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# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America



# **IRISH MIGRATION STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA**

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## Ireland and the Caribbean

By Jorge L. China  
Guest Editor

The Caribbean was the first American region to come to the attention of sixteenth-century Europeans. It was here that they at first marvelled at the pristine beauty of the New World, were puzzled by the 'strange' Arawak and Carib natives, lorded it over the indigenous people and their countryside in the name of religion, civilisation, and mercantile expansion. They thereby set in motion the largest trans-oceanic migratory movement in the history of the world. The pursuit of riches and fame lured enterprising people from throughout the 'Old World,' fascinated by the unique languages, spiritual beliefs, and cultural artefacts of the people of the 'New World'. While it is tempting to describe this process using modern-day multicultural clichés like the 'melting pot' ideology of the United States or 'mestizaje' in Latin America, it must be remembered that intense friction accompanied the post-1492 re-settlement of the New World.

The newcomers brought with them their centuries-old quarrels, and these were played out in the Antillean archipelago in the shape of inter-imperial competition and warfare. These carry-overs from Old World politics, in turn, would influence the various ethnic, religious, and racial groups that came to be a part of the re-settlement of the Americas. The Caribbean and its surrounding littoral exemplify this legacy. Perennial clashes between Spain, France, England, Denmark and Holland, the five leading European countries whose subjects carved out colonies there, have characterised much the history of this region over the past five centuries. Even Sweden, which at one point occupied the tiny island of Saint Bartholomew, was involved in these economic and territorial battles.

Although the region-wide violence perpetrated by pirates, privateers and armed military expeditions, who raided, pillage and killed is now largely behind us, it has been replaced by another type of discord: the politics of

representation. The area's present-day historiography, particularly in relation to the colonial period, mostly focuses on the Spanish, French, British, Danish and Dutch settlers, and their various attempts to gain the upper hand. Colonists, fortune-hunters, adventurers, clerics, voyagers, coerced labourers, prisoners, religious dissidents and mercenaries from other parts of Europe who also had a role in the demographic, economic and political evolution of the Antillean archipelago, are generally marginalised or silenced.



Christmas Carnival in Montserrat  
(Jonathan Skimmer, 2000)

The Irishmen and women whose varied experiences are featured in this special edition of *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* are certainly some of them. With the possible exception of the Irish association with the eastern Caribbean island of Montserrat, they are not in the mainstream of academic and popular discussions of Caribbean Studies. It is hoped that the essays that follow will shed some light

on their voluntary or compulsory arrival, successes and failures, misfortunes and strokes of luck, virtues and shortcomings, contributions and blunders, in short on their 'lived' experiences.

Perhaps one of the most revealing findings in this collection is the fact that the Irish diaspora in the Caribbean was not limited to any one historical period, group of individuals, or geographical area. Their presence in the region stretched across time, from the indentured servants in the 1650s to mercenaries and freedom fighters in the early nineteenth-century Spanish American wars of independence. Unlike many other European colonists, who generally came as single men, one finds both Irish men and women among the pioneers. Some, like Byrne's John Hooke, arrived voluntarily; others crossed the Atlantic under duress, like the transported and forced labourers studied by Rodgers.

Most European settlers on the islands confined themselves to one or another island or group of islands, hence the modern-day expressions Hispanic Caribbean, French Caribbean, British Caribbean, and so on. The Irish, on the other hand, looked for and found new homes wherever opportunities or other circumstances took them. They resided on practically all of the islands of the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean zone, as demonstrated in the papers by Rodgers, Anderson, Power and Chinaea, among others. Some of them were undoubtedly trans-colonial, multilingual, and highly adaptable to changing environments.

The Irish also helped to shape the demographic, social, economic and political evolution of the areas under study. Early on, Irish servants and religious dissidents comprised the bulk of the white population of the British Caribbean. When the islands made the transition to sugar cultivation, and Africanisation set in, this numerical advantage faded away. Since the presence of whites now became a matter of public safety, some of the Irish exploited this shift to their advantage whenever possible, by seeking or demanding access to the more prestigious positions of master artisans, overseers and planters.

In some cases, as shown by Power, Irish people took leading mercantile positions in the expanding world of transatlantic trade. Others escaped from servitude or defected to England's Catholic rivals, especially France and Spain. In Cuba, Irish railroad workers became part of the plantocracy's unsuccessful 'whitening' scheme, as described in Brehony's article. Politically, the vital roles played by the O'Reilly-O'Daly team in revamping defences in the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan, as examined in Chinaea's article, or John 'Dinamita' O'Brien during the Cuban insurrection of the 1890s, analysed in Quintana's article, are also acknowledged in this volume. They are but a few examples of a long tradition of Irish military presence in Spain and its American colonies.

Finally, the Irish impact in the region went beyond their physical activities as servants, planters, merchants and soldiers. Attempts to draw comparisons between the colonial experiences of Ireland and the Caribbean have also sparked the creative energies and imagination of writers. Two examples in this volume are Tewfik's insightful deconstruction of Lorna Goodison's poem, 'Country Sligoville', and Novillo Corvalán's original search for a literary kinship in the works of Derek Walcott and James Joyce. Their work shows the enduring cultural, linguistic and political cross-pollination resulting from the Irish presence in the Caribbean, one that challenges the notion of discreet colonies or nations evolving in relative isolation. Instead, the authors show how writers in both the Caribbean and Ireland see or have come to grips with their common experiences with servitude, oppression and forms of colonialism.

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## **The Irish in the Caribbean 1641-1837 An Overview**

By Nini Rodgers

### **Abstract**

*The arrival of Europeans in the Caribbean brought about irreversible demographic change. Decimated by defeat and disease, 'peaceful' Arawaks and 'warlike' Caribs alike ceased to exist as an identifiable ethnic group, their gene pool dissolving into that of the newcomers, where it died away or remained un-investigated. The replacement of native peoples by European settlers was desultory. After their arrival in 1492 the Spanish explored and settled the Caribbean islands with some enthusiasm. The extension of activities into Mexico and Peru, however, rich in precious metals and with a structured agricultural work force, swiftly eclipsed the islands as a destination for settlers. More northerly Europeans (French, English, Irish, and Dutch) arriving later, slipped into the more neglected Spanish possessions in the Leeward Islands (today's eastern Caribbean) or Surinam, on the periphery of Portuguese Brazil. These seventeenth-century colonists initiated the process which turned the Caribbean into the world's sugar bowl. To do so, they imported enslaved Africans who soon became the most numerous group on the islands. In the nineteenth century, as sugar receded in economic importance, so too did the remaining whites, and the Caribbean assumed its present Afro-Caribbean aspect. Changing the islands' flora, fauna and demography, the newcomers also imported their religious and political systems and 'great power' rivalries. Those who founded the colonies were eager for royal support and recognition, thinking very much in terms of subsequently returning home to enjoy wealth and importance. As their tropical possessions proved themselves valuable, kings and governments became more and more determined to retain and expand them. The sugar boom made the Caribbean a cockpit for warfare among the European powers. This presented difficulties and opportunities for the Irish. Divided at home into colonists and colonised, when seeking their fortunes in Europe's overseas empire, they had to choose which king to serve, which colony to plant.*

### **Pioneer Settlers: The Case of Peter Sweetman**

This situation in the Caribbean was first clearly articulated by Peter Sweetman in 1641. Sweetman had left Ireland with the intention of becoming a substantial planter. His chosen destination was Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts), the first island where Europeans made a serious attempt to develop tobacco plantations. Arriving simultaneously in the mid-1620s, the English and French, fearful both of native Caribs and Spanish claims to possession, partitioned the island amongst themselves. Sweetman, a subject of the British King Charles I and building upon connections with English traders and adventurers who used Cork and Kinsale as the last landfall on the Atlantic crossing, led his entourage (male and female, soldiers and servants) to the English sector of the island.

The outbreak of the 1641 rebellion by Catholics in Ireland against English rule caused Sweetman

to rethink his position. Tensions ran high between the English and Irish colonists and the governor sought to defuse the situation by deporting the Irish to the nearby island of Montserrat. Uneasy about this move, Sweetman wrote to King John of Portugal citing religious harassment and requesting to be allowed to lead four hundred Irish from Saint Christopher to an island site at the mouth of the Amazon. There, Sweetman hoped to establish a distinct Irish colony, promising King John that his group of soldiers and servants, which included fifty or sixty married men, would be a guarantee of security, stability and future development.

The idea of establishing an Irish tobacco colony along the Amazon under an Iberian monarch had been put before the King of Spain some years earlier. Church and King were well disposed to such a proposal having already welcomed the Irish as persecuted Catholics and useful soldiers. Hispanic colonists in the Americas reacted differently, seeing the Irish as

northern intruders, pointing out that not all of them were Catholics, complaining that wherever they came they brought the English with them. The Portuguese authorities now reflected a similar split. King John therefore designed a compromise solution. He refused Sweetman's request for a distinct Irish colony, based on the strategically placed island the Irishman had chosen. Instead King John offered a mainland site where Sweetman could establish a town. There he could be governor but the head magistrate would be Portuguese. The Irish must become naturalised Portuguese, admit other Portuguese subjects to settle among them and accept the Portuguese judicial system. They would also have to observe Portuguese trading rules, which meant that they had to rely on merchants in Lisbon (Lorimer 1989: 446-559).

Sweetman's hopes were dashed. He had hoped to set up a distinct Irish colony in an island location where he could maintain valuable trading connections with the English and the Dutch, currently the best suppliers of capital, cheap freight charges, manufactured goods, and African slaves. So Sweetman's attempt failed and the Irish were moved to Montserrat. By 1667 a visiting British governor described it as 'almost an Irish colony'.

A decade later a census of the island proved this description correct, showing some sixty-nine percent of the white male population and some seventy percent of the white females to be Irish. On Nevis and Antigua, the Irish totalled around a quarter of the white population; on Saint Christopher they hovered around ten percent.

Neither the Spanish Habsburgs nor the British Stuarts were prepared to sanction an official Irish colony in the Caribbean. The Irish therefore were left in the position of trying to secure their advantage by playing off the rival powers against one another. As France replaced Spain as the leading Catholic power in Europe, Caribbean colonies moved from tobacco to more valuable and capital-intensive sugar cultivation. The division of Saint Christopher into French and British sectors thus became more politically volatile.

The Irish could prove politically influential. In 1666, when Britain and France declared war, it

was the Irish who ensured the triumph of the French on Saint Christopher and Montserrat. An English colonist commented that 'the Irish in the rear, always a bloody and perfidious people in the English Protestant interest, fired volleys into the front and killed more than the enemy of our own forces'. Montserrat, as well as the entirety of Saint Christopher, passed into French control, a situation reversed a year later. The English took over, demoting Montserrat's Irish Protestant governor for helping the French, and installing William Stapleton, an Irish Catholic, in his place, as he understood 'the better to govern his countrymen' (Akenson 1997:55-58).

It was the needy nobles of Portugal and Spain who established Europe's first overseas empires. Landless younger sons, *fidalgos* and *hidalgos*, bred to avoid manual labour and give orders to their social inferiors, took to soldiering, eager to conquer and discover new lands. In doing so they frequently encouraged the family's peasantry to leave the fields, take up arms and stagger on shipboard. Peter Sweetman, setting off for Saint Christopher with his armed retinue and bond servants, was an Irish version of this European phenomenon.

Tudor and Cromwellian conquest meant that Ireland was full of dispossessed or depleted Catholic gentry struggling somehow to preserve their social standing. The irony of the Irish as 'colonised and coloniser' is intellectually disturbing to readers in a later generation; it was not so to the actual participants. Needy Catholic gentry, landless swordsmen, particularly from the provinces of Connacht and Munster, might look west to recoup their losses. The earliest surviving Irish emigrant letter from the New World comes from the Blake brothers on Barbados and Montserrat, conventionally carrying messages home to Galway of the good living to be made in a new land. The details about the sugar plantation and the slave labour force which produced this satisfaction are surprising to the twenty-first century reader (Oliver 1909, I: 52-4).

#### **Island Exploitation/Irish Servitude**

While gentry and merchants (Catholic and Protestant) set out for the Caribbean to become

planters, the majority of Irish arriving there in the seventeenth century came as bonded labour. These servants, who continue to haunt Irish memory as 'white slaves' and 'political transportees', arrived in Barbados and Jamaica as well as in the Leewards. Barbados (rather than the more disturbed Leewards) emerged as the Stuarts' most valuable Caribbean colony, first producing tobacco, then in the 1640s switching to sugar.

In a headlong search for labour, the sugar planters bought up indentures (four to seven year contracts) for white servants and imported enslaved Africans. By the 1650s their preference for slaves, whom they would own for life, had clearly emerged. In their eagerness for profit the planters created a society which often frightened them, for both servants and slaves were numerous and discontented. In 1647 there was a servant revolt in Barbados, its ringleaders were hanged, but no particular part was imputed to the Irish.

The establishment of a protectorate in Ireland and the appointment of Daniel Searle, the first Cromwellian governor, aroused official fear of Irish servants as rebellious, and capable of making common cause with slaves. This accusation would be revived again at times of political uncertainty in 1685 (James II's accession) and 1692 (William III's establishment on the throne). On all three occasions, slaves were hanged and Irishmen acquitted (Beckles 1990:515-521). In 1660, Barbadian legal codes laid down a clear colour line. Africans and Native Americans were to serve for life, white men for the period of their indenture. Bonded servants were not slaves, but for those harassed by an uncaring master or overseer, subjected to unremunerated work under a hot sun and dying before their indenture was completed, the difference must have seemed academic.

How many white servants (bonded and free) reached Barbados in the seventeenth century and what proportion of these were Irish, it is impossible to say. Over fifty percent seems a distinct possibility. In 1667 Governor Willoughby was worried because he believed that more than half of the four-thousand-strong Barbadian militia was Irish (Ibid: 508-9). It

seems possible that there were more Irish servants on Barbados than on Montserrat.

So why have they made so little mark on an island described as 'as English as Cheltenham' and where the surviving records produce far fewer Irish names than the Leewards or Jamaica? One answer may be that intensive sugar cultivation, raising the price of land, drove out servants who had served their indentures. A Barbadian historian calculated that in the years immediately following 1660, ten thousand settlers, mostly servants, frustrated by their inability to gain access to land, left the island, half of them bound for Jamaica, the other half for mainland America, the Leewards, Windwards and Surinam (Chandler 1946:114).

However, for a Caribbean island Barbados does possess an unusual number of poor whites, a distinctive group dubbed 'Red Legs' or 'Red Shanks' by nineteenth-century commentators. This group is said to be descended from Cromwell's transported Scots or perhaps English from Monmouth's rebellion. Recent research argues that the Red Shanks are the result of the large intake of servants in the seventeenth century. If they are carriers of Irish genes, perhaps they lack Irish surnames because female servants were more likely to remain on the island and marry there than their male counterparts (Sheppard 1977:25; Rodgers 2007: 338).

The question of how many Irish transportees reached the West Indies is just as difficult to compute. Most Irish soldiers leaving as a result of the wars in the 1640s and 1650s went or were deported to continental Europe. Possibly more Scots soldiers were deported to the New World than Irish. It seems probable that most transportation from Ireland took place after the establishment of the protectorate, when the Tudor law allowing the transportation of vagrants was applied to Ireland. In the 1650s the disturbed state of the country provided a rich source of vagrants, and of course it was easy for the authorities to designate anyone thought politically dangerous within this category. After the conquest of Jamaica in 1655, Henry Cromwell offered to help populate the island by sending off one thousand young women, a move for their own good 'although we must use

force in taking them up'. A similar number of boys aged from twelve to fourteen could also be provided. Whether or not this deportation took place remains uncertain. Its funding proved elusive (Thurloe 1742, 4: 23).

### **From Labour Oppression to Economic Opportunity**

Recruits for the Jamaican campaign were raised in Barbados. Given the expedition's need for soldiers and the confused state of affairs on the island, it is possible that some transportees actually escaped into the Cromwellian army that conquered Jamaica. Push and pull factors of the various types mentioned so far led the Irish to Jamaica. In 1685 James II found Irish Catholic smallholders ready to cast their votes for colonial assemblymen who supported royal policy.

In 1731 Governor Robert Hunter declared that the 'servants and lower rank of people in Jamaica chiefly consisted of Irish Papists' who had been 'pouring in upon us in such sholes as they have done of late years' (Beckles 1990:520). This remark was made at the end of a decade in which 72,689 enslaved Africans had been ferried in, while the white population stood at just above 7000 (Richardson 1998, 2: 459). The same pattern existed in Montserrat. Between 1678 (the year of the first census) and 1775 the number of Irish on the island never reached more than 2,000.

In 1678 the majority of these Irish people may have been servants, bonded and free, but by 1729 they had disappeared either by dying, emigrating elsewhere or becoming smallholders. Some of these obviously lived not by farming but by renting out their slaves. Garret Fahy had sixteen slaves, four horses and one cultivated acre. Anthony Bodkin, described as a planter, had thirteen slaves and no land at all. John Conner, labourer, had two slaves, a man and a woman. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, Montserrat's slave population stood at 3,570: by 1729 it was up to 6,063, and as of 1775 had climbed to 9,834 (Sheridan 1974:182). The 'almost Irish colony' had thus achieved a Caribbean demographic norm.

The accession of William III produced colonial assemblies in the English islands which enacted versions of the penal laws so that Catholics now found it more difficult than before to hold public office. However, unlike in Ireland, no attempt was made to restrict their ability to buy or bequeath land. Britain's triumph in the War of the Spanish Succession (1713) removed the French from Saint Christopher, which the British, pleased with their exclusive ownership, now affectionately renamed Saint Kitts.

Greater political stability in the region made for economic development. In the course of the eighteenth century, the Creole Irish planter community on Montserrat achieved striking wealth. Leading families, Skerrets, Galways, Kirwins and Farrells, began to buy property in Saint Kitts. Fortunes were made by a combination of trading and sugar planting. Activating contacts in Bristol and Cork, they imported slaves and provisions, the two most desired commodities in the West Indies. Contacts with Guadeloupe and Martinique, the French islands, eager for barrelled and salted Irish beef to feed their slaves, and illegal imports of cheap British-imported slaves, provided an expanding market.

Also convenient for Montserratians, indeed visible from the cane fields of Saint Kitts, was Dutch Saint Eustatia, famed as 'the golden rock' for its smuggling activities. The most remarkable fortunes in inter-island trading were made by the Tuites and the Ryans sailing to the Virgins, where the Danes had recently acquired Saint Croix. On Montserrat at the start of his career, Nicholas Tuite had one hundred acres and forty-one slaves. On Saint Croix by 1760, he owned seven plantations and had an interest in fourteen others (Ibid.:444-5; Fenning 1962: 76). Orla Power's article in this journal provides an analysis of the activities of these Irish planters on Saint Croix.

Some ten percent of the property owners in Jamaica in 1670 were Irish. In 1685 when James II ascended the throne, he found the support of this group useful in promoting his policy of strengthening Catholicism and royal power by encouraging the exercise of freedom of religion within his dominions. The triumph of William III reversed this situation, but in 1729 some

twenty percent of the colonial assemblymen possessed Irish names.

In the early eighteenth century, families from Connacht and Munster, Archdeacons, Kellys, and Bourkes, established a tradition of Irishmen holding the Jamaica's highest legal offices. Coming from a Catholic background, to achieve these positions they had to conform to the established church, but Protestantism in the Caribbean was always less severely demanding than in the mainland colonies. Legal office opened the way to the easy acquisition of land for plantations so that all these families emerged as rich slave owners. In 1752 the heiress Elizabeth Kelly, daughter of Denis Kelly of Lisaduff, County Galway and Chief Justice of Jamaica, married into the Brownes of Westport, County Mayo, thus aiding their rise to Viscounts of Altamont and Earls of Sligo. Irish names on the island continued to mount among the substantial planter class, O'Hara, O'Conner, Talbot, Coulthurst, Herbert, Gregory, Martin, Madden, Forde, Richards, Dobbs, and de la Touche.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Ulster Presbyterians, famous for settling as Scots-Irish in Pennsylvania and the Appalachians, also appeared in the Caribbean. Some were wealthy merchants who invested in plantations, Delapps from Donegal and Dublin in Antigua and Jamaica and, from Belfast, Blacks in Grenada, and Gregs and Cunninghams on Dominica. Others worked as overseers or as commission agents, selling Irish linen and provisions, expanding into slaves, hoping that their fortunes would eventually rival those they had formerly served.

The most striking case here was that of the Blair brothers from Newry. In the late eighteenth century James and Lambert Blair left Newry to set up an agency on Saint Eustatia. Their 1790 accounts reveal that the largest items of purchase for their planter clients were slaves for a Mr. Stevenson (Blair 1793:24). By the turn of the century when the British took Demerara from the Dutch, the Blairs had amassed enough capital to invest in the rich, wet, black soiled lands of the new colony. After emancipation, when the government paid out £20 million in compensation to the plantation owners for the loss of their slaves, James Blair junior received

about £83,530 for his 1,598 slaves. As such, he received more money than any other slave holder in the British Empire (Higman 1967: 12). In the eastern Caribbean, Queely Shiell vindicated Montserrat's reputation as an Irish island by claiming for 920 slaves, a number far in excess of anything the island's largest planters in previous times (the seventeenth-century Dutch Waads and the eighteenth-century English Wykes) had ever amassed. Indeed this claim meant that tiny Montserrat produced the largest single compensation package in the Leewards (Sessional 1837/: Montserrat).

However, the majority of those claiming and collecting under this compensation scheme were small property owners possessing ten slaves or less. Defenders of slavery complained that its abolition would hit the most vulnerable hardest. Men, drawing up wills, preferred to bequeath land to their sons and moveable property (slaves) to female dependants. Thus, widows and spinsters were often left with few resources, save the ownership of slaves, who served them and could be rented out to bring in an income. Irish names supply evidence of this point. Examples from two parishes in Jamaica show Brigit Garvey received compensation for eight slaves; Elizabeth Anne Carroll seven; Jane Welch, Elizabeth Geoghegan, Anne O'Meally, and Eleanor Tierney six each; Elizabeth Anne Sherlocke, Elizabeth Slevin, and Mary O'Sullivan five; Rebecca Fergus, Elizabeth Burke, Cecelia Jane Murphy, Mary Anne Connolly four; Ann Rattigan three; Mary Anne B. Hennessey, two; Jane Boyle, Brigit Dillon, Mary Curtin one (Ibid: Jamaica). Again, the lists of names on Montserrat and Antigua reveal examples of a similar situation.

Throughout the British West Indies, records for the eighteen thirties attest to the tenacity of Hiberno-Caribbean connections. In 1833 the Earl of Sligo (direct descendant of Elizabeth Kelly and John Browne) claimed for 286 slaves and received about £5,526 in compensation. In 1834 he was appointed Governor of Jamaica with Dowell O'Reilly from County Louth serving as his Attorney General. O'Reilly's appointment reiterated the Irish legal presence on the island. Unlike his predecessors, the passing of Catholic emancipation in 1829 meant

that he could take up his judicial appointment as a Catholic.

### **Island-Hopping in the Caribbean**

The Irish had nonetheless never limited their Caribbean destinations to British colonies. In the early 1670s a visitor came upon a settlement of one to two hundred Irish on Guadeloupe living 'much as they do at home in little huts, planting potatoes and tobacco, and as much indigo as will buy them canvas and brandy and never advance so far as sugar planting'(Cullen 1994:127). This group may not have made such social progress but certainly next-door on Martinique there were families who had done so. Kirwans, Roches, Lynchs and Skerrets sought ennoblement from the French Crown in the eighteenth century, claiming to have left Ireland for the colony in the seventeenth century. Social absorption for Irish Catholics in French and Spanish colonies was relatively easy. In the late seventeenth century, John Stapleton and his wife Helen Skerret left Ireland for the newest and largest French colony, Saint Domingue, where their success as planters enabled them to move to France, buying a property in Nantes (Holohan 1989: 29).

To make this journey in reverse became more common as the Irish merchant community on the Atlantic coast found itself at the centre of France's slave trade and sugar imports. In the second generation, Galway Butlers, now in La Rochelle, sent two sons to Saint Domingue where they established extensive plantations (Ibid.: 97-100).

The most famous Irish merchant family to use wealth gained in France to establish plantations in Saint Domingue were the Walshes. Antoine Walsh worked as a slave trader from 1730 to 1753, during which period his ships carried some 12,000 slaves across the Atlantic. In 1753 he retired from that trade and left to settle on the family plantations on Saint Domingue, where died in 1763 (Rodgers 2007: 106-112). His immediate heirs remained in the southern province of that colony, among other *grand blancs*, successful Hiberno-French planters, Sheil, O'Gorman, Rourke, Macnamara and Plunket (Van Brock 1977, 13:89-104).

Back in France, money from the slave trade and plantations helped to fund the Irish college in Nantes and Walsh's regiment in the Irish brigade, which received its name from Antoine's nephew, coming from a new generation determined to put trade behind them. Despite enormous losses in both areas during the upheavals of the Revolution, these families survive today in France as titled and *chateaux*-owning.

In eighteenth-century Saint Domingue, Stapletons, Butlers and Walshes were *grand blancs*. Yet Saint Domingue's swiftly expanding plantation economy, which made France the greatest sugar producer in the Caribbean, offered opportunities to men of modest means as well as to wealthier investors, thus creating a class of *petit blancs* engaged in small holding, overseeing, trade and artisan activities, and all employing slave labour. Given the existence of a substantial Irish presence in the Atlantic ports (at once long established but also continuing to receive young, impecunious arrivals from home) the development of a group of Irish *petit blancs* is a likely but as yet an un-researched topic in Irish-Caribbean studies.

### **Irish Mariners in the Antillean Sea**

Irish sailors constitute another historically neglected group with significant Caribbean ties. We know that in the closing years of the eighteenth century some twelve percent of the crew on Liverpool slave ships were Irish (Behrendt 2005). Sailors making the direct voyage from home to the Caribbean must also have been numerous. From the seventeenth century onwards, the Munster ports achieved international importance as the final point for taking on water and victuals before the Atlantic crossing. Since the West Indian islands furnished little in the way of material for naval repairs, eighteenth-century Cork was organised to produce sailcloth and rigging as well as provision for British, French, Dutch, Danes and Bremeners setting out on the Atlantic crossing.

Captains, unexpectedly short on crew, must also have used Munster as a point of last resort. Scattered evidence of Irish people sailing the Caribbean suggests a wide social spectrum. The County Kerry poet Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin

(1748-1784) wrote his only work in English in Port Royal, Jamaica. His encomiastic poem to Admiral Rodney was perhaps embarked upon in the hopes of gaining his discharge from the British naval vessel on which he was a rating. Of the pirate fraternity, Anne Bonny from Cork was sentenced to death in 1720. Disguised in male clothing, according to Daniel Defoe, she was 'as forward and courageous' as any of her calling. Unlike her male colleagues, she was reprieved from hanging on the grounds of her pregnancy (Applby 1991: 64).

### **Irish Inter-Racial Marriages and Affairs**

In 1775, nineteen-year-old Charles Fitzgerald, naval officer, brother to Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and third son of Emily, Duchess of Leinster, wrote to his mother with literary panache that 'the jet black ladies of Africa's burning sands have made me forget the unripened beauties of the north'. A few months later he followed this up with the news that she could look forward to 'a copper coloured grandchild' (Tillyard 1995:331).

Relations between Irish men and African women were as much a staple of the Caribbean experience as malaria, yellow fever, hurricanes, rum drinking and turtle soup, but it is an area of life which rarely appears on the written record. The earliest emigrant letters hint at this scheme of things. In 1675 John Blake, a merchant settler from Galway admitted to the veracity of his brother Henry's accusation that he had brought a 'whore' from Ireland to Barbados along with his wife, but excused himself on the grounds of domestic necessity; his wife's 'weak constitution' meant that she could not manage everything herself 'for washing, starching, making of drink and keeping the house in good order is no small task to undergo here'. He could not dispense with the services of the prostitute until the African girl he had bought was properly trained in household matters (Oliver 1909-19, II: 55).

Wills and investigations instituted over disputed inheritance would sometimes reveal lifelong secrets concealed from the family back home. Thus in 1834 R. R. Madden (anti-slavery activist and future historian of the United Irishmen — see Burton's article in this journal) penetrated into the mountains of Jamaica in order to view a

deceased relative's plantation, long the subject of a chancery suit. There he was startled to find several mixed-race cousins and their elderly mother, his uncle Garret's mulatto concubine (Madden 1835, I: 171).

### **Irishmen in Antillean Inter-imperial Wars**

Though Afro-Irish sexual relations and Irish sailors in the Caribbean have so far been neglected by historians, the impact of Irish soldiers in the region has received some attention. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the Irish were involved in countless colonial wars in the West Indies. In 1667 their settlers rushed to arms to help the French take over the whole of divided Saint Christopher. This triumph was short-lived. Yet the varied nature of their loyalties meant that one of the most successful Irish soldiers in the Caribbean, William Stapleton, made his career and fortune by reversing this situation. This landless swordsman from Tipperary, serving the British King Charles II in the West Indies, helped re-conquer Montserrat and became governor, first of that island and then of all the English Leewards. On Montserrat he supplied family and friends with lands and official appointments while confirming his planter wealth by marrying an heiress on Nevis.

William Stapleton's achievement conformed to a pattern which all soldiers longed for, the successful campaign which fed military reputation, career and fortunes. As the eighteenth century duel between Britain and France intensified, such opportunities blossomed. The Caribbean was a particularly enticing area for the expeditionary force, as plantation colonies invaded by military and naval forces offered extensive booty. Sugar planters, regardless of national affiliation, favoured preserving their lives and assets to fighting the enemy. They tended to flee, or cooperate with the invader.

During the Seven Years War, the British taking of Havana, the heavily fortified Cuban guardian of the Spanish fleet, furnished just such opportunities to Irish officers working for the rival sides, and illustrates both the advantages and dangers of military campaigning in the Caribbean. Five hundred and sixty of the British

forces were killed (most of them in the siege of Morro Castle, the huge fortification guarding the port), while about 4,700 died of fever or dysentery. The total prize money amounted to £750,000, distributed according to naval and military rank, ensuring that officers took the lion's share.

The taking of Havana was celebrated in Ireland as a victory for the Protestant cause. Bonfires were lit in Cork and Sir Boyle Roche (1736-1807) a Munster man, who distinguished himself at the assault on Morro, was hailed as a local hero. On leaving the army he entered the Irish parliament as member for Tralee town, County Kerry. He became famous for his 'fineering brogue' and bungling interjections. The 'Irish bulls' charged forth - 'I smell a rat - I see it floating in the air before me and hear it brewing a storm - but I'll nip it in the bud'. On such occasions his military reputation as a hero of Havana combined hilarity with respect. Useful to government as he offered loyal support and defused tempers with buffoonery, he became a successful collector of places and pensions for himself and his wife (Johnston-Lik 2002, 6: 171).

The British onslaught on Havana was even more important in furthering the career and reputation of an Irish soldier in the employ of Spain. Born in Baltrasna, County Westmeath, Alexander O'Reilly joined the Spanish army as a cadet at the age of eleven. He was a brigadier in the Hibernian regiment when in 1763 he became part of a force sent to Cuba to reorganise the colony after Britain's incursion. When the new governor died, O'Reilly took command of the island's administration and emerged with a reputation as a keen military strategist, who had re-established the viability of the colony. On his return to Spain he became a lieutenant general. Now regarded as a trouble shooter in the New World, both figuratively and literally, he led an expedition to establish Spain's power in New Orleans and Louisiana. In these areas he was able to promote the fortunes of three other Irish officers - Charles Howard, Arthur O'Neil and Maurice O'Conner (Fannin 2000: 26-28).

By the time O'Reilly arrived in Havana, Irish soldiers abroad were more likely to be found in the service of France. The Irish Brigade was headed by officers born in France's Irish

community or fresh from home in search of career opportunities denied them there as Catholics. In 1778 France and Britain went to war again and the Irish brigade served outside Europe for the first time. Suitably, Walsh's regiment was despatched to guard Senegal in West Africa, France's largest slave-trading establishment. However, the regiment was soon transferred to the Caribbean and played a vital role in the American Revolutionary War. King George III of Britain at one point declared that he would rather risk an invasion of Britain itself than lose the sugar islands, for without them he would not have the money to carry on hostilities.

The presence of armies and navies raised the price of supplies in the region to unprecedented heights. Irish merchants (Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter) seized on wartime conditions to make fortunes using that conveniently placed smugglers' rock of Saint Eustatia. In 1779 the British turned upon the Dutch colony. Admirals Rodney and Hood, landing the Thirty-Fifth Regiment of foot (a unit first formed back in Belfast at the beginning of the century by Sir Arthur Chichester) occupied the island. In London's parliament and press, this action would elicit criticism, suggesting that Eustatia was chosen as a target because of its easy riches, rather than strategic relevance. A cartoon of the time shows Rodney waving his sword and calling out 'French fleet be damned, Hood! Grab the loot'. On officially declaring war on Britain in 1778, rather than simply observing their neutrality with a pro-American bias, the French were eager to take the war to the sugar islands. In 1781 they launched a triumphant expedition from Martinique to Saint Eustatia spearheaded by the Irish Brigade.

When the French commander sailed back to Martinique, a Munster man, Colonel Thomas Fitzmaurice (b. Kerry 1725) was appointed Governor of Saint Eustatia. As the war ended, he used personal contacts with Lord Shelburne (the British prime minister with estates in Kerry) to prevent any embarrassing disclosures and persecutions of wartime smugglers (Ibid.: 226). Thomas Fitzmaurice himself would go on to hold important appointments in the long-established French colonies of Cayenne and

Guadeloupe, other footholds from which to secure Irish careers within the Caribbean (Hayes 1949: 96).

Saint Eustatia had provided conventional campaigns for both sides, death by disease rather than physical conflict for many, with rich pickings for the survivors. But the American Revolutionary War highlighted problems which would complicate the French-Revolutionary War in the Caribbean. Both conflicts raised the issue of whether or not enslaved Africans should be deployed as soldiers. In many societies throughout history enslaved people have been sent to the battlefield, but Caribbean slavery, the product of commercial capitalism, did not favour such a solution. Africans were to labour on the plantations while Europeans held the firepower, the ultimate weapon of control in societies where they were very much the demographic minority. Yet in military crises the temptation to use any able-bodied group of men naturally existed.

Faced with the prospect of defeat by the American colonists, the British began to enlist African Americans. Among them was a Samuel Burke, born in South Carolina around 1755, reared in Cork, returning across the Atlantic with his master for the Revolutionary War. In New York Samuel used his fluency in the Irish language to recruit dock workers to a Loyalist regiment, which he himself joined (Miller 2000:148).

Imperial frontiers also provided areas where the colour line might waver. Edward Marcus Despard, from a military family in Queen's County (present-day County Laois), spent the greater part of his professional career in Jamaica. After the American Revolutionary War, he fought in Honduras, where he led forces that comprised Native Americans and Afro-Caribbeans. Appointed Superintendent on the Muskito Coast (later British Honduras) in 1787, he fell foul of the 'Bay men' who protested to Westminster that he treated 'the meanest mulatto and free Negro' as though he was a white man (Burns 1965: 541).

Recalled to London, Despard failed to get another official appointment and ended up in the debtors' prison, where he read Tom Paine

and took to radical politics. He joined the United Irishmen and attempted to recruit United Britons and so co-ordinate a republican risings in both countries. In 1797 suspicion of his activities resulted in his arrest and internment. In 1803 (the year of Robert Emmet's rebellion in Ireland), he was hanged for organising a plot to assassinate King George III (O. DNB 2004, 15: 906). Despard's story, individual and dramatic, reflects the tensions created by this revolutionary period. In the 1790s, the French colony of Saint Domingue was to see these factors played out at their most extensive and explosive.

The outbreak of revolution had caused quarrelling among the propertied groups in the colony - *grand blancs*, *petit blancs* and property-owning mulattoes. The desire of these groups to follow their own interests in order to dominate the wealthy colony had given the slaves the chance to rebel. In this situation, Victor Martin O'Gorman (born County Clare, 1746) emerged as a leading figure. Starting his career in the Irish Brigade, he had become aide-de-camp to Count d'Argout, governor general to the French colonies in America, a position which enabled him to acquire a substantial plantation in Saint Domingue's southern province. In 1790 he was elected as one of the colonial representatives despatched to Paris to serve in the National Assembly.

As planter, assembly man and soldier, he helped to organise the Irish brigade (now officially known under the new constitution as Eighty-Seventh, Eighty-Eighth and Ninety-Second regiments of infantry) to form part of the expeditionary force to put down civil war in Saint Domingue. In 1792 Dillon and Walsh's regiment fought and lost an engagement against a rebel army (largely of African origin) in the southern province at Les Plantons. During this engagement, O'Gorman armed and led a group of his own slaves as did his planter neighbour, the resident 'milord' Walsh, who was caught, tortured and beheaded by the rebels.

When news of this defeat was received by the colonial assembly, they declared it 'the finishing stroke to the whole colony'. Captain Oliver Harty of the Berwick regiment was then appointed acting commander of the southern

province and organised a campaign to avenge the loss at Les Plantons. For this deed, he was lauded by the southern provincial assembly as 'a good and brave patriot' and denounced by his critics for conducting a massacre of old men, women and children. A new governor, Sonthonax arrived from France and assessing the situation in the colony came to the conclusion that the rebel slaves would in fact make the best republicans. He thus removed Harty from his command, declared slavery illegal, and appointed Toussaint L'Overture, an African Creole general and former slave from a Butler plantation, as commander and chief.

Back in Europe, the Irish Brigade persuaded the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger to support the Bourbons by fighting with the French. Their offer was accepted. The leaders of the brigade had hoped to fight in Europe but instead became part of the British invasion of Saint Domingue. Victor Martin O'Gorman fought with General Maitland against the French colonial government which had emancipated the colony's slaves, leading a unit known as O'Gorman's Chasseurs Noirs (black hunters) dedicated to restoring slavery and monarchical rule in Saint Domingue (Hayes 1949: 232). This campaign, stretching from 1794 to 1798, ended in the defeat and withdrawal of the British, by which time savage fighting and rampant disease had annihilated the Irish brigade.

The horrors of Saint Domingue had driven Britain to employ people of African origin as combatants. The exigencies of war now required that this policy be extended as French activity in the Leewards and Windwards led to the development of an eastern Caribbean front. In 1795, to the unease of the British planters, eight West India regiments, drawing on Afro-Caribbean recruits, were established. All commissioned officers, who of course had to pay for their appointments, were white, and half of these were Irish or Scots (Lieutenant-Colonel John Skerret was the commander of the Eighth Regiment). While the rank and file were in the main black or mulatto, each regiment was constructed around a nucleus of European corporals, sergeants and drummers.

Incomplete copies of enlistment books which survive suggest a heavily Irish presence. The

first fifty-two names and backgrounds of those enlisted in the Fourth West India Regiment show fifty-one whites, the majority of them coming from Cork, Dublin, Tipperary, Galway and Waterford. Some of the older sergeants had from eighteen to twenty-nine years experience under the belts (Buckley 1979: 31). So in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, we see a common pattern of Irish being used as white buffers. As bonded servants, the Irish worked close to, but in distinct groups from, Africans. Personal contact might result in friendship and good feelings, but on the whole the Irish held and benefited from the existence of the colour line.

### Conclusions

The Caribbean never achieved iconic status as a destination for Irish emigrants.

For Catholics who stayed put service with the kings of continental Europe was common. The West Indies, when remembered at all, struck a sinister note as a place of sentence for the transported. Yet for some, it had become home and for others a springboard for migration to mainland America. For Ulster Presbyterians, for example, North America became the Land of Canaan. The Antilles was often a place of opportunity; through Caribbean activities, Antoine Walsh and Nicholas Tuite became the friends of kings. Sugar and slaves shaped urban development in the expanding ports of Cork, Limerick, and Belfast and in Dublin their existence impacted on Ireland's parliamentary politics (Rodgers 2007:119-196).

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century the Irish could be found at every level of white society in the Caribbean, one that by the twentieth century was ebbing away. In the case of the other Europeans (Spanish, French, British, Danish and Dutch) remnants of their presence remained among the islands, recorded sometimes in a reduced but lingering governmental presence, more obviously in architecture and language. However, the Irish, working through the empires of others, have left no such visible marks. Their one memorial is the names they planted – only possible to discover in Cuba, Trinidad, Saint Domingue, and most noticeable in the Leewards and

Jamaica. These surnames are now sometimes borne by descendants of Africans, occasionally carrying a genetic imprint from the original owners from generations past.

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## Literary Migrations: Homer's Journey through Joyce's Ireland and Walcott's Saint Lucia

By Patricia Novillo-Corvalán

### Abstract

*This paper examines the literary kinship found in the works of Derek Walcott, James Joyce and Homer. Principally, it explores the way in which Walcott transplanted the classical epic tradition onto his Caribbean island of Saint Lucia in the wake of Joyce's similar shifting of the *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin. It argues that Walcott forged a colonial affiliation with Irish literature, which he used as a model for his reflections on the linguistic, cultural and historical situation of Saint Lucia. The paper concludes with Walcott's homage to Joyce in his epic poem *Omeros*, which underlines the significant fact that the epic genre is not a fixed form of yesteryear, but rather a fluid, living category that travels across cultures and languages and acquires richer, more complex meanings through each of these migrations.*

The work of James Joyce looms large in the prolific production of the St Lucian poet, playwright, essayist, and 1992 Nobel Laureate, Derek Walcott. This is revealed in his autobiographical essay 'Leaving School' (1965), in which he reported his youthful identification with '[his] current hero, the blasphemous, arrogant Stephen Dedalus' (Walcott 1993a: 31); in his epic poem *Epitaph for the Young* (1949), where he continued and developed his relationship with Joyce's work; in his seminal essay, 'The Muse of History' (1974), the epigraph to which boasted Stephen Dedalus's forceful declaration in *Ulysses*: 'History is the nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (Walcott 1998: 36); [1] and in his celebrated epic poem *Omeros* (1990), in which he emulated Joyce's Hibernian rewriting of the *Odyssey* as he shifted Homer to the historical, cultural and linguistic circumstances of his twentieth-century Caribbean island of Saint Lucia.

Beneath the enduring fascination that Walcott has repeatedly professed of Joyce and Irish literature, however, it is possible to identify a larger historical reciprocity that proved fundamental in this timely literary meeting. At the core of Walcott's affiliation with the Irish literary tradition, thus, is embedded a deeply-rooted colonial history that forged a series of parallels between the Irish and Saint Lucian islands.

According to Charles W. Pollard, these analogies are based on historical, religious, and political

factors, particularly since '[both writers were] born on an island controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and the British Empire', and were 'educated by Irish priests [...] but rebelled against [their] suffocating orthodoxy' (Pollard 2001: 197). Similarly, he claims that both writers were 'educated in the colonial system, [and] grew to resent English rule yet cherished the English language and literary tradition' (Pollard 2001: 197). Finally, Pollard asserts that their literary vocations 'compelled [them] to flee the provincialism of [their] island home although [they] continued to focus on writing about that island' (Pollard 2001: 197). In effect, Walcott himself identified these striking parallels in a crucial interview with Edward Hirsh:

*The whole Irish influence was for me a very intimate one. When the Irish brothers came to teach at the college in Saint Lucia, I had been reading a lot of Irish literature: I read Joyce, naturally I knew Yeats, and so on. I've always felt some kind of intimacy with the Irish poets because one realized that they were also colonials with the same kind of problems that existed in the Caribbean. They were the niggers of Britain (Baer 1996: 59).*

In Walcott's creative development as a writer, Stephen Dedalus's perceptive differentiation of his Hibernian-English dialect from the Standard English spoken by the Dean of Studies: '— The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so

foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech (Joyce 2000: 159)', would have increased his awareness that as an English-speaking Caribbean writer he had to face a similar linguistic dilemma.

Therefore, just as Joyce masterfully twisted the colonial language to make it suit the particular requirements of his twentieth-century Irish circumstances, so Walcott similarly employed the English language to express the racial, cultural, and linguistic concerns of the island of Saint Lucia. Walcott turned the English language into a hybridised, Antillean patois that successfully captured the regional accents and idiosyncrasies of the Saint Lucian people. Moreover, in 'The Muse of History' Walcott advocated an Adamic redemption, a linguistic rebirth that would allow New World writers to become a second Adam and to rename, and hence transform, the oppressive colonial legacy which they had inherited.

In particular, he placed emphasis on the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, whom he considers one of the greatest New World poets, arguing that Neruda had similarly undertaken the historical task to rename and poetise his own culture (Walcott 1998: 39-40). This call for action is powerfully allied with the belief that the ex-colonial subject has the right to use 'the white man's words [...] his dress, his machinery, his food. And, of course, his literature' (Walcott 1993b: 20). In this light, Walcott is asserting that language and literature provide marginal writers a dual means of self-representation which enable them to use the Western tradition to their own advantage, as well as stretching the linguistic possibilities of the colonial speech through the use of devices such as code-switching (moving between two languages or dialects within the same discourse) and vernacular transcription (writing in colloquial language).

Yet at the same time, in the mirror of Joyce's art wherein Walcott recognised the image of his own face, are also reflected a series of complex, distorted figures with which the Caribbean poet identified. The looking glass of Irish art simultaneously revealed to him the literary figures of Homer, Dante and Shakespeare, albeit compounded and enriched by the signification they had assimilated in Joyce's work. If Joyce

charted the complex migration of Homer's *Odyssey* into the scenery of his native city of Dublin, then Walcott similarly extended the journey of Homer to the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia.

But Joyce's mapping of the *Odyssey* also involved a complex voyage through history and literature that created a version of the Greek hero Ulysses refracted through the prisms of Dante's *Commedia*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as well as through several centuries of critical interpretations that he had inherited as a twentieth-century Irish writer. Thus in his epic poem *Omeros*, Walcott also incorporated a Homeric heritage refracted by Dante's medieval understanding of Homer (he employed a lyric form that resembles Dante's *tersa rima*) and by Joyce's contemporary readings of Homer and Dante, which Walcott, in turn, blended with the rich, exuberant, and yet oppressive history of Saint Lucia.

Not for nothing has the island been named the 'Helen of the Caribbean', in a metaphorical designation that proposes an analogy between the mythical quarrel between Greeks and Trojans over Argive Helen, and the historical disputes between British and French powers over the sovereignty of the island. Saint Lucia, as Walcott pointed out in 'Leaving School', had been named 'by Columbus [...] after the blind saint' (Walcott 1993a: 24). According to Christian hagiography, Saint Lucy plucked out her beautiful eyes because they proved attractive to a male admirer. This vow of chastity also enabled the martyr to renounce all earthly possessions in her total devotion to God. The motif of metaphorical and physical blindness, as we shall see, is also central to Walcott's relationship with Homer and Joyce.

For Walcott, above all, this process of cross-cultural transference became a means by which Western discourses could be transplanted into the geographical landscape of his native Caribbean Island. These migrating seeds, thus, would bear the fruits of the cultural and linguistic richness of Saint Lucia, but also the thorns of a long and oppressive history of colonisation and slavery. In this manner, 'Homer' becomes *Omeros*, a cultural legacy stripped of a capital 'H' and turned from the

singular monologic ‘Homer’ to the plural dialogic ‘*Omer(os)*’, suitably representing the cultural diversity of colonised peoples whose hybridity is characteristic of an in-between identity that results from the merging of multiple worlds, multiple languages and multiple races. Therefore the canonical figure of Homer acquires a new literary and cultural meaning within a Caribbean heteroglossic locale:

*I said, “Omeros,”  
And O was the conch-shell’s invocation, mer was  
both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,  
os, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes  
and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore.  
Omeros was the crunch of dry leaves, and the washes  
that echoed from a cave-mouth when the tide has  
ebbed (Walcott 1990: 14).*

The metaphor of the sea provides Walcott with the dual image of literary continuation and re-generation, as the ever-flowing waters of epic inscribe his Caribbean poem within the classical epic tradition but also within the Hibernian sea of Joyce’s *Ulysses*. In his essay ‘The Language of Exile’ the Irish poet and 1995 Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney, perceptively identified the powerful currents that merge in Walcott and Joyce’s seas: ‘When Walcott lets the sea-breeze freshen in his imagination, the result is a poetry as spacious and heart-lifting as the sea-weather at the opening of Joyce’s *Ulysses*’ (Heaney 1993: 305).

Like Joyce, Walcott set himself the task of creating a new type of trans-cultural epic, which he represented on the large and multifarious canvas of *Omeros*, whereby he depicted the everyday reality of the islanders of Saint Lucia. This vast and complex panel, however, created ambivalent relationships in terms of culture (New World/Old World) race (black/white) and language (Creole-English/Standard English). By this token, the characters that inhabit *Omeros* adopt the grandiloquent names of their epic ancestors, but emulate a new type of heroism that arises, not from the battles of high rank individuals, but from the struggle of fishermen and local people who have to survive the socio-economic challenges of the island.

For instance, in an interview with J. P. White, Walcott applauded Joyce’s successful creation of

a new type of urban epic that transcends traditional notions of heroism: ‘*Ulysses* is an epic because it breathes. It’s an urban epic, which is remarkable in a small city. It’s a wonderful epic in the sense that the subject is lyrical and not heroic. The subject is a matter of a reflective man, not a man of action, but a sort of wandering Jew’ (Baer 1996: 161). The conciliatory qualities of Leopold Bloom, to whom Walcott is alluding here, are particularly manifested at the end of the ‘Ithaca’ episode. Contrary to his Homeric counterpart Odysseus, who mercilessly executed both Penelope’s importunate suitors and the female servants of the palace, Bloom opted for an anti-heroic, pacifist acceptance of Molly Bloom’s infidelity with Blazes Boylan, and decided not to perpetuate a bloodthirsty, Homeric-type revenge on her suitor:

*Why more abnegation than jealousy, less envy than  
equanimity?*

From outrage (matrimony) to outrage (adultery) there arose nought but outrage (copulation) yet the matrimonial violator of the matrimonially violated had not been outraged by the adulterous violator of the adulterously violated (Joyce 2002: 603).

It is important to highlight here, nonetheless, that the main story of *Omeros* is the antagonism of two local fishermen, Achille and Hector, who become arch-rivals in their fight for the love of Saint Lucian Helen, a beautiful yet highly enigmatic character, who works as a waitress in a local bar of the island. Yet it merits mention that for as much as Walcott’s characters are able to wear the mythical façade of their Homeric counterparts, these masks are eventually removed in order to reveal the Other, deeper reality that lies beneath the classical attributes. In this manner, Walcott’s Homeric correspondences, like Joyce’s, are not fixed, one-dimensional constructs, but rather fluid, transformative identities that are capable of breaking free from the shackles of their Homeric namesakes insofar as their larger *meaning* becomes transformed by their new geographical setting.

In this way, Caribbean Helen adopts several Homeric and mythological identities; she

inherits the beauty of her counterpart, Helen of Troy, and thus becomes the source of rivalry between Hector and Achille. The eventual death of Hector, however, turns Helen into Penelope, a bereaved figure grieving for his absence, weaving an intricate tapestry out of the foamy currents of her Caribbean *mer*. Helen is also Circe, the enchantress whose powers allure Plunkett (the British expatriate) and who silently steals Maud's (Plunkett's Irish wife's) bracelet. Towards the end of the poem, however, Saint Lucian Helen triumphs over all her epic counterparts as she reasserts herself in all her Caribbean identity, transforming the long history of a marble face into the renewed beauty of an ebony face:

*Names are not oars  
that have to be laid side by side, nor are legends;  
slowly the foaming clouds have forgotten ours.  
You were never in Troy, and, between two Helens,  
yours is here and alive; their classic features  
were turned into silhouettes from the lightning bolt  
of a glance. These Helens are different creatures,  
One marble, one ebony (Walcott 1990: 313).*

Another principal personage in the poem is a local fisherman named Philoctetes, who bears a wound from a rusty anchor which, as the book develops, acquires a larger allegorical significance and becomes a metaphor for the abuse and suffering of the Saint Lucian people. As Lorna Hardwick has pointed out: 'Names, relationships and situations familiar from Homer also bring with them reminders of enforced diaspora and a plantation culture which replaced the African names of its slaves with classical ones' (Hardwick 2006: 356).

It is highly significant, in this respect, that Seamus Heaney produced his own Irish version of the Greek hero in *The Cure at Troy: A Version of Sophocles' "Philoctetes"* (1991). Like Walcott's Caribbean afterlife of the mythological character, Heaney's fluid and lyrically infused translation of *Philoctetes* similarly resonates with echoes of his Irish circumstances. For instance, in his 'Production Notes' he suggested that his new title *The Cure at Troy* conveyed the faith belief system of Irish Roman Catholicism: 'Cure is backlit ever so faintly in Irish usage (or should I say Irish Catholic?) by a sense of miracle. Lourdes and all that' (Heaney 2002: 172).

Further, the Northern Ireland resonances of Heaney's version of Sophocles are deeply interrelated with the fact that most of the cast was originally from Ulster, that the play's official opening took place in the Northern Irish county Derry, and, as Heaney also admitted, the play operated under the cultural slogan of Field Day Theatre Company (Heaney 2002: 174).

In a larger way, both Walcott and Heaney's afterlives of Philoctetes foreground the importance of healing and hope as the best antidotes to alleviate the wounds of the past. "We shall all heal" (Walcott 1990: 219) says the blind figure of Seven Seas to the rest of the characters at the end of *Omeros*. And the Chorus in Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* positively proclaims towards the end of the play: 'So hope for a great sea-change/On the far side of revenge./Believe that a further shore/Is reachable from here./Believe in miracles/And cures and healing wells' (Heaney 1990: 77).

In addition, Seamus Heaney's translation of Sophocles' tragedy reinforces the valid claim that it is possible to identify a longstanding association between Irish literature and ancient Greek mythology, principally in the wake of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Marianne McDonald has particularly recognised the interrelationship between Attic tragedy and the Irish theatrical tradition: 'In the twentieth century, there seem to be more translations and versions of Greek tragedy that have come from Ireland than from any other country in the English-speaking world. In many ways Ireland was and is constructing its identity through the representations offered by Greek tragedy' (McDonald 2002: 37).

Amongst the most important playwrights who have continued and developed this literary affiliation it is worth mentioning here the Irish playwright Tom Paulin, chiefly with his idiosyncratic, Northern Irish version of *Antigone* entitled *The Riot Act: A Version of Sophocles' Antigone* (1985) and Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), in which she successfully transposed Euripides' *Medea* into the cultural and linguistic setting of the Irish Midlands. It is obvious, then, that Walcott employed the rich symbolic medium of Greek literature to convey his Caribbean reality, just as the Irish had, and

still are, exploiting the wide range of creative possibilities offered by ancient Greek tragedians.

Central throughout all stages of *Omeros* is, of course, Homer himself, both as the mythical blind bard who has been credited with the authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and also under the protean guise of his Saint Lucian avatar, a blind fisherman named Seven Seas, who follows the call of the sea and embarks on his own odyssey around the globe. Yet one of Walcott's greatest ironies is that his modern-day Homer, variously known as 'Old St. Omere' and 'Monsieur Seven Seas' had been christened 'from a cod-liver-oil label with its wriggling swordfish' (Walcott 1990: 17-18).

The poem abounds in complex interlaced stories of this blind figure which are stitched together into the larger fabric of *Omeros*. The protean persona of Seven Seas, moreover, not only brings to mind the ancient Greek bard, as well as the blinded minstrel Demodocus who poignantly sang the labours of Odysseus in the Odyssey, but also another blind Irish poet, James Joyce, who continues and enlarges this genealogy. Even in the 'Lestrygonians' episode of *Ulysses*, Joyce depicted the lonely figure of a blind man, an avatar of Homer, making his way through the streets of Dublin: 'The blind stripling stood tapping the curbstone with his slender cane' (Joyce 2002: 148). This frail figure, we may also add, prefigures Joyce's future destiny as the blind bard of Dublin.

Therefore the theme of blindness becomes a twofold expression in the literary tradition. What the unseeing, inert eyes of the poet cannot perceive is compensated for by the vast, unlimited vision afforded by the eye of the imagination, as the poet exchanges eyesight for the craft of versifying. In *Omeros*, Derek Walcott celebrated the rich allegory of the blind poet, and amalgamated in the character of Seven Seas a fascinating genealogy composed of Homer, Demodocus, Joyce, as well as distant echoes of the mythical figure of the blind Argentine poet, Jorge Luis Borges.

In Book V of *Omeros* the narrator travels to Dublin and stages an imaginary encounter with Joyce, whom he elevates as 'our age's Omeros, undimmed Master/and true tenor of the place'

(Walcott 1990: 200). According to Walcott, the legendary Joyce becomes a phantom that appears at nightfall to walk the streets of his beloved Dublin:

*I leant on the mossed embankment just as if he  
bloomed there every dusk with eye-patch and tilted  
hat,  
rakish cane on one shoulder (Walcott 1990: 200).*

Just as Walcott paid tribute to his Irish predecessor, so in his book-length poem *Station Island*, Seamus Heaney similarly conjured up an encounter with the spectre of Joyce. *Station Island* tells of Heaney's journey to an island in County Donegal which has been the sacred site of pilgrimage since medieval times. Amongst the numerous ghosts which Heaney stumbles upon during this physical and spiritual voyage of self-discovery - highly reminiscent of Dante's *Purgatorio* - is the unmistakable phantom of James Joyce:

*Like a convalescent, I took the hand  
stretched down from the jetty, sensed again  
an alien comfort as I stepped on ground  
to find the helping hand still gripping mine,  
fish-cold and bony, but whether to guide  
or to be guided I could not be certain  
for the tall man in step at my side  
seemed blind; though he walked straight as a rush  
upon his ashplant, his eyes fixed straight ahead  
(Heaney 1998: 266-7).*

Similarly to Walcott, Heaney is able to capture Joyce's distinctive silhouette by means of a brief descriptive passage that condenses his archetypal image. The dream vision that follows stages Heaney's dialogue with the spectre, who advises him on his career and role as a poet: 'Your obligation/is not discharged by any common rite./What you do you must do on your own./The main thing is to write for the joy of it' (Heaney 1998: 267).

What Walcott and Heaney are highlighting here, above all, is that the haunting phantom of Joyce has become their guide and inspiration in their journeys through literature. Both poets are paying homage to the vast literary tradition encompassed in Joyce's work, a corpus which comprises not only a distinctive Irish cadence but also the voices of other literary models, such as Homer and Dante. Ultimately, by calling up

the ghost of Joyce in his epic poem *Omeros*, Walcott is implying that the trajectory of the epic tradition is ongoing, and that the migration of Homer to twentieth-century Ireland may well continue its course into the warmer seas of the Caribbean. This transformative, trans-cultural voyage is succinctly conveyed in the final line of

the poem: 'When he left the beach the sea was still going on' (Walcott 1990: 325).

Patricia Novillo-Corvalán  
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### **Notes**

[1] It should be noted that Walcott altered, however slightly, Stephen Dedalus's assertion. In *Ulysses* we read: '— History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (Joyce 2002: 28).

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## **An Alternative View to the Propaganda: The Irish-American Press and the Spanish-American War**

By Eileen Anderson <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Abstract**

*The importance of alternative views on the Spanish-American War has been largely ignored and the discourse of the New York Irish is particularly significant because it frames the debate by equating imperialism with Anglo identity and emphasises the role that many other ethnic communities played in the formation of a more pluralistic US identity. The New York press shaped the course of events of the Spanish-American War. The fierce competition for readers that led the editors of New York Journal and New York World to print exaggerated reports of Cuban sufferings and inspired their reporters to create news to increase sales has been well-documented. These newspapers played a significant role in shaping mainstream public opinion on US involvement and on imperialism in Puerto Rico and the Philippines and dominated the discourse relating to the war. However, the New York/Irish-American press and the syndicated newspaper columns of Finley Peter Dunne presented alternative views of war-related issues and US imperialism which reached a significant audience.*

### **Introduction**

When the United States entered into the conflicts in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands in the late nineteenth century, it was abandoning its original policies of not becoming directly involved in wars with European colonial powers, and it was aligning itself politically with England (against Spain). This ideological shift transformed aspects of the social structure and culture as well. The US was already a multicultural nation and this attempted homogenisation of identity and the new imperialistic role was problematic for many non-Anglo communities. For Irish/Catholic New Yorkers, the reconfiguration would be more serious. Many had come to the Americas to escape Anglo hegemony and believed that emphasis on Anglo culture would hinder their ability to negotiate a place in the US power structure. US support for England was an overt attempt to downplay the Irish presence in the United States and to justify their marginalisation. The same rationale of Anglo superiority would later be used to deny independence to Puerto Rico and the Philippines after the War.

*...Anglo-Saxon racism was a chic ideology in American Universities, drawing rooms, and private clubs.[...] Survival of the Fittest Social Darwinism, another English import, provided a scientific and sociological framework for Anglo-*

*American nationalists. They not only used it against 'inferior breeds' in the United States, but as a propaganda weapon justifying military and economic imperialism in Latin America and in the Far East, claiming that America was bringing the advantages of a superior civilization to the benighted savages of an underdeveloped world. (McCaffrey 1976: 113)*

This resurgence of kinship with the British would also justify an imperialistic stance to which some of the Irish were vehemently opposed due to their own long history as a British colony.

Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer primarily viewed the war and the occupation of Puerto Rico and the Philippines as a way of promoting their publications. However, Patrick Ford, who ran the *Irish World* from 1870-1913, Patrick Meehan, who edited the *Irish-American* from 1857-1906, and Finley Peter Dunne, whose syndicated column was published throughout the nation, believed that US imperialistic endeavours had important consequences which contradicted their ideas of what the US should represent. Several generations of Irish and US-born Irish (who came from a variety of backgrounds) coexisted in New York; and there was no single Irish viewpoint on all the issues involving the War. However, the majority of these Irish viewed US Imperialism in the

Philippines and Puerto Rico as an 'anti-American' idea and the sympathy that they had for the Cubans, Filipinos and Puerto Ricans stemmed from their own history as a colony of England.

However, the events leading up to the war and the resulting surge of US nationalism which occurred during the battles, split Irish opinion and often challenged the idea that Irish communities could be US citizens and still remain loyal to Ireland. The Irish viewed US imperialism as one of the consequences of an assertion of Anglo traditions and an attempt to negate all other nationalities and ethnicities. The war brought issues of citizenship and human rights to the fore, and forced the Irish in the US to align themselves with other ethnic groups in way that they had not been inclined to do previously.

In the late 1800s many new Irish immigrants were still arriving in the US and by early 1900, the Irish population amounted to nearly five million people (Miller 1985: 493). *The New York, The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, and *The Irish-American* were the two newspapers that the New York Irish were most likely to read. By the 1870s *The World* was more widely read than *The Irish-American* (which had previously been the most popular paper among the Irish communities) and 'by the eighteen nineties and early twentieth century the circulation was regularly listed at 125,000' (Rodechko 1967: 525). The paper also had a significant readership outside New York.

Patrick Meehan shared Ford's belief that Ireland should be liberated from England. However, the two men often differed on the methods of achieving liberation, which led them to advocate different causes in the US. Ford supported the US labour movements and believed that social mobility in the US would empower US-Irish to fight England, while Meehan was a Catholic who tried to reconcile Catholic doctrine with Irish freedom movements. Both Ford and Meehan supported the idea that aligned Irish identity with the Catholic Church and reported extensively on Church events in the US and in Ireland; however, the primary focus of these papers was news related to Ireland. They also reported on US-Irish concerns about the

consequences of a war with Spain and their sympathy for the Caribbean and Philippine Islands is apparent. Ford saw the similarities between Irish and Cuban/Puerto Rican history and his extensive coverage reflected on the parallels of the situations.

Finley Peter Dunne was one of the most influential voices of the Irish community during these years. Dunne, who was the son of Irish immigrants, began his career writing about the relevant issues of the Irish in Chicago but later moved to New York to write about national issues. His Chicago columns had been enormously popular, but he gained national recognition with his satirical depictions of events related to the war. Most of his columns featured as their protagonist an Irish bartender from a pub in Chicago called Mr. Dooley who became the voice of many working-class Irish. Dunne wrote about many other topics but these parodies of the General's speeches and war reports gave him national success.

The cynical views of Mr. Dooley, the bartender, were all written in a phonetic Irish-American dialect which was then considered humorous. Dunne's idea was to 'make Dooley talk as an Irishman would talk who has lived thirty or forty years in America' and 'whose natural pronunciation had been more or less affected by the slang of the streets' (Fanning 1987: xvi). In the sketches, one becomes *wan*, when *-whin* and the final /g/ is dropped on words which end in 'ing'. The Spanish names are transformed as well, so Puerto Rico becomes *Porther Ricky* and Cuba is also given an extra syllable to imitate an Irish language pronunciation and turns into *Cubia*. This Hiberno-English had a long tradition in English and Irish writing and in the US context, 'writers from the WASP mainstream throughout the nineteenth century made full use of the brogue to help create derogatory pictures of the alien immigrant hordes', which 'were part of the new wave of nativism that swept America in the nineties against the "new immigration"' (Fanning 1987: xvii). However, Dunne's mimesis of a working class Irishman is not meant to be offensive because "he used the brogue in new and salutary ways" (Fanning 1987: xix). Mr. Dooley's humorous naïveté conceals the gravity of the

issue he confronts. Dunne's subversion of English and the conversational tone of the article undermines the serious content of the subjects written about and "the expression of social consciousness ... would never have been printed unless they had been written in dialect" (Ellis 1938: xxii).

**The Threat of an Anglo-American Alliance:  
Irish opinion on the possibility of an  
English connection to the war**

The traditional antagonism of these Irish American communities towards England put them opposition to US/Anglo opinion which supported intervention against Spain. Their first reaction was not to fight Spain because the Spanish government, which was also Catholic, had traditionally been an ally of Ireland. However, because of their own experiences of colonialism they also understood that these Islanders desired and fought for independence. "The contradictory impulses in the hearts of Catholic Americans - of sympathy for Cuba's insurgency, and identification with Spain's Catholicity, - might [have] distanced them from the current of popular passion" (Doyle 1976: 165). Many of these Irish were loyal citizens who had fought for the US army but also recalled their own aspirations towards independence. Some of their resentment surfaced as the Irish saw support for the US in Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico, but not in Ireland.

Thus, there were three positions (that intersected and diverged on various levels) that these Irish-Catholics supported: pro-Spanish, pro-Islander (Puerto Rico, Cuba, Philippine) and/ or pro-US. As Hearst and Pulitzer were producing large amounts of anti-Spanish propaganda at the end of 1897 and the beginning of 1898, the Irish New York/Irish newspaper editors found themselves in an uncertain position. They were not eager to enter into war with Spain because Spain's decline might help maintain England's military supremacy and would give the appearance that the US supported England's colonial policies. There was also a great deal of trepidation in the community that the United States would alienate its other European allies. Thus, the pre-War

coverage of *The Irish World* and *The Irish-American* primarily consisted of connecting the Spanish Caribbean problem with England. One of these links is explained in this letter to the editor of the *Irish World* from 15 January 1898.

*Employing her usual cunning arts, England is working hard through her agents here to defeat the settlement of the Cuban question by the establishment of home rule in Cuba. What does it matter to her that prolonging the insurrection means the prolonging of the hunger and nakedness and destitution of the poor Cubans, the continued devastation of the island and the further sacrifice of human life? With Cuba governing herself, developing her resources, advancing on the path to returned prosperity which has been opened to her by the liberal ministry of Spain discontented Jamaica seeing her Spanish neighbor enjoying the advantages of self-government might again attempt to shake off the English yoke [...] and the other British West Indian Islands might follow in her lead.  
A Home Ruler.*

As this reader points out, pro-war advocates ignored the fact that Cuba and Puerto Rico had already been given limited autonomy by Spain with the *Carta Autonómica* since November of 1897.

Both newspapers also printed several small articles which described the Spanish warships coming to the Caribbean which tempered the daily reports of Spanish troop build up in the mainstream press. However, for Ford and Meehan, the threat of an Anglo-American Alliance was the issue that deserved daily front-page coverage. They were concerned about a US/British agreement that would tentatively facilitate the use of each other's ports and canals in Asia and in Central America in case of war. [2] The Irish editors feared that the US government would align itself with the English and support colonial policy by linking it to US interests. On 15 January 1897, *The World* referred to an editorial in *The London Spectator* 'Boasting of American Alliance' which 'threatens Europe with the Whole Anglo-Saxon Race, United and Resolved' and was the beginning of a series of articles strongly denouncing the Alliance.

The sinking of the US warship the *Maine* in February was a turning point in the conflict; and articles alluding to Spain's culpability appeared in *The New York World* and *The New York Journal*; however, the Irish editors were sceptical about Spain's role in the disaster. Ford remained convinced of English involvement in the campaign to discredit Spain and the *Irish World* quoted another article from *The London Spectator* that cites unrest in the Americas and defined the US as primarily Anglo.

*The difficulties with Spain only served to increase latent sentiment essential to the unity existing among Anglo-Saxons. The possibility that the Spanish quarrel may bring them face to face with a continental coalition made the Americans realize that our race is not beloved on the Continent and that we may some day have to make a common cause. (26 March 1898)*

In "England helped Spain go Broke" (21 March 1898), *The Irish-American* also suggests ongoing concerns about English participation. However, supporting the Spanish and complete abstention from the war would have been perceived as unpatriotic. As a result the articles printed in the *Irish-American* (and to some extent the *Irish World* as well) changed their anti-war tone. On 24 February the *Irish-American* published this opinion.

*Until the result of an official inquiry is known, the proper thing, therefore, for everyone, is to keep cool and rest in the assurance that full justice will be insisted on by the President and congress. It would be premature to attempt to pronounce any judgment as to whether the terrible event was the result of an accident, or an act for which, in any way, the Spanish authorities can be held responsible. Should the latter prove to be the case, in the present state of feeling in the United States, war between the two countries would be inevitable.*

On 2 April, a small article appeared in the *Irish World* that made a more subtle argument that defended the United States without criticising Spain.

*The United States has always been most reasonable in its relations and dealings with other nations and it needs but plain and honest dealings on the side of Spain to have the present unpleasantness reach a*

*satisfactory conclusion for both. The United States is neither a bully nor a grabbing nation.*

At this point, the writer still has faith in the US legal system and believes that US and Spanish diplomats can solve the conflict.

Dunne's Mr. Dooley also provided his opinion on the idea of 'The Anglo-Saxon Race' and the Anglicisation of the US in his column entitled *On the Anglo-Saxon*. He tells his friend and loyal customer, Hennessy, that an 'Anglo-Saxon is a German that's forgot who was his parent and 'They're a lot iv thim in this country.' Dooley also confides that he is 'wan iv the hottest Anglo-Saxons that iver come out of Anglo-Saxony. Th' name iv Dooley has been the proudest Anglo-Saxon name in the County Roscommon fr many years.' (Green 1988: 34) Also, in *The Decline of National Feeling*, Dooley claims that then President McKinley (Mack), was a Scots-Irish who was becoming more anglicised because he supported US/English connections. In the column, Hennessy asks Mr. Dooley about his plans for St. Patrick's Day and he responds:

*Well, said Mr. Dooley, "I may cillybrate it an' I may not. I'm thinkin' iv savin' me enthusiasm fr th' queen's birthday, whiniver it is that blessd holiday comes ar-round. Ye see, Hinnissy, Patrick's Day is out iv fashion now. A few years ago ye'd see the Prisident iv th' United States marchin' down Pinnsylvania Avnoo, with the green scarf iv th' Ancient Order on his shoulders an' a shamrock in his hat. Now what's Mack doin'?' He's settin in his parlor, writin' letters to th' queen, be hivins, askin' after her health. He was fr'm th' north iv Ireland two years ago, an' not so far north ayether, - just far enough north fr to be on good terms with Derry an' not far enough to be bad friends with Limerick... (Filler 1962: 46-7)*

Dunne comments on way the colonisation of Irish culture makes it part of English tradition. Dooley calls himself an Anglo-Saxon and supplants the Catholic holiday of Saint Patrick's Day (which celebrates the person who brought Christianity to Ireland) with the Queen's birthday and reminds his readers that many Irish in the US have become "assimilated" into Anglo traditions.

### **The Invasion of Puerto Rico**

Even after the US had invaded Cuba and was preparing to invade Puerto Rico, *The World* still dedicated much of its coverage to linking the push for US involvement in the Caribbean to an attempt by the English to increase their influence. The headlines in the summer 1898 issues attacked 'Anglo' ideas of hegemony more directly and supported a more multicultural approach to defining 'Americanness' by emphasising the necessity for other Americans to fight against Anglicisation. On 11 June they published an article with the headline 'Arrogance of the Anglomanic Gang' which offers an alternative definition to a single US identity.

*What Binds Us as Nation is Not Community of Race, But a Community of Interests, [...] Of all the Races Here That Which Calls Itself the Anglo-Saxon is the Only One That Attempts to Force the Entire Nation into its Allegiance [...] It seems strange that it should be necessary to call attention to the fact that we are not a race, Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, Latin or Celtic, or any other but a nation made up of many races.*

The article concludes with ideas about ways of defining US citizens and warns against defining them by language or race. *The Irish-American* emphasised a parallel sentiment.

*I would remind this self-complaisant 'Anglo-Saxon': that there are a good many countrymen of the young Emperor of Germany in this country, and many more of this race - All American citizens - who would have a word to say in regard to a combination of the aforesaid 'mother and daughter' against their fatherland. And then what about the Irish and their kindred? And what of the Franco-American element in our makeup, not to speak of the Russians, Scandinavians and Italians, and last, though not least our colored brethren, who owe their former condition of slavery to British colonial institutions? (10 June 1898).*

In this editorial the war is seen as prompting a change in the ethnic understanding of association and creating a civic version of US ethnicity.

However, as an article on 28 March demonstrates, the position of *The Irish-American*

was becoming less inclined to question the logic of the war and began to support US involvement. Neither editor encouraged the involvement but they attempted to convince their readers that their duties as Catholics were related to the responsibilities of US citizenship.

*We avail ourselves of this opportunity; however, to call to mind our Catholic brethren that should war break out between our Republic and Spain, we are obliged in our conscience to be loyal to the flag- the Stars and Stripes. It is the teaching of Catholic theology that the government has a right, binding on the conscience of its subjects, for their money and their arms in the war against their foe. We trust after God and the intercession of the Blessed virgin in the well-known peaceable disposition of the American government and the American people, that war may be averted. But should it come - Catholics, you know your duty...*

The article displays a double speak that could be interpreted as pro-Spanish or pro-War and it is unclear whether their duty as Catholics is to the other Catholic nation or to US interests. A new anti-Spain rhetoric replaces their previous sympathy as they call Spain 'the wreck of a once great nation' (25 April 1898).

*The Irish World* did not undergo such a transformation and was much more restrained in its support of the war. The journalists remained respectful to the Spanish people. However, like *The Irish-American*, they paid homage to the 'Irish boys' such as the well-known sixty-ninth Infantry Regiment of New York and other regiments that were volunteering to go to war. On 7 May they dedicated an entire page to the history of the Sixty-Ninth [3] and reports on the ovation the regiment received as they departed for Florida. Both newspapers emphasised that the Irish that were fighting for the United States and ostensibly for Cuban/Puerto Rican independence.

*The Irish-American* also highlighted the Irish presence in the War and emphasised ideas of race and blood and contended that Admiral Dewey, who played an important role in the Philippines conflicts, was an Irishman.

*The Irish Strain in the American Blood appears to be again asserting itself as it did in the early naval*

*combats of the Republic. The name of Admiral Dewey, of our fighting navy, may have an unfamiliar appearance to some people, but it is only the anglicized form of the old Irish Sept-name of ODuaghtaigh which was one of those described by penal law in the Old Land. (7 May 1898).*

This emphasis on the Irish presence in the US armed forces redefines the War as a US endeavour and not an Anglo one.

Dunne parodies this way of promoting the Irish presence in the military and Mr. Dooley makes a more ironic claim about Dewey's Irish ancestry in his column called *On War Preparations*. He tells Hennessey that "Cousin George is all r-right" and when his friend questions him about his cousin George he says "Dewey or Dooley, 'tis all th' same. We dhrop a letter here an'there, except the haitches, - we niver dhrop thim, -but we're th' same breed iv fighting men. Georgy has th' traits iv th' family"(Green 1988: 14).

Most of Dunne's satire on the battles was directed at US generals and parodied the ideas of masculine bravery portrayed in *The New York Journal* and *The New York World*. Dunne's column on the invasion of Puerto Rico, entitled *General Miles's Moonlight Excursion*, ridicules the entire invasion of Puerto Rico and depicts a party-like atmosphere. Mr. Dooley pontificates on his own inadequacies compared to the "brave" soldiers fighting the war, comments on the velocity of the surrender of the Puerto Rican people, and implies that the real reason that US invaded the island was for capitalistic gain - not the promotion of democracy. In the column, Mr. Dooley explains the valiant efforts of General Miles, who led the Puerto Rican invasion, to his friend, Mr. Hennessey. He tells 'Hinnessy' that he would have liked to participate in the military incursion. He also comments that the biggest decision that the General and his soldiers had to make was deciding where to eat, play croquette and how to dodge the bouquets of flowers being thrown at them.

*Dear, oh, dear," said Mr. Dooley, "I'd give five dollars-an' I'd kill a man fr three - if I was out iv this Sixth Wa-ard tonight, an' down with Gin'ral Miles; gran' picnic an' moonlight excursion in Portber Rickcy. 'Tis no comfort in being a cow'rd whin ye think iv thim br-rave la-ads facin' death be*

*suffication in bokays an' dyin' iv waltzin' with th' pretty girls of Portber Rickcy. (Filler 1962: 55)*

General Miles was one of Dunne's favourite objects of satire because of his self-aggrandising behaviour. Puerto Rican resistance to the invasion was nominal and in Dunne's columns the officials appear as welcoming hosts, who ask to be taken into a 'glorious an'well-fed raypublic' (Filler 1962: 57). As they arrive, the young women throw flowers at the troops and arrange a party in their honour.

At the end of the "Excursion" sketch, Mr. Dooley reminds Hennessey that there are monetary advantages to be gained by the integration of Puerto Rico. He once again downplays any notion that the United States is a liberating force. The bartender also explains his view on the real results of war when he quotes his version of General Miles's first speech to the Puerto Rican people:

*'Ye will get ye'er wur-kin-cards from the walkin' diligate.'he says; 'an ye'll be entitled,' he says; 'to pay your share iv th' taxes an' to live awhile an' die whin ye get r-ready, 'he says; 'jus th' same as if ye was bor-rn at home, 'I don' know th' names iv ye; but I'll call ye all Casey, fr short. (Filler 1962: 56).*

In this speech the United States is transformed from a liberating force into an imperial one and General Miles tells the crowd that they have nothing to worry about because they will be able to work and pay taxes just like all other US citizens. He goes on to negate their Spanish, African, and Caribbean ancestry by calling them all by an Irish surname.

The force of Dunne's satire is that he appears to support the war, yet he is criticising the real motivations of the Generals and the US government.

*'An so th' war is over?'asked Mr. Hennessey.*

*'On'y part iv it,' said Mr. Dooley. "The part that ye see in the pitcher pa-apers is over, but the tax collector will continue his part iv th' war with relentless fury. Cal'vry charges are not th' on 'y wans in a rale war.'"(58)*

According to Dooley, the spectacle of the war is over, but the most important part has just

begun. He knows that the island will be taken over by the US and they will be forced to pay taxes to a government that will not grant them the same rights as citizens.

### **Reactions to this New Imperialism**

The Irish-Americans' support for the war continued even after the invasion of Puerto Rico.

*It is semiofficially announced that Porto Rico will be held by the United States as a naval and military station, commanding the West Indies. Its possession will go toward making up the heavy expenses of the War to the United States. Our flag -once run up- will float over the islands permanently. (23 July 1898)*

The comparisons to Ireland continue and Meehan attempts to justify US imperialism as a form of assistance and not exploitation. He compares English and Spanish imperialism and claims that England has changed its tactics. England now adopts legal measures to control its subjects while Spain tries to bully them into submission. US imperialism, on the other hand, will be neither brutal nor political, because its principle goal is assisting the Islands.

*The government of Spain, over her colonies, had been, like that of England over Ireland under the Cromwellian conquest; and it produced naturally the same results-insurrections of the people, driven to despair against the irresponsible military tyranny to which they were being subjected [...] But there is a difference. The wily Anglo-Saxon has always adopted the legal and parliamentary method of robbing its victims of their rights; while the Spaniard true to his African instincts relies on his big guns, - and fails. [Now] we shall know whether our example, for the liberty of the human race, has borne its appropriate fruit. In the advocacy of human freedom the United States has always stood alone... (30 July 1898)*

In this framework, the US is obligated to take over these Islands because of a moral obligation to help them.

Spain surrendered to the US in October 1898 and it gave up control of its colonies to the US.

When it became clear that Cuba was to become independent and Puerto Rico was to remain under U.S. control, [4] the debate on the repercussions of the United States becoming a colonising nation reared its head. *The Irish-American* maintained that the Puerto Ricans were better off with their new status than they were under Spanish control and continued to print articles that vilified Spain. However, by 1899, as the US policies of control became more apparent, the *Irish-American* began to speak out against the Government policies regarding Puerto Rico. The paper felt that the government was putting unfair taxes on the Islanders which would hinder economic growth. The 'lower House of Congress, last week, passed a tariff bill inflicting an almost intolerable and unnecessary revenue burden on the island of Puerto Rico' (3 March 1898).

### **Conclusion**

In spring 1900, as the Foraker Act [5] was being debated in congress, *The World* published an article entitled 'Shall Porto Rico be our Ireland?' The article implies that Puerto Rico should be automatically granted the right to statehood. It was one of a number of articles and editorials in both newspapers which question the tariffs that were being levied on Puerto Rican products. Both papers opposed the way the federal government was treating the Puerto Rican colonists and demonstrated empathy for them. They resented seeing the United States follow a British example, by incorporating Puerto Rico the same way they had seen Ireland become part of the British Commonwealth a hundred years before in the Act of Union.

Many of the other headlines referred to Puerto Ricans as 'Colonists' and criticised the McKinley administration for denying the Puerto Ricans their rights. Their empathy and self-identification with the Puerto Rican people is evident and their prediction of what would occur in the island under US occupation was dire.

Eileen Anderson

### Notes

- [1] The author is a PhD. Candidate at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is finishing her dissertation entitled, “Resisting Anglicization: Strategies of Identity Formation in Irish and Puerto Rican Communities in the United States”.
- [2] It also referred to as the British-American Alliance in the Irish World
- [3] A regiment based out of New York that fought in the Revolutionary War and the Spanish-American War. Historically, the men in the unit were of Irish descent.
- [4] Even after the Treaty of Paris, there was still fighting in the Philippines.
- [5] This act established a civilian government in Puerto Rico and put into effect all federal laws of the United States on the island. It was based on the ideas of the British Commonwealth system. It gave the Puerto Ricans limited representation and no voting rights.

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## **Irish Indentured Servants, Papists and Colonists in Spanish Colonial Puerto Rico, ca. 1650-1800**

By Jorge L. China

### **Abstract**

*The historical treatment of Irish Catholics by the English and British governments has been the subject of much examination, but systematic research on the social, economic, and political impact of Irish refugees who sought asylum in Spain and Latin America at various times since the sixteenth century has only recently drawn the attention of scholars. The Irish experience in Spanish colonial Puerto Rico is no exception. Puerto Rican historiography acknowledges the presence of a handful of Irish planters in the late eighteenth century, but provides few clues about those who came before or after that time (Picó 1986: 142). Nor are the 'push' factors that might help explain why they came to the island discussed at any length. This essay seeks to bridge this gap by linking the Irish diaspora to a long history of Anglo-Spanish rivalry both in Europe and the West Indies. In doing so, it also aims to show how changes in Spain's colonial priorities impacted on Irish immigration in Puerto Rico. Three numerically small but significant Irish 'waves' are identified and briefly examined in the context of Spain's foreign immigration policy: indentured servants around the middle of the seventeenth century; illegal traders in the early 1700s; and Irish farmers, artisans and soldiers during the late Bourbon period, c. 1750-1815.*

### **Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in the Caribbean**

Inter-imperial competition between Spain and England over New World resources characterised the first four hundred years of the post-Columbian era. Initially, Spain (or more properly, Castille) claimed the entire American region as its exclusive Catholic domain, but by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas (a Hispano-Portuguese treaty that divided the 'New World' in half between the two powers), Portugal had managed to 'legalise' its colonial occupation of Brazil. From the perspective of both Portugal and Spain, non-Iberian Europeans who dared set foot in the region were considered intruders. However, the logistical difficulties of settling such a vast realm eventually compelled Spain to concentrate on the mineral enclaves of Mesoamerica and the Andean world. Less economically promising areas were abandoned, left to their native inhabitants, or used as refuelling stations for the *carrera de Indias*, that is, the transatlantic voyage to the Americas.

Spain's European challengers targeted these weak links for exploration, plunder and ultimately colonisation, starting in the Lesser Antilles and expanding into the Bahamas, Jamaica, western Hispaniola, the Mosquito bay, and the Atlantic shores of North America in

the course of the seventeenth century. As they established themselves there, they turned to smuggling European goods into Spanish dominions in exchange for their mineral wealth, pearls and exotic tropical products. As soon as commercial sugar production began in earnest in the non-Hispanic Caribbean, they also bartered for beasts of burden, provisions and timber. Spain's inability to satisfy the growing demand in the Indies for alcoholic beverages, textiles, industrial equipment, weapons and even slaves stimulated this clandestine activity. The encroachment often escalated into state-commissioned piracy and various other armed conflicts, including the pillaging of settlements, naval warfare and the capture of American territories that each European polity claimed to 'own'. By the eighteenth century, these struggles had reduced Iberian hegemony in the Caribbean to Cuba, Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Puerto Rico and Trinidad. England, France, Denmark and Holland continued to battle amongst each other for the spoils (Morales Carrión 1974).

Of the large areas of American soil that fell into English hands, none became more important than the sugar-growing regions. Commercial sugar production was introduced into the Spanish Antilles and spread out to the

mainland, especially on the Atlantic seashores of Mexico and Brazil. It began replacing tobacco as the principal economic pursuit in the eastern Caribbean in the 1640s in places like Barbados, where the phrase 'Barbadian planter' became synonymous with wealth and power. In 1655 England seized Spanish Jamaica and opened it up to colonisation by its subjects from Europe and the Americas.

The centre of English piratical raids against the Spanish Main, Cuba and Hispaniola, Jamaica underwent a gradual transformation into a flourishing sugar island, starting around 1700. The sugar planters of the expanded British Caribbean commanded a great deal of power at home. Organised into a dominant political force known as the West Indian lobby, they did their best to keep England from acquiring new American territories where sugar could be grown profitably. They also supported policies designed to curtail smuggled sugar and its by-products — rum and molasses — from entering England from British North America (Alonso and Flores 1998: 38-43). New Englanders had been bartering for these and other tropical products in the West Indies since the middle of the seventeenth century (Williams 1970: 164-66).

England's loss of its North American colonies following the American Revolutionary War altered this state of affairs by triggering renewed British territorial expansion in the Americas. One of its targets would be Puerto Rico. Relatively large when compared to its eastern neighbours and ideally suited for large-scale sugar cultivation, the Spanish colony was a thorn in the side of the British West Indian lobby. Puerto Rican buccaneers frequently attacked British vessels and raided the seaside settlements and plantations across the Lesser Antilles. Puerto Rico is a short distance away from the former British Caribbean colonies of Tortola, Antigua, Virgin Gorda, Saint Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat. Before 1800 much of its coastline had been largely unguarded and its interior thickly forested. These conditions attracted countless fugitive slaves fleeing their British captors, depriving them of valuable labour (Morales Carrión 1974; China 1997).

British Caribbean planters desperately sought to cut their losses by pressuring England to confront the Spaniards on this issue. Those from colonies experiencing the destructive effects of deforestation and soil erosion also envisioned making Puerto Rico their next sugar frontier. English merchants foresaw gaining a major foothold in the central Caribbean from which to expand their illegal trade with the Spanish Antilles and northern South America.

### **The Irish in the Caribbean**

Following Oliver Cromwell's conquest of Ireland, Irish military prisoners, religious dissidents and abductees were shipped out to the British Caribbean plantations as indentured workers (Dunn 1972: 69). Historian Hilary Mc. D. Beckles described the attitude of the British planters toward their victims:

English masters considered their Irish servants as belonging to a backward culture, unfit to contribute anything beyond their labor to colonial development. Furthermore, their adherence to the Catholic religion reinforced the planters' perception of them as opposed to the English Protestant colonizing mission that in fact had begun in Ireland. Irish servants, then, were seen by the English planter class as an enemy within and were treated accordingly (Beckles 1990: 510-11).

They were often mistreated by a biased judicial system, 'imprisoned, publicly flogged, [and banished] for arbitrary or minor offences (Beckles 1990: 513). Labour unrest and other forms of resistance by the Irish, 'whom some [English planters] thought a greater threat than their African slaves', were swiftly and brutally suppressed (Beckles 1990: 513). Many suffered slave-like working and living conditions, which often fuelled anti-British plots and rebellions.

Rumours of collaborative plots by Irish servants and enslaved Africans circulated in the Bahamas in the 1650s and 1660s (Bernhard 1999: 89-91). The Irish rose up violently in Saint Kitts in 1666 and in Montserrat in 1667, and later defected to the invading French forces. Over one-hundred rebelled again in Saint Kitts two years later. In Antigua and

Montserrat, the British conducted mass arrests and deportations of pro-French Irish servants (Beckles 1990: 509; 519-20). In 1694, Jamaica's Governor William Beeston suspected that Irish Papists were actively encouraging the French to invade the island (Great Britain, Board of Trade: 98).

In 1729, the Jamaica Assembly passed an Act 'to prevent dangers that may arise from disguised, as well as declared Papists' (Great Britain, Board of Trade: 159). The measure responded to public statements by Irish servants to the effect that they would not fight the Spaniards in the event that they attacked Jamaica, and to their alleged secret correspondence with the Spaniards in Cuba (Headlam 1964, Governor Hunter to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 6 September 1729).

Following a pattern established by Amerindians, sea flight as a means to escape servitude became commonplace for both indentured servants and African captives (Fergus 1994: 25; Beckles 1985: 79-95; Handler 1997: 183-225). Ordinances in Saint Christopher (or Saint Kitts) penalised anyone who sailed off with servants without authorisation (*An Abridgment of the Acts of Assembly... of St. Christopher* 1740: 189-194). Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and Cuba became popular destinations for the fugitives. The Spaniards often labelled the servants *ingleses* (English), but there can be little doubt that most such cases referred to the Irish. In 1657, two Dutch and two British Catholics, who claimed to have been held as slaves by the British in Saint Thomas, fled to Puerto Rico. So did the 21-year old Irish servant Joseph Marques in 1688, who absconded from the British Virgin Islands. Three more sought shelter in the western seaside town of Aguada in 1700. The anonymous *inglés* married to a Black female slave who led thirty-six African maroons and four Amerindian captives to Puerto Rico to request asylum in 1715 was probably Irish. In 1763 the Irish servant Diego Sky fled to Puerto Rico along with a British companion from Spanishtown, Jamaica (Chinaea 1997).

At the beginning of the century, in 1701, alarmed by the frequency and magnitude of the maritime exodus, the Jamaica Assembly passed an Act 'to prevent freemen, white servants, negroes and other slaves running away from this Island in shallops, boats, and other vessels.' (Headlam 1964: vol. 19, #1172). A decade later, Governor Hamilton reported that his counterpart in Santo Domingo sought to 'inveigle several Irish Papists settled in H.M. colonies...alleading it was for their interest to desert the tyranny these heretick Dogs exercis'd over them' (Headlam 1964: vol. 26, #268). As late as 1768 the authorities in Cuba reported the arrival of Irish escapees from Jamaica (AGI-SD, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1049).

Despite the antagonistic climate between England and Spain and the latter's policy of harbouring and 'freeing' the Irish servants, Spain exercised strict control over foreign immigrants in a persistent, but unrealistic attempt to keep the riches of the Indies from falling in the hands of non-Hispanics. Although the Spanish Crown incorporated or collaborated with subjects from various parts of Europe — for example, Austrians, Italians, and French — the laws of the Indies strictly forbade foreigners from settling or trading in Spanish America (Chinaea 2002). However, many non-Iberians slipped past these prohibitions. Some had become hispanicised prior to or after their arrival in the Americas. Keeping track of their whereabouts in such a vast empire, particularly as they moved about within and outside their first points of destination, was next to impossible. Some blended easily into their host societies, stayed out of the way, or built familial and economic ties with subjects of Spain in the Indies, further obstructing their detection, apprehension, and deportation (Chinaea 2002).

Since 'foreigners' hailed from diverse social classes and occupational backgrounds, these factors often helped determine how they fared in the Spanish American colonies. Researchers who write about them in monolithic terms fail to account for these important differences. To be sure, there were several distinct 'waves' of Irish migrants in the Caribbean. Irish servants

who sought asylum in Puerto Rico often came with little more than their shirts on their backs and gratefully repaid their Spanish hosts in a variety of ways. Like African maroons, some willingly provided valuable information about the military conditions of Spain's European rivals. Others joined the local Spanish militia or navy. They also arrived at a time, roughly from the 1650s to the 1760s, when Puerto Rico was sparsely populated and in dire need of extra hands for its defence. During the course of previous research on maritime maroons during this period, I found no evidence that any servant was ever returned to their Danish, Dutch, French or British 'masters' (China 1997).

By contrast, Irish immigrants whose presence in Puerto Rico, or in other Spanish American territories for that matter, the colonial authorities viewed as a real or likely mercantilist breach, were generally unwelcome. Several times between 1686 and 1701, the Spanish Crown denied Flemish and Irish families authorisation to settle in Hispaniola. In this instance, their potential infringement on the Spanish American trade in a colony already heavily involved in contraband was a major reason for turning them down (Gutiérrez Escudero 1983: 58-61). The same principle applied to Puerto Rico, as typified by Governor Miguel de Muesas's 1770 deportation of the Irish illegal immigrant, Thomas Fitzgerald. An investigation tied him to illegal trade in the southern district of Humacao. Daniel O'Flaherty was also arrested and charged with smuggling goods, but managed to escape before he could be legally tried (Feliciano Ramos 1984: 90-94).

Late eighteenth-century developments in Trinidad, located just off South America, reveal another variation of the Spanish Crown's ambiguous position with respect to foreign immigration in its American colonies. As in much of the Hispanic Caribbean, Trinidad was thinly settled and deeply implicated in illegal trading. Spanish imperial planners had few options to choose from in addressing conditions in the marginal colony. Since Trinidad lacked mineral wealth and its economy

was stagnant, Spanish immigrants preferred to settle elsewhere. Relinquishing it to European foes was not practical, since Trinidad was part of a chain of Caribbean defensive posts extending from Florida to northern South America (Morales Carrión 1976: 26-7).

Under these circumstances, settlement by selected foreigners from friendly, Catholic countries became a viable alternative for revitalising Trinidad's languishing economy. Colonists from the French Caribbean and later Irish residing in Danish-held Saint Croix, especially those with slaves and desirable plantation-applicable trades, were enticed to relocate to Trinidad. Land and other incentives were granted to them to make the offer attractive (Joseph 1970: 158-167; Borde 1982: 153-207).

This marked shift from excluding to luring foreign immigrants responded to Charles III's military, fiscal and administrative overhaul of the Spanish American empire. In essence the Bourbon reforms, as some of these changes became known collectively, aimed to boost royal revenues and bring peripheral regions of the Indies into closer alignment with Spanish imperial goals. In the late 1760s, the monarch had recruited immigrants from Germany, France, Switzerland and Greece to colonise deserted regions in Spain, including the southern region of Sierra Morena (Hull 1980: 167-8; Lynch 1989: 213-4).

Although results were mixed, these migrants persuaded the Crown to lessen restrictions on foreign colonisation in Spanish America. The selection of Trinidad in 1776 sought to test out the idea in a colony considered among the least profitable and most militarily vulnerable of the Spanish Antilles. The 'experiment' succeeded economically as Trinidad experienced a remarkable agrarian boom over the following two decades. But it was not accompanied by any significant improvements in the island's defensive capability, an oversight that cost Spain the colony when the British easily took over it in 1797 (Newson 1979: 139; 147).

### Irish Settlers during the Transition to Commercial Agriculture in Puerto Rico

With a population in 1776 estimated at around 70,000 inhabitants and growing, Puerto Rico did not desperately need as large an infusion of foreign immigrants as Trinidad. When contemporary observers recommended that immigrants settle it, they invariably hoped to attract colonists with capital, skills or slaves capable of converting Puerto Rico's agricultural wealth into cash crops. The Bourbons agreed in principle, but made no effort to go beyond what they had done for Trinidad. Instead, they focused mainly on increasing mercantile ties between the peninsula and the Hispanic Caribbean through the 1778 *comercio libre* (free trade) policy. They also promoted the importation of African captives via slave trade contracts and special permits.

Neither initiative had the desired impact on Puerto Rico, which continued to linger on the fringes of the Hispanic American economy for much of the eighteenth century. Also launched in 1778, one reformist measure that seemed promising was the re-appropriation and reallocation of all state-owned land among farmers. A special dispensation was simultaneously granted to landowners: they were allowed to contract a fixed number of agricultural specialists from the nearby non-Hispanic Caribbean to assist them in establishing and running their plantations.

The experts had to be both white and Catholic, requirements that appealed to Irish planters, overseers and skilled craftsmen residing in the nearby British and Danish colonies. No one knows for certain how many of them took advantage of the opportunity, but their noticeable presence in Puerto Rico in the last third of the eighteenth century appears to suggest that a considerable number surely did. Felipe Doran, a native of Carlow, was one of them (AGI-Ultramar, leg. 405, Cámara de Indias to King, 16 January 1804).

Alejandro O'Reilly, of County Meath, who migrated to Spain in his early teens and later joined the Hibernia Infantry Regiment, was the highest ranked Irishman serving in the Spanish

armed forces to come to Puerto Rico around this time. A career officer holding the rank of Field Marshall in 1765, he was dispatched to Puerto Rico a few years earlier in response to the British occupation of Havana. His *memoria*, or report, of Puerto Rico enabled the Spanish Crown to get a better sense of the island's military weaknesses and economic potential. Credited with re-organising the local militias, O'Reilly also set out to revamp the fortifications around San Juan (Torres 1969; Beerman 1982).

The latter task fell to Colonel Tomás O'Daly, a native of County Galway who began his military career as a second lieutenant under Juan (John) Sherlock's Ultonia Regiment in 1744. Trained as a military engineer in the Academia de Barcelona, he served in Madrid, El Ferrol, and Girón (AGS-Guerra, legs. 2668 and 3091). Granted land in the vicinity of San Juan, O'Daly began developing it into a thriving sugar hacienda (AGI-SD, leg. 2300, 15 July 1761). With that step, he joined an embryonic Irish immigrant community that would come to be associated with the growth of commercial agriculture. Upon his untimely death in 1781, his brother Jaime took over the property and helped raise Tomás's three children, Isabel, Manuel, and Demetrio (AGI-SD, leg. 2393, 6 July 1797).

A colourful character, Jaime left Ireland possibly in his late twenties and took up residence in Cádiz, Spain, around 1763. Two years later, he sailed off to the Dutch Caribbean colony of Saint Eustatius. When a Spanish fleet ran aground near the British colony of Anguilla, Jaime and a business partner came to its aid. In compensation, the Spanish Crown gave him a temporary licence to export products from Puerto Rico to recoup the funds both had spent on refitting the stranded convoy. He applied for a licence to embark from Cádiz to Puerto Rico on 6 November 1775, but did not leave until 23 February 1776 (AGI, Casa de Contratación, leg. 5522, no. 1, r. 21).

Sheltered by Tomás, he remained on the island beyond the stipulated time. Over the next decade, Jaime built up a reputation as a successful sugar and tobacco planter and

merchant, with connections across the non-Hispanic Caribbean and Europe (Torres 1962; Pérez Toledo 1983). In 1793, detractors cited his foreign status to block his nomination to a post on the prestigious San Juan city council (AGI-SD, leg. 2372, 16 December 1793). When the Spanish Crown appointed him director of the Royal Tobacco Factory in 1787, one of his *fiadores* (guarantors) was Bernardo Ward, the Irish economist and adviser to the Spanish monarch King Ferdinand VI (China 2001).

Jaime claimed blood ties to Lieutenant Timoteo O'Daly and Captain Pedro O'Daly, officers of the Hibernia Regiment that took part in the 1781 Spanish capture of Pensacola, Florida. Lieutenant Colonel Arturo O'Neill, also of Hibernia, co-led the final assault that dislodged the British forces. For his feat, Spain named him Governor of West Florida and subsequently appointed him to the Supreme Council of War (Murphy 1960: 220-22; Beerman 1981: 29-41; Walsh 1957: 38). In 1792, he had been placed on the short list of candidates to replace Governor Miguel de Uztáriz, who passed away while en route to Spain (AGS-Guerra, leg. 7146). His two nephews, Julio (or Tulio) and Arturo O'Neill y O'Kelly, born in Saint Croix, moved to Puerto Rico in 1783 with their slaves and plantation equipment (AGI-SD, leg. 2364, 15 October 1783). Another Irish planter residing in Saint Croix, Tomás Armstrong followed them in 1791 (AGI-SD, leg. 2393, 16 February 1791).

Others were not so lucky, no doubt because their intentions would have violated regulations that banned foreigners on Spanish soil from partaking in the navigational and commercial trades. Such was the case of Juan Tuite, a resident of Saint Croix with business ties to England. In 1766, he proposed setting up an Irish colony of one hundred well-to-do families in Puerto Rico. He asked for authorisation to bring in provisions, tools and slaves not just for his settlers, but also to supply Puerto Rico and other Spanish American colonies. Clearly, Tuite's mercantile ambitions contravened the Laws of the Indies, which could explain why his project was not favourably received (AGS-Estado, leg. 6961, exp. 14, 1766).

In order to gain approval to import slaves into Puerto Rico, Tuite needed a licence. This may have been possible, especially during acute labour shortages. But the Spanish Crown had already granted an exclusive slave importation right, or *asiento*, to a private party or company between 1765 and 1789. Thereafter, the Crown opened the trade in African captives to all its subjects and foreigners upon payment of the applicable slave importation and sales duties. Joaquín Power y Morgan came to Puerto Rico in connection with the Compañía de Asiento de Negros and married a local Creole, María Josefa Giralt (AGI-SD, leg. 2389; AGMS, 1ra. Sección, leg. P-2619). His paternal grandfather Pedro Power was a native of Waterford who emigrated from Ireland to Bordeaux. Father José Bautista Power, born in the French port city, relocated to Biscay, northern Spain (Bilbao Acedos 2004: 102-3). Born in 1775 in San Juan, one of Joaquín's sons, Ramón Power y Giralt, became Puerto Rico's representative to the Spanish *Cortes* in 1808 and later president of the same legislative assembly (Caro 1969).

Several servicemen of the Irish regiments that saw action in Central and South America around this time also remained behind in the Hispanic Caribbean. Patricio O'Haurahan and Cristóbal Conway, both of the Irlanda Regiment, were two of them (AGMS, leg. 7147, exp. 33, 24 July 1790 and exp. 40, 25 May 1790). A handful of lesser known Irish settlers also came to Puerto Rico around this period. Besides the O'Dalys and O'Neills, at least two other separate pairs of brothers, David and Jaime Quinlan and Miguel and Patricio Kirwan, established sugar haciendas. Like the O'Dalys, the Kirwans also came from County Galway (AGPR, Loíza, carpeta 1, 1791-1803). Their fellow countrymen, Miguel Conway, Patricio Fitzpatrick, Felipe Doran, Jaime Kiernan, and Antonio Skerret, were also commercial farmers around northern Puerto Rico, from Toa Baja in the northeast to Luquillo in the east (Bermejo-García 1970: 125-26). Since some of the latter began as overseers, there is a strong possibility that they originated from the nearby non-Hispanic colonies where former Irish servants with limited prospects for social mobility had

little choice but to seek greener pastures elsewhere (Walters 1982).

### **The 1797 English Invasion of Puerto Rico**

In the early morning of 17 April 1797, a large convoy approached the waters off San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. Even though it hoisted no flags at first, a state of war between Spain and England dictated caution. So started the report filed by Brigadier Ramón de Castro, Captain General of Puerto Rico, about the largest and last British attempt to wrest territories in the Americas from Spanish control. Between sixty and sixty-four vessels ferrying an estimated ten thousand combatants, including German and black auxiliaries, took part in the attack. The outbreak of hostilities began the following day and ended disastrously for the aggressors on 1 May (Tapia y Rivera 1970: 669-718).

For British warmongers, the attack was a costly miscalculation. They had grossly underestimated both the citadel's ability to fend off enemy strikes and the tenacity of its defenders. During the two-week conflict they were held back by an impregnable fortified system circling the city, working in tandem with organised resistance forces deploying both frontal charges and guerrilla tactics. Prevented from gaining any significant ground, the invaders abandoned a large quantity of their armaments and re-boarded their ships in the cover of night. It was a resounding victory for the island's armed forces, the overwhelming majority of whom were local people (Tapia y Rivera 1970: 669-718).

This event marked a turning point in the history of Spanish colonial Puerto Rico. In its aftermath the lettered elite seized the opportunity to leverage a series of concessions, including tax relief, privileges and honorific titles for various government functionaries, and special recognition of the capital as 'most noble and loyal' (Tapia y Rivera 1970: 715-18). Poor residents of the adjacent Loíza and Cangrejos settlements, most of them black and/or former maroons, boasted of their own active role in thwarting the British invasion, a feat commemorated by their descendants to this day (Giusti 2000: 33-41). Local lore immortalised

the heroism displayed by the likes of José 'Pepe' Díaz, an officer from the peripheral town of Toa Alta killed while charging a British battery in the Martín Peña bridge (Morales Carrión 1974: 117).

Fascinatingly, the traditionally despised 'barbaric' countryside (symbolically represented by the rural folk from throughout the island who answered Castro's call to arms) had saved the ostentatious, 'civilised' walled city of San Juan (Giusti 1993: 20). According to historian Fernando Picó, the triumph over the numerically superior English expedition may have even led to 'the crystallisation of a national sentiment' (Picó 1986: 123).

Having invested considerable funds and manpower in upgrading defences in Puerto Rico in the last third of the eighteenth century, the Spanish Crown could not have been more pleased with the defeat of its British opponent. Seen from an imperial perspective, however, the show of force displayed by the Puerto Ricans was as impressive as it was alarming. They had demonstrated their loyalty, but also their ability to come together and fight for their homeland. In an age when slave revolts and pro-independence agitation were on the increase, Spain viewed this development with trepidation.

Several important economic reforms sought to blunt this budding movement of self-affirmation. The opening of five additional island ports in 1805 was expected to increase the exportation of tropical staples by eliminating the need to ship them out only through the 'official' port of San Juan. A decade later, Spain granted Puerto Rico a '*Cédula de Gracias*' to attract capital and skilled workers, and to otherwise further the island's agricultural growth. The Crown expected these types of concessions to keep the islanders from severing the colonial bond (Scarano 1984: 18).

There was one unanticipated consequence of the British attack that has received only scant attention in the historical literature: the expulsion of English-speaking European foreigners alleged to have supported the anti-Spanish military campaign. Three days into the

battle, Governor Castro reported that a party of Loíza blacks had captured two German soldiers. They were escorted to the capital, where a routine check of their backpacks uncovered a piece of paper with the name of a San Juan resident. To guard against the possibility that the enemy might gain intelligence from anyone in the city or the island, Castro ordered some of the local residents and foreigners, especially those of English and Irish descent, to be placed under surveillance. The directive coincided with a report that British soldiers had looted the sugar plantations owned by José Giralta and Jaime O'Daly. Eventually, he had them arrested and imprisoned (Tapia y Rivera 1970: 680).

Castro extended his expulsion order to all foreigners, yet apparently those affected by it were overwhelmingly Irish. Jaime Quinlan, Jaime O'Daly, Miguel Conway, Juan Nagle, Miguel and Patricio Kirwan, Tomás Armstrong, Jaime Kiernan, Felipe Doran, Patricio Fitzpatrick and Antonio Skerret were given eight days to leave the island (AGS-Guerra, leg. 7146, exp. 2, 14 March 1797; AGI-Ultramar, leg. 451, 3 July 1797). Miguel Kirwan ended up in Saint Thomas, where he passed away alone in September 1798. His wife Juana Rita Salgado and daughter Isabel, fourteen years old at the time, stayed behind in Puerto Rico. His worldly possessions in Loíza included nine slaves, countless heads of cattle, pastures and four houses. The land itself was appraised at 28,617 pesos (AGPR, Loíza, carpeta 1, 1791-1803). His brother Patricio, Miguel Conway and some four or five unidentified Irish colonists were taken out of jail and cast off the island. Fifty-year-old Juan Nagle, who had successfully made the transition from overseer to planter, died soon after being released (AGS-Guerra, leg. 7146, exp. 2, 14 March 1797). O'Daly was incarcerated for forty-six days (AGI-SD, leg. 2393, 15 September 1797). The fate of the others could not be ascertained.

Even though the situation looked grim for the Irish, their defenders in Puerto Rico lost little time in making their views known to the Spanish Crown. At least two prominent local figures spoke out for them in vigorous terms.

Treasury official Felipe Antonio Mejía condemned Castro's pronouncement as legally unjustified and economically counter-productive. He pointed out that there was no credible evidence to support the claim that the Irish had aided the enemy, nor any real effort to get at the truth. All were arbitrarily rounded up, locked up, and told to leave the island without ever facing a court of law.

O'Daly, a royal appointee, was put behind bars and denied an opportunity to secure the accounts of the Royal Tobacco Factory as mandated by the Laws of the Indies. Moreover, Mejía wrote to the King, their unwarranted removal went against everything the Crown had done to jump-start the economies of the Spanish Antilles, such as reapportioning state-owned land among farmers, waiving certain import and export duties, and granting special dispensations to foreigners knowledgeable in commercial agriculture. After all, he added, the Irish *hacendados* (landowners) whom Castro had expelled without just cause were spearheading the conversion of swampy, uncultivated lands into flourishing plantations (AGI-Ultramar, leg. 451, 3 July 1797).

The Spanish Secretary of State Juan Manuel Alvarez forwarded a confidential letter to Bishop Juan Bautista to try to learn what really happened. According to the informant, an anonymous flyer circulating after the British invaded contended that the enemy planned to capture Governor Castro's wife who had taken refuge in the town of Bayamón. It also claimed that Nagle, Conway, O'Daly, the Kirwans and others were keeping contact with the British. The governor hastily charged them with aiding the enemy and placed them under guard in solitary confinement. In the end, however, none of the allegations were proven.

To cover up the wrong, the bishop continued, Governor Castro cloaked his actions by recourse to the laws that forbade aliens from settling in Spanish America. Still, his order of expulsion against the Irish excluded all other foreigners, 'of which there are plenty' (AGS-Guerra, leg. 7146, exp. 2, 14 March 1797). The bishop described Conway as 'one of the most proper and honorable men' he had known. His

only fault, Batista went on, was to have an Irish nephew in the ranks of the British forces that assaulted the island although no communication between the two was ever established. The ecclesiastical official added that Nagle had done nothing to merit his ill-treatment. He merely went to the British general leading the attack with a signed passport from a local Spanish commander to retrieve several slaves stolen by his soldiers, all of which Nagle had dutifully informed Governor Castro. Echoing Mejía's comments, he added:

*In effect, Your Excellency, these honorable Irishmen, most of them married, all landowners, dwelling and grounded in this island for so many years, are the ones who have opened the eyes of these our islanders; they have taught [them] to make and refine our rums; to plant sugar cane, manufacturing it and whitening it with the perfection that it is done today; they are the ones who have taught [them] all of the labors and operations of coffee [production], introducing all the useful machinery to save on labor and to make [our coffee] among the most preferred, save those of Asia and Mocha; they are the only ones who have imported into this island many lines or articles of commerce, utility, and industry; finally, before their arrival and settlement, a sad and worthless cane syrup was produced here which foreigners purchased, converted to rum, and sold back to us for a sweet profit (AGS-Guerra, leg. 7146, exp. 2, 14 March 1797).*

Just what transpired as a result of Alvarez's inquest is not clear from the sources consulted for this article. Yet in 1798, the expulsion order against O'Daly was suspended. Governor Castro was directed to forward all documents regarding his case to the Council of the Indies for review. O'Daly remained in Puerto Rico, where he died of natural causes in 1806 and was buried in the San Juan Cathedral (AHC, Fondo N.S. de los Remedios, Sección Sacramental, caja 84, Libro 17 de Defunciones,

fols. 295-295v.). Doran, Kiernan, Quinlan and Skerret also survived the witch hunt. The first received a residence permit in 1804; the other three obtained naturalisation in 1816. Kiernan even managed to acquire another four hundred acres of land in Hato Rey (AGI-Ultramar, leg. 405, 16 January, 1804; Cifre de Loubriel 1962: 93; AGI-SD, leg. 432, 30 October 1816).

While it is entirely possible that these Irish settlers successfully countered the false charges of treachery, the urgency of retaining and expanding an economically viable white population in Puerto Rico may have also worked in their favour. The British attack coincided with the Haitian Revolution in the adjacent French colony of Saint Domingue, which resulted in the abrupt flight of thousands of whites fearing for their lives. The Spanish colonial authorities not only forbade Dominguan slaves and free blacks from entering Puerto Rico, but also kept native people of colour under constant watch to prevent what they believed to be an impending race war.

Accordingly, the aforementioned 1815 *Cédula de Gracias* had a distinctively pro-white slant in that it offered incoming 'coloured' farmers a fraction of the land that it allotted to their white counterparts. In this racially tense atmosphere, attracting previously excluded white foreigners willing to embrace the Catholic faith and pledge allegiance to Spain regardless of country of origin became a priority. As a result, the foreign white population, which included the Irish, increased noticeably in Puerto Rico during the first half of the nineteenth century (China 2005).

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### Abbreviations

AGI = Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

SD = Sección de Santo Domingo

Ultramar = Sección de Ultramar

AGS = Archivo General de Simancas, Simancas, Spain

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China, Jorge L. 'Irish Indentured Servants, Papists and Colonists in Spanish Colonial Puerto Rico'

Guerra = Sección de Guerra

Estado = Sección de Estado

AGMS = Archivo General Militar de Segovia, Segovia, Spain

AGPR = Archivo General de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico

AHC = Archivo Histórico Catedral, San Juan, Puerto Rico

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## **Irish Railroad Workers in Cuba: Towards a Research Agenda**

By Margaret Brehony

### **Abstract**

*The story of 300-plus Irish railroad workers, contracted in New York in 1835 to work in Havana, Cuba, raises many questions about their recruitment, experience and survival. Situating their migratory experience within a context of race and class politics, at a time of nationalist struggles on two colonial islands on either side of the Atlantic, the position of these migrants as colonised 'Other' within the Iberian Atlantic system of slavery and colonial labour is highlighted. The need to explore the relationship between an Irish identification with subalternity, on the one hand, and the significance of 'the wages of whiteness' to the Irish on the other, against the backdrop of the Hispano-Cuban colonisation policy to 'whiten' the island's majority black population is examined. In concluding that there was some opposition by the Irish to colonial rule and slavery in Cuba, the paper suggests that the question of Irish identification with a subaltern position merits closer investigation.*

### **Introduction**

Cuba is not usually associated with Irish immigrants, but in the decades before the 1840s potato famine successive waves of Irish people migrated to the Spanish slave colony. In the early 1800s, Cuba and Latin America in general were destinations for labourers who knew little about the climate, customs or language and had no personal networks to fall back on if things went wrong. The expectations and ambitions of English and Irish emigrants heading to Brazil in the 1860s were born of ignorance and desperation and based on idealised images of 'a land of mystery or lush paradise' (Marshall 2005: 7). Immigration schemes targeting labourers were more often than not exploitative; this was certainly the case with the importation of an immigrant workforce to build the Cuban railroad. Described as a bitter and shameful episode (Serrano 1973: 35), the fate of 300 Irish railroad workers contracted in New York in 1835 to work in Havana raises many questions about their recruitment, the conditions they experienced, their provenance and their survival; it also highlights their position as colonised 'Other' within the Iberian Atlantic system of slavery and colonial labour.

In this paper, I propose to situate this particular episode of Irish migration within the context of race and class politics at a time of nationalist struggles on the two colonial islands of the

Atlantic world. The perceived or real threat of a large population of oppressed "Others" in the case of Catholics in Ireland and of enslaved Africans in Cuba, especially their potential for inciting mass insurrection from below, weighed heavily on the cause for independence on both islands. Transformations in the world economy and the societal imperatives of colonial Ireland triggered a dynamic for the migration of labour. The railroad workers' position as colonial others and British subjects was also coloured by the Hispano-Cuban elite's colonisation project, a policy to 'whiten' the island's majority black population and assuage the fear of 'el peligro negro' (the black peril) amongst its white minority elite.

### **Irish Latin American Studies**

Within the broader context of Irish Latin American Diaspora studies, Irish migration and settlement in the Spanish Caribbean is one of the least researched areas to date. Mary Harris, in her survey of 'Irish Historical Writing on Latin America,' concludes that 'weighty Irish academic studies are very few indeed,' despite a growing interest and recognition of Irish communities in Latin America (Harris 2006). Citing Edmundo Murray's description of nineteenth-century Irish immigrants in Argentina 'as English colonisers in a remote location of the Anglosphere', she underlines the challenge to historians who wish to locate Ireland within the discourse of colonialism (Harris 2006: 258). Historically, the close ties

between Ireland and Spain have complicated the Irish attitude to Spanish colonisation, according to Harris, and she posits that 'Catholicism, rather than postcolonialism, proved the strong point of identification with Latin America'. In a short biography of James J. O'Kelly, the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz distinguishes between the conservative Irish who were supporters of the Spanish colonial system in Cuba, such as the celebrated Irish generals and/or merchants O'Reilly, O'Donnell, O'Farrill and O'Gaban, and those other sons of Ireland who identified with the anti-colonial struggle, including Richard Madden and O'Kelly. Regarding Irish involvement in liberation wars throughout South America, Ortiz concludes that for the latter Irish, England was their Spain (O'Kelly 1930: 41).

Several Cuban academics researching the links between Ireland and Cuba recognise that there are important Irish influences in the economic, political and cultural development of the island (see the article by Rafael Fernández Moya in this journal). Some of the first registered settlements of Irish communities in Cuba date back to 1817, though Irish individuals and families found their way, voluntarily or by force, to the West Indies much before that time.

### **Railroad workers**

During the months of November and December 1835, some 378 workers, most of them Irish, disembarked at the port of Havana. All had been contracted in New York to work for the Cuban Railway Commission. In a push to industrialise the sugar industry in Cuba on the eve of the abolition of the African slave trade, British investment paved the way for building the first stretch of railroad in Ibero-America between Havana and Güines. It was estimated that a workforce of 1,500 men would complete the excavations within a period of eight months. Benjamin H. Wright, the engineer in charge, looked outside Cuba to recruit cheap white wage labour of European descent. The Irish recruits are described as being semi-skilled with experience in explosives

and railroad construction. A copy of one ship's passenger rolls lists forty-six men and six women, and included artisans, labourers, mechanics, and overseers. Five women are listed as wives; one woman was apparently unattached to any of the men (Ballol 1987).

Accounts written by Cuban historians make brief reference to Irish migrant workers in the construction of the railroad; however, most fail to explore this migratory flow in any great detail. A more recent publication by the Spanish Railroad Foundation (Ballol 1987), commemorating 150 years of the Cuban railroad, contains the most extensive reference to Irish railroad workers and to the many records concerning them preserved in the National Archives in Havana and the Provincial Archives in Matanzas. In his study of the sugar mills in Cuba, *El Ingenio* (The Sugar Mill, 1964), the Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Friginals provides a short account of the construction of the 'sugar railroad' and the immigrant work force (including Irish) that made it possible.

The Irish and other bonded labourers, particularly Canary Islanders, were forced into a brutal work regime under Spanish military rule, where any attempt to abscond was treated as desertion punishable by prison or execution. They drew monthly wages of 25 pesos, most of which was absorbed by the contractors as repayments for the maritime passage, passports, hiring fees, monthly medical bills, and debts incurred as penalties. Documents from the Cuban National Archives revealed a December 1835 report by the Royal Council for Development, which tallied the following figures for the labourers toiling on the railway project:

- Irish contingent, 282
- Military prisoners from the Iberian Peninsula, 140
- Freed slaves, 30
- Free blacks liberated from illegal slave ships, 24 (Ballol 1987: 82)

In the course of the construction of its short 17 miles, the 'sugar railroad' claimed many lives. The appalling work conditions of hunger and an exhausting sixteen-hour day, with workers

crammed into wooden huts at night, led to rebellion, protest and flight. Protestors ended up in prison, only to find themselves returned to the railroad work gang, this time as forced labourers. In fact some of the first strikes recorded on the island were led by Irish people and Canary Islanders (Mota, 2003). On termination of their contracts, the Irish were not entitled to repatriation. Their passports were returned and the workers unceremoniously let go. Serrano writes of workers plagued by diseases left to beg in the streets of Havana and in the countryside, an image of abject drunken misery, and of starvation (Serrano: 1991). Recalling their abuse in the British West Indies some two centuries earlier (see article by Rodgers in this journal) by planters who viewed them as 'insubordinate and riotous social misfits' (Beckles: 1990), the Royal Council in Havana likewise defended its refusal to repatriate the Irish by characterising them as 'worthless, lazy, disease-ridden, drunkards' who deceived their bosses by disguising their 'vile habits' at the time of their contracts (Serrano: 1991).

### **Twice Exploited: As Labourers and as White Buffers**

In the absence of any comparative studies of Cuba and Ireland as colonial sites, the broader question posed by Joe Cleary (Carroll 2003: 40) as to the extent of connections between Irish oppositional discourse and other non-European subaltern discourse is a very useful prism through which to examine this episode of the Irish experience in Cuba. References to Irish contract workers in Cuba in the early part of the nineteenth century reveal their exploitation as "racial pawns" in the Latin American power elite's struggles to contain black workers and slaves through racial privilege. During the nineteenth century, they sought to 'whiten' their populations and engender European mentalities and customs through immigration. Argentina is noted for its 'success' in effectively diluting and diminishing its Afro-Argentine and indigenous population by these means. Doctoral research carried out by Claire Healy describes the enthusiastic embracing of their own whiteness by the Irish

in Buenos Aires - albeit not with the extreme reactionary stance associated with North America's race/class wars. This eased the Irish-Argentines' way out of the subaltern position that they came from. They were easily classified 'as *ingleses* and therefore unequivocally white' (Healy 2005: 488), contributing to the structural process of inscribing white dominance. However, the Irish who came to Cuba to work on the railroad were known as *irlandeses* (not *ingleses*) and their incorporation into the world of privileged whiteness was not so clear cut.

The marked differences in the experiences of Irish immigrants in Argentina and Cuba must be found in the Hispano-Cuban colonisation policy to 'whiten' the island, to keep it from being overrun by a majority black population. Irish subalternity on the one hand, and attempts to tie the workers to 'the wages of whiteness' on the other, need to be explored against this backdrop. The British too imported Irish labour as a solution to tipping the balance in favour of whiteness in the planter-dominated economies of the Caribbean. While they may have been successful in terms of producing the 'right' numbers of whites, it must be remembered that the Irish servants were perceived and treated as 'black men in white skins' (Beckles, 1986). They were considered by their English masters as the 'internal enemy' and at different times were seen as a greater threat to peace than their African slaves. Suspicions of Irish participation in slave revolts ran deep.

The accusation of Irish identification with African slaves in Barbados was repeated again in Cuba more than a century later. Jonathan Curry-Machado studied the presence, identity, and influence of engineering migrants in Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century, including some Irish artisans working on the sugar plantations and railways. He contends that by their mere presence, foreign labourers and mechanics were seen as 'catalytic agents' in the social and political changes taking place at the time in Cuba (Curry-Machado 2003). Both Curry-Machado and historian Robert Paquette describe the imprisonment and torture of British subjects during the slave revolts which

took place on a number of sugar plantations in 1844. British Consular documents at the Public Records Office in Kew contain testimonies of Irish prisoners accused of being involved in a plot to overthrow slavery and the Spanish Crown.

Many foreigners were arrested and tortured during a crackdown by the Captain-General of the island, General Leopoldo O'Donnell, ironically a descendent of the O'Donnells of Donegal. His brutal repression of slaves during the revolts known as the Escalera Uprising is well known. There are lengthy petitions by the British Consul in Havana advocating for more humane treatment of the British subjects imprisoned in different parts of Cuba who were natives of Ireland. For example, Patrick O'Rourke was accused of helping to obtain ammunition to assist in the insurrection; [1] James Downing, a native of Waterford, was also charged with conspiring to overthrow the authority of the Spanish Crown in Cuba; [2] Patrick O'Doherty, of Donegal, a train driver on the Havana-Güines line, was thrown into prison for allegedly causing the train he was driving to crash into another [3].

### **Slavery vs. Wage Labour and Whiteness**

From the end of the eighteenth century, Bourbon-driven capitalist expansion in Cuba based on the production of sugar relied fundamentally on slave labour. After the Haitian Revolution of 1791 Cuba became the world's largest producer of sugar. The various Anglo-Spanish treaties to suppress the 'legal' African slave trade opened the way for another lucrative flow of captives via contraband that lasted throughout the last third of the nineteenth century. By 1846 it is estimated that 36 percent of the Cuban population were slaves, many of whom still spoke African languages and had little or no contact with the Creole or Cuban-born world outside the plantations. At this time Cuba had a very large slave population and a higher proportion of free blacks living in cities and practising trades than all the other so-called sugar-islands (Ferrer 1999). The Spanish Crown turned a blind eye to the thriving illegal slave trade to maintain a

plantation economy that yielded fat royal revenues. They also hoped that fear of the large African population would keep growing anti-colonial sentiments by Cuban separatists from materialising into a full-blown independence struggle.

Sugar planters shaped colonial labour relations and technological developments, both of which leaned heavily on foreign capital. As the abolition of slavery neared, their calculations regarding the pros and cons of bonded versus wage labour also had to factor in concerns about industrialisation and the racial anxieties of the time. The importation of thousands of contracted Chinese labourers to work in the sugar mills only intensified their racial fears. The Hispano-Cuban 'colonisation' project calling for the importation of cheap white European labour that had started towards the end of the eighteenth century now acquired some urgency. Apart from addressing a chronic scarcity of manpower to fuel the voracious expansion of the sugar industry, the business of importing wage labour was part of a policy to 'whiten' the island and assuage the fear of '*el peligro negro*'.

The white ruling population clung to their Iberian superiors for fear of a slave rebellion such as happened in Haiti. Cuban colonial society in the early part of the nineteenth century, with its white minority elite and black majority subjects, was moving from a discourse of planter/slave to one reflecting a conflict of race (Benitez-Rojo 1992: 122). Those prepared to consider independence from Spain expressed their desire for a Cuban nation 'formed by the white race' (Ferrer 1999). While the discourse of Cuban nationalism centred on race and nationality, the merchant class envisioned a vast labour market of dispossessed workers both native and imported, who would also tip the balance in favour of whiteness.

In describing *los irlandeses*, Moreno Friginals draws on Engels' descriptions of the Irish in Britain as 'white slaves'. He also makes reference to Carlyle's descriptions of the Irish sleeping with their pigs, psychologically dependent on drink, etc., and lowering even further 'the minimal human needs' for factory

workers in England. He goes on to state: 'As the cheapest workers available in Europe who knew enough to lay rails, they were brought to Cuba by the railroad contractors to be submitted to a form of slavery similar to the Negro's' (Moreno Fragnals 1978: 135). According to Ballol (1987), the documentation of the era depicted them in a negative light.

The Railway Commission ultimately divested itself of the Irish. Ballol quotes an article written in the *Diario de La Habana* dated 4 June 1836 that suggests an economic motive for the rejection of Irish workers in favour of a new wave of immigrants from the Canary Islands: 'Henceforth they [Canary islanders] could prove to be the most economic of workers, now that the company has liberated itself from the high daily wage paid to the Irish...' (Ballol 1987: 82). In a parting shot, the Royal Council in Havana stated that the 'worthless, lazy, disease-ridden, drunkards ... should have been thrown out much earlier' (Serrano 1991: 38).

Despite the 'moral' critique of the Irish, their whiteness was never called into question. This contrasts with the reputed racialisation of the Irish in North America in the early part of the

nineteenth century. The Irish had not yet embraced their position as white in the racial pecking order of the United States, where pitting race against class worked to disrupt potential alliances between Black, Chinese, and Irish immigrants (Roediger 1991). From the sources consulted, it appears that there was opposition on the part of some of the Irish to colonial rule and slavery in Cuba. Little else is known of those who survived the brutal conditions in Cuba either by returning to New York or staying on the island. Many questions remain unanswered: given the prevailing racial climate, why did they come to Cuba in the first place? How many departed or stayed, and what happened to each of them? What drove some of them to conspire to overthrow slavery and the colonial social order? It is hoped that a thorough investigation based on primary sources in Cuba or Spain may shed light on the experiences of this small group of people from Ireland who were exploited as peons in two very different colonial systems.

Margaret Brehony

### Notes

- [1] Letters from British Consul in Havana, Crawford, to Lord Aberdeen, 3 May 1844, PRO, FO 72/664, no. 142; 250.
- [2] Testimony by Daniel Downing to Crawford July 1844, PRO, FO/664, no. 161.
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## The Irish Presence in the History and Place Names of Cuba

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Translated by Annette Leahy

### Abstract

*Irish immigrants made history and left their mark on the noble heraldry and the toponymy of the island. This article, penned by the erudite hand of a well-informed chronicler at the Historian's Office of Havana, attempts to rescue from anonymity a wonderful collage of dispersed information and anecdotes that document the enduring Irish influence in Cuba from Spanish colonial times to the early republican era.*

The villa of San Cristóbal de la Habana, founded in 1519 on the north coast of Cuba, was visited sixty years later by sailors and passengers from England and other countries. In 1609 the governor Ruíz de Pereda informed the Spanish king that many foreigners were arriving to the island, amongst them Irish people. Due to the lack of experienced seamen, many of these foreigners were enlisted in the Spanish navy.

Political events in England during the seventeenth century, and particularly the clashes between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, prompted a mass emigration of Irish people to Spain and the protection of the Catholic Monarchs. After the defeat of James II of England and the Catholics in Ireland, whose last stronghold was surrendered in October 1691, several thousand Irish followers of the king left the country, many of them joining the armies of other European countries. For example, for a long period of its history Spain maintained four regiments made up entirely of Irishmen, with their own uniform and officers, some of whom served in the Spanish territories overseas, among them the island of Cuba.

In 1665 Juan Duany, whose father was a native of the province of Connaught, travelled to Santiago de Cuba in the east of the country to take part in that city's fortification works. A son of his named Ambrosio Duany y Fallon, from Briggs in Sligo, laid claim to the status enjoyed by Irish Catholics and allies in the Spanish legal regime by Royal *Cédula* of 28 June 1701. Ambrosio Duany was a consular representative, commander of the city's militia and owner of a

sugar plantation called "Yarayabo". He died in Santiago de Cuba in 1738 and one of his descendants, Andrés Duany y Valiente received the title of Count of Duany in 1864.



Corner of O'Reilly and Tacón streets  
at Havana's Plaza de Armas  
(Rafael Fernández Moya, 2007)

Throughout the eighteenth century citizens with the surname Duany held office as council members and mayors of the City Hall of Santiago de Cuba. In the middle of the twentieth century a central neighbourhood of the city was named Castillo Duany after Demetrio Castillo Duany, general in the Cuban

Liberation Army and civil Governor during the first American intervention (1898–1902), and a street that leads into the port's Alameda carries the name of Joaquín Castillo Duany, also a general in the Liberation Army. Count Andrés Duany owned land in the modern-day province of Holguín in the east of the island, and his surname is the name of a village near Alto Cedro.

On 26 March 1713 the English Slave-Trading Agreement (*asiento*) was signed, which would remain in force for thirty years, and for this purpose the South Sea Company was created and obtained the monopoly for supplying enslaved Africans to all the Spanish possessions. Ricardo O'Farrill and Wergent Nicholson ran a company in Havana which also had a branch in Santiago de Cuba run by Messrs. Cumberlege and Walsh.

Ricardo O'Farrill y O'Daly was a native of the Caribbean island of Montserrat and a descendant of a family whose lineage traces back to County Longford. He married María Josefa de Arriola y García de Londoño in 1720 and both would establish a prominent family in the administration, economy and cultural development of the country, as well as at the heart of the Spanish-Cuban aristocracy. The surname O'Farrill appears in the family tree of almost all the Havana families with noble titles.

At the beginning of 1721 Ricardo O'Farrill asked to be granted Spanish citizenship and six months later it was public knowledge that he had travelled to Jamaica and brought part of his assets consisting of 236 African men and women of all ages, 260 barrels of flour, other possessions and household furnishings, as well as the materials necessary for the construction of a sugar plantation back in Cuba. On 17 January of the following year a Royal *Cédula* was signed which granted O'Farrill citizenship in Spanish America and a licence to trade there with the status of resident of Havana.

Besides working in slave-trading and the import business, Ricardo O'Farrill became the proprietor of two sugar plantations located in Sabanilla, adjoining Tapaste, situated on the road from Havana to Matanzas. The Tapaste

church was built on land donated by descendants of Don Ricardo, who died in 1730.

It seems Ricardo O'Farrill had his slave depot on a short street known as Callejón de O'Farrill (O'Farill's Alley), which was also called La Sigua and Las Recogidas, situated between Picota and Compostela streets, in the port area and near El Palenque – so called because it was the State's African slave depot. In the present day this place is occupied by the Archivo Nacional (National Archive) building. The corner of Cuba and Chacón streets is where Ricardo's grandson Rafael built his home and is called O'Farrill's Corner. This mansion was restored for private lodging and is now the Hotel Palacio O'Farrill. Nowadays, in one of the capital's neighbourhoods, La Víbora, there is a street called O'Farrill and another called Alcalde (Mayor) O'Farrill, after one of the Irishman's descendants named Juan Ramón O'Farrill, who chaired the City Hall of Havana at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1728 the Irishman Santiago Garvey applied for Spanish citizenship. He was based in Santiago de Cuba, where fellow countrymen Juan Francisco Creagh and Juan Rodríguez Kavanagh were also living. The latter, a native of County Waterford, was accused of serving as a pilot for the British troops who landed in Guantánamo Bay that year with the intention of taking control of the eastern region of Cuba.

A powerful British military force attacked the city of Havana in the summer of 1762 and occupied it until July of the following year. Among the members of the senior command of the troops under the command of the Count of Albemarle was the Quartermaster General Guy Carleton, born in Strabane, a town in County Tyrone, in the province of Ulster, who served as the military contingent's quartermaster.

During the British occupation Cornelio Coppinger was a resident in the capital. Originally from County Cork, he worked as a slave-trader with the local authorities' approval. After the evacuation of the British forces, he remained on the island and married the Havana woman María López de Gamarra, with whom

he had four sons who excelled in careers in the military and in government. One of his sons, José Coppinger, an infantry colonel, was Governor of Bayamo, in the eastern region of Cuba (1801), Florida (1817-1820), Veracruz, Mexico, until 1825 and of Trinidad, in the central region of the island (1834-1837). Cornelio Coppinger died in Havana around 1786. The historian Manuel Pérez-Beato states in his book *Habana antigua* that the intersection of Cuba and Acosta streets in Havana was known as Coppinger Corner, but he does not give a reason why.

After signing a peace treaty with England, Spain regained the city of Havana in exchange for Florida. In order to re-establish Spanish control, Ambrosio Funes de Villalpando, Count of Rica and Lieutenant General of the Royal Armies, arrived in Cuba on 3 July 1763 accompanied by several foreign officers in the service of the Spanish crown among whom was General Alejandro O'Reilly, a native of County Meath, assigned to fill the post of second corporal and sub-inspector of the armies on the island, and as such the second military authority in the country.

General O'Reilly finished his mission in Cuba a short time later, but his first-born, Pedro Pablo, formed a Cuban family by marrying the Countess of Buenavista, heiress of the title Marchioness de Jústiz de Santa Ana. As well as these titles, their descendents added to the possession of the family those of Marquis of San Felipe y Santiago and Count of Castillo. However, General O'Reilly is remembered for having organised the military forces on the island and particularly the Black and Mulatto Militias. In honour of his achievements, one of the main streets of the historic centre of Havana was given his name. A stop on the railway line situated in the municipal district Quemado de Güines, in Sagua la Grande in the central region of the country also bears the name O'Reilly.

Warships entered the port of Havana between 3 and 5 August 1780 carrying around eight thousand men under the command of Lieutenant General Victorio de Navia, army general and chief of operations in America.

These troops were made up of the Soria, Aragón, Flandes, Hibernia, Guadalajara and Cataluña regiments, who stayed in the houses and quarters of Guanabacoa, Regla, Jesús del Monte and neighbourhoods outside the walls, with the High Command, generals, other high-level chiefs and also some of the troops staying inside the capital.

That same year Spain reconquered West Florida and under the peace agreement reached in Versailles, in 1783 East Florida was also handed over by England. In order to take possession of the latter territory, on 19 June 1784 Brigadier Vicente de Céspedes left the port of Havana with a force of six-hundred men from the Rey, Dragones and Hibernia regiments, the latter made up of Irishmen.

Several hundred Irish soldiers destined for Florida passed through Havana under the direct command of officers like Lieutenant Colonel Hugo O'Connor, captain in the Hibernia infantry regiment, who was given the command of the Company of Grenadiers of the first battalion of this regiment which was left vacant by the retirement of its leader, Juan Hogan, in August 1784.

In the second half of the eighteenth century various descendants of Domingo Madan y Grant and his wife Josefa María Commyns, both Waterford natives, arrived in Havana from Tenerife, Canary Islands. At the beginning of the next century the Madans had settled in the city and were in business under the company name Madan, Nephews and Son. Later, several of them settled in the Matanzas area and would become part of the Cuban aristocracy with the title Count of Madan. Through marriage the Madans became connected to the Alfonsos who formed a powerful economic group with the Aldamas, linked to the operations of the German bank Schroeder which had its headquarters in England and which financed railway companies in Cuba.

Since colonial times one of the streets in Matanzas, near the bridge of the Yumurí river, was called Madan, as was a neighbourhood of the Carlos Rojas municipal district, also in Matanzas province.

As the eighteenth century was coming to a close, the Spanish Crown assigned the Count of Jaruco and Mopox the mission of heading a Public Works Commission that would be in charge of studying the existing conditions favourable to the colonisation of the island. Among those who formed part of this commission was the navy officer Juan Tirry y Lacy, born in Spain and son of Guillermo Tirry, Grand Standard-bearer of Cádiz and Governor of Puerto de Santa María, who was granted the title Marquis of Cañada de Tirry by Royal Dispatch on 28 September 1729.

Juan Tirry y Lacy was responsible for mapping Isla de Pinos, modern-day Isla de la Juventud, where he went with the mission of analysing the pine trees to see if they could be used for the ships in the Spanish navy. He also wrote a memoir of that region which gave rise to the Reina Amalia colony in 1828. In honour of his contributions to geography, the northernmost point of Isla de Pinos was called Punta de Tirry. In Havana Juan Tirry was the engineer general, was twice mayor of the city and Governor of Matanzas in 1816, a city where one of the streets bears his name. In May 1824 he inherited the title of Marquis Cañada de Tirry, which he retained until he died fifteen years later.

In June 1798 Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan, son of Vicente Kindelán Loterell-Loterelton, originally from Ballymahon in County Longford, was named political and military Governor of the Santiago de Cuba garrison. His sister, María de la Concepción, married to Phillippe O'Sullivan, Count of Berhaven, died in Havana in August 1771. In July 1810 Santiago Kindelán was transferred to Florida with the same position and from there he returned with the rank of King's Lieutenant, and later came to occupy the post of second corporal and sub-inspector of the troops on the island.

Due to the death of Nicolás Mahy in July 1822, Sebastián Kindelán assumed the role of interim Captain General and governed the island for almost a year until May 1823 when Francisco Dionisio Vives took over. He died three years later having retired to his hacienda in Santiago

de Cuba where he had founded an illustrious family. He had attained the rank of Field Marshall. Two geographical points in Cuba bear the name Kindelán, one of them is a Cupeyes neighbourhood in the municipal district of Morón, and the other is a neighbourhood in Matanzas near the border with Sagua la Grande.

During the first third of the nineteenth century there was a wave of immigration towards the island of settlers from different European countries and North America, amongst whom there were also Irish people who participated in the foundation and development of two new towns.

In 1819 on the southern coast of the island's central region on the banks of the Jagua River, a town of the same name was founded, and was later renamed Cienfuegos. The first settlers were from Bordeaux in France, and were joined by settlers from the United States of America. On 30 December of the same year 99 people arrived from Philadelphia, and in this group were the Irish migrants Guillermo Carr, Patricia Collins, Jaime Riley, his wife María Mac Donald and his daughter Ana, Juan Boyle, Cristina Paulinger and their sons Sebastián and Juan, Juan Hotton and his wife María Guerty, Juan Conrad and his wife Luisa Owns, Felipe Honery, his wife Cecilia and son Guillermo, Juan Miller and his wife Lidia Sybbs, a North American, Francis Farland, John Byrnes and Jaime Collins.

On 21 December 1826 a ship called *Revenue* entered Baracoa port in the extreme east of the island with 40 people on board arriving from the United States, who came with the purpose of settling on the banks of the Moa River and forming a colony there. These settlers were mainly from Ireland, Scotland and the United States. The Irish group was formed by the labourers Joseph Ocons and his wife, Richard Powers, his wife and a child, Lawrence Heigar, his wife and a child, Robert Irving, Peter Higgins and Mathew Mac Namara, the carpenters Patrick Ollvan, James Mac Namara, John Blakeney and Simon Dorn, and the blacksmith Michael Mac Namara.

Besides John Byrnes, a settler in Cienfuegos town, in the same period other people of the same name lived on the island, probably his relatives. In June 1855 a boy named Juan Byrnes, whose father was Gregorio and his godmother Margarita Byrnes, was baptised in Havana. This surname became part of the heart of the intellectual community of Matanzas. Firstly, this happened through the educational work of Juana Byrnes de Clayton, the first headmistress of the school for poor girls. This school would later become the Casa de Beneficencia, founded in 1846, and later through the literary work of the poet and revolutionary journalist Bonifacio Byrne (1861-1936), who earned the title of national poet for his patriotic independence work. A street in the Los Olmos neighbourhood in Santiago de Cuba, which bears the name of this distinguished Cuban, is the expression of the permanent tribute paid to him.

The city of Cienfuegos bears the mark of the Irish settlers in its neighbourhood of the north part of the Jagua Bay which has the name O'Bourke and was founded at the end of the War of Independence in a parcelling of lots conducted by Miguel O'Bourke Ramos. Juan O'Bourke, who was born in Trinidad around 1826 and twenty-five years later took part in the armed uprising of July 1851 organised by Isidoro Armenteros, collaborator of the expansionist general Narciso López, lived in this city from 1839. The young revolutionary Juan O'Bourke was arrested and later condemned to ten years in prison in Ceuta from whence he escaped and headed to the United States.

Juan O'Naghten y O'Kelly was originally from Athlone, County Westmeath and travelled to Spain in 1747, where he served at every level of the Irlanda Infantry Regiment. He had attained the rank of brigadier before he died in October 1837. One of his sons, Tomás O'Naghten Enríquez, also an officer in the same regiment and who also came to Havana, died in this city in 1842. The Cuban branch of the O'Naghtens inherited various titles of Spanish nobility through marriage, among them those of Count of Casa Bayona and Count of Gibacoa. Some

family members lived in the Chacón house on the street of the same name on the corner with San Ignacio, in Havana.

The Irish presence was particularly notable during the construction of the island's first railway, from Havana to Güines from 1835 and 1838, as described in Brehony's article in this journal. By Royal Order of 12 October 1834 the Junta de Fomento de Agricultura y Comercio (Agriculture and Trade Board) was authorised to build a railway from Havana to the town of Güines. For this purpose financing was arranged with the English banker Alejandro Robertson, who was an agent of the Railway Corporation of London.

On 31 March 1835 a public document approved by Captain General Miguel Tacón was signed in New York naming Benjamin Wright head engineer and main consultant for the railway project, Alfredo Krueger, first engineer, and Benjamin H. Wright, son of the former, as second in command, directing and carrying out the project. The Junta de Fomento brought the technicians, foremen, superintendents and a group of workers made up of 273 men and 8 women from the United States under contract, among whom were English, Irish, Scottish, North American, Dutch and German labourers. However, they were all identified as Irish, perhaps due to the greater numbers of those of that nationality.

While the work was being carried out, the so-called Irish workers and Canary Islanders were subjected to hard labour beyond their physical endurance, receiving insufficient food in return. Nor were they assured the pay and treatment previously agreed upon. After some weeks putting up with mistreatment and hunger the 'Irish' workers and Canary Islanders decided to demand their rights from the administration of the railway works and when these were not adequately met, they launched the first workers' strike recorded in the history of the island. The repression was bloody; the Spanish governors ordered the troops to act against the disgruntled workers, resulting in injury and death.

The first stretch of railway, to Bejucal, was inaugurated in 1837 and the line from there to Güines was put into service the following year. In 1839 the Villanueva station was built in Havana, on the land where the Capitolio (Capitol Building) is to be found nowadays, following the same architectural style used for that type of building in Europe and the United States. The memory of the Irish and other builders of Cuba's first railway are present in the Cristina Station Museum, the departure point of the old Western Railway.

It has been said that the introduction of the steam engine and other improvements in the sugar industry, Cuba's main economic activity in that period, was mainly the work of North American growers who had settled on the island, particularly in the areas surrounding Matanzas and Cárdenas, north coast districts which, according to the opinion of the Irish writer Richard R. Madden, had more characteristics in common with North American towns than those of Spain.

One of the growers who had come from the United States named Juan D. Duggan was, according to the Cuban chemist and agronomist Alvaro Reynoso, one of the first farmers in the country to plant sugar cane over great distances, while Santiago Macomb, Roberto Steel and Jorge Bartlett were the first to grow sugar cane and made the richness of the soil in the Sagua la Grande region known. The introduction of the steam engine on the sugar plantations resulted in the necessity to hire operators or machinists in the main from the United States and England. After the administrator, the most important job in a sugar plantation was without a doubt that of machinist, who had to work like an engineer because, besides being responsible for all repairs, sometimes they had to come up with real innovations in the machinery.

Some of these foreign technicians living in the Matanzas region became involved in a legal trial, accused of complicity with the enslaved African people's plans for a revolt, which were abandoned in 1844. Six of them were originally from England, Ireland and Scotland: Enrique Elkins, Daniel Downing, Fernando Klever,

Robert Hiton, Samuel Hurrit and Thomas Betlin.

The number of people arrested later grew and all were treated violently during interrogation. In November 1844 the English consul Mr. Joseph Crawford informed the Governor and Captain General of the island, Leopoldo O'Donnell, that the British subjects Joseph Leaning and Pat O'Rourke had died after being released. The doctors who treated them indicated that the physical and moral suffering they had endured in the prison was the cause of death. One of the streets in Cienfuegos was given the name of the infamous Governor of the Island, Leopoldo O'Donnell, who embarked on a bloody campaign of repression against the Afro-Cuban population and against the white people who supported their cause.

One particular case is that of the machinist Jaime Lawton, who prospered as a businessman and was the founder of a family business that his descendants continued until the first third of the twentieth century. He started as a machinist in the Saratoga plantation owned by the Drakes and later entered into partnership with the English ex-consul Carlos D. Tolmé. The two men started operating under the company name Lawton y Tolmé in 1848.

Jaime Lawton was the owner of several *haciendas* in the Matanzas region, among them a sugar plantation located in the town of Ceja de Pablo, another called Mercedita, in Lagunillas, and the Hernaní coffee plantation, bought in 1852, located in the Coliseo region. He was one of the partners of the company that built the Almacenes de Regla (Regla Warehouses) in the south of Havana in 1849-1850, and set up a nail factory in Regla town, on the other side of the bay from the capital. In May 1853 he was an administrator of the Compañía de Vapores de la Bahía (Bahía Steamship Company). When Jaime Lawton died in 1857, a nephew, Santiago M. Lawton, originally from the United States, remained at the head of the business. A few years later, Santiago and two of his brothers, Benjamin E. and Roberto G. Lawton, formed a new commercial enterprise under the name Lawton Hermanos (Lawton Brothers), and in

the 1870s worked as traders, import agents and consignees of boats.

After the death of the brothers Santiago M. and Benjamín E. Lawton, their representative formed his own company in 1895 under the name G. Lawton, Childs y Cía., in which Roberto G. Lawton was a joint partner. The partners of this new company worked as bankers, businessmen and consignees of ships. Around 1915 G. Lawton, Childs y Cía. was being managed by William Wallace Lawton, a former employee who had been born in Havana but retained his US citizenship. One of the capital's residential neighbourhoods owes its name to him as he spent several years in the business of urbanisation of the land in the Lawton subdivision of La Víbora. This activity, begun in the nineteenth century, gained importance in the third decade of the following century, with W.W. Lawton extending his business concerns with the establishment of a company called Compañía Constructora de Cuba S.A. (Cuban Construction Company Ltd.), which built Anglo-Saxon "cottage" style houses. One of the streets of the original lot of land was also called Lawton.

At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first years of the twentieth under the protection of the North American government, the Anglo-Saxon colonies were founded. They were made up mainly of US Americans and Canadians, although there were also a considerable number of English, Germans, Swedes and other nationalities. At the beginning of 1903 there were 37 North American agricultural establishments on the island, ten in Pinar del Río, six in Matanzas, four in Santa Clara, eight in Camagüey and nine in the eastern region. In the Pinar del Río province, near Guadiana Bay, the Ocean Beach colony was organised and to the east was Herradura, the colonial town, close to which many Anglo-Saxons settled.

On 4 January 1900 the first expedition of a colonising movement organised by the North American Cuban Land and Steamship Company arrived in Nuevitas bay on the north coast of Camagüey aboard the *Yarmouth*, and settled on land that was called Valle de Cubitas.

Along with the Americans, people from several European countries also arrived.

At the beginning of 1901 in Isla de Pinos, modern-day Isla de la Juventud, the first two associations of North American colonists had already been set up. One of the territorial companies organised there was called Mc Kinley. In the eastern region Bartle and Omaja were established, two genuine colonies with a considerable number of picturesque bungalows. At the same time, banking firms and sugar monopolies established large sugar cane estates and built sugar factories, chief among them the United Fruit Company, which in 1900 built the Central Boston and five years later Central Preston in Punta de Tabaco, Mayarí, beside which a settlement of the same name was built.

Due to all these circumstances different Anglo-Saxon surnames appear as part of the toponymy of Cuba. Besides those already mentioned, names like Burford, Campbell, Dutton, Felton, Lewinston, Maffo, Morris, Wilson, Woodfred and Woodin are the permanent testimony of the presence of English, Irish and Scottish people in the country's history. On 10 October 1868 the War of Independence against Spain began in the eastern region, headed by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who became the first President of the Cuban Republic at war and Father of the Nation. The liberation battle lasted until 1878 and therefore became known to history as the Ten Year War.

From the beginning, the Cuban Liberation Army had the support of patriots who had emigrated to or organised outside of Cuba, mainly in the United States where they raised funds, bought arms and munitions and recruited volunteers who enlisted to fight for the liberation of Cuba from the Spanish yoke. Among the foreign volunteers was the Canadian William O'Ryan. Born in Toronto, in 1869 he put himself at the service of the Junta Cubana (Cuban Board) in New York and joined the expedition on the steamship *Anna*, under the command of Francisco Javier Cisneros. He disembarked on 27 January 1870 near Victoria de las Tunas, in the east of the island. With the rank of colonel, he was part of

the expedition's leadership that also included another colonel G. Clancey, Commandant Carlos Meyer and captains Thomas Lillie Mercer, Ricardo Ponce de León and Simon Grats.

Upon the US American general Thomas Jordan's arrival, who was named Chief of the High Command and later Head of the Liberation Army in the Camagüey region, W. O'Ryan was named inspector and chief of cavalry, before attaining the rank of general. He was sent on a mission to the United States, from where he set out to return to Cuba at the end of October 1873. He sailed aboard the American steamship *Virginus* as part of the leadership of an expedition also led by the generals Bernabé Varona Borrero (Bembeta) and Pedro Céspedes Castillo, as well as the colonel Jesús del Sol.

The *Virginus* was captured by the Spanish warship *Tornado* off Cuban waters and was towed into the bay of Santiago de Cuba on 1 December. Five days later, by order of the Spanish authorities, all the leaders of the revolutionary expedition were executed, O'Ryan among them. On 7 December the ship's captain, Joseph Fry, and 36 members of the crew, were executed, causing a diplomatic and political conflict between Spain and the United States. In honour of the independence fighter O'Ryan a street of the Sagarra subdivision in Santiago de Cuba was given his name.

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### Notes

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Archivo Nacional de Cuba; Fondos Gobierno General Gobierno Superior Civil; Junta de Fomento; Realengos; Escribanías; Comisión Militar.

*Table 1: Geographic location of place names*

<i>Place Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
Bartle	Victoria de las Tunas, eastern region
Burford	Camagüey
Byrne, Bonifacio	Street in Santiago de Cuba
Campbell	Railway stop, Las Tunas, eastern region
Duany Cinco	Neighbourhood in Alto Cedro
Duany, Castillo	Central neighbourhood in Santiago de Cuba
Duany, J. Castillo	Street in Santiago de Cuba
Dutton, Cayo	Cayo on the north coast, Sabana Archipelago, central region
Felton	Mayarí, eastern region
Kindelán	Neighbourhood in Martí, Matanzas
Kindelán	Neighbourhood in Cupeves, Morón district, Camagüey
Kindelán, Loma de	Neighbourhood in Velazco, Ciego de Avila
Lawton	Neighbourhood and street in La Víbora, Havana
Lewinston	Cacocum, Holguín, eastern region
Madan	Neighbourhood in Carlos Rojas, Matanzas
Madan	Street in Matanzas
Maffo	Contramaestre, eastern region
Mc Kinley	Isla de la Juventud, formerly Isla de Pinos
Morris	Ciego de Avila
O'Bourke	Neighbourhood in Cienfuegos
O'Donnell	Street in Cienfuegos.
O'Farrill	Street in the La Víbora neighbourhood, Havana
O'Farrill, Alcalde	Street in the La Víbora neighbourhood, Havana
O'Reilly	Street in Old Havana, historical centre of the capital
O'Reilly	Railway stop in Quemado de Güines, Sagua la Grande
O'Ryan, W.	Street in Sagarra subdivision, Santiago de Cuba
Preston	Punta de Tabaco, Mayarí
Tirry	Street in Matanzas
Tirry, Punta de	Northernmost point of Isla de la Juventud
Wilson, San Juan de	Matanzas
Woodfred	Mayarí
Woodin	Florida, Camagüey



## **Liberty's Call: Richard Robert Madden's Voice in the Anti-Slavery Movement**

By Gera Burton

### **Abstract**

*The early decades of the nineteenth century in Britain witnessed major legislative changes in the area of human rights. After 1807, when Britain's parliament abolished the slave trade in its colonies, the government signed a number of anti-slavery treaties with Spain outlawing - if not the 'odious institution' of slavery itself - trafficking in human beings. By 1829, the Whig government had passed the Catholic Emancipation Act; four years later, under pressure from nonconformist religious groups known as 'the Saints', the parliament finally banned slavery throughout the British Empire. To ensure compliance with the 1833 Emancipation Act, the administration dispatched Special Magistrates to the 'sugar colonies' of the West Indies. Among these men was the Irishman Dr. Richard Robert Madden, a rather unlikely choice for such an assignment. This article examines Madden's role in the international campaign to abolish slavery at a key moment in the movement's evolution.*

### **Introduction**

On the recommendation of Whig contacts in the anti-slavery movement, including William Wilberforce's successor, Thomas Fowell Buxton, Madden was among the first Irish Catholics appointed, after the 1829 Act removed barriers to the employment of Catholics in the British public service. [1] Although he had no legal background, as a medical practitioner, Madden had witnessed slavery in the Middle East under the Ottoman Empire, making him uniquely qualified for what would become the first in a series of dangerous human rights missions. A native of Dublin with a thriving medical practice in London's fashionable Mayfair, Madden abandoned his career as a physician to devote himself full-time to the anti-slavery cause. In October 1833, accompanied by his English wife, Harriet, he boarded the *Eclipse* at Falmouth and set sail for the British West Indies.

Madden was one of six Special Magistrates who landed in Jamaica in November 1833, where their arrival provoked intense hostility from planters. No sooner had the select band set foot on the island than they experienced rumblings underground, described by Madden as 'a harbinger which was considered an appropriate introduction for persons with our appointments' (Madden 1835: 80). These earth

tremors did indeed foreshadow the effect the newcomers' mission had on the island's status quo.

Any expectations they might have entertained regarding the reception awaiting them were shattered by the headlines in the local newspapers. According to one editorial, the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, had sent a crowd of 'sly, slippery priests from Ireland' to support themselves on the poor colonists. The press embellished their reports with a biblical reference labelling them as 'strangers, plunderers, and political locusts'. Interference on the part of these newcomers was disrupting the peace of the island by promoting 'disorder and confusion' with their 'insidious practices and dangerous doctrines' (Madden 1835: 33).

Among the enslaved population, however, the reaction was altogether different. From their perspective, the magistrates were sent to the island as saviours who would deliver them from bondage. There was a palpable sense of excitement, as everyone eagerly anticipated Emancipation Day, set for 'the 1st of August' of the following year.

Losing no time, Madden was officially sworn in as Special Magistrate by Lord Mulgrave and settled into his duties in St. Andrew's parish, an area of approximately 455 square kilometres just north of Kingston. [2] From there he transferred to the City of Kingston, the island's

commercial and administrative centre, when this important region was placed under his jurisdiction.

Madden's tenure was marked by illness, controversy, and violence. Within nine months of their arrival, yellow fever and other tropical diseases caused the untimely demise of four of the special magistrates who had accompanied Madden on the *Eclipse*. Evidently, the Irishman's medical training and standards of hygiene inoculated him from the ravages of disease as he adapted to the unfamiliar climate.

On what he later described as the proudest day of his life (Madden 1891), Madden was present for the historic Emancipation Day Proclamation, delivered by Lord Mulgrave, in Spanish Town, Jamaica, on 1 August 1834. Far from disturbing the peace of the island as the authorities had feared, slaves celebrated the occasion with church services and 'a quiet and grateful piety.' [3] According to the provisions of the Emancipation Act, by way of compensation, the government had earmarked £20 million (more than £800 million in today's currency) to be paid to former slave owners for loss of 'property'. Slaves younger than six years of age were to be freed, while those six years and older were required to serve a term of apprenticeship designed to teach them how to behave in freedom, or, as the Act stipulated, 'to accustom themselves, under appropriate restraints, to the responsibilities of the new status' (Temperley 1972: xi). Under threat of corporal punishment, house slaves were required to serve a period of four years; praedial slaves had to serve a period of six years, in what amounted to little more than a system of modified slavery.

During one of his numerous trips around the island, Madden set out for St. Mary's Parish to find the location of a small plantation property known as *Marley* that had once belonged to a distant relative long since deceased. At the end of an exhausting day's ride in the verdant mountains, whose heavily wooded areas and limestone soil had sustained countless runaway slaves, he discovered what appeared to be the abandoned remains of the old *Marley* plantation. Making his way along the narrow,

mostly overgrown path, he encountered three women, former slaves, who had been living in the dilapidated old house for many years. To his astonishment, the two younger, middle-aged women turned out to be the daughters of Madden's great-uncle, Theodosius Lyons, the previous plantation owner. He could even see a strong family resemblance, and the elderly woman was their mother. As the story unfolded, the sisters described how, following the sudden death of the plantation manager, their younger brother was sold to pay off the debts of the estate.

Deeply moved by these revelations, Madden offered the family what little he could by way of financial assistance. On the tiny *Derry* plantation nearby, he discovered the exact site where, forty years earlier, one of his uncles, old Garrett Forde, was laid to rest. With a sense of Shakespearian irony, he observed that the soil covering the spot had begun to sprout the planter's beloved sugar canes. Undoubtedly, the unforeseen encounter with his Jamaican relatives had a profound impact on Madden, infusing him with an even greater desire to eradicate slavery in all its forms (Madden 1891).

Much to the dismay of colonial officials preoccupied with the 'sacred rights of property', as Special Magistrate, Madden viewed emancipated slaves as British subjects, entitled to all the protections enjoyed by white subjects under the law. The duties of the Special Magistrates under the 1833 Abolition Act were 'extensive but vague' (Burn 1937: 203); they had exclusive jurisdiction over relations between apprentices and their former masters. The arduous workload involved regular tours of inspection on horseback over a rough terrain, frequently mountainous, covering a radius of as much as thirty miles.

Duties included regular visits to jails and workhouses. The Special Magistrates were required to fix the value of slaves who wished to purchase their freedom. They also had to find suitable locations to hold court. When there was a dispute, Madden insisted upon equal treatment of apprentices in his court, refusing to hear cases in which coercion had

been used to bring the accused before him. In response, he faced obstruction by the powerful Council of Kingston, which maintained its own police force and resented the imposition of Special Magistrates by the London government.

In the course of his duties, Madden befriended Benjamin Cochrane, otherwise known as Anna Moosa or Moses. A native Arabic speaker and son of a Mandinka chief, Anna Moosa was a skilled doctor with a practice in Kingston where he administered popular medicine, demonstrating considerable expertise with medicinal plants. Madden also struck up a friendship with Aban Bakr Sadiki (Al-Saddiq), a Muslim scholar and native of a region bordering Timbuktu, who had been kidnapped thirty years earlier, transported to Jamaica, and sold into slavery. Bakr was noted for his Arabic penmanship and for the accounting ability that became invaluable to the plantation owner who claimed him as his property. To Madden he was 'as much a nobleman in his own country as any titled chief is in ours' (Madden 1835: 158). Expressing his regard for this extraordinary individual, Madden later wrote, 'I think if I wanted advice in any important matter in which it required extreme prudence and a high sense of moral rectitude to qualify the possessor to give counsel, I would as soon have recourse to the advice of this poor negro as any person I know' (Madden 1835: 158). With some difficulty, he managed to secure Bakr's manumission and passage back to Sierra Leone. [4]

Inevitably, Madden's activities led to clashes with employers of apprentices. On one occasion, when a dispute between a planter and his apprentice erupted in his court, the irate employer threatened to have him 'tared and feathered'. Without the support of local law enforcement, his situation became untenable. Refusing to be intimidated, he was obstructed and assaulted on a Kingston street, until two other Special Magistrates intervened and threatened to call in the troops. Eventually, Madden was forced to resign his position and return to London noting, 'I found the protection of the negro incompatible with my own' (Madden 1891: 72).

Upon returning to London, Madden published the two-volume *A Twelvemonth Residence in the Island of Jamaica* (1835), using as a device an epistolary format whose addressees included prominent literary figures, such as the poet, Thomas Moore. The book had a considerable effect on public opinion in Britain (Burn 1937: 221). The work prompted the government to establish a select committee whose membership included Daniel O'Connell, 'to inquire into the working of the apprenticeship system in the colonies', at which Madden testified that, essentially, the apprenticeship system was slavery in another form. Along with two other Special Magistrates, he described the difficulties and abuses inherent in the Jamaican system, but went further than the others in condemning it as a failure, offering 'no security for the rights of the negro, no improvement in his intellectual condition'. His efforts, along with those of Joseph Sturge and members of the anti-slavery movement, led to the early abolition of the apprenticeship system in 1838, two years prior to the date fixed by the Emancipation Act. Apart from documenting the inoperability of apprenticeship, the 1835 work is replete with descriptions of Jamaica's flora and fauna based on the author's observations. [5] The appendix to the London edition also provides an insight into Madden's views of US policy. Written in the form of satirical verse, the following lines reflect Irish opinion as articulated by Daniel O'Connell:

*O Hail! Columbia, happy land!  
The cradle land of liberty!  
Where none but negroes bear the brand,  
Or feel the lash of slavery.*

Following the signing of the Anglo-Spanish treaty of 1835, Madden prepared to set sail once again, this time for Havana, Cuba, the centre of the slave trade. Even before he set foot on the island in the summer of 1836, the Irishman's appointment by the Colonial Office under Lord Glenelg 'for his merit and character' (Madden 1891: 75) as Judge Arbitrator and first Superintendent of Liberated Africans caused a flurry of diplomatic activity between Cuba and Spain.

Describing Madden as *un hombre peligroso*, ('a dangerous man') based on his abolitionist view and activities in Jamaica, the Captain-General, Miguel Tacón, attempted unsuccessfully to block his appointment. Madden was also appointed Judge Arbitrator on the International Mixed Commission Court for the Suppression of the Slave Trade in Havana under Lord Palmerston at the British Foreign Office. [6]

In accordance with the anti-slave trade treaties, slaves from condemned vessels were to be liberated and employed as either free labourers or servants. Since he was charged with securing the safety of *emancipados*, or freed slaves, Madden was set on a collision course with the ruling saccharocracy. His plan was to transfer the *emancipados* from captured vessels to British colonies as free labourers. Tacón, however, refused to allow the *emancipados* to come ashore while awaiting a vessel to transport them to British colonies, on the pretext that they would transmit cholera or some other contagious disease. As Madden clearly pointed out, Tacón had no difficulty allowing enslaved Africans ashore in chains at out-of-the-way places around the Cuban coastline. From the perspective of the Captain-General, only emancipated Africans posed a threat to inhabitants as 'pestilential persons' with their capacity to spread 'a contagion of liberty' throughout the island. A confidential dispatch from Tacón to the Spanish government confirmed that Madden's views as an abolitionist unnerved the Captain-General more than any other concern at that time.

To obtain an accurate assessment of conditions in Cuba, Madden developed the habit of showing up on plantations unannounced, providing him an opportunity to see beyond the colonial façade of lavish hospitality to invited guests and to refute the so-called 'benign treatment' of slaves in Spanish colonies. What he observed remained etched in his memory, as his anguished testimony made clear: 'So transcendent the evils I witnessed, over all I had ever heard or seen of the rigors of slavery elsewhere, that at first I could hardly believe the evidence of my senses' (Madden 1891: 77). Some of the more egregious

practices he documented were the twenty-hour work day at harvest time and the appalling conditions of the *ingenios*, or sugar mills, which he described as 'hells on earth'. Withstanding pressure to turn a blind eye to abuse, he gained powerful enemies and found himself in a life-threatening situation on at least one occasion. Regardless of the obstacles, the valiant doctor remained fiercely independent, prompting one unscrupulous slave-keeping British official appointee in Havana to declare that he agreed with Lord Sligo's assertion that 'he [Madden] wouldn't agree with an angel from heaven' (Ó Broin 1971: 95).

No episode portrays the nature of the conflict in Cuba more clearly than that surrounding the British vessel *Romney*. Shortly after his arrival in Cuba, instead of seeing to the break-up of the captured slave ships as stipulated by the 1835 Anglo-Spanish treaty, Madden proposed that these ships be used to accommodate Africans liberated by the Mixed Anglo-Spanish Court until they could be transported to safe locations. Once the Africans were liberated, it was Madden's responsibility to arrange for their safe passage to neighbouring islands - a sizeable task, given the concerted opposition of powerful interests.

Later, he convinced his employer of the need to procure the *Romney*, a superannuated warship, as a permanent hospital ship to provide accommodation and medical assistance to the men, women, and children rescued from the slave ships. The infuriated Tacón refused to allow the *Romney's* crew of free and newly liberated Africans to come ashore, so the vessel remained at anchor in the harbour at Havana. Drawing on his medical expertise, Madden maintained the vessel as a hospital ship whose presence became an affront to the slave-holding oligarchy. Defiantly, the *Romney* remained anchored in the bay at Havana for almost nine years, long after Madden's departure, as *un baluarte del abolicionismo en el corazón del esclavismo* ('a bulwark of abolition in the heart of slavery') (Ortiz 1975: 23).

As he was preparing to leave Cuba for London, Madden read an article in *The Sun* newspaper about an incident involving a number of

enslaved Africans on board a Cuban schooner, the slave ship *Amistad*. Under the headline, 'The Long, Low, Black Schooner', the article, which included a sketch of the six-year-old, 170-ton vessel 'of Baltimore clipper build', reported the arrest and detention of the Africans. On his own initiative, and without prior approval from his employer, Madden immediately sailed for the United States to give key evidence in the case of the captives of the *Amistad*.

In one of the most famous trials of the age, fifty-two Africans were charged with mutiny and murder on board the *Amistad* as they struggled to overcome and escape their captors. An expert witness with first-hand knowledge of the operation of the Cuban *barracones*, or slave barracks, Madden visited the Africans in the New Haven County Jail, where he addressed the captives in Arabic. Since he had procured the emancipation of hundreds of Africans and had visited the *Misericordia* slave barracks in Havana just a few weeks previously on 24 September 1839, he could testify with authority as to the status of those held. The captives had been purchased from Don Pedro Martínez, of Martínez and Company - 'a notorious house' - one of the largest slave traders in Havana, with slave forts along the coast of Sierra Leone.

The prosecuting attorneys argued that the captives were *ladinos*, the term used on the transportation licence, and had been brought to Cuba before 1820, the year in which the slave trade became illegal. They made the case that, because the accused were slaves before the law changed, they were therefore legally held property. Although translated by US officials as meaning 'able-bodied', Madden clarified that, in Cuba, the term *ladino* was specifically used to denote Africans enslaved before 1820. In his deposition, dated 20 November 1839, he testified that the accused were 'bona fide *bozál* negroes quite newly imported from Africa', or Africans recently kidnapped and transported to Cuba to be sold into slavery, in contravention of the law. His evidence showed that their return to Cuba, as desired by President Van Buren, meant instant death at the hands of interests aligned with the ruling saccharocracy

determined to make an example of the captives for would-be insurrectionists (Jones 1987: 109).

Madden's deposition proved that the captives, some of whom were less than 19 years old at the time of the trial, were indeed *bozales* and were therefore illegally held. Much later, summarising the arguments for the accused, former US President John Quincy Adams stated that this distinction was one of the most important points of the case. [7] The fearless doctor also drew attention to Cuba's blatant disdain for Spain's international anti-slavery treaties exemplified by the imposition of a \$10 'voluntary contribution', or tax levied on each slave introduced to the island, the proceeds of which flowed into the Captain-General's coffers.

The *Amistad* affair aroused international interest, threatening to interfere with relations among the major powers, the US, Spain, and England, over jurisdiction. Madden's role in the case helped strengthen ties between the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and American groups opposed to the 'odious institution'. Although the Irishman travelled to the United States and gave evidence at his own expense and without prior approval from London, his employer at the Colonial Office, Lord John Russell, later to become Prime Minister, recognising the significance of Madden's actions, subsequently commended him for his actions in defence of the *Amistad* captives (Madden 1891).

Prior to the events surrounding the *Amistad* affair, in order to highlight the corrupt practices of the colonial administration in Cuba, Madden wrote a pamphlet entitled 'Regarding the Slave Trade in Cuba' (1839), which was published in Boston, receiving much attention. Penned in the form of an open letter to the outspoken, anti-abolitionist Unitarian minister, William Ellery Channing, Madden criticised the role of the US Consul in Havana, Nicholas Trist, in the slave trade. [8] Widely circulated in the United States, the pamphlet denounced not only the Cuban administration but the role of US investment capital in maintaining an abundant supply of slave labour. Madden accused Trist of trafficking in slaves between Cuba and the

Republic of Texas under the cover of the US flag. In retaliation, an anonymous correspondent with the pseudonym 'Calm Observer' launched a blistering attack on the Irishman, calling into question his credentials and motivation regarding the *Amistad* captives. [9]

On 12 June 1840, the world's first anti-slavery convention in London drew thousands of participants from several countries. The US delegation, numbering in the hundreds, included William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. [10] The official register of delegates lists four representatives of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Association: Richard Allen, Richard D. Webb, Edward Baldwin, Daniel 'The Liberator' O'Connell, and Dr R. R. Madden, recently returned from Cuba. The doctor's perspective as an eyewitness was particularly valuable, as it ran contrary to De Toqueville's statements regarding the 'benign' nature of slavery in Spanish colonies.

In his address, Madden presented a detailed account of the nature and operation of the slave trade in Cuba, published in pamphlet form and circulated widely. He described the blatant disregard for the *cédulas* (documents) supposedly in effect in Cuba for the protection of slaves as well as the system of *coartación*, whereby slaves could purchase their freedom in instalments. In fact, regardless of official decrees, at all times slaves remained at the mercy of slaveholders, who were under no obligation to accede to their slaves' requests for *coartación*.

Also distributed widely that year was Madden's translation of Juan Francisco Manzano's poetry and Part I of his autobiography, published as *Poems by a Slave in the Island of Cuba* (1840). Manzano and Madden had developed a friendship in Havana and, although Juan Pérez de la Riva maintained that Madden was instrumental in procuring his friend's manumission, I am unable to verify that this was the case. [11] The autobiography broke ground as it was, and remains, the only work of its kind by a slave from a Spanish colony. Considered the foundational work of Cuban

literature, Manzano's narrative did not appear in its original Spanish until 1937, almost one hundred years after the publication of Madden's translation. In 1849, Madden published a comprehensive account of his experiences in Cuba entitled *The Island of Cuba: Its Resources, Progress and Prospects*. [12]

On 7 January 1841, Madden embarked for Gambia as Commissioner of Inquiry to conduct an investigation into the operation of slave settlements on the west coast of Africa. What he discovered provoked intense opposition, leading to personal attacks on his character, especially when an unexpected change in the government in London altered the political landscape. His controversial Report to the House of Commons exposed the 'pawn' system, in which British merchants took Africans as captives in pawn for debts; when the debts could not be discharged, the pawns lapsed into slavery. Published in 1842, the report also exposed the flouting of the government's official anti-slavery policy by British companies engaged in supplying the slave trade. Once again, the courageous doctor battled powerful 'monied interests', this time with ties to the City of London.

When the new government appointed John Forster MP, an affluent West African merchant and slave-trade profiteer, as Chair of a House of Commons committee to investigate the report's findings, including allegations of his own company's participation in the illegal slave trade, it became clear that a cover-up was in progress. Committee members challenged Madden's findings and criticised his methods, so that portions of the report were withheld from the British public.

Although the results of Madden's investigation were undermined by a powerful opposition in the House of Commons, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society expressed its appreciation for 'the fearless and impartial manner' in which he had exposed the evils connected with the participation of British merchants in the slave trade and the 'pawn' system. The Committee further referred to the 'unjust attacks to which [he had] been subjected by parties implicated in the transactions

exposed and which [he had] so successfully refuted' (Madden 1891: letter dated 31 March 1843). Perhaps the best vindication of Madden's findings came from the veteran anti-slavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson. Referring to the 'cruel warfare [he had] to sustain', the 83-year-old Clarkson acknowledged his victory over the 'vile and servile agents' and 'unprincipled men who endeavored to thwart [him] in all [his] proceedings' (Madden 1891: 117, letter dated 10 April 1843).

Sponsored by Buxton, the 1843 Slave Act extended the provisions of the 1824 Slave Trade Act and the 1833 Abolition Act. Section 2 specifically referred to persons held in servitude as pledges for debt, known as 'pawns', and 'deemed and construed to be slaves or persons intended to be dealt with as slaves'. In effect, the act provided for the elimination of the 'Pawn' system and imposed penalties for offenders, closing the final legal loopholes exploited by unscrupulous merchants who fuelled the slave trade, making a mockery of the anti-slavery statutes. There can be no doubt that Madden's controversial findings influenced the successful passage of the 1843 Bill.

Uncompromising on slavery and oppression, at times his opponents accused the 'bookish' Madden of being a fanatic. His fiercely independent approach caused one colonial official to remark that 'he could not be bribed, cajoled, or coerced'. As noted by Leon Ó Broin, he considered it the peculiar duty of an Irishman accustomed to oppression at home 'to favor by all means in his power the

promotion of liberty abroad' (O'Broin 1958: 322). Among his countrymen in Ireland, his work as champion of the oppressed in foreign lands received little recognition, due in large part to his status as a servant of the British Crown. While it is true that John Quincy Adams acknowledged the value of Madden's testimony and that the Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, officially praised his efforts in the *Amistad* case, the valiant doctor's subsequent struggle against the causes of famine and injustice in Ireland precluded him from receiving due recognition by Britain for his heroic contributions to the anti-slavery cause.

A staunch champion of human rights, whose remarkable efforts in other circumstances would have merited a knighthood, Madden was often viewed by British administrators in Ireland as 'a mischief-maker and a danger to the peace of the community' (Ó Broin 1958: 322). Notwithstanding his role as 'the most indefatigable defender of the oppressed' (Patrick Rafroidi) in the latter part of his career, the authorities on occasion went so far as to keep the elderly Madden under surveillance in his native city, regardless of the Whig connections that had previously afforded him protection (Emmet 1911: 268). Throughout his life he remained a strong voice for the poor and unrepresented of his country. By the time of his death in Dublin in 1886, the year in which slavery was finally outlawed in Cuba, his courageous work in the anti-slavery movement had long since been forgotten.

Gera Burton

### Notes

[1] It should be noted that the 1829 Act lost much of its significance through the simultaneous disenfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, the core constituency of Catholic politicians representing a substantial proportion of the population.

[2] This was the Liberal Constantine Henry Phipps, later first Marquis of Normanby, who favoured Catholic Emancipation and the abolition of slavery. Following his Jamaica posting, Lord Mulgrave was appointed Britain's Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland for the period 1835-1839.

[3] For a detailed description, see *Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies* by W.L. Burn, Jonathan Cape, 1937.

[4] Following a pirate raid on the return journey, Aban Bakr was captured and once again sold into slavery in Africa. Madden made an unsuccessful attempt to locate him. For details, see *A Twelvemonth Residence*.

[5] A specimen worthy of mention for its vital role in Jamaican history is the prolific tillandsia, whose amazing properties permit growth without roots. Developed from seeds scattered by the wind, the tillandsia plant's capacity to attach itself to trees and conserve several ounces of water in a natural reservoir meant that it could provide sustenance, ensuring the survival of fugitive slaves in woodland areas.

[6] For a detailed account of the operation of the Mixed Commission Courts, see Leslie Bethell's 'The Mixed Commissions for the Suppression of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century' in *The Journal of African History* 7:1 (1966), pp. 70-93.

[7] The 35 surviving Africans were eventually released and allowed to return to Sierra Leone.

[8] This was the same Nicholas Trist who negotiated the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo signed on 2 February 1848. The treaty provided for the cession of 55% of Mexican territory to the United States.

[9] See A Letter to Wm. E. Channing, D.D. in Reply to One Addressed to him by R.R. Madden, on the Abuse of the Flag of the United States in the Island of Cuba, for Promoting the Slave Trade (Boston: William D. Ticknor, 1840).

[10] Madden also addressed the second anti-slavery conference in Paris on 17 March 1842.

[11] Most scholars conclude that Manzano's manumission was procured by the members of Domingo Del Monte's literary circle.

[12] A Spanish translation of this work was published by the Consejo Nacional de Cultura, Havana, in 1966, entitled, *La Isla de Cuba: Sus Recuerdos, Progresos y Perspectivas*.

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## **Beyond Kinship: A Study of the Eighteenth-century Irish Community at Saint Croix, Danish West Indies**

By Orla Power

### **Abstract**

*The Irish trading post, and its associated sugar plantations on the Danish island of Saint Croix during the eighteenth century, is fascinating in that it reflects a cultural liaison unusual in the study of the early modern Irish diaspora. Although the absence of a common religion, language or culture was indicative of the changing nature of Caribbean society, the lack of a substantial 'shared history' between Ireland and Denmark encourages us to look beyond conventional notions of the organisation of Irish-Caribbean trade. The traditional model of the socially exclusive Irish mercantile network, reaching from Ireland, England, France and Spain to the Caribbean colonies and back to the British metropole, although applicable, does not entirely explain the phenomenon at Saint Croix. Instead, the migration of individuals of mixed social backgrounds from the British Leeward Islands to Saint Croix reflects the changing nature of the kinship network in response to the diversification of the Caribbean marketplace.*

### **Introduction**

At the height of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) between the European colonial powers, the Irish community at Saint Croix in the Danish West Indies was responsible for some 30 per cent of official Danish sugar exports from the island [1]. The upheaval created by the inter-continental war created a myriad of opportunities within the ambit of inter-island and international trade. Skilled in the art of commerce and diplomacy and fortified by well-established familial connections overseas, the Irish group at Saint Croix were poised to take advantage of uncertain times. Originally from the British Leeward Islands, this group of Irish merchants and planters, while not overtly discriminated against, were nonetheless excluded from gubernatorial positions and held in mistrust by the British establishment. [2] Their strategy to partake in the sugar industry depended on developing kinship networks, which also served as a platform from which to establish other kinds of business and trade alliances in unfamiliar territories.

This article will show how the venture at Saint Croix reflected the changing nature of the kinship network, together with the increasing requirement to formulate alliances beyond the security of kinship itself. This phenomenon is illustrated by a brief synopsis of Irish inter-colonial and transatlantic trade as conducted at

Saint Croix. Finally, the concept of the 'metropole' is examined within the context of the sugar trade. The islanders did not always consider London, which acted as a focal point for Irish kinship networks, as the hub of their Atlantic world.



View overlooking Saltriver Bay, St. Croix.  
Henry Ryan, a planter from Montserrat and St. Croix,  
owned the land in the foreground c. 1760  
(Orla Power 2006)

### **The Irish Kinship Network**

Studies of Irish mercantile communities overseas during the early modern period are heavily influenced by the concept of the 'Kinship Network'. [3] In this way, the mercantile expertise of the many Irish families involved in international trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be appreciated by the extent to which they were

represented in the major ports of France, Spain, the West Indies, England and North America. Encompassing a geographically disparate group of individuals, such networks enabled Irish merchant families to engage in long-distance trade that was heavily reliant on complex credit arrangements. Reliance on trusted local contacts was essential in the functioning of the commission system and allowed the movement of commodities throughout the Atlantic world without the need for specie. During the eighteenth century, the Irish mercantile community was organised around London, the hub of the international sugar trade. [4] The ability to rely on kin to pursue communal family interests ensured stability and consistency within frequently volatile Atlantic markets.

### **An Irish Cosmopolitan Venture**

The Danish West Indian and Guinea Company purchased Saint Croix from France in 1733 with the expectation of competing in the global market for sugar. Denmark, slow to appreciate the economic significance of sweetness, made a belated attempt to engage in the trade and opened Saint Croix to all-comers. This proved to be an ineffective strategy. By 1747, the Company was in difficulty. As a result, negotiations were initiated to persuade the King of Denmark and Norway to purchase the island. Eventually, in 1754, the Crown took over Saint Croix, making it a free port and ensuring a favourable market in Denmark for the island's produce. Since Denmark remained a neutral country, the island prospered in trade and sugar throughout the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) (Westergaard 1917: 130).

By 1747, a group of Irish merchants and planters with family connections in Ireland, Montserrat and London, had begun to purchase land at Saint Croix. Astute property speculation, skilful plantation management and the shrewd use of international contacts sustained the Irish interest on the island. By the 1760s, this group had become a formidable presence both on Saint Croix and in Denmark. [5] Those involved were of varied social origins and included some members of Galway

merchant families, along with others who were of a more modest background.

Theobald Bourke, John Skerrett, Laurence Bodkin, all merchants of Galway families, were from Montserrat. Similarly, Henry Ryan, a skilled planter who was not a member of the Galway network, was also from Montserrat. Another associate, John Baker, a solicitor, was married to Henry Ryan's sister Mary. Accepted into the Irish community, he was also well respected within the British Leeward islands and served as Solicitor General from 1750 to 1752. Mathias Farrall, also from the British Leeward Islands but not originally associated with the Galway families, was a merchant and planter. Finally, Nicholas Tuite, the director of the operation, was a merchant whose origins lay in County Westmeath. Coming from a land-locked county, Tuite's family was not traditionally associated with international trade. However, by marrying Ann Skerrett, the daughter of a successful Galway family based on Antigua, he gained entry to the socially exclusive Irish mercantile oligarchy.

### **Operating within the Network**

Although Nicholas Tuite did not initially belong to this core network of Irish mercantile families, he clearly had something to offer the Skerrett family. Cullen has noted the difficulty experienced by those not associated with international trade in penetrating the mercantile network (Cullen 1984: 71). Originally involved in the inter-island sloop trade with his brother, Richard, Tuite appears to have amassed sufficient funds to marry the daughter of a well-connected individual. Such a match may reflect an increasing strain in the Irish network, and could point to the short supply of suitable spouses of the appropriate religion and social standing within West Indian society.

The importance of 'marrying well' is also reflected in the choice of partners for Tuite's own daughters. Tuite's eldest daughter Eleanor married the wealthy Thomas Selby of Middleton in Northumberland. His other daughter Anne married Thomas Stapleton, a member of the Irish merchant community in France, who was also well connected in the

British West Indies. Meanwhile, another daughter Winifred Tuite married Justin McCarthy of County Tipperary, who had made his reputation in French army service and was made Count in 1776.



The Danish fort at Christiansted, St. Croix  
(Orla Power 2006)

While describing several strategic marriage alliances outside the Irish circle in Bordeaux, Cullen points out that Irish-Catholic expatriates did not tend to marry outside their religion (Cullen 1980: 55). However, this was not entirely true in the West Indies where business and social interactions among Catholic and Protestant merchants were not uncommon. In fact, it appears that in the West Indies in general, where there was a limited pool of individuals of similar social standing, mixed-religion marriages occurred with remarkable frequency.

When John Baker, a Protestant, married Mary Ryan in 1746, she continued to attend Catholic service (Yorke 1931: 62). Their daughter Patty was also raised as a Catholic and attended a Catholic Girls' school at Lille, France. Difficulties seemed only to arise within the community when individuals actually converted to Protestantism. In 1751, Mary Ryan's niece Elizabeth chose to elope with a Protestant, Mr. William Coventry Manning. The disharmony that resulted when she conformed to the Church of England did not subside and her father John became stoutly 'resolved against a reconciliation'. [6]

Indeed, the desire to have one's daughters marry well was a determining factor in several of the wills relating to Irish families at Saint Croix. The preceding examples of mixed-religion marriages reflect the economic and

social necessity of forging alliances with 'the other', while simultaneously maintaining a clear sense of family heritage. The Galway families in Saint Croix reflect this in their wills.

In his 1777 will, Theobald Bourke's bequeathed a substantial amount of money to his heirs on the proviso that they marry with the consent of his executors or himself. Should they contravene this request, they were to be allocated a paltry maintenance for their lifetimes, and the remainder of their original inheritance was to be divided among those siblings who had not transgressed in such an impractical fashion (Will Bourke).

Similarly, Laurence Bodkin's substantial estate was also shared out amongst his children. However, his female offspring Catherine and Ann were threatened with absolute economic isolation should they neglect their daughterly duties, and marry without consent (Will Bodkin). In the ambit of the Irish-Catholic West Indian experience, daughters were precious commodities and served to unite and reinforce partnerships and business ventures both within the community and beyond it.

One of the more traditional methods of maintaining Irish mercantile alliances was access to a Catholic education. Certainly, European education for boys was an essential rite of passage for many West Indian heirs. Given the restrictions on Catholic education in Ireland the boys, who were often as young as seven, were frequently sent to colleges in France and Belgium. Saint Omer's and Bruges were the favoured establishments for those who could afford them. What is particularly interesting, however, is the fact that sons of merchants based in the West Indies often studied accounting and business with their cousins, whose fathers were engaged in trade in London, Dublin, Nantes and Spain. This certainly had an impact on the strength and structure of the Irish business network at home and abroad, fostering what could be described as an 'Old Boys' Club' mentality and reinforcing its elite nature.

During the 1730s and 1740s, the school of choice was Saint Omer's, a Catholic academy in

Belgium. Thomas Skerrett of Ireland, Robert Tuite (Nicholas Tuite's son) and James Carroll of Carrollton, Maryland were all enrolled at the school in 1739. Michael Murphy and Charles Farrill, both of Montserrat, also attended Saint Omer's during this period. The second generation of Irish Caribbean scholars seemed, for the most part, to have attended the school at Bruges. During the 1760s and the early 1770s, the Bourkes, Ryans and Farrills, all of Saint Croix, were enrolled at the school. Their schoolmates included Edward and James Lynch, whose address is listed as the 'West Indies' and Francis Farril of Philadelphia. Michael and Robert McGrath of Ennis, County Clare were their contemporaries, as was Thomas Lynch, son of the infamous merchant and trader, Isidore Lynch of London. [7]

Once accepted into the Irish network, it was important to maintain the position. This can be appreciated in the manner with which the Cruzan plantocracy married and educated their children. However, in order to expand their ambit of trade, it was important to find alternate ways of forging alliances that were more suited to the unpredictable Caribbean environment.

### **Beyond the Network**

Nicholas Tuite's ability to gain access to the Irish mercantile network and to expand his business beyond its scope reflects his capacity to engender bilateral trust by alternate means. Possessed of a shrewd business intuition and an affable nature, Tuite chose prospective business ventures - and the personnel required to make them a success - very carefully. Renowned for assisting earnest individuals to purchase properties or invest in trade ventures, Tuite perceived such assistance as a 'leg up' rather than a 'hand out', stipulating that the loan be re-paid in full, usually on favourable terms (Will Tuite). 'Money,' as the saying goes, 'makes money', and by offering individuals the opportunity of sampling the sugar trade, Tuite forged lifetime friendships and enduring loyalties. John Baker, unable to afford land in the Leeward islands, was in 1751 offered a share in a plantation on 'very favourable terms'.

[8] As a result, Baker considered himself 'forever indebted' to Tuite. [9] Similarly, individuals such Francis Finn and William Dalton, both of Saint Croix, bequeathed money to Tuite for the purchase of a memorial ring. In Dalton's case it was to be worn 'as a remembrance that I was not insensible of the disinterested benefits he has [Tuite] been pleased to confer upon me' (Will Dalton).

Preserving a position within a familial network was essential in order to engage with and succeed in the world of Atlantic commerce. However, in order to secure business transactions above and beyond the security of the family bond, it was essential to have the skills with which to inspire trust and a sense of fraternity. Assisting individuals to make their fortunes was one way of ensuring lifetime devotion. It was also essential that an individual was both knowledgeable of the international market and approachable enough to act as an advisor. Such an individual ensured he remained informed and ready to take advantage of changing markets.

Entertainment, hospitality and friendship were a fundamental part of business networking in the West Indies. During Christmas 1751, Governor Heyligger and his wife from the Dutch island Saint Eustatius spent a fortnight at the Baker residence. [10] The following Spring, Baker visited Heyligger at his home on the Dutch island of Saint Martin. [11] Similarly, on a visit to Saint Croix, Baker dined at Mr. Tuite's residence with Judge Schuster and Judge Hazelberg (Yorke 1931: 52).

Accordingly, the important role of alcohol is clear in the large consignments of Madeira wine imported into Saint Croix for personal consumption. As the century wore on, the beverage became associated with increasing sophistication and 'good taste'. In 1752, Baker remarked to his brother that he would like the West Indies 'particularly the hospitality of the place: even the most greedy people...are not niggardly in that point or in their living'. [12] In this light it is not surprising that the hospitable Nicholas Tuite, master of the international business realm and the art of conversation, made a special provision to bequeath the

following to his wife: ‘...all my Wines Rum Brandy Beer Ale Cyder and all other spirituous Liquors together with the provisions and stores belonging or for the use of my said houses in England for her sole use and as her own property for ever...’ (Will Tuite).

### **Trans-national Trade at Saint Croix**

Although recognising the importance of hospitality and friendship in the building of trans-national alliances, the Irish group at Saint Croix were very much of their time, particularly in relation to slavery. In examining customs records relating to the period, it is clear that the Irish community considered their African labourers as commodities. The slaves’ introduction to society at Saint Croix is listed alongside consignments of routine items required for management of the plantations. Such stark inventories reflect the absence of any need to forge partnerships or build alliances with individuals considered as plantation ‘stock’.

During 1760, Laurence Bodkin imported a large number of Africans to Saint Croix from various locations. On the 3 June, a vessel skippered by Jacob Dischington imported a cargo of 22 male slaves, 36 females, 29 girls and 14 boys directly from the Guinea Coast for which he paid 318 rixdalers. [13] In July of that year, Henry Ryan imported 18 men, 13 women, 12 boys and 2 girls along with a quantity of cement from Montserrat. [14] Meanwhile, on 26 May Mathias Ferrald exported bread, rice, 1000 floor-tiles and 16 slaves to Puerto Rico. [15]

The settlers’ wills also reflect their attitude towards African slaves. Laurence Bodkin bequeathed the sum of 1,700 rixdalers to his nephew, either to be given him when he turned 18 or ‘to be laid out in Negroes for his use’. William Bourke, Bodkin’s godson, was to be given a smaller sum because he had already been given ‘...one Negro woman and one child...[the] Negro woman nam’d Bella is worth 500 rixdollars’ (Will Bodkin). It could be said that the highly competitive nature of the sugar trade underpinned the settlers’ reliance on chattel slaves. Writing in 1762, William

Dalton desired that ‘...immediately upon my demise I desire that my little Negroe boy Joseph have his freedom.’ Given that the will was not proved until 1779, it is certain that Dalton’s slave was no longer a ‘little Negroe boy’ (Will Dalton).



Ruins of an eighteenth century plantation house on the northern coast of St. Croix  
(Orla Power 2006)

Overall, it is clear that the Irish community was adept at maintaining familial alliances while liaising with Danish officials and merchants of various nationalities when required. Both Baker and Tuite spoke some Danish. However, where language barriers existed, solutions were readily found and adopted. Hardware goods imported for the sugar and rum producers ‘Bodkin, Skerrett and Ferral’ did not have corresponding Danish nomenclature. As such, in the official records, a degree of syncretic interaction is apparent. For instance, a technical apparatus relating to the distillation process, such as the *Swan Neck*, [16] was directly translated as a ‘Svan Halse’. Similarly, articles associated with the production of ‘Killdevil’ such as ‘Killdevil pans’ were prefixed, in Danish, by the phonetic ‘*Kieldyvel*’. [17]



Sugarmill  
(Orla Power 2006)

Apart from involvement in the principal trade in sugar to the Danish metropole, Irish individuals at Saint Croix often used sugar and rum in transactions with traders from other islands. For instance, Theobald Bourke imported 28 fads of unrefined and 20 fads of refined sugar from French Granada in March 1760. [18] Similarly, Captain John Kennedy exported 18 fads of rum to the Dutch Saint Eustatius in May of that year. [19] Irish merchants trading to New York, Montreal and beyond matched such inter-island trade, and reveal the global reach of mercantile operations on the island.

### The Metropole

McCusker describes a complicated financial exchange zone which existed between Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Hamburg. For example, a London merchant who wished to purchase a bill on Copenhagen would have had to negotiate through Hamburg or Amsterdam, as there were few or no bills for sale on Copenhagen (McCusker 1978: 81). This shows the extent to which Copenhagen was dependent on other European capitals in the ambit of international trade. It is probable that this was a factor that influenced the prevalence of non-Danish nationals in positions of influence in Copenhagen. Danish reliance on European finance ensured opportunities for well-connected individuals within the Atlantic World who were willing to engage with unfamiliar territory.

Overall, without London, the Irish Atlantic mercantile world would have floundered

(Truxes 2006). Contacts frequently tied to a merchant's familial network furnished financial services to clients in far-flung regions. Individuals such as Isidore Lynch and John Kirwan, both of Galway families, managed bills of exchange and sourced venture capital as required. Given that London was one of the most important markets within the international sugar industry, allegiances with influential brokers involved in the trade were an essential aspect of maintaining and appreciating one's wealth and affluence. It was common for planters who had 'over-wintered' in the Caribbean to return to the metropole for a few months in the spring. [20] This was regarded as a time to socialise, reinforce business arrangements and to enjoy the trappings of success. Soon after her return to London in July 1757, Mary Ryan and her sister bought assorted silks at Mr Palmer's on Ludgate Hill (Yorke 1931: 98) and her husband, John Baker, met Nicholas Tuite at Lloyd's coffee house and later dined at Mr Kirwan's (Yorke 1931: 105).

However, as the Irish presence at Saint Croix gained in significance, Copenhagen came to join London as another metropole on the Irish-Caribbean horizon. Trips to London also became opportunities to meet Danish representatives of the King. [21] In 1760, John Baker and Nicholas Tuite both travelled to Copenhagen where Tuite 'drank chocolate with the Imperial Minister' (Yorke 1931: 142). Theobald Bourke, who composed his will in Copenhagen in 1770, was granted a 'Facultas Istandi' by King Christian VII at his Royal Palace at Christianborg (Will Bourke). Similarly, the will of Laurence Bodkin and his wife Jane was recorded in Danish and registered in the Chancery Rolls at Copenhagen in 1763 (Will Bodkin). Meanwhile, Nicholas Tuite was accorded a special honour by the Crown and his son, Robert was granted the status of Chamberlain to the King of Denmark (Yorke 1931: 62). The Irish presence at Copenhagen can also be appreciated in the fact that the sugar refinery of 'Selby and Company', belonging to Nicholas Tuite's grandson Charles Selby, was one of the top five producers in

Copenhagen at the end of the eighteenth century (Sviestrup 1945: 88).

In examining the role played by Irish individuals in the rapidly expanding and changing Caribbean marketplace of the eighteenth century, it is necessary to focus on the commercial relationships based on kinship, together with those which lay beyond traditional familial ties. Overall, the methods and motivations that engaged and built alliances with 'the other' are essential in our understanding of the region during this time. In concentrating on the kinship network alone, it would appear that all roads led to London. However, by searching for alternate spheres of

influence and the ways in which the network adapted to suit the rigours of the Caribbean market, it is possible to chart the Irish journey on the fringes of the familiar. Such an approach may further elucidate the duality of commercial liaisons displayed by Irish settlers at Saint Croix. Similarly, in using this approach, it is hoped to shed light on the settlers' own sense of identity, perceptions of 'otherness' and notions of 'Irishness'.

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### Notes

[1] The term 'Irish' refers to individuals bearing last names associated with Ireland. Figure compiled using the Christiansted Weighbook for the month of June 1761, 1762 and 1763. Irish exporters were responsible for some 1.7 million rd (Reichsthalers/Rixdalers) of a total of 5.8 million rd of sugar exports from Christiansted during this period. Record Group 55. Saint Croix, Various Departments. Weighbooks, 1748-1778 Vol. 11,12 and 13. Entry No. 465. NARA, College Park, MD.

[2] Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations ... preserved in the Public Record Office. London: H.M.S.O., 1920-1938 (1749-50 Jan.-1753 De - 1932). 3 December 1751

[3] For example: Cullen, L. M. 'The Irish Merchant Communities of Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Cognac in the Eighteenth Century' in *Negoce et industrie en France et en Irlande aux XVIIIe et XIXe siecles : actes du Colloque franco-irlandais d'histoire*, Bordeaux, May 1978 / sous la direction de L.M. Cullen et P. Butel. (Paris 1980) and Cullen, L. M. 'Galway merchants in the outside world, 1650-1800' in: *Galway: Town and Gown 1484-1984*, ed. Ó Cearbhaill, D. (Dublin, 1984), 63-89).

[4] Truxes, Thomas, M. 'London's Irish Merchant community and North Atlantic Commerce in the Mid-Eighteenth Century' in *Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks in Europe and Overseas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, David Dickson, Jan Parmentier and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), Gent, Academia Press, 2006.

[5] For a more comprehensive background to the early Irish settlement at Saint Croix, see: Power, Orla 'The 'Quadripartite Concern' of St. Croix, 1751-1757. An Irish Catholic Plantation in the Danish West Indies' in *Proceedings of the Irish in the Atlantic World Conference, Charleston S. C. March 2007*, forthcoming.

[6] Letterbook of John Baker. Letters to Mr. Tuite. 27 January 1752 and 30 July 1752. See also: Yorke, Philip C. *Diary of John Baker*, London 1931. p16.

[7] See Holt, G. *St. Omers and Bruges Colleges. 1593-1773. A Biographical Dictionary*. Catholic Record Society, Vol. 69 (London, 1979).

[8] Letterbook of John Baker. 22 June 1752.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Letterbook of John Baker. Letter to Mr. Tuite, 27 January 1752.

[11] Yorke, Philip, C. *The Diary of John Baker*. London 1931. p92.

[12] Letterbook of John Baker, Letter to brother Thomas, 4 March 1752.

[13] Danish unit of Currency. In 1760, one rixdaler was equivalent to one shilling sterling (see Yorke 1931: 140).

[14] NARA, Washington D.C. Record Group 55. Saint Croix Customs Department, Christiansted. Customs Journal, 1749-1799. Box 877D, Entry No. 460. 1760. Ff246 [no date].

[15] *Ibid.*, ff220.

- [16] Component of the distillation still. Lewis, William, *The Edinburgh new dispensatory: containing I. The elements of pharmaceutical chemistry. ... III. The pharmaceutical preparations and medicinal ... The second edition; with many alterations, corrections, and additions.* Edinburgh, 1789. p352.
- [17] Record Group 55. Saint Croix Customs Department, Christiansted. Customs Journal, 1749-1799. Box 877D, Entry No. 460. ff176.
- [18] *Ibid.*, ff136.
- [19] *Ibid.*, ff203.
- [20] See for example the return of Nicholas Tuite and Theobald Bourke from England in June 1755. Yorke, Philip C. *Diary of John Baker.* London 1931. p82
- [21] Tuite and Baker met Baron Bothmar on two occasions, 30 October 1758 and 18 June 1760. pp118 & 136.

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## **Banished by Cromwell? John Hooke and the Caribbean**

By Thomas Byrne <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Abstract**

*For many years and in the eyes of many Irish people, Oliver Cromwell was the ultimate historical hate-figure. Given the brutal nature of the war of reconquest fought by the army under his command in Ireland in 1649-1650, this is perhaps not surprising. However, political expediency, atavistic emotions and misconceptions have at times clouded a more complex historical reality. An excellent example of this is the case of the migration of John Hooke to the Caribbean island of Saint Christopher. Because Hooke left Ireland in the 1650s, it was assumed unquestioningly in older works that he had been forcibly expelled by Cromwellian soldiers. Revisiting and reinterpreting the sources available recast the episode as one where John Hooke made the most of close connections with the Cromwellian regime to establish himself voluntarily amidst the burgeoning English trading colonies in the West Indies.*

In July 1642, Hooke Castle was attacked by a small Parliamentary force from the fort of Duncannon, County Wexford. Manoeuvring two guns ashore from the ship that had landed them, the assault party proceeded to fire on ‘the castle [for] 4 or 5 hours in vain’. Despite warnings from the captain of the ship that ‘foul weather was like to come upon them,’ the men were by this stage in too great a state of disarray to effect a quick and orderly retreat. Caught amidst ‘a very great storm and thick mist,’ the Parliamentarians ‘could not keep their muskets dry, nor their matches light, neither well see each other.’ Attacked at that moment by a force of some 200 Catholic Confederates, almost the entire party was killed or captured. Only a small number who leaped from the rocks into the sea, and who avoided drowning in the attempt, made it back to the ship. Despite this setback, subsequent attacks on the Castle were more successful and the remaining members of the Hooke family, the Castle’s long-time owners and residents, were allegedly driven out by Cromwellian troops in the late 1640s, escaping or expelled to the West Indies (O’Callaghan 1885: 328; Hayes 1949: 128).

Despite the claims made by O’Callaghan and Hayes, no connection can be made to substantiate a link between the Tower of Hook (in reality a lighthouse dating from the 1100s) and the Hooke family. While members of the Hooke family were indeed to be found on the West Indian islands of Martinique and

Guadeloupe, it is unlikely Cromwellian dispossession was responsible for their presence. Despite later misconceptions, the Hookes benefited rather than suffered from the Cromwellian conquest and settlement. This article will examine how later accounts, reflecting and infused with a romantic and strongly nationalist perception of the Irish abroad, came to turn history on its head in regard to the Hooke family. The full story is far more complex and illustrates very well that the reasons and motivations underpinning migration and diasporic identity are multifaceted and subject to ongoing change and transformation. Scholarly undertakings such as ‘The Irish in Europe’ project based in NUI Maynooth are currently endeavouring to advance the study of the Irish migrant experience in this context.

Some of the confusion surrounding the history of the Hookes stemmed from the activities of another member of the family, Nathaniel Hooke (1664-1738). Nathaniel Hooke had a quite remarkable life - born in Dublin, he transformed from a radical Protestant Whig rebel fighting against James II in Monmouth’s rebellion of 1685 to a loyal servant of James in 1688. He metamorphosed yet again in 1701 into a diplomat and soldier of Louis XIV. [2] To suit his changed circumstances, it seems quite likely that he constructed this past family connection with Hook Tower. An early seventeenth century map depicts the lighthouse

as Castle Hooke complete with fortifications (Colfer 2004: 86). A later document by Hooke refers to his possession and use of a book of maps by cartographer John Speed ('The state of Scotland, written by the earl of Lauderdale in 1690 and sent to me by M. Louis Inese, Almoner to the Queen' [with annotation by Hooke], 7 Nov. 1705, (A.A.E. CP Angleterre, supplemental, vol. 3, f. 277r). [3] Hooke wrote in praise of the usefulness of the atlas in 1705, one year before he applied for naturalisation as a French subject. For a man seeking to prove his noble ancestry, the existence of an extant Hooke Castle with suitably impressive battlements hinting at the past martial gloire of the family must have been a godsend. The naturalisation papers submitted for registration in the *Chambre des Comptes* in January 1706 traced the origins of the Hookes back to Eustache de la Hougue and the Norman invasion of England in 1066 (*Bibliothèque Nationale*, MSS Dossiers Bleus 59, f. 9351). In 1172 a descendant, Florence de la Hougue, allegedly accompanied Henry II to Ireland, established himself near Waterford and anglicised his name to Hooke. The town which he founded was called Hooke-Town, but unfortunately (if perhaps conveniently), this bourg had been eventually inundated by the ocean. The only remaining remnant of the settlement was the family chateau, still bearing the name of Hooke Castle. The document then skipped without further detail directly from the twelfth century to Nathaniel Hooke himself.

A pedigree of the family contained in a French genealogical guide draws on and echoes much of the account given in the naturalisation document (De Saint-Allais 1872: 19-22). Intriguingly, however, it then proceeds to add new information fleshing out the rather skeletal family tree presented in the original source with a much more detailed genealogy. In this version, we learn of the same claimed descent from Eustache de la Hougue's arrival in England, to Florence de la Hougue's journey to Ireland. From this point it jumps four centuries to arrive at another Eustache Hooke, of Hooke Castle, County Waterford. His existence is unconfirmed by other documentation. He is said to have lived in the 1590s and to have been

married to Helen O'Byrne of County Wicklow. His son is named as Thomas Hooke (of Hooke Castle), who married Eleanor O'Kelly from Aughrim in County Galway (or possibly of Aughrim, County Wicklow). Partial veracity of the document is confirmed by the inclusion of Thomas Hooke, Nathaniel's grandfather. Independent documentation confirms his existence, though not his place of birth, and the feasibility of his being born in 1590s (Twenty-sixth report of the deputy keeper of the public records and keeper of the state papers in Ireland 1894: 428). There is no evidence connecting him with Hooke Castle.

It is interesting to note that both of these early Hookes are purported to have married women from prominent Gaelic Irish families. Such a connection with Gaelic nobility would have served Nathaniel Hooke's purpose in 1706 by strengthening his claim to noble status in French eyes. It may also have gained him greater acceptance in Irish émigré circles in Paris. Significantly, Hooke made no mention that his grandfather Thomas Hooke had been mayor of Dublin in 1654, during Cromwellian rule, nor that he had been a lay elder of a radical Protestant church in the city. While this would have testified to the family's status, it would also have highlighted unwelcome links with Parliamentarianism and radical Protestantism in the 1640s, 1650s and 1660s. Hooke would appear to have suppressed this aspect of his past by constructing the alternative origin centring on Hooke Castle/Hook Tower.

Nathaniel Hooke was far from unusual in attempting to embellish retrospectively his ancestry, to mask the foundations of a rather too hasty social ascent. Many first and second generation arrivistes in Ireland, England and France spent much time and not a little money avoiding the stigma of being seen as a parvenu in the ranks of nobility. 'Parvenus ... sought to cover their sometimes unsavoury and usually shadowy backgrounds with a veneer of antiquity'. Similarly, 'members of the displaced élites of Old Ireland, adrift on the continent, clutched at pedigrees [which] comforted by reminding them of what they had forfeited, and

buttressed requests for fresh ennoblement' (Barnard 2003: 45-51). That even a man as eminent in the hierarchies of the French church and state as Cardinal Richelieu felt the need for a sympathetic appraisal of his pedigree demonstrates that the weight of authority and legitimacy attached to the prestige of lineage was no mere foible (Bergin 1997: 12-13). The consequences of having the legitimacy of claims accepted could be great. For a man in Richelieu's position in the highest ranks of the elite, for example, an illustrious past served to cast his rise to power in a natural light and reinforce his hold on the most influential offices of state. To those in Hooke's position, strangers in France, far below *les grands* on the social scale, the benefits of a distinguished ancestry were more practical. Economically, the acknowledgement of noble status was vitally important in avoiding taxes and making the financial position of *émigré* families more secure. Socially, it provided an *entrée* into the decidedly and determinedly select world of the French nobility.

Similar sentiments relating to the importance of social status underpin references in a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy (MSS 24 D9, pp 1-48) relating to the branch of the Hooke family established in the Caribbean. These documents originate from a legal case concerning *dérogance* (loss of the status of nobility) taken in 1785. The people concerned claimed descent from a John Hooke who left Ireland for the island of St Christopher in the 1650s. However, the documents cast little light on when or why John Hooke left Ireland as, not surprisingly, the family members themselves were unclear by the 1780s; in De Saint-Allais' account of the Hooke family's history (De Saint-Allais 1872: 19-22), this John Hooke who migrated to the West Indies is identified as the son of Peter Hooke, brother of Nathaniel's father, John. His existence is confirmed by the Correspondence of Colonel N. Hooke (Macray 1870 II: ix). John Hooke of St Christopher would therefore have been Nathaniel's cousin. If De Saint-Allais' account is taken at face value, the political outlook of this branch of the family would have been very different to that of the rest of the family: Peter

Hooke is claimed to have disappeared after the reduction of Ireland by Cromwell, and his son John, a cavalry lieutenant, allegedly proscribed at that time also, leading to his migration to Saint Christopher.

This version of the Hooke genealogy would place Peter Hooke very much at odds with his father Thomas Hooke, a committed supporter of Parliament in politics and Protestantism in religion, and a man who substantially aided and benefited from the Cromwellian conquest. Thomas Hooke's rise to influence had been rapid. In 1654 he was elected, in a departure from the previous system of arranged succession, to the office of mayor of Dublin. He advanced steadily in power and responsibility in the civic government of Interregnum Dublin as he proved both his loyalty and usefulness to the Cromwellian regime. He became mayor, justice of the peace, revenue commissioner, commissioner for probate of wills and farmer of the petty customs of Dublin. He was directly involved in overseeing land confiscation and population transplantation after the defeat of the Catholic Confederacy. Indeed, in what can be seen as evidence of his trustworthiness and reliability he was the only non-military member amongst an eight man commission sent to the precinct of Waterford to investigate 'the delinquency of Irish and other proprietors [...] in order to the distinguishing of their respective qualifications, according to the act for settling Ireland' (Dunlop 1913 II: 378). In this context, it appears unlikely in the extreme that the Hookes were expelled from any lands in the 1650s by dint of Cromwellian action, and especially not from any holdings in Waterford or Wexford, where the only evidence we have to support their ownership is that invented by Nathaniel Hooke in 1706. How, then, did John Hooke get to the Caribbean?

De Saint-Allais gives no source for his information. As the work was printed in the 1870s, at a time of increasing controversy in print surrounding Cromwell's memory in both Ireland and England, this may have contributed to the misinterpretation of the reasons motivating John Hooke to leave Ireland.

Documentary as well as circumstantial evidence suggests that rather than being forced to leave, he may have been a voluntary participant in Cromwell's 'Western Design' to mount an expedition against Spanish territories in the West Indies. A John Hooke is recorded as Assistant to the Commissary General of Musters in Jamaica in 1657 (C.S.P Colonial, America and the West Indies, 1675-76: Addenda 1574-1674: 499). If this is the same John Hooke, his career was furthered by involvement with Cromwellianism, rather than hindered. Spain, rather than France, was England's main rival in the 1650s. Indeed from the late 1650s, England and France were allies in a war against Spain. In the West Indies, the island of Saint Christopher (colloquially known as Saint Kitts) was a shared territory, and instances of holding land in both parts of the island were not unusual (C.S.P Col., America and the West Indies: 758). With the other English settlements in the Caribbean on Barbados, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat and later Jamaica, Saint Kitts attracted large numbers of settlers in the 1650s through the growth of the hugely profitable sugar trade. The sugar boom gave birth to 'vast and sudden fortunes' allowing successful settlers to 'establish sturdy foundations for the economic security of their

posterities' (Canny and Pagden 1987: 217). In the wake of the downfall of the powerful French political and financial figure Nicolas Fouquet in 1661, John Hooke appears to have acquired his confiscated estates on Martinique. Marrying Elizabeth Melon or Meslon, their children remained in the sugar business in the Caribbean for over a century. In an instance of historical irony, later members of the family, now thoroughly Gallicised and Catholicised, and with only a vague awareness of their Irish origins, served in the Irish regiments in the French army.

In a sense then, the Hookes in the Caribbean did owe their presence there to Oliver Cromwell and the legacy of his campaign in Ireland. Rather than the forced migration of Catholic rebels, the family had benefited from the opportunities created by the Cromwellian wars. As with many aspects of Irish migration and diaspora studies, a seemingly simple and straightforward account can with more in-depth critical investigation and with the benefit of archival research produce a more complex and nuanced understanding of the processes at work.

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### Notes

- [1] The author's areas of interest include Early Modern Europe, Migration, Identity, Diplomatic and Intelligence History, Colonialism and Empire, and the War of Spanish Succession.  
[2] See Thomas Byrne, 'From Irish Whig Rebel to Bourbon Diplomat: the Life and Career of Nathaniel Hooke (1664-1738)' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006).  
[3] Hooke cites the work as Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1614), p. 129.

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## John Dynamite: Marine Mambí<sup>[1]</sup>

By José Antonio Quintana García

Translated by David Barnwell

As is known, one of the reasons for the failure of Cuba's 'Ten Years' War against the Spanish colonial power (1868-1878) was the small number of expeditions to land on the Cuban coast with military supplies for the Liberation Army. The Cuban revolutionary leadership in exile was aware of this, and from 24 February 1895, the date on which the independence struggle broke out for a second time, it assigned priority to the task of importing supplies for the revolutionary forces. Efforts were concentrated in the United States and came mainly from among the tobacco workers, though other elements of the Cuban *émigre* population were involved to a lesser extent. To make the enterprise more effective, an Expeditionary Department was created, with a constitution approved on 2 August 1896. Colonel Emilio Núñez was placed at its head.

Among the ranks under his command, special importance was attached to those who were to command ships, since they would be responsible for their vessels' safe passage - not just in the face of harsh sea conditions, but also if confronted by United States and Spanish gunboats.

Foremost in these duties for his skill and daring was a captain of Irish origin, John "Dynamite" O'Brien. Recruited by John D. Hart, he joined the Cuban struggle in early 1896. As owner of the steamer *Bermuda* he was able to use the ship for transporting supplies to the independence forces. He had accepted the contract 'more out of sympathy with the Cuban cause than for the small amount of money that was offered'. Nevertheless, he took his duties so seriously that he replaced the entire crew and 'not even to his own family did he confide his commitment or whereabouts' (García del Pino 1996:46). In order to put the United States authorities off track, supplies were shipped in boxes labelled as medicine or codfish. O'Brien had already been accused of filibustering and sent for trial. Yet undaunted and in spite of

constant surveillance by the United States police, he decided to undertake the difficult task of bringing to Cuba Major General Calixto García, one of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

The researcher Gerardo Castellanos has described the dangers of the crossing:

*On Sunday Captain O'Brien on the 'Bermuda' calmly set out through the narrow bay, bound for Veracruz. He was soon surrounded by a number of tugs bearing customs officers and newspapermen, all hopeful of taking the expeditionary force by surprise. These were disappointed however, as the cargo had been carefully hidden. At Sandy Hook the curious were dispersed by a snowstorm. O'Brien took the opportunity to head east, and only when he was so far out from land that not even the smoke from his funnel could be seen did he take his true course south, heading towards Atlantic City. The rest of the expedition had been assembled in that city, to leave from there on Monday morning, the sixteenth. [...] These took to a fishing boat in Great Egg Harbour and unfurled the agreed sign, a white flag. The transfer was carried out so speedily that it went unnoticed by anyone in the vicinity, and when the police's suspicions were aroused the Bermuda had already been at sea for four days (Castellanos García 1927: 166).*

During the voyage, the Irish captain made good use of his navigational skills, bringing the expedition to a safe conclusion by landing on 24 March 1896 near the city of Baracoa, in the extreme east of the island of Cuba. The shipment consisted of 3,000 rifles, a million rounds of ammunition, two artillery pieces, a printing press, revolvers, medicine and food. A few months later these supplies were to enable Major General Calixto García to mount an offensive in Cuba's eastern province.

Francesco D. Pagliuchi, an Italian crew member, described the scene as they made land:

*The dark ship [...] was surrounded by a flotilla of small boats, moving rapidly like an army of ants. Each one bore away its arms and returned to get more. A subtle breeze from the coast wafted tropical fragrances towards us. In a few hours the men had finished their work. We would have loved to shout 'Viva Cuba Libre!' at the top of our voices, but we were only a couple of miles from the port of Baracoa. We contained our enthusiasm and left as silently as we had arrived (Pertierra Serra 2000:80).*

By June, O'Brien was captain of the steamer *Comodoro*, and had signed on for another expedition. This time he brought to Cuba 400 rifles, 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 300 machetes, 2,500 pounds of dynamite, an electric battery, 5,000 feet of wire cable, together with medicine, surgical and other equipment (García del Pino 1996: 55). Again in August the tireless Irish seaman set out for Cuba. Commandeering the *Dauntless* he landed on the coast of Camagüey 1,300 rifles, 100 revolvers, 1,000 machetes, 800 pounds of dynamite, 46,000 rounds of ammunition, an artillery piece, a half tonne of medical supplies and several hundred saddles (García del Pino 1996:60).

O'Brien was to undertake another voyage to Cuba in March 1897. He set out from Cayo Verde, at the southern tip of the Bahamas, as captain of the steamer *Laurada*. A number of distinguished crewmen were on board: generals Joaquín Castillo Duany and Carlos Roloff; José Martí Zayaz Bazán, son of José Martí, Cuba's national hero, together with the internationalist Alphonse Migaux, a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War who had made his military skills available to the Cubans. On this occasion, too, the supplies transported were substantial: 2,050 rifles, 1,012,000 rounds of ammunition, two artillery pieces, 3,000 artillery rounds, 3,000 pounds of dynamite, 750 machetes, a machine-gun, torpedoes, clothing and other materials. The shipment was used in the assault and capture of the city of Las Tunas under the command of Lieutenant General Calixto García. This event contributed greatly to the resignation of the infamous Valeriano Weyler,

the infamous head of the Spanish government on the island.

"Dynamite" almost lost his life in one of those perilous voyages. He left for Cuba on 22 January 1898 aboard the steamer *Tillie*, a small, dilapidated vessel. Forty-seven miles out from the United States coast, she began to founder. The crew took to the boats. Pagliuchi described the fateful moments:

*On my boat were Captain O'Brien, the captain of the ship, several sailors and a few Cuban volunteers - fourteen in all. After we had moved away from the ship the captain, upon seeing that she was not sinking as fast as expected, urged us to try to save her [...] Once the boat was salvaged, O'Brien ordered us [...] to push her forward. We rowed for five endless hours in the face of fifteen-metre high waves, until we saw the largest sailing ship then afloat: the 'Governor T. Eames', a fine ship [...] she was coming to rescue us. Finally, the 'Tillie' was swallowed up by the waters (Pertierra Serra 2000: 91).*

But nothing would stop the intrepid Irishman. He resumed his freedom-fighting adventures on 14 February 1898. At the helm of the *Dauntless*, he arrived uneventfully to the coast of Camagüey. On this occasion the expeditionary force was composed of 24 men, among them general Eugenio Sánchez Agramonte. Yet again the revolution was furnished with large quantities of war material, thanks to "Dynamite" and his decision to serve the Cuban revolutionary cause.

Once the 1895 campaign was over O'Brien piloted the steamer *Wanderer* to Pinar del Río, in the west of Cuba. Mission accomplished, he returned to Key West. However, shortly before the conflict ended, O'Brien was one of the protagonists of the epic of the ship *Three Friends*. Let us return to the testimony of Pagliuchi, who accompanied O'Brien on that voyage and left an account worthy of a movie script:

*The ship was full to capacity and everything was ready for landfall [...]. Guided by Cuban pilots we cautiously approached the chosen spot [...] at the mouth of the San Juan river. There was a full moon to illuminate us, with just a few clouds in the*

sky. Suddenly a cloud blocked the moon. A ray of light managed to filter through and was reflected right onto the spot where we were to land[...]

I spotted a Spanish gunboat making for the river. I informed the leader of the expedition, who ordered Captain O'Brien to turn around and withdraw. I returned to the Observation Post and now saw another gunboat heading towards us. I told Captain Lewis, the ship's captain, who calmly replied that I was dreaming, at which point the first cannon-ball went off [...].

I ran and told Captain O'Brien to put the ship at full steam in order to evade the gunboats[...], which were now behind us and closing in. At the same time I distributed a rifle and ammunition to each volunteer and told them to take up positions at the stern and fire on the gun boats [...].

Once we were ready, O'Brien turned the ship to face one of the gunboats, and when we thought ourselves within range we opened fire. Unfortunately the first shot missed and we had to repeat the operation, all the while losing ground and coming too close to the gunboats. We fired a second shot and the noise produced by this last cannonade shattered all the glass in the windows at the ship's stern [...]. But this shot did us a great service, since when the gunboats saw that we were well armed they reduced speed, allowing us to withdraw calmly (Pertierra Sierra 2000:83).

The Spaniards suffered a number of casualties in the clash.

What was this floating house like, from which “Dynamite” challenged the maritime power of Spain, well provisioned by the United States? Piotr Streltsov, a Russian internationalist who fought in the Liberation Army at Pinar del Río under Mayor General Antonio Maceo described the *Three Friends* in his memoirs:

[...] she is a small craft, like a river boat. She can make 18 knots, a speed that allows her to outrun

almost all the Spanish cruisers. This, together with the experience of her crew, accounts for the fact that, during the two years of the insurrection, government ships never captured her, indeed a number of them suffered damage at the hands of the 'Three Friends'.

Aside from its engine this ship has no other means of defence, except for the rare cases when she carries a cargo of cannons, which are installed at the prow. Like most American ships, in addition to the upper deck there are several structures which disfigure the original build of the 'Three Friends'. Her hold is not large, hence more than a third of her cargo was stowed on the lower deck, while the expeditionaries remained on the upper deck (Streltsov 1984: 54).

### Stalked by Spies

John “Dynamite” O'Brien and the other seafaring Cuban revolutionaries also had to deal with United States spies. A letter published in the newspaper *Cuba y Puerto Rico* denounced the work of these men:

*Spies.*

A United States policeman, now turned to spying, was on board the steamer 'Three Friends', currently at Jacksonville, during its recent voyage supposedly on a filibustering expedition. Today he submitted to the Attorney General the notebook in which he had written down everything that occurred on board during the voyage. This report is believed to offer a good deal of evidence of the ship's participation in filibustering activity, but the information is not conclusive nor does it offer the proof sought by Spain. It is hard to believe that there should be men so vile and nations which accept espionage as an institution (González Barrios 1990: 216).

José Antonio Quintana García

### Notes

[1] O'Brien was known as “Dynamite” because during his period as a filibuster he brought a cargo of six tonnes of the explosive to Panama. It was a voyage marked by inclement weather, and by something of a miracle the cargo did not explode. “Mambi” was an anti-Spanish rebel in the nineteenth-century wars of independence of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and Cuba.

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## **‘I arise and go with William Butler Yeats...’: Cultural Dovetailing in Lorna Goodison’s *Country Sligoville***

By Lamia Tewfik <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Abstract**

*This paper presents a reading of Lorna Goodison’s poem ‘Country Sligoville’, published in 1999. The value of this poem rests in the condensed articulation and juxtaposition of a myriad of cultural allusions, imagery and references that belong to Irish and Jamaican contexts. It is argued here that this articulation stems both from the poet’s personal affiliation for the works of W. B. Yeats, as well as an active presence of the two cultures in Jamaica. The powerful embracing of the multiple elements with which the region’s cultural history is invested moves away from the extremes of ‘revenge’ and ‘remorse’ warned against by Derek Walcott. Moreover, the eloquent voice which the narrative persona in the poem is endowed with creates a balance between the diverse Irish and Jamaican elements. The ability to embrace such diversity in a creative way without privileging one side over the other allows the poet to break away from traditional hierarchical perceptions in favour of a serenity emanating from reconciliation.*

The works of contemporary Caribbean women writers display their remarkable abilities of putting in play the myriad of diverse cultural elements embedded in the cultural history and contexts of the region. The rich heterogeneous cultural toolkit they use makes their texts an ideal site for tracking/locating the interactions between such diverse elements. Lorna Goodison’s poem ‘Country Sligoville’, published in the anthology *Turn Thanks* (1999), presents a condensed instance of such interaction as Caribbean traditions and icons are placed side-by-side with Irish ones through evoking the figure of William Butler Yeats.

Speaking of this poem, Goodison talks of her Irish grandfather:

*... I had an Irish great grandfather. There is a great deal of Celtic influence in Jamaica and the Caribbean. ‘Country Sligoville’ is a pun on ‘County Sligo’ in Ireland, because Jamaicans refer to rural Jamaica as ‘country’, and there is a place called ‘Sligoville’ in Jamaica. Maybe my work is informed by many of the things which also informed Yeats’ work. I am deeply committed to a place-Jamaica, its people and all aspects of its culture, and things temporal and spiritual play important roles in the life of Jamaicans. [...] perhaps all I was attempting to say is that these two cultures have things in common (Email Interview 2004: 2).*

Indeed the cultural similarities between the two ‘Sligos’ has prompted a recent call for a ‘twinning’ of the two. In a ‘twin town’ initiative Sligo’s namesake in Jamaica has been making an effort to organise official visits and cultural exchange with Yeats’ county (‘Twinning Suitors 2007: 1). Incidentally, in 1996 a plaque was laid by Jeremy Ulick Browne, the 11th Marquess of Sligo, in commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Jamaica - the emancipation having been initiated by his ancestor Peter Browne (1)

Goodison’s ideas on Irish lineage, recounted in more detail in her recent autobiographical work *Harvey River* (2007), echo a general atmosphere of Irishness that permeates Jamaica. This includes Irish place names such as Irish Town and Dublin Castle in St. Andrew, Irish Pen and Sligoville in St. Catherine, and Athenry and Bangor Ridge in Portland to name but a few; added to this is a proliferation of typically Irish surnames.

The capture of Spanish-held Jamaica by the British took place in 1655. Irish men and women were shipped to Barbados by Oliver Cromwell, followed by his son Henry, through a system of forced labour akin to slavery. From there an Irish workforce was forcibly brought to Jamaica.

The historical similarities between how African and Irish people came to the Caribbean set the scene for the cultural give-and-take performed

by Lorna Goodison in her poem. The towering figure of Yeats as a canonical literary icon from the West is adorned with new meaning engendered initially from a personal experience of the poet:

*...I began to write poetry in response to my father's death. I was taught a great deal of poetry in school, mostly the romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth. As part of this teaching I was made to memorize poems and I think I learned from early about the 'charm' effect that some poems can have. My father died when I was fifteen years old. I had no idea how to cope with such a devastating loss, so I turned to poetry. I read widely in the year following my father's death, from John Donne, George Herbert and Rupert Brooke to Edna St. Vincent Millay and all the poets in the Oxford Book of Modern Verse, edited by W.B. Yeats. I believe that reading those poems helped me to deal with my father's death. I believe that good poems all have some 'medicine' in them, and I hope that my poems do (Email Interview 2004: 1).*

Using Yeats' book as a refuge from the pain of loss brings to mind the first line of the poem at hand: 'I arise and go with William Butler Yeats/ to country, Sligoville' (47) -also a rewriting of Yeats' poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' (*Modern British Poetry* 1920) 'I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree'. The setting is also rewritten as the speaking voice takes Yeats for a stroll in the Jamaican Sligoville: 'in the shamrock green hills of St. Catherine' (47). Bringing the colour of the Irish flag to the Jamaican landscape is the beginning of an intricate dovetailing of the two worlds.

### **Dovetailing**

The term 'dovetailing' as used here indicates a balance in the use of imagery and icons, as well as a reconciliation and affinity between the two cultural bodies. Rather than explain this as a form of 'translocation' or cross-cultural exchange as Jahan Ramazani does (*Modernist Bricolage*, 2006: 446), the present reading seeks to establish the notion of intentional embracing of diversity *within* Jamaica and the Caribbean at large - a process grounded in the daily lives of Caribbean people. Modernist notions such as 'mosaic' are often used to refer to texts that

juxtapose diverse elements with the implication that these heterogeneous elements form, or should form, a sense of unity. Yet, in this case no unified picture is sought. The poem comes closer to being a cultural patchwork where contrasting flavours stand out and compete for the reader's attention.

Denise deCaires Narain views the process that takes place in this poem as an act of refusing unconditional devotion to canonical texts imposed by the education system, one that redefines the terms of a new relationship (2002:166). Yet this argument fails to acknowledge the unique bond that Lorna Goodison retains with Yeats as a poet, associated both with the moment of crisis in her life and the moment at which she began to write poetry.

Consideration of the non-conformist inclinations of Yeats as an Irish poet, as well as the historical bond between Irish and Jamaican transplanted cultures mentioned above, calls for an alternative reading of this poem. It is necessary in this case to adopt a method of reading that combines both external and internal devices. In other words it will be necessary to take into consideration, on the one hand, the above-mentioned personal link between Goodison and Yeats, and hence the 'intention' of the author in creating the poem, and on the other the multiple cultural allusions made by the poet, stemming from the context. These two dimensions will be continually traced and analysed at the level of the crafting of the poem.

This technique is based on the proposal made by French theorist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, of a literary analysis that brings together internal and external methods of reading (*Other Words* 1990: 147). Such a technique takes into consideration both the mental, subjective directions of the author and the objective, social context within which the text takes shape - both of which are manifested at the level of the crafting.

The persona in the poem metaphorically takes Yeats by the hand as they roam the landscape of Sligoville:

*We walk and palaver by the Rio Cobre  
till we hear tributaries  
join and sing, water songs of nixies (47)*

The Jamaican river Rio Cobre is set in the mind's eye against Yeats' 'lake water' in the above poem: 'I will arise and go now, for always night and day/I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore'. Goodison's 'water nixies' similarly bring to mind a myriad of Yeats-created creatures.

Next a process of storytelling is begun, where yet more cultural symbols and icons are juxtaposed:

*Dark tales of Maroon warriors,  
fierce women and men  
bush comrades of Cuchulain.*

*We swap duppy stories, dark night doings.  
I show him the link of the rolling calf's chain  
And an old hige's salt skin carcass. (47)*

Caribbean Maroon warriors and the legendary Irish Cuchulain share common qualities of courage and awe-inspiring fearlessness and are thus set side-by-side as comrades. Duppy (ghost) stories are also exchanged in another point of affinity where the rich corpuses of Caribbean and Irish ghost stories are dovetailed. A figure from a Caribbean duppy story is brought to life as the narrative voice shows Yeats the 'rolling calf's chain'- a goat-like duppy with glaring fire-breathing eyes that has a chain on its back producing a characteristic sound at its approach. The rolling calf in duppy stories does not hurt humans.

The voice then shifts to personal references connected to the lives of both Yeats and the narrative persona:

*Love descended from thickets of stars  
to light Yeats' late years with dreamings  
alone I record the mermaid's soft keenings. (47)*

The reference to Yeats' famous poem 'The Mermaid' adds to the intricate web of intertextual references made throughout the poem. Reserving the right to trace the 'keenings' of the mermaid is an attempt by the narrative voice, not to overpower Yeats, but

rather to establish a strong affinity between the poet who created the mermaid and the Jamaican persona who can 'record' her presence.

Intertextual links thus continue to permeate the poem, including a reference to Yeats' 'Salley Gardens'. Incidentally this reference is present in an earlier poem by Lorna Goodison as follows.

*O Africans  
in white dresses  
in dark suits  
at pleasant evenings.*

*Singing of the flow  
of the sweet Afton  
warning of false love  
down by the Salley Gardens. (Flowers are  
Roses 1995: 62) [2]*

Africans appear in the same setting as that of Yeats' poem, wearing 'white' dresses contrasting with their blackness, bringing to mind the snow-white feet of Salley in Yeats' poem. There is a sense of mingling between the cultures of Africans and Europeans: 'To the melodies of Europe/roll the rhythms of the Congo', and a bringing together of the constructs of both cultures by this juxtaposition: 'a marriage mixed/but a marriage still' (62).

The ultimate expression of affinity appears in evocation of the persona's dead mother:

*William Butler, I swear my dead mother  
embraced me. I then washed off my heart  
with the amniotic water of a green coconut. (Turn  
Thanks 1999: 47)*

Leaving out the last name of Yeats while referring to this profound moment of reconciliation with the memory of the dead mother, followed by the quasi-ritual cleansing process with the sweet-tasting water of a coconut, presents a supreme moment of amalgamation of the two cultures. The fact that the coconut is green retains that link that is preserved throughout with one of the colours

of the Irish flag transferred to the Jamaican landscape.

Yeats himself is also made to experience a similar sense of resolution:

*In December Sally water will go down  
to the Sally gardens with her saucer  
and rise and dry her weeping orbs.*

*O to live, Innisfree, in a house of wattle and daub  
[sic].*

In Yeats' poem it is the narrative voice that cries: '...But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears', yet here a personified 'Sally water' will visit the Salley gardens and dry *her* tears. This sharing and ensuing resolution complete the sense of serenity that is established in the poem. The reference is then returned back to Yeats' first poem in the line 'O to live, Innisfree, in a house of wattle and daub' that alludes to Yeats' lines:

*...And a small cabin build there, of clay and  
wattles made;  
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey bee  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade*

This sets up the above lines as a suitable sequel for 'Down by the Salley Gardens' - one that involves an overwhelming serenity and sense of resolution.

The condensation of imagery and cultural allusions in this poem sets it apart as an ideal

example of the ability to dovetail seemingly contradictory elements to create a new type of beauty. The patchwork of traditions intricately woven together without privileging one colour or flavour over the other is testimony to the craft of Goodison. The poem represents a reflection of the close bond between Irish and Jamaican cultures - a bond that is part of the context from which the poet emerges.

This poem reflects Derek Walcott's historical call for a rejection of both the literatures of 'revenge' and 'remorse' through a powerful embracing of the multiple elements with which the region's cultural history is invested (Walcott 1974: 354). The strength with which Goodison articulates the elements retrieved from her cultural bag-of-tricks is admirable as she creates an eloquent persona that shows Yeats a new path of serenity and reconciliation - a favour that Goodison is returning, many years after herself finding peace in Yeats' book.

The success in not privileging either one of the two cultures represents a case of 'aesthetic detachment' called for by Pierre Bourdieu (*Rules* 1996: 75). This success provides testimony to a high level of skill on the part of the poet as she objectively utilises all the resources available in the space within which she exists.

Lamia Tewfik

### Notes

[1] The author's research interests include Caribbean women's literature, postcolonial literature, and gender and power manifestations in texts.

[2] 'Down by the Salley Gardens' is published in *An Anthology of Modern Verse*. Ed. A. Methuen. London: Methuen & Co., 1921. Available online: at Poetry-Archive.com (2002) ([http://www.poetryarchive.com/y/down\\_by\\_the\\_salley\\_gardens.html](http://www.poetryarchive.com/y/down_by_the_salley_gardens.html)) accessed January 2006.

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## A Taste of My Life: Texts and Poems

By Carlota Caulfield <sup>[1]</sup>

### How many Cubans are there of Irish ancestry? *From Ticket to Ride (some ways to play my tunes)*

In the forties my father moved to New York in search of his destiny. There he learned to make brilliantine in blue, red and golden colours - to give a beautiful sheen to the hair. In his free time, when he could break free from his alchemistic captivity, he would go to listen to Cuban music at the Park Plaza Hotel in Manhattan. Those were happy times, and years later became a topic of conversation with me, always so curious about foreign lands and convinced early on that my father inhabited a magical world.

A few days ago, while listening to a CD of 'Cuban Blues' by Chico O'Farrill, I remembered that in the New York of those stories of the mid-forties, Chico and my father had met at one of the Siboney Orchestra's concerts at the Club Cuba in Manhattan, and saw each other again in Havana in the mid-fifties. The jam sessions on the terrace of Chico's house on D Street in Vedado, our neighbourhood, became so famous that even my father, not particularly fond of Afro-Cuban jazz, couldn't resist dropping in once in a while to that much-talked-about terrace. I listen to the 'Rhumba Abierta' of Chico's 'Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite,' and then I imagine Chico back in New York, doing arrangements for Count Basie and Ringo Starr, and I see myself turning into a Beatles fan during my teenage years in Havana.

### Haggadah [2]

*Hasta los nombres  
tienen su exilio*

*(Even names / have their exile)*

José Isaacson, *Cuaderno Spinoza*.

### A polytonal history: Taking an Irish canoe currach to cross the sea

Some years ago, I opened my archives - the real ones and those woven through the  
Caulfield, Carlota. 'A Taste of my Life: Texts and Poems'

recollections of others and my own imagination. Documents and fog bridges fell out. Once more I began drawing the space of my cartographies with their psychological, political and cultural effects: I found myself playing hopscotch on a map where my name was written in different sounds.

After a risky journey of *anamnesis* (or my effort of remembering), the pieces of the family's collage appeared, building a road that begins and ends nowhere and everywhere.

'In principio erat verbum' said Saint John in Latin and Moisés de León added in Aramaic 'millin de-hidah' and the words riddled with allegory. Not far away by Biblical and Cabalistic standards, in the city of Dublin, Ireland, a warrior-poet by the name of Milesius Ó Cathamhoil told his people that according to an Irish legend (created by him?), the prophet Jeremiah and his disciple Baruch visited Ireland around 580 BC; others connect the Irish with the Ten Lost Tribes. (Was my great-great grandfather reading *The Annals of Inisfallen?*)

Let's go ask the spirit of King Toirdelbach of Munster sitting on his throne in 1079 and speaking with five Jews visiting Ireland (from where?).

While they wanted to secure the admission of their families to the Emerald Isle, the King was humming a big 'No'. But Milesius politely replied, 'Yes, come, my beloved children'. And in 1232 a fellow known as Peter de Rivall received a grant for the 'custody of the King's Judaism in Ireland'. The rest is the history of my father's ancestors (by now documented by Solicitors, Clerks, and Mythmakers).

The *Irish Encyclopaedia* tells me that the few Jews who went to the island were merchants and financiers. Some refugees from Spain and Portugal settled in Ireland at the close of the fifteenth century. Many of them were expelled, but fortunately they returned in 1655, in the time of Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth (difficult times for the Irish).

And the city of Dublin became a 'centro storico': the Liffey, 7 Eccles Street, Duke Street, Fenian Street and O'Connell Street seen by Leopold Bloom from the top of Nelson's Pillar and *the Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piledup bricks, stones. No one is anything.*

**'The sea, oh the sea, is a grádh geal mo chroí,' bright love of my heart**

*The autumn solitude of the sea day,  
Where from the deep ' mid-channel, less and less  
You hear along the pale east afternoon  
A sound, uncertain as the silence, swoon-  
The tide's sad voice ebbing toward loneliness...*

*Thomas Caulfield Irwin*

My great-grandfather Richard Michael was an Irish merchant and trader who had some commercial success. It is true that he was not as popular as Richard Hennessy, a Cork emigrant, who founded the famous Cognac firm. He was from Dublin and he developed the habit of living for travelling.

According to Caulfield trivia, this merchant soldier went to Spain on a mission from the British Army (things get a little confusing here). He fell in love with the Catalans, in particular with Doña Antonia María Rebeca de Pons y Tudurí, native of Mahon, Menorca, Balearic Islands. She was the only daughter of Emanuel Pons y Fuster, a Merchant, and Carlota Moynihán from Palma de Mallorca. Emanuel came from a family of *conversos*, called *chuetas* in the Balearic Islands and I don't know more. Carlota was the daughter of another Irish merchant and a Catalan woman and I am at this point entering the 'inconnu'.

The name Caulfield, originally Ó Cathamhoil, occurred in many Irish historical references, but from time to time the surname was spelt Caulfeild, Caulkin, Calkins, Cawfield, Cawfeild, Cawfield. It was not uncommon to find a person's name spelt several different ways during his or her lifetime, firstly when he or she was baptised, another when that person was

married, and yet another appearing on the death certificate. (Please, let's add to these changes the ones that the spelling of my name suffered in Cuba. I had many identification cards with names like Coffee, Caultfeld, Caulfieldi, and Garfield. Did the bureaucrats at the ID office know that I love cats?).

Notable amongst my family were King Conn of the Hundred Battles, a warrior who died in the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, Thomas Caulfield Irwin, poet, Amach Caulfield, architect and one of the first defenders of animal rights, and my grandfather Edward Henry Caulfield de Pons, lawyer, merchant and traveller. In the New World, my ancestors played an important part in building nations, railroads, bridges, and writing business letters.

**Gibraltar, London, Paris, Havana: My Grandfather**

Born in Gibraltar, my grandfather Edward Henry grew up in London, studied law and travelled the world. He left me an exquisitely written document about himself. It is one of my family treasures. Dated in London and signed by Sir William Anderson Rose Knight Locum Tenens, Lord Mayor of the City of London, part of it reads: '...to whomsoever it may concern - Be it hereby notified that Edward Henry Caulfield, Esquire, who has resided in Paris for upwards of 14 years, whose present private and business address is No. 10 Avenue de Messine, in the same City, and who is Secretary of his Excellency the Conde de Fernandina (Grandee of Spain) has added to his said name that of de Pons, and will henceforward be known only by the name of Edward Henry Caulfield de Pons.'

I approached Edward Henry's life with love and fascination. The enigmatic figure of my eccentric *abuelito irlandés* would emerge in letters sent to him by Philip August Crozier, his British lawyer. If Edward Henry were alive today would he have sung to me his adventures with his English woven on a Gaelic loom, with his adopted French (he was an ardent francophile) or with his beautiful Spanish? He was a master in the art of conversation (what a pity that I did not inherit it) and he possessed a

genius for satire; he was an expert in 'slagging', a very Irish thing that means telling stories in a cruelly amusing way.

### **How to get to the Centre of Things?**

Wearing good walking shoes, I began searching for the sounds of my grandparents. I found my way into the archives of the Church of 'Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje' of the City, Province and Diocese of Havana:

*On the fourth day of November, all proper requirements have been complied with. The three canonical admonitions were published in the Church and at the Sacrament of the Cathedral of the City; the bride has obtained her parents' counsel and Sacrament of Penance was previously received. I, D. Pablo Tomas Noya, Presbyter, Parish Priest in charge of this Church, did attend at the marriage which, personally and as ordered by The Holy Church, was contracted by Don Eduardo Enrique Caulfield aged forty-one years, unmarried, merchant, native of Gibraltar and residing at number fifty San Ignacio street, a legitimate son of Don Ricardo Miguel Caulfield, native of Dublin and Doña Antonia de Pons, native of Mahon, Menorca, the Balearic Islands, and Doña Mercé Carlota Jover, aged eighteen years, housekeeper, unmarried, native of Barcelona and a resident of number seventy six Amargura street, etc. (Book 11 of Marriages of white persons, page 71, serial number 102).*

After they married, my grandparents were at the centre of many fascinating things. I found myself at 'el centro', their *tertulias* - their literary and musical gatherings. Their house at Calle Mercaderes, and later on Calle Amargura in Old Havana, became a cultural ghetto where the traffic of foreigners created a new inspired geography. They travelled anywhere. My grandmother Mercé (Nena) Jover played the piano and read poems (she liked Bécquer and Folguera) while Edward Henry Caulfield de Pons, besides playing the fiddle and the violin, behaved like an avant-garde composer, moving around pieces of furniture in order to make the *salón* more musical.

Let's drink a glass of red wine, Irish beer or Cuban mojito with my ancestors and their

friends! Evenings of music and storytelling bring full days to a pleasing conclusion. Let's open up memory once more and jump out her window.

### **Còr que vols? / Sweet Heart, what do you want?**

My grandmother Mercé had beautiful white hair and very curious eyes. She was a good talker and loved recounting anecdotes about her life with my grandfather. Blasa, my nanny, told me that she had a nice soprano voice and loved traditional Catalan lullabies. She was an overpowering, demanding and intelligent woman who rebuilt her family's fortune when my Irish grandfather died, leaving his family almost in penury. Her good luck and strong spirit kept her alive and well. Maybe we can talk here of the luck of the Catalans and not the Irish?

### **An Irishman's heart is nothing but his imagination: My Father**

Francis-Francisco: handsome, witty, quiet, generous. He loved New York, had few but loyal friends, knew many people, never played a musical instrument, and my dear daughter: - Never forget you are Irish.

*They say that clouds are pure secrets Of children  
And that playing hopscotch, hide-and-peek,  
'The Queen,' and 'My house's patio,'  
Are bygone things.*

*When I was a child  
I liked to play with the sky,  
To walk looking upwards,  
To spin around until I fell down,  
To discover those marvellous clouds  
Looking like old men's heads  
Curled-up snakes, long noses,  
Top hats, sleeping foxes, giant shoes.*

*And it was so good to play  
'You see, I see, I see, ... I see.'  
To speak of the snail which leaves for the sun.  
And what pleased me most was the song about  
Señora Santana which my mother sang*

*When she sheltered me.*

*They said that clouds  
Are pure secrets of children.*

*When I walked hand-in-hand with my father  
Through the streets of Old Havana,  
The little Chinese restaurants  
Showed their red-and-white checked tablecloths  
And the oyster-stands looked at each other  
From opposite corners.*

*To go to the Casa Belga for books  
Was a daily trip.  
That passion of mine for pencil-cases,  
Coloured crayons, and erasers  
Crowded into small wooden boxes.*

*They said that clouds  
Are pure secrets of children.*

*And I remember the blue bicycle  
With rabbits' tails  
And the never-used roller skates  
And the enormous brown piano  
And the Pinocchio my aunt Charlotte  
Kept in a narrow wardrobe  
And 'Ring-Around-The-Rosy'  
With bread and cinnamon.*

*When I was a little girl  
I liked bald dolls and stuffed clowns.*

*They said that clouds  
Are pure secrets of children...*

### **Notes**

[1] The author is a Havana-born poet of Irish descent, based in Oakland, California. She is the author of nine books of poems, including *34th Street and other poems*, *A las puertas del papel con amoroso fuego / At the Gates of the Paper with Burning Desire*, *The Book of Giulio Camillo. A Model for a Theater of Memory*, *Quincunce/Quincunx* and *Ticket to Ride. Essays and Poems*. An anthology of her poems *A Mapmaker's Diary* is forthcoming from White Pine Press this autumn. Carlota Caulfield teaches Spanish and Spanish-American Studies at Mills College, Oakland, California.

[2] *Haggadah*. The Sephardic Jews refer to the first night of the Passover celebration as the *haggadah*, which means 'the telling'. The Passover is one of the Ancient Spring Festivals. It provides Jewish families with a time to recall the Exodus from Egypt.

## Review of Jonathan Skinner's *Before the Volcano: Reverberations of Identity on Montserrat*

By Cielo G. Festino <sup>[1]</sup>

Kingston: Arawak Publications, 2004.

219 pp. ISBN 976-8189-21-5.

The name that Skinner gives to his book points to the time and place of the narrative, the result of his own trip to the Caribbean British colony of Montserrat (a British Dependent Territory) before the volcanic eruption of Mount St. Peter in 1995, at a time when the tremors were not only geographical but also political due to questionings of identity, nationhood and independence, as the author points out.

From an anthropological and postmodern perspective, Skinner claims the status for his account of Montserrat of 'an experimental ethnographic exemplification of an impressionistic anthropology' that, in his own words, 'grows out of individual and group experiences, converging as intersubjective constellations, diverging as incommensurable positions. They are multiple. And they are partial - partial in the sense that there is a diversity of impressions, but not one complete and whole impression' (xiii-xiv).

Skinner's impressions are organised in six chapters, written in a collage fashion and in counterpoint to each other, that are interspersed with his explanations and reflections on his own readings and writings on Montserrat, and due to the author's repressed desire for linearity also offer a guideline for the reader in coping with this fragmentary narrative.

The passage from one chapter to the next is marked by short vignettes [2] that remind the reader of the volcanic quality of the island and the imminent eruption of Mount St. Peter, amid all the nationalistic muddle. Chapters and vignettes superpose *English* with *english*, oral narratives with essay pieces, shreds of political discourse with domestic discourse, voices of politicians with voices of musicians, singers, poets and acquaintances the anthropologist met during his stay on the island. Throughout, the

narrative reverberates - to use Skinner's own term - with references to the Irish Catholics who fled in the wake of Oliver Cromwell's invasions in the seventeenth century and to Montserrat becoming known as 'the Anglo-Irish Colony' (45). Skinner mentions a brief guidebook written by the poet and professor Howard Fergus (1992) for tourists on the island, in which he describes it as a place where 'Afro-Irish combines [...] with a *New World* interpretation' (46). Later on in the text, Skinner will define these Afro-Irish as '-a quirky, quaint, inter-racial brotherhood of former fellow slaves equally mistreated by the English' (154).

Skinner devotes chapter 6 "'The Way the Caribbean Used to Be": The *Black Irish* and the Celebration or Commemoration of St. Patrick's Day on the *other* Emerald Isle' to addressing the *Irishness* of the island. In order to better understand Skinner's text, I will make some references to the previous chapters in which the author and anthropologist defines the quality of his narrative voice, reflects upon the structure of his book, the quality of his research, and places the Irish question in perspective.

In Chapter 1 'Montserrat Place and Mons'rat Neaga,' the narrative focuses on Skinner himself as he delineates his attempt at positioning himself not above but inside the discursive calypsonian impressions through which he recreates the island of Montserrat. The two issues that stand out in the chapter are his miming of the accent and cadence of Montserrat English *You young t'ing, you t'ink you white people can come and tell us what we want. Us dat live here. On my Montserrat* (14) and his feeling flattered when considered as a 'neaga', that is, Black Irish.

This transpires as he mingles with Montserratians, attempting to overcome his identity, in his own words, of 'inquisitive interloper' and trying to 'connect, argue, and disagree' (26) with all the people he comes across, so that he and the locals do not end up trapped in 'identity's hurricane shelters' (27). Hence this first chapter, rather than being narrated through a third person ubiquitous narrator that knows all about the island's geography, presents 'the partial point of view, position, experience, reality of the anthropologist' (28).

In Chapter 2 'Barbarian' Montserrat', Skinner reflects on his own method of writing and reading his anthropological research as he plunges the reader into one of his glimpses of Montserrat, a session of poetry reading led by the poet Howard Ferguson, one of the 'barbarian poets' writing from an anti-colonialist perspective.

Skinner then immediately commences an academic commentary in which he highlights his own method of doing ethnography, saying that each one of the impressions recorded that evokes daily affairs is 'fleeting and partial' but helps him to reconstruct 'human characters, inconstant individuals with fickle personalities and inconsistent practices' (29), a true record of the 'constant muddle' that society is. He concludes that this 'strategy of indeterminacy' (34) points to the indeterminacy of culture.

Chapter 3 'Conversing Montserrat: Two Place-settings evoking two constellations of realities on development and dependence' is articulated through the juxtaposition of two dinner parties, one with development workers, the other with members of the Montserratian British Dependent Territory Citizens, during which Skinner discusses the development of the island. In line with his theoretical perspective, he calls both experiences 'constellations' and reads their opinions from the perspective of Stanley Fish's interpretative communities (1988) and Nigel Rapport's (1993) idea that world views are diverse, multiple and partial.

In the same anthropological research style, in Chapter 4 "Rum & Coke and Calypso: Explicit

Commentary in Private and Public Spaces', Skinner focuses on calypso, underlining both its impromptu aspect as well as its quality of social commentary; 'social expression, social situation, social issues, ills and opinions' (83), thus likening it to the barbarian poetry of Fergus and his group of poets. In a Pan-American gesture, Skinner also compares calypso to reggae songs in Jamaica, 'with their disclosure and affirmation of ghetto values, concerns and discontentment' (88) and Brazilian *capoeira*, only that the kick is 'in the song rather than the foot' (89).

The impressions recorded by Skinner in Chapter 5 'Black but not Irish: Chedmond Browne's Teaching the Past, Protesting the Present, Altering the Future', are markedly different from those of the previous chapters, not in the method of composition but in the persons interviewed. Chedmond Browne, 'Cheddy', is a 'West Indian, a Vietnam veteran, a Pan-Afrikanist, a politician and General Secretary of the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union' (110). Skinner records Browne's different identities through his direct political discourse and action and not through artistic forms like poems or calypso that, as Skinner points out, allow them to 'influence society with impunity' (23).

In line with his theoretical argumentation, through the use of storytelling that, as he explains, is based on the way in which the writer relates to the world, Skinner then gives a full account not of Browne's 'extremist arguments and opinions in a history of Africa, the West Indies and Montserrat' but of his 'impressions' of Montserrat (111). In turn, the Browne that is evoked in Skinner's narrative is the result of his own impressions obtained through 'interview, newspaper dialogue, anthropological narrative and case study of island politics' (133). He is at times Mr. Browne and at times, Cheddy, depending on the levels of the relationship that Skinner establishes with him.

Skinner's impressions on Browne revolve around two main issues, connected with Browne's concept of race. The first one is 'white racism, the superiority of the white race'

is 'based solely on the lack of pigmentation in the skin' (122). Browne is the son of a black mother and a white European father. However, contrary to the colonial belief that fair skin helps a man in life, Browne wants to 'blacken himself and his family, with a strong African gene pool' (115). For him, power should come from direct action, as shown in his union activities, and not the colour of his skin: he identifies himself as black, but not Irish. Skinner quotes him as saying, in one of the interviews: '98 percent of the population of Montserrat is of pure African ethnicity regardless of what they gonna tell you at the Tourist Department, and regardless of what they tell the Irish people' (123).

The second issue, 'the invention of Greek and Roman histories and traditions at the expense of African civilisations' (122), finds expression in Browne's publication of his newsletter *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* that aims to unite 'black people of the diaspora and black Africa' (122). Skinner defines Browne as 'harassed by the British for proposing an alternative future, for protesting the present colonial condition and for teaching a blackened history of the island's colonial past' (111).

To highlight the quality of Browne's thought, Skinner contrasts him with Fergus, stressing that 'the differences in their individual realities, actions and convictions all stem from their different personalities, personal experiences, skin colour, upbringing and positions on the island' (118). While Browne is in favour of a more revolutionary policy, Fergus is associated with the conservative powers of the island. While Browne is the anti-colonial historian of the island, Fergus, through his equivocal poetry that fosters the African connection, still contributes to the *status quo* of Montserrat.

What all these chapters show is the other face of Montserrat, the problematic one that the tourist, thirsty for the paradisiacal image of the Caribbean, with the help of the local Tourist Board and their equally ambiguous tour guides, reduces to an image of the picturesque. It is precisely this idea that Skinner tries to problematise in the next chapter as he aims to deconstruct the feature that characterises

Montserrat in the eye of the tourist: its 'Irishness.'

Chapter 6 'The Way the Caribbean Used to Be': The *Black Irish* and the Celebration or Commemoration of St. Patrick's Day on the *other* Emerald Island' is introduced by a vignette that acts as historical preface: the volcano theme gives way to the Irish theme, and is significantly and ambiguously named 'Taken by Storm'. Hence the imminent eruption that is about to come over the island gives way to the narrative of the European white men who invaded the island, another kind of tempest. Echoing the Tourist Board's description of Montserrat, Skinner explains that it describes Montserrat as 'being the Caribbean's only 'Irish' island' (136) to the point of making 'much play of the Irish connection' and explaining that it is '3000 miles to the West of Ireland and lists some 73 Irish surnames to be found on the island: Fagan, Farrell, Maloney, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, Reilly, Ryan and so on' (136). Furthermore the islanders are Catholic, celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the island crest depicts Erin with her harp and, as you come through immigration, your passport is stamped with a shamrock (137).

Not only that, but according to Skinner, there are many apparent similarities between the islanders and the Irish: 'both share a casual, anything goes, what-the-hell attitude to life; they have in common an enthusiasm for religion and a passion for music and poetry, for debate and rhetoric, and for drinking and dancing' (137). At this point, Skinner questions himself whether there is any more to Montserrat's Irishness (137). In order to confirm that, Skinner did some field research, interviewing a Miss Sweeney 'a light-skinned woman with 'soft' hair' but came to the conclusion that 'she seemed about as Irish as reggae music or rum punch' (138).

It is this so-called Irishness and colonial character of Montserrat, as Skinner points out, that is the main attraction that the Tourist Board tries to promote, in order to set this island, that curiously bears Ireland's national colour, emerald, apart from the many other Caribbean island which are exactly the same:

sand, sea and sun paradises, and thus attracts a variety of visitors, 'from British monarchists to American republicans' (141).

In order to problematise the Irishness attributed to the island by the tourist guide discourse on Montserrat, he focuses on one of its national holidays: St. Patrick's Day. From a theoretical perspective, Skinner defines St. Patrick's Day in Montserrat, quoting Eric Hobsbawm (1992) who refers to these events as an 'invented tradition' and he resignifies them as 'a constructed and formally instituted set of practices claiming a link with an immemorial past' (153). He then goes on to superpose the way in which local historians, Montserratians and tourists (insiders) and academics (outsiders) read this invented tradition, to show how St. Patrick's Day has a different reality for different people (155). Skinner's focus is then 'upon the contemporary understandings of St. Patrick's Day, upon present-day meanings and uses, and not upon the historical specificity or roots of the event' (155).

He first records the voices of the local historians such as the poet Fergus and the political activist Browne. Skinner points out that Fergus wants to change the character of national *celebration* of St. Patrick's Day to that of a *commemoration* when in 1768 'the slaves on Montserrat attempted to overthrow their Irish and British masters' (143-144). For Browne, St. Patrick's Day should be known in Montserrat as 'Heroes Day or Slave Rebellions Day' (145). Skinner interestingly points out that Browne is critical of Fergus's reading of the events on the grounds that in his many narratives of those historical events, he has omitted such details as the names of the slaves, the estates they worked on, or where they were executed because 'the possible lack of specificity surrounding the slave uprising strengthens its mythical status furthering a nationalist agenda which concentrates upon the present rather than the past' (156).

As for the Montserratians, if for Missie O'Garro, the cleaning lady, St. Patrick's Day 'celebrates a slave's victory in the 1768 revolt', for Doc 'St. Patrick's Day is a time for

additional work during the day and partying during the night'. For the Irish-American tourists visiting Montserrat, St. Patrick's Day can 'at last be celebrated in a hot and sunny climate' (154).

Finally Skinner considers in counterpoint the reading of these events by the anthropologists Michael Mullin in *Africa in America* (1992) and John Messenger in 'St. Patrick's Day in "The Other Emerald Island"' (1994) to show how St. Patrick's Day 'remains an example of contestation, of colonial and tourist impressionistic histories versus independent and nationalistic impressionistic histories, with many Montserratians also happy just to enjoy the week-long extension of the weekend' (163).

Skinner reads Mullin as establishing a relationship between 'slave acculturation' and 'the changing nature of slave resistance' (157). He explains that the main difference between the historian's interpretation and that of Browne and Fergus resides in the fact that he 'allows the reader to appreciate the position of the Creole leaders of rebellions trying to gain support from slaves' (157) while the Montserratian historians 'persist with the theory that the relationship between *all* African slaves and masters was a relationship of tension, struggle and revolt - the St. Patrick's rebellion being just one instance' (157).

Messenger, on the other hand, through his 'spiteful comments directed at the unnamed 'Afrophiles', casts doubt upon the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy', basing his interpretation on the reading of an account based on court records in 1930 'by a colonial agricultural worker and believer Mr. T. Savage English' (1930) who refers to the St. Patrick's conspiracy in 1768 in a derogatory fashion as

*a legend collected by English or a predecessor, and implied in it is that on this day the Irish would be vulnerable because of the drink customarily imbibed. To some locals, basing a festival on an unsuccessful slave revolt, possibly recorded only in untrustworthy legend, is as questionable as the effort by Afrophiles to change the name of the island (160).*

In the same way that he refuses to treat the uprising as a conspiracy, Messenger, according to Skinner's reading, developed his 'Black Irish' theory of the inhabitants of the island based on a 'voluntary inter-ethnic marriages between slaves or freed slaves and Irish indentured labourers, freemen and landholders' (162). In order to further the Montserrat-Ireland connection and his claim that the Irish left an indelible genetic and cultural imprint on the island' (162), Messenger in his many articles written on Montserrat, says Skinner, hammered home the controversial claim that 'the Irish landowners treated their slaves with more care and kindness than did their English and Scottish counterparts' (162). What comes out of all this debate, as Skinner points out, is that 'there is, at the very least, an agenda for each person involved with the *Irishness* debate on Montserrat' (163).

Skinner provisionally closes his narrative of Montserrat, 'though life on and around Montserrat continues apace' (171) with a scene of the disaster caused by the deadly eruption of the volcano and the urgency and despair of the evacuation that seem to drown all the voices involved in the politics and ancestry of the island, as well as their 'loose collective sense of Irishness' (166), as half of the British colony's 11,000 residents are forced to flee the island.

Skinner's *Before the Volcano* is a very enticing narrative, true to his own postmodern convictions, as he does not place himself above the discourse of those being interviewed, is always conscious of his borderline position in Montserratian culture, tries to articulate all the voices and all forms of discourses and continuously reflects upon both his own role as researcher and the construction of his own text.

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### Notes

[1] Cielo G. Festino holds a Ph.D. from São Paulo University, Brazil in Literary and Linguistic Studies in English and is currently doing a post-doctorate in travel writing at the History Department of the same university. She teaches Literatures in English at the Universidade Paulista, São Paulo, Brazil.

[2] The word vignette, as used in the present review, has the aim of highlighting the author's enticing style, as through his own narrative voice, he brings together different types of texts that act as historical contextualisation to each one of the chapters.

### Author's Reply

I am writing to thank Ms Festino for such a sympathetic and generally detailed review of my book. On the whole I find her comments pithy, accurate and I take them as complementary as I believe they are intended. Certainly, in the narrative, I explore questions of identity, nationhood and independence on and about Montserrat, a British Dependent Territory in the Eastern Caribbean (now, more recently, a 'British Overseas Territory' as the British seek to do away with explicit *labels* of dependency if not the *mechanisms* of dependency). This collection of impressions of Montserrat is indeed composed of six chapters which are 'written in a collage fashion and in counterpoint to each other' as Festino rightly points out; and there is, I suppose, a 'repressed

desire for linearity' in the text, just as there was a repressed desire for positivistic data whilst I was working in the field. Ms Festino has read my text and read through to my construction of the text with a sharp, eager and - to use her words - 'enticed' eye. It is more the pity then that I feel it necessary to add some corrections to this most thorough review - corrections which I did point out when I read her draft review of my book.

Ms Festino wrongly attributes the authorship of the chapter-prefaces at the start of each chapter in the book. What Festino considers to be a narrative vignettes written by myself so as to introduce the chapters and their topics, are in fact real reports and documents - largely from newspaper - which either complement the text, or close it as in the case of the final newspaper

account of the pyroclastic mudflows destroying the part of the island where much of the book is set. All of these newsgroup or newspaper reports are referenced in full with the author and the website or newspaper (eg Stewart, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4 February 1996: 51-52 [p.140 my book]). Further to this, I discuss the nature and intention of including these chapter-prefaces in the text at the start of the book (p.xxxiv) and at the end of the book (pp.172-173): there I refer to them as volcano updates which intersect and interrupt the 'Before the Volcano' narrative which is written in the conventional ethnographic present. These chapter-prefaces thus highlight the 'artificial frame' (p.173) around the main narrative, though it is a clear mis-reading to consider them artificial and fictional in themselves as Festino does. To do so leads Festino to misattribute a number of comments which I was citing rather than constructing myself, comments which are antithetical to my own theses expressed in the book: for instance, all of her comments about the 'vignette' opening chapter six come from Stewart's newspaper article and not from me, and so include the contents where Festino cites my purported interview with a Miss Sweeney, and comments about islander and Irish identity, Irish surnames and other details. In an earlier draft of her review Festino prefaced this section with the following - 'Assuming his theoretician's voice, Skinner explains that Montserrat has ...'. This misreading was pointed out, but unfortunately the subsequent version of the review has not taken this on board and has become more emphatic.

Furthermore, I should like to correct several distinctions or definitions which Festino has read into my text. Firstly, the term 'neaga' which I use in Chapter 1 does not translate to 'Black Irish'. Rather, it is an inclusive term for 'blackness' or 'folk' as it is used in the expression 'Mons'rat neaga' - 'Montserrat people'. I make no such Black Irish association

in my book. So Festino is wrong in linking me to any claim for Black Irish ethnicity when I use this term or felt flattered when I was included "in" it (see Chapter 1). Secondly, in her review, Festino picks up from the text a definition of the Afro-Irish of Montserrat: 'Later on in the text, Skinner will define these Afro-Irish as "-a quirky, quaint, inter-racial brotherhood of former fellow slaves equally mistreated by the English (154)." Here, Festino is picking out an extract from the book where I was paraphrasing the types of self-projection given by the likes of the Montserrat Government and Montserrat Tourist Board to attract tourists to the island. This should be more clear when read with the preceding two sentences from my book: 'There would appear to be a variety of local and non-local understandings of St. Patrick's Day, different realities held by a range of different people. No doubt, this is the case even amongst the tourists enticed to Montserrat by Government and Montserrat Tourist Board adverts to visit this Caribbean island and to celebrate vacation time of St. Patrick's Day alongside Irish-Africans - ...' (154). I would not want to be held to a definition of an 'Afro-Irish' identity from these writings, or indeed from my experiences on Montserrat.

Apart from the above mis-readings, I am happy with and grateful for Festino's reading and reviewing of my book. She has summarised a number of the chapters very well and linked them together as I intended the reader to have done. I will reflect further, however, upon the nature of reader-response theory and the control of meaning in a text given the above possibilities which have arisen from a generally keen and careful reading.

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## Review of Nini Rodgers's *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery, 1612-1865*

By Gera Burton

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Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, European powers transported 11,000,000 enslaved Africans to the Americas. One of the largest and most elaborate maritime and commercial ventures in history, an undertaking of such magnitude, involving three continents, required significant planning and investment, generating vast profits. Given Ireland's geographic location, its domination by Britain, and the fact that in the eighteenth century slavery accounted for one-third of Europe's trade and half of Britain's trade, the existence of an Irish dimension is hardly surprising. Who benefited from slave-trade profits? What was Ireland's role? To what extent does Ireland's complicated history merit scrutiny related to the slave trade?

*Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, Nini Rodgers' well-researched and timely study tackles these perplexing questions. The author draws on first-hand accounts and archival resources to explore African slavery's Irish connections and offers two possible reasons for the neglect of this topic. One possibility is a reluctance on the part of researchers to confront this shameful history; the second arises from the supposed marginality of its importance. Focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the book provides a wealth of biographical information, tracing the activities of individual merchants, capitalists, and adventurers who profited from the slave trade and described themselves as 'Irish', although, as the author notes in the Introduction, they did not necessarily consider themselves exclusively or consistently so. Rodgers distinguishes shades of Irishmen, including Gaelic, Hiberno-Norman or Old English, New English, Anglo-Irish, and Ulster Presbyterians, arguing that each group produced merchants who benefited from the 'trade in stolen men'.

Divided into three parts, the book incorporates the author's original findings with data from a host of secondary sources. Part I: *Away* covers slavery from Saint Patrick in the fifth century to indentured servitude and slavery in the British West Indies, with details from the life of Olaudah Equiano and his master, Captain James Doran, on 'the Irish island' of Montserrat. Chapter 2 includes an examination of Irish participation in the over 4,000 slave revolts that occurred between the late seventeenth and nineteenth centuries on Montserrat, Domingue, Jamaica, and Demerara. Part II: *Home* traces the impact of Caribbean and North American plantations on eighteenth-century economic, social and political development in Ireland, then part of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. A chapter on imaginative literature concludes with an analysis of Irish literary contributions to the promotion of anti-slavery attitudes. Irish emigrant and poet, Hugh Mulligan, author of *Poems Chiefly on Slavery and Oppression* (1788), emerges as an influential figure in the anti-slavery movement. There is a discussion of the works of Mary Leadbeater and Mary Birkett, followed by a more detailed analysis of the writings of Maria Edgeworth, who compared the lot of 'the lower Irish' with that of West Indian slaves. The reader might have expected to see Swift included here, especially for his mastery of the language of slavery with its 'rhetoric of calculation' (costs, yields, profits) so brilliantly exemplified in *A Modest Proposal*. Part III: *Emancipation* examines the links between Catholic and slave emancipation, including the analogous Irish/slave relationship. This section focuses on Frederick Douglass' visit to Ireland, followed by a lengthy discussion of the career of the pro-slavery Protestant Nationalist, John Mitchel.

For the Latin American reader, it might be illustrative to consider whether the complexity of the Irish colonial situation mirrored that of the *peninsulares* or Spanish colonists and first-generation *criollos* of Cuba, who either spearheaded or played key roles in the colonial project. Over time, the *criollos* began to distance themselves from the centre of power, a transformation that saw them no longer identifying themselves as 'Spanish', but rather as 'Cuban'. Much like their *criollo* counterparts, the Anglo-Irish developed a world view at odds with that of the majority population. Ireland's proximity to the colonial power was unique, as it continually nurtured the Anglo-Irish relationship, facilitating the maintenance of English households, providing an easily accessible English education for the next generation, and preserving an English identity. Underpinning that social framework were men imbued with ambition, foot soldiers in the project of empire building, a number of whom bore Irish surnames. In the vanguard came cash-strapped members of the Anglo-Irish landed gentry, vying for colonial governorships to pay off debts and support their lifestyles.

On the contentious matter of 'Irishness', some analysis would have been helpful to the reader, since it is hardly inconsequential that, for a portion of the population, 'Irish' was little more than a regional qualifier subordinate to the dominant 'British' signifier. Member of Parliament (MP) for County Down, Lord Castlereagh, exemplified this group. Had he been born in Kingston, would he have been considered 'Jamaican'? For the vast majority of the island's inhabitants, however, there was nothing protean about their Irish identity, with its connotations as fixed on their status as colonised subjects, marginalised in the land of their ancestors. Lacking agency, they had been systematically dispossessed of the right to participate as equal subjects under the British Crown.

In spite of issues such as restrictions on land ownership, the prohibition on the right to bear arms, living within city walls, and holding memberships of city corporations, clearly some Catholics prospered with the patronage of

influential Protestants who could vouch for their loyalty to the Crown. Some opted to join the Established Anglican Church 'to become English men'. Thousands of 'the Irish nation' were voluntarily and involuntarily shipped to the Americas, either for petty offences or to escape oppressive conditions in Ireland. The book tends to gloss over the fact that Cromwell's deportations forced some members of 'the Irish nation' into indentured servitude in Barbados, where they became rebellious, unfree persons. Jamaica's Governor Robert Hunter banned 'native Irish Papists' from the larger island.

Rodgers' analysis of Ireland's connection with the slave trade highlights some undisputed facts. Since Britain governed Ireland on the garrison principal, treating the island as a colony in its imperial mercantile system, imposing taxes and exporting goods, such as butter and beef, to West Indian plantations, the island's economy languished under British control. Ireland's exclusion from membership of the slave-trading Royal Africa Company - whose initials, RAC, were branded into the chests of Africans - meant that the island was banned from participation in the infamous triangular trade for most of the eighteenth century. With Ireland's economy subservient to Britain's economy, it lacked the capacity to produce the wide range of manufactured goods demanded by the dehumanising commerce in people, including chains, cooking pots, cutlery, trading irons, and firearms, all produced in Britain. Maintaining a well-funded lobby at Westminster, planters of the sugar islands - 'the spoiled children of the empire' - were economically and intellectually tied to Britain. Rodgers argues that in 1784, plans to engage in the slave trade, hatched by merchants in Limerick and Belfast, did not come to fruition. The Dublin Chamber of Commerce proudly observed that Ireland was unsullied by the 'odious slave trade'. In 1788, the Chamber observed with satisfaction that 'the traffic in human species does not appear to have ever been carried on from this kingdom.'

The author's meticulous examination of surviving letter books and ships' logs for

surnames of ships' captains operating from the ports of Bristol and Liverpool reveals the presence of names of Irish origin. Since the port of Liverpool accounted for half of Britain's trade, and one-third of Europe's trade during the eighteenth century, and given that city's close ties to Ireland, it is surprising that few Irish merchants and captains appear to have been involved in the slave trade. Unfortunately, the book does not provide a percentage for that participation. However, Irish crews appear to have comprised more than 12%, the highest non-English group. While acknowledging that the use of surnames can be an inexact measurement, the author investigated the backgrounds of profiteers with Irish-sounding surnames—the permanent émigrés—to reveal their involvement in the slave trade. The book includes brief histories of slave ship owners with Irish roots, most notably the Irish-Frenchman and *armateur*, Antoine Walsh (1703–63) whose notorious slave-trading activities produced great wealth in St. Malo and Nantes. David Tuohy, an Irish Catholic emigrant, and resident of Liverpool, is identified as one who benefited from the traffic in human beings, and planter Samuel Martin, a native Antiguan with Ulster roots, is said to have undergone a 'shift in consciousness' after many years of involvement in the slave trade.

The book provides rich contextual background to illustrate the economic impact of sugar in the rise of the Catholic middle class, and the importance of provisioning the slave trade in the West Indies to the development of Cork in the eighteenth century. The principal players include Richard Hare, one of Cork's wealthiest merchants with ties to banking and the sugar network in London, whose descendent became Governor of the Gold Coast in 1957. There are the Roche and the Creagh families from Limerick, who held slaves in Barbados, and whose involvement 'stretched from Nantes, to Africa, the Leewards, Rhode Island and South Carolina', and the Latouche family who owned plantations in Jamaica. Favoured by Ireland's governing power in Dublin Castle, the Brownes of Westport, with seats in the British parliament (Lord Altamount) emerge as 'Ireland's premier slave-holding family'.

The author's scrutiny of newspapers published in Ireland revealed two instances of a slave advertised for sale, one in Cork (1762) and one in Dublin (1768). There is even 'an Irish-speaking negro' from South Carolina, Samuel Burke, who is identified as a resident of Cork. In the second half of the eighteenth century the number of 'sightings' of blacks in Ireland is given as 100, mostly those of servants visiting the island with their masters. An estimate of comparative figures for Britain or other European countries at that period would have been helpful.

Until recently, historians have tended to ignore the convergence of the struggle for Catholic emancipation - promised as a quid pro quo for the passing of the Act of Union in 1800 - and the abolition of slavery, achieved after protracted efforts by Wilberforce et al. in 1833. Rodgers highlights the significant, but often overlooked, outcome: in 1829, Catholic Emancipation split the Tory vote, which in turn cleared the way for the abolition of slavery. As early as the 1760s, the Quakers had been in the forefront of anti-slavery agitation, and the author's inclusion of the work of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society (HASS) is a most welcome contribution. That membership included Richard D. Webb and Richard Allen, both Quakers, and Unitarian James Haughton who in June 1840, along with Edward Baldwin, attended the World's First Anti-Slavery Conference in London.

It is important to note, however, that the activities of Daniel O'Connell and Richard Robert Madden overshadowed those of the HASS. With a higher international profile in the anti-slavery movement, and informed by his eye-witness accounts of slavery in Jamaica and Cuba, Madden addressed the Conference along with Daniel O'Connell, although the book does not make that distinction. Neither Madden's role in the *Amistad* affair, nor his role in the abolition of the apprenticeship system two years early, receives attention.

In his seminal work on the slave trade, Hugh Thomas noted that slavers in Catholic countries ignored successive papal condemnations of slavery and the slave trade by Popes Urban

VIII (1639), Clement XI, who instructed his nuncios in Madrid and Lisbon to act so as 'to bring about an end to slavery,' and Benedict XIV (1741). As Rodgers observes, Madden's appeal to the Catholic Bishops of Ireland to 'deal a heavy blow...to slavery in all its forms', appears to have fallen on deaf ears. Pope Gregory XVI's papal encyclical of 3 December 1839, strictly forbidding 'any Ecclesiastic or lay person from presuming to defend as permissible this traffic in Blacks no matter what pretext of excuse...' should not have required Episcopal clarification.

Madden's documentation of papal condemnation of slavery might also have merited discussion. Regarding nationalist anti-slavery agitation, two points are worth noting: first, the protracted campaigns for Catholic Emancipation, Repeal, and agrarian reform proved to be exhaustive struggles detrimental to O'Connell's health, precipitating his imprisonment, followed by his demise in the famine year of 'black 47'; second, Catholic/nationalist preoccupation with survival of the 'Irish nation' at home drained energy and resources from all but immediate considerations. Madden would have agreed with Frederick Douglass' commentary on the hypocrisy of the Whigs and their followers who tended to engage in a type of 'telescopic philanthropy' by supporting distant causes at the expense of pressing humanitarian concerns close to home (i.e., the plight of Ireland's starving millions).

Ever since Eric Williams' observation that Liverpool's slave traders financed the industrial revolution in England, new light has been shed on the slave trade's economic impact. If the

slave trade made England rich, how much of that wealth found its way to Ireland? Throughout the Irish Diaspora, there is a level of unease with the disjunctures between a perceived Irish affinity with oppressed peoples and the recorded activities of numerous individuals - often with tenuous Irish connections - who profited from the slave trade.

*Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery* analyses the Irish experience of 'enslavement' in light of the experience of enslaved Africans, always at pains to distinguish between the two. Rodgers manages to draw together the various strands linking Ireland with slavery to present the most comprehensive volume available on the subject. Her research reveals that, although Irishmen of all backgrounds had connections with slavery, very little of the slave trade profits actually wound up in Ireland. Evidently, the bulk of the profits went to consolidate the wealth of colonial powers.

This reviewer noted a few shortcomings: It was the abolitionist Thomas Fowell Buxton - not Charles - who took over the mantle from Thomas Clarkson. As noted, the roles of Ireland's anti-slavery activists could have been further developed. Nevertheless, a study of this scope could only have been completed by a committed scholar working over an extended period. This book will be valuable to researchers and scholars alike, making a significant contribution to Ireland's historiography. It should stimulate further research.

Gera C. Burton

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### **Author's Reply**

Reviewing this book (332 pages of text), Gera C. Burton has written at length, summarizing its structure and content while adding further factual material and personal commentary. At certain points she would have liked more figures; one hundred and sixty seven sightings of Africans were recorded in eighteenth century Ireland (p.127). The reviewer felt that a comparative figure for Britain and other European countries would have been informative. Such figures could have been furnished, revealing the Irish number as tiny when measured against the contested figures for England - from three thousand to thirty thousand, with the latest estimate suggesting five thousand upwards (Myers, 1996: 31). In France, with a population more than twice that of England and Wales, four to five thousand has recently been posited (Peabody 1996:4). The fact that Ireland did not possess slave trading ports and was not an imperial metropole reduces the cogency of the comparison. Even more elusive is any exact quantitative assessment of the Irish merchants and captains involved in the Liverpool slave trade. The relevant material appears to be very sparse but further extended research could well reveal new sources. The same is true of Bristol and London, the latter port busy with slave ships and Irishmen in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century and as yet so far uninvestigated. (There is certainly at least a PhD thesis in all this.)

Burton is also concerned that this book glosses over Cromwellian deportations to Barbados. The author however feels that she struggled hard with the problem of bond servitude and transportation to the West Indies in the seventeenth century doing what she could with the current printed evidence. As far as she could ascertain no Irish historian since Aubrey Gwynn in the nineteen thirties has directly confronted the issue of Cromwellian transportation (Gwynn, 1931) Over the last decades Kerby Miller *et al* have brought about a revolution in historical knowledge of Irish emigration to North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even more recently

Mary Ann Lyons and Thomas O'Connor's conferences and publications on the Irish abroad have produced similar understanding for continental Europe over an even longer time span. (Attending one such lively and informative conference, this writer was asked by a post doctoral scholar where her particular interests lay. When she replied 'The Irish in the Caribbean' he laughed and said, 'You are on your own.')

A new study of Irish migration across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century, the era in which Caribbean destinations were at their most important, would be very challenging, the evidence scattered and diverse, yet this is an important project worthy of thought and investigation. Where thousands are carried away in ships there is usually some trace left in shipping or financial records - the early years of the slave trade, recounted by Hugh Thomas, make this clear.

When commencing research on *Ireland, slavery and anti-slavery*, the author began by writing Part 2, At Home, intending to produce a short work on the eighteenth century showing how Ireland was part of the 'Black Atlantic', its economy, society and politics affected by the export of provisions to the Caribbean and the import of slave grown produce, sugar and tobacco. It is still the case that the chapters focused on the eighteenth century contain more in-depth research than the others. However the lack of published material on Ireland's involvement with slavery and anti-slavery suggested that a work extending into earlier and later times could at least provide a useful overview for interested scholars.

Producing a survey of two and a half centuries entails a high degree of selection, always a difficult process. It seemed apposite to avoid writing at length on any prominent figure who left Ireland in youth and made his name in England. This entailed the rejection Hans Sloane and Edmund Burke, the former often seen as the father of the British Museum, the latter as the philosopher of British Toryism. In the case of Burke, mounting interest by historians in the influence of his Irish background on his thought and career, caused the author to lift the ban. In Sloane's case it

remained. Born in County Down in 1660 he left Ireland to study medicine and produced the first natural history of Jamaica in which he commented on slavery as well as flora and fauna. The author now feels that a concise and compact survey of the Irish in Jamaica from 1655 to 1838 would have been a useful contribution to historical knowledge and could have made some use of Sloane's writings. However, as the structure of the text had evolved, she could see no easy way of including such an account. Time of course was also a factor. Dublin contains Jamaican plantation records belonging to the O'Haras of Sligo and the de la Touche's of Dublin which the author never managed to consult. Jamaica remains a rich and promising field for future researchers.

Commenting upon Part 3 'Emancipation,' Burton is disappointed that more attention should not have been paid to the abolitionist R.R. Madden. Looking back the author agrees that she could have used the rich material which Madden provides more extensively. There were two reasons why she decided not to deal with his career at length. First she had already published an essay on this subject and did not want to repeat herself. (Rodgers, 2003:119-131). But again consideration about the structure of the book influenced the decision. Madden's anti-slavery career was carried out within a British context and at this point in time (the late 1830s and early 40s) the author was eager to move on to the U.S.A, where the main struggle between slavery and anti-slavery was now taking place.

Throughout the work the author has attempted to use biographical material in order to convey important historical developments in an interesting manner. Perhaps this does not work as well as she had hoped, for Burton has reservations about the device and in John Mitchel's case finds the material decidedly lengthy. In chapter 13 'Famine and War' the book deals with a place and time so important to the Irish that historians of migration and military historians have produced extensive research and publication. Discovering that many people in Ireland knew John Mitchel supported slavery with no idea why, and in

search of a strategy which would allow her to survey work done by others while adding some degree of original research, the author decided to showcase the Mitchel family as Irish emigrants entering, and contributing to, the maelstrom of the slavery and anti-slavery conflict. The close of this chapter returns to Ireland to concentrate on the impact of the Galway professor, John Eliot Cairnes' influential *Slave Power, its Character, Career and Probable Designs* (1863) followed by a description of the stimulus which the cotton famine gave to Irish linen. Considering that chapters 11 and 12 already provided an account of the work of the HASS (Hibernian Anti-slavery Society) assessing its contribution to the international anti-slavery movement and its impact on Irish society, the author does not provide a detailed history of its downs and ups 1850-1865. Anyone interested in this topic should start their researches by reading D.C. Riach's, pioneering PhD. thesis 'Ireland and the campaign against American slavery, 1830-1860' to which *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-slavery 1612-1865* owes many debts.

In her review Burton takes a stimulating line in suggesting analogies between the position of the Anglo Irish and the *crillos* of Cuba. This of course could be extended to mainland Latin America where the existence of indigenous, dispossessed peoples would offer an even closer comparison with the Irish situation. On the Caribbean islands Arawaks and Caribbs had been eliminated. African slaves, like the Europeans who imported them, were newcomers not natives. Pursuing her comparison Burton asks if Lord Castlereagh had been born in Kingston would he have been considered Jamaican? The answer is 'yes'. Any son born to a long established planter family resident in the colony, when he went to school or university or visited England, would have been hailed as a Jamaican or West Indian and would have viewed himself as such. The equation of Jamaicans with blackness is a post emancipation development. In the eighteenth century slaves were in a demographic majority on the island but many of them had been born in Africa. Even after 1807 the number of these was substantial. The small group of elderly

African intellectuals, slaves and ex-slaves, with whom R.R.Madden became friendly, prided themselves on being Muslim and Mandingo (Madden 1835: i 99-101, ii 183-189.) To return from the Caribbean to the Irish situation, Castlereagh's Presbyterian forbearers had arrived in Donegal in 1629 and a century passed before they began their move into an Anglo-Irish, Anglican ethos. Born in 1769, for most of his life he thought of himself as Irish and was regarded as such. Only after he had eliminated the Irish parliament and achieved cabinet status at Westminster did he decide that he was beginning to feel English.

*Ireland, Slavery and Anti-slavery* depicts identity as a social construct, often multi-layered and hybridised, shifting with time and place. The book uses as a base line the contemporary eighteenth century view of Ireland's population as consisting of 'Protestants (members of the Church of Ireland), Catholics and Dissenters (Presbyterians) and the study seeks to delineate their religio/ethnic backgrounds and their privileged or underprivileged status. It attempts to show how black slavery impacted on everyone from the rich and powerful to the poor and oppressed.

Burton quotes Rodgers' definition of those considered suitable for inclusion in the study but is uneasy about the choice and would have liked a deeper analysis of 'the contentious

matter of "Irishness".' For the last forty years Irish historian (historians writing about Ireland?) have been working to amend the view of 'the true Irish' as a monolithic group 'lacking agency' which Burton puts forward, drawing upon post-colonial theory. Rodgers discusses post colonialism with regard to anti-slavery literature and here finds it an unhelpful mode of analysis (pp.254-255). Within the review she feels that at times it leads to confusion. At one point Burton notes the importance of urban growth in eighteenth-century Ireland, at another she states firmly that the island's economy was 'languishing in British control'. The text stresses that even without admission to the slave trade, within the imperial regulations laid down by Westminster, Ireland benefited from mercantile contacts with the slave plantation complex. The argument that Ireland was part of the 'Black Atlantic' is the thesis upon which this book is based.

Given the different approaches of reviewer and reviewed some degree of disagreement is inevitable and could prove fruitful. In the hope that *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-slavery* will stimulate further research, they are in complete agreement.

Nini Rodgers

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**Review of Matthew Brown's  
*Adventuring through Spanish Colonies: Simón Bolívar, Foreign  
Mercenaries, and the Birth of New Nations***

By Karen Racine

Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2006.  
220 pp. ISBN 978-1-84631-044-7.

Many people have tried to write this book, but Matthew Brown finally has done it properly. It is widely known that English and Irish soldiers (or mercenaries, as the title would have it), were a small but significant component of Bolívar's armies during his campaigns in northern South America. Previous historians have made sweeping references to this development, based their interpretations on the memoirs of a few standout figures, and the general assumption that a majority of the soldiers were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. In this book, however, Brown went further than any previous attempt, and traced the actual names and service records of the recruits. It is a work of astonishing ambition and considerable labor and, through his new methodology, the author arrived at some surprising conclusions.

Matthew Brown set out to examine the personal experiences of the approximately 7,000 European adventurers who joined the armies of independence in Gran Colombia (today Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador) between 1816 and 1825. He rightly points out that the descendants of these soldiers created important links between Spanish America and Europe that significantly affected the identities, economies, and intellectual orientations of the new republics. In this way, their long-term influence is greater than numbers alone would suggest. Where previous historians focused particularly in military history or great figures (Alfred Hasbrouck, Eric Lambert), or in diplomatic and commercial relations to elucidate British informal ties in the region (Charles Webster, R. A. Humphreys), Brown is more interested in unearthing the actual human experiences of the men and their families, using their memories to shed light on the relationship between war and society in a very turbulent era. As a result, three of the book's nine chapters

are devoted to the aftermath of independence, discussing the soldiers' integration into their adopted homelands and how their contributions have been commemorated in subsequent decades.

The author assembled a database containing biographical and service records of more than 3,000 adventurers, as Brown opts to call them. One of his more surprising discoveries is that fewer of the recruits were veterans of the Napoleonic wars than was previously reported. Similarly, there were at least 150 women in the military expeditions as well. He has placed these materials on the internet for the benefit of other researchers, genealogists, and the general public. [1] Brown also convincingly argues for the emergence of a "cult of the adventurer" in the early nineteenth century, and links the recruits' enthusiasm to a renewed emphasis on military service and national identity in Britain itself during the Napoleonic wars, the influence of Romanticism and an idealized notion of liberty, and an emphasis on heroic service to the homeland (or *patria*) as an intrinsic characteristic of Atlantic masculinity. These insights reveal the author's thorough understanding of the historical experiences of his subjects as men and of contemporary cultural theory as a useful tool of analysis. Of course, in keeping with the author's intention to focus on social networks and daily struggles, it is always important to remember that the adventurousness of poor men seeking a livelihood in the armed services differs significantly from the adventurousness of the rich pursuing the same occupation. Unlike previous attempts to tell the story of the foreign adventurers, Brown skillfully gleans insight into their lives and experiences from a variety of undervalued sources: rumors,

speculations, jokes, advertisements, and squabbles.

Finally, a word about the high quality of research done for this book. Brown's work can be considered authoritative in ways that previous attempts to tell this story cannot. He vastly expanded the source base used for his history and the final result has repaid those efforts. Where previous authors generally consulted the three major English and Irish newspapers of the day, and used a handful partisan accounts and travelogues written by returning soldiers in the 1820s (both disillusioned ones and those who were still enthusiastic about the patriot cause), Brown visited twenty-two archives in six countries, utilized twenty-seven newspapers, and incorporated material from sixteen printed contemporary sources. His secondary bibliography runs over twenty-six pages and is truly impressive in its scope. It would be nitpicking to wonder if anything useful might have been gained from US-based contemporary sources, of which there were few consulted. One might also wonder how the demographics and experiences of these 7,000 soldiers compare those of the British and Irish sailors who joined with Lord Cochrane in the Chilean and Peruvian navies at the same time (a

question that understandably lies beyond the scope of Brown's goals). Nevertheless, this book is the product of extensive research, and will not likely be superseded anytime soon.

*Adventuring through Spanish Colonies* is an ambitious and successful book. The author has a keen eye for detail, a comprehensive understanding of the era's complex politics and ever-changing roster of characters, and an awareness of the topic's larger significance for the historiography of the era. As Brown wrote, the age of the great Atlantic revolutions consisted of a number of interrelated events linked by ideology, trade, geopolitics, individuals, and warfare. By presenting the historical profession with a carefully researched, engaging study that sheds light on each one of those aspects, Matthew Brown has provided a solid foundation for moving the scholarship in different directions. In short, this book is a much-needed corrective to earlier, more speculative accounts of the British and Irish recruits in Gran Colombia's independence armies.

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### Notes

[1] <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hispanic/latin/research.html>

### Author's Reply

I am very grateful to Karen Racine for her generous review of my book. Her comment about the omission of US-based sources is fair and well-made. I would have liked to have consulted the Illingworth papers in Indiana, for example, but I had to stop somewhere. US newspapers from the period also contain plenty of detail recording the passage of adventurers on their ways to or from Europe and South America, and a thorough analysis of those papers would have been very helpful I am

certain. Regarding a potential comparison with the adventurers who served under Lord Cochrane in Chile and Peru, my understanding is that they were a completely different group, with much naval experience behind them before they arrived in Chile - but careful revision of their Chilean documents, and cross-referencing with the archives in Kew, may well find this also to be a mistaken impression.

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