychoanalysis, Derrida suggests that by being the repository of all human knowledge, the archive is the principal institution of western hegemony. In a Marxist sense, the archive is the place where the accumulation of knowledge, "capital", produces the surplus that forms the principles of history, law, philosophy and all facets of human endeavour.[583] Encompassing, but always outside of thought, the archive is a place of "consignation", where the passage of its documents from one institution to another sees them interpreted with new and different meaning.[584] Distinct from Freud's lifetime of roaming from house to house and across borders as a wandering Jew, the archive's exteriority, a place outside the self, allows for the location of order.

Tracing the history of the archive by from its lexical origins in the Greek word *Arke,* Derrida likens the authority invested in it to that of a "commandment".[585] The archive is the place from which all concepts begin and where "social order is exercised".[586] Still the archive's

[581] As with the other images from the William Henry Fox Talbot Collection, these Irish scenes are comprised of positive, negative and internegative prints. They are fragile, sensitive to light and difficult to examine. Complicating the difficulty of speculating upon the authorship of these photographs is that many of them have been trimmed. Hence by the photographs losing their tell-tale aspect ratio and edge signatures (as calotype cameras were handmade each unit produced a distinct edge marking), we are unable to establish a connection between the scenes depicted in the collection and the cameras used by photographers known to have been active at this time.

[582] Derrida, *Archive,* 11.

[583] Ibid., 7.

[584] Ibid., 11.

[585] Ibid., 2.

[586] Ibid., 1.

semblance of order is not decreed by the weight of the documents it holds, but through the authority of "men and gods".[587] According to Derrida, it is this religious-like ordination that sees the archive consecrate human history in the manner that "circumcision" inscribes the body;[588] the archive always leaves its mark. And though this mark gestures to the past, without the archive, Derrida writes, there can be "no future".[589]

Derrida also recognised a dialectic tension buried deep within the archive. Akin to Freud's observations on the *death instinct*, Derrida argues that the archive conceals an outbreak of violence that sees it carry out a type of "radical perversion".[590] By inscribing history as it does the body, this destructive potential has bestowed on the archive the contradictory role of destroying memory. Moreover, as a place of "consignation" outside the self, the archive's assimilation of the *death instinct* has configured it to be the unparalleled institution of mass forgetting. Augmented by the digital data systems of late capitalism, for Derrida, the structure of the archive is – much like the future it anticipates – spectral; a place of haunting, the archive "*shelters* itself from this memory which it shelters"(author's emphasis).[591] The original now deceased, in the archive there remain only the "ashes" of that which has long since passed.[592] But it is this trace within the archive that compels us to return to it again and again. Like a tomb, the archive is a place where we bear witness to a notion of the past that has been lost forever. It is this paradox within the institutions charged with preserving the memory of the past that Derrida describes as "Archive Fever".

Normalising absence

When bearing in mind that the Famine is absent from the photographic record, it's silence from the medium synonymous with modern historiographical testimony has had the effect of jettisoning Ireland's defining watershed to the mists of antiquity. Like the catastrophes of medieval history, it was a tragedy that, once acknowledged, can be quickly forgotten.[593]

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[587] Ibid.

[588] Ibid., 42.

[589] Ibid., 73.

[590] Ibid., 9.

[591] Ibid., 2.

[592] Ibid., 99.

[593] I refer here to Melissa Fegan's suggestion that the Famine, due to its enormity and Ireland's "proximity" to "the most industrialized nation on earth", was perceived by many commentators at the time as akin to "medieval distress". See Fegan, Melissa. 2002. *Literature and the Irish Famine 1845 – 1919.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 7.

And though the sesquicentennial commemorations raised the Famine's public and academic profile, in the partisan political climate that has emerged since the Irish state's constitutional absorption into the European Union, the event and its meaning have become distorted.

Figure 79. ***Downpatrick Cathedral and environs, Downpatrick, County Down, 2006*** (Author)[594]

This expurgation of meaning is most evident in the chronologies presented at Irish heritage sites, notably in the country's north, where events that have had an inconsequential impact on the present are given precedence over the Famine as Ireland's defining historical watershed. At the Down Cathedral (Anglican Church of Ireland) and the nearby visitor centre in Downpatrick, County Down (Fig. 79), much is made of the tribulations endured by Ireland's patron saint, St Patrick.[595] For instance, Patrick's intransigence when dealing with the restraints forced on his mission by pagan chieftains is applauded as an identity trait shared by Irish people both sides of the country's border.[596] Patrick's adopted Hibernian

[594]In the timelines presented at the Downpatrick Cathedral and the accompanying visitor centre, the Famine is not mentioned at all. Its historical impact upon the Ireland's political, cultural and cartographic divisions is ignored.

[595] Downpatrick is one of the several sites where Patrick is believed to have been buried.

[596] For a summary of how the figure of Patrick has been conceptualised in the "Two Ireland" view, see chapter four, "Dived by Common Cosmologies", in Craith, Máiréad Nic. 2002. *Plural Identities – Singular Narratives: The Case of Northern Ireland.* New York: Berghahn Books.

pig-headedness (historians suggest that he was Welsh) was nowhere more ingrained than when, climbing Croagh Patrick to request a favour of the Lord, he went on hunger strike after he was accused by an angel of asking for too much. Following 40 days and 40 nights without food or water, Patrick ended his protest only when the Lord reluctantly conceded to his demands.[597] Yet in the chronologies presented in the Cathedral and the visitor centre there is no mention of the Famine. At a conjunction where the ideologues of the heritage industry and the northern statelet meet, the Famine – a far more recent incident of forced hunger – is overlooked in favour of a history that dissolves the trauma of the past through the rise of commodity culture and "Third way" socio/political agendas.[598]

Trawling the archive

As with all theoretical endeavours, the assumptions I raised in the previous chapters regarding a photographic silence surrounding the Famine stand to be corrected if at some point an image depicting this calamity happens to emerge from the archive. There are, of course, precedents for this occurring. Before Karl Baptist de Szathmari's 1854 studies of Russian troop formations during the Crimea War (1853 -1856) came to light, Roger Fenton was widely regarded to have been the first person to photographically document a war.[599] Aided by an Irish photographer, Marcus Sparling (Fig. 80),[600] Fenton's aftermath images provide a chilling commentary on the horrors of industrialised warfare.[601] Similarly, in recent years the existence of an anonymous body of daguerreotypes from the American-Mexican War of 1846-1847 has challenged long-held perceptions as to the origins of photography in documenting conflict.[602] Discovered in a barn (an archive of sorts), in these

[597] Guiley, Rosemary Ellen. 2001. *The Encyclopaedia of Saints.* New York: Facts on File.

[598] For a brief summary of the Third Way view of the Irish political and literary landscape, see Kiberd, Declan. 1995. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. London: Random House.

[599] Few of Szathmari's Crimea photographs exist. Our knowledge of them comes from their description in historical sources. Crucially, Szathmari's studies predate Fenton's by some 12 months. For a brief account of Szathmari's work, see Gernsheim, Helmut. 1986. *A Concise History of Photography*. 3rd rev. ed. New York: Dover Publications.

[600] Marcus Sparling was Roger Fenton's photographic assistant at the Crimea. He came from Castlebar in County Mayo and is known to have had a military background. He appeared as the subject of Fenton's famous photographic wagon image (Fig. 80). However, Fenton seemed to have had mixed opinions for his assistant. In his letters from the Crimea, Fenton notes his gratitude for Sparling after seeing him through several illnesses, but he was also scornful of him, particularly for his drinking. Oddly, Sparling's drinking, as is evident from Fenton's letters, must have outdone even his employer's prodigious efforts. Sparling later became the Honorary Secretary of the Photographic Society and published a book titled *Theory and Practice of the Photographic Art* (1856). Roger Fenton's letters from the Crimea are available for viewing on-line. See Fenton, Roger. 2014. Roger Fenton's letters from the Crimea. http://rogerfenton.dmu.ac.uk/.

[601] A comprehensive listing of Fenton's Crimean War photographs can be viewed at Fenton. Roger. 2014. "Crimean War Photographs by Roger Fenton, 1855," All World Wars. Accessed November 28, http://www.allworldwars.com/Crimean-War-Photographs-by-Roger-Fenton,-1855.html.

[602] Although the existence of these daguerreotypes has been documented for some years, they have received only passing scholarly attention. Interest in these images was revived during the 1980s when the greater part of what now constitutes the

images of cavalry officers and Free Masons in full regalia we contemplate an event that, alongside the Famine, held central stage in the globalising print media of that time.[603]

Figure 80. ***Marcus Sparling with Photographic Van, Roger Fenton, 1854***

After considering the possibility for several years that a Famine photograph might one day be discovered, my view is that, if such an image did exist, it would be found within an archive located outside of Ireland. Significantly, I suggest this image would not be a direct depiction of the Famine, at least not in the sense of how we think of documentary photography today. Its citation would be circumstantial. Possibly a cityscape or a rural scene, the picture's standing as a Famine photograph would be revealed to a researcher alerted to some historical detail within the picture's frame. More importantly, this purported Famine photograph would not have been taken by a member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency. As I demonstrated in the previous chapters, the debilitating cultural estrangement the coloniser held against their "other" would have been an obstacle to this type of recording. Hence, in considering the period and, as discussed in chapter one, the restrictions on early commercial photographic practice, the prime candidate for taking just such an image would be, in my view, an itinerant photographer.

collection was discovered in a Connecticut barn. See Sandweiss, Martha A. 2002. *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

[603] These images can be viewed on the website Luminous Lint for Connoisseurs of Photography. "Earliest War Photographs". 2014. Accessed November 28, http://www.luminous-lint.com/app/vexhibit/_THEME_War_Earlist_01/4/0/0/.

Although the details are somewhat sketchy, the historical record does note that several photographers fitting the description just outlined are known to have travelled through Ireland at the time of the Famine. The Dublin photographic writer Peadar Slattery mentions that amongst others, an obscure French daguerreotypist named Champeaux travelled through the country during the 1840s.[604] Champeaux was working in London with the famed Parisian photographer Antoine Claudet.[605] Along with Richard Beard, Claudet was the only other daguerreotypist working in England to have a license from Daguerre to operate his patented process.[606] But the candidate who in my view best stands out for taking a Famine image would be the Derry daguerreotypist Robert McGhee. Reminiscent of the incursions made by Celtic raiders across the Irish Sea in the distant past, McGhee was known to have taken commercial excursions through the north of England with his photographic wagon in tow – staying safely out of sight of Daguerre's agents in London. Apart from operating a portrait studio in Derry City, not much is known about McGhee or his practice.[607] But as an itinerant photographer active in Ireland during the 1840s, it would not be imprudent to presume that he might have stumbled across a Famine scene.

Revelations from the archive

Though the archive may appear, due to its chaotic nature and the weight of the history that it holds, to be on the brink of collapse, what Derrida referred to as its "desire and disorder", for the curious it never stops throwing up surprises.[608] Such is the case with a mysterious group of calotype images taken in Ireland between the 1840s and 1850s, about which a critical examination suggests their potential to be examined as Famine photographs. Regrettably, however, as neither the authorship of these images nor the dates they were created is known, the collection remains an indeterminate historical source. The first published mention of these images is found in Edward Chandler and Peter Walsh's 1989 exhibition catalogue *Through a Brass Lidded Eye*, where they are referred to as the "'Dublin'

[604] See Slattery, Peadar. 1992. "The Uses of Photography in Ireland 1839 – 1900." PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin. 35. The Slattery family were suppliers of camera equipment through their Dublin store for several generations.

[605] Heathcoate, Bernard and Pauline Heathcoate. 2002. *A Faithful Likeness: The First Photographic Portrait Studios in the British Isles*, *1841 to 1855.* Lowdham: B. & P. Heathcote. 66. Antoine Claudet has an interesting Irish connection by taking the only known photographic portrait of the Duke of Wellington. See MacKenzie, John M. 2001. *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*. London: V&A Publications.

[606] See Gernsheim, *A Concise.*

[607] Robert McGhee is an enigmatic figure. Several sources who mention him spell his name as McGee. For a brief account on Robert McGhee, see Gernsheim, *The History of Photography,* 114.

[608] Derrida, *Archive,* 81.

calotypes".[609] Featuring iconic Dublin locations such as the Custom House, Trinity College and the Four Courts, when considering the sites depicted in the collection this descriptive title seems fitting.

However, as the collection also includes a series of images taken at Powerscourt House in County Wicklow, which, as demonstrated below, offers evidence into both their authorship and the period they were created, I refer to them hereafter as the "Leinster calotypes". This citation is in recognition of their provincial location: Counties Dublin and Wicklow are in the province of Leinster. Further, Leinster was the region in Ireland where the coloniser's hegemonic project was emblazoned on the landscape in edifices fashioned from bronze and stone (Fig. 81). As can be recognised in the images depicted throughout the Leinster calotypes, it was this belief in the ideological system symbolised by these monoliths that captivated the gaze of the photographers who created them.

Figure 81. ***Colonial era heraldry by the "sham ruin" at the Custom House, Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

Uncertain though the origins of the Leinster calotypes might be, there is one aspect regarding the collection that can be historically verified. As with the majority of images from the William Henry Fox Talbot Collection, these photographs owe their legacy to a

[609] Chandler and Walsh, *Through a Brass,* xiv. The authors mention that the collection is also known as the ""Calvert Jones" calotype negatives". I have not come across this title elsewhere in my research.

failed business venture by the Dutch photographic entrepreneur, Nicolaas Henneman. One of many identities from the early history of photography who lived out their lives on its periphery, Henneman, who was Talbot's former valet, gathered these images together for sale in his London print viewing establishment, the Sun Picture Rooms. This venture, originally established in Reading in 1843, was supported and partly financed by Talbot. Exploiting a growing bourgeois fascination for images of the exotic, Henneman made his living by producing print views from calotype negative and inter-negative prints.[610] And while Henneman's enterprise held promise, the economic and technical uncertainties that restricted early photography's commercial development always worked against him. By the late 1850s, coinciding with the phenomenal rise of the *carte-vista* (the cabinet photograph) as a visual memento, Henneman's business failed; upon which he was forced to surrender his vast calotype stock to Talbot in part settlement of a debt. But testament to Talbot's failure to recognise the brilliance of his invention, when Anthony Burnett-Brown, his great-great grandson, first examined these photographs at Lacock Abbey during the 1960s, the majority of them remained in the sealed envelopes provided to him by Henneman. Unopened for over one hundred years, Talbot had not even bothered to inspect the images for which he had once held so much hope.[611]

Though the Leinster calotypes generated much curiosity upon their one and only public showing in Dublin during the late 1980s, no research has been carried out on either their significance as historical documents or the exact period from which they date. Indeed, the two authors who have discussed them in any detail differ in their estimates as to when they were created. For instance, Edward Chandler proposes, without offering support for his claim, that they were "taken" sometime "in the mid to late 1840s",[612] whilst Maria Pelizzari, who likewise cites no evidence, contends that the images were produced during the early 1840s.[613] This lack of scholarly interest in the collection stems, I suggest, from the assenting approach taken by the writers who have examined the early history of photography in Ireland. The overriding emphasis of these assessments has been towards establishing either a chronology of the medium or evaluating the aesthetic merit of a corpus of work. A number of authors have embarked on these approaches in their analysis of the Sexton

[610] It is uncertain as to the exact means by which Henneman acquired these images. Records of his establishment do not seem to exist. For a summary of Henneman's practice, see Hannavy, *Encyclopaedia of.*

[611] I thank Professor Larry Schaaf for his insights into the collection.

[612] Chandler, *Photography in Ireland*, 10.

[613] Pelizzari, "The Inclusive Map".

collection[614]. And although these investigations are informative, they have, nonetheless, had the effect of presenting the history of photography in Ireland as but a sideshow to the medium's assimilation into the nebulous infrastructures of modernity. Consequently, by incorporating the history of Irish photography within an authoritative master narrative, these writers have devalued the influence the country has had upon the medium's overall development.

An additional impediment for researcher's lack of interest in the Leinster calotypes has been, as I see it, their dissemination amongst the archive; the photographs are not housed at any one site. Following Burnett-Brown's examination of Talbot's photograph and correspondence archive at Lacock Abbey, the photographic component was donated to the British Museum, only to be then subsequently divided amongst several other English repositories. To reference John Tagg's observation on photography's diffusion through the apparatuses of the state – the collection is "a flickering across a field of institutional spaces".[615] Compounding the difficulty for those wishing to examine the Leinster calotypes is that following the 2008 GFC, major parts of the collection are now virtually impossible to access. With no likelihood of the images being made available for online access, the Leinster calotypes remain veiled in the forgetfulness propagated by the institution entrusted to preserve their memory.[616]

Notwithstanding the difficulties surrounding their access, even if researchers are able to examine the Leinster calotypes, they will encounter a problem facing all those who come into contact with Talbot's photographic archive. Totalling upwards of 6000 images, the Talbot Collection lacks both taxonomic grouping and classification.[617] I found this to be an obstacle when viewing that part of the collection archived at the National Media Museum in Bradford, Yorkshire, where the connection between the images and their *catalogue raisonne* is arbitrary. In the archival box which contained the known Leinster calotypes held at Bradford, there was also a selection of Talbot's studies of Egyptian hieroglyphs for his

614 See Sexton, Sean (compiled), and Christine Kinealy. 2013. *The Irish: a Photohistory 1840 – 1940*. London: Thames & Hudson.

615 Although John Tagg makes this comment concerning photography's dissemination across knowledge disciplines, I do not believe that my reference to the archive has unduly stretched his insight. See Tagg, John. 1988. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories.* Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press. 63.

616 Several images from the collection can be viewed at the Science Museum, London website http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk.

617 Larry Schaaf has communicated to me that the collection may even far exceed this number.

publication *The Pencil of Nature* (1843 – 1846) and other such unrelated content; all these images were listed with the same ascending numerical grouping. Needless to say, such loose taxonomy might mean that other Irish content from the Talbot Collection might have been misidentified. Chandler mentions just such an instance, when upon one of the rare occasions an Irish researcher has had access to the collection, they discovered that an image taken of Sackville Street (O'Connell Street) in Dublin was wrongly recorded as the Place Vendome in Paris.[618] A case, maybe, of the Liffey flowing into the Seine?[619]

Conscious of the restrictions placed upon accessing the collection, none more so than my position living and writing from Australia, this examination of the Leinster calotypes has been greatly assisted by reference to Talbot's correspondence record. Unlike his calotype collection's diffusion amongst the archive, Talbot's near on 70 year long trail of written correspondences with family, friends and the leading thinkers of the 19th century has remained more or less accessible to researchers. Significantly, over recent years these letters have been the subject of an ongoing scholarly examination and are now available in transcript form as part of the on-line *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot Project*.[620]

But Talbot's correspondence archive does have its limitations. In the main it consists of his incoming letters. Most of Talbot's outgoing correspondence is presumed to have been lost. Thus, when reading Talbot's archive we see neither his literal view nor the occasions he puts a full stop on a conversation. In truth, Talbot's correspondence is for the greater part testament to his single-minded obsession with making money. Even on his death bed, Talbot was still writing letters to secure his business and legal affairs. Nonetheless, it is

[618] Chandler, *Photography in Ireland,* 12

[619] My reference to the Liffey flowing into the Seine is a take on the folk song "If We Only had Old Ireland Over Here", an Irish-Australian diasporic narrative (although there are American version) that collapses vast geographic boundaries in a single line. However, the similarities between O'Connell Street (formally Sackville Street) and the broad avenues of Paris have been commented upon by historians and urban planners alike for many years.

[620] The on-line *Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot Project* is managed by Professor Larry J. Schaaf. Talbot's 69 year-long letter writing career is remarkable. It far exceeds that of his contemporaries. Commencing in 1808, when Talbot was a young boy, he would write up until his death on 17 September 1877. Talbot was also a prolific correspondent and had many interests. Assuming that he answered all his letters, and there is no reason to suggest otherwise, a search of his on-line correspondence reveals that he must have devoted several hours a day to this activity alone. Tellingly, with regard to his archives survival, in a note to his step-father, Admiral Charles Fielding (this annotation is written at the end of a letter to his mother, Elisabeth, dated 27 May 1808), the 8-year-old Talbot requested that his mother "keep my letters & not burn them" (Letter no. 492). But it was ultimately his family's wealth, and the fact that although he generated some dispute over his calotype patent Talbot was never a controversial figure, that has allowed his extraordinary correspondence record to remain intact. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to letters sourced from the online *The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot Project.* http://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/. To simplify the long referencing of these letters, I will abbreviate them to note only the surname of the correspondents, and the letter's number and date of writing as stated on the website. Hence, Talbot's letter to his mother, Elisabeth Fielding, would appear as Talbot to Fielding #492, 27 May 1808.

possible by picking up the threads of these conversations to recognise the relationship between the Leinster calotypes and the early history of photography in Ireland. The two, as we shall see, are inseparable.

Questions of authorship

Despite Talbot's correspondence indicating that he had not travelled to Ireland during the 1840s, his connection to the Leinster calotypes via the collection that bears his name has led several English archives to presume that these images were his creations.[621] However, the few researchers who have discussed the collection in any detail credit its authorship to the Anglo-Irish chemist William Holland Furlong and the Welsh clergyman, mathematician and painter the Rev. Calvert Richard Jones. The first mention of Furlong and Jones' involvement comes from Chandler and Walsh's *Through a Brass Lidded Eye.* Without citing any evidence, the authors "tentatively suggested" that, of the two, Furlong produced "the main body" of the collection.[622] The authors also mention the possibility of a Scottish calotypist, John Muir Wood, also having some involvement with the collection.[623] Wood is known to have experimented with the calotype in Ireland during the early 1840s. Still, as there is no mention of him in any of Talbot's correspondence, his association with the collection must be considered only a remote possibility.

The Leinster calotypes were also examined by the Art historian Rollin Buckman in his 1990 compendium, *The Photographic Work of Calvert Richard Jones*.[624] Following an investigation of these and other photographs from Talbot's archive, Buckman published those images from the collection held at the Science Museum in London. These were accompanied by their *catalogue raisonne*, descriptive title and size. However, in contrast to Chandler and Walsh's claim of joint authorship, Buckman, by crediting the entire body of work to Jones, makes no mention of Furlong.[625] Indeed, Furlong remains something of a mysterious

[621] The Science Museum, London still credits Talbot with several of these images.

[622] Chandler and Walsh, *Through a Brass Lidded,* xiv.

[623] Ibid.

[624] Buckman, Rollin. 1990. *The Photographic Work of Calvert Richard Jones*. London: Science Museum: H. M. S. O.

[625] Many of the images published in Buckman's compendium are undoubtedly the work of Calvert Richard Jones. They are historically verifiable and can be traced to the timeline of Jones' travels through Europe and also the descriptions he makes of them in his correspondence with Talbot. However, despite Buckman's comprehensive chronology, he makes no mention of how Jones came to be associated with the Irish images in Talbot's collection. The Leinster calotypes held at the Science Museum appear in three subject groups listed as Dublin (SVI 1 to SVI 12), Ireland (CM24 to CM31) and Churches (CC24, CC28 – CC30). Strangely, Buckman lists a photograph of Dublin's iconic Custom House, which appears here as Figure 83, as an unidentified location.

character. His surname appears on the Landed Estates Database maintained by the National University of Ireland as a minor landowning family resident in Counties Cork and Limerick.[626] In the few letters we have from him, he spells his name either Furlong or Furlonge. This variation has caused some confusion.

In contrast with what little can be gathered about Furlong, the Rev. Calvert Jones is, on the other hand, a readily identifiable historical figure. Born into one of Swansea's most prominent families, before he inherited his father's estate, Jones indulged his passion for photography by becoming one of the medium's first recognisable Grand Tourists. Many of the images Jones had taken on his 1846 photographic Grand Tour of the continent made their way to Henneman for sale in his London print viewing rooms. Presumably, it was these travels, along with Jones' friendship with Talbot and family ties to Ireland, that have led several historians to credit part authorship of the Leinster calotypes to him.[627]

Granted, the curiously detached images that make-up the Leinster calotype collection lack either inscription or reference in historical sources, their authorial provenance may remain an indefinite mystery. Then again, considering the period from which the images date from, doubts concerning their authorship are not surprising. Unlike photographers in this present-day who invest inordinate effort into establishing the genesis of their creative endeavours, photography's early exponents were far less interested in such matter of fact details. What motivated these practitioners was a desire to have their names linked with the technological and historiographic discoveries that obsessed Victorian society. Furlong had drawn our attention to this small but not unimportant distinction when he penned a letter to the journal *Photographic Notes* claiming credit for an iodizing procedure associated with the early calotype process. Writing from Dublin in February 1856, when the calotype was well into its final death throes, Furlong noted that it was he and not another correspondent to the journal who had developed this technique some years before.[628]

Though Furlong is deserving of further research, his connection with the Leinster calotypes appears to be based solely on him being active in Ireland during the early 1840s. A technical

[626] See the website Landed Estates Database. 2014. "Connacht and Munster Landed Estates Database". http://www.landedestates.ie/

[627] Including Edward Chandler, the several authors who have associated Jones with the collection give no reason for doing so.

[628] See Furlong, William H. 1856. "On Iodizing Paper." *Photographic Notes, Journal of the Photographic Society of Scotland and the Manchester Photographic Society* (1): 23.

assistant at St. Andrews University in Scotland, Furlong was introduced to the calotype through the circle of free thinkers that surrounded Sir David Brewster. Including such luminaries in the early history of the medium as David Octavius Hill and the brothers Robert and John Adamson, through their experimentation with the calotype, this group helped propagate the emergence of photography in Scotland and Ireland. Regrettably, as is so often the case with early photography, few examples of Furlong's work survive. The only photographs that can be verified as his creations are a series of ruins taken on the site of St Andrews Cathedral.[629] These images form part of a family compendium known as the "Brewster Album", now archived at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California.[630] Compiled by David Brewster and his first wife, Juliet, apart from the work of Talbot, Edgeworth, Herschel and the Adamsons (amongst others), the album also incorporates a fascinating series of images taken at Buttevant in County Cork by Brewster's son Henry, whilst he was stationed there as a captain in the 76th Regiment of Foot in 1842.[631] These photographs count amongst the earliest known surviving images from the history of the medium in Ireland.[632]

Although the scattering of images attributable to Furlong offers genuine historical interest, his productions are singularly unremarkable. In comparison with Hill and Robert Adamson's proto-documentary studies at Newhaven in Scotland, Furlong's work appears flat and uninviting. Reflective of the sense of detachment inherent in the greater part of the Leinster calotypes, Furlong's photographs fail to rival the hypnotic brilliance of Hill and Adamson's famous "fishwife" images from the Newhaven series (Fig. 82).[633] Through her aversion of the gaze, one that seduced Walter Benjamin, the "fishwife" heralded an interpretative dilemma that resonated in Roland Barthes analogical comparison between

[629] Brewster to Talbot #4897, 18 Nov., 1843.

[630] The Furlong images appear as plates .85 and .102 in J. Paul Getty Museum compendium of the Brewster Album. See Smith, Graham. 1990. *Disciples of Light: Photographs in the Brewster Album.* Malibu, California: J. Paul Getty Museum.

[631] I have formed the view that there are without doubt other undiscovered Irish calotypes within the Talbot collection. One possible inclusion might be the images produced by Henry Craigie Brewster in Buttevant, County Cork. In his letter to Talbot dated 22 October 1842, David Brewster mentions that he was in the process of making prints from his son's negatives and would "soon" forward these on to him. More than likely these images are copies of those which appear in the Brewster Album. Much like the Sackville Street (O'Connell Street) image Chandler notes was incorrectly recorded in the Talbot Collection as the Place Vendome in Paris, without knowledge of Buttevant there are few details in these pictures that might suggest their Irish location. Brewster to Talbot #4628, 22 Oct 1842.

[632] Henry Brewster's images taken at Buttevant in Cork appear as plates .110 and .111 in Smith, *Disciples.*

[633] Walter Benjamin mentions the "fishwife" image in his *A Small History of Photography* (1931), but he does not indicate which of the Hill and Adamson photographs grabbed his attention. However, given that the image (Fig. 82), which depicts Mrs Elizabeth (Johnstone) Hall, is a single subject, and the women's gaze coincides with Benjamin's description, this is more than likely the image he refers to.

photography and history. Echoing Derrida's ponderings on the archive, Barthes suggests that although photography was capable of freezing what he described as "mythic time", by being forged from the same forces that had invented "history", the medium was a co-conspirator in modernity's desire to sever us from the past.[634] Hill and Adamson contemplated this conundrum through their photographic studies of fairy trees, monastic ruins and other aspects of a rapidly vanishing past being eroded away by modernity's unrelenting pursuit of progression.

Figure 82. ***Mrs Elizabeth (Johnstone) Hall, Newhaven fishwife***
David Ocatavius Hill and Robert Adamson, 1845

Recovering the past through the Leinster calotypes

Just as Furlong's link to the Leinster calotypes is tenuous, the Rev. Calvert Richard Jones' association with the collection is also, despite his historical standing, difficult to verify. Although Jones had family ties to Ireland and travelled there on important social occasions, such as when he officiated at Lady Charlotte Butler's wedding at Cahir House, County Tipperary in October 1835, there is no record of him having visited the country during the 1840s.[635] Another complication regarding Jones' involvement with the collection is that in

[634] See Barthes, Roland. 1986. *The Rustle of Language*. Berkley, California: University of California Press. 130.

[635] See Buckman, *The Photographic Work,* 16. Lady Charlotte Butler's family were Irish Peers from Anglo-Norman origins.

his correspondence with Talbot he makes no mention of these images or any detail that might link him with them.[636] Yet it is by comprehensively sifting through the traces of the past in the archive where Jones' potential association with the collection can be found.

Sharing several confidants, through photography Jones and Talbot became good friends. And although we only have Jones' outgoing letters, the two appear to have regularly corresponded, with Talbot taking on a mentoring role.[637] In every aspect of life Jones is open with Talbot and always quick to offer him his praise. He describes to him his apprehensions about life and, importantly, his photographic practice at home and abroad. Tellingly, Jones also confides in Talbot about his financial difficulties. Though Jones was heir to a considerable fortune, he seems to have had meagre means for a man of his social standing. Hence, his relationship with Talbot also had a commercial imperative. Jones' alludes to this when he suggests in a letter the price his images should be sold for in Henneman's London print viewing rooms.[638]

Notwithstanding the leap of faith required to speculate upon the authorship of the Leinster calotypes when they are examined for their subject matter and aesthetic treatment Jones' hand does become recognisable. The task of attributing Jones' authorship to aspects of the collection is made easier by the voluminous amount of work accredited to him. He was a prolific photographer. In contrast to the desperately few images ascribed to Furlong, Jones' catalogue is substantial. Along with his friend and fellow Swansea photographic collaborator John Dillwyn Llewelyn, Jones' studies of maritime, rural, ecclesiastical and industrial sites in Wales, a project he commenced in October 1846, have made a significant contribution to both Welsh cultural heritage and the early history of photography. It is this legacy and, more importantly, the stylistic signature divulged from Jones' catalogue, that can be read from a number of images within the Leinster calotype collection.

[636] Larry Schaaf mentions, in a footnote to a letter from William Buckland to Talbot, that there is a suggestion of Jones' involvement in the Leinster calotypes when his name becomes associated with a negative image of Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin. But it must be said that Jones' connection is only coincidental. Indeed, the image Schaaf refers to, "27. Old Christ Church Cathedral Dublin (before restoration) from s.w.", which may not be the image noted in Buckland's letter, presents an aesthetic treatment unlike that associated with Jones. See Buckland to Talbot #5975, 07 Jul., 1847.

[637] Unlike many of his contemporaries, Talbot did not respond to his correspondents by writing beneath or on the back of letters. This use of new stationery for every letter has made it difficult to follow the trail of his conversations.

[638] Jones to Talbot #5769, 03 Nov 1846.

Figure 83. ***The Custom House, Dublin (National Maritime Museum, London)***

These aesthetic traits attributable to Jones are most evident in an image of the Custom House building in Dublin. Taken either from George's Quay or Burgh Quay (Fig. 83),[639] this is one of two images from the collection featuring this site. Here Jones' expertise (if indeed he is the photographer) as a maritime artist of some renown, has, through the spatial conventions of painting, quelled the compositional difficulties presented by this view. But this would have been old ground for Jones. As indicated by the pencil sketch (Fig. 84), Jones had studied this scene before. Dated "Jan 9, 1836", this drawing was executed, no doubt, on the occasion he travelled to Ireland to officiate at Charlotte Butler's wedding in late 1835. When read in comparison with the photograph (Fig. 83), this rendering demonstrates not only Jones' command for location work but also provides an indication into how the compositional conventions of painting informed photography's emerging aesthetic awareness.[640]

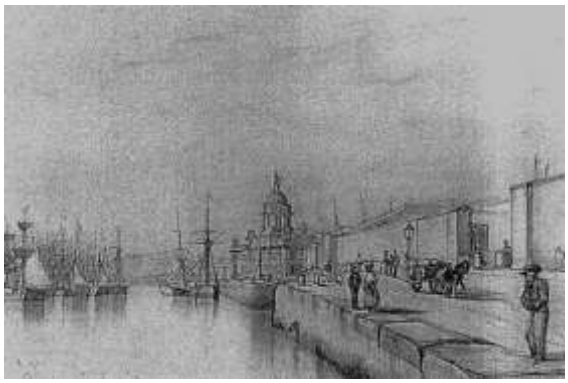

Figure 84. ***Calvert Richard Jones, sketch of Dublin Harbour dated "Jan 9, 1836"***

[639] As calotype images are laterally inverted, and the photograph (Fig. 83), which is a reproduction from the Science Museum website, may or may not have been flipped in post-production, it is hard to tell the location it was taken.

[640] For a summary of the aesthetic connections between early photography and painting, see Wells, Lez, ed. 2012. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Jones' poise at photographing people is also detectable from the Leinster calotypes. As seen in his joiner daguerreotype views of Margam Castle (Fig. 85), Jones' training as a painter prompted him to place his subjects in positions recessive to the camera. This technique, which entices the viewer's eye through the illusion of depth, is noted in two images from the Dublin scenes. The first, (Fig. 86), is of a mixed group of women, men and children standing in front of St. George's Church of Ireland in Hardwicke Place. The second, (Fig. 86), is the image of a solitary male taken alongside the city's principal location of Catholic devotion, St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral (Fig. 87).[641] In both these images, the placement of the subjects on the converging lines that make up the street view has given them a heightened graphic presence. In contrast with other group scenes from the collection, notably those taken at Powerscourt House, these images are captured with an air of controlled spontaneity. When combined with their compositional attributes, the stylistic qualities evident in these and several other images in the collection distinguish them from the majority of work being created during what was effectively photography's infancy.

Figure 85. ***Joiner daguerreotype views of Margam Castle, Rev Calvert Jones, 1841***

[641] Ironically, considering Jones' confessional allegiances, he entered Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in 1822; the Science Museum collection has catalogued the image of St. Mary's as a "Protestant Cathedral". But, then again, this oversight might have happened in the cataloguing process.

Figure 86. ***St. George's, Church of Ireland, Hardwicke Place, Dublin (National Media Museum, Bradford)***

Figure 87. ***St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough St, Dublin (National Media Museum, Bradford)***

Whereas an examination of the subject matter and aesthetic treatment of the Leinster calotypes may help substantiate the authorship speculations examined here, these photographs are still difficult to date. As mentioned above, Chandler's suggestion that these images date to the time of the Famine is negated by Maria Pelizzari's statement. An authority on the early history of photography in Europe, Pelizzari proposes that these images originated from a time prior to this calamity.[642] Needless to say, albeit that the periods mentioned by these authors differ only by a matter of years, a great deal turns on

[642] Pelizzari, "The Inclusive Map".

these claims. For if the photographs that make up the collection do in fact date from the time of the Famine, they are beholding to another curious historical silence.

Despite the photographers who captured these images working at locations where the "other" gathered in their multitudes, the places depicted in these scenes appear erringly quiet. In the image of the Custom House taken from the adjoining Custom House Quay (Appendix Three), those who had the means to flee the country during the Famine are conspicuous by their absence. Apart from a soldier and a figure holding a dog, all is still. Similarly, in the photograph of the Four Courts (Fig. 88), where the camera is located a street front away from Asenath Nicholson's Famine era soup kitchen, the starving make not a murmur. But where this silence is most palpable is in the photograph taken of the Rutland Memorial Fountain at Merrion Square (Fig. 89). In this tightly cropped image, there is no sign of the "other" who, during the early stages of the Famine, camped out at this the leisure garden of the city's most influential families desperately seeking "outdoor relief". [643]

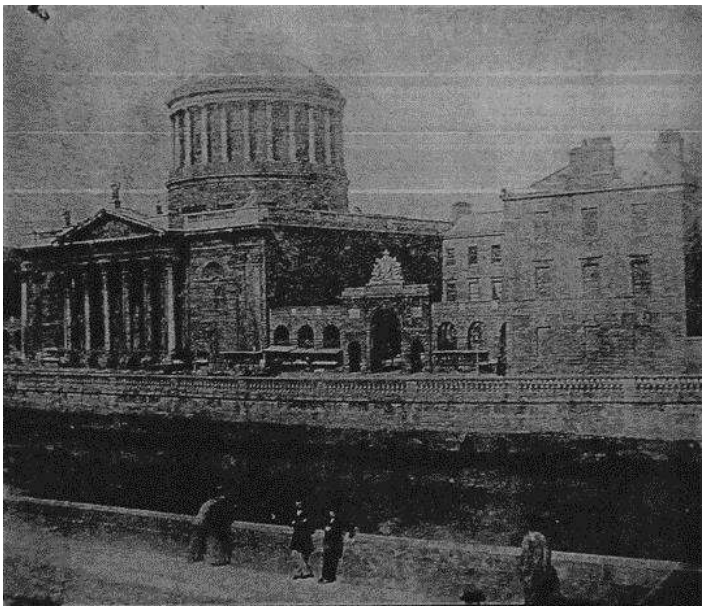

Figure 88. ***Two figures standing on the south bank of the Liffey with the Four Courts in background***[644]

[643] For a brief account of the Merrion Square encampment, see Kilfeather, Siobhan. 2005. *Dublin: A Cultural History.* New York: Oxford University Press. 83. Many influential Dublin families, such as the Wildes, lived close to Merrion Square.

[644] Fig. 88 was sourced from Chandler and Walsh's *Through the Brass Lidded Eye: Photography in Ireland, 1839 - 1900*. The image appears on the front cover of the publication and does not seem to be held by the National Media Museum in Bradford.

Figure 89. ***The Rutland Memorial Fountain, Merrion Square, Dublin (National Media Museum, Bradford)***

This photographic silencing of the "other" is strongly evocative of what Joan Schwartz has cited in quoting Mary Louise Pratt's examination of 19th-century travel writing as the "erasure of the human".[645] Instilled in that term resonant in the history of imperialist expansionism as *terra nullius* (land belonging to none),[646] Schwartz suggests that by early photography's excessively long exposures silencing those who had not posed for the camera, the medium reiterated the dominant colonial/modernist worldview. Within the photographic frame was evidence of not just the coloniser's technical supremacy but also of their social superiority over all that they observed. Consequently, in the absence of the native's representation, as might be attributed to in the Leinster calotypes, lay proof of a culture that was either inferior, at best or simply did not exist.

Mysterious men

Apart from their depiction of a now long bygone Dublin, the Leinster calotypes also offer an intriguing snapshot of emerging social perceptions of photography. Of note is an image of a group of men wearing top hats on the lawn at the *Library Square* in Trinity College (Fig. 90).

[645] Schwartz quotes from Pratt's 1992 volume *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* See Schwartz, Joan M. 1996. "The Geography Lesson: photographs and the construction of imaginative geographies." *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1): 30.

[646] For a discussion of the concept of *terra nullius,* see Fitzmaurice, Andrew. 2014. *Sovereignty, Property and Empire, 1500 – 2000.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Basking in the sun on the space where Sir Charles Lanyon's Campanile (Bell Tower) has stood since 1852, these sitters, who appear in various combinations throughout the collection, bestow in their candour to the camera an insider's familiarity with the medium.[647] But this is not the only intriguing social dimension about this photograph. By lying on the lawn at the *Library Square*, an activity still frowned on by university authorities today (Fig. 91), these sitters portray a jovial irreverence for academic protocol; as if they are well aware of the esteem Dons hold for their grassed central squares but have sufficient social capital to flaunt this convention before the camera.

Figure 90.***The Library Square, Trinity College Dublin***

(National Media Museum, Bradford)

There has been some speculation as to the identity of these mysterious men. They appear in a number of formations throughout the Leinster calotypes. Chandler raises the possibility that they may include, and have even been photographed by, William Furlong. Intriguingly, considering what little is known about the social networks that informed the practice of early photography in Ireland, he also suggests that Furlong was accompanied by no other than Michael Pakenham Edgeworth. Though Chandler offers no evidence to support his claim, it is far from being an outlandish proposition. Indeed, if later proved, it may even help date aspects of the collection. Both men experimented with photography in Ireland during the early-to-mid 1840s. We know of Furlong's practice through correspondence

[647] Several of these men also appear in an accompanying photograph taken at the New Square at Trinity College (Appendix Three),. Significantly, judging by tree foliage in this image, the photographs seem to have been taken in the early spring.

archived in the British Library. Similarly, Pakenham's investigations with the calotype in Ireland while he was on leave from the East India Company between spring 1842 and the mid-summer of 1846 are verified by the historical record.[648] Moreover, Furlong and Edgeworth were acquainted with each other through David Brewster's circle at St. Andrews University in Scotland. Might it be that this alumni connection and the friendly rivalry that existed between St Andrews and Trinity College as part of Britain and Ireland's "ancient universities" explain the tongue-in-cheek irreverence shown by the figures basking on the lawn at the *Library Square*? [649]

Figure 91. ***The "New Square", Trinity College Dublin, 2012*** (Author)

It must be said that Furlong and Edgeworth make an odd pairing. Though both were members of Ireland's colonial class, they came from widely different social backgrounds. In many ways, it could only have been through a shared interest in photography that these men might have been drawn together. Derived from diverse cultural, philosophical and political orientations, the Anglo-Irish Ascendency was not a heterogeneous block. To view it in this way oversimplifies both the relations of power in colonial Ireland and the diversity of this class. This divide might even help explain the distinctions in the dress worn by the men that appear throughout the Leinster calotypes. Though some are dandy, others appear, due to their ill-fitting garments, to be like poorer cousins showing their cosmopolitan relatives around the sites of the provincial capital. But these observations aside, Pakenham came from one of Ireland's most acknowledged colonial families. In his youth, his sister Maria's

[648] Jacob, Michael G. 2000. "Michael Pakenham Edgeworth (1812-81): Pioneer Irish Photographer." *History of Photography* 24 (2): 169-174.

[649] For a brief contextual account of Britain and Ireland's "ancient universities" see Anderson, R. N. 1992. *Universities and elites in Britain since 1800.* Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

literary fame rivalled or, according to some authors, surpassed that of Jane Austen.[650] And whilst Furlong remains an unknown figure outside his brief encounter with photography, his position at St Andrews as a technical assistant and not a full student, as was Pakenham, suggests that he came from humble stock.

While unlocking the identity of the men who appear in the Leinster calotypes might prove to be a judicious way of dating these images, as they are eclipsed by the monuments that surround them they remain only as misty silhouettes. But they do present some discernible characteristics. Certainly one is tall, while another is far shorter in frame.[651] In the Four Courts image, these two men stand side-by-side (Fig. 88). Their distinctions in height, together with the awkward gait of the taller figure as he holds his pose for the camera, lend a comical air to the scene. Of these men, the shorter of the two repeatedly appears throughout the collection. In the image of the Rutland Memorial Fountain (Fig. 89), he strikes a solitary pose. This figure can also be seen in a photograph taken on the parade ground at Dublin Castle (Appendix Three). Dwarfed by a group of soldiers standing alongside him, in this image he has the height of a young boy. Indeed, upon examining enlargements I had taken of this photograph at the National Media Museum in Bradford, the figure closely resembles a representation of Michael Pakenham from the Brewster album.[652] In this image, Edgeworth is seated with the Brewster family.[653] He is round in the face, as he appears in his daguerreotype representation at the National Gallery in Ireland, and short in stature. Tellingly, in the Edgeworth family Pakenham was affectionately known as “little” Michael.[654]

As opposed to the evidence that suggests Michael Pakenham’s involvement with the Leinster calotypes, a similar anthropometric assessment of William Furlong is hindered by the lack of representations of him. Only one is known to exist.[655] This image, (Fig. 92), is also from the Brewster album.[656] With the annotated title “Bridge on the Kenly / Mr R. Adamson

[650] Baker, William. 2008. *Critical Companion to Jane Austen: A Literary Reference to her Life and Work.* New York: Facts on File. 527.

[651] The smaller figure appears in several images throughout the collection.

[652] The image I refer to appears as plate .120 in Smith, *Disciples.*

[653] The National Gallery of Ireland has two excellent daguerreotype images of Michael Pakenham Edgeworth.

[654] See Jacob “Michael Pakenham,” 169.

[655] I make this claim after extensive research and on soliciting the opinions of several experts in this field.

[656] The image appears as plate .75 in Smith, *Disciples.*

Mr Furlong", the picture, attributed to John Adamson, depicts two men of similar stature standing on a bridge over the River Kenly in Burnside, Scotland. Much like the figures in the Leinster calotypes, these men are overshadowed by the panorama that surrounds them. Although it is impossible to tell them apart (annotative titles within the Brewster Album are often out of sequence), we might deduce that since they both appear to be of average stature that Furlong was of regular height. Evidence for this assumption can be gained from examining photographs of Robert Adamson. In the famous representations taken of him resting on Dissenter graves at Greyfriars Cemetery in Edinburgh, he appears to be of normal height.[657]

Figure 92. ***"Bridge on the Kenly / Mr R. Adamson Mr Furlong", from the Brewster Album (John Adamson 1842/3)***

Still, despite what is inferred by the annotated title noted on the Kenly photograph, a closer inspection reveals that there are in fact three people captured in the frame. To the right of the two men in the centre of the picture, there is another male figure. Here he appears faint – like a spectre. Curiously, by supporting his weight on the bridge rail, this figure exhibits a gait not dissimilar to the taller of the two men who appear in the Four Courts image from the Leinster calotypes (Fig. 88). More significantly, this man is exceptionally tall. His head is above the alignment of the top hat worn by the man in the centre of the

[657] This and other images taken by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson at Greyfriars Cemetery, and now archived in the George Eastman House Archive. See George Eastman House Archive. 2014. Photography Collections Online. http://www.geh.org/fm/Hill/htmlscr/hilladam_idx00001.html

photograph. And whilst we are unable to tell the other two men apart (one of them has to be Robert Adamson), within the picture frame there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that the taller of the three is Furlong and that his similarity in height with the figure that appears in the Leinster calotypes suggests that he and, by extension, also possibly Michael Pakenham, participated in the production of the collection.

Armed with this reductive understanding we might, then, deduce from Pakenham and Furlong's potential association the period encompassed by the Leinster calotypes. Coinciding with Furlong's pursuit of the calotype and Pakenham's return to Ireland on leave from the East India Company, an early date for the collection would be within the first half of 1842. And though it is hard to substantiate Furlong's photographic practice post the early 1840s,[658] since Pakenham's furlough ended in September 1846, whereupon he returned to India, a late date for his involvement would be during the summer of that same year – just as the Famine was inundating the country.[659] Yet like the conjectures David Hemmings' character, Thomas, makes in Michelangelo Antonioni's motion picture *Blow-up* (1966), as he scrutinised increasingly minute photographic detail, to subject these images to such forensic examination might cause us to see things that are simply not there.[660]

Deconstructing the archive

Though the Leinster calotypes have surrendered up some fascinating details, examining them from a depository consisting of innumerable documents does, in its own peculiar way, contribute to the "annihilation of memory" Derrida described as Archive Fever.[661] The more we scrutinise these images as Famine documents, the more the archive conceals the memory of that which it "shelters".[662] Reminiscent of Kafka's autobiographical observations

[658] In a letter to Talbot in late 1876, his first in nearly 40 years, Furlong suggests that he still held an interest in photography by stating that he had not "deserted … [his] old love". Interestingly, in this letter Furlong also queried Talbot on the subject of photography as to "whether or not you still interest yourself in the matter". Furlong to Talbot #2393, 3 Oct 1876.

[659] See Barbe, Lluis. 2010. *Francis Ysidro Edgeworth: A Portrait with Family and Friends*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. 432 Francis Ysidro Edgeworth was Michael Pakenham's cousin. Francis was a famous political economist. The date Pakenham left for India is mentioned in Francis' letters archived in the Bodleian Library.

[660] Antonioni, Michelangelo. 1966. *Blow-up.* Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Corp., Metrocolor. Funnily enough, there is a figure in the Leinster calotypes that when subject to a Photoshop enlargement resembles Captain Henry Craigie Brewster. As noted above, Brewster had taken collotype images in and around Buttevant, County Cork when stationed there with the 76th Regiment of Foot in 1842. In the Leinster collotypes, this figure closely resembles the only known contemporary to that time photographic representation of Henry Brewster. Part of the Brewster Album, this image is a self-portrait. The image appears as plate .148 in Smith, *Disciples.* It is inscribed, *Capt. B. Phot,.* In the Leinster images, the Brewster lookalike appears alongside a group of soldiers at the Wellington monument and also on the grounds of the New Square in Trinity College. In both these photographs, the figure is endowed with the same "mutton chop" sideburns worn by Brewster in his self-portrait.

[661] Derrida, *Archive,* 11.

[662] Ibid., 2.

on the archive in *The Castle*, where the character "K" is psychologically trapped between mounting piles of documents and an inflexible bureaucracy,[663] examining the Leinster calotypes as a Famine record might only bolster the forgetfulness that surrounds it.

What I emphasise in this statement is that my rationale for undertaking such a comprehensive unpacking of the Leinster calotypes is to stress how thorough the assessment of photographs need to be if they are to be used as a parallel text to reading history. Unlike the conventional historian, who sees images as an adjunct to more authoritative text based sources, when examined as a parallel text, photographs have an unadulterated potential for teasing out overlooked aspects of the past. But as I have demonstrated in chapter four's examination of forgotten memory, this reading of the photograph can only occur when the social conditions that led to its production are acknowledged. Hence, by scrutinising the Leinster calotypes for what they might reveal about the Famine, we are compelled, as Derrida suggests, to keep returning to the archive. It is towards satisfying this desire that I continue to investigate William Furlong and Calvert Richard Jones' connection with this work. What is important to realise here is that if either of these men can be identified as contributing to the collection, we then have a means of attributing a chronological relationship between the scenes depicted in these images and the Famine.

But having said that, Furlong's involvement with the collection does suggest that at least some of these images predate the Famine by a number of years. Evidence for Furlong's connection can be gathered by examining the photographs taken outside Powerscourt House. Comprising of four views, three of which depict either a group or single figure in a scene, this work appears naive. As can be discerned from a contrived scene, where two men perform a clumsily handshake gesture, the images are indicative of a novice coming to grips with a medium unfamiliar with them.[664] Additionally, when the photographs are examined with reference to a letter Furlong writes to Talbot, where he alludes to his authorship of these images, they hint at a period prior to the Famine. Writing in an effort to remedy technical problems he was experiencing with the calotype, Furlong makes mention in this letter of a positive print produced by Talbot from a negative he had "made in the

[663] Kafka, Franz. 1968. *The Castle.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

[664] This image appears in Buckman's compendium of Jones' photographs as CM28 Powerscourt, County Wicklow. See Buckman, *The Photographic.*

County of Wicklow".[665] This image, which included a member of Furlong's family, had been forwarded to Talbot by David Brewster in late 1841.[666] Since Talbot was so secretive about his process, (even Henneman in his letters seemed unsure about certain elemental details), Furlong was at the mercy of the calotype's inventor to offer him advice. Further, as Furlong's correspondence is dated 16 March 1842, and he infers more than a circumstantial connection to the image of Powerscourt House, the estate is in County Wicklow; we then have enough reason to propose that aspects of the collection were produced by him and, significantly, these images date from the early 1840s.

Reading photographs as historical sources

Notwithstanding Furlong's connection to the Leinster calotypes providing a potential early date for their creation, other methodologies used to date photographs exemplify the problems they present when read as historical sources. For instance, a mechanical examination of these images serves to compound the complexity of their dating.[667] Given, as Roger Taylor's research indicates, that some British calotypers practiced the medium for ten or more years beyond the advent of the wet collodion process in 1851, parts of the collection may date from a period after the Famine.[668] We have only to recall Eugene Atget's Parisian streetscapes to appreciate how this technological lag occurred. When Atget was continuing to capture these mesmerising scenes on a glass plate camera in the late 1920s, the technique was considered to be "archaic".[669]

Correspondingly, an examination of architectural detail in these photographs, generally an accurate chronological indicator, is also fraught with problems. And though the image of the men lounging at the *Library Square* indicates that, due to the absence of Lanyon's *Campanile*, aspects of the collection must date from prior to the structure's construction in 1852, other details from the built environment are misleading. In making this statement, I draw attention to a negative image of the King's Inns archived in the National Media

[665] Furlong to Talbot #4347, 7 Nov 1841.

[666] Brewster to Talbot #4440, 16 Mar 1842.

[667] A mechanical examination does, however, provide one important clue to the collection's origins. As the images vary in size and aspect ratio (although a number have been trimmed), these images are more than likely the production of several practitioners – certainly more than the two credited with the collection.

[668] The term "calotypers" appears in documents contemporary to the 1840s and '50s as a noun used to describe early photographers.

[669] At a time when photography was undergoing incredible technological change, Atget was utilising a process not dissimilar to that used during the 1850s. I sourced the reference to Atget's practice with "archaic" equipment in Rabate, Jean-Michel. 2014. *Crimes of the Future: Theory and its Global Reproduction.* New York: Bloomsbury. xvi.

Museum, Bradford (Fig. 93). Constructed in the early 1800s as Legal Chambers, the King's Inns are the Republic of Ireland's principal School of Law. Counting amongst its alumni are figures such as the 1916 revolutionary leader Patrick Pearce (Fig. 94) and the Unionist politician Edward Carson who is, outside of Ireland, best known for being Oscar Wilde's inquisitor during the famous Marquis of Queensbury libel case. The King's Inns embody the social, political and cultural divisions that have shaped modern Ireland.

Figure 93. ***The King's Inns, Dublin (National Media Museum, Bradford)***

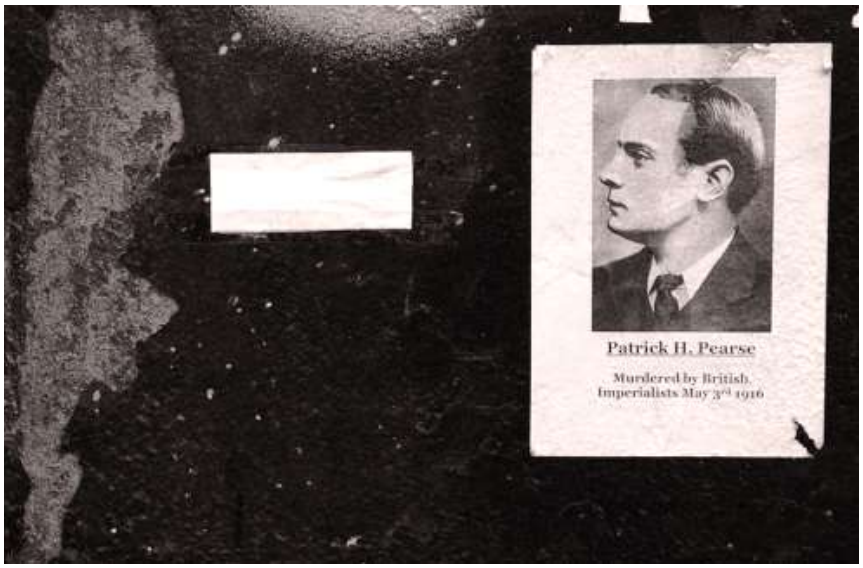

Figure 94. ***Xerox street poster marking the 90th Anniversary of the Easter Rising, Abbey Street, Dublin, 2006*** (Author)

In a similar vein, the King's Inns development as a bastion of Irish jurisprudence has also been governed by the country's historically troubled fiscal circumstances. Mirroring the economic depression that followed the accumulative impact of the Act of Union and cessation of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, where apart from church construction following Catholic Emancipation in 1829, Dublin saw very few new building projects, the King's Inns were built in stages. It has been this heirloom to colonialism, and not the foresight of the city's planners, that has given rise to Dublin's celebrated Georgian streetscapes. More significantly, according to the architectural historian Patricia McCarthy, it was also these factors that accounted for the King's Inns East and West wings not being erected until, presumably, in 1846 and 1849 respectively.[670]

This architectural legacy, which sees the East wing of the King's Inns being built in 1846, locates the creation of this image and, therefore, possibly part of the Leinster calotype collection, from the time of the Famine. The evidence is literally in the detail. As a close inspection of the photograph (Fig. 93) reveals, located in the lower right-hand corner of the image is the paraphernalia indicative of a building under construction.[671] Nevertheless, this date is by no means set in stone. Doubts concerning this chronology arise when the existence of a positive copy of the King's Inns image printed on paper watermarked with the year "1842" enters the frame.[672] Located in the British Library, London, the presence of this positive print in the archive indicates one of two possibilities. Either the year McCarthy acknowledges for the East wing's construction is incorrect, (she is by no means sure about this date), or the positive copy watermarked "1842" was printed on old writing paper stock.[673] Apparently the practice of sourcing older paper stock, as divulged in Talbot's letters, was not uncommon amongst practitioners of the calotype. Nonetheless, irrespective of the circumstances, by offering an inconclusive date, this image exemplifies the problems that stem from using photographs to make broad historical statements –

[670] See McCarthy, Patricia. 2006. *A Favourite Study: Building the King's Inns.* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

[671] As calotype negatives were inverted and upside down (there was no reflex mirror in these cameras), the East wing of the King's Inns, which is on the left hand side of this South facing building, appears on the right hand side of the image presented here.

[672] I am indebted to Professor Schaaf for alerting me to the existence of this image, and also to staff at the King's Inns, Dublin for their assistance with locating the building's historical record.

[673] It seems strange, in hindsight, that instead of commissioning stock to be made specific to their requirements, the practitioners of the calotype invested so much time and effort into sourcing paper from printers and other merchants. See Gernsheim *The History,* 132.

particularly with events, such as the Famine, that are assumed to be have been absent from the photographic record.[674]

The photographic practice of Rev. Calvert Richard Jones

Though the Leinster calotypes remain difficult to date, I suggest that if the Calvert Richard Jones' connection with the collection is examined more closely, it follows that a portion of these photographs may have been taken during the Famine. After the success of his first daguerreotype experiments in 1841, Jones was eager to try his hand with the calotype. A seasoned traveler, he recognised the rewards a paper based photographic process would offer him. Principally, as he noted in a letter to Talbot before undertaking a photographic Grand Tour of Europe in 1841, the calotype would free him from the "trouble, weight, and expense" of having to haul daguerreotype plates across the continent.[675] But reflective of other early commentators on photography, including Talbot, while Jones is correct in acknowledging the calotype's portability over the daguerreotype, he overlooked what was his mentor's greatest endowment to the medium. Unlike the difficulties associated with producing daguerreotype copies, the calotype was the medium of infinite mechanical reproduction. In his invention, Talbot had achieved what his great rival, Daguerre, had failed at – to industrialise the photographic process.

Notwithstanding his enthusiasm for the calotype, Jones' initial attempts with the medium were a disappointment. His lack of chemistry training, combined with the constant "blotches and spots" that marred his images, forced him to abandon the process while overseas.[676] It would not be until July 1845, when Jones met with Talbot and Henneman for a field trip to York, that he began to master the medium. Enough, so it would seem, that, backed with iodized paper supplied to him by Henneman, essential for the production of calotype negatives, he undertook a second photographic Grand Tour of Europe in November 1845. But for this paper, Jones writes to Talbot just before returning home in May 1846, his endeavors would have been a failure.[677]

[674] McCarthy is more than likely correct in her assumption that the east wing of the King's Inns was built around the year 1846. However, as there is no historical evidence to verify this claim, the date of the structure's construction, like its photographic representation, remains undetermined.

[675] Jones to Talbot #04264, 29 May 1841.

[676] Jones to Talbot #4744, 02 Mar 1843.

[677] Jones mentions throughout his correspondence with Talbot the artistic merit of this paper. He goes to endless lengths to procure more of it. However, Jones need not have relied on Henneman to supply him with iodized paper stock. Gernsheim mentions that in the early 1840s iodized paper was a common "article of commerce". It was not Talbot's invention. But like so

Albeit conjecture, I suggest that the timing of Jones' field trip to York, where he acquired the skills that led to his extraordinary practice with the calotype, raises two possibilities for him visiting Ireland and, in turn, encounter a Famine scene. As mentioned, this excursion (if it was ever taken at all) is not mentioned by Jones in his letters to Talbot. The earliest of these timeframes would see him arrive in Ireland sometime between travelling to York in July 1845 and his embarking for Europe in November of that same year. However, recalling Branwell Brontë's visit to Liverpool, as noted in chapter one, this period is far too early for Jones to have seen Famine victims. Though the Famine was well underway by this time, due to the relief measures instigated by Robert Peel's Tories, combined with the wide-scale consumption of seed potatoes for food, Jones would not have seen the great masses of people that inundated Dublin when the blight returned again in 1846.[678]

Though difficult to substantiate, an alternative possibility sees Jones arrive in Ireland at some point following his return from the continent in May 1846. In turn, this scenario presents two potential late dates, either October 1846, around the time Jones undertook his Welsh sojourn or early 1847. This late date, as is noted by Rollin Buckman, was when Jones forwarded to Henneman the accumulative views he had taken over eighteen months of travel.[679] It is this second possibility that places Jones in Dublin just as the Famine was delivering its most devastating mortality. At which point, on account of Lord Russel's zealous pursuit of "free market" principles, Jones would have come face to face with the starving "other" that inundated the city during the Famine. The horrors that left correspondents who witnessed these scenes dumbstruck and spurned, according to some authors, Bram Stoker's Famine memory account through his gothic thriller *Dracula*, would have played out in plain view of Jones and his camera (Fig. 95).[680]

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many other materials used in photography, Talbot included iodized paper on his calotype patent so as to restrict the mediums application. See Gernsheim *The History,* 132.

[678] Apart from Peel's relief measures, wide scale starvation was temporarily averted during 1846 by the eating of seed potatoes. This action would, however, contribute to the enormity of the catastrophe that soon followed. Even though the blight did not return in 1847, the lack of seed potatoes available for planting meant that the crop was inordinately small. See Donnelly, *The Great Irish.*

[679] See Buckman, *The Photographic,* 37. This claim is verified in a letter Jones writes to Talbot. See Jones to Talbot #5913, 28 Mar 1847.

[680] One of its most explicit annunciations that Stoker's novel can be read as a Famine text comes from the Irish poet and novelist Seamus Deane. In a short essay for the journal *History Ireland,* Deane suggested that the soil Dracula carries with him in his coffin can be read as an allegory for the situation of the absentee landlord at the time of the Famine. Interned in his London residence, the absentee landlord lived in a twilight world, outside the harsh reality that would come with the approaching "nationalist" dawn. Now facing the prospect of being "evicted from history", the absentee landlord, Deane suggests, seeks refuge in the only territory left open to them – "that of legend". See Deane, Seamus. 1994. "Land & Soil: a territorial rhetoric." *History Ireland* 2 (1): 32-34.

Figure 95. ***Diorama at the Bram Stoker Dracula Experience, Dublin, 2008*** (Author)

In prefacing this second possibility for Jones travelling to Ireland as being difficult to verify, I refer to evidence from the letters he had written to Talbot following his Grand Tour in May 1846, which places him in either England or Wales right up until his father's death in April 1847. This late date is significant, for it marks a point where, as the principal benefactor of his father's will, Jones' interest in photography becomes secondary to managing his family's estate. But that said, Jones would not have had to be in Dublin very long to have captured many images. Up until the large scale urbanisation projects instigated by the Irish state following WWII, Dublin was by no means a big town. Joyce alluded to Dublin's relatively small size in his novel *Ulysses,* when, on Thursday, 16 June 1904, "Bloomsday", the character Leopold Bloom traversed the greater part of the city in a matter of hours.[681] Similarly, Jones' expertise with the calotype would have also assisted the timely conclusion of any photographic excursion across the Irish Sea. While the medium was notoriously time-consuming, a competent operator could still take a good number of exposures over a relatively short period. Talbot makes mention of this in a letter to his wife, Constance, where, during his trip to York with Henneman and Jones, the trio, he wrote, "took 12 views" in a single day.[682]

[681] Of course, as readers of Ulysses will know, Leopold Bloom's journey, due to his numerous encounters, takes a good many hours. Nonetheless, the actual time he spends traversing the streets of Dublin is remarkably brief.

[682] Talbot to Constance Talbot #5341, 29 July 1845.

Looking for the "other"

Granted that the historical period encapsulated by the Leinster calotypes remains indeterminable, their existence in the archive still leads me to contemplate what we might garner from them into circumstances that contributed to the silencing of the Famine. After all, the sites depicted in these images are symbolic of both the coloniser's hegemonic project in Ireland and the deep-seated cultural estrangement they held against the native. However, evocative of Schwartz's reference to the "erasure of the human", these images are beholding to a curious reticence, for the mendicants associated in the coloniser's mindset with the Irish "other" are again absent from these scenes. Similarly, despite what is known about the chaotic nature of street-life in pre-Famine Dublin, in these photographs there is no trace of the countless waifs and abandoned children who scratched out an existence on the streets of "the second city of the Empire".[683] The dark, hungry street urchins, some of whom by making their way to Liverpool may have inspired Emily Brontë's character Heathcliff, would have been a familiar site at the places depicted in the collection.[684]

Notwithstanding the absence of the "other" from the Leinster calotypes reiterating the greater silences that surround them, I suggest that if we contemplate photography's transformative qualities, we might still perceive their presence. Although my conjecture here is informed by the metaphysical dimensions of photography discussed in chapter three, I refer more specifically to the whirlwinds of movement that are characteristic of the early medium. Created by the passage of traffic, animals and people, through early photography's excessively long exposures, the past registers to us as a historical blur. Indeed, Jones had reason to comment on this phenomenon when writing to Talbot from Rome. He remarked that depending upon the quality of available light, his exposures ranged from between "6" to a staggeringly long "20" minutes in duration.[685] This lapse in

[683] During times of food scarcity and epidemic, many destitute children gathered in Ireland's cities, particular Dublin. See Robins, Joseph. 1980. *The Lost Children: A Study of Charity Children in Ireland, 1700—1900*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. The reference to Dublin being "the second city of the Empire" was used by a number of authors contemporary to the time. Even Kohl describes Dublin as the "second city of the United Kingdom". See Kohl, *Travels*, 14.

[684] Kohl mentions how Dublin was awash with transient people moving back and forth between Ireland and Britain. He also notes the many women and children who begged for a living on the city's streets while men sought out work in England. See Kohl, *Travels*, 281 - 282.

[685] Jones to Talbot #5647, 11 May 1846.

time made it "impossible", he noted, to photograph moving objects, "especially Palm trees", which appear in his images only as fleeting outlines.[686]

If we are to extend Jones' reflections on palm trees to the representation of people, it follows, therefore, that the "other" who gathered at the sites depicted in the Leinster calotypes might be detected from the torrents of movement that are the residue of the camera's protracted exposure. What I propose in this statement is that when the viewer/reader scrutinises the photographic gushes that inundate the collection, they bear witness to the "other" as a historical blur. To cite Ulrich Baer's examination of Mikael Levin's photographs of forgotten Holocaust sites (discussed in Chapter Four), these images provide a form of "Spectral Evidence" into both their existence and the devastatingly harsh social conditions that were trussed on them.[687] Gathered around the mysterious men in top hats, whose insider knowledge of the medium required that they hold their pose for the camera, the "other" registers in these images as a ghost. Contradicting Benjamin's assertion that photography had destroyed the "aura", it is, I suggest, this absent presence of the "other" that pricks at our consciences when reading the collection.[688]

Figure 96. ***Detail of ghostly figures from the photograph taken on North Earl Street looking west towards Nelson's Pillar, Dublin***

[686] Jones to Talbot #5606, 15 March 1846.

[687] Baer, *Spectral Evidence.*

[688] In Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), he announces what he believed to be a demarcation in the essence of photography. For Benjamin, the mystic of the photograph, as he defines in his reading of Hill and Adamson's fishwife image in *A Small History of Photography* (1931), was lost on the medium's industrialisation. Unlike the singularity of the artwork, when the photograph became an item of infinite mass reproduction it lost its original auratic characteristics. However, as with Hill and Adamson's images, the Leinster calotypes are objects of infinite mechanical reproduction. They are the result of Talbot's negative/positive process, the forerunner for the medium's global dissemination. It is worth noting that when Benjamin was reading these images, likewise those by Atget, they were reproductions of the originals, not the originals themselves. And although Benjamin is correct in his assumption that the processes of industrial development have fundamentally changed the photograph as a material object, they have not – like the book – diminished what it might be read for. For an overview on the contentions surrounding Benjamin's concept of aura, see Caygill, Howard. 2005. *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience.* London: Routledge.

The shadowy distortions that imbrue the Leinster calotypes are listed in Appendix three. Of note are the shapes seen to the right of the picture in (Fig. 96). Taken from North Earl Street, looking west towards Nelson's Pillar, unlike the pedestrian traffic on the left of the image (which follows the photograph's vanishing point) these shapes encroach on the camera. They gaze back to us from the past that has yet to be accounted for. Again, Talbot recollected a similar scene when he wrote to his wife after visiting York with Henneman and Jones. Such was people's curiosity for the apparatus these men lavished so much attention on that "crowds of admiring spectators", he wrote, "surrounded the camera wherever we planted it".[689] Similar to Jones' recollections on palm trees, apart from the wisps of movement created by their bodies, the people Talbot mentions are nowhere to be seen.[690]

But what does this insight from the archive tell us about the "other" brought to ruin by the Famine? Considering the locations depicted in the Leinster calotypes and the fact that they were taken, as previously noted, during the early spring, the images are revealing. For the crowds who register in these images as a historical blur would have included some of the most marginalised members of Irish society. Including cottiers and landless labourers, these are the ghosts of those who due to their circumstances were most vulnerable to the agricultural emergencies that periodically struck the country. Consequently, it is in these torrents of movement fashioned by the body of the "other" where the collection provides a photographic insight into the ideological circumstances that brought about the Famine's silencing.

Prior to the Famine, when at least some of the images from the collection were taken, the presence of the "other" on Dublin's streets was a hungry summer interlude between them consuming the last of their potato supplies and the bounty promised by the autumn harvest. Dark, and, like Heathcliff, speaking "gibberish", their presence was unwelcome.[691] Inundating the city with their misery, they were a reminder for the Metropolitan of all that

[689] Talbot to Constance Talbot #5341, 29 July 1845.

[690] I have only located three of the 12 views Talbot had taken with Henneman and Jones.

[691] Brontë, *Wuthering Heights.* 42. Pre-Famine editions of *The Dublin Review* and the *Dublin Penny Journal* mirror the xenophobic views on the Irish and Dublin street life as depicted in English sources such as Punch. We also get an insight into Ascendency views on the Irish poor from travel writers. When the English abolitionist John Walker (1759 – 1830) arrived in Dublin in the mid-1780s, he was taken back not just by the appalling state of the poor but the indifference shown to them by Irish authorities. See Walker, John. 1795. *The Universal Gazetteer: Being a Concise Description ... of the Nations, Kingdoms, States, Towns* ... London: Darton and Harvey.

was wrong with Ireland. Lacking in morals and want for improvement, the retreat of the "other" to work their plots in the autumn was awaited with glee. Unsurprisingly, this way of life bounded to the rhythm of the potato ensued in the minds of the country's colonial elite what they perceived to be a peculiar seasonal disposition in the Irish. Preferring the cold and dark months of winter, the native appeared disparaging when the sun shined.

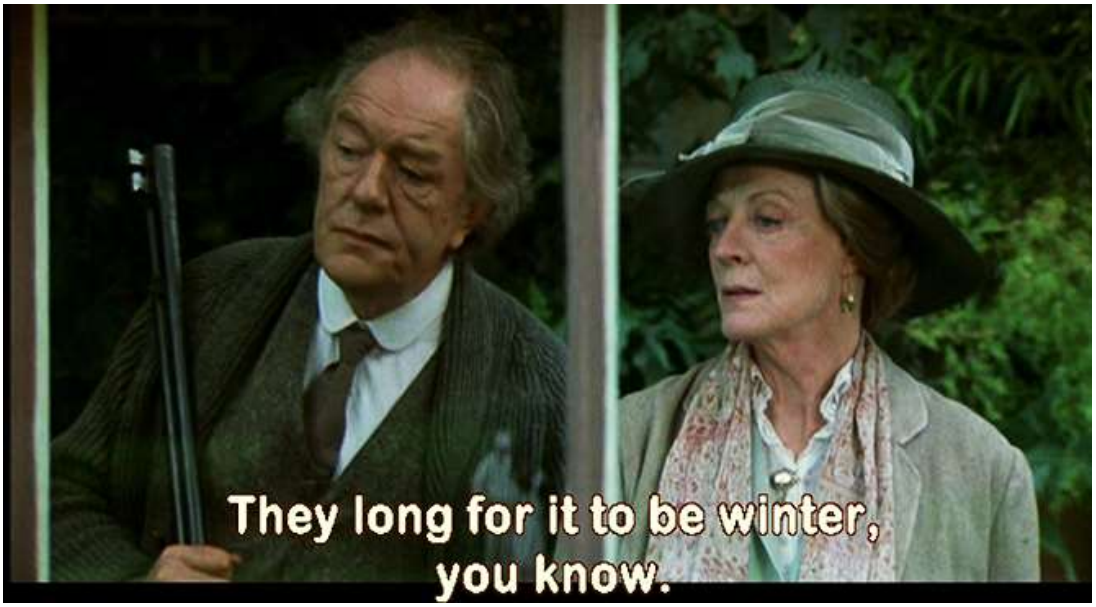

Figure 97. **Screenshot from the motion picture "*The Last September*" (1999) (Dir. Deborah Warner)**[692]

The native's melancholic disposition and incongruity for modernity were examined by the gifted Anglo-Irish author Elizabeth Bowen in her 1929 novel *The Last September.* Set on a crumbling Cork estate during the Irish War of Independence (1919 – 1921), the book revisits the Big House themes explored by Maria Edgeworth over one hundred years before.[693] In a scene where a groundsman is scorned for removing a tennis court net in the last days of summer, the character Lady Myra Naylor remarks that "they [the Irish] long for it to be winter" (Fig. 97).[694] Gazing down on this innocuous setting from the sanctuary of the greenhouse, Lady Naylor was reminded by the groundsman's actions of a physiological trait in the native that had puzzled her for as long as she could remember. Much like the unfolding political crisis that would usher in the final collapse of the Ascendency in Ireland,

[692] Bowen, Elizabeth. *The Last September,* directed by Deborah Warner screenplay by John Banville (Lions Gate, 1999), DVD.

[693] For a comprehensive examination of the topics explored by both Edgeworth and Bowen, see Coughlan, Patricia and Tina O'Toole, eds. 2008. *Irish Literature: Feminist Perspectives.* Dublin: Carysfort Press.

[694] I have sourced this quotation from the Wexford novelist John Banville's screen adaptation of Deborah Warner's 1999 filmic interpretation of Bowen's *The Last September*. Though this line of dialogue does not appear in the original novel, Bowen's use of the tennis court as a narrative device remains the same.

through the winter twilight the native found the conditions that mirrored their mournful temperament.[695]

This affinity the Irish native held for the winter was also detected by no more astute a chronicler of the human condition than Johann Georg Kohl. On route to view the ancient ecclesiastical ruins at Monasterboice in County Louth, Kohl noted how the subdued colours of the Irish winter landscape reflected "the oppressed and straitened spirit of her people".[696] Under what he described in referring to the light produced by the mountainous clouds that gather over Ireland as a "tattered mantle of gloom", the landscape, he wrote, echoed the "sad despair" of the nation's history.[697] In Kohl's summation the "sea of events" which had inscribed the melancholic nature of the Irish was intertwined with aesthetic perceptions of the winter landscape.[698]

Reading the Archive

The native's yearning "for it to be winter" and contempt for the social sensibilities of the coloniser, as seen in the actions of the Naylor's groundsman removing the tennis court net, were qualities that also mirrored their worldview. Though their life was perilous and often brutal, it was rich in ways that remain unimaginable for us today. Living outside the moral constraints of the church and the avarice of capitalist monetary systems, these people had no need for Canon Law and private property. Following a good harvest, cottiers and agricultural labourers could spend much of the winter months in the pursuit of cultural life and custom.[699] However, for those who were forced onto Dublin's streets during the Famine, their existence transcended into one of abject horror. In the years that followed successive potato crop failures, their want fo food and excessive mortality overwhelmed authorities who did little more than avert their gaze from scenes they failed to comprehend.

[695] Ironically, reflective of Maria Edgeworth's observations on the Irish, in many ways Bowen demonstrates through her writing that she understood the native better than she did her own class.

[696] Kohl, *Travels*, 311.

[697] Ibid.

[698] Ibid.

[699] Kevin Whelan has written a fascinating study on the cultural practices of the Irish agricultural classes prior to the Famine. Significantly, concerning the seasonal disposition of the native mentioned here, Whelan notes that this rich and nuanced life occurred predominantly in the winter months, after the potato harvest. See Whelan, Kevin. 1995. "Pre and Post-Famine Landscape Change." In *The Great Irish Famine*, edited by Cathal Póirtéir. Dublin: Mercier Press.

Merging into the fog that rushes by the monuments to an uncaring state, it is the absent presence of the "other" that haunts the Leinster calotypes. In the whirlwinds of movement created by their bodies, we bear witness to the system of institutional neglect that instigated the Famine. Summoning up the existential fears that etched themselves upon the post-Enlightenment imagination, when read as a parallel text these photographs also tell us something about our relationship with the Famine and the conditions that brought about the event's silencing. As Barthes suggests in his analogy between photography and history, the Famine is precariously situated in the contemporaneous now but divorced from the present by the ideologies that seek to inscribe its memory.[700] Veiled by modernity's want to placate the past by dragging us headlong into its preordained future, the Famine slips quietly from view. Mimicking the telling of history at Irish heritage sites, the Famine and its meaning are distorted.

Yet the Famine remains. A testament to modernity's failure to eradicate our connection with the past, in the soft darkness of the Leinster calotypes, the defining event of modern Irish history returns abruptly into the present. Irrespective of the period encompassed by the collection, when recognised that it is the "other" who fashioned the torrents of movement in these images, we are compelled to question both our understanding of the Famine and the ideological forces that instigated its silencing. Moreover, by their capture through the medium applauded for being the unsurpassed technical advancement of 19th-century modernity, these photographic traces are a reminder that the Famine was not an event from the mists of antiquity. By grinding away the forgetfulness of the present, the Leinster calotypes reveal the Famine in glimpses from an archive that, as Derrida suggests, is a place haunted by the ghosts of returning souls. But it is also through this spectral encounter with the tidal wave of change instigated by the Famine where we realise that the only ontological possibility we have of approaching this calamity is through silence. In silence, we bear witness to a past that is ignored at our peril – a past that speaks not just of its horrors but also the unbounded possibilities that still dwell there.

[700] See Barthes, *The Rustle*, 130.

Conclusion

Figure 98. ***Abandoned potato plot at the foot of Croagh Patrick, Murrisk, County Mayo, 2006*** (Author)

This thesis has utilised the theme and the acute condition of silence to examine the Great Famine (1845 – 1852) and how this watershed has been represented, commemorated and remembered into the present. By uncovering the Famine's traces, this thesis has positioned it as one of the first great social catastrophes of modernity. I have taken this stance in response to the still largely uncritical acceptance in popular culture and the media to revisionist informed assertions that the Famine occurred when the blight, *phytophthora infestans,* laid the potato plots of Ireland to waste (Fig. 98). From this perspective the Famine is seen as a natural disaster; it was not the result of human agency. Hence, any silence surrounding the event is solely that which comes from our incomprehension for the violence of nature. However, as I have stated in the Introduction of this thesis and demonstrated through its chapters, it is in the identification and critical reading of the silences that have encompassed the Famine where the events ideological underpinnings are revealed. In silence we bear witness to how the cultural estrangement that ensued from the coloniser's failed hegemonic project in Ireland instigated the appalling actions they carried out against the class of cottiers and landless labourers who

were swept away by this calamity – their "other". Moreover, when recognising that it was the "other" that constituted the major social collective in Ireland prior to the 1850s, it is no overestimation to say that, owing to their erasure during the Famine, the course of modern Irish history has been written in the dust of their bones. It is this untold inscription in history that this thesis has sought to redress.

In advancing the claim that silences surrounding the Famine find their origin in the cultural estrangement the Ascendency held for their "other", I do not reduce in significance how long-simmering political tensions in Ireland impacted on the coloniser's disillusionment with the native. Even for the Ascendency's most liberal thinkers, as is revealed in Maria Edgeworth's letters, these frictions were the cause of considerable anxiety.[701] Equally, I do not ignore the influence the Ascendency's failure to arrest its contemptible land management practices in Ireland had on people whose life, even in the best of times, was precarious. In a country where access to a potato plot controlled every demographic variable from marriage and fertility through to pauperism and death, land was literally the contested terrain on which all aspects of the life cycle were inscribed. Further, when the Famine's silences are read within the theoretical third space presented in this thesis, we can see how the Ascendency's cultural estrangement from their "other" was compounded by the predicaments that came to it when pondering the rocky road of Irish history. From the coloniser's perspective, Ireland's history told the story of a country that was at odds with the dictates of Enlightenment reasoning.

Still today, the reading of Ireland's history throws up difficulties for those indebted to positivist understandings of the past. Indeed, for the Irish themselves, who have long been criticised for having an unnatural obsession with the past, the reading of their history remains a vexed dilemma. At every juncture in the nation's forward journey, its past has come back to haunt them. But the advancement of history has offered the Irish an unprecedented level of economic prosperity, at least up until the 2008 GFC, and the chance to investigate new forms of articulating cultural difference and belonging. When viewed through the country's reinvigorated social landscapes, this development has been a welcome digression from the post-colonial stupor that had long stifled Irish society. Yet when this same notion of linear, progressive history is examined through the calamitous

[701] See Colvin, *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England*.

upheavals instigated by the Famine, the Irish are confronted by a past that looms so ominously over their present that it cannot be ignored.

Absence, Photography and Memory

Of the various silences examined in this thesis, those that surround photography's absence from the Famine record have received the most critical attention. Not only does this silence underpin the early chapters, but it provides a means of contemplating what I have suggested to being an unrecognised connection between the Ascendency, the early history of photography and the ideological circumstances that gave rise to the Famine. Additionally, though photography's absence from the Famine record is, by the nature of the camera's proximal forms of witnessing, distinct from the reticence that has enveloped other cultural activities (notably late 19th century Anglo-Irish literature), they have, nonetheless, provided a parallel text by which to read the greater practice of historical silencing in Ireland.

In chapter one, I situated photography's Famine silences in the context of the Ascendency's failed hegemonic project in Ireland. Led, in part, by Terry Eagleton's reading of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, I extended on the novel's themes of ambivalence, absence and identity erasure to tease out the cultural complexities that surrounded the Ascendency's estrangement from their "other". This discussion was informed by deconstructing the web of concealment that masked the Brontë family's troubled relationship with their Irish identity and also speculation that the character Heathcliff might have been a Famine refuge. I also looked at the Famine's silencing with reference to the Celtic Revival's literary reinvention of Ireland's past and demonstrated how the "other" that had been expunged from the Ascendency's post-Famine memory was, through its guilt laden cultural productions, silenced in another way.

Photography's Famine silencing was also deliberated on in chapter two. By telling the non-canonical history of the medium in Ireland, I demonstrated how, when perceived as a "cultural activity"[702] linked to the gaze, photography provided the Ascendency with a set of empirical references in which to verify its worldview by. The merging of scientific and providential beliefs that caused Lord Rosse to spend many a long night gazing into the celestial heavens is indicative of this deeper cultural association with the medium. However, as I noted in the image selections produced by the Anglo-Irish photographers

[702] Whyte, *Science, Colonialism and Ireland*, 40.

William Despard Hemphill and Francis Edmund Currey, for the Ascendency, photography's mirroring of the gaze beheld a dark reflection, where the absence of the "other" from its creative productions in the years following the Famine revealed the burdensome ontological infliction it held for the event. Conscious of the role it played in prompting the catastrophic transformations that resulted from the Famine, through photography, the Ascendency subjected its memory of this trauma to an ophthalmic purging.

The connection between the gaze, photography and the psychological torment the Ascendency held over the Famine was also explored in chapter three. In contrast to chapter two's investigation of the photograph as a referential document, here I uncovered the allegoric possibilities that lay hidden in the medium by examining its metaphysical associations. This study centred on the little known Irish landlord and calotype practitioner John Shaw Smith. I argued that his photographic practice provided an example as to how, for the Ascendency, its gaze became the site of a virulent post-Enlightenment anxiety. As can be detected from a close reading of his travel diary and Grand Tour images, though Shaw Smith appeared self-assured in what he gazed on, his lack of Irish references gestured to the problematic associations his class held for their identity and the sustainability of the modernity project. And despite the possibility that Shaw Smith may not have been a member of the Ascendency, his emphatic denial of the situation of Ireland is akin to the identity concealments of other Irish figures who were also English pretenders. But it is not just from the reading of Shaw Smith's catalogue where the compounding identity and existential dilemmas that inflicted the Ascendency can be identified. It screams out from other colonial era creative productions and historical accounts, none more loudly than in the photographically recovered image of Branwell's Ghost and Alexander Somerville's chilling, ocular encounter with the starving Limerick farmer, Thomas Killakeel.

The creative production

Pivotal to this thesis' examination of the Famine has been the use of photography as both a research methodology and source for practice led creative production. By the taking, review and interpretation of photographs, I have alerted the viewer/reader as to how they might bear witness to the Famine through the recognition of its absences. Widening the investigations carried out in chapters one and two, I also utilised photography as a means of redressing that still piercing silence that emanates from the "other", whose obliteration during the Famine denied them a place in Ireland's ascent to modernity. I have suggested through the sublime, Burkean overtones of the photographs that accompany this thesis

that it is the "other" who is representative of the country's unresolved pain over this tragedy. And while the "other" continues to be silenced by cultural productions ranging from *The Quiet Man* to the *Riverdance,* their deafeningly loud traces remain. They persist in the lexical absurdities and paradoxes that inundate Irish culture and also in that remorse that grips you when travelling through the countryside. Even when driving in a car amidst what Kohl observed to be the "tattered mantle of gloom" that hangs heavily over the Irish landscape, one cannot help but feel the undeniable presence of their absence.[703]

It was this same critical approach to photography that also guided the thematic construction of the exhibition *Redressing the Silence* (Appendix Five). Neither an outcome of the thesis nor a full stop on the project itself, the responses drawn from people who attended the exhibition informed the final drafting of the thesis chapters. Assembled as a series of dissolving, black and white projections (an allegory for the transience of memory and its forgetting), the creative production utilised the representational conventions of aftermath photography to provoke a dialogue between the viewer/reader and the ideas outlined in the exhibition catalogue (Appendix Four). By juxtaposing the aesthetics of the sublime with the forgetfulness of the sites depicted in the photographs, the exhibition provided the audience a third space encounter with the Famine that resonated at two levels.

First, as referential documents that are titled with a citation to the horrors associated with the places depicted in them, the photographs were presented as historical records. Their naming provided testimony into an event that by its enormity refuses to be disallowed. Secondly, when interpreted allegorically these images afforded the viewer/reader an opportunity to either recognise their own forgotten memory of the Famine (as a number of people had) or to realise that, though they might be generationally removed from the event, it persists through their interpretation of its representations.[704] Making these realisations all the more tangible for the viewer/reader were the image selections that focused on how the memory traits associated with these places had been written over. The photograph (Fig. 99), which depicts a Lounge Bar beside an unmarked Famine graveyard in Meelick, County Clare, is an example of the approach undertaken here. Following Ulrich

[703] Kohl, *Travels*, 311.

[704] As noted in the Introduction, during the exhibition several people approached me regarding how the image presentations brought back forgotten memories of their familial connections to the sites and places of the Famine.

Baer's investigations of the Holocaust and its representations, I have argued that it is in the act of recognising incidents of historical erasure where we bear witness to the traumas of the past.

Figure 99. ***Still projection from "Redressing the Silence", John Curtin Gallery, 2013*** (Author)

Unpacking photographs for the alternative histories they allude to was foremost in crafting the discussions outlined in chapters four and five. Chapter four ended where it started by exploring the shadows that shrouded a set of abandoned potato ridges from the Famine in my uncle's photograph (Fig. 33) and those concealments that could be detected from the image of a hunger strike memorial (Fig. 50). Again, mindful of Baer's investigations, chapter four was also influenced by Mikael Levin's images of forgotten death camps from the Holocaust. Through the depiction of aftermath photography, I demonstrated how, when the viewer/reader came to recognise the act of historical silencing, they allowed for the possibility of a forgotten memory from the event to re-emerge in the present. Importantly, this recognition does not have to be explicit. As I noted when deconstructing the image of my uncle (Fig. 33) – which is in every sense of the term an aftermath photograph – the memory that emerges for the viewer/reader may be solely that of ambivalence. I suggest that it was this ambivalence that punctuated the silences of the people who once gathered in my mother's parlor, where the image had been kept for many years. Albeit without their knowing, this photograph, along with the kitsch that surrounded it, generated a forgotten memory of the event that by its ongoing impact had isolated them from the lives they once led on the other side of the world.

Chapter four also examined the Famine's silencing by comparing its representations with the depiction of other modern social catastrophes, primarily the Holocaust and the Holodomor. This approach was not taken to reconcile these singularities but as a means of evaluating the broader practice of historical silencing. Maud Ellmann's conjecture on how the representation of the emaciated body exposed the ideological forces that underpin the interconnections between hunger, starvation and famine provided an analytical measure for making this assessment. For Ellmann, the deprivations hunger leaves on the body can be read as a text. It was towards this textual reading of the body that I examined the divergent understandings generated by the re-emergence during the sesquicentennial of James Mahony's depiction of Bridget O'Donnel (Fig. 49). I argued that even though O'Donnel's representation had been misconstrued by the state in its attempts to finally put the Famine to rest, the trauma that had inscribed her body told a story that could not be so easily forgotten.

In chapter five, I continued to examine the connection between aftermath photography and forgotten memory by directing the viewer/reader's attention to the scars that inscribe Ireland's ruins. I demonstrated how the Irish ruin, ranging from the Ascendency mansion to the workhouse, can be read as a historical text. But unlike the unwavering chronicles prescribed by monumentalist memory, when reading the ruin we encounter a history that is in a perpetual state of re-inscription. The comparison I made between William Makepeace Thackeray's reflections on the Irish ruin and the country's present day phenomenon of the ghost estate exemplifies this process. Just as the ruin is subject to the forgetfulness of decay, so to the marks that inscribe it tells of a history that is impervious to modernity's refrains on progression.

Chapter five was also thematically linked to the creative production *Redressing the Silence,* where images from the exhibition were presented to inform the viewer/reader as to the historical exchange that exists between the ruin and photography. Though rooted to the sites they dissolve back into, through photography the ruin found a way of unfettering its spatial constraints. As with the medium's early exponents, it is this reciprocity between photography and the ruin that still captures our imagination today. Not unlike the Famine victim's return of the gaze, in the ruin we find an echo from the past that cuts through the presumptions of the present.

Rummaging the archive

Apart from this thesis' primary focus being on the exploration of silence, it has also examined the intangibility of the experience that comes when encountering the past from within the archive. Albeit that the archive has by its cataloguing and recording made the past increasingly available to us, this is a vision of the past that exists only in fragments. Like the shards of history excavated on an archaeological dig (Fig. 100), in the archive all that remains of the past are its traces. In a Derridian sense, the archive is an incongruous place, where our attempts to encounter the past by probing its relics have distanced us further away from it. Put differently, in the archive we bear witness to the past that, by its irrevocable loss, compels us to question not just our presence amongst its dusty vaults but what it is we seek to find. Sure enough, when considering the third space approach I have advocated here, this realisation that the archive was beholding to a contradiction had a methodological implication for the project. Though I had spent a great deal of time in Ireland conducting fieldwork, the majority of my research occurred through accessing archival sources while working in Australia.

Figure 100. ***Archaeological dig at the foot of the Slievemore Mountain, Achill Island, County Mayo, 2008*** (Author)

But my entry into the archive was also timely. As noted in the Introduction, access to colonial era documents from on-line sources, notably the 19thcentury maps of the Ordinance Survey of Ireland, which have been difficult to access until the recent present, have allowed me to locate many hard to find and, as shown in the photograph (Fig. 101), hazardously located sites from the Famine. Additionally, research for this project coincided

with a remarkable period of academic openness that, prior to the 2008 GFC, saw a number of archives in Ireland, and also Irish archives located outside the country, free up access to researchers who were working remotely.[705] In combination, these two developments have allowed me to scrutinise sites and historical documents beyond the bounds of previous researchers. Sometimes, I hasten to say, this extensive unpacking might have taxed the viewer/reader's patience. Nonetheless, my investigations from the archive have helped cast critical, new light on the silences that surround the Famine. These insights influenced the crafting of the final two chapters of this thesis.

Figure 101. ***Templedoomore Graveyard, Thallabawn, County Mayo, 2010*** (Author)[706]

In chapter six I ventured back into the archive to examine the silences surrounding the 1879 apparition at Knock. In contrast to the explanations put by the vision's supporters and detractors over the years, I choose not to question its veracity. However, after examining some long forgotten accounts of the apparition, I demonstrated how the vision, as described by the witnesses, was beyond any shadow of a doubt the creation of a lantern projection. As can be discerned from Fr Ward's account of the prank with the gramophone at Knock, an incident which occurred around the turn of the 20th century, the lantern was

[705] Two archives that have, by opening their doors to researchers working remotely, greatly assisted this project are the Pontifical Irish College in Rome and the Catholic Archives at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. I am indebted to them both. Regrettably, however, post the 2008 GFC, the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, along with several other Irish archives abroad, have closed their doors to researchers due to lack of funding.

[706] Templedoomore Graveyard is on a remote tidal island. The site, which dates from medieval times, was a large canonical mound until being broken up by a series of massive storms in the early 1990s.

but one of several new sensory technologies the villagers would have been unfamiliar with. Yet when these same traces from the archive are read with reference to Walter Benjamin's notions on mimesis, they indicate that the vision was not the result of one isolated occurrence but several happenings that, in the minds of people living through the aftermath of the Famine, merged into one. Just as memory of the Famine has conflated into so many aspects of Irish culture and society, what I suggested in this chapter is that the event that is recognised by many as the defining moment of the Catholic Church in Ireland was a "flickering" afterimage of this calamity.[707]

This tour of the archive continued in the seventh and final chapter when I revisited the theme of photography's absence from the Famine record. This investigation focused on a collection of anonymously authored images taken in Ireland between the 1840s and 1850s. By unpacking these images, the Leinster calotypes, to their most elemental details, I demonstrated that, if they are not to be regarded as Famine photographs, their absences have, then, highlighted a little-realised insight into the "other" obliterated by this event. Haunting and difficult to access, when viewed through the prism of Marx's camera obscura analogy, these images provide a backward look at the belief systems that gave rise to the Famine, and it's silencing. Selected images from the collection, and also enlargements of the ghosts that haunt it, are listed in Appendix three.

Finally, with respect to the historical reticence examined here, there can be no denying, as I noted in the Introduction, that silences surrounding the Famine are indicative of what Niall O'Ciosain has described as "selective memories".[708] To contend, and this has not been my intention here, that the Famine's trauma can be universally read through the representation of silence is to encroach on the misappropriations of history discussed in chapter four. Equally, to compare silences surrounding the Famine with those that have encompassed the other singularities of modernity is to limit our comprehension of these events and those which no doubt lay waiting in the future. However, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis and the accompanying photographic production when reading the silences of history we bear witness to the presence of those who have been written out of it. With respect to the Famine, these silences are those which emanate from an "other" that must be acknowledged if the attempts at redress that have been embarked on in recent years are to have any meaning.

[707] McPhilpin, "Apparition of the Blessed Virgin".

[708] O'Ciosain, "Was there a 'silence,'"9.

Importantly, this recognition of the "other" should not be to see them as either a victim of circumstance or the inhabitant of some pre-modern arcadia. Rather, the "other" we encounter through their silent traces is a reminder of not just the great losses that reside in the past there but also of its infinite possibilities. And despite photography's capitulation to the ideological worldview that since the Enlightenment has presented history as a narrative of augmented progression, this is a relationship the medium is still eminently capable of alerting us to. Like the shadowy boreens that lead to the countless Famine graveyards of Ireland (Fig. 102), photography provides a passageway into a past that, by its unremitting inscription on the present, is never far away.

Figure 102. ***The Boreen to the Callan Workhouse and Famine Graveyard, Callan, County Kilkenny, 2008*** (Author)

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Appendix One: Province and County Map of Ireland

The Province and County Map of Ireland was sourced from:
Irish Genealogy Toolkit. 2014. The Counties of Ireland. Accessed October 28, http://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/counties-of-Ireland.html.

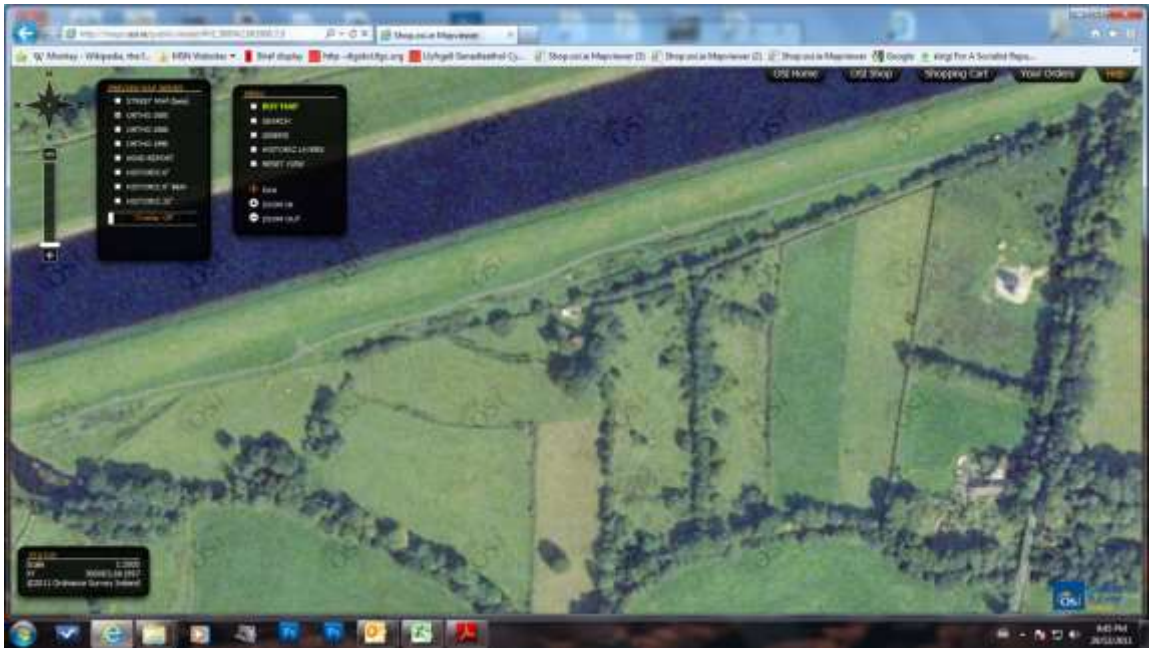
Appendix Two: The Mapping Process

Appendix Two details the correspondence and mapping process I undertook when locating a number of the sites discussed and photographed throughout this project.

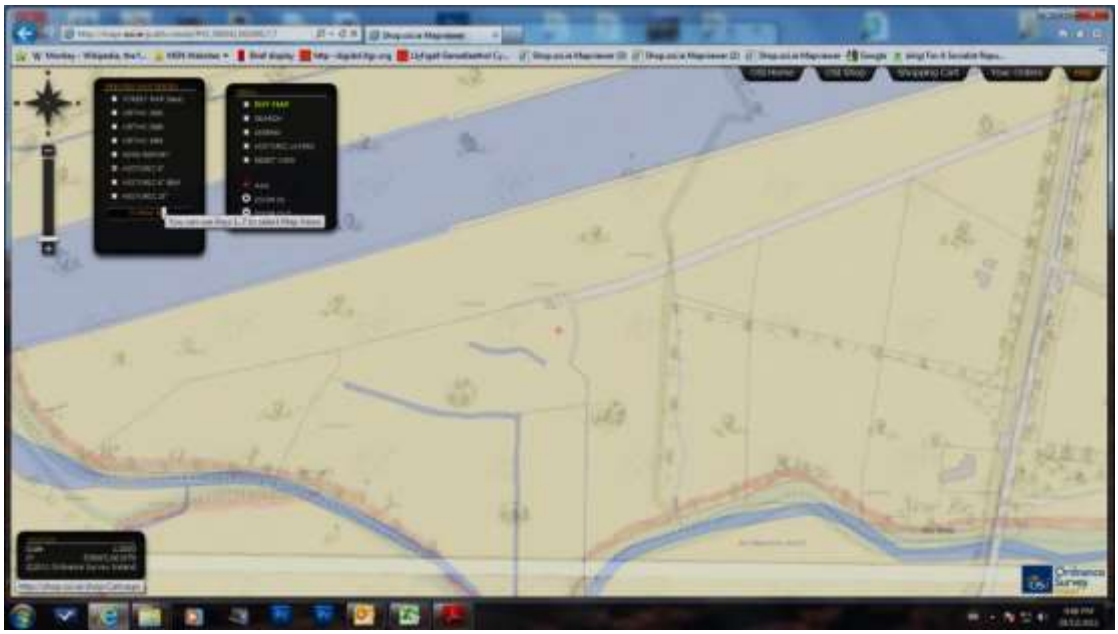
The site noted below is a *cillin* in the townland of Rosmadda, County Clare. I became aware of it during a conversation with gravediggers at the Kileely graveyard in Limerick City. This led me to a parish priest who passed my details on to a local historian. After a period of time, the historian emailed me in Australia with directions to the site and its associated stories. From his email (listed below), I was able to establish the location of this site by merging the layers of the on-line Ordinance Survey Map with reference to Google's Street View. Interestingly, as noted in the screenshots, the mass grave does not appear on the Ordinance Survey map of 1839 – 1842. It is located on unconsecrated ground and contemporary to the Famine.

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, 29 December 2011 9:48PM
To: p.carpenter@curtin.edu.au
Subject: Rosmadda Cealltrach

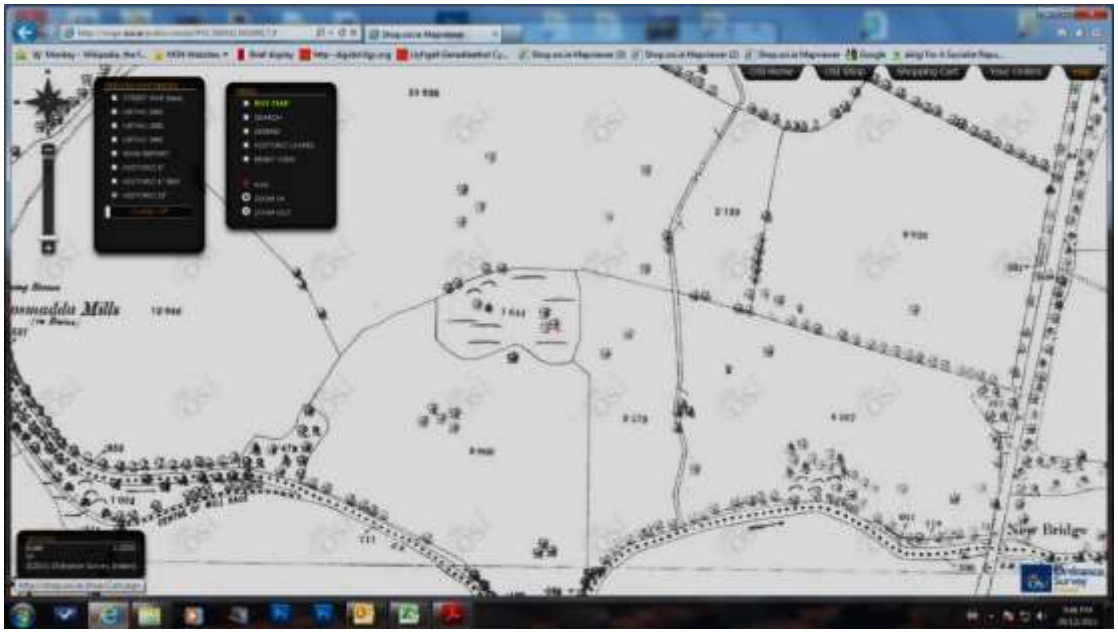
The Cillin or Cealltrach is situated in a cul de sac off the Rosmadda road between the Shannon and Blackwater rivers. At the end of the cul de sac there is a gate on the left handside and a boreen 300 yards or so long leads to the cealltrach. It is a grove of trees on a mound of earth. When I was writing the History and Folklore of Parteen and Meelick a Michael O Dwyer a local seanchai told me that his father who would be born approx 1880 told him that he attended a funeral there.



Screenshot from the 2005 Ortho Map of the Ordinance Survey



Screenshot from the merged Street Map (2010) and the Historic 6” Map (1829 – 1842) of the Ordinance Survey



Screenshot from the Historic 25” Map (1897 – 1913) of the Ordinance Survey

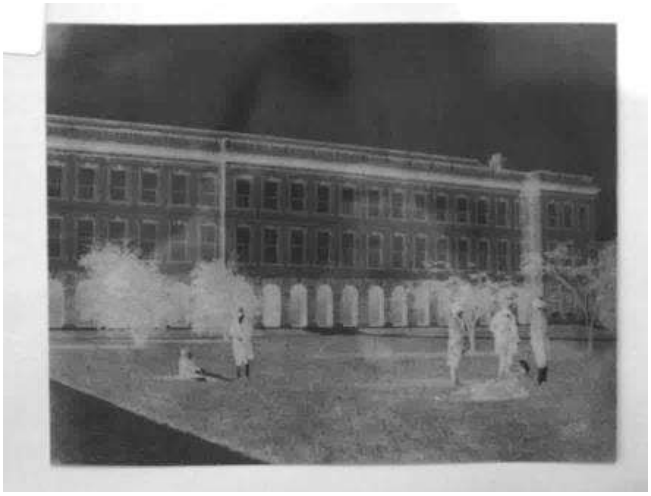
Google Street View (2014), this is a recreation of the Street View screenshot I had used to find the Rossmada Famine burial site. The original is lost.

A Place Known only by Priests and Gravediggers: Rossmada Famine burial site, Parteen, County Clare, 2012 (Author)

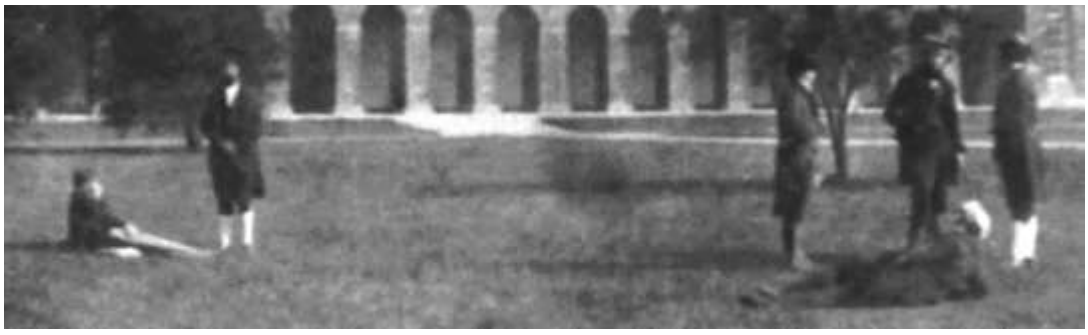
Appendix Three: Figures and Ghosts in the Leinster Calotypes

Excluding the image *The Custom House, Dublin*, which appears a (Fig. 83) in chapter seven, and has been downloaded from the Flickr photostream of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, the photographs below are sourced from digital representations I had taken of the positive, negative and inter-negative images that make up Leinster calotype collection archived at the National Media Museum in Bradford, Yorkshire. These images are very sensitive to light and can only be photographed using handheld photography. Combined with reflections from the plastic archival sleeves they are stored in, the high ISO used to photograph these flat, sepia toned images has denigrated their reproduction. Nonetheless, both the shadowy figures and the ghosts contained in the collection can be discerned to the eye.

It should be noted that these images are not true to the orientation of the sites depicted in them. As cameras from this period had no reflex mirror, the photographs produced by them were latterly inverted and upside down. Apart from them being presented right way up, I have not changed their lateral alignment. However, for reasons of drawing the viewer/reader's attention to the details within the photographs, I have altered their contrast and brightness in Photoshop and produced them as black and white renderings. Additionally, I have inverted the enlarged cropped sections of the negative images to present them as positives.

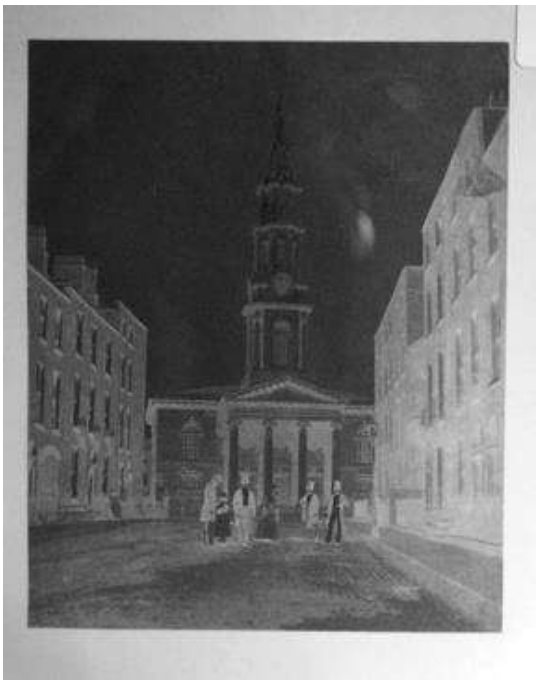


The New Square, Trinity College, Dublin



Detail of figures from the photograph taken at the New Square, Trinity College, Dublin

As noted in chapter seven, the tree foliage in the background of this image suggests that the photograph was taken during the early spring.



St. George's Church (Church of Ireland), Hardwicke Place, Dublin

Detail of figures from the photograph taken outside St. George's, Hardwicke Place, Dublin

The portly figure standing third from the left seems provincial in his ill-fitting clothing when compared with the dandy figures on the right. The figure on the extreme left, who dresses as a student, also appears on the extreme left in the New Square photograph, above.

The Library Square, Trinity College, Dublin

Detail of figures from the photograph taken at the Library Square, Trinity College, Dublin

The figures reclining on the lawn take up the space where Sir Charles Lanyon's iconic Campanile has stood since 1852. A large dog can be detected on the left. A dog also appears in the photograph of the Custom House Quay taken from the Custom House Quay, below.

The Wellington Monument, Phoenix Park, Dublin

Detail of figures from the photograph taken at the Wellington Monument, Phoenix Park, Dublin

The figure with the white cap in the foreground appears throughout the collection, notably in the photographs of the New Square, St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral and the Custom House taken from the south side of the Liffey. The figure fourth from the left, who also seems to be depicted in the New Square image, resembles the only known, contemporary to the 1840s, photographic representation of Henry Brewster, Sir David Brewster's son. Henry Brewster had taken a series of calotype photographs at Buttevant in County Cork when he was stationed there as a captain with the 76th Regiment of Foot in 1842.

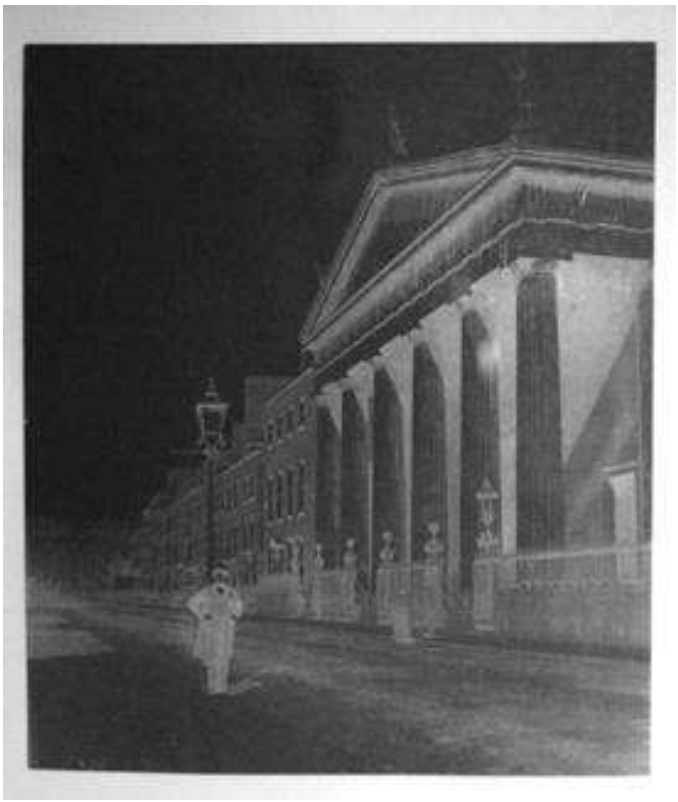
The parade ground at Dublin Castle

Detail of figures from the photograph taken on the parade ground at Dublin Castle

The figure in the top hat on the extreme left of this photograph appears throughout the collection. He is recognisable as the solitary man standing outside the photograph of the Rutland Memorial Fountain, below. I speculate in chapter seven that he might be Michael Pakenham Edgeworth.

The ruins of St Maur's, Lusk, County Dublin

Detail of figures from a photograph taken at the ruins of St Maur's, Lusk, County Dublin



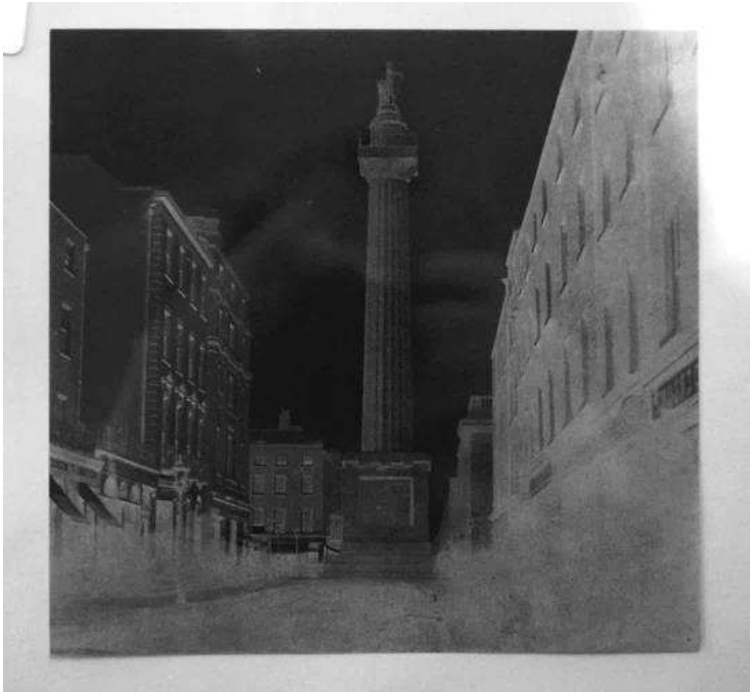
St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough St, Dublin

Detail of figure from the photograph taken at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough St, Dublin

The figure in the white hat outside the Pro-Cathedral also appears at the Wellington Monument, The New Square and the image of the Custom House taken from the south side of the Liffey.

The Rutland Memorial Fountain at Merrion Square, Dublin

Detail of figure from the photograph taken at Rutland Memorial Fountain at Merrion Square, Dublin



The Nelson's Pillar looking west from North Earl Street, Dublin

Detail of ghostly figures from the photograph taken on North Earl Street looking west towards Nelson's Pillar, Dublin

Looking north to the Custom House, Dublin

Detail of figures and ghosts from a photograph taken looking north to the Custom House, Dublin

As noted above, the figure with the white hat on the right of this details in a number of images in the collection.

Custom House Quay, looking to the Custom House, Dublin

Detail of figures and ghosts from a photograph taken at Custom House Quay, looking to the Custom House, Dublin

There is a noticeable blurring detectable in the foreground of this image. I suspect that it is the passage of people on the quay.There is also a large dog being held to the left of the solider. A dog also appears in the image taken at the Library Square at Trinity College.

City Hall from Castle Street looking south, Dublin

Detail of figures and ghosts from a photograph taken at the City Hall from Castle Street looking south, Dublin

John Curtin Gallery
www.johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au

Curtin University

SoDA13

Paul Carpenter: *Redressing the Silence*
Michelle Frantom: *Her Beauty and her Terror*
Andrew Purvis: *Transmission*

John Curtin Gallery
15 November – 8 December 2013

Michelle Frantom: *Her Beauty and Her Terror*

South Gallery

In 2003 a fifteen year old boy I did not know called Nathan, drowned at Salmon Holes on the south coast where I live. I was inundated with mental images and dreams about drowning. I was already familiar with the 'drowning' motif - it surfaced in a dream when I was a small child and never left.

Some time later an acquaintance suicided at The Gap, on the same stretch of coast where Nathan drowned. Her death had a powerful impact on me because she was an artist. Not long after that another artist I knew suicided there too. I wanted to understand why and how - the focus of my research turned directly to the connections between art, death and the tragic sublime.

I went out to The Gap to make images in a place that evokes a sense of spiritual awe. As I worked I discovered links between the physical void that The Gap symbolises and the Void of spiritual psychology. These artworks are the result of my efforts to know and make sense of that Void.

The work addresses three fundamental 'themes' that reflect three different ways of responding to the Void. Chasm - *looking into* the Void; Drowning - *being in* the Void; and Void - *transcending* the Void. The smaller works or 'studies' - generally referred to as 'visual' or 'studio' research - inform the large works.

1. *Chasm* (2013), oil & mixed media on masonite, 2400 cm x 2400cm
2. *Void* (2013), digital animation, dimensions variable; Original sound Robin Thomson; Technical consultant Paul Kelly; Animation Kingsley Taylor
3. *Drowning* (2013), oil & mixed media on masonite, 2400 cm x 2400cm
4. *Void 2* (2013), digital print on metallic paper, 40cm x 40cm
5. *Study 3-3* (2011), digital print on metallic paper, 40cm x 38.72cm
6. *Welcome to the Edge* (2012), digital print on metallic paper, 40 cm x 38.65cm
7. *The Philosopher's Stone* (2013), digital print on metallic paper, 40cm x 40.14 cm
8. *Study 2* (2013), digital print on metallic paper, 40 cm x 41.34cm
9. *Chasm 3* (2013), digital print on metallic paper, 40cm x 40cm
10. *Study 5-4* (2011), digital print on metallic paper, 40cm x 38.72cm
11. *Study 27* (2010), digital print on metallic paper, 22cm cm x 40.87 cm

12-30. Study series: *Study 2-8; Study 3-6; Study 2-9; Study 3-5; Study 5-1; Study 1-3; Study 2-1; Study 1-2; Study 3-1; Study 5-3; Study 1-1; Study 3-2; Study 4-2; Study 1-4; Study 4-1; Study 3-3; Study 2-4; Study 1-5; Study 2-7;* all works (2011), digital print on metallic paper, 22cm x 21.29cm

Paul Carpenter: *Redressing the Silence*

North Gallery

Figure 1. *The Crag Graveyard (Famine burial site), Clonconnane, County Limerick* (Author)

The photograph (Fig. 1) depicts the site of an unbaptised children's graveyard in one of the small rural townlands that merge between the parish boundaries and borders that separate counties Limerick and Clare in the west of Ireland. In the Gaelic language these places are known as 'cillin'. They can be found throughout the country and are often, as is this site, part of older Neolithic settlements and or places of passage. Due to their metaphysical associations they are also referred to as "fairy forts". Some people believe that these places still hold tremendous emblematic power. Apart from recent legislative changes introduced by the state to prohibit their destruction, this belief has assured their existence in a country that up until the not unforeseeable collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy in 2008 was experiencing a period of monumental accelerated change. But that said it is not exactly an adherence to this belief that has sustained these places into the present; rather it is an apprehension held by many that encroaching upon them might resurrect a ghost from the long gone past.

Taken in the fast fading light of a winter's day, the returning souls that haunt the cillin also animate this photograph. In its compounding mix of aesthetic, allegoric and historical orientations, the photograph is a reminder of the site's human association stretching back millennia. Yet the cillin conceals a much more recent memory, one encapsulated by its connection with a modern trauma that has drenched both this site and its representation in silence. For during the time of the Great Famine (1845 – 1852) the cillin was used to intern strangers and those who for various reasons could not be buried elsewhere. Here the photograph develops yet another connotation, where by substantiating our historical understanding of these places the image gestures to the memory, contestations and silences that continue to surround the Famine.

Figure 2. *St. Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny Town, County Kilkenny* (Author)

Many significant Church buildings, such as St. Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny Town, which was one of the largest and most expensive architectural constructions erected during Ireland's "long 19th century", were built at the time of the Famine.

Few things have either come to threaten or inspire the Irish collective imagination more than memory of the Famine. With upwards of one million deceased, over two million forced immigrations and the annihilation of the Gaelic speaking peasantry, the Famine is as inscribed upon the Irish psyche as its ruins, graveyards and forgotten places punctuate the country's landscapes. Surpassing any other event that has shaped the country's jagged political, cultural and cartographic contours, the Famine was Ireland's defining historical watershed. By greatly accelerating changes that were already occurring in Irish society since the early 18th century, the Famine also opened up Ireland to industrialisation, immigration, and the demise of the country's once prolific subsistence agricultural economy. In addition, by depopulating the countryside the Famine fundamentally altered Ireland's social composition. The sweeping changes that followed its aftermath heralded the ascension of the Catholic Church and of an Anglicised Catholic bourgeoisie as the country's principal cultural power brokers. As seen in the photograph (Fig. 2), this was a rise to power symbolised in the massive church building projects that emblazoned the skylines of Ireland's cities and towns with bell towers and steeples. Still today the shadow cast by this trauma is never far away. As the defining event of modern Irish history, the Famine generated a set of historical distinctions that typify both the country's troubled relationship with the past and ambivalent encounter with modernity; what the author Luke Gibbons has described in examining Ireland's liminal position on the pan-European/global stage as "a First World country, but with a Third World memory".[1]

Having occurred at a historical conjunction that witnessed both the rapid rise of print media and a readership endowed with an insatiable appetite for spectacle, the Famine was extensively reported on. Many popular media conventions that are used in the reporting of news today can be traced back to this event. Indeed, such was the proliferation of accounts of this tragedy in newspapers and Parliamentary reports that it led to a phenomenon several authors have described as "Famine fatigue".[ii] However, in the years that were to follow this watershed fell into what many people suggest to be a deafening, historical silence. Permeating all aspects of Irish culture and society, one of the most recognisable sites for this silencing can be found through the literature of Ireland's colonial elite, the Anglo-Irish Ascendency; culturally estranged from the native that had steadfastly refused to yield to their ideological project, apart from some fleeting allegoric references, in the literature of the coloniser the Famine is barely mentioned at all.

Coinciding with the discriminatory and unduly brief period of economic prosperity ushered in by the Celtic Tiger economy, during the mid-1990s the Famine and its memory were invoked through a series of observances to mark its sesquicentennial anniversary. Setting in train a cycle of commemoration that continues today with tentative preparations for the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the Famine was remembered throughout Ireland and the diaspora. Notwithstanding the controversies that surrounded this event – notable how the commemoration slipped from being a memorial to a "celebration" for the state and its perceived successes – the sesquicentennial was hailed as a belated but welcomed response to the generational silence many believed had shrouded the Famine.[iii]

But whilst the commemoration and ongoing scholarly analysis that arose from the sesquicentennial has given rise to a more nuanced set of approaches to examining the Famine, these endeavors had, nonetheless, continued to omit a significant silence long disregarded by historians. Despite photography being practiced in Ireland within weeks of the release of the daguerreotype process in September 1839, and soon thereafter becoming a competitive commercial activity and pursuit amongst the gentry, no photographic record of the Famine exists. Paradoxically, although photography had developed in Ireland relatively early on account of its anomalous legal and cultural status in Britain's Empire, the event that best symbolised the country's traumatic encounter with colonial modernity is absent from the photographic record.

Inspired by the author Ulrich Baer's examinations of "aftermath" photography, and how, when critically read, photographs have the ability to incite in the viewer/reader powerful post memory encounters with the past, through the photographic recording of ruins (both contemporary to the Famine and post the Global Financial Collapse in 2008), burial sites and locations of state, colonial and radical memory, *Redressing the Silence* challenges the viewer to critically reassess their concepts of historical progression.[iv] In a similar manner to how the action of the camera's shutter explodes the myth of chronological time, through the photography of absence these images seek to reveal how the past and the present are interconnected. The only thing that separates them apart is our misguided belief that the events of history can be read like "beads on a string".

Further, by utilising photographic projections as an allegory for the dark, transitory quality of memory and its forgetting, *Redressing the Silence* also provides the viewer with a space to realise that the only ontological possibility we have to contemplate the Famine and the entrenched ideologies that force the oppressed to starve is through silence. Lurking in ruins, in archives and in the dark recesses of our mind, in silence we are compelled not to understand the Famine's incomprehensibility but to recognise how this watershed continues to intrude upon the promises of the present. Like the reading of the photograph, in silence we encounter a past that is never complete, a past that echoes with the muteness that is the haunting redress of its forgotten memories and unanswered questions.

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[i] Luke Gibbons, "Introduction: Culture, History and Irish Identity", *Transformations in Irish Culture 3* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996)

[ii] For an expression on this phenomenon see Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004)

[iii] The authors Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling have identified a lexical tension in President Mary Robinson speeches during the sesquicentennial. In several of her major public pronouncements her description of the commemoration shifted from being a memorial to a national tragedy to that of a "celebration" for the state. See their chapter "Millenarianism and utopianism in the new Ireland: the tragedy (and comedy) of accelerated modernisation" in Colin Coulter (Editor), *The End of Irish History? Critical Approaches to the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

[iv] See Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: the photography of trauma* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002) Baer's text examines aftermath photographs taken of forgotten sites from the Holocaust. Outside the commemoration of official Holocaust memory, these are places where all evidence of the atrocities committed at them has been erased. Following the influential writings of Walter Benjamin, Baer demonstrates how when critically read photographs taken at sites of historical trauma can through the articulation of absence allow the viewer/reader to experience the event by way of its representation.

Andrew Purvis: *Transmission*

Central Gallery

Andrew Purvis' exhibition *Transmission* investigates the shadow history of communications technology, exploring humankind's efforts to make contact with divine, occult or extra-terrestrial presences. Efforts to communicate with hypothetical receivers have prompted the innovation of a range of esoteric techniques and tools, from the Ouija board and the séance, through automatic writing and electronic voice phenomenon, to the rather more advanced methods of the SETI (search for extra-terrestrial intelligence) community. Utilising and adapting these associated technologies, Purvis combines elements of drawing, installation and performance to create works that balance the hope and futility of the unanswered call.

The *Transmission* catalogue is available at John Curtin Gallery's reception.

Transmit / Receive – Part 1 (Catherine-Elise Müller)
(2013)
coloured pencil and screen-print on paper
21cm x 30cm

Transmit / Receive – Part 2
(2013)
mixed media
dimensions variable

John Curtin Gallery

PUBLIC PROGRAM
Wednesday 27 November 12.30pm: Paul Carpenter artist talk
Sunday 8 December 3.00pm: Michelle Frantom artist talk
Sunday 8 December 4.00pm: Andrew Purvis performance

Visit www.johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au or facebook for further exhibition and public program details

Please join us at the opening of an exhibition by
Higher Degree by Research students from Curtin's
School of Design and Art [SODA]

SoDA13

Paul Carpenter: ***Redressing the Silence***
Michelle Frantom: ***Her Beauty and her Terror***
Andrew Purvis: ***Transmission***

to be opened by Leigh Robb
Curator, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

6pm Thursday 14 November 2013

RSVP essential by Monday 11 November 2013
phone: 9266 4155 | email: gallery@curtin.edu.au
exhibition continues from 15 November – 8 December 2013

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Wednesday 27 November 12.30pm: Paul Carpenter artist talk
Sunday 8 December 3.00pm: Michelle Frantom artist talk
Sunday 8 December 4.00pm: Andrew Purvis performance

visit www.johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au or facebook
for further exhibition and public program details

John Curtin Gallery

Building 200A, Curtin University.
Enter campus via main entrance Kent Street,
Bentley, Western Australia.
Free parking opening night and weekends.
All other times, metered visitor parking available
in areas D3 and B12. Taxi Stand 2 located at
flagpoles adjacent to John Curtin Gallery.

FREE ADMISSION

Monday to Friday 11am–5pm
Saturday & Sunday 1–5pm

Cover: Paul Carpenter, Garavogue Roundabout, Sligo Town, Ireland, 2010, photograph [detail].

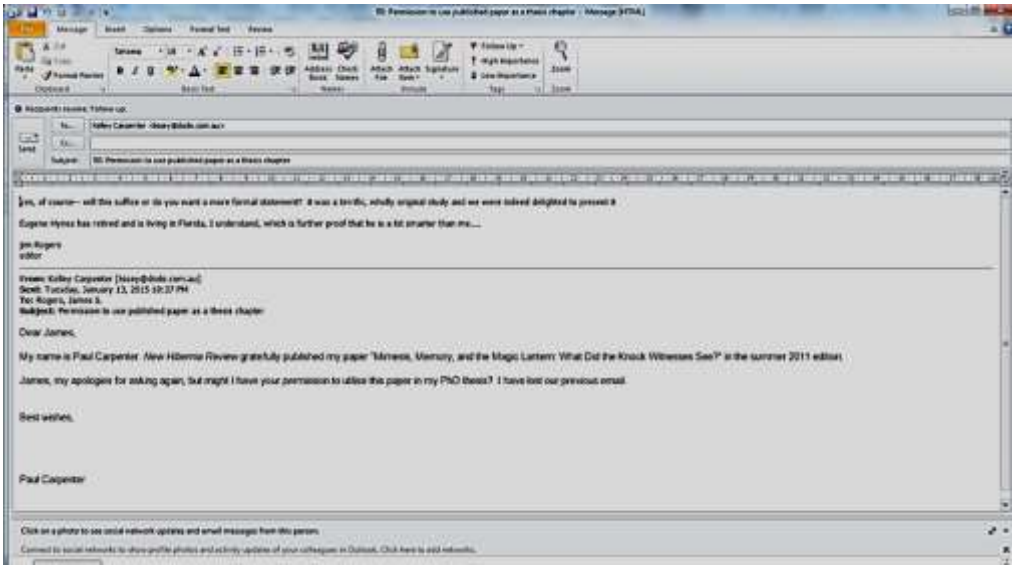
Appendix Five: *Redressing the Silence*

The exhibition *Redressing the Silence* was staged as a PowerPoint presentation consisting of 101 black and white photographs. The images were held for 7 seconds with a 3 second fade. These settings have been saved to the attached file. The presentation lasts 17 minutes and can be started by clicking **From Beginning** in the **Slide Show** tab. Due to constraints with the picture titling process, a number of images in the PowerPoint presentation are named differently to how they appear in the thesis.

The images are held for 7 seconds with a 3 second fade.

The presentation can be started by clicking **From Beginning** in the **Slide Show** tab.

Appendix Six: Permission to Use Published Paper as a Thesis Chapter



From: Rogers, James S. <JROGERS@stthomas.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, 14 January 2015 8:18 PM
To: Kelley Carpenter
Subject: RE: Permission to use published paper as a thesis chapter

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

yes, of course-- will this suffice or do you want a more formal statement? it was a terrific, wholly original study and we were indeed delighted to present it

Eugene Hynes has retired and is living in Florida, I understand, which is further proof that he is a lot smarter than me....

jim Rogers
editor

From: Kelley Carpenter [lissey@dodo.com.au]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 10:37 PM
To: Rogers, James S.
Subject: Permission to use published paper as a thesis chapter

Dear James,

My name is Paul Carpenter. New Hibernia Review gratefully published my paper “Mimesis, Memory, and the Magic Lantern: What Did the Knock Witnesses See?” in the summer 2011 edition.

James, my apologies for asking again, but might I have your permission to utilise this paper in my PhD thesis? I have lost our previous email.

Best wishes,

Paul Carpenter