

# Images of Irishness in Nineteenth-Century Travel Literature



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By

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## ABSTRACT

Since its annexation to the British Crown, Ireland never ceased to form the subject of an ardent national debate in Great Britain which resulted in the demonisation of the Celtic race as subaltern and backward. In its effort to forge a national identity, the British Empire adopted several collective identities on the basis of the racial and cultural findings of the 1850s which gave a new impetus to the systematic view of England as a typically Anglo-Saxon culture, which was staunchly opposed to the alleged Celtic backwardness and the rebellious spirit of the Irish.

In view of the rising anti-Irish wave in the British imperialist imagination, Irish nationalism was manifest through a series of uprisings, the majority of which sought to link the country to its ancient Celtic heritage. The Celticist movements of Young Ireland and Irish Revival revealed the need of the Irish Nationalists to acquire a new, collective identity that proved to be a strenuous struggle, given the complex historical and ethnic background of the Irish.

This book investigates the extent to which Irish identity is affected by the racist and nationalist discourses of the nineteenth century which emerged to either defend or oppose the image of Ireland as a cultural construct. The travelogues of the present volume include some of the fundamental representations of Ireland by prominent Irish and British travel writers, whose impressions of the island might be linked to the utopian and dystopian dimensions of the country.



## INTRODUCTION

This volume explores Irish identity in connection to the travel literature which was produced in the nineteenth century. In particular, this study aims at shedding light on the instances in which several nineteenth-century travel writers define Irishness from various perspectives. Unlike my previous monographs *Representations of the North in Victorian Travel Literature*, *Icelandic Utopia in Victorian Travel Literature* and *American Travellers in Scandinavia* which focused primarily on the rising Anglo-Saxon movement and its effect on the nation-building process of British and American nationhood, the present text revolves around the parallel attempt of the Irish to respond to the anti-Celtic spirit which gradually emerged within the framework of the British Empire.

As regards the nineteenth-century British nationalist discourse, Anglo-Saxonism aimed at reviving the racial and cultural ties between the England and the Nordic countries based on the common features they shared in terms of literature and language. As argued by Robert E. Bjork, the alleged similarities of the English with the Nordic nations reinforced the idea of a pan-Germanic community, often at the expense of the Celtic populations of the British Isles (62).

At the threshold of the twentieth century, with the advent of the pseudo-sciences which emerged as a form of scientific racism, the Celtic groups of the British Empire were often classified as an inferior stock, which lacked the prowess and the masculinity of their Saxon neighbours. Thus, the Irish Celts were depicted as corrupt and effeminate (Paul Kramer 1321).

The racial demonisation of the Irish as an inferior ethnic group which was opposed to the sturdiness of the Anglo-Saxon race was also enhanced by the historical and political conditions which amalgamated the Irish nation, both ethnically and religiously. Throughout the nineteenth century, the revolts of the Irish population reinforced the idea of the wild Celt, which posed a threat to the territorial interests of the British Empire. The English emphasis on the savage aspect of the Irish stemmed from the rebellions against the British rule of Ireland since 1798 which aimed at the Home Rule of the island.

A leading figure of the Irish struggle for independence was Daniel O'Connell<sup>1</sup> who was commonly referred to as the "Liberator or the Emancipator" (Fergus O'Ferrall 5). Daniel O'Connell's instrumental role as a founder of the Repeal Association led to a political movement in 1830 which campaigned for a repeal of the Act of Union between Ireland and Great Britain in 1800 (Patrick Steward and Bryan McGowan 55). This independence movement called for a legislative autonomy from the British Crown and gradually set the foundations for the Young Ireland Movement which was manifest in the 1840s (Fergus O'Ferrall 6).

As per the Young Ireland Movement, it was manifest in the 1840s, through the direct involvement of its chief writers Thomas Davis, Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon as paramount revolutionary figures of the movement, using the newspaper the *Nation* as a principal means of voicing the ideals of the Home Rule. According to Sean Cronin, "its writers received the name 'Young Ireland', although that was not of their doing. Young Ireland gave Irish nationalism an ideology" (67). In the Young Ireland movement, the role of female activists of international prominence was also of paramount significance. Sean Ryder claims that

Three of its most popular poets were women- Jane Francesca Elgee, later Lady Wilde ('Speranza'); Ellen Downing ('Mary of *The Nation*'); and Mary Kelly ('Eva of *The Nation*'). Janen Elgee and Margaret Callan in fact took over the running of *The Nation* during July 1848, when most of Young Ireland's male leaders were under arrest" (219).

Reflecting upon the concept of the wild Celt, Murray Pittock mentions that in colonial texts, one can trace the systematic view of the Irish Celt as the dangerous Other, rooted in the "fear of 'going native', which held heavier sway among colonists in Ireland than in Wales, also heavily populated by incomers" (45).

