‘A PUBLIC DISPLAY OF ITS OWN CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES’: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF IRISH IDENTITY ON DISPLAY, 1851-2015

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces constructions of Irish identity in national and international displays between 1851 and 1939 as Ireland moved from a colonial to an independent state. As a cultural history of Irish identity, the thesis argues that the exhibitions were a formative platform for imagining a host of Irish pasts, presents and futures. Fair organisers responded to the contexts of famine and poverty, migration and diasporic settlement, independence movements and partition, and my original insight is to demonstrate how Irish businesses and labourers as well as the elite organisers of the fairs presented their own identity. The central malleability of Irish identity on display emerged in tandem with the unfolding of Ireland's political transformation from a colony of the British Empire, a migrant community in the United States, to a divided Ireland in the form of the Republic and Northern Ireland – a separation that continues today. Exhibitions are a key conduit for assessing the changing landscape of Irishness over two centuries by focusing on the politics of display. This thesis presents an original account of neglected exhibitions of the Irish and so provides an important contribution to historiographies on Exhibitions, Ireland and Empire, and Race.

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INTRODUCTION

> Afflicted by a calamity […] its staple food blackened and rotted by some mysterious agency, […]; its people mowed down in tens of thousands, by the two-edged sword of famine and pestilence; its gentry prostrated beneath the weight of national ruin; its agricultural population rushing to its shores in affright, […]; its labourers driven to the workhouses, […]; its cities and towns filled with the degraded and demoralised wrecks of the population, […]; its mind darkened with visions of ruin and disaster; its heart almost paralysed with terror and despair.[1]

J. F. Maguire's description of Ireland in the 1852 Cork Exhibition exemplifies the popular national mood in the mid-nineteenth century. After the tragedy of the Famine, many Irish men and women embarked on a course of exhibiting Ireland and its peoples through international and national exhibitions that lasted until the outbreak of World War II. These exhibits served various functions, including improving the morale of the country, promoting industry, or creating a sense of nationhood. Exhibitions were grand spectacles that showcased the manufactures, industries, arts, technologies, histories, and communities of countries on an international platform for the consumption of millions of visitors. International exhibitions were mainly located in the capital cities of the world's countries, namely London, New York, Berlin, Paris, and Dublin amongst others and typically lasted for five to six months at a time.[2]

Exhibition organisers employed objects and people in a variety of stalls, villages or pavilions to create an Ireland on display. These models of Irishness relied on language, dress and behaviour to offer convincing visions of the country. From 1851 to 1939, Ireland was alternately presented through antiquities and treasures from the land such as bog oak, or else

[1] J. F. Maguire, *The Industrial Movement in Ireland, as Illustrated by the National Exhibition of 1852* (Dublin, 1853), p. 8-9. Shelf mark: 7956.f.33. British Library.
[2] See, J. E. Findling and K. D. Pelle (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of World's Fairs and Expositions* (Jefferson, 2008).

through commodified tokens of Irish culture such as shamrocks or spinners, and even later as a vast technocratic economy with the display of Shannon Airport and the hydroelectric scheme. Exhibits were organised by a host of different historical actors ranging from industrialists and entrepreneurs to philanthropists and national bodies. Several imaginations of an Irish home emerged on the fairground for the consumption of visitors, who in the 1850s were largely working class, in the 1890s mainly Irish migrants and the early to mid-twentieth century exhibitions largely attracted British and Irish nationals. Visitor perceptions of the displayed Irish varied accordingly to historical prejudices, the contemporary political climate and future concerns of the nation.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, exhibitions possessed a significance of mythic proportions according to popular discourse. The displays were heralded as a unique, profitable, and unsurpassed forum for celebrating a country's wares, vying for increased trade, and consolidating national mores. They enabled participating countries to navigate the period's emerging globalisation by straddling the temporal spheres of past, present, and future. Organisers could highlight the supposed backwardness of the past, illuminate the successes of the present, and imagine the triumphs of the future. The creative vitality of exhibitions encompassed the varied hopes of participating countries and Ireland was typical in imagining exhibitions itself to be 'of [the] great[est] value and importance' as a 'public display of its own capabilities and resources' for the period under consideration – the 1850s to the 1930s.[3]

[3] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland*, p. 8.

Many exhibition organisers like Maguire, spent vast sums on building a temporary structure, hiring actors and soliciting businesses to offer their wares in an advertisement of goods for the masses. The visuals of a flag, a costume and a piece of bog yew for example offered textual authority to a narrative of Ireland centred on hope and prosperity at different historical junctures. A structure of feeling was built around these short displays, for instance in the Cork Exhibition of 1852, everything from Irish salt to furniture and even a harp circulated in an omnipresent display of Irishness. Whilst this specific exhibition will be discussed in chapter one, several observations regarding the broader typology of Irish display can be made. Firstly, exhibitions were always a spectacle – they responded to desires of entertainment as well as learning; secondly, display was monied – while those in positions of power and privilege constructed the narrative of the country they relied on the labour of the public to consume and the performance of the exhibited to succeed. Efforts at creating an authentic image of Ireland were sustained by the ephemeral nature of display which encouraged constant adaptability and change. And this complexity (rooted in contradiction) enables me to take unique case studies of exhibitions to originally formulate a cultural analysis of historic Irish socio-political identities in my thesis chapters.

The prolific analytical capacity of exhibitions has seen extensive research from historians, anthropologists, geographers, and museum studies professionals over the past few decades. This burgeoning scholarship identifies the importance of exhibitions in the international markets, the development of science, and identity formation.[4] My thesis offers a meaningful contribution to existing literature by interrogating the specific transformations of Irish identity through nineteenth and twentieth century exhibitions of the Irish within Britain,

[4] Early histories include: R. D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (London, 1978); J. Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London, 1977); K. W. Luckhurst, *The Story of Exhibitions* (London, 1951).

Ireland and the United States. Exhibitions were cultural sources that organisers claimed as apolitical; however, the frivolous characteristics of display saw it quickly become a rich site for varied Irish political expression. I originally investigate a range of Irish identities that covers home and diaspora, Protestant and Catholic, north and south of the country. In this way, I demonstrate how an Irish culture was created in the visual realm by the everyday actions of Irishmen and women in multiple spheres.

'A Cultural History of Irish Identity on Display' traces how exhibitions of Irishness imagined solutions to a multiplicity of Ireland's perceived problems. For instance, Irishmen and women used display to act interchangeably as a catalyst to revive rural industry and ferment newer manufactures, or a base through which to stem migration and facilitate tourism as well as commerce. Each exhibition displayed diverse notions of Irish identity. The unique visions of Irishness largely concerned 'development' and 'progress' in the nineteenth century, and state building and commerce in the twentieth century.

My thesis relies on a sophisticated analysis of primary sources, mainly printed material produced by and about several key international exhibitions staged between 1851 and 1939. These range from catalogues, guidebooks, maps, and descriptive listings to reveal the machinations of fair organisers which offers a creative and multifaceted textual and visual topography of historical constructions of Irishness. I analyse these sources in conjunction with the periodicals, editorials, and articles printed in newspapers to complement the exhibition's display from the 1850s to the 1930s. These materials expose productive avenues to read visitors' responses, criticisms, and legacies of the displays. I also use visual sources to illustrate the significance of symbols of Ireland in the form of postcards, photographs, and

paintings. Meeting minutes and exhibition committee reports offer a further layered interpretation of organisation and reception that is useful in my analysis. The planning stages were largely bureaucratic and so decisions relating to invitations, building plans and exhibiting structures have a trail of printed documents. A composite and holistic sense of the production of Irishness is excavated through my primary sources due to their range and historic longevity concerning display and Irish identity.

The agency of those displayed is revealed through their letters home and personal diaries, which I read against the grain since many were published in contemporary newspapers. I complicate my observations of photographs, postcards and ephemera by highlighting the range of labour involved in their production. For instance, from poses to staging, I contextualise who was being exhibited and why – considering conditions of employment and advertising practices will be suggestive of the demographic of Irish people that were targeted to perform their Irishness. Within the constructed world of the fairground, exhibited Irish men, women and children worked for several months at a time. They took part in the various industries displayed, posed for photographs, waited and served and generally made real the fiction of a displayed Ireland.

Exhibitions had particular meaning and power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; avowed as non-partisan spaces, they were an important conduit for constructing Irishness for vast audiences. Existing literature on Ireland's political, social, and cultural history advances by focusing on visual sources as a crucial space for knowledge production and identity formation, particularly within a contested imperial framework. By interrogating exhibitions of the Irish in the country's formative period, I offer an original insight into the

manifest ways Ireland was created through display by illustrating the animus that existed between Britain and Ireland in this period along Unionist, Nationalist, Protestant, and Catholic lines within visual and printed material. Those who created Irishness through exhibits changed from state and non-state actors with vested interests in the broader social, economic, as well as political concerns pertinent to Ireland and left behind a wealth of archival evidence.

Significant scholarship on exhibitions has focused on their imperial nature and is now largely outdated.[5] Building on this work, I contend that display is an important avenue for Irish historians to challenge the reductive binaries of colony and metropole that have dominated histories of Ireland's relationship with Britain, exemplified by the work of James C. Beckett.[6] I chiefly demonstrate that discrete images of Ireland came into being alongside and through the political sphere, while diverse stories of Ireland emerged in accordance to the needs attached to Irish identity at various points. Exhibitions held significance in numerous moments of Irish history to rectify famine and poverty, to sustain migration and diasporic settlement or to ease national discord as well as religious tension created by independent movements, particularly partition, and reveal Irish agency within the geographic and political boundaries that it was historically constrained within. They functioned idiosyncratically to further individual and national causes and its prime utility to historians comes from this diversity of intention and outcome.

[5] See, D. Stephen, *The Empire of Progress: West Africans, Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25* (New York, 2013); J. A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (Yale, 1999); J. E. Findling and K. D. Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851-1988* (New York, 1990).
[6] See, J. C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923* (London, 1966) and *A Short History of Ireland from Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London, 1952); C. Falls, *The Birth of Ulster* (London, 1936).

While some visitors may have observed the Irish in ethnographic terms (as earlier histories like Deborah Silverman's contended); I distinctly highlight how the more potent civilisational narratives surrounding the Irish emerged from the geography of the fairground.[7] At various times Ireland stood in the British industry section of Empire Exhibitions in the 1850s, positioned on the Midway Plaisance reserved for colonies in the 1890s, or neighboured to other developing nation states in the early and mid-twentieth century. Therefore, Ireland's varied locations in the fairground reveals far more about ideas of race and progress than interpreting the behaviour of a few ethnographers who visited, or the advertised benefits for science. By excavating the broader ambitions of displayed Irishmen and women and their location in the larger exhibition, my research will valuably demonstrate the contextual agency of these individuals as recorded in printed documents.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and deconstruct the multiplicities of negotiation involved in constructing and transforming Irishness by individual Irishmen and women through exhibitions. I take display to mean the performance of self, Irish identity in this instance, as related to showcases of personhood both individually and as part of a collective. The term display carries the means through which identity is produced in a public and prominent way, in my case, in fairs, national and international exhibitions, and public celebrations. I take the visual to be the literal manifestation of these desires of selfhood – how it was imagined and what was seen and put on show. My understanding of display and the visual tie to images of Irishness and the physicality of its production, whether through

[7] D. Silverman, 'The 1889 Exhibition: The Crisis of Bourgeois Individualism', *Oppositions: A Journal of Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, 8 (1977), pp. 71-91. See, R. Bain, 'Going to the Exhibition' in R. Staley (ed.), *The Physics of Empire: Public Lectures* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 113-142; G. Davison, 'Festivals of Nationhood: The International Exhibitions' in S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith (eds.), *Australian Cultural History* (New York, 1988), pp. 158-177.

exhibits or festivities. I focus on seeing over sound and feel because contemporaries and visitors alike prioritised observation and looking as essential to how they understood the Fair and themselves. I will explore the images of Irish history and culture deployed to create Ireland's global image through in-depth primary source analysis. By tracing the shifting discourses of Irishness, I reveal how perceptions of Ireland in exhibitions interacted with the Ireland outside these venues. Overall, the ebb and flow of Irish symbolism enabled workable juxtapositions to reconcile disconnects between the utopian image of the fairground and the lived reality of Irish politics.

My thesis has four chapters that elucidate formative moments in Irish social, cultural and political history across a host of Irish pasts, presents and futures. My first chapter considers Ireland's post-Famine exhibitions in the 1850s, to argue that they became a crucial stage through which to debate post-famine reconstruction policies. I demonstrate how ideas of Ireland's recovery after its national tragedy were contested along Nationalist and Unionist lines to varying effects. My second chapter follows the Famine exodus to the United States and considers the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, to illustrate how exhibitions of the Irish interacted with transatlantic activism and philanthropy. I argue that elite women used Irish exhibitions to combat Irish poverty by championing a rural Ireland worthy of revival and capitalising on Irish migration in America.

My third chapter follows the trajectory of a single Irish Village in the early twentieth century exhibitions and demonstrates how agitation over Home Rule was bodily enacted within the fairground through performing a political whiteness. I argue that a commercial union with Britain was powerfully evoked by two Irish entrepreneurs who advertised soap by

exploiting popular images of Ireland. My fourth chapter examines the interwar British Empire Exhibition's to show how the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland each used display to champion their global agendas and distinct relationships to the British Empire to differing degrees of success. I end by focusing on the last international exhibition before the outbreak of World War II (New York World's Fair of 1939) to evaluate how images of Ireland had transformed from presenting the country as a British possession to one rooted in nostalgic visions, and finally to a display of political expression that allowed Irishmen and women to claim cultural advancement and prestige to complete their authority over Irishness in the fairground.

My transatlantic approach offers a unique comparative lens that precisely identifies how mutability and fragmentation became key to constructions of Irishness. This enabled adaptability according to the needs of specific audiences (geographically, politically, socially) and particularly shaped how display interacted with Irish migration to the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s. Fragmentation accommodated Irish identity across numerous socio-political loyalties which were in constant formulation and flux. This complicates the traditional idea of a singular Irish identity to highlight the tension involved in the creation of an Irish culture, and by extension demonstrates how fracture was essential for Irish-identity making more broadly.

My overall intervention changes the way we think about Irish identities for those working on Britain and Empire, as well as Ireland by arguing that exhibitions were a formative platform for Irish individuals and groups to work out their politicised existences across two centuries. At key historical moments I highlight the importance of display through

focused archival research that reveals how multiple visions of Irishness co-existed at any one time. For instance, images of Ireland in the 1850s were tied to issues of industrialisation whereas by the 1910s Ireland on the fairground largely centred on a capitalist sale of goods. I illustrate that distinct visions of Ireland related to the country's development and progress, or its modernity and industrialisation functioned in a constant exchange that modified itself according to different historical episodes. I particularly demonstrate the agency of Irishmen and women in visualising and performing their politics as creators of Irishness changed from state to non-state actors thereby highlighting the transforming agency of Irish contemporaries.

My study fits within exhibition literature and I will offer an overview of this research as it stands to situate my work. Scholarship on exhibitions is vast and in the 1980s and 1990s a plethora of books and essays were published on the topic. The central thesis of this earlier historiography was that international exhibitions sold an ordered world, sanitised for popular consumption during times of economic instability or national discord. Moreover, that the constructed reality within the fairgrounds became a significant means of education for the masses, who were instructed on ideas of the nation, discoveries in science, the development of the urban and natural environment, and the importance of art in society. These scholars pointed to world's fairs as key sites for an emergent consumer society intimately packaged within national discourses.[8]

[8] See for instance, R. W. Rydell and R. Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago, 2013); R. W. Rydell and J. E. Findling and K. E. Pelle, *America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, D.C., 2013); R. W. Rydell and N. Gwinn (eds.), *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam, 1994); R. W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago, 1993); R. W. Rydell, *The Books of the Fairs: Materials about World's Fairs, 1834-1916* (Chicago, 1992); P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988); R. W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago, 1984); J. M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984); W. A. Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York, 1980); D. Silverman, 'The 1889 Exhibition: The Crisis in Bourgeois Individualism',

Robert Rydell set the terms for scholarship on exhibitions as concerned with the state and its manufacturing and commercial interests.[9] Trade was central to discussions on the gigantism and monumentality of international exhibitions to these earlier historians, including Burton Benedict, who emphasised the relations between power and the economy as well as the imperial world.[10] These scholars have contended that exhibitions became the means by which the metropole constructed itself in opposition to the peripheral colonies.[11] Timothy Mitchell notably demonstrated that exhibitions were the ultimate means of reifying and reproducing Britain's imperial dominance which is necessarily complicated in my analysis of Ireland's changeable position within the British Empire.[12] Overall, international exhibitions were held to be 'symbolic universes' that offered 'evolutionary justification for long-standing racial and cultural prejudices', and the market was considered to be the ultimate organising principle in society.[13] This literature generally classified exhibitions as important to the formation of the modern state and commerce within an imperial hierarchy and has since sparked revised works of which I discuss a few.

Oppositions, 8 (1977), pp. 71-91; K. M. Roemer, *The Obsolete Necessity: America in Utopian Writings, 1888-1900* (Kent, 1976); F. C. Cary, 'Shaping the Future in the Gilded Age: A Study of Utopian Thought, 1800-1900', PhD, Wisconsin University (1975); R. H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967); W. L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (New York, 1964); D. M. Potter, *People of Plenty* (Chicago, 1955).

[9] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, p. 2-8.

[10] B. Benedict, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (New York, 1983), p. 6-12.

[11] Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas,* p. 54-55; Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 1-2. See, C. McArthur, 'The Dialectic of National Identity: Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938' in T. Bennett, C. Mercer and J. Woollacott (eds.), *Popular Culture and Social Relations* (London, 1986), pp. 117-134; M. Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture' in M. Heidegger (ed.), *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York, 1977), pp. 5-54.

[12] T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, 1991), p. 14 and 'The World as Exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31: 2 (1989), pp. 217-236.

[13] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, p. 8; T. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford, 1990), p. 3-5. Sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann consider a 'symbolic universe' to be a structure of authority that offers meaning for social behaviours, establishing 'all collective events in a cohesive unity that includes past, present, and future', P. L. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, 1966), p. 120.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the literature moved away from ideas of the unity, hegemony and utopian comprehensiveness of exhibitions and instead considered fracture, discontent, and concessions within display.[14] Paul Kramer is fundamental to this scholarship, and he argues against analysing exhibitions as a centrally co-ordinated event and instead highlights the very discourse of political coherence as a deceptive construct carefully managed by exhibition planners and financiers. Concurrently, he argues that the abundant promotional literature of exhibitions was part of the labour to convince visitors and historians that fairs were totalizing in nature. Kramer complicates the reading of the exhibitions' sources, and so visitor numbers are not enough to reveal a consensus of audience experiences and nor are the jingoistic proclamations of exhibition organisers taken as factual. He revealed how international exhibitions tended toward 'irresolvable contradictions' within a 'chaotic' ensemble.[15] Likewise, scholarship that emphasises the extensive involvement of a diverse range of bodies and institutions account for the disorder of the fairground and purposefully oppose earlier works by its focus on the complexity of actions that went into producing international exhibitions.[16]

Continuing this strain of literature, more recent research by Nathan Cardon, Sadiah Qureshi and Alexander C. T. Geppert has prioritised divergence, difference, and disruption

[14] See J. Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St Louis Exposition* (Chicago, 2009); A. Lewis, *An Early Encounter with Tomorrow: European's, Chicago's Loop, and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Illinois, 2001); D. Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, 1997); A. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, 1994).
[15] P. Kramer, 'Making Concessions: Race and Empire Revisited at the Philippine Exposition, St. Louis, 1901-1905', *Radical History Review*, 73 (1999), pp. 75-107, p. 76-77. See, A. L. Stoler and F. Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda' in A. L. Stoler and F. Cooper (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 1-58.
[16] P. H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, 2001), p. xiv. See, M. Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, 1995).

when conceptualising the expertise produced in the fairground, whether related to modernity or popular science.[17] Cardon demonstrates that classed and gendered identities operated in tandem to authenticate discourses on modernity for the American South.[18] Qureshi has shown that exhibitions were crucial grounds for the creation of racialised, scientific and imperial knowledge in nineteenth century Britain.[19] Further, Geppert argues that the historical notion of 'exhibitionary networks' enables adequate historicisation of display with its focus on an overlapping series of networks that evolved over time.[20] My thesis is heavily indebted to this more recent literature; Kramer has argued that a language of the 'imperial' rather than 'empire' avoids connotations of unity and coherence, and this nuanced definition underpins my theorisation of the colonial nature of Ireland as one straddling the core and periphery in a unique, hybrid form.[21] I am originally applying Kramer's idea from the US context to Britain and Ireland in a detailed appraisal of fluid constructions of Ireland over two centuries.

Extending this historiography that has argued for the importance of exhibitions to imperialism and society, I demonstrate how the Irish laboured to construct their own national

[17] N. Cardon, *A Dream of the Future: Race, Empire, and Modernity at the Atlanta and Nashville World's Fairs, 1895-1897* (Oxford, 2018); S. Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire and Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Chicago, 2011); A. C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-De-Siècle Europe* (New York, 2010). See, M. Filipova (ed.), *Cultures of International Exhibitions: 1800-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (London, 2015); L. Kriegel, 'After the Exhibitionary Complex: Museum Histories and the Future of the Victorian Past', *Victorian Studies*, 48 (2006), pp. 681-704; S. Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago, 1998); M. Niquette and W. J. Buxton, 'Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions', *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 22 (1997), pp. 81-133; P. Harvey, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the Nation State and the Universal Exhibition* (London, 1996); M. Armstrong, 'A Jumble of Foreignness: The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions', *Cultural Critique*, 23 (1992-93), pp. 199-250.
[18] Cardon, *A Dream of the Future*, p. 2-17.
[19] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, p. 1-12.
[20] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, p. 1-15.
[21] P. Kramer, 'Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World', *Radical History Review*, 116: 5 (2011), pp. 1348-1391, p. 1349. See also, R. W. Rydell, 'New Directions for Scholarship about World Expos' in K. Darian-Smith, R. Gillespie, C. Jordan and E. Willis (eds.), *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World* (Melbourne, 2008), pp. 4-5; P. H. Hoffenberg, 'Equipoise and its Discontents: Voices of Dissent during the International Exhibitions' in M. Hewett (ed.), *An Age of Equipoise? Reassessing Mid-Victorian Britain* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 39-67.

and international stories, becoming active agents who selected the goods on show, the specific industries performed, and the companies advertised as adaptability became central to their self-fashioning through display. I originally illustrate how Irishmen and women utilised experimentation and contradiction to allow competing constructions of Irishness to proliferate alongside each other. Hostile, consensual or peaceful visions of Ireland emerged in the backdrop of Irish political and economic tension to convince visitors of their productive reality. Considering how display offered Irish individuals and groups an opportunity to navigate the undefined space of their existence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries challenges earlier Orientalist approaches to exhibitions that inferred a binary in power relations between the centre and periphery. These outdated works typically reified display for creating an 'othering' process that ignored the agency of colonised groups in crafting their own stories.[22]

As an example of this reductive literature, Raymond Corbey has argued that ethnographic exhibits in fairs were part of a wider process of documenting colonial groups during the highpoint of colonialism through collecting, measuring, and classifying knowledge. Corbey insists that indigenous groups were made available for visual observation by millions of Western visitors interested in their ways of life. He further compares these displays to spectacles such as zoos, botanical gardens, circuses, and museums of natural history.[23] He concludes: 'The fairs told the story of mankind, the very same narrative that accompanied and legitimised colonial expansion. In this epic, staged by themselves, white, rational, civilised European citizens cast themselves in the role of the hero'.[24]

[22] See, N. Harris, 'All the World a Melting Pot? Japan at American fairs, 1876-1904' in A. Iriye (ed.), *Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese Relations* (Harvard, 1975), pp. 47-54.
[23] R. Corbey, 'Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930', *Cultural Anthropology*, 8: 3 (1993), pp. 338-369, p. 338.
[24] Ibid., p. 341.

Problematically, Corbey's thesis rests on a 'white self' observing a 'black/racialised other' – this contention is decisively proved a fallacy in my study of Irish displays.

I originally demonstrate that the Irish peoples, at times allied with Britain, yet, stereotyped as a racialised anomaly within narratives of self-improvement and civilisation, existed across a spectrum of imperial prejudice that allowed them to construct and resist derogatory imperial identifications of their character. Exhibitions functioned alternatively as a *tabula rasa* for Ireland or a historical remedy to ease the burden of nostalgia; they functioned as political propaganda or as nation building. Displays of the Irish were heterogonous, unstable and worked within decades of negative stereotypes; my thesis notably argues that the in-between colonial status of the Irish enabled a transcendence towards local and national not just imperial development. This nuanced discussion is a valuable intervention in debates on empire that intentionally centres the Irish and not the English.

My theoretical understanding of exhibitions uniquely highlights the dissonance typical of Irish exhibitions. For instance, rurality and authenticity were juxtaposed with industry and modernity within the fairground. Despite both being regarded as important narratives for Ireland's trade, they functioned in direct opposition. Relying on recognisable stereotypes of Ireland's rural industries created an accessible narrative, however, its focus on the past contradicted constructions of an Irish modernity in the future that was prosperous and profitable based on industry and technology. Moreover, claims to authenticity were fundamental in convincing visitors to attend the exhibitions and Ireland's claims to 'reality' in the fairground continually circulated. Yet, actual events in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not feature in the exhibitions of the country and its people, and my

research specifically reveals the tensions between display and reality as opposed to assuming a congruence between the two that problematically simplifies the debate.

I recognise exhibitions as precious spectacles of tangible fantasy, in which organisers and visitors forged nations and the British Empire, both imaginary and material by utilising Ann Stoler's work on intimate spaces.[25] For instance, I valuably take the process of material consumption as one rooted in manifold intricacies by considering how visitors engaged with exhibitions in the short and long term through souvenirs and other promotional material. My thesis follows the trajectory of exhibition paraphernalia where the sources are available. By tracing how certain objects within the fair circulated and the ways in which its meaning changed with each production and sale my archival research brings a thorough analysis of how capitalism worked to sustain Irishness in this period. I further consider how popular motifs of Ireland were repeatedly utilised as a response to visitors' enthusiasm thereby productively complicating static perceptions of the visual. Reception shaped future exhibits and there was a constant interaction in the lifespan of the exhibition's materials, and so my research demonstrates the material significance of objects within assorted intimate spaces.

My thesis generally reveals that millions of visitors who attended international exhibitions, and displays of the Irish in particular, behaved in unpredictable ways from the 1850s to the 1930s within a larger system of knowledge and enforced order. My chapters clearly illustrate that a discourse of uniformity and a solely positive reception was engineered largely by authors commissioned to write exhibition reports in order to disguise the inherent

[25] A. L. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (California, 2009). See, H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994); C. Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31: 2 (1989), pp. 195-216.

fracturedness of display. This specifically extends Tony Bennett's inversion of Foucault's panoptical principle in 'Exhibitionary Complex'. Bennett argued that the exhibitionary complex functioned so that everyone can be seen and everyone can see, thus transforming the crowd into a self-watching and self-regulating organisation.[26] Whereas Bennett explored the logic of the exhibition itself in a Foucauldian sense, I emphasise contestation and discontent within exhibitions of the Irish by drawing out the contrary responses of visitors. For instance, chapter four makes clear that visitors were more interested in witnessing Ireland's Gaelic rusticity as a tourist site over its presentation as a technological paradise in the exhibition space.

My research furthers theorisations on capitalism as businessmen or philanthropists with vested interests often supplied the extensive capital that exhibitions required. Accordingly, a vision of Ireland that was devoid of poverty and disease and abundant with industry and potential prosperity became common presentations. This relied on an erasure of the poorest in Ireland and displayed a self-regulated middle class for international consumption. The working class were given days off to visit the fairs and provided with the appropriate attire to attend the exhibition upon arrival, and the notion of being seen implemented strict controls of dress and decorum within the exhibition grounds but not necessarily beyond its borders.[27] Specifically, by recognising the function of class within displays of Ireland I reveal the dissonance between anticipated ambitions and visitor experiences across the social strata.

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[26] T. Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations,* 4 (1988), pp. 73-102, p. 73-75. See also, T. Bennett, 'Speaking to the Eyes: Museums, Legibility, and the Social Order' in S. Macdonald (ed.), *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (London, 1998), pp. 25-35.

[27] *Good News! Or, Free Admission to the Great Exhibition* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: 4406.b.60. British Library. This will be discussed in Chapter One in my analysis of the Presbyterian Church propaganda issued to encourage the poor to visit the Dublin Exhibition in 1853.

There have been two theses written on exhibitions of the Irish, which my research takes further. Caroline Malloy, an art historian, offers a broad survey on various Irish displays at international exhibitions but her focus on visual culture and Irish art history leaves gaps in the consideration of an idiosyncratic Irish politics. Malloy narrates the process of national identity formation through display, although her analysis prioritises imaginations of Irishness not the relations between the state, exhibition organisers, a divided Irish politics or broader imperial concerns.[28] Regardless, her scholarship remains impressive for being the first to properly consider Ireland in world's fairs. Jeffrey O'Leary's thesis exclusively considers Irish fairs in America and he argues that a 'manufactured reality' became the bedrock of constructions of Ireland in the United States. He demonstrates how this related to an agrarian-oriented and pre-industrial Irish society.[29] However, his focus on the United States prevents broader connections with complementary and more disparate displays. Although O'Leary's work should be commended for considering the commodification of Irishness for American audiences, it lacks a comparative quality, and its primary interest will be to those concerned with Irish-America.

Overall, my thesis is a useful addition to these works by its comprehensive consideration of a displayed Irishness over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in diverse historical and geographical spaces. My transatlantic approach uncovers the connections between the colonial, imperial and national in Britain and the United States to illustrate the familiar motifs of Ireland in popular circulation. The focus on exhibited Irish actors (mainly women) ensures a perspective considering divergences between the ideology of the organisers

[28] C. R. Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland: Irish Villages, Pavilions, Cottages, and Castles at International Exhibitions, 1853-1939', PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison (2013).
[29] J. M. O'Leary, 'Manufacturing Reality: The Display of the Irish at World's Fairs and Exhibitions 1893 to 1965', PhD, Kent State University (2015).

as well as the experiences of the actors and visitors. I analyse the subtle tensions within Irish exhibitions and broader Irish politics to make clear the instability of the project to depict Irishness on the fairground. For instance, images of contentment within the Union existed alongside volatile independence debates in the early twentieth century as chapter three will discuss. Specifically, my broad timeframe enables comparisons to be formed, and reinscribes social, political, and cultural agency to Irish men and women who were intimately involved in shaping their identities through display. My original insight demonstrates how Irish businesses and labourers as well as the elite organisers of the fairs presented their own selfhood by taking seriously visual sources.

My research valuably contributes to scholarship on Ireland and empire in its transnational approach as a cultural history of Irish identity on display. Primarily, my thesis argues that the visual and cultural are fundamental to understand Irish identity underscored by considerations of the state and nation as crucial spaces of knowledge creation and the imagination of selfhood. I will offer a brief overview of recent scholarship with a focus on how my thesis enriches these areas.[30] Stephen Howe and Kevin Kenny led debate from the early 2000s on Ireland's status within the British Empire. Howe argues for the

[30] For broad works on Ireland, see T. Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland. Vol IV. 1880 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2018); E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017); R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923* (Dublin, 2015); J. R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. VII. Under the Auspices of the Royal Irish Academy planned and established by the late T. W. Moody 1921-84* (Oxford, 2010); W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. VI. Ireland Under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996); W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. V. Ireland Under the Union, I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989); K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and Conformity (Studies In Modern History)* (London, 1989); R. Foster, *Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1988); M. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital: A Social and Economic History 1860-1914* (Cork, 1985); J. V. O'Brien, *'Dear, Dirty Dublin': A City in Distress 1899-1916* (London, 1985); T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. IX. Maps, Genealogies, Lists* (Oxford, 1984); O. MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict 1780-1980* (London, 1983); T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. VIII. A Chronology of Irish History to 1976, I* (Oxford, 1982); F. S. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939* (Oxford, 1979); P. O' Farrell, *Ireland and England since 1800* (Oxford, 1970).

appropriateness of analysing certain aspects of Irish history in a British Empire framework to push back against a full identification of Ireland as colony. He insists that Ireland's 'colonial past […] took unique hybrid forms, involving extensive integration and consensual partnership as well as exploitation and coercion. And [became] part […] of an extremely complex and unusual set of historical legacies [that] shap[e] the Irish present'.[31] Moreover, Kenny recognises that Ireland's relationship with Britain changed over time and so too did the features of the British Empire. His thesis helpfully stresses that modern Irish history unfolded alongside the rise, growth, and later decline of the Empire; and, just as Irish history is incomplete without this imperial structure, an accurate British imperial history requires the inclusion of the Irish.[32]

My cumulative concern is to read participation in or proximity to empire as markers of the complex multiplicity of Irish histories themselves in trying to fully understand the specific transformations of Irish identity across different periods.[33] Therefore, I position myself against works focused exclusively on Ireland's colonial nature, such as Terrence McDonough's recent intervention which argued that the exclusion of the colonial made many

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[31] S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford, 2000), p. 232. See, S. Howe, 'The Politics of Historical "Revisionism": Comparing Ireland and Israel/Palestine', *Past and* Present, 168: 1 (2000), pp. 227-253; D. Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and Empire' in A. Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol III. The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 494-521; T. Bartlett, '"This Famous Island Set in a Virginian Sea": Ireland in the Eighteenth Century British Empire' in P. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol II. The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 254-276; D. Lowry, 'Ulster Resistance and Loyalist Rebellion in the Empire' in K. Jeffrey (ed.), *An Irish Empire?: Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 191-215; C. Brady, *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-199*4 (Dublin, 1994).

[32] K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), p. 1. See, S. Howe, 'Historiography' in K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 220-250; R. W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol V. Historiography* (Oxford, 1999); D. McMahon, 'Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1900-1948' in W. R. Louis and J. M. Brown (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol IV. The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 138-162; S. Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918-1964* (Oxford, 1993).

[33] Flannery, *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies*, p. 238.

aspects of nineteenth century Irish society incomprehensible.[34] My research instead takes the more productive concerns of scholars like Stoler seriously, who argues that imperial power tended to be unbordered and unbounded polities, and so they are appropriately conceptualised as scales of rule that produced different degrees of sovereignty as well as access to rights, which moves away from assuming a homogenous experience.[35] By refusing reductive binarised approaches to issues of Ireland's status within Empire, I complement recent literature such as Eóin Flannery's work which demonstrates that post-colonialism, colonialism, and imperialism cannot be considered in straightforward progressive terms, so localised distinctions should be maintained in discussions on popular culture or broader state politics.[36]

Historiography on Britain and Ireland's relationship is intensely politicised and is a core concern of my thesis.[37] My research configures Ireland through the multiplicity of its national, political, and regional imaginings. By reworking Irish agency into narratives of the state and policy, I avoid a false uniformity being applied to the Irish experience and explicate the divergences of different political groups in the ways they constructed themselves.

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[34] T. McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), p, vii. See, M. de Nie and J. Cleary, 'Editors Introduction', *Éire-Ireland*, 42 (2007), pp. 5-10; J. Cleary, 'Postcolonial Ireland' in K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 251-288; T. Garvin, *Preventing the Future: Why was Ireland so Poor for so Long?* (Dublin, 2004); T. Garvin, *The Birth of Irish Democracy* (Dublin, 1996); T. Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin, 1981).

[35] A. L. Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', *Public Culture*, 18: 1 (2006), pp. 125-146, p. 128. See also E. Flannery, *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies: Theory, Discourse, Utopia* (London, 2009); J. Lennon, *Irish Orientalism* (Syracuse, NY, 2004); E. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Race and Class*, 27 (1985), pp. 1-15; E. Said, *Orientalism; Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1978).

[36] E. Flannery, 'The Art of Resistance: Visual Iconography and the Northern "Troubles"' in E. Flannery and M. Griffin (eds.), *Ireland in Focus: Film, Photography and Popular Culture* (Syracuse, NY, 2009), pp. 125-143, p. 126.

[37] See E. Gkotzaridis, *Trials of Irish History: Genesis and Evolution of a Reappraisal, 1938-2000* (London, 2006) and K. Grant, 'Bones of Contention: The Repatriation of the Remains of Roger Casement', *Journal of British Studies*, 41: 3 (2002), pp. 329-353.

International exhibitions visualise how state structures interweaved with an Irish reality in increasingly disorientating ways and I conceive of Ireland within the fairground as a hybrid entity, at once colony, yet nation.[38] The value of this revised scholarship in my research rests in seeing Ireland's fluid position within both metropole and periphery spaces which transforms discourses of consensus to those of contest and evokes questions of shifting identities.

My research brings to the fore Ireland's historic position within British imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism in a focused way. The exhibitions were imperial in organisation as the state's purported aim was to celebrate and advertise the British Empire but nations collated their own exhibits, and so adaptability enabled an independent image of Ireland to emerge within the confines of an imperial platform. This strengthens my argument that Irish historians must consider exhibitions as a legitimate category of analysis, as they offer a crucial insight into constructions and representations of an Irish identity within a multi-dimensional space of power and privilege.

My thesis makes clear that Ireland's defining characteristic was an agency regulated within imperial constraints – at times Ireland was seen as a profitable ally whilst concurrently being a nuisance country in need of complete assimilation or disbandment. Many groups, such as exhibited African and Asian communities, tended to be removed from the processes of organising their own display. Whereas Irish peoples across multiple class, gendered and imperial backgrounds featured in the planning, hiring, and performing stages of exhibitions

[38] Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire*, p. 3-4. See also, H. K. Bhabha, 'Life at the Border: Hybrid Identities of the Present', *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 14: 1 (1997), pp. 30-32; H. K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', 28, *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis* (1984), pp. 125-133.

and self-fashioned their identities unlike other displayed groups. For Ireland, the Empire was simultaneously a source both of compulsion and of freedom.[39] I uniquely argue that a study of Irish display within international exhibitions reveals that Irish relational identifications spanned along highly individualised contours and often interacted with multiple, fragmentary, yet totalising, overarching identities (such as Nationalist, Unionist, Catholic, and Protestant politics) within gendered and classed localities.

Throughout my thesis, I mobilise a transatlantic approach that relies on expansive borders. In Niall Whelehan's recent edited volume on transnational perspectives in modern Irish history, the contributors understand transnational history as a perspective that transcends the borders of the nation-state, so trace connections and parallel developments between various territories.[40] My transnational approach productively showcases the movement of people and ideas between Ireland as well as other territories through multiple networks and migratory circuits. My central argument considers an Irish agency during the process of migration and settlement as an exchange between home and abroad within the contexts of female philanthropy, nationalist movements and capitalist structures which will be discussed in chapter two. It balances larger contexts with smaller-scale analysis at local or individual levels, 'fundamentally highlighting the importance of the wider world to Irish history and society' by seriously considering for example how flying the Union Jack triggered different visitor responses whether in London, Dublin or Chicago.[41]

[39] See, A. Jackson, 'Ireland, the Union, and the Empire, 1800–1960' in K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 123-153.
[40] N. Whelehan (ed.), *Transnational Perspectives on Modern Irish History* (Routledge, 2014). See also, N. Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867–1900* (Cambridge, 2012); E. Delaney, 'Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37: 148 (2011), pp. 599-621.
[41] S. Akhtar, 'Book Review of Transnational Perspectives on Modern Irish History' (ed.) by N. Whelehan (New York & London: Routledge Press, 2015)., *Journal of British Studies*, 57 (2018), pp. 672-673, p. 673.

Building on this approach in a sustained fashion, I show that visions of Ireland were geographically rooted in the temporal and spatial boundaries of the exhibition grounds within larger transnational conceptualisations of Irishness. For instance, popular symbols of Ireland readily circulated beyond discrete borders were manipulated according to the needs of specific audiences. My thesis notably reveals for example, that the meaning of a shamrock to the Free State in the 1920s was entirely divergent to its earlier iteration as part of a rose and a thistle in the 1850s when a Union with Britain was championed. Moreover, visitors to the exhibitions whether in Britain, Ireland or the US desired different stories of Ireland. By highlighting historical specificity throughout my study, I discuss how a London based post-famine exhibition in 1851 exemplified a new era of Irish industry through tabula rasa narratives linked to free trade in chapter one. Whereas chapter two explains how an American-based exhibition in Chicago expounded ideas of a lost rural Ireland to account for the wants of a migrant population that had settled over the sea, in effect, a performative salve for their collective feelings of nostalgia. My transatlantic approach offers a pivotal connected history of Irish display that bridges scholarship on Irish migration with the visual through a transatlantic perspective.

By centring the multiple forms that Irish colonial experience took, which involved assimilation and willing co-operation as well as manipulation and force, my research presents a detailed interrogation of Irish social, political and cultural history through fractured display.[42] Ireland was not exclusively a colony, an imperial possession, or a post-colonial entity. Throughout my work I expose the contradictory impulses which enabled Ireland to experience the cruelty, violence, and military might of British imperial rule, whilst also

[42] Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, p. 232.

remaining enmeshed in the machinations of empire by deconstructing printed material from the relevant exhibitions.[43]

Specifically, by taking exhibitions as my case study I assuredly highlight that Ireland's political sphere was messy and often at odds with lived reality. Further, I productively interrogate how the imagined Ireland on the fairground contrasted with a lived Ireland, while considering how messages of Ireland changed whether in London, Dublin or the United States. Since Irish migration to the United States was a key factor in the social, political and cultural developments of an international Irishness, my transnational lens expertly makes clear that binaries of politics transcended Irish experience beyond its geographical borders, and a mutability of political positions existed at any particular time in discrete territories. Issues of imperial, colonial and national whilst important are overridden by important considerations of overlap, networks and mutual contradictions. My thesis centrally recognises the fluidity and complexity of multiple Irish identities which avoids simplistic interpretations and cogently extends the trend of Irish historiography today.[44]

My new discussions on Ireland and race, and in particular Ireland and whiteness in the international exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries moves the literature on Irish

[43] See, B. Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks: Migration, Social Communication and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century India* (Cambridge, 2011); J. Cleary, 'Amongst Empires: A Short History of Ireland and Empire Studies in International Context', *Éire-Ireland*, 42: 1&2 (2007), pp. 11-57; H. Morgan, 'An Unwelcome Heritage: Ireland's Role in British Empire-Building', *History of European Ideas*, 9 (1994), pp. 619-625.
[44] See, J. McAleer and J. M. Mackenzie (eds.), *Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire* (Manchester, 2015); P. Byrne, P. Kirwan and M. O'Sullivan, 'Introduction' in P. Byrne, P. Kirwan and M. O'Sullivan (eds.), *Affecting Irishness: Negotiating Cultural Identity Within and Beyond the Nation* (New York, 2009), pp. 1-17; D. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, 1996). Also, S. Akhtar, 'Book Review of Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire' (eds.) by J. McAleer and J. M. Mackenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015)., *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54: 1 (2019), pp. 204-205.

whiteness forward in a sophisticated manner. Stuart Hall's contention about the historic particularity of racism which stresses that '[Racism is] specific to the present organisation of society, to the present unfolding of its dynamic potential and cultural processes not simply to its repressed past' theoretically underpins my analysis.[45] Historically, long-held racial tropes of Irish duplicity, brutality and ignorance increased during the post-famine development policies of the nineteenth century. An imperial rubric of discrimination stressed Irish deficiency, and Irish peoples were conceived of as violent, stupid Catholics contrasted to the perceived 'rational' Protestant work ethic of the British.[46] Simian portrayals of Irishmen in particular within British satire translated into aphorisms of the Irish as unclean, uncivilised and barbarous.[47] I originally argue that epistemological notions of an 'Irish' race and ethnicity were visualised in the fairground with display offering a valuable platform to disprove racialised stereotypes of the Irish, and perform a political allyship with white Britons. I decisively demonstrate that racialised discourse of the Irish as a lesser type of a white ethnicity firmly located in the 'Other' sphere was rooted in the popular consciousness by the late twentieth century and thereby exhibitions became a crucial site of popular visual resistance.[48]

[45] Cited in P. Gilroy, *One Nation under a Groove: The Cultural Politics of 'Race' and Racism in Britain* (Minnesota, 1990), p. 265. See also, S. Hall, 'Ethnicity, Identity and Difference' in G. Ely and R. G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 339-349.
[46] See, R. A. Fried, 'No Irish Need Deny: Evidence for the Historicity of NINA Restrictions in Advertisements and Signs', *Journal of Social History*, 49: 4 (2016), pp. 829-854; K. Kumar, 'Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective', *Theory and Society*, 29: 5 (2000), pp. 575-608, p. 604; A. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London, 1996); R. F. Foster, 'We are all Revisionists Now', *Irish Review*, 1 (1986), pp. 1-5.
[47] See, D. Seitler, *Atavistic Tendencies: The Culture of Science in American Modernity* (Minnesota, 2008), p. 2-3.
[48] G. Schaffer and S. Nasar, 'The White Essential Subject: Race, Ethnicity, and the Irish in Post-War Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 32: 2 (2018), pp. 209-230.

Considering exhibitions as a platform through which the Irish performed an ethnic whiteness substantially contributes to and changes the tenor of concerted debate on the racialisation of the Irish. Thus far, there has been significant dispute as to the degree of racism the Irish suffered in the past, if at all, and whether claims of racism against the Irish have been exaggerated or underplayed.[49] My research accepts that the Irish were ostensibly white but originally contends that political access to the social and economic privileges afforded those with perceived racial and civilisational superiority was refused to the Irish, and exhibitions became a platform through which to lay claim to these privileges. I demonstrate that for Irishmen and women, the constructions of a political whiteness became paramount – one that would allow them to exist alongside Britain or as an independent Irish state. Literature focusing on stark racial differences between black, brown and white warps the discussion and it is crucial that we study a white gaze that differentiates between degrees of whiteness. Notably, Vron Ware argues: 'It is important to recognise that racial domination is a system that positions or constructs everyone who falls within its orbit. Focusing on ideas about whiteness and the various constructions of white racial identity can offer new avenues of thought and action to those working to understand and hopefully dismantle systems of racial domination'.[50]

Debate about the significance of whiteness as a historical category of analysis has problematically focused on the United States which has invited skewed interpretations in the

[49] See, P. Kolchin, 'Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America', *Journal of American History*, 89 (2002), pp. 154-173; B. J. Fields, 'Whiteness, Racism, and Identity', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 60 (2001), pp. 48-56; D. Brundage, *'Green over Black' Revisited: Ireland and Irish-Americans in the New Histories of American Working-Class 'Whiteness'* (Oxford, 1997).
[50] V. Ware, 'Defining Forces: "Race", Gender and Memories of Empire' in I. Chambers and L. Curti (eds.), *The Postcolonial Questions: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London, 1996), pp. 142-156, p. 143. See also C. Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester, 2000).

United Kingdom context. I avoid this reductive conceptualisation by clearly situating my analysis within Britain and Ireland in a way that is cognisant to the specific issues of gendered capitalism that sustained Irish whiteness in the early twentieth century. A number of scholars have argued that whiteness became important during high points in immigration as a marker of individual and collective belonging, for the Irish, Jews, Italians and Eastern Europeans.[51] The central thesis of this scholarship holds whiteness as malleable and mutable, in the same way Irish identity was in the fairgrounds. Historians like David Roediger were key to this literature in the late 1990s but it has recently faced criticism for simplifying the nuances of imperial racism and retroactively re-inscribing a non-whiteness onto Irish immigrant experiences.[52] While these are worthwhile concerns there is significant archival material that can be read to reveal the localised campaigns to claim whiteness by the Irish on both sides of the ocean.

My research is primarily concerned with changing the focus of debate on whiteness in Britain and Ireland and I will sketch the arguments in this area before making clear my valuable contributions that challenge reductive thinking on race and Irishness. In the United Kingdom in the late 1990s, Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter led scholarship on racialised

[51] B. Rolston, 'Are the Irish Black?', *Race and Class*, 41: 1 (1999), pp. 95-102; M. F. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, 1998); B. Dooley, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (London, 1998); N. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995); R. Frankenberg, White Women, *Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London, 1993); b. hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Massachusetts, 1992); V. Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London, 1992); K. A. Miller, 'Class, Culture and Immigrant Group Identity in the United States: The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity' in V. Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Re-considered* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 97-125; D. H. Akenson, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence and the Irish in North America* (Virginia, 1985).

[52] D. R. Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (New York, 1994) and *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, 1991). For criticism see, E. Arnesen, 'Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 60 (2001), pp. 3-32, p. 22-23.

Irish-British relations. They have shown how discourses of multiculturalism and race relations contained differences of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', within the US-led framing that racism related to 'colour', and have explained how colour 'bec[a]me a marker of national belonging' so that 'being of the same "colour"' was associated 'with [the] "same nation"' suggesting an absence of discrimination.[53] Consequently, they argued that the colour paradigm as applied to Britain has inadvertently simplified the experience of white groups subject to racism. The myth of British cultural homogeneity thus ignores the range of racism experienced by different historical subjects. Evidently, Irish whiteness and the perception of Irish and British racial similarity has questionably altered historical acknowledgement of systemic British discrimination against the Irish in manifest ways.

The incompatibility of traditional theorisations of race from a US perspective prevents a complex understanding of whiteness in Britain. I argue that whiteness, whether related to religion, culture, or education was creatively reimagined across a whole arena of British society.[54] My study demonstrates that exhibitions offer a productive case study into Irish ethnicity as they encapsulated the performance of whiteness, which had become synonymous with civility. The gatekeepers of the white British middle class regulated access to acceptable

[53] M. J. Hickman and B. Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review*, 50: 1 (1995), pp. 5-19, p. 8. See also, M. J. Hickman and B. Walter, 'Racializing the Irish in England: Gender, Class and Ethnicity' in M. Cohen and N. J. Curtin (eds.), *Reclaiming Gender: Transgressive Identities in Modern Ireland* (New York, 1999), pp. 267-292; B. Walter, 'Challenging the Black/White Binary: The Need for an Irish Category in the 2001 Census', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 32 (1998), pp. 73-86; M. J. Hickman and B. Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain: A Report of Research Undertaken for the Commission for Racial Equality* (London, 1997); M. J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Avebury, 1995).

[54] See, L. Gibbons, 'The Global Cure? History, Therapy and the Celtic Tiger' in P. Kirby, L. Gibbons, and M. Cronin (eds.), *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society and the Global Economy* (London, 2002), pp. 89-106; M. J. Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies of the Irish in Britain: A Critique of the Segregation/Assimilation Model' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 236-253; A. Bonnett, 'How the British Working Class Became White: The Symbolic (Re)formulation of Racialized Capitalism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11 (1998), pp. 316-340.

notions of civil decorum; investment, trade, and profit all relied on being seen as deserving of capitalist growth based on one's individual and national character.[55] Therefore, display singularly makes clear that it is not that the Irish were not white but that they wanted the political privileges associated with whiteness, which was denied to them based on a racialised language of civilisation and class. I further prove that whiteness historically functioned via a rubric in terms of access to privilege that was gendered, sexualised and dependent on ethnicity.

My thesis forcefully critiques earlier historians who have emphasised the imagined inferior position of the Irish in Britain as being an all-encompassing product of the British state. These scholars have documented perceived similarities and connections between the Irish and those racialised as non-white during colonialism. For instance, Philip Cohen suggests that the Irish encapsulated British fears by representing 'a missing evolutionary link between the "bestiality" of Black slaves and that of the English worker as well as dangerous currents in European thought, including republicanism'.[56] Moreover, historians such as Luke Gibbons have argued that a broad anti-racist coalition developed between people of colour and Irish groups within British society.[57] I strongly contend that such generalised comparisons

[55] See, C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1995).
[56] P. Cohen, 'The Perversions of Inheritance: Studies in the Making of Multi-racist Britain' in P. Cohen and H. S. Bains (eds.), *Multi-Racist Britain* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 9-118, p. 74. See also, R. McVeigh, "'There's No Racism because There's No Black People Here": Racism and Antiracism in Northern Ireland' in P. Hainsworth (ed.), *Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland* (London, 1998), pp. 11-32; R. McVeigh, 'Is Sectarianism Racism? Theorising the Racism/Sectarianism Interface' in D. Miller (ed.), *Rethinking Northern Ireland: Culture, Ideology and Colonialism* (London, 1998), pp. 179-194; R. McVeigh, *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996); J. Kirkaldy, 'English Newspaper Images of Northern Ireland 1968-1973: An Historical Study in Stereotypes and Prejudices', PhD, University of New South Wales (1979); S. Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1780-1900' in C. Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978), pp. 81-110; L. P. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D.C., 1971); L. P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, 1968).
[57] L. Gibbons, 'Race against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13: 1 (1991), pp. 95-117. Gibbons compares discrimination against the Irish to racism toward American Indians in L.

delegitimises the racism experienced by people of colour in the past and moves away from a productive discussion of whiteness. It is far more valuable to highlight the specificities of racism against the Irish rather than imagine false equivalencies to prove that the group were indeed subject to discrimination.

Similarly, historians Michael de Nie, Hazel Waters, Ned Lebow and Perry Curtis have insisted and demonstrated in various ways that the Irish were the most important Othered group against which the British regularly measured themselves.[58] Indeed, negative racial representations of the Irish were more potent during the famine era than in later periods, yet, there was no established majority consensus. I demonstrate how conflicting narratives worked in tandem with the most extreme (racist) minority opinions in the British public alongside the far more common micro-scale marginalisation of the Irish. Therefore, a broad-brush interpretation of racism experienced by Irish groups is as simplistic as it is untrue.

I valuably demonstrate that focusing on the historical specificity of racialised prejudice against the Irish as opposed to assuming a homogenous experience is elucidated by studying international exhibitions and analysing the various versions of an Irish whiteness

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Gibbons, 'Race against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History' in C. Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 207-223, p. 208-209. See, D. Lloyd, 'Race and Representation', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13: 1 (1991), pp. 62-94; C. Wills, 'Language, Politics, Narrative, Political Violence', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13: 1 (1991), pp. 21-60.

[58] M. de Nie, 'A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes': The British Press and Transatlantic Fenianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), pp. 213-240, p. 234. See also, M. de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Wisconsin, 2004); S. Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience* (London, 2004); R. McVeigh, 'The Last Conquest of Ireland? British Academics in Irish Universities', *Race and Class*, 37 (1995), pp. 109-122; N. Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800–1960* (Hamden, 1982); N. Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy* (Philadelphia, 1976); M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley, 1975); N. Lebow, 'British Historians and Irish History', *Éire-Ireland*, 8: 4 (1973), pp. 3-38.

that were geographically as well as temporally rooted. More recently, Raymond M. Douglas in the early 2000s has analysed how theories purporting to show that the people of Ireland were racially distinct from their Anglo-Saxon neighbours underwent a revival in interwar Britain.[59] While this research argues that discourses of racial hibernophobia became prominent in British sociability and its impact varied in importance over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I again prioritise contextualised historical specificity. My thesis will creatively show that Irish whiteness as related to access to political privileges heightened during the Home Rule period in particular for political and capitalist motives instigated by Irish actors.

My research convincingly demonstrates how an Irish political whiteness was produced and maintained. Irish exhibition organisers were active agents in multiple constructions of Irishness, and they often employed hundreds of white Irish women to sell the fantasy of a peaceful and prosperous Ireland. Their conscious decision to largely employ women wove narratives of beauty and purity into discourses of the Irish and demonstrably proved that the Irish were in fact becoming more civilised like the British through soap and cleanliness.[60] A core concern is to explore how circulating popular images of rural industry and domesticity

[59] R. M. Douglas, 'Anglo-Saxons and Attacotti: The Racialization of Irishness in Britain between the World Wars', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25: 1 (2002), pp. 40-63. In M. Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge, 2014), Moulton argues that Douglas' reading is complicated when considered as part of a broader anti-immigration rhetoric in Britain, p. 296-297. See also, S. Garner, 'Ireland: From Racism without "Race" to 'Racism without Racists', *Radical History Review*, 104 (2009), pp. 41-56; M. J. Hickman, 'Reconstructing/Deconstructing "Race": British Political Discourses about the Irish in Britain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21: 2 (1998), pp. 288-307; C. Coulter, *Ireland: Between the First and the Third Worlds* (Dublin, 1990).

[60] See, S. Paseta, *Irish Nationalist Women 1900-1918* (Cambridge, 2013); M. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, 1999); M. O'Dowd, 'From Morgan to MacCurtain: Women Historians in Ireland from the 1790s to the 1990s' in M. G. Valiulis and and M. O'Dowd (eds.), *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 38-58; A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995).

both in Irish villages and in postcards as well as photographs ensured that the spectacle of Ireland flowed through the exhibition's borders. The Irish were not bounded entities, and the performance of, and reception to, Ireland's political whiteness was divided and multifarious, as my analysis will comprehensively show.[61]

The racialisation of the Irish in the fairgrounds is strikingly discernible within an imperial domestic context that reveals the labour involved in achieving a wider range of modern white privilege. I will show in chapter three how this materialised through cleanliness and purification narratives related to the commercial project of selling soap based on Irishness by two Irish entrepreneurs. I productively recognise the whiteness of the Irish as a broader project to modernise, industrialise, and perform civility within the imperial hierarchies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This fundamentally maintains the intricacies of bodily performed civility within the deeply divided British imperial state through the 1850s to the 1930s.

Existing scholarship on exhibitions has primarily focused on colonised extra-Europeans such as Africans and South Asians, and so ignored exhibited Europeans, such as the Irish. Yet, as an internally colonised people, exhibited Irish performers provide a rich case study for examining the multifaceted, changing nature of transnational exhibitionary politics that both expand and complement the current focus of the secondary literature. Historians

[61] See, G. K. Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', *Journal of British Studies*, 44: 1 (2005), pp. 115-133, p. 116. See also, G. K. Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union: A Response to the Commentators', *Journal of British Studies*, 44: 1 (2005), pp. 134-145; K. A. Miller, "'Scotch-Irish" Myths and "Irish" Identities in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century America' in C. Fanning (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora* (Illinois, 2000), pp. 81-98; K. N. Conzen, D. A. Gerber, E. Morawska, G. E. Pozzetta, and R. J. Vecoli, 'The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective form the U.S.A', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 12 (1992), pp. 3-41.

such as Neil Harris who have discussed race within exhibitions have tended to focus on the gaze of the white visitors – studying Ireland uniquely offers a way to talk about what happens when the gaze is shifted and the difference between observer and observed is not so stark. The visitors and exhibited within Irish display and consumption were located in a spectrum of whiteness and were close geographically and ethnically. Whilst historians like Corbey in particular have tended to reify the 'exoticism' of those displayed they have lost the nuances of racism, and inadvertently centred whiteness – an uninterrogated assumption tends to operate which always holds a difference in colour as historically significant as opposed to hierarchies within colour – whereas Irish exhibitions were whiteness in creation.

Overall, my thesis interrogates how the politics of display influences the production of Irish identity according to a host of contexts. The practices of display were shaped by issues of funding, organiser's motives, and the larger purpose of the event itself, which in turn fed back into Irish understandings of themselves politically, economically, socially or culturally as industrialists, capitalists, women, Home Rulers, British imperialists, nationalists, and Republicans. It comfortably sits within the 'new imperial history' instigated by Catherine Hall and others that critiques nation-centred historical approaches and seeks to reformulate British history.[62] Fundamentally, colonial powers may exist as the nucleus of a vast network of intertwined discourses; but in revealing those trajectories, the centre itself is decentred, as Britain is in my study of Ireland.[63] The fluid nature of embodied Irish identity in international contexts as it moved from a colonial to an independent state is originally evoked in my larger

[62] See, C. Hall and S. O. Rose (eds.), *At Home with Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (London, 2006); A. S. Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain* (London, 2005); S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Cambridge, 1997).
[63] S. Howe, 'Questioning the (bad) question: 'Was Ireland a Colony?', *Irish Historical Studies*, 36 (2008), pp. 138-152, p. 143.

analysis. By offering a broad overview of these topics in my introduction, I have demonstrated how my thesis valuably advances and contributes to multiple historiographies on Exhibitions, Ireland and Empire, and Race. 'A Cultural History of Irish Identity on Display' is transnational in scope, encompassing exhibitions in Ireland, the British Empire and the United States and each exhibition is placed in the wider political, economic and cultural context of its time. Thus, the lens of exhibitions reveals several original arguments regarding Irish identities as singular and broader collectives working with and through gender, capitalism and race in a larger configuration of empire and whiteness from the 1850s to the 1930s.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Throughout my thesis, I use the terms 'exhibitions', 'world's fairs' and 'expositions' interchangeably in my discussions of large-scale displays to a global audience. The different terms relate to various historical epochs and country-specific preferences. 'Exhibitions' is a term typically used by British organisers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to refer to their expansive displays. The word is also used in most scholarship on display in the British sphere. 'World's fairs' is often used by American scholars and American contemporaries in their discussions of these events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 'Expositions' is a word that can be traced to the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries and in contemporary discourse covers displays throughout the world. My use of these terms follows the parameters set by John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle in their authoritative *Encyclopaedia of World's Fairs and Exhibitions* published in 2008. They explain that 'exhibitions are similar to fairs but are quite different in one respect: exhibitions are solely for displaying or exhibiting goods,

while fairs connote commerce, as in the sale of goods being displayed'.[64] Alternatively, an exposition is a word that 'etymologically bridges the gap between fair and exhibition' and 'an exposition is larger, more extensive, and perhaps more formally organised than a fair'.[65]

[64] Findling and Pelle, *Encyclopaedia of World's Fairs*, p. 8.
[65] Ibid.

CHAPTER ONE:
'STIMULAT[E] THE INNATE [INDUSTRIAL] CAPACITIES OF IRISHMEN, AND SPUR THE GENIUS OF ERIN TO COME FORWARD INTO THE ARENA OF ARTISTIC AND SCIENTIFIC CONSUMPTION':[1] IRELAND'S EXHIBITIONS IN THE 1850S

In the 1850s, Ireland was theorised as a transitional space in constant need of development, and the country received practical solutions to industrialise within the fairground in line with Trevelyanite arguments on famine-relief that will be discussed later. The surviving Irish middle class post-famine became the organisers and financial backers of Ireland's exhibitions and they sought to engage the Irish populace with the project of commerce.[2] They capitalised on the opportunities afforded by the Great Exhibition of Arts and Industry held in London in 1851 after the Famine.[3] The Crystal Palace was the first international exhibition and with its some 100,000 objects from over 15,000 contributors attracted over six million visitors. Irish industrialists and entrepreneurs used the international platform to respond to the immediate and more long-term concerns exposed by the disaster. The Famine led to a rupture in Irish society in the short-term but for many it also highlighted the deep-rooted weaknesses of the Irish economy. The Irish display in 1851 functioned on two levels – on the one hand, it demonstrated its purported recovery from the direct impact of the Famine; on the other hand, it advertised the potential for modernisation in the future. This two-pronged approach enabled

[1] *The Exhibition Guide through Dublin: Containing a Description of the Public Buildings, Cathedrals, Churches, and Chapels, With Notices of the Theatres and other Places of Amusement; Also a well-arranged Route through the City and Environs, Modes of Conveyance, And a great Variety of interesting Information for the Guidance of Strangers. Illustrated with Views of the Public Offices, and A Map of the City and surrounding Districts. To which is prefixed a History of the Great Industrial Exhibition* (Dublin, 1853), p. iv. Shelf mark: 10390.a.31. British Library.

[2] For classed stereotypes on the Irish, see M. de Nie, 'The Famine, Irish Identity and the British Press', *Irish Studies Review*, 6: 1 (1998), pp. 27-35.

[3] Recent works on the 1851 Exhibition include: G. Cantor, 'Anglo-Jewry in 1851: the Great Exhibition and Political Emancipation', *Jewish Historical Studies*, 44 (2012), pp. 103-126; L. Merrill, 'Exhibiting Race "under the World's Huge Glass Case": William and Ellen Craft and William Wells Brown at the Great Exhibition in Crystal Palace, London, 1851', *Slavery and Abolition*, 33: 2 (2012), pp. 321-336.

Ireland to petition foreign investment for Ireland's anticipated progress and imagine a corrective to its current tragedy.

Historiography on Ireland in the 1851 exhibition has focused on the imperial nature of its display. Jeffrey Auerbach interprets the exhibition as revealing the conflicted colonial status of Ireland with varying degrees of success and failure for the future of the country, which holds true in my analysis.[4] The 1852 Cork Exhibition was locally organised by Cork's middle-class in this era of exhibits. Concurrently, historical consensus posits that the Great Industrial Exhibition in 1853 held in Dublin was a response to the inadequacies of Ireland's display in 1851 and 1852 and the horrors of the Famine.[5] Held from 12 May to 31 October on the grounds of Leinster House, 1.15 million visitors witnessed a proclaimed rebirth of the Irish nation. A determined show of industrial solidarity in the wake of their tragedy – here was an Ireland recovering and beginning a new chapter in its country's fateful history. Historians disagree, however, as to the success of the exhibition enterprise. Some such as Alun C. Davies have argued that it probably hastened the decline of some rural industries by exposing their weaknesses to competition from imports.[6] Others such as Leon Litvack have analysed the exhibition for its planned industrial regeneration and hopeful narrative of Ireland.[7] Building on this earlier work, I argue that the 1853 exhibition did represent a positive story of future development if not of current recovery.

[4] J. A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (London, 1999), see especially p. 30, p. 59, p. 85-86. Also, J. A. Auerbach, 'Empire under glass: The British Empire and the Crystal Palace' in J. McAleer and J. M. Mackenzie (eds.), *Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 111-141.
[5] A. C. Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace, 1853' in J. M. Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (eds.), *Irish Population, Economy, and Society* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 249-270.
[6] Ibid., p. 269. See also, p. 257 for Davies' analysis of the raw materials section.
[7] L. Litvack, 'Exhibiting Ireland, 1851-1853: Colonial Mimicry in London, Cork and Dublin' in L. Litvack and G. Hooper (eds.), *Ireland in the Nineteenth Century: Regional Identity* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 15-57.

Whilst there is extensive scholarship on what the 1851 Crystal Palace meant for Britain's Empire, and considerable literature on what the 1853 Dublin International Exhibition meant for post-Famine Ireland, this chapter attempts to bridge the two, and ask what happens if we consider the exhibitions imperial in nature for a country hugely changed demographically, and constitutionally shaky in the 1850s. If we can agree that the 1851 and 1853 exhibitions became the platform through which to visualise and authenticate a regenerated Ireland post-famine, we can expand and extend the significant literature that identifies international exhibitions as largely imperialist.[8] This chapter considers the display of Ireland, the responses to and the legacies of its representation in the 1850s to decentre British-centric literature on the 1851 exhibition and Irish-centric literature on the 1853 exhibition. By connecting the two historiographies, I will contribute to this well-known story and reveal how a new Irishness was cultivated after the natural disaster through exhibitions. The popular discourse of Irishness in the mid-nineteenth century emphasised the country as a less-developed space in desperate need of industrialisation and functioned through hopeful language of its recovery and regeneration.

I will demonstrate how Irish organisers operated along nationalist and unionist lines in a mixed hybrid form with their exhibits. The enterprise was wide-ranging and encompassed everything from educational theories on the visual as a legitimate form of learning to soliciting religious support to increase visitor numbers. I take *tabula rasa* to mean that a blank

[8] See, L. Purbrick, 'Introduction' in L. Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 1-25; A. Hassam, 'Portable Iron Structures and Uncertain Colonial Spaces at the Sydenham Crystal Palace' in F. Driver and D. Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities, Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 174-193; T. Barringer, 'The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project' in T. Barringer and T. Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London, 1998), pp. 11-27; P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988).

slate existed for Ireland through display which enabled them to inscribe their own vision of the country irrespective of problematic past constructions of their land and people while reinforcing Trevelyanite arguments on Irish development during the Famine.

The exhibitions emerged alongside discussions of the so-called 'Irish Problem' in the 1830s and 1840s which was concerned with the chronic poverty of much of the rural population and the scheme of land tenure. Many conceived the Irish rural economy as outdated, feudal and working solely for the benefit of a ruthless class of landlords motivated only by profits from rent. Contemporary businessmen in particular held an anachronistic form of agriculture to be the ultimate cause of Irish poverty. The solution was to see established farmers employ labourers and smallholders to work with new agricultural techniques to boost productivity and profit.[9] Thus, the exhibitions of the 1850s and 1851 in particular, functioned as a liminal space that enabled Irishmen and women to visualise an industrialised Irish future. It functioned as its own tabula rasa by demonstrating the Irish potential for industrialisation as a response to the urgent tragedy, and offering solutions to broader weaknesses in Irish economy and society through laissez-faire politics. Irish businesses contributed over 300 goods to the exhibition and contemporary opinion disagreed over its impact.

Some newspapers celebrated Ireland's wares, albeit in patronising terms. Others were generally quite derogatory. Contemporary texts reflect the differing ideological responses to post-famine policies in mid-nineteenth century Ireland and England. For most Irish men and

[9] Delaney, *Curse of Reason*, p. 229-230 and E. Delaney, *The Great Irish Famine: A History in Four Lives: Personal Accounts of the Great Irish Potato Famine* (Dublin, 2012), p. 180. See also, P. Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity: 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), especially Chapter Five, pp. 175-230 and D. Fitzpatrick, 'The Disappearance of the Irish Agricultural Labourer, 1841-1912', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 7 (1980), pp. 66-92.

women, ideas of Irish development functioned along distinctly nationalist or unionist lines that intersected with religious traditions. Importantly, Irish men and women across the confessional divide organised and contributed to the country's display. Some saw a union with Britain as the ultimate rectifier of Ireland's problems (exemplified in the 1851 exhibition and typically practiced by Irish Protestants) and others saw Irish development and advancement in a more nationalist vein (epitomised in the 1853 exhibition and often espoused by Irish Catholics), when considering solutions to Ireland's post-famine recovery. These Irish industrialists and British policy makers believed that Ireland desperately required dramatic social and economic reconstruction in the 1850s. The way in which broader theoretical justifications of development (divided along political and religious lines) interacted with the lived experience of Ireland's people highlights the competing approaches to recovery, which translated into conflicting notions of Ireland in the 1850s. Display therefore operated as an important and rich site for post-famine debate that emphasised the country's perceived need for industrialisation and hope.

The Famine, from its first appearance in 1845 to its end in 1849, was responsible for the deaths of over a million Irish men, women and children. The outright failure of the potato crop in 1846 and 1848, with smaller failures in other years, was the result of a large-scale blight (Phytophthora infestans) that destroyed the food that at least a third of the people of Ireland relied on to exist. Responses to the Famine ranged from nationalist John Mitchel's accusation that 'the Almighty […] sent the potato blight, but the English created the Famine' to Irish surgeon William Wilde's claim that 'the most strenuous efforts which human

sagacity, ingenuity and foresight could at the time devise were put into requisition'.[10] Turbulence in the social-political climate of Ireland ran rampant in the 1840s. Landlords were publicly charged in extreme cases of murder for evictions and almost a quarter of a million people emigrated from the country in 1851.[11] Historiography, public opinion and national sentiment have produced highly polarised camps of opinion.[12]

Historians such as Enda Delaney have been key in arguing that the Famine functioned as a tabula rasa for British policymakers, Irish industrialists, and the monied classes. Delaney has shown how these groups of people interpreted the Famine as offering a valuable chance to transform the Irish economy and Irish society. Often, religious discourse interpreted the Famine as a divinely ordained event, which in turn justified the attempt to overhaul traditional peasant culture through the extensive reform of the rural economy into a new capitalist design of agriculture. Many of the poor died from starvation or disease, were forced into workhouses, or emigrated as a result.[13] However, many of the upper and middle-classes, both Catholics and Protestants, landlords, farmers and merchants saw their lives improve.

Depopulation came with a rise in living standards. By 1851, Cormac Ó Gráda notes that one-tenth of the Irish population lived in 'fourth-class dwellings' (mud cabins) contrasted

[10] J. Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland* (c. 1861). Cited in K. A. Miller, *Emigrant and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, 1985), p. 306. *The Census of Ireland for the Year 1851, Part 5, Tables of Death, vol. I, Containing the Report, Tables of pestilences, and Analysis of the Tables of Death*. Cited in C. Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 3-4.
[11] E. Delaney, *The Curse of Reason: The Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 2012), p. 3.
[12] See, C. Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine: The Great Hunger in Ireland* (Dublin, 1997), especially Chapter One for a historiographical survey, pp. 1-15; N. Ó Ciosáin, 'Was there "Silence" about the Famine?', *Irish Studies Review*, 13 (1995-96), pp. 7-10; R. D. Edwards and T. D. Williams (eds.), *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History* (New York, 1957).
[13] Delaney, *Curse of Reason*, see especially p. 3.

to one-third before the Famine.[14] Irish life in general improved; Ó Gráda has documented wages rising, illiteracy decreasing and personal savings increasing for a significant number of famine survivors.[15] Overall, the Famine was an environmental catastrophe accelerated by mismanaged famine relief by the British government and exacerbated by the longer-term agricultural makeup of the Irish economy. The latter two conditions meant that a tragedy by chance interacted with conditions in Ireland and Irish-British relations to create large-scale suffering and death.

Ireland's recovery was intimately connected to the female sphere, whether through feminine domestic labour or women's consumption of popular goods as the title of this chapter: 'spur the genius of Erin' within 'artistic and scientific competition' reveals.[16] The fairs of the 1850s interacted to visualise a post-famine Ireland worthy of international spectatorship on distinct classed and gendered axes. A new era of Irish recovery excluded the country from its past trauma and its poorest people, however, the representation of social engineering did not materialise in Irish society and I will explore this in my discussion. My research extends imperial historiography by revealing how broader state (British) politics manifested in the localised domestic sphere of Ireland, and how exhibitions as sites of political expression accommodated the competing ideologies of Irishmen and women engaged in the country's development.

The 1851 Exhibition reflected a more generalised plan of Ireland's recovery that was organised by the British state, and those who supported the Union in Ireland. It was broadly

[14] Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine*, p. 58.
[15] Ibid.
[16] *The Exhibition Guide through Dublin*, p. iv.

concerned with Irish development as it related to Britain. In the 1852 Exhibition an Irish nationalist outlook engaged with the British Empire's vast influence to mediate a plan of development for Ireland. The 1853 Exhibition generally took a more nationalist stance, organised by contemporaries concerned with improving Ireland for the benefit of the Irish populace, partially separated from Britain. Roy Foster has argued that the Union symbolised the confessional divide in an increasing sectarian politics, and how these conflicting religious and political arguments interacted in the exhibition grounds is telling – each exhibition possessed a different salience in the larger story of Ireland in the 1850s.[17] Whilst 1851 set out how Ireland should proceed with its recovery post-Famine in a Unionist perspective, 1852 precariously balanced the Empire's priorities with Ireland's concerns, and 1853 exemplified the specificities of Ireland's recovery within a popular nationalism. The various organisers and their personal ambitions for the country's future can explain these differences. Overall, differing ideologies presented new forms of Irishness in the 1850s, and a curious mix that synthesised multiple political concerns was the dominant mode of Irishness in this period.

IRELAND'S BLANK SLATE: GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF INDUSTRY OF ALL NATIONS, LONDON 1851

The ideology of the 1851 exhibition is neatly summarised in *A Tribute to the World's Industrial Jubilee*: '[A] peaceful contest of arts and industry' that had ambitious aims for the future: '… in which art, science, and commerce, literature, and brotherly kindness, should go hand-in-hand among all the nations of the earth'.[18] The cosmopolitanism of the exhibition was

[17] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1988), p. 290.
[18] J. Cassell, 'No. 1', *The Illustrated Exhibitor, A Tribute to the World's Industrial Jubilee: Comprising sketches, by pen and pencil, of the Principal Objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, 1851* (London, 1851), 7 June 1851, p. 1-20, p. 1. Shelf mark: 606 *48* DSC. British Library. Copies of the *Illustrated Exhibitor* cost two pence and were roughly twenty pages in length.

epitomised by the architect of the Crystal Palace, Joseph Paxton (1803-1865): a 'self-made man' who designed the grand parallelogram that was 456 feet wide and 66 feet high (**Figure 1.1**).[19] The vast building was depicted as a prominent attraction. The sketch reveals in detail the architectural ingenuity of the building with the clean lines and domed roof. An array of well-dressed men, women and children were portrayed. The front of the building flew the flags of the world reflecting the international nature of the exhibition. The inclusion of trees reflects the broader blend between nature and the urban environment that the Crystal Palace sought to evoke. Overall, the image conjures scenes of an eager group of spectators crowded within and around the 1851 building ready to absorb the lessons of the Fair.

Chief adviser for the 1851 exhibition, Lyon Playfair, suggested a classification system to organise the exhibition's products. It catalogued the whole exhibition along four sections of: Raw Materials, Machinery, Manufactures and Fine Arts. This mapped out stages of industrial production, Louise Purbrick notes, to demonstrate the transformation of organic substances into luxury goods.[20] Contemporary literature celebrated the evolution of '[the] productions of the earth' which 'advance[d] [one's] comfort and happiness' with various different 'tools, implements […] to be worked into manufactures' and art 'which added beauty to what was already useful' as could be seen in the exhibition.[21] The political economy position that labour was the law of human nature, Purbrick argues, underscored the exhibition enterprise – this held that being industrious had a symbiotic effect on moral and material

[19] Ibid., p. 3.
[20] L. Purbrick, 'Defining Nation: Ireland at the Great Exhibition of 1851' in J. A. Auerbach and P. H. Hoffenberg (eds.), *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Hampshire, 2008), pp. 47-75, p. 55. See, S. Edwards, 'The Accumulation of Knowledge, or William Whewell's Eye' in L. Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 26-52, p. 35-37 for a discussion of Lyon Playfair's classification system.
[21] 'The Exhibition of 1851', *Cork Examiner*, 13 November 1850.

improvement.[22] Building on this, labour and its practices thus became legitimate indices to measure a country's progress on a scale of civilisation that held industrialisation and mechanisation as the ultimate achievement in human development.[23]

Most importantly, this type of labour targeted the 'advancement of the mass' who were considered in the best position to benefit from the technological and industrial development displayed in the fair.[24] Official commentators noted the class-based concerns of the exhibition by envisioning the space as egalitarian: 'beneficial to the poor and the oppressed, but also advantageous to the rich and powerful'.[25] The display functioned as a platform for didactic instruction and knowledge mainly through exposure. The *Illustrated Exhibitor* insisted: 'With increased acquaintance with each other, would come increased knowledge and more extended means of education; a better education among the people of England would tend to lessen crime; decreased crime would necessitate a decrease of taxation' and so the exhibition organisers apparently solicited 'a free, happy, moral, educated, and enlightened people'.[26] This utopian dream saw labour as a restorative to the injustices of unequal investment and structural poverty.

The ambitions of free-trade capitalism, globalised commerce, universalised peace and progress, notes historian Paul Young, underpinned the exhibition. Young's argument that the globalisation of the fair centred on England and revolved around concepts of development

[22] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 57.
[23] See, L. Kriegel, 'The Pudding and the Palace: Labour, Print Culture, and Imperial Britain in 1851' in A. Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking Through and With the Nation* (Duke, 2003), pp. 230-245; L. Kriegel, 'Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace' in L. Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 146-178.
[24] 'No. 1', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 2.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

and underdevelopment, advanced and less advanced groups, individuals capable of growing economically next to those deemed less able is convincing.[27] Young's contention that the 1851 exhibition both enforced and consolidated exploitative power relations with Britain as the imperial centre and the nucleus of global commerce is further evident in the fair's promotional material.[28] Ireland stood in juxtaposition to the centre in terms of difference; Jamie Saris has argued that historical prejudices held that 'the Irish were feckless in opposition to Saxon thrift; Ireland had folklore, whereas Britain had history; the island was without the arts of civilisation, whereas Britain had industry and associated economic power'.[29] Building on this, the perceived fecundity of Britain positioned itself against negative characteristics of Ireland, and exhibitions as sites of inscription allowed Ireland to resist this narrative and subvert, or (inadvertently) reaffirm these stereotypes to different degrees. An Irish agency therefore operated within broader prejudices related to the country in a constant tension that affirmed Ireland along contested fronts.

The fact that an exhibition would prove 'a mighty step' on the road to industrialisation and economic growth seemed obvious to contemporaries. Davies has convincingly argued that vociferous declarations fawning over the potential of exhibitions came from a mistaken belief that international fairs could stimulate economic growth by catalysing a growth toward future mechanisation and expansion, which conflated cause with effect.[30] For instance, the *Cork Examiner* noted that Irishmen and women had to 'seek out markets, make their

[27] P. Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 201.
[28] Ibid., p. 202.
[29] J. Saris, 'Imagining Ireland in the Great Exhibition of 1853' in L. Litvack and G. Hooper (eds.), *Ireland in the Nineteenth Century: Regional Identity* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 66-86, p. 70.
[30] Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 249-250. See, W. J. Battersby, *The Glories of the Great Irish Exhibition of All Nations, in 1853* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: 821 B32G. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

manufacturers known' within and outside exhibitions 'for the benefit of all future time' even after display – all of which were difficult and uncertain prospects.[31]

Specifically, a type of social policing functioned in the display to ensure properly disciplined behaviour within the public sphere of the exhibition and the private sphere of the home. This sinister hope for control over human action and emotion hints at the broader machinations of the fair and its desire to ferment an obedient, productive and well-behaved labouring class as Tony Bennett has discussed.[32] Whilst Bennett has considered the regulatory nature of the museum and larger exhibitions, 1851 specifically highlights the contentions within local display. Organisers held that labour would uphold the existing status quo; for Ireland specifically, the physical capacities of the country and its people took on a greater significance. For British policymakers and Irish industrialists, out of all of Britain's colonies, Ireland was considered the most in need of development after the Famine.[33] A well-behaved Irish populace would therefore inculcate the values of hard work within the Irish community, and in turn enable Britain's imperial rule to continue without incident. Labour as regulator of behaviour became a two-way beneficial process – both for Britain's Empire and Ireland – with Britain's ruling power protected. The teleological pretensions of fairs were attractive and easy to grasp, offering a ready-made solution to instability in mid-nineteenth century Ireland.

[31] 'The Exhibition of 1851', *Cork Examiner*, 13 November 1850.
[32] T. Bennett, 'Speaking to the Eyes: Museums, Legibility, and the Social Order' in S. Macdonald (ed.), *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (London, 1998), pp. 25-35 and T. Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, 4 (1988), pp. 73-102, p. 84.
[33] See, N. Hsieh, 'The Conspicuous Absence of Examination Questions Concerning the Great Irish Famine: Political Economy as Science and Ideology', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought,* 6: 2 (1999), pp. 169-200.

Britain's centrality as host and nucleus of trade was upheld by the positioning of the exhibits in the fairground. The Palace was divided geographically and split in half; with British and colonial goods occupying the western side of the building and international products situated in the eastern side. Irish objects featured within the British section of the 1851 exhibition. This assimilation is reflective of Ireland's political status, incorporated into the United Kingdom since the 1800 Act of Union. The number of contributors from Ireland was about 300: 'Dublin boast[ed] 197, Belfast 53; Cork 22; Limerick 12'.[34] Thus, the 1851 Exhibition confirmed the boundaries of British territory and state authority, but the terms applied to both Britain and Ireland in the exhibition's publications were varied. Changing descriptors of 'Britain', the 'United Kingdom' and 'England' pepper the writings of the exhibition's organisers and official literature on the 1851 exhibition.[35]

Purbrick has identified that 'Ireland was considered part of an "empire" and called a "province", it was also often claimed as a "sister isle", "sister land", "sister kingdom", sometimes [lauded] as "Sister of Erin", "emerald isle" or "Green Isle", and, occasionally, identified as a nation'.[36] The changeable language reveals a broader complexity on part of the exhibition organisers, as they hoped that Ireland could benefit from the exhibition but there was a reluctance to allow complete identification with the lesser industrialised country. For instance, in the *Official Catalogue,* 'It was observed that Cork had contributed little to the Crystal Palace' – thus revealing the uneven impact of the Famine with some parts of Ireland suffering more than others.[37] Such mutable positioning maintained Ireland's status as

[34] 'No. 9. Ireland's Contributions to the World's Fair', *Illustrated Exhibitor,* 2 August 1851, p. 141-160, p. 159.
[35] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 52.
[36] Ibid., p. 55.
[37] J. Sproule (ed.), *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853: A Detailed Catalogue of its Contents: with Critical Dissertations, Statistical information, and Accounts of Manufacturing processes in the Different Departments*

underdeveloped physically and textually and the variety of linguistic appendages enabled a camaraderie to exist without negatively affecting Britain.

Ireland in the 1851 exhibition was contrarily conceptualised by its organisers – at times, it was assimilated, and at others, it was segregated. Despite Ireland's exhibits being in the British section of the display, commentators frequently highlighted differences between Britain and Ireland. For instance, official exhibition literature emphasised the separateness of exhibits from Ireland and discussed their origins as offering a unique and particularly distinctive aesthetic to its goods.[38] The *Illustrated Exhibitor* championed Ireland's unique versatility by specifically naming the contributions of various merchants as exceptional, such as Richard Allen, popular clothier of Sackville Street, Dublin, who displayed 'cloths suitable for the first noble in the land, and for the individual of humble means'.[39] This may have been a tacit acknowledgement that both England and Ireland had a stark gulf between the richest and the poorest – with the exhibition and its goods seeking to bridge that gap. Moreover, a specific Irishness, in contrast to the clothier above who was generic in UK terms, even extended to its display of food. There was a preserved Irish pig which 'measure[d] five-and-a-half feet tall from the tail to the snout' cured by Mr Smith, provision merchant of Dublin.[40] The pig was a salient symbol of Ireland in nineteenth century Britain, and its presentation affirms the importance of evoking identifiable images of Irishness in a memorable fashion.

(Dublin, 1854), p. 4. Shelf mark: 7957.c.17. British Library. See, M. Murphy, *Compassionate Stranger: Asenath Nicholson and the Great Irish Famine* (Syracuse, NY, 2015), especially Chapter Seven, pp. 196-209.
[38] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 57-58.
[39] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 149.
[40] Ibid., p. 156.

The pointed posturing on Irish products is reflective of historian Mary Hickman's broader contention on constructions of Irishness within the British state. She insists that 'it has been a main function of national cultures to represent […] the ethnic mix of modern nationality as the primordial unity of "one people" […] through centralised nation-states […] incorporating cultures and national identities, implanting and securing strong cultural institutions, which tend to subsume all differences and diversity into themselves'.[41] In the 1850s, homogeneity and unity became superseded in the process of highlighting difference as a means of distancing, which extends Hickman's argument. Ireland's difference functioned within the larger whole of the British Empire. The Union worked on dual fronts; Ireland belonged to a greater political unit with idiosyncratic tendencies but it was also vulnerable to complete assimilation by British policymakers if desired. This became part of the project of creating an Irish nation allied with Britain for unionists and distanced from it for nationalists in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Overall, Irish exhibits and accounts of them in the popular press indicated that Ireland's political status was unresolved and uncertain in the 1851 Exhibition. This changeable existence allowed Britain to claim Ireland's successes where they existed and negated association with any of the country's weaknesses when they appeared. Crucially, Irish industrialists could strengthen their claims to the Union and petition for investment on these grounds as well as maintain their distinctive national identity.[42]

[41] M. J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Avebury, 1994), p. 7. See S. Hall, 'Our Mongrel Selves', *New Statesmen and Society*, 19 June 1992.
[42] See, B. Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Oxford, 2012), especially Chapter Two, pp. 30-56.

Reporting on Ireland's exhibits swung between enthusiastic portrayals emphasising new openness and camaraderie and more negative descriptions of the country's goods. The *Illustrated Exhibitor* was a magazine founded in June 1851 to commemorate the exhibition and act as a visitor guide; it reached a circulation of 100,000 a week.[43] It was authored and published by John Cassell (1817-1865), famed for producing educative books and periodicals through Cassell & Co as a form of social activism to bring knowledge and culture to the public.[44] The *Exhibitor* traded on nationalistic ideas of industrialisation's 'civilising' capacities. In August 1851, it published three articles entitled 'Ireland's Contributions to the World's Fair'. It declared: 'THERE IS HOPE FOR IRELAND'. The cause for hope rested solely in the hands and labours of Irish men and women: 'Hope in the warm, generous, kindly hearts of her people; Hope in the industry of hard hands, and the energy of thoughtful minds'.[45] It also narrated the Irish landscape as offering productive opportunities: 'Hope in the clearer day which dawning upon her green valleys, and shining out above the sterile mountain-tops that overlook them'.[46] This is markedly different from many popular tracts of the time, which lamented Ireland's unused landscape as causing the country's perceived chronic underdevelopment.

The wondrous image of a non-partisan utopia included admitting historic prejudice: 'Time was when Englishmen looked askance at anything – human or otherwise – coming from the Green Isle'.[47] However, the exhibition ushered a timely era of optimism and

[43] Litvack, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 23.
[44] B. Maidment, 'Entrepreneurship and the artisans: John Cassell, the Great Exhibition and the periodical idea' in L. Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 79-113, p. 81-82.
[45] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor,* p. 141.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

friendship between the two countries, cemented by Ireland's display of its present successes and potential: 'Ireland has asserted […] inventive genius [and] industrial skill', and so visitors could proudly witness 'Ireland's advancement in the scale of nations'.[48] Such congratulatory tones in describing Ireland may have been compensating for the historical subjugation of the country in the past. The narration of Ireland's exhibits in largely positive tones further contributed to the ideological rendering of the entire exhibition enterprise, framed as celebrating the British Empire more generally, and in this case, Ireland's union with it specifically.

The *Exhibitor*, in particular, attempted to establish a filial condition by embracing a sibling relationship utilising pronouns. For example, it characteristically framed Ireland's goods as 'contributions of the sister kingdom' which included a variety of items from glass and silver manufactures, to lace, linen, poplin, tabinets, and friezes: 'from the most delicate and highly-wrought textile fabrics to the coarse cloth of the peasant's cloak'.[49] This extensive list of the displayed Irish goods encapsulated Britain's attitude towards Ireland in the exhibition – as a proud older sibling overjoyed by their younger relation's partial and fuller achievements. 'Worthy' and 'useful' – for everything from the practical to the decorative were typical descriptors in the narration of Irish exhibits. What better demonstration of Ireland's recovery was there then to showcase that the country had an abundance of things in 1851's 'universal rendezvous'?[50]

[48] Ibid., p. 143.
[49] Ibid.
[50] 'Exhibition of 1851. To Parties Visiting London', *Dublin Evening Mail*, 16 April 1851.

In official exhibition reporting, every part of the country was included; reinforcing the sense that Irish men and women's lives as a whole were improving and Britain was key in facilitating this recuperation. It was claimed that 'Clonmel ha[d] some good specimens', which complemented the high-quality furniture from Dublin, the 'damasks and linens of Belfast' as well as the display of the 'agricultural machines of Cork'.[51] A joint enterprise of contemporary texts exalted Ireland's 'honourably distinguished' position.[52] This praise extended to asserting Irish superiority over English goods. For instance, Messrs. Richard and Thomas Turner, of the Hammersmith Works, Dublin, had a design considered far better than the majority of drawings received for a competition judged by the Royal Commissioners in 1851.[53] The exaggerated reporting on Ireland's products fulfilled the need by certain British industrialists to address past inequalities in an attempt to create new trade for the future and Irish industrialists were particularly receptive to such opportunities for investment from the wealthier Britain. The *Exhibitor* concluded: '[the] year 1851 [i]s [a] period of advancement to the civilized world, no less than as a time of Hope for our long-oppressed Sister of Erin'.[54] Such congenial declarations of love and support conceptualised the exhibition as existing as a blank slate against past ill feeling and long-oppression. There was no mention of the Famine, nor recognition of the historical underdevelopment of Ireland, or any acknowledgement of the political tensions of nationalism in the early decades of the 1800s.

In Irish exhibits, a quaint and ancient image of Irishness was cultivated with a focus on connectedness to the land. Jewellery and furniture made out of Irish bogwood was popular

[51] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 143. See, 'World's Exhibition of 1851. Premiums of Irish Manufacture', *Newry Examiner*, 3 August 1850.
[52] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 143.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

in Crystal Palace. Purbrick has comprehensively argued that bog-yew enacted the labour of historical recovery and reclaimed an Irish past for contemporaries.[55] This ancient timber re-addressed the national inequalities between England and Ireland by cultivating a distinctive Irish story. Part of the nationalist Irish myth of the Famine was English neglect and dislike of the Irish populace. This ancient material symbolically asserted that Ireland had a history that was equal to, if not even more special and precious than England's. The revered material of bogwood enabled Ireland to expound its exceptionalism for national profit.

Crucially, many items of bogwood featured symbols of the Union in the form of roses, shamrocks and thistles (**Figure 1.2**) and so decorative art tailored the exhibits to a British audience.[56] Common designs complementing the Union through cherubs and beautiful men and women adorn the sideboard. Furniture made in Ireland for Crystal Palace were resplendent with artistic intricacies and aesthetic flair. The image reveals the delicate nature of Irish designs that associated handmade Irish goods with beauty and sophistication. The sideboard was both practical and decorative, and the catalogue for 1851 contained many Irish exhibits from the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. There are other examples of this connectedness to the land which Purbrick does not cite, for instance, the 'Royal Tara Brooch' received much interest and was described as, 'peculiarly Irish, or, perhaps properly, Celtic; or […] common to Scotland; and [maybe] common to Moorish tribes of Africa, and derived from thence; but it is certainly of a very great and unknown antiquity in Ireland'.[57] The

[55] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 75. Bog oak was also shown in the 1852 Cork Exhibition, the *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier* reported that 'Goggin, of Nassau Street, displayed several antique brooches, bracelets, armlets beautifully designed upon traditions of Irish history, and gemmed with Irish pearls found in the Slaney, with Irish diamonds found in the Glens of Killarney, and with Irish gold found in the Wicklow mountains', 'Bog-oak Ornaments', *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier*, 12 June 1852.
[56] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', see especially p. 71-75.
[57] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 154.

history offered in this description conjures images of a global world commerce rooted in a unity that spanned the globe. Ireland was imagined as one country in a network of broader areas each sharing not only a specific type of brooch but also a collective history from Western Europe to Africa. Thus, the significance of the symbolism of Irish exhibits and its ties to the land in Purbrick's argument holds ground in multiple instances.

Specifically, the acknowledgment of bogwood's history established claims of an authentic Ireland steeped in archaic virtues and culture displayed for popular interest, and for a British audience in particular. This cultivated interest in Irish goods by creating a revered sense of historical significance over creative ornamentation. Visitors could feel like they were the proud owners of something timeworn and special. Purbrick has argued that dual ideas about national status were contained in Irish objects at the 1851 exhibition; alternatively, nationhood was imagined to occur after future industrialisation and modernisation, or it would emerge immediately when Irish land had become more 'useful'.[58] Building on this, displayed Irish crafts revealed to visitors the precious objects birthed from Irish land. The land interacted with a broader Irish history contained in antiquities such as St Patrick's Bell, with its richly ornamented shrine, a crozier of Lismore, and even the harp of Ireland became a feature in later displays.[59] An Irish nationhood was visualised through displayed symbols of an archaic Ireland. The power of symbols allowed observers to see an object and associate it with a place.[60] This transference of symbolism enabled Ireland to craft a distinctive national identity in Crystal Palace as bound to the land.

[58] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 75.
[59] 'The National Exhibition', *Cork Constitution*, 1 July 1852.
[60] See, T. McDonough, 'Post-Colonial Perspectives on Irish Culture in the Nineteenth Century' in T. McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 249-259.

Most importantly, Ireland in the fairground materialised as becoming industrial and developed. This planned industry was intimately tied to the Union and broadly revealed a pro-Union and by extension pro-Empire stance in the mid-nineteenth century. The burden of industry became the responsibility of the poor and particularly women. The *Illustrated Exhibitor* imagined that a 'brighter day [could] dawn on the Sister-land, [without] famine and despair' only 'when the Irish peasant shall be industrious and prosperous'.[61] Textiles were a productive market for the labour of female peasantry, which gained notoriety throughout the exhibition. The newspaper expounded: 'the term "Irish" is universally known as the name of the finest [textiles]', such as flax, linen, lace, muslin, and poplin.[62] The manufacture of textiles in Ireland was primarily a domestic industry in the 1840s, taking place in women's homes. Further, in well-attended female schools and peasant's cottages in Ireland 'almost every kind of useful and ornamental work', took place.[63] These schools were popular projects for gentry women interested in local philanthropy, particular in times of hardship, and relied on substantial charitable donations.

One of the key aims of the exhibition project was to stimulate a growing commercial interest amongst the labouring poor and female employment was seen as having a positive benefit on consumption. The exhibition was part of a broader move towards wage labour to enable individuals to earn money and spend money in the purchase of luxury and beauty. *Reports by the Juries* (1851) was an official appraisal of the exhibits by selected committee members. This noted that '[female] workers being invariably employed in their own houses […] they can thus, by their own industry, increase their comforts without endangering their

[61] 'No. 10. Ireland's Contributions to the World's Fair', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 9 August 1851, p. 161-180, p. 169.
[62] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 146.
[63] 'No. 10', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 169.

morals'.[64] Such female industriousness was praised and encouraged both in the exhibition and beyond. On the other end of the class-scale, the production of various kinds of expensive lace reflected the consumer habits of a new middle-class who were unaffected or otherwise profited from the Famine. Evidently, the capitalist instinct of the nineteenth century produced changed labour practices and consumption.

The recurrent characterisation of the Irish as 'developing' positioned Ireland as tentatively straddling backwardness and modernity, agriculture and manufacturing, tragedy and progress. The Irish performed a modernity that was achievable, timely and profitable.[65] Concurrently, the British often criticised the present Irish condition as backwards, stagnant and at times hopeless. Yet, the exhibition platform bought these two conflicting positions together and allowed a fictionalised reconciliation to occur – whatever past stereotypes of the Irish existed their display of industry and peoples represented the possibility of a hopeful future irrespective of their present condition. Peter Hoffenberg demonstrates that the need to be 'developed' became the trope of a rudimentary nation.[66] 'Developing' did indeed tease the prospect of potential equity with industrialised nations while exemplifying the country's backwardness in the present, which in turn reinforced imperial control.[67] For instance, official exhibition literature narrated in exhaustive detail Britain's role in developing the Irish textile

[64] 'Class XIX. Report on Tapestry, including Carpets, Floor-cloths, &c, Lace, Fancy Embroidery, and Industrial Works' in *Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided* (London, 1852), p. 465. Shelf mark: 7955.e.12. British Library. Cited in Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 62-63. Such narratives can also be seen in the Dublin exhibition; 'The Dublin Exhibition: Embroidery', *Newry Telegraph*, 28 July 1853, celebrated the 'handywork of Irish female talent and industry'.
[65] See, D. Lloyd, *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* (Dublin, 2008), p. 6.
[66] P. H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (London, 2001), see Chapter Six, pp. 166-202, especially p. 167-168.
[67] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 70.

industry. It reported that 'the British government had granted £1,000 for the purpose of affording instruction in the proper cultivation and treatment of flax'.[68]

Within this discourse, a rural, traditional (and feminine) Ireland was epitomised as a virtue; offering hope. Almost a third of the *Illustrated Exhibitor's* articles discussed feminised rural industries.[69] This sentimentalisation of labour paradoxically equated a new consumer market with unaffordable and highly ornate goods. For example, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace,* boasted that the exhibits in 1851 were typically the 'crowning representation[s] [of particular trades] rather than the articles of everyday use' and Lara Kriegel has shown how this made exhibited items more appropriate for expensive well-decorated homes.[70] Despite not being suitable for everyday consumption, this translated into a productive change for both the working and middle-classes. With the acceleration of free trade discourses in the mid-nineteenth century, in this instance the revered 'invisible hand' in the market was manipulated by those in power for the perceived benefit of the underdeveloped and poor, as well as the more industrial and middle-class in Ireland. A dual influence thus operated in Ireland's display, which sought to employ the abundant cheap female labour in the country to produce and sustain a new commercial sphere for the monied.

A statue of Caractacus by Constantine Panormo of Dublin (c. 1805-1852) placed in the main avenue at the entrance of the Irish Court (**Figure 1.3**) generated popular interest by

[68] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 146.
[69] See, 'No. 14. Needle-Work in the Great Exhibition', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 6 September 1851, p. 237-256 and 'No. 24. 'Porcelain Works in the Great Exhibition', *Illustrated Exhibitor,* 15 November 1851, p. 433-452.
[70] *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851*, Vol. 2 (London, 1852), p. 260. Shelf mark: W30/2382. British Library. Cited in L. Kriegel, *Grand Designs: Labour, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (London, 2007), p. 123-124.

the fair's visitors. The *Illustrated Exhibitor* narrated the story: 'British General, famed as the bravest among his comperes […] for nine years […] oppose[d] and annoy[ed] the Romans'.[71] The General was eventually captured in Rome and 'in chains' from the 'depth of his shame and indignation' pleaded for release to 'a humble cottage in Britain!'.[72] The story explains that Emperor Claudius was so moved by the General's predicament that he commanded him to be set free, along with his companions. The artist sculpted the moment of the chains being loosed.[73] The story of the statue attracted significant contemporary attention – the sculpture's power rested in the interpretations and connotations drawn from its observation. Visitors were encouraged to read the description of its origins in the *Catalogue* and reflect on the physical statue.

Caractacus's statue of white marble in elegant dress and strong features has been the subject of many historical interpretations. Purbrick has summarised the historiography on the sculpture and argues that it might have existed as a 'gesture of unity between Ireland and Britain'.[74] Leon Litvack argues that the Caractacus statue was a case of 'colonial mimicry' – a work that possesses a colonial structure but does not directly duplicate colonial effects.[75] Purbrick has used the work of Sam Smiles in *Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (1994), to show how Caractacus could, in different contexts, appear as a 'Celtic or a British hero or as both'.[76] However, Purbrick rightly points out that the adoption of a Celtic insurgent, as the embodiment of nineteenth century British national identity was

[71] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 150.
[72] Ibid., p. 151.
[73] See, W. G. Strickland, 'Constantine Panormo', *A Dictionary of Irish Artists* (1913), https://www.libraryireland.com/irishartists/constantine-panormo.php (Accessed: 27 July 2018).
[74] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 50; for Purbrick's summary of the historiography see, p. 47-52.
[75] Litvack, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 32-33.
[76] Purbrick, 'Defining Nation', p. 50 and S. Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (London, 1994), p. 40-41.

curious. By this time, Celticism was becoming synonymous with negative prejudices related to the Irish character and broader Irish inferiority within imperialist discourses.[77] Thus, the positive display and reception of Caractacus as British hero necessitated the obfuscation of historical and contemporary narratives as Purbrick has shown.[78]

The research of Kate Nichols works wells within this expansive historiography. In *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace* (2015), Nichols demonstrates how classical sculpture functioned in different political moments to expound a particular version of history that was not necessarily rooted in any specific time and place. She argues that the display of Greek and Roman sculpture at the Crystal Palace reveals how 'classical sculpture could be associated with moral beauty as well as design reform, archaeological precision, the realm of the mind, or be part of an entertaining day out'.[79] Therefore, it is evident that Panormo's Caractacus could represent Ireland's recognition of Britain's admirable struggle against a powerful entity; alternatively, it could display the Irish potential to 'liberate' themselves from the shackles of the British. Overall, the statue could serve as a role model, an admired agitator or a political nuisance according to visitors' perspectives.

The central tenet of the 1851 exhibition's organisers was that the Irish could 'work' themselves out of the poverty caused by the Famine – as a result of the productive Union with Britain. Exhibition organisers individualised the process of recovery by emphasising the importance of personal desire and entrepreneurship as a way out of distress. Crystal Palace

[77] Ibid. See, L. Gibbons, 'Race against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13: 1 (1991), pp. 95-117; L. Curtis, *Nothing but the Same Old Story: Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (London, 1984); L. P. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (London, 1971).
[78] Ibid., p. 52.
[79] K. Nichols, *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854-1936* (Oxford, 2015), p. 248.

was an effusive example showing that the tools for Irish progress and industry were readily available – it just relied on the labouring poor to act on the opportunity. The middle-class could act as investors and consumers and the working-class labourers as the producers. Ireland's potential future could be 'more successful and more active' after its 'lamentable depression' in the 1850s.[80] The *Official Catalogue* made innumerable laudatory statements on the plentiful lessons of the exhibition; 'We heartily say "God Speed!" to all attempts to give employment to the population of Ireland'.[81] Visual displays were perceived to be sufficiently instructive to change the lives of the Irish poor according to popular discourse.

The exhibition interacted with the real-life conditions in Ireland on a superficial basis – there was a significant disparity between the realities of a barely recovering Ireland post-famine and the exhibition's celebratory proclamations. Delaney has shown that the impact of the Public Works programmes, the strikes, and riots of the late 1840s still had real consequences decades later.[82] Newspapers reported daily on the departures of 'wretched creatures' escaping from poverty.[83] Further, there was such large-scale emigration from Ireland that Irish-born people accounted for a third of New York's population in 1855.[84]

Despite these seismic demographic changes, individual Irishmen and women received praise as the bastions of the future through their perceived integrity and perseverance coupled with new mechanisation. For instance, the *Exhibitor* boasted that 'the Briarean arm of steam-

[80] 'The Exhibition of 1851', *Cork Examiner*, 13 November 1850.
[81] 'No. 11. Ireland's Contributions to the World's Fair', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 16 August 1851, p. 181-200, p. 197.
[82] Delaney, *The Curse of Reason*, p. 225.
[83] 'The Irish Immigration', *Reynold's Newspaper*, 23 March 1851.
[84] Delaney, *The Curse of Reason*, p. 221. See also, H. R. Diner, '"The Most Irish City in the Union": The Era of the Great Migration, 1844-1877' in R. H. Bayor and T. J. Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish* (London, 1996), pp. 87-107.

power and machinery will accomplish that which the maiden's arm once sufficed to do'.[85] Ireland's portrayal as a rural hinterland with undeveloped natural resources and a backward manufacturing system extended the narrative of potential development both through the individual and technology. The newspaper lamented that 'Ireland contains some of the richest iron-ores in Europe, and yet they are allowed to lie unused beneath the soil'.[86] The Irish land and its people were ripe for cultivation in the eyes of many.

Irish publications however, concentrated on the post-Union alliance between British and Irish contributions, comparing their ordered exhibits with the perceived jumble present in the international courts, as Litvack has discussed.[87] The *Freeman's Journal* noted: 'The products of Great Britain and Ireland are displayed in a profusion, and with a skill as regards arrangement, that must impress the mind of any man […] extent of British and Irish manufactures, […] enormous resources of capital and industry which we organise and control. On the eastern side of the transept […] filled with the production of foreign countries […] much negligence appears to have prevented the progress of the exhibition'.[88]

Despite the fact that both the British press, the Irish press, and certain exhibition literature critiqued Ireland – its partnership with Britain granted Irish industrialists an elevated sense of superiority in the hierarchy of displayed nations. The Union in this way was vastly profitable, performatively, if not in reality. Within the webs of empire, we can see how colonial networks operated. Ireland could claim prestige merely by association. For some authors of official state propaganda its relatively low 300 goods granted it a renowned

[85] 'No. 9', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 146.
[86] 'No. 10', *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 177.
[87] Litvack, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 33.
[88] 'Irish Industry at the Crystal Palace', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 8 May 1851.

position in the competition of industrialisation. The Irish symbolically used their personal physical labour to supplement the ranks of the imperial state, and so power remained within the imperial English nucleus. The exhibition commissioners bestowed the prestigious Council Medal, thirty-six Prize Medals, four cash prizes, and seventeen honourable mentions to Ireland.[89] Ireland's chameleon-like status in 1851 allowed it to assert itself as being on the brink of industrialisation, if only its people and the British state would help.

IRELAND'S INTERIM DISPLAY: NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF IRELAND, CORK 1852

The Industrial Exhibition of Ireland in 1852 held in Cork emerged out of the widely held belief that exhibitions caused economic growth, and the general disappointment with the goods Cork had sent to the 1851 exhibition. The Cork Exhibition lasted three months from 10 June to 10 September and hoped 'to develop and foster […] hitherto neglected resources'.[90] It was organised by John Francis Maguire (1815-1872) former Mayor of Cork. He was determined to 'display to the country its own resources and capabilities, to inspire confidence, to remove doubt, to banish prejudice, to awaken interest […] to give employment, diminish poverty, lessen taxation, promote happiness, and elevate the moral and physical condition of the mass of the people, by the practical encouragement of native industry'.[91] These extensive objectives again placed the burden of improvement on the Irish people, notably its poorest. It even assigned blame to them. Maguire lamented the over-reliance on potato, which he saw as

[89] *Illustrated London News*, XIX, July-December 1851, p. 505; 'Exhibition of All Nations. Irish Prize Bells', *Cork Examiner*, 1 September 1852. See, K. W. Luckhurst, 'The Great Exhibition of 1851', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 99: 4845 (1951), pp. 413-456.
[90] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland*, p. ii.
[91] Ibid., p. 17.

causing the Famine: 'the whole framework of Irish society rested on the frail support of a perishable root'.[92]

Maguire's politics reveals an Irish nationalism popular in the nineteenth century which sought to develop the country's manufacturing industry; to make Irish products appealing for Ireland's benefit, and further to counter anti-Irish prejudice that made the populace 'purchase everything English'.[93] The exclusive consumption of English products became a distinctive form of nationalism for Unionists who were committed to an alliance with England, even at the cost of Irish industry. Maguire despaired that prejudice against Ireland permeated 'the lowest to the highest class, from the peasant to the peer' acting as 'a moral blight upon the minds and hearts of Irishmen and Irishwomen'.[94] For instance, contemporary newspapers deplored that even after Irish exhibitions: '[where] people viewed and admired the various specimens of native genius and industrial skill' they still 'purchased English and foreign goods as usual'.[95] The Cork exhibition was therefore part of a broader process of unlearning prejudice towards Irish manufactures and challenging the perceived higher status attached to English-made goods in the mid-nineteenth century.

Maguire described the Irish as 'impulsive children', conceivably critiquing the vast swathes of migration in the 1850s.[96] In Maguire's nationalist view, emigration because of hardship in the country was child-like and immature, and he himself was an example of the successes Irishmen and women could achieve if they stayed in Ireland. Here, 'child-like'

[92] Ibid., p. 9.
[93] Ibid., p. 10.
[94] Ibid.
[95] 'Exhibition of the Manufactures of the World in 1851 – True Encouragement for Irish Talent and Industry', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 29 July 1850.
[96] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland,* p. ii.

becomes a metaphor for abandoning the country. The exhibition thus emerged out of negative conceptions of Ireland, and its people specifically – it became a workable solution, a lifeline, and a much-needed chance for development. The prospective 'employment of the idle and the poor' was the exhibition's 'main object'.[97] And the exhibition received around 140,000 visitors in total. The number of visits by season ticket holders was 54,936 and 74,095 paid at the entrance.[98] Of this, it is difficult to know how many of the poorer classes attended but Maguire introduced sixpenny days to attract visitors from the labouring communities. Furthermore, some had their admission paid by their employers, like workers from Queenstown, Blackrock and Cloyne amongst others for 'whom the day of their excursion was made a joyful holiday'.[99]

As in 1851, the importance of social discipline is exemplified in contemporary reporting: 'The very humblest and poorest preserved their self-respect, by the propriety and gravity of their deportment, and as rigidly complied with the prescribed regulations as the richest and proudest'.[100] Maguire's patronising appraisal reveals the scepticism within which the working class operated in the mid-nineteenth century and the anxiety to dispel any fears that they would upset the exhibition project. To a certain extent, there was significant effort to present images of a fraternal unity within the nation for the benefit of the country as a whole. The official pamphlet of the 1852 exhibition stated: 'All classes, from the fashionably-dressed holder of the season ticket, to the humbly attired payer of the six-penny admission fee […] in

[97] Ibid., p. 17.
[98] Ibid., p. 424.
[99] Ibid., p. 427. See, A. C. Davies, 'The First Irish Industrial Exhibition: Cork, 1852', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 2 (1975), pp. 46-59, especially p. 50.
[100] Ibid., p. 428. See also *Report of the Cork Cuverian Society for the Cultivation of Sciences* (Cork, 1855). Shelf mark: P 432(1). National Library of Ireland. For the working-class and exhibitions, see A. Short, 'Workers under Glass in 1851', *Victorian Studies*, 10: 2 (1966), pp. 193-202.

point of demeanour, deportment, and conduct, there did not seem to be [the] slightest difference'.[101] The historical accuracy of such a position is impossible to recover; however, again we see the importance of regulating human behaviour within the constraints of contemporaries' class groups. The number of working-class attendees is questionable, as the organisers reduced the entrance fee in order to attract more visitors.[102] Maguire and others reinforced class-based inequality and prejudice as a way to rebuild Ireland post-famine, reminiscent of capitalist England.

Similar to 1851, the 1852 exhibition championed the union in order to show 'how worthy [Ireland] is to form a portion of the British Empire'.[103] It saw the union as fundamental to its future development and industrialisation but maintained Irish distinctiveness. Its ultimate ambition was that: 'Ireland should be considered as a[n] integral portion of the British Empire, and not to be considered as a province or a dependency of the empire'.[104] Like 1851, the mythical capacities to fix Ireland post-famine circulated: the 'spirit of charity and patriotism' prevalent would 'awaken intelligence […] excite emulation […] impart knowledge'.[105]

The Cork Exchange Building displayed everything from minerals, salt, flax and beet, machinery, hardware, whisky, tobacco, poplins, tabinets and velvets, furniture, and harps 'to educate the masses' (**Figure 1.4**), even a shamrock table.[106] The image reveals the number of

[101] Ibid..
[102] 'Cork National Exhibition', *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 19 July 1852.
[103] *Exhibition Inaugural Address Delivered by His Grace, The Archbishop of Dublin, in the Exhibition Pavilion, Cork, on the Evening of the Tuesday, 19th June, 1852, on the Opening of a Course of Lectures, Illustrative of Irish Art, Industry, and Science* (Cork, 1852), p. 3. Shelf mark: D-7956.f.18. British Library.
[104] Ibid., p. 5.
[105] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland*, p. 7.
[106] *Cork Constitution*, 24 November 1855. See, 'Cork Exhibition', *Roscommon & Leitrim Gazette*, 14 August 1852 and *Cork Constitution*, 8 June 1852.

children admitted on various days of the exhibition's run, and there were almost 1,000 more girls who visited than boys. Many of the girls came from schools of rural industries and church organisations, and the boys from various religious and military organisations. The higher number of girls may reflect the fact that women were tasked with the revival of rural industries, and these girls were seen to have the potential capacity to save Ireland by their industrious hands. However, boys and men held the responsibility of mechanisation deemed necessary for Irish recovery, and their lower numbers may reveal the general failings of this project. Boys did not visit the exhibition in order to further Irish progress, perhaps because of a lack of interest, or lack of opportunity. We can further see that some charities bought girls and boys tickets to attend, and indicates that children occupied a significant section of the exhibition's targeted audience. The focus on children may have reflected Maguire's desire to prevent migration at a later age – if citizens could see and be inspired to further the industry of their country, they may eventually have opted to settle in Ireland during adulthood. Again, Irish men and women evolved as the saviours of the country – devoid of the state.

In the end, the entire exhibition enterprise was celebrated despites its lack of practical achievements (it failed to produce a profit). It was an 'unaided effort of one of the poorest and most depressed countries on the face of the earth' and the vast project was an achievement in terms of organisation and general reception.[107] Alun C. Davies has shown that the practical impact of the Exhibition ranged from stimulating the growth of flax to sustain Ulster's productive linen industry, introducing sugar beet as a staple in the Irish diet, and the

[107] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland*, p. 425. 'National Exhibition to be held at Cork', *The Evening Freeman*, 24 April 1852 noted the many contributions received for the 1852 display from private merchants to philanthropists.

expansive irrigation of salt mines.[108] Ultimately, in the words of Maguire, the 1852 exhibition was 'another stride, in the path of National Regeneration'.[109] Thus, 1852 entrenched ideas of an Irish nationalism allied with the Union based on the power of the visual, the abilities of the individual, and the gift of the natural environment in the quest to reform Ireland to fight against the 'forgeries of the foreigners'.[110] Ireland's display in the 1850s stood as convincing exemplars of potential progress – Ireland's productive future was on the horizon – Irishmen and women need only to reach out and grasp it.

IRELAND'S RECOVERY: GREAT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF ART AND INDUSTRY, DUBLIN 1853

The International Irish Exhibition of Arts and Industries opened on 12 May 1853 for six months on the grounds of Leinster House, Dublin (**Figure 1.5**). The impressive building was smaller in size and grandeur to the 1851 display. The structure was centrally positioned in the pencil sketch with an imposing front (each dome was 425 feet in length and 100 feet in height).[111] A host of well-dressed men and women, some on horses, circulated on the lawn, evoking images of sophistication and prestige. A few of the guests pointed admiringly at the building itself and trees drawn on either side illustrated the importance of nature in this grand display of industry. Overall, the image with its inclusion of horses and carriages emulated the broader aspirations of the Fair to stimulate increased consumption and trade, particularly for the wealthy.

[108] Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 250-251.
[109] Maguire, *Industrial Movement in Ireland*, p. 430.
[110] 'The National Exhibition at Cork', *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier*, 18 May 1852.
[111] T. D. Jones, *Record of the Great Industrial Exhibition, 1853: Being a Brief Description of Objects of Interest, etc* (Dublin, 1853), p. 43. Shelf mark: 7958.aa.2. British Library. See, S. M. Kilfeather, *Dublin: A Cultural History* (Dublin, 2005), p. 143-144.

John Benson, a county surveyor of the East Riding of Cork, and engineer to the Cork Harbour Commissioners, designed the building.[112] Its opening, attended by representatives of the Church, university, army and guilds was heralded as a:

> Day of jubilation and of pride – for Ireland invites in peaceful convocation to her metropolis a nobler assemblage than ever met in her ancient halls of kings, and she has raised a structure for their reception more august than that Teagh Mor, which in the days gone by, stood on the Hill of Taragh. Already our streets and thoroughfares are thronged with strangers, denizens of lands with whom our intercommunication is ordinarily limited and fortuitous.[113]

The presentation of the grand building and vast tourism to Dublin starkly contrasts to the million who died and the millions who emigrated after the Famine. Despite such tragedy, a class in Ireland existed that engaged in luxury – the improved Irish economy and society benefited a few.[114] The 1853 exhibition became a 'Sublime causeway of knowledge by which the spirit of man climbs up from earth to heaven' and ultimately became an 'Epic of Labour!' which enabled visitors to 'See the Titan's progress through all the regions and times of the earth'.[115] Overall, 160,000 acres celebrated the achievements of labour and labour became the 'Heaven-sent benefactor of mankind!' as well as the ultimate tool of progress and development.[116] Official exhibition reports abounded in such declarations and emphasised the historical and ancient importance of labour as in London and Cork. Again, human toil and perseverance were the solutions to structural and environmental problems. The 'universal

[112] Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 252.
[113] 'First Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* (Dublin, 1853), p. 1. Shelf mark: LOU.IRL S12. British Library. The newspaper was published in the exhibition building for the whole twenty-five weeks of the display and it cost two pence unstamped; three pence stamped.
[114] See C. Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory* (Princeton, 1999), especially Chapter Four, pp. 122-156.
[115] 'First Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1. See also, *Irish Exhibition Almanack* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: P.P.2505.r. British Library. The almanack cost sixpence and was described as 'a memento to one of the most interesting events in the History of Ireland'. Cited in *Wexford Independent*, 29 October 1853.
[116] Ibid.

brotherhood' that Ireland imagined was hoped to be a 'glorious paternity of Labour' for the benefit of all.[117]

William Dargan (1799-1867) organised the fair and he notably championed nationalist projects in Ireland for the benefit of the country. He profited from the railway boom in the 1830s; and also developed canals, roads and viaducts. Dargan saw the potential in marketing Ireland as a tourist destination, notes Jamie Saris, and developed joint ticketing with English businessmen, so that tourists could visit the south and west of Ireland.[118] The development of tourism continued throughout Irish exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dargan wanted to respond to the 1851 exhibition in London and to build on the 1852 Industrial Exhibition in Cork to assert Ireland's industrial development. Thus, he proposed an international exhibition for Dublin in 1853 and offered £20,000 to begin the project; he eventually contributed around £90,000 to the enterprise. The Dublin display expanded the exhibitions held triennially by the Royal Dublin Society.[119]

Dargan received almost god-like praise: the *Illustrated Magazine of Art* described him as 'an object for the interest and admiration of all the world. A man in whom so much energy and perseverance are united with so much patriotism'.[120] Dargan epitomised the spirit of the Dublin exhibition and became the embodiment of individual success. The fact that he acted alone buoyed his grand tale: '[he was not helped] by any adventitious aid from fortune, but by

[117] Ibid., p. 2. See, 'Inauguration of the Great Exhibition, 1853', *The Advocate: or, Irish Industrial Journal*, 11 May 1853.
[118] Saris, 'Imagining Ireland', p. 75. See, S. O'Donnell, 'The Works of William Dargan', *Éire-Ireland*, 22: 1 (1987), pp. 151-154.
[119] *Official Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition (in Connection with the Royal Dublin Society*), 3rd edition (Dublin, 1853), p. 7. Shelf mark: D-7956.bb.25. British Library.
[120] 'William Dargan and the Irish Exhibition of 1853', *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, 1: 3 (1853), pp. 152-155, p. 152. See also, F. Mulligan, *William Dargan: An Honourable Life, 1799-1867* (Dublin 2013).

probity, patience, and thriftiness at the outset', and subsequently 'the mere word "Dargan"' had become the 'synonyme [*sic*]… of the magnitude and the success of nearly every great public work in Ireland'.[121]

Saris argues that Dargan was the 'child of Daniel O'Connell' (1775-1847), sharing connections to a modernising bourgeoisie; ambitions to rebuild Ireland as a modern nation; and the 'belief that the great mass of poor people in the country required immediate social and economic development' – evident in Dargan's Dublin enterprise.[122] O'Connell played an important role in the political split between Protestant and Catholic Ireland in this period and became the vanguard for Irish disaffection with the Union.[123] Historian Paul Bew argues that in the late eighteenth century it was possible for many of the Protestant political class in the north to have a 'primary identification with "Ireland"'.[124] However, Bew insists that this connection was steadily eroded. For one, under O'Connell a form of Catholic nationalism emerged, which overlooked Protestant liberals; two, the rapid industrialisation of Belfast created uneven development throughout the rest of the country, three, Britain considered Irish Protestants as a potential defence against Catholic revolt in Ireland.[125] Consequently, within the United Kingdom Irish Protestants were pointedly integrated (against Irish Catholics).

Daniel O'Connell mobilised the Irish citizenry in his Catholic Association, founded in 1823 which blended 'Gaelic clansmen and local Catholic gentry' to campaign for Catholic

[121] 'Dargan and the Irish Exhibition', p. 152. See, 'Irish Industrial Exhibition for 1853', *Dublin Evening Mail*, 9 July 1852.
[122] Saris, 'Imagining Ireland', p. 75.
[123] D. Harkness, 'Ireland' in R. W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol V. Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 114-133, p. 115-116.
[124] P. Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 369.
[125] Ibid.

emancipation.[126] Bew documented how O'Connell called Britain 'the most intellectual and commercial nation on the face of the world […] a mighty empire, upon whose limitless dominion the sun never sets' – with whom the Irish Protestant community allied themselves with.[127] In the fairground however, non-practising Catholic, Dargan, legitimised the transformative powers of the individual and became a role model for the post-famine survivors. He stimulated an impassioned Irish nationalism – as a businessman with wealth helping the poor of Ireland, and the industrious poor were encouraged to emulate him; and so the surviving middle and working classes were apparently inspired to rescue their country. Dargan embodied national and religious conciliation for the benefit of Ireland as a whole.

In 1853, organisers again adopted Playfair's classification system of Raw Materials; Machinery; Manufactures and Fine Arts. The value of seeing and internalising productivity was evoked by the sheer mass of exhibited objects. The *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* wrote: 'The first sensation experienced by the visitor upon entering the Great Hall of the Industrial Exhibition is that of wonder and admiration […] everything crowds alike upon the eye and upon the mind' (**Figure 1.6**).[128] High ceilings contributed to the profusion of objects within the immense Centre Hall, and the vast display included sculptures and paintings on both sides of the room. People clustered around the middle of the hall, looking up, looking around, and generally admiring the exhibits on display. That one could overwhelm visitors with objects to indicate growing prosperity manifested in the excessive quantity of objects in each room. A commentator reported that the vast array of displayed goods offered, 'special

[126] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 300-301.
[127] Cited in Bew, *Ireland*, p. 369. See, P. Ollerenshaw, 'Industry 1820-1914' in L. Kennedy and P. Ollerenshaw (eds.), *An Economic History of Ulster* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 62-108.
[128] 'Third Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 5.

knowledge; so that the present may be compared with the past, and suggestively, with the future'.[129] A cyclopaedic range of information sought to stimulate the consumption of visitors, and to build the confidence of the Irish manufacturers who had, 'struggle[d] against apathy and neglect', due to historical prejudices.[130]

Irishmen and women could travel the world and learn from other nations in Dublin according to popular discourse; visitors could become 'a mighty traveller […who had] traversed all the regions of the earth; […and] journeyed thousands of leagues, and seen and learned the sights and the knowledge of the world'.[131] This reinforces Timothy Mitchell's concept of 'world-as-exhibition' and reveals the realism that the display relied on to attract visitors.[132] Clearly, this was propaganda but it is interesting to reflect whether at a time of expensive travel an inexpensive train ride to the exhibition did indeed feel like tourism of the continent. Visitors were advised to absorb the exhibition's teachings like a sponge and 'fill [their] heart with the marvels that crowd upon [them]; then pause a while, and meditate upon them'.[133] This reveals the perceived developing nature of Ireland and Irishness in this period – there was still much to learn, and Irish individuals needed to continue on the path of discovery and industry to further the country's progress.

Visually if not psychologically visitors saw that free trade would ensure Ireland's resources could be 'known and investigated', regions explored, people understood, and

[129] 'First Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[130] 'Exhibition of the Manufactures of the World in 1851 – True Encouragement for Irish Talent and Industry', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 29 July 1850.
[131] 'Ninth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 7.
[132] T. Mitchell, 'The World as Exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31: 2 (1989), pp. 217-236, p. 218.
[133] 'Ninth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 7.

manufacturers encouraged so that the 'wealth of other countries should find its way into Ireland […] in the constant intercourse of commerce' and capitalism.[134] People 'of all climes' were physically consuming a displayed Ireland within laissez-faire economics for the 'material interests of [Ireland]'.[135] Further, visits to Ireland were actively encouraged with newspapers advertising inexpensive excursions and popular attractions – therefore, a large-scale tourist enterprise capitalised on the exhibition in tandem.[136]

A progressive timeline of Ireland's history materialised with technology such as carriages and locomotives, fine arts, medieval artwork and antiquities, in addition to agricultural tools and Irish designs in silk, linen and wool – epitomising a diverse set of exhibits from ancient Ireland to the country's present in the 1850s. The exhibits encompassed 'a romantic, backward-looking nostalgia for the country's past glories juxtaposed with an ambitious, forward looking notion of progress', notes Margaret M. Williams, and this created a teleological timeline in which Ireland continued to advance.[137] Ireland's displays in the 1850s typically straddled different temporal spheres. Its interpretation of time allowed Irishmen and women to rationalise the industrial failings of the present as a temporary blip when compared to the successes of the past and the hopes of the future. Overall, visual bonds linking an Irish past, present and future created an accessible Irish national community that stressed commonality, community and a shared Irish history and memory.

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[134] Ibid.
[135] 'Fifth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[136] See, 'Tours in Ireland, 1853. Dublin Industrial Exhibition', *Coventry Standard*, 14 October 1853; *Carlisle Journal*, 14 October 1853; *The Globe*, 26 April 1853.
[137] M. M. Williams, 'The "Temple of Industry": Dublin's International Exhibition of 1853' in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Irish Art Historical Studies in Honour of Peter Harbison* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 261-276, p. 261-262.

Machinery became 'the most important [exhibit] in the entire Exhibition' and 'surpass[ed] the wonder of enchantment' for Irish contemporaries.[138] To Ireland, machinery offered a gargantuan opportunity for technology's power to save the country from stagnant industry. The Machinery section devoted 400 feet to printing presses, engines, reaping machines, ploughs, diggers, haymakers, and dairy utensils. Displays of textile looms; the art of printing; and steam engines celebrated industry to 'illustrate errors of the past and to bring a change as regards the future'.[139] The exhibits included literature on their uses and benefits, and traded on the belief that observation equalled utilisation. The ultimate message of the exhibits held that mechanisation was a productive solution or a remedy to human (read Irish) deficiency. Here was an opportunity to learn from one's mistakes, particularly the tragic mistake of relying on the potato.

Proinnsias Breathnach has shown that the creamery industry's mechanisation in the late-nineteenth century produced a higher and uniform quality of butter away from the slow and laborious process in individual farms. Milk processing entailed the separation of cream from raw milk, and the churning of cream into butter, which centralised the processing of the milk supply in industrial units (creameries) through technology.[140] Creameries mechanisation only occurred in the late-nineteenth century and reveals that contemporaries typically overlooked the practicalities of incorporating the mechanised exhibits of the 1850s into a vast

[138] *Official Catalogue of the Great Industrial Exhibition*, p. 17. See, 'Exhibition. Section D – Machinery', *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 18 June 1853.
[139] 'Fourth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1. See, C. Adley, *Synopsis of the Contents of the Great Industrial Exhibition 1853 in connection with the Royal Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: D-7956.b.59.(2.). British Library.
[140] P. Breathnach, 'Agricultural Change and the Growth of the Creamery System in Monaghan, 1855-1920' in P. J. Duffy and É. Ó Ciardha (eds.), *Monaghan: History and Society* (Dublin, 2017), pp. 617-641, p. 627-628. See also C. Babbage, *The Exposition of 1851 Or, Views of the Industry, the Science, and the Government, of England* (London, 1851). Shelf mark: T 10274. British Library.

agricultural system. It is unlikely that the overall impact of the fair had any tangible effect on the Irish economy.

The exhibits of mechanisation in 1853 offer comparisons to the 1851 display. Davies has argued that the machinery displays in Dublin illuminated the 'uneven impact of industrialisation on the Irish economy'.[141] He insists that the exhibits highlighted the disparity between trades and industries in Ireland versus the United Kingdom while claiming that Ireland's mineral resources were inadequately displayed.[142] However, drawing too strict contrasts between England and Ireland in the 1850s is unproductive as the 1853 exhibition was on a smaller scale than 1851. The *Illustrated Magazine of Art* explained that whilst London was 'the metropolis of the British Empire', Dublin was the city of a kingdom 'lately risen from the slough of famine and despond'.[143]

It is curious to consider whether mention of the Famine sought to heighten the achievement of the display itself or to offer a (well-justified) reason for any weaknesses in the exhibits. Direct comparisons between the 1851 and 1853 exhibitions naturally produces vast differences in quality of display but we need to keep in mind why visitors attended the exhibition. If it was because they recognised Ireland's slow recovery and wanted to help propel its industry, its underdeveloped exhibits may have encouraged them to commerce and investment. Alternatively, if they wanted to see the height of technology, Britain's exhibits were better developed, but Ireland was tied to England and so benefits of trade had the

[141] Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 257 and see p. 256-258, p. 259.
[142] Ibid., p. 256.
[143] 'The Irish Industrial Exhibition', *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, 2: 9 (1853), pp. 135-143, p. 135.

potential to overlap. For the organisers of the exhibition, this was the opposite of the desolation of the Famine, and a remedy to perceived Irish apathy.

Official exhibition literature adopted an inconsistent discourse on the 'artificial world's partnership with nature' in Dublin.[144] The 1853 exhibition was narrated as 'the commencement of a new era', or 'a revival of prosperity', otherwise 'the last grand convulsion throes of an expiring nation'.[145] The contradictory reporting of Ireland's display reflects the organisers' anxieties about competition and comparison. For instance, the *Illustrated London Magazine* worried that '[Ireland] exhibits her own shortcomings […] Dublin Exhibition – a gigantic anomaly in a land long celebrated for its paradoxes'.[146] The author expressed fears that as the Famine was technically not even a decade old during the 1853 exhibition the country's limited recovery would be obvious. Ireland competed in displayed commerce partly because of the pressures of the global market and there was uncertainty amongst Irish organisers and Irish citizens alike as to the public reaction to the Irish exhibits specifically, and the Dublin Fair more broadly.

Exhibition texts often adopted a negative appraisal of Ireland's capabilities. The *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue* lamented Ireland's deficiencies in the land: 'coal and iron and limestone in abundance [left undisturbed], mines have been but very partially worked; with water-power […] runn[ing] idl[e]'.[147] Therefore, the virtue of 'seeing' at the

[144] 'The Dublin Exhibition: A Trip to Killarney', *Liverpool Mail*, 21 May 1853.
[145] 'Dublin Industrial Exhibition of 1853', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 16 September 1853.
[146] Cited in 'Dublin Industrial Exhibition of 1853', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 16 September 1853.
[147] *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue, Published in Connection with the Art Journal* (Dublin, 1853), p. v. Shelf mark: J/7960.dd.29. British Library.

exhibition would further the 'social, industrial, and political welfare of the people', through replication, production and consumption.[148] By observing the technological revolution in the exhibits, the next logical step for visitors was to apply these developments, for the benefit of the country. The inherent teleology assigned to Irish development made the messages of the Fair accessible if not wholly practical.

There was a limited acknowledgement of Ireland's historic mistreatment in certain publications. The *Expositor* noted that Ireland occasionally became a 'terra incognita' because of unfair diplomacy and investment. It continued: 'When Ireland becomes like other countries – like Scotland […] will she have her fair chance of rising as other lands rise, of taking her legitimate place amongst the nations of the earth'.[149] Despite not naming England, there is slight tension and bitterness here towards the country as hampering Ireland's development. Evidently, nationalist agents within Ireland resented the differences in policy and treatment within the nations of the United Kingdom and petitioned for a greater parity. Moreover, the *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier* wrote the two countries 'were as if united by a syphon, the long leg of which was in England, and through which Ireland was emptied for the bloating of the other' – in a graphic appraisal of the situation.[150]

Yet, allyship with Britain remained crucial in the practical encouragement of industry. The *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue* vied for 'increased intercourse' and 'a more intimate acquaintance with the people and the capabilities of Ireland … [to stimulate the] inflow of English capital'.[151] The exhibition belonged to a broader narrative of union between

[148] 'Irish Industrial Exhibition', *Illustrated Magazine of Art,* p. 135.
[149] 'Ninth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor,* p. 7.
[150] 'The National Exhibition at Cork', *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier,* 18 May 1852.
[151] *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue,* p. v.

Britain and Ireland that facilitated increased co-production and prosperity for Ireland's benefit. This sentiment percolated throughout the fair, and the Lord Lieutenant expounded at the exhibition's opening ceremony that England and Ireland's interests were 'mutual and inseparable'.[152] The valorisation of a renewed co-operation reflected Irish anxiety to prove their value and worth as a 'sister country' to England, whilst recognising English mis-governance of Ireland in the 1850s.

The complex discourse on the Irish display demonstrates the country's negotiation of capitalism and empire at these fairs. By adopting contradictory language, Ireland could hope and occasionally achieve trade and the irrigation of its resources but it left room for improvement, always labouring for a better future. It tempered expectations of Ireland in an era of global trade with its focus on the individual and profit. Laudatory statements could act as an inspiration for Irishmen and women at home and potentially popularise the country's wares globally. This partially protected Ireland against criticism but also furthered hopeful ambitions for the country's development.

The *Dublin University Magazine* published an excerpt on the 1853 exhibition that focused on improvements in Dublin, which may have indicated the rise in living standards after the mass deaths of the Famine.[153] For instance, the unnamed author commented on the houses looking 'particularly bright and cheery'.[154] They identified the changing crowd of the city with the 'people themselves [fashionably] dressed' – which revealed the prosperity of the

[152] Ibid., p. vii.
[153] See, P. Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society 1843-1850* (Dublin, 1999), especially Chapter Six.
[154] Cited in 'Ninth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 7.

middle-class after the population decline of the labouring poor in the 1840s. The author wandered and sought out the 'little old man, with the white apron'.[155] This was a nostalgic remembrance of a Dublin past but it also illuminated the rapid extinction of the poor in Ireland, whether from starvation, disease or migration. This was a story of transition, of a revived present containing hope for the future based on the elimination of the poorest. Many Irish industrialists held that 'pestilence and famine [was] the ultimate purifier and regenerator', and so 1853 offered a tabula rasa for Ireland's future prosperity.[156] Consequently, the Dublin Exhibition building was a stark difference to the 'fever sheds and the soup kitchens' erected throughout the capital in the 1840s.[157]

Only a few years prior, the *Cork Examiner* exclaimed: 'death […] desolation in every district – whole families lying down in fever – hovels turned into charnel houses – entire villages prostrate in sickness, or hushed in the last sleep'.[158] In the *Dublin University Magazine* extract a compression of time sought to displace the logic of the Famine into a new era of prosperity and survival. The idea of famine as rebirth emerged in official exhibition literature such as the *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*: 'National pulse was again beating with somewhat of its former health and the spirit of trade and enterprise [was] again renascent'.[159] Such commentary was reminiscent of Sir Charles E. Trevelyan's (1807-1886) policies in the 1840s. Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, Trevelyan was the most senior official who oversaw famine relief efforts in Ireland. He possessed strong religious beliefs and

[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] *Cork Examiner*, 8 September 1847. Cited in Bew, *Ireland*, p. 196.
[159] 'Ninth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 7.

contentiously prioritised economic principles over Irish survival in his policy-making.[160] The 1853 exhibition therefore represented the continuation of a discourse that enabled a genocide of Ireland's poor by in effect celebrating the mass deaths of the Famine as a type of positive social cleansing for the benefit of Ireland, and showcasing the new industrial exhibits that the surviving populace could build on.

The 1853 exhibition included even the 'small farmers of the remote regions of Donegal, of Erris, and of Kerry' in its nationwide recovery.[161] Ireland's western periphery had suffered significantly during the Famine and became a priority in the country's regeneration. A vast railway enterprise and discounted tickets made the exhibition accessible to these remote communities.[162] However, the exhibition's impact on these areas is questionable. The *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* admitted that the, 'larger proportion of the rising generation [wa]s not included among the visitors […and a] comparatively small number of boys [visited] … the parties who would be likely to derive most advantage for it', – thus building on Maguire's hopes of educating children to ensure their contribution to Irish society in adulthood.[163] Despite the fact that over 1.1 million people visited the exhibition, 'not one in every twenty of the inhabitants from Dublin ever entered the building', visitors from other parts of Ireland were negligible, and so the Irish middle-class were the main beneficiaries.[164] Reviews in the *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* regretted the excessive cost of admission

[160] See, C. Ó Gráda, *Ireland's Great Famine: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Dublin, 2006), especially Chapter Four.
[161] 'Fifth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[162] An equivalent enterprise took place in Scotland, see for instance, *Greenock Advertiser*, 13 September 1853, which advertised regular steamships from Glasgow to Dublin for the exhibition, also 'Dublin Exhibition', *Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser*, 5 July 1853.
[163] 'Twelfth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[164] Jones, *Record of the Great Industrial Exhibition*, p. 36; Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, p. 21-26 contains tables of visitor breakdowns.

with five shillings being unaffordable for most of the post-famine population.[165] In the first month visitor numbers ranged from a low 300 to a reasonable 3,000 on a daily basis (the exhibition building could hold 15,000 visitors).[166]

The exhibition became a place of socialisation for the metropolitan upper classes, organisers complained that 'One sees the same person's day by day walking up and down, apparently with a view of exhibiting themselves rather than with that of becoming acquainted with the objects around them'.[167] This again reinforces Bennett's 'Exhibitionary Complex' theory, as the fairs became an opportunity for visitors to police class boundaries through self-surveillance.[168] Moreover, elite men and women were a regular feature in the exhibition and many dignitaries including Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), former president of America visited.[169] This middle class enterprise was ineffective in reaching its target audience of the urban poor. Whilst this seems to have been a largely unintentional outcome, the exhibition organisers created an exclusive and hostile environment for the labouring classes.

For both during and after the Famine, Irishmen and women were blamed for their own deaths and starvation, rather than inadequate state infrastructure or lack of investment in Ireland. The continual proclamations such as: '[a] degree of apathy [existed] on the part of a large proportion of our people', probably did not endear labouring Irishmen and women to

[165] Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 267.
[166] A typical week is reported in 'Third Week of the Exhibition: The Progress of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1. Admission for 13 May – Holders of Season Tickets: 2,833; Persons paying 5s: 290; Excursion Ticket Holders: 0 and 21 May – Holders of Season Tickets: 4,533; Persons paying 5s: 295; Excursion Ticket Holders: 46.
[167] 'Twelfth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1. Cited in Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 267.
[168] Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', p. 73-75.
[169] *Kings County Chronicle*, 29 June 1853 – reported on distinguished visitors such as Van Buren who was accompanied by his son and Campbell, Governor of one of the states.

visit the exhibition to hear how wrong and ignorant they were.[170] Furthermore, many were still recovering from the Famine and so reluctant to spend scarce money on visiting a display that highlighted their supposed personal inadequacies in commerce and enterprise. The immediate and physical burden of improving the Irish condition fell on those hardest hit by the blight devoid of a shared responsibility with the state and its resources. Repeatedly, the *Exposition Expositor and Advertiser* grumbled that: 'There are still numerous of our fellow-citizens who have not been in the Exhibition building'.[171] *The Advocate: or, Irish Industrial Journal* lamented that 'cousins from the country constitute a very small percentage of visitors'.[172]

Instead of considering why, the author directed personal rebukes to a certain 'class [of people who] would think little of spending the price of admission on some folly'.[173] Therefore, certain Irish citizens were considered 'as irretrievably plunged in the slough of despond' because they refused this benevolent opportunity to improve.[174] An elitist attitude interpreted the behaviour of those still suffering from the after-effects of the Famine as apathy and a rejection of personal improvement. It reveals a continuation of Famine-era discourse, which blamed the country's poverty on improvident foolish Irish people. The wealthy were eager to overcome a suffering that little affected them. The environmental disaster of the 1840s fuelled a strand of nationalist discourse that urged the poorest people of Ireland to do better. In the last month of the exhibition, organisers reduced admission to sixpence and visits

[170] 'Thirteenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[171] 'Sixteenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[172] 'Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853', *The Advocate: or, Irish Industrial Journal*, 3 August 1853.
[173] 'Sixteenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[174] Ibid.

increased to 4,000 to 5,000 daily, with a peak of 11,000 in the exhibition's last week.[175] The second to last week is reported in the *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* where visitor numbers were as follows: Monday 10,418; Tuesday 6,403; Wednesday 8,714; Thursday 8,816; Friday 8,602; Saturday 6,219.[176] The attendance figures proved that people were interested; they just could not afford to go. The consistently high number of visitors suggested an engaged response to the Fair by the lower classes in the last month, and may have pointed to repeat visits in the case of another exhibition.

Surviving satire is indicative of the exhibition's popular impact on the poor. For example, a letter from 'I. Donoghoe' (I Do Not Go) to his brother Dan, titled *A Versified Description of the Great Industrial Exhibition* (1853) is illuminating. The text included a note by 'Scribbler, of Scribbletown, Esq'. Scribbler wrote that this letter was written by one of his tenants: 'The letter was intended by Donoghoe for a brother of his in New York, but, owing, to the singularity of the address, it failed to reach its destination, found its way to the Dead Letter Office, and thence, under cover, to me. I now, with Donoghoe's consent, venture to place it before a discerning public, in the persuasion that many persons will feel gratified in being enabled by means of its perusal, to ascertain the actual impression upon an unsophisticated mind, by so novel and imposing a spectacle as our Great Industrial Exhibition'.[177]

[175] Cited in Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 268. See, 'Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853', *The Advocate: or, Irish Industrial Journal*, 17 August 1853 – which reported that a 'large number of tickets [were] purchased by employers for their working men [in this last month]'.
[176] 'Nineteenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 7.
[177] Scribbler, Esq, *A Versified Description of the Great Industrial Exhibition, in Dublin, 1853, in a letter from I. Donoghoe to his Brother Dan* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: RB.23.a.15618. British Library.

The satirical piece adopted condescending humour to illustrate some of the considerations and obstacles working-class people may have contended with to visit the Dublin display. The fictional story explains that Donoghoe was incredibly 'aiger […] to go' to the exhibition but could not afford it until the publication of the 'chape 'scursion tickets' offered by a railway company. Donoghoe narrated his difficulties in attending, from having to mend his tattered clothing to trying to speak properly. This fabrication revealed that the targeted audience, of the urban working poor received vague and dubious instruction on visiting the exhibit. The mockery offered in this 'letter' elucidated some legitimate problems of the exhibit. For instance, the character remarks that he could not absorb all the information: 'come out/No wiser not whin I wint in'.[178] The display relied on quantity and the power of the visual, and it is likely that the exhibition had little transformative power for the casual visitor. In addition, the Irish working classes may have been mocking the elite attempts at social engineering by highlighting its failings in this extract.

The satire laboured the questionable educative capacity of looking by noting that Donoghoe despite seeing the ideal 'house iv wood', exclaimed he 'prefar[ed] a snug cabin of mud'. Whilst making derogatory jibes at this made-up character, the parody concluded with Donoghoe feeling impressed with 'man' and the 'thoughts of the hand' and vowing to 'be thankful, and useful, and quite'.[179] The satire revealed the problems of an exhibition centred on educating the poor, as well as the limited capacity for developing new skills and knowledge. The satirist further critiqued the prejudices of the working class popular in mid-nineteenth century Ireland. The simple fact of Dublin being a beautiful spectacle did not necessarily confer any practical qualities.

[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.

The organisers of the exhibition employed many methods to amass interest – one of which was using religious folk to increase visits to Dublin. Two sermons popularly circulated during the 1853 display that used scripture to encourage visits from the city's local populace. Their central argument held that the mechanisation and industrialisation displayed reflected God's work and so deserved admiration and duplication. For instance, the Presbyterian Reverend James Milligan intