

An Exile Guidebook for the Inhabitants: The Reception of William Bulfin's *Rambles in Eirinn* in Ireland: 1901-1904

By Rebecca Geraghty and Patrick Geraghty (1)

Abstract

Written as a guidebook on the Irish landscape for the diaspora that were exiled from the island, William Bulfin's Rambles in Eirinn is often treated in a discrete context from his earlier works. Since Bulfin wrote the book outside of Argentina, and switched topics away from South America to write about Ireland itself, Rambles in Eirinn is often treated as a divergence from his earlier literary focus. In fact, Rambles in Eirinn was not only continuous with Bulfin's earlier writings, but also served to bridge the Irish Argentine diaspora with the emerging nationalist renaissance in Ireland. Rambles in Eirinn inadvertently presented a portrait of Ireland that catered to the nationalist aspirations of developing leaders within Ireland: Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and Michael Davitt. These figures praised the book in a network of correspondence, thereby acknowledging both their attention to and respect for Bulfin's efforts on behalf of Irish nationalism.

William Bulfin's impressions and recollections provide a collection of written sources about the daily lives of the Irish diaspora in Argentina. His book, *Tales of the Pampas*, and articles in *The Southern Cross* newspaper are frequently cited in historical surveys about the Irish Argentine immigrant community in the nineteenth century. These two sources of writing, *Tales of the Pampas* and *The Southern Cross*, formed the first phase of Bulfin's writing career, when he was still living in Argentina. In 1902, however, after re-emigrating back to Ireland, Bulfin wrote another influential book. He composed *Rambles in Eirinn* as a form of exile guidebook for the Irish diaspora that was separated from Ireland. Written as a guide to the Irish landscape, Bulfin filled *Rambles in Eirinn* with advice and comments relevant to the intended Irish Argentine reader. This second phase of Bulfin's writing career, after he had moved away from Argentina, is often treated in a discrete context from his earlier works. Since Bulfin was located outside of Argentina, and switched topics away from South America to write about Ireland itself, *Rambles in Eirinn* is often treated as a divergence from his earlier literary focus. In fact, *Rambles in Eirinn* was not only continuous with Bulfin's earlier writings, but also served as a bridge that linked the Irish Argentine diaspora with the emerging nationalist renaissance in Ireland.

Production of Irishness: The Southern Cross and Tales of the Pampas

In both phases of his writing career, Bulfin strove to produce a sense of Irishness amongst the diaspora. Given the fact that the Irish Argentines resided over five thousand miles away from Ireland, this collection of emigrants was separated from the homeland by an ocean, hemisphere and language. This community did not come to see itself as Irish because it was following directions from some inner biological connection to Ireland. Instead, due to their great geographical and cultural distance, it was conceivable that the Irish Argentine sense of affiliation to Irish roots might dissipate over time. As a result, certain community members such as William Bulfin carried out deliberate social efforts to promote and celebrate Irishness from this remote Argentine location. Motivated by a strong dedication to his national heritage, Bulfin aimed to construct and enhance the sense of Irishness amongst the community in Argentina. Using the tools of journalistic and literary output, Bulfin's writings provided an opportunity for the community to define itself around a common national heritage.

As writer, editor and owner of *The Southern Cross*, Bulfin presided over a connecting force that linked the Argentine Irish back to their point of origin.⁽²⁾ By reporting on international affairs, the newspaper kept the Irish Argentine community in touch with the geopolitical

events affecting Ireland. The late nineteenth century was a turbulent time in Irish politics, with the fall of parliamentary leader Charles Stewart Parnell, the failed Home Rule Bill of 1886 and the land wars that consumed the island. The regular coverage of these events in *The Southern Cross* created a degree of involvement amongst the diaspora in Irish affairs. They relied on each new edition of the newspaper to tune into the latest news, and, consequently, had the opportunity to form their opinions and aspirations for the future outcomes of events.

In addition to political and economic affairs, however, significant print space in *The Southern Cross* was devoted to Irish cultural matters. Following the disappointments of the failed paramilitary and political movements in Ireland during the second half of the century, the island underwent a vibrant cultural renaissance. This cultural awakening produced an innovative canon of Irish poetry, prose and theatre, with a particular emphasis on the native language of the island. Through *The Southern Cross*, Irish Argentines in both the city of Buenos Aires and across the vast stretches of the pampas were able to participate in this celebration of the Irish culture. *The Southern Cross* not only exposed them to the latest events hosted by proponents of the Irish language or theatre, but also reported on the Irish cultural activities that had been transplanted in Argentina. For instance, *The Southern Cross* regularly updated its readers about the Gaelic League of Buenos Aires, which was established in 1899 at the Passionist monastery (Murray 1919:466). Through these repeated notices on the Irish activities in Latin America, the periodical enabled the community to see itself as an active and contributing member to what was taking place in Ireland.

As a consistent and dependable source of Irish-themed topics, *The Southern Cross* provided the opportunity for this community to continue to define itself through an Irish national identity in spite of their distant location. In his public role as a journalist, Bulfin presided over this mouthpiece of Irish content to sculpt and mould a cultural enthusiasm for Ireland. Then, at the start of the next century, he applied his

writing skills to a different genre to further consolidate the community's relationship to its roots.

Bulfin provided a similar opportunity for the community to relate to their Irish heritage through his portrayal of Irish Argentine discourse in his book *Tales of the Pampas*. (3) A collection of humorous short stories on the lives of agricultural labourers in the province of Buenos Aires, the book recounted situations of Irish characters encountering *gauchos* and enchanted toads alike. While his narrative of the pampas applied to immigrants of many nationalities, Bulfin took care to record a linguistic experience that was distinctly Irish Argentine. The text was written neither in perfect English nor perfect Spanish, but instead in a middle place somewhere in between. Specifically, Bulfin wrote the dialogue to faithfully depict the sounds that he heard, thus recreating the phonetics of Irish accents. For instance, he described one character as: "...the biggest rogue in South America. He'd steal the milk out of St. Patrick's tay if he got the chance" (Bulfin 1997: 33). By spelling out the word 'tay', meaning 'tea,' this line refers to a manner of pronunciation unique to Irish people. The book is replete with phrases and words that Bulfin wrote out phonetically, thereby recording the unique discourse that circulated amongst these Irish Argentine farmers at the time. By memorialising Irish Argentine speech, Bulfin left a record of life on the pampas that referenced an indisputable Irish presence.

Through these two sources of writing, Bulfin invited the community to celebrate its Irish identity. In the public role of editor-in-chief of *The Southern Cross*, Bulfin enabled the diaspora to overcome the barrier of physical distance and feel connected to one another as members of an Irish network. Through *Tales of the Pampas*, he memorialised an experience unique to the community, and left a record of the Irish on the pampas that has survived long after the individual farmers were gone. By focusing on the lives, relationships and discourse of the community within Argentina, Bulfin's work placed Irish Argentine heritage in the spotlight. His writings extended the opportunity to the

community to overcome the barrier of physical distance to define itself around this Irish national identity. In his third piece of writing, *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin continued to write with this goal in mind. By composing a detailed account of the contours and features of the Irish landscape, he once again sought to defy the physical distance that separated the community.

Bulfin composed a literary portrait of the Irish landscape so that the Hiberno-Argentines could experience the topography of their homeland. As the narrator, he served as the information conduit that transmitted the sights and sounds that he observed back to the reader. By describing, explaining and depicting the features of Ireland, Bulfin hoped to make the reader feel as if they too had experienced the landscape. Whereas *The Southern Cross* and *Tales of the Pampas* had focused on international, cultural and linguistic representations of Irishness, *Rambles in Eirinn* dealt with the physical realities of Irish topography. By equipping the diaspora with this meticulous report of what it felt like to cycle across Irish terrain, *Rambles in Eirinn* was a mechanism to further instil in the community a feeling of being connected to a guiding principle of Irishness.

By concentrating on the topographic origin of the diaspora's identity, however, Bulfin's work resonated with a larger audience than he had intended. Despite having written with an Irish Argentine audience in mind, Bulfin's words struck at the heart of the cultural nationalist ideals gaining popularity within Ireland. The book unconsciously extended the opportunity to celebrate Irishness outside of the diaspora and towards residents of Ireland itself.

Although Bulfin had set out to write about the Irish landscape for the emigrants who could not see it, *Rambles in Eirinn* inadvertently presented a portrait of Ireland that catered to the nationalist aspirations of developing leaders within Ireland. *Rambles in Eirinn* captured the attention of emerging Irish thinkers and activists Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and Michael Davitt. These figures praised the book in a network of correspondence, thereby acknowledging both their attention to and

respect for Bulfin's efforts on behalf of Irish nationalism. Voicing a new perspective on the topography and squandered potential of the island, *Rambles in Eirinn* enabled Irish people across the globe to re-envision their relationship to the Irish terrain.

Rambles in Eirinn: Exile Guidebook

Bulfin initiated his *Rambles in Eirinn* tour after re-emigrating back to Ireland from Argentina in 1902 (Murphy 2001: 55). Although he had physically left Argentina, he continued to use his writing skills to foster a sense of Irish pride amongst his Irish Argentine base of readers. After settling his family on his estate in Derrinlough, County Offaly, Bulfin embarked on a bicycle tour around the island. (4) As he travelled, he recorded his perceptions of the landscape from an outsider's perspective. Placing himself in the mindset of a tourist visiting the countryside, Bulfin composed a travel guide for his former Irish Argentine comrades. His notes were published as a series of newspaper articles and later assembled into a guidebook that described the Irish countryside that the diaspora could not physically see.

Bulfin framed the book as an instructional guide for displaced Irish people, on the landscape and features of the island. He announced this ambition in the first few pages of his book, saying that *Rambles in Eirinn* centred around the "...sole object of sharing the writer's thoughts and feelings with certain Irish exiles on the other side of the world" (5) He described his route in detail, giving recommendations and tips to the potential traveller who might follow in his tracks. He often spoke in the second person, addressing the reader directly with advice such as "There is one particular hill close to the eastern end of the lake that you ought to climb. Leave your bicycle on the side of the road which turns off to the right from the shore..." (Bulfin 1981: 38). In this sentence, and many throughout the book, Bulfin comes across as excited and pleased with the natural wonders that he observes. Many other authors approached the Irish landscape with a similarly positive tone, but differed from Bulfin in one crucial respect. Most travel books had been composed by

British writers rather than by the Irish people themselves. They approached the island from a dispassionate perspective and tended to exoticise the features that they deemed the most striking. (6) Consciously diverging from this conventional approach, Bulfin framed his book in direct opposition to the orientalist descriptions of foreign writers. (7) Framing his narrative so as to instruct the Irish diaspora about Ireland's physical terrain, Bulfin parodied the traditional travel guide approach.

In *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin carried out an extended dialogue with a rival guidebook to differentiate his approach to the landscape. He explains that he purchased a 'road book, edited by a West Briton' along his route; and by describing the rival author this way Bulfin tapped into a culturally-charged word for nationalists in Ireland. 'West Briton' was a derogatory term used by cultural nationalists in Ireland to chastise Irish people who emulated British culture. Believing this author to be a cultural slave of the Empire, Bulfin mocked the book's predictable choice of travel route. He noted that the West Briton considered a certain route to be unworthy of travel, and responded heartily by saying, "An uninteresting route?" Not if you are Irish and know something of the history of your land...' (Bulfin 1981: 24). Presenting the rival author as someone who clearly knew nothing of his or her 'land,' Bulfin divested this book of its credibility. He cast past these descriptions of Ireland's physical terrain as the work of uniformed outsiders, who were neither sufficiently Irish nor familiar with the 'land.' Portraying himself to be a faithful source on the island, Bulfin then recast the rolling landscape in a cultural animation along nationalist lines.

Bulfin approached certain locations along his route with an appraising eye towards their future potential. Instead of passively observing what he saw, Bulfin instead used the landscape in front of him as a mental draft from which to make projections about what Ireland could become. He contrasted the situation before him with what 'could have been' if Ireland was free to manage its own affairs. For instance, he commented on the lack of trees in many parts of the island:

In Connaught, Ulster and parts of Munster, aye, even in sylvan Leinster, there is room for hundreds of thousands of acres of forest. Irish Ireland should set about planting them at once. It is work for nation builders (Bulfin 1981: 38).

Calling upon Irish people to return the landscape to its former condition, Bulfin's comment draws the reader's attention to this cultural nationalist interpretation of the Irish landscape. (8) Other travel publications might have made reference to the open fields they glimpsed before them. In contrast, Bulfin emphasised the absence of forest throughout the landscape on the horizon. He invited the reader to consider not only the visible features, but also the omissions that existed in the landscape due to the historical experience of colonialism. By encouraging the reader to think back to the pre-colonised past, Bulfin posited suggestions of how the cultural nationalist movement could lead to a better Irish future.

Following a cultural nationalist interpretation of the Irish situation, Bulfin lamented the lost potential of certain locations on the island. For instance, he maintained that:

Sligo should by right be a great Irish seaport town, but if it had to live by its shipping interests it would starve in a week. Like Galway, it has had such a dose of British fostering and legislation that it seems to be afraid of ships, and the ships seem to be afraid of it. The city lives independently of its harbour, which it holds in reserve for brighter and greater days (Bulfin 1981: 27).

This passage posits a 'what if' question, and thereby places this location in the Irish landscape into a spectrum of time, contrasting Sligo's present and possible future. Due to British 'legislation,' this potentially prosperous port was instead restricted to, and stifled by, land. Had these laws not come into action, Bulfin suggests that Sligo would have taken advantage of the ocean resources at its disposal. Yet, by looking to 'brighter and greater days,' Bulfin proposes that the town might reverse these current circumstances. His implorations encouraged the reader to project forward into the future and consider the favourable status that Sligo might one day achieve. By emphasising Sligo's future rupture from this

state of degradation, Bulfin framed the town's history in a nationalist perspective. Bulfin proposed that by overturning this colonial subjection, Sligo, and on a broader level, Ireland, could achieve improved prospects. Bulfin replicated this motif of a brighter future throughout the book. In this passage, he spoke about the future in a largely descriptive tone. In other sections, however, his words resonated as an immediate call to action.

At times throughout *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin's cultural nationalism crossed into the political realm. While reflecting on the Irish situation in the past and the present, he spoke to the reader directly by saying:

It is for the uptorn homes and the empty fields that you are angry. It is for these things that curses rise to your lips. It is against the infamous law which fomented and sanctioned and authorised the depopulation that you are a rebel to the inmost core of your manhood. And it is for the day that will see English rule swept out of the island... (Bulfin 1981: 44).

This passage openly addresses the reader as a mutual partner in these furious emotions, addressing the reader directly as 'a rebel to the inmost core of your manhood.' The strength of Bulfin's tone, looking to the day when 'English rule [is] swept out of the island,' appears to suggest that he was sympathetic with the physical-force branch of Irish nationalism. However, as a piece of writing, this rhetorical source cannot be cited as a demonstration of nationalist action. We must remain mindful of the distinction between individuals who thought and wrote about nationalism, and those that acted upon these independence aspirations. While Bulfin's words are intense in this passage, there is no evidence to suppose that he stepped into the constitutional or physical-force realm of nationalist politics. Nonetheless, while Bulfin may have confined himself to the orbit of cultural nationalism, thinking and reflecting on the Irish situation and its future prospects, his words and ideas affected others who actively fought for independence.

While Bulfin himself remained within the literary arena of cultural activity, his book

attracted the attention of nationalists of many persuasions. Nationalists within Ireland had first been exposed to *Rambles in Eirinn* when it appeared as a series of installments throughout 1902 in Arthur Griffith's newspaper, *The United Irishman* before being published in book form in 1907. As sections of the book diffused through newspapers such as *The United Irishman*, *Sinn Féin*, and the *New York Daily News*, enthusiasts of Irish culture across the globe began to take note (Kiely: 1948) In a stream of correspondence directed towards the author, constitutional, cultural, and even physical-force nationalists expressed their approval of his writing. Bulfin noted his own surprise at the widespread attention that the book received, saying:

It never occurred to me that Irish people at home would take any special interest in my efforts to describe the things I saw and express the things I felt: and even when the literary men of Irish Ireland urged me to publish the 'Rambles' in an Irish newspaper, I imagined that their judgment had been obscured by their friendship. (9)

To Bulfin's own surprise, therefore, *Rambles in Eirinn* elicited applause and praise from the developing leaders of the Irish nationalist movements within Ireland. Bulfin consequently found himself welcomed into the network of prominent intellectuals and thinkers engaged in renewing Irish national identity.

Rambles in Eirinn: Reception in Ireland

Bulfin received praise from a multitude of nationalist figures of both cultural and paramilitary orientations. Some praised his work in particular, while others expressed general admiration for Bulfin himself. This web of correspondence indicates that Bulfin's cultural work had caught the attention of the highest reaches of the evolving nationalist network, and that these individuals held his words in high esteem. These letters reveal that the upper echelons of the emerging nationalist movements believed *Rambles in Eirinn* to constitute a work of comparative value to the Irish nationalism. As a continuing feature of *The United Irishman* periodical in 1902, *Rambles in Eirinn* elicited the particular praise of the paper's editor.

Arthur Griffith

The letters from *The United Irishman's* editor, Arthur Griffith, exhibit a deep respect for this Irish Argentine author. Griffith was the founding father of the Sinn Féin political party that was a prominent organising force for activists in the War of Independence later in the twentieth century. At this point, in 1902, Griffith's ideas were slowly gaining followers through his editorial leadership of *The United Irishman* newspaper. In the paper, and the Sinn Féin publication that followed, Griffith presided over a dialogue in which questions and debate over the question of Irish sovereignty were worked out. When Bulfin began submitting sections of the book to the paper, Griffith replied, 'Thanks ever so much for articles they are splendid. I envy your cycling rambles.' (Arthur Griffith to William Bulfin, MS 13810). Describing the writing as 'splendid' and vigorously thanking Bulfin 'ever so much,' Griffith's friendly tone points to a sociable relationship between the two correspondents. In fact, they had been in contact the year before, before Bulfin had relocated to Ireland, when Griffith had applauded the efforts of the Buenos Aires Gaelic League. At that time Griffith had said:

Thanks a thousand times for your offer of course I should be glad of a note now and then from Argentina which is immensely popular here since the Southern Cross has worked up the Gaelic movement there. I am glad you are thinking of paying a visit. (Griffith to Bulfin, 11 July 1901).

By expressing his approval of *The Southern Cross*, Griffith indicates that he was aware of Bulfin's efforts to promote Irish activity within Argentina. In a later letter, Griffith demonstrated further esteem by entrusting Bulfin with control over the American branch of his successor newspaper to *The United Irishman*. He wrote to the paper's staff members in the United States instructing them that '...Mr. W. Bulfin is authorized to act and complete arrangements on behalf of the Sinn Féin Daily newspaper in the United States' (Arthur Griffith, undated, MS 13810 Folder 12, Bulfin Papers, Manuscripts Department, National Library of Ireland). (10) *The Sinn Féin*

newspaper was Griffith's brainchild, and hosted the spirited conversations where he worked out his ideas and ambitions for Irish sovereignty. The fact that he was willing to hand control of his pet project over to this fellow journalist signals Griffith's faith in Bulfin's capabilities to see this periodical through. His readiness to entrust Bulfin with a task of this volume points to the respect he held for Bulfin's role as a fellow cultural nationalist. In addition to these trusting sentiments from Griffith, Bulfin also corresponded with the physical-force and constitutional nationalist, Michael Davitt, from whom he received further praise for his pro-Ireland efforts.

Michael Davitt

The Davitt-Bulfin letters display an eagerness on the part of the older nationalist to interact with this Irish Argentine. A formidable figure in Irish politics, Davitt had been arrested for his participation in the Fenian rebellions of the 1860s, and had worked alongside Parnell to lobby for Home Rule in the 1880s (Boyce 2004). Davitt was at the twilight of his hybrid physical-force and constitutional nationalist career upon writing to Bulfin, as he died two years later in 1906.

In one 1904 exchange with Bulfin, Davitt expressed his sorrow that they had not been able to meet in person a week prior. At the time, Bulfin was on a visit to Dublin from Argentina, and had apparently called at Davitt's home. Although Davitt had missed him on this occasion he alerted Bulfin that: 'In case you may have to pass through the city at any time, I would run to meet you if I knew on what date and hour I would be likely to meet you.' (Davitt to Bulfin, 23 September 1904). For a seasoned nationalist, who had participated in some of the most controversial parliamentary and paramilitary struggles of the era, to assert that he would 'run to meet' Bulfin, Davitt must have been particularly intrigued. (11) He articulated similar admiring sentiments in an introductory letter that he composed for the Irish Argentine in preparation for Bulfin's upcoming visit to New York.

Passing the torch from his nationalist generation to the upcoming one, Davitt

expressed warm praise for Bulfin's activities in this letter of recommendation. He wrote to a contact in New York, Mr. Bourke Cockrane, applauding Bulfin's work on behalf of Ireland: 'Senor [sic] Bulfin is a firm representative of our race in the Argentine Republic and takes a warm and patriotic interest in the progress of the Irish Cause, especially in the fortunes of the Gaelic language movement.' (Davitt to Mr. Bourke Cockrane, 20 September 1904). By referring to him under the title of 'Senor Bulfin [sic],' Davitt first paid homage to Bulfin's Argentine base of operations. Next, though, Davitt heightened this title by portraying Bulfin as the 'representative of our race.' Rather than merely citing Bulfin as a nationalist, Irish Argentine activist, or even an Irishman, Davitt instead elevated his role to a racial ambassador. Finally, by making note of Bulfin's 'patriotic interest' in promoting the 'Gaelic language movement,' Davitt singled out his work on behalf of the language. This particular area of praise can also be found in Bulfin's correspondence with another cultural nationalist who shared his love for the Irish language.

Douglas Hyde

The visionary of the language movement himself, Douglas Hyde, also echoed Davitt's praise. Hyde had founded the Gaelic League in 1893 to halt the cultural decline that threatened the native Irish language in the face of spoken English. Through the League, and his essay "On the Necessity of De-Anglicizing Ireland," Hyde strove to overturn the negative associations of poverty and degradation that had become associated with the language (Lysaght 242). (12) He instead portrayed Gaelic as a repository of Irish cultural value, and organised classes to train a new generation of speakers. Branches of the Gaelic League gained substantial popularity, both in Ireland and diaspora locations such as Buenos Aires and the United States, and served as an organising basis from which nationalism slowly extended. William Bulfin maintained a direct line of communication with this language activist, as Hyde praised his writing and ideas.

Hyde wrote to Bulfin expressing positive comments about both *Tales of the Pampas* and *Rambles in Eirinn*. He explained that he had '...read your pampas story with great interest. I never read anything quite like it...My wife has just finished your story and says "tell Mr. Bulfin to send some more!"' (Hyde to Bulfin, 24 December 1902). The personal dimension to this letter, involving the praise of Hyde's wife, points to Hyde's enthusiastic reception of the literary output that Bulfin was producing. This was not merely a routine expression of thanks, but instead a hearty congratulations from both Mr. and Mrs. Hyde. At the close of the letter, Hyde also implied that an additional Irish nationalist might have been praising Bulfin's work on *Rambles in Eirinn*.

Hyde stated in the postscript of his letter: 'P.S. I heard old J O'L last night violently praising your articles! We all applauded!' (Hyde to Bulfin, 24 December 1902). Although we cannot be certain, the initials 'J O'L' could refer to the physical-force nationalist John O'Leary. Active in the Fenian movements of the 1860s, O'Leary had articulated separatist political aspirations in a variety of publications, and served in a financial role in the revolutionary campaign (O'Day, September 1904). After years of imprisonment in British jails as punishment for his role, O'Leary returned to Ireland. As an icon of the separatist aspiration of a free Ireland, his memory was later immortalised in the line 'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, It's with O'Leary in the grave' from the poem "September 1913" by W. B. Yeats (Webb 1991: 73). O'Leary was active in the Irish literature efforts, and conceivably may have read and approved of Bulfin's articles in *The United Irishman*. If Hyde was talking about O'Leary, then Bulfin's work was even admired by the iconic Fenian of the nineteenth century nationalist campaigns.

Applauded and praised by cultural, constitutional and physical-force nationalists, these letters demonstrate that Bulfin's role as a producer of Irishness was vocally confirmed in Ireland. Nationalists in Ireland were not only aware of what Bulfin was doing to produce cultural writing on the island, but also believed

Rambles in Eirinn to provide a valuable impetus to the development of an Irish consciousness.

Conclusion

In his quest to cultivate an appreciation for Irish terrain through *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin demonstrated a continuation of his earlier efforts to carve out a space for Irishness that differentiated the community from its foreign surroundings. Since he was writing with similar objectives, Bulfin initially believed himself to be dealing with the same audience of the diaspora. Upon publishing *Rambles in Eirinn*, however, Bulfin found that his audience had in fact multiplied. Now that his literary object was Ireland itself, he provided the opportunity to celebrate Irishness not only to the diaspora, but also to the inhabitants of the actual island.

The praise for *Rambles in Eirinn* illustrates that the book resonated not only with Irish exiles, but also with activists in Ireland. As representatives of the various branches of Irish

nationalism, Griffith, Davitt and Hyde approved of the book's treatment of the terrain. They recognised Bulfin's efforts to carve out a space for Irishness that was discrete from the British and imperial claims on the land. By constructing this narrative of the contours and features of the landscape from an Irish orientation, *Rambles in Eirinn* reclaimed the island's topography for the Irish people.

Twenty years after its appearance, this topographic aspiration of *Rambles in Eirinn* was realised through the establishment of the Irish Free State. Amongst the architects of this independence campaign, successfully returning the Irish landscape to the jurisdiction of its inhabitants, were some of the most avid fans of *Rambles in Eirinn*.

Rebecca Geraghty and Patrick Geraghty

Notes

1 Rebecca Geraghty is a recent graduate of New York University, and this article was a section of her senior honours thesis in History. Patrick Geraghty is an aerospace industry executive and a lifelong history enthusiast. This father-daughter team has enjoyed pursuing William Bulfin's records in Argentina, Ireland and the United States over the past year.

2 After contributing sporadic articles throughout the early 1890s, William Bulfin bought *The Southern Cross* and became the full-time editor in 1898. In the introduction to the Literature of Latin America edition of *Tales of the Pampas*, Susan Wilkinson provides the dates of his initial emigration, tenure on *The Southern Cross*, and return to Ireland drawn from her interviews with descendents of the Bulfin family. See: Bulfin, William, *Tales of the Pampas* (Buenos Aires: Literature of Latin America, 1997), p. 8.

3 *Tales of the Pampas* was originally published in collected book form by Fisher & Unwin in 1900.

4 Bulfin's choice to tour the country by bicycle reflected a trend that was in vogue amongst literary enthusiasts at the time. Gaining popularity after the 1890s, many writers traveled by bicycle and wrote 'road books' about their travels. See Oddy: 95.

5 Bulfin 'To the Reader' section, not numbered.

6 Maureen Murphy claims that Bulfin took the opposite route from that which had been featured in past travel guides. She explains that, whereas most other writers adhered to a traditional journey from Dublin to Limerick with a stop in Killarney, Bulfin deliberately decided upon an unusual route (Murphy 57). He traveled specifically to the Midlands, a location that had been conventionally omitted from other travel surveys, and delighted in the natural wonders offered by places such as Westmeath (Bulfin, 63). Since the Midlands was the birthplace of many Irish Argentines, Bulfin appears to have intended for his rambles to celebrate the landscape in these oft-forgotten sections of the island (See Murphy, Maureen, 'The Cultural Nationalist of William Bulfin' in Londraville, Richard (ed.) John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from His Library, (Connecticut: Locust Hill Press, 2001.)

7 The familiar presentation of ‘orientalism’ derives from Edward Said’s 1978 exploration into colonial perceptions of the colonised as exotic and distanced ‘Others’. Said focused on Western representations of the Middle East, but this reasoning has also been applied to the Irish colonial situation. Scholars such as Joe Cleary have incorporated the methodological paradigms set out in Said’s *Orientalism* in works like *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2002). For Said’s work see: *Orientalism* (United Kingdom: Vintage Books: 1979).

8 In this passage, Bulfin is referring to the deforestation that occurred under British colonial rule. Prior to colonisation, Ireland had been a heavily-forested island. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, many trees were cut down and exported for use in construction. This historical episode outraged Irish nationalists, and was criticised in many cultural nationalist writings during the late nineteenth century as an exhibition of the British administration’s brutality. Christopher Burlinson gives a brief overview of the deforestation and literature that explores this topic in *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (England: DS Brewer, 2006) p. 194.

9 Bulfin ‘To the Reader’ section, no numbering.

10 This letter is undated, but its description of the paper as a ‘Daily’ suggests that it may be from the 1909-1910 period when Griffith issued the *Sinn Féin* paper on a daily basis in the United States. Maureen Murphy claims that Griffith dispatched Bulfin to the United States in an attempt to salvage the failing daily immediately before the latter’s death in 1909. She cites Bulfin as travelling back and forth from Ireland with The O’Rahilly. Her claim appears to be correct, since the Bulfin Papers do contain correspondence between Bulfin and ‘Ua Rathghaille,’ although the handwriting of these letters is extremely difficult to decipher. One letter between them from 5 January 1910 makes reference to Arthur Griffith, saying, ‘Griffith told me about your typewritten report.’ (William Bulfin to Ua Rathghaille, 5 January 1910, MS 13810, Folder 26, Bulfin Papers, Manuscripts Department, National Library of Ireland). Since they mention Griffith, this interchange between Bulfin and The O’Rahilly appears to support Murphy’s claim that they partnered up to support the *Sinn Féin* daily. As a result, it is likely that the letter in which Griffith gave Bulfin’s authority to act on his behalf in the United States came from the 1909-1910 period. See: Murphy, Maureen, “The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin” in Londraville, Richard (ed.), *John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from His Library* (Connecticut: Locust Hill Press, 2001).

11 For the text of the essay see: Reid, Gerard (ed.), *Great Irish Voices: Over 400 Years of Irish Oratory* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). For background on Hyde’s cultural nationalism, see: Lysaght, Patricia, ‘Review of Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland, by Janet Egleson Dunlevy and Gareth W. Dunlevy’ in *Folklore*, vol. 103: ii, (1992): 242-3.

12 For the text of the essay see: Reid, Gerard (ed.), *Great Irish Voices: Over 400 Years of Irish Oratory* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). For background on Hyde’s cultural nationalism, see: Lysaght, Patricia, ‘Review of Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland, by Janet Egleson Dunlevy and Gareth W. Dunlevy’ in *Folklore*, vol. 103: ii, (1992): 242-3.