In view of the constant Irish revolts which largely questioned English dominance on Ireland and promoted the Irish cause, the Anglo-Saxon hypothesis propagated three different approaches to the tackling of the Irish Question: an ethnic cleansing of the Catholic Irish and repopulation of the island by Protestants of English and Scottish descent, the independence of the island from the British Crown or the gradual racial and cultural intermingling of the Irish with the English (Robert Young 6).

Despite the potential solutions to the Irish "problem" which were formulated by both Irish and English theorists, the Irish nation came to connote all the negative qualities which were persistently emphasised by

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847)

the British nationalist discourse. In view of its dual function as a colony and an integral part of the British Empire, Ireland occupied a prevalent position in the anti-Celtic racial debate of the Victorians. Consequently, it was treated like a colony “in law-making, in policing, in vice regal models of imperial government and in levels of poverty and despair not countenanced elsewhere in the British Isles” (Robert Colls 93).

According to Young, the increasing industrialisation of England resulted in its identification with “intrinsic Saxon racial characteristics, and contrasted to Celtic lethargy and poverty in Ireland” (104). In other words, the Irish nation epitomised all the unpleasant features which British nationalism desired to efface from the metropolis, that is, an impoverished and lethargic state of existence.

Since the Irish nation was unwilling to comply with the collective identity that was systematically supported by the British nationalist discourse of the nineteenth-century, this reluctance partly accounts for its dystopian depiction as a barbaric and perilous stock which challenged British supremacy. As Colls suggests,

The Anglo-British state imposed its view of Union on the other three countries. The historic dignity it afforded the Welsh, Scots, and Irish peoples can be measured according to how much those peoples came to accept, and comply with, its overarching dominance. (93)

Forming the frequent subject of Anglo-Saxon racism, the Irish nation held a peculiar position within the British Empire as an insular colony and an active part of the imperial expeditions overseas. Discussing the peculiarity of the Irish role in the Empire, Kevin Kenny maintains that

From the beginnings of the British Empire in the sixteenth century to its demise in the twentieth, the Irish were both subjects and agents of imperialism. The term ‘agency’ can cover a wide range of activities, some of them actively imperialist and others at best passively so, simply by dint of their taking place within the bounds of the Empire. (93)

Due to the reluctance of the Irish to identify themselves with the umbrella-term “British”, an Irish dystopia gradually developed in Victorian travel discourse, which aimed at distancing the powerful image of the Saxon from the “weak” Celt. Even though the Irish entertained the idea of the split identity (both Irish and a member of the British Empire), they were never successfully incorporated into the imperial apparatus but were rather regarded as part of the colonised world. Concerning the complex relationship of Ireland with the British Empire, Alvin Jackson argues that

For Ireland was not only a half-hearted colony, it was also a half-hearted component of the imperial metropolis; and Irish people who might be constrained at home also had access to the Empire and to the social and economic opportunities it provided. For Ireland, therefore, the Empire was simultaneously a chain and a key: it was a source both of constraint and of liberation. (136)

This ambiguous status of the Irish nation as part of the colonisers and the colonised was further reinforced at a legislative level, a fact which accounts for the assimilationist policies which were imposed on the Irish through the repopulation of the island by Scottish and English settlers in order to ensure the island's allegiance to the British Crown and the Irish nation's cultural incorporation into the Empire. Hence Jackson's argument that

Ireland was ruled partly in colonial and partly in metropolitan terms, and was partly assimilated within a British cultural context. The compromised and half-hearted nature of British political and cultural supremacy in Ireland was rejected in the ambiguities of popular Irish attitudes towards the Empire. (125)

Another important factor which contributed to the anti-Irish sentiment in the British Empire was the predominant role of the Catholic Church in the sociopolitical affairs of Ireland. Paul Kramer purports that Protestantism was yoked to British nationhood and, as a result, British identity was continually contrasted to the "Catholic 'others', the 'Celtic race in Ireland and the 'Latin' in Spain'" (1321). If Protestantism was a key feature of the Anglo-Saxon aspect which the British nationalist discourse was keen on foregrounding, Irish Catholics were seen as a direct menace to the religious homogeneity in the British Isles and were accused of aligning themselves with the French Other.

What is more, it is worth highlighting the fact that Protestantism functioned as a unifying factor for most Britons whereas religion constituted a major point of conflict between Irishmen of different religious doctrines. With reference to the view of religion as an obstacle to the forging of a separate national identity from the English rulers, David George Boyce affirms that "until the mid seventeenth century, religion was not a unifying political force among Irishmen, though attempts were certainly made to make it so" (46). Thus religion intensified the divide of the population in Ireland into Irish Catholics and Anglo-Irish, which further distinguished these groups at a racial level, where the former allegedly represented the Celtic element on the island and the latter the 'anglicised' Irish.

As explained by Kenny, the complex relationship of the Irish with religion was linked to the existence of a “tripartite religious division between Anglicans, Dissenters, and Catholics” (8) which resulted in the identification of the Protestant group with the Anglo-Irish elite that was often considered incompatible with the Celto-centric aspect of Irish culture.

Despite the alleged mixed racial background of the Irish nation, nineteenth-century Irish Nationalism relied precisely on the nation-building elements which were employed by the English in their anti-Irish discourse. As Boyce asserts,

The chief characteristics of nationalism in Ireland have been race, religion, and a strong sense of territorial unity and integrity; and in all its modes it had been profoundly influenced by the power and proximity of Britain. (18-9)

Based on the above argument, Ireland was both influenced by and opposed to the formation of British nationhood, as Irishness was forged in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon militarist spirit.

Moreover, the constant reference to the binary opposition between the rebellious Irish and the stable Saxon constituted a frequent motif in British literature of late eighteenth and nineteenth century. In their attempt to differentiate themselves from the Celtic populations of the British Isles, British travel writers tended to depict Irish culture as peripheral and strongly marginal.

Given the extensive accent of the English writers on the savage aspect of Ireland, the Irish were exoticised and represented as a nation which was diametrically different from the civilised English. This point is also attested by Joseph Lennon, who maintains that Irish writers struggled to forge their national identity in compliance with this exotisation strategy:

The impression of Irish difference from English culture long compelled Irish attention to its own legendary history, itself rooted in a sensibility of Irish geocultural remoteness and peripherality. As English impressions became more influential in Irish culture, a number of Irish writers interrogated the exoticizing lenses of imperial culture, some seeking to expose the Oriental and the Celtic as constructions, some hoping to challenge the negative tropes, some working to reverse the tropes and perform more positive images of Irishness through a process of autoexoticism. (115)

In attempting to differentiate Ireland from the British Crown through its parallel exoticisation, Irish and English travel writers deliberately and

unconsciously associated the image of Ireland with the aesthetic primitivism that prevailed in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century travel literature on the Orient. As pointed out by Lennon, a series of imperial romances and Romantic poems circulated towards the end of the eighteenth-century, enhancing the exotic image of the Celtic as Oriental (115).

From that perspective, Irish Orientalism formed a significant part of the British nation-building agenda, in the British attempt to depict its insular colonies as primitive and exotic. Due to the Irish alienation from the racial paradigm of Anglo-Saxonism, Irish culture was frequently linked to “the ‘Orient.’ Ireland’s ancient history and culture supposedly stemmed from Asian and Middle Eastern, or West Asian cultures” (Lennon xv). In the nineteenth-century British nationalist discourse, the Irish nation allegedly shared linguistic, racial and cultural similarities with the wide Orient, a fact which implied both an exotic and non-European dimension of the island and therefore suggested further appropriation of its culture by the dominant English ruler.

This above strategy of exoticising Ireland did not only accord with eighteenth-century aestheticism, in which primitivism came to the fore as a major cultural construct, but also underlined the barbaric aspect of the Irish. As Lennon puts it,

Imperial British texts had long compared Ireland with other Oriental cultures, at first in order to textually barbarize Ireland and later in order to discover intra-imperial strategies for governing its colonies. (xviii)

By applying the centre-periphery model, British nationalist discourse sought to justify the territorial expansion of England in Ireland and simultaneously legitimised the power of the coloniser over the colonised. In that respect, the dark Other was represented by the Irish.

Irish Orientalism could also be considered as an English invention to deprive the Irish of a national voice and legitimise British control over the British Isles on the basis of racial criteria which further alienated the Irish nation from Europe and placed the Irish at the bottom of the racial ladder. For this reason the Irish were often compared to the Asiatic and African nations of the overseas British dominions and, as Bernard Boxill postulates,

‘Europeans may have invented the idea of race to explain their differences from Black Africans or to justify enslaving black Africans. Inevitably, however, it generated claims that there were racial differences among Europeans and that some white races were superior to others [...] At that



point there occurred what one historian has described as a 'fragmentation' within the white race'. That is, although the Irish were acknowledged to be white, their critics maintained that they were also Celtic, and racially different from and inferior to Anglo-Saxons and Teutons. (24-5)

After the introduction of Darwinism as a biological theory that conveniently classified civilisations and ethnic groups in accordance with specific racial criteria related to their physical attributes and based on the degree at which they differed from the dominant Anglo-Saxon white race, Ireland was the subject of significant biological racism which aimed at foregrounding its peripheral and backward position within the British Empire. According to Tariq Modood, it was precisely this non-whiteness of a people that British nationalist discourse of the nineteenth-century aimed to stress for the consolidation of the Empire:

While biological racism is the antipathy, exclusion and unequal treatment of people on the basis of their physical appearance or other imputed physical differences-saliently in Britain their non-whiteness- cultural racism builds on biological racism a further discourse which evokes cultural differences from an alleged British or 'civilised' norm to vilify, marginalised or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer from biological racism. (239)

It is also worth referring to the frequent association of race with gender, as Irish Orientalism was not only confined to the aestheticisation of the Irish culture as Oriental and primitive but also reinforced the idea of the masculine Saxon race and the feminine Celtic stock. Kenny considers British imperialism as a "by nature gendered process where the British Empire always seems a very masculine enterprise" (16).

If British nationalist discourse was forged upon images of military strength and the Beowulfian tradition of the Middle Ages, Celtic culture was pictured in an entirely different vein. In relation to the feminine visage of the Irish culture, Pittock suggests that Thomas Arnold offered "an intensely feminized reading of the Celt as a kind of decorative accessory to British identity, simultaneously womanish and childish" (65), a narrative strategy that further nourished British perception of the Irish Celt as backward and weak.

Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon link of Irish culture to the female element did not only pertain to the anti-Celtic agenda of the British Empire but was extensively exploited as an ideological construct during the resurgence of Irish Nationalism. As Ryder puts it,

Gender also becomes, as we have seen, one of the basic grounds upon which Irish cultural nationalism shows its indebtedness to the imperial culture against which it is defined; and even within nationalist discourse itself gendering poses severe problems by embarrassing the latter's logic of democracy and self-determination. (221)

In the light of Irish Nationalism, Irish identity was shaped as a reaction to the British attempt of portraying the Irish Celt based on racial and social conventions attached to the female element. As a result, the nationalist awakening of the Irish coincided with the effort of Irish scholars to revitalise Irish literary tradition to respond to the Herderian notion of the *Volksgeist*, that is, the people's spirit that was encountered in the distinct history, literary tradition and language of a nation (Barnard 85). In Irish literary tradition, the image of Mother Ireland, which was often evoked in the Young Ireland Movement to subvert the Anglo-Saxon view of Ireland as a corrupt, effeminate world, was often addressed to link the country's glorious past with its present state:

A related figure of femininity characterizing Irish nationalism has been the Poor Old Woman, the *sean bhean bhocht*, or 'Mother Ireland' figure [...] The *sean bhean bhocht*, like the young queen of the *aisling*, is powerless, apart from her power to lament or keen, but precisely because she is so, the implied male/ reader/ listener is able to define himself as her rescuer-active, courageous and ultimately patriotic. (Sean Ryder 213)

Drawing upon this argument, the feminine element in the form of Mother Ireland was used by Irish Nationalists to dispel the dystopian images of Ireland in British nationalist discourse and sensitise Europe to the Irish struggle against British assimilationist policies.

Yet Irish Orientalism was not only utilised by British travellers in order to ensure English supremacy over Ireland; it was also employed by Irish writers to acquire a new, distinct voice from the rest of the British dominions. As suggested by Lennon, the duality with which Irish authors approached Ireland as a semi-colonised country and an active part of the imperialist apparatus provided them with a unique opportunity to achieve a new role

Considering the fact the Orient offered Irish writers some discursive control over an aspect of Empire: the representation of other (colonized) peoples [...] these writers could belong to both the imperial metropole and the colonized periphery. (xxiii)

Aside from the Orientalist dimension with which Irish culture was impregnated, anti-Anglo-Saxon discourse evolved into a rhetoric of defense against the racial bias of the British nation-building agenda. Therefore, Irish nationhood was founded on strictly racial criteria which prioritised the Gaelic and Catholic attributes of Irish civilisation over its more Anglo-Irish aspects. Inevitably, "Irish history was interpreted in racialist (or ethnic) terms: Gaelic civilization versus the English conquest; the Celt against the Anglo-Saxon" (Cronin 99).

Such a dichotomy posed a significant challenge to the shaping of Irish nationhood, considering the different ethnic groups that inhabited its territories: since the Irish were primarily people of Gaelic extraction and Catholic faith, the Anglo-Irish part of the Irish population was often deemed as unfamiliar with the Irish struggle for independence, notwithstanding the influential role of the Anglo-Irish Protestants in the revolutionary movements of the mid-nineteenth century. Discussing the controversies in the definition of Irish nationhood, Cronin points out that

The 'Irish' consisted of Gaelic and Anglo-Norman residents of Ireland. How the peasantry saw themselves it is difficult to say, but in a traditionalist society, where clansman and chief shared a common heritage, one may assume that they shared cultural and national values too. (11)

If Irish nationhood was forged on Catholicism and Celticism as its necessary components, the term Anglo-Irish often coalesced with the common view of Irish Protestants as non-Irish or hostile to the idea of Home Rule that constituted a key feature of Irish Nationalism. As observed by F.S.L. Lyons

The very name 'Anglo-Irish' [...] carried much broader cultural, social religious and political implications. Essentially, the Anglo-Irish were the descendants of those who had conquered and colonized the country from Norman times down to the end of the seventeenth century and who dominated it for two hundred years thereafter. (212)

In that way, Irish nationalist discourse frequently addressed the issue of Anglo-Irishness as a status which was more relevant to the British expansionist agenda and less related to the Irish cause, projecting the Anglo-Irish as an "elite", which was more akin to the English element in Ireland.

Notwithstanding the clash between the Anglo-Irish and the Celtic ethnic groups of Ireland, the Anglo-Irish intellectuals were gradually absorbed into the Irish struggle for independence and underlay the core of

the revolutionary movements that accelerated Home Rule on the island. It was the period during which the Anglo-Irish played a decisive role in the ideological conceptualisation of the Irish cause. As Boyce contends,

When a later and very different generation of Anglo-Irishmen made good their claim to be the Irish people, and also eagerly asserted the political and constitutional rights claimed by the medieval colonists, Irish nationalism became at last a political reality. (42)

Owing to the hostile relations and the competitiveness which characterised Anglo-Irish relations throughout the greatest part of the nineteenth-century, Ireland did not constitute an attractive travel destination for the majority of British travellers. Nevertheless, similarly to the status of other Celtic regions, that is, Scotland and Wales, Ireland often connoted a peripheral world which remained unscathed by the vices of modern civilisation. Considering the island's proximity to Britain, "travellers did not have to go far, for every core had its periphery and every periphery had its trusting place" (Colls 259). In that sense, Ireland provided British travellers with an opportunity to explore a country in which they were well versed on a political and linguistic level but still retained utopian traits. According to Colls,

Celtic lands offered more promising journeys. Here were people whom even the state saw as peripheral. Indeed, seeing them as *Celts* at all was a view from the top, and not at all a view at first shared by the Celts themselves. Once over the border, however, and moving through a shaggy landscape which looked the part, English travellers could begin to breathe-in the difference. (275)

Given the above assumption, one could easily comprehend that the Irish landscape combined elements which were not easy to find in other travel destinations. Though a periphery, it could easily be explored and inspected by the average British traveller who desired to undertake a trip to the unknown.

In addition, Irish proximity to the English metropolis successfully reiterated the centre-periphery model upon which British imperial beholders drew their discourse. As mentioned by Colls, there was the «shared idea of distance from central state and church as providing the best conditions for survival. Celtic lands, after all, were as far away as the British could get» (276).

If Victorian travel writers were anxious to visit sequestered locations which were off the beaten track (Thompson 56), Ireland could satisfy this desire for less popular travel destinations, as it combined the necessary

ingredients of adventure and picturesqueness with which the travelling process was intrinsically connected at a relatively short distance from the English metropolitan space.

What is more, one should add that, during the Irish national awakening, the common reference to mythological figures of ancient Celtic literary forms, such as the *aisling*, rendered Ireland an attractive, utopian locus in the eyes of the Victorian traveller, who was eager to reproduce images of Irish mythology through a visit in Ireland. The use of Irish literary tradition as a focal point of the Young Ireland movement did not only seek to revive the ties with the Celtic cultural heritage of the island but was also made to draw the British traveller's attention to the distinct, utopian features of Irish culture.

On the significance of the Irish literary forms to the Irish cause as a means of transforming Ireland into an appealing travel destination for the average English tourist, Ryder maintains that

The *aisling* tradition was an aristocratic one, with links to the wider European country love tradition and its associated values of chivalry and so on- indeed bourgeois 'chivalric' values become quite prominent in the gendered rhetoric of nineteenth-century nationalism. The Young Ireland period also sees the translation of eighteenth-century *aisling* into English. (212-3)

The use of Irish national literature and the resurgence of folkloric studies coincided with the second phase of Irish nationalism, which was termed Celtic or Irish Literary Revival. As Joe Cleary mentions,

The Irish Literary Revival, which extended from about 1880 to approximately 1930, is usually deemed the constitutive moment in the development of a modern Irish post- or anti-colonial culture. As a broad cultural movement, the Revival owed much to earlier nineteenth-century cultural developments such as antiquarian and folkloric studies, the cultural nationalism of Young Ireland, and German and Irish philological studies of Celtic languages and civilization. In this particular instance, however, the cultural revival extended beyond narrow intellectual coteries and acquired real political impetus from several events: the destruction of Gaelic culture during the Famine. (257)

Based on Cleary's argument on the political and cultural dimensions of the Irish Literary Revival, one could comprehend that the rediscovery of Old Irish literary remnants and the rise of antiquarianism in Ireland posed a significant challenge to the British nation-building agenda. In search of a separate national identity, Irish philologists and travellers founded

associations which responded to the development of a Celticist spirit and systematically produced works that glorified the image of the Irish Celt and Old Irish folklore. According to Cleary, this Irish Revival was

associated with figures such as Standish O'Grady, Douglas Hyde, W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, John M. Synge, Patrick Pearse, and others emerged as part of a wider cultural ferment produced by a series of overlapping cultural and political organizations that included the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Irish Literary (later Abbey) Theatre, the co-operative movement, and Sinn Féin. (257)

Given all the above, the present volume concentrates on travelogues which explore Irish nationhood from a variety of angles. In particular, the text investigates the representations of Irish nationhood by Irish and British travellers in order to shed light on the sociopolitical and cultural conditions that underlay the forging of Britishness and Irishness as antithetical notions. The aim of the book is to find the extent to which these travel narratives are influenced by the dominant racial theories that pertained to the British nationalist agenda in the light of the Irish Nationalist movements of mid and late--nineteenth century such as the Repeal Movement and Young Ireland Movement.

Regarding the first chapter of the book, it focuses on Richard Coal Hoare's travel text *Journal of a Tour in Ireland* which constitutes one of the first attempts to depict Ireland as a travel destination. In his narrative, the writer reflects upon Ireland as a British colony after the failed Irish rebellion in 1798.

As regards the second chapter of this volume, it concentrates on James Johnson's travelogue, which sheds light on the political developments on the island at a time, when the Repealers' role had gained ground in Ireland. Johnson's text touches upon all the significant traits of Irishness, as was defined in the 1840s, forming one of the first endeavours to deal with the anti-Irish rhetoric in Victorian Britain.

With reference to the third chapter of the present volume, it analyses Samuel Carter Hall and Anna Fielding Hall's travel narrative *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character* which reflects on Irish society based on the basis of the Anglo-Saxon paradigm.

Concerning the fourth chapter, it explores James Macaulay's travelogue *Ireland in 1872: a Tour of Observation with Remarks on Irish Public Questions* which includes the impressions of the writer on the role of Ultramontaniam in Ireland, juxtaposing Scottishness with Irishness as antithetical national constructs.

Insofar as the fifth chapter revolves around Dinah M. Craik Muloch's travelogue *An Unknown Country*, in which the writer offers a glimpse into nineteenth-century Ireland, employing images of Otherness that seek to depict the island as a terra incognita, including the writer's approach to the issue of womanhood.

The sixth chapter investigates Samuel Hole's *Little Tour in Ireland* as a text which has been produced to apply the eighteenth-century criterion of the sublime to the Irish context, while focusing on the superstitions that underlie the country's *Volksgeist*. In his travel narrative, Hole challenges the mid-nineteenth-century Victorian conventions attached to the definition of Irishness.

The seventh chapter centres on Thomas O'Neill Russel's *Beauties and Antiquities of Ireland* which is intimately related to the resurgence of interest in Celtic antiquarianism during the Irish Revival towards the end of the nineteenth century.

As for the final chapter, Katherine Tynan's text *Peeps at many Lands: Ireland* concentrates on the Herderian aspects of the Irish culture, based on the Old Celtic literature on the island. Tynan's text encompasses all the Celticist ideals of Irish Revivalism.





## CHAPTER ONE

### RICHARD COAL HOARE: *JOURNAL OF A TOUR IN IRELAND: A.D. 1806*

Sir Richard Coal Hoare, Second Baronet, was born in 1758 in Barnes, Surrey. After being educated at Wandsworth, he pursued further studies in the field of archaeology. In 1783 he married Hester Lyttelton and after her death, he started journeying in Italy, Switzerland and France. Hoare might be regarded as a prominent antiquarian and archaeologist who penned various travelogues and historical studies, which were always accompanied by his own sketches of the place visited.

Hoare is best remembered for his travel accounts, which were the products of his journeys through Wales and Ireland, leading to the publication of the works *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis* and *Journal of a Tour in Ireland, A.D. 1806*, published in 1804 and 1807 respectively. After his second tour in continental Europe, he also wrote the topographical works *A Catalogue of Books Relating to the History and Topography of Italy* (1812), *Hints to Travellers in Italy* (1815) and *A Classical Tour through Italy and Sicily* (1819), all inspired by his long journey across the Italian Peninsula.

One should also mention Hoare's vast contribution to the archaeological studies in Britain, given his membership in the Society of Antiquaries of London and his participation in the first excavations at Stonehenge in 1798, after which he published a two-volume book, entitled *The Ancient History of Wiltshire* (1812). He died in 1838 at Stourhead.

This chapter concentrates on Hoare's travel narrative *Journal of a Tour in Ireland: A.D. 1806*, which could be deemed as one of the first travelogues to focus exclusively on Ireland as a travel destination. In the prefatory part, the writer projects Ireland as one of the neglected fringes of the British Empire that travellers rarely visit:

To the traveller, who fond of novelty and information, seeks out those regions, which may either afford reflection for his mind, or employment for his pencil, and especially to him, who may be induced to visit the neglected shores of Hibernia the following pages are dedicated. (ii)

Hoare's introductory statement is of major importance, given that Ireland is depicted as a peripheral British dominion, the exploration of which is not easily undertaken by the average British traveller. His view of Ireland as a region off the beaten track endows the island with a utopian dimension which enhances its contemplation as a *terra incognita*, ready to be inspected by the British imperial beholder who comes from the civilised world.

Hoare's assumption that Ireland constitutes a travel destination ideal to those travellers who search for novelty, reflection and information adheres to the Rousseauesque idea of the unexplored that stimulated the imagination and the scientific pursuits of early nineteenth-century travellers. As highlighted by Colls, in the early nineteenth-century a sudden shift of interest from the Grand Tourist loci to less cosmopolitan locations occurs, rendering the Celtic lands more attractive in the eyes of the English traveller because "represented as the least changed, most original people of Europe, it was claimed that Celts were still in touch with their ancestral voices" (277).

Additionally, Hoare regards the island as a locus which can provide a travel writer with a unique opportunity to reflect and get inspired by the beauties of wild Irish nature. Thus, he alludes to the Rousseauesque concept of the solitary traveller, according to which in search of "personal solitude and loneliness [...] the Romantic hero is frequently an exiled, solitary wanderer, pictured in a vast and threatening landscape" (Peter Fjågesund and Ruth Symes 307).

Considering the emphasis of eighteenth-century travellers on Greco-Roman culture, the Celtic parts of the British Empire did not form popular travel destinations, as they were remotely connected to the neoclassical interest in ancient monuments. According to Pittock, Celtic lands in general and Ireland in particular were termed the "Celtic fringe" which expressed

both a thinning of population density and a fraying of British identity, though the former renders the latter barely relevant, and in no sense a serious object of concern within the term in which this dismissive phrase is used. (1)

In addition, Ireland did not fare well as a travel destination in eighteenth-century British imagination because it did not possess the exotic elements that could render this island a popular place to visit. As Thomas Bartlett puts it,

As an island lying closely of a larger island itself located just off continental Europe, Ireland conspicuously lacked the eighteenth-century colonial stereotypes (extreme temperatures, exotic produce, curious animals, slavery, distance from the mother country. (61)

Given the above theoretical framework, Hoare is well acquainted with the lack of interest in Ireland until the late eighteenth century. For this reason, he wishes to break away from the travel canon of the previous century, aiming to draw the reader's attention to the idea of the unexplored. Owing to his capacity as an antiquarian, Hoare explains the reason why he desires to undertake a trip to the unknown country. In particular, he states that he wishes to restore the island's fame in British imagination, stressing the ignorance of the mainstream British traveller to be the cause of Ireland's demonisation: "Because from the want of books, and living information, we have been led to suppose its country rude, its inhabitants savage, its paths dangerous" (ii).

It is also worth mentioning that, apart from the writer's emphasis on Ireland as an unexplored land, Hoare produces his travel account a few years after the repression of the Irish uprising against the British rule in 1798. According to Guy Beiner, the Irish rebellion took place with the help of the French, and led to an atrocious civil war amongst different religious groups of Irish society (60). Nevertheless, Hoare does not reproduce the mutual feelings of hatred or the anti-English sentiment that permeated Irish society at his time but bestows significant attention on the historical aspect of Killdare County, which constituted the main battlefield during the Irish Rebellion in 1798:

I regretted very much that I had not leisure to examine more minutely this extensive district, as from the experience I have lately had on our Wiltshire plains, I think I might have made some interesting discoveries. The tumuli dispersed over the plain, prove most evidently that it was inhabited in very early times, and if properly opened, their contents would throw a great light on the Irish History, and prove the connexion both in manners and customs of the tribes inhabiting Ireland and the Western provinces of England. (164-5)

In the above extract, the writer resents the fact that he cannot visit this historical Irish region, pointing to its pivotal role in the formation of Irish history and culture. His attachment to the national history of the island indicates his eagerness to avoid a political reading of the country visited.

In addition, Hoare touches upon the lack of information about the island as one of the principal causes of the misconceptions attached to Ireland. This attitude shows that he is genuinely interested in exploring the

country and assuming the role of the mediator between the two worlds, that is, Ireland and the dominant British culture. In doing so, his narrative does not fall into the category of travelogues which contribute to the consolidation of the British imperialist apparatus. Hence the writer's comment on the function of Ireland as a *terra incognita* in British imagination, as opposed to other Celtic parts of the United Kingdom with which British readership was better acquainted:

Whilst the opposite coasts of Wales and Scotland, have for many successive years attracted the notice and admiration of the man of taste, and of the artist; whilst the press has so teemed with publications, pointing out their natural beauties, and works of military and monastic art, that little more is left to be described whilst Wales and Scotland, I say, have had the assistance of the Historian's pen to record their annals, and of the artist's pencil to portray their natural and artificial curiosities; the Island of Hibernia still remains unvisited and unknown. (ii)

Drawing upon Hoare's argument, it could be deduced from his reference to the misinformation on Ireland that until early nineteenth century, the island remained on the margin of the social advances within the British Empire and assumed the role of the insular periphery.

Despite Ireland's implicit transformation into the dark Other amongst British insular dominions, Hoare does not embrace this dystopian view of the island but rather seeks to elucidate the reader on the function of Ireland as an ancient cradle of Celtic civilisation. As Hoare puts it:

It appears however clear, that at a very early period, and at a time when the greater portion of Europe laboured under the oppression of Gothic ignorance, Ireland became a celebrated seat of learning and religion. After the propagation of Christianity, it was dignified with the title of *Insula Sanctorum*, or the Isle of Saints; so great was the number of holy. (xiv)

On the one hand, the status of the island as a seat of learning defies the imperialist view of Ireland as the Celtic Other, which became synonymous with ignorance and backwardness, especially when Hoare refers to the backwardness of the Anglo-Saxon (Gothic) ignorance at the time when Ireland flourished culturally. On the other hand, Hoare's projection of Ireland as an ancient religious centre reiterates the utopian concept of the *insula sacra* which was brought to the foreground from the nineteenth century onwards. As has already been suggested, the view of Ireland as the holy island was one of the recurrent motifs in nineteenth-century Irish nationalism. According to Pittock, "Nationalist territorialism in Ireland

was aided by the simple fact that the country was a discrete unit, a separate island: and not just any island, but *insula sacra*, the sacred placed" (53).

Another noteworthy aspect of Hoare's travel narrative is his reference to the racial admixture of the Irish with the English, which also draws a common ancestral link between the two nations. Given the constant emphasis of nineteenth-century Britons on their racial purity, Hoare's remark defies the strictly Saxon origins of British culture and espouses a broader view of the term Anglo-Saxon, encompassing both the Celtic and Germanic elements of British culture.

As to its original inhabitants, it is most probable, that Ireland, as well as England, were peopled from the neighbouring Continent of Gaul; first by the Celtic, and afterwards by the Celtic tribes; and this supposition is corroborated, if not proved, by our adoption of the same names of people and places, as used by them. Some authors contend, that the name of Scoti is derived from the Scutui and Scythia; and that of Hiberni and Hibernia, from Iberia and the Iberi, in Spain: others claim for their country a Phoenician and Milesian origin; and others get so deeply involved in the labyrinth of fable and romance, that they cannot with any degree of plausibility extricate themselves from it. (xvii)

In lieu of adopting a more segregating attitude towards the Irish Celts, Hoare appears to advocate a more inclusive model of Anglo-Saxonism, which accords with the generic British identity that early nineteenth-century writers endeavoured to disseminate in their writings. Hoare's Anglo-Irish connection bears strong resemblance to the mid-nineteenth century version of Anglo-Saxonism which sought to justify the mixed racial background of the English:

By mid-century the term Anglo-Saxon had been extended to refer to the English-speaking world as a whole, and Anglo-Saxonism— a political movement exalting the later English-speaking tradition as well as the Anglo-Saxons, their language, and their entire culture— had become a national issue. (J. R. Hall 134)

It is hardy coincidental that in a later episode, the writer addresses this inclusive Anglo-Saxon paradigm by referring to the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Ireland as a process of racial and spiritual intercourse between the two nations rather than an event of political nature:

In the middle of the seventh century (A.D.646) we learn from Bede, that many of the higher and lower order of Anglo-Saxons retired from their own country into this island: some to indulge their taste for reading, others to lead a life of stricter observance and solitude; all of whom the Scots

received with cordiality, lending them books, and affording them gratuitous instruction, as well as daily sustenance. (xxv)

For one thing, the above comment indicates the status of Ireland as a cultural centre, to which Anglo-Saxons resorted to indulge in spiritual and religious matters. For another thing, Hoare uses the term Scots as a synonym for Celt to address the Anglo-Irish historical ties. Instead of demonising hybridity as a state of racial impurity, Hoare's discourse revolves around the different connections of the Saxons with the Celts to forge a collective British identity between the two nations. His pan-Germanic outlook on race is reminiscent of Kramer's argument that

While used as a shorthand for racial purity, Anglo-Saxonism featured a contained hybridity. No other late-nineteenth-century racism wore so prominent a hyphen. Anglo-Saxonism represented the alloy of superior but distinct racial elements. While sharply delimited, that hybridity and the theoretical possibility of future assimilations lent porousness to Anglo-Saxonism's boundaries in race, culture, and destiny. (1322)

If Hoare defines Irishness in connection to the more generic term Britishness, one might discern his loyalty to the national construct of the Briton, which attempts to reconcile antithetical terms such as the Celt and the Saxon. Hence his later remark on the unifying aspect of Britishness:

But I should ill perform the duty I owe to my own feelings as a man of humanity and as a citizen of that community which has so lately united each nation under the general appellation of Briton were I to quit this subject without noticing more strongly than I have hitherto done during my journal, the disgraceful state in which several of the cemeteries are steered to remain. (300)

While commenting on the bad condition of the ancient Irish cemeteries, the writer makes reference to his duty as a citizen of a wider community, that is, a member of the British Empire. On this occasion, Hoare expresses his loyalty to the British imperialist cause, a fact which shows that his journey is textually imbued with imperialist nuances.

This becomes obvious in another instance, in which Hoare's narration revolves around the idea of the solitary traveller in connection to the expansionist agenda of the Empire towards unexplored territories. Regarding the concept of solitary travelling as a means of exploring sequestered places in order to achieve self-recognition, Hoare makes the following statement: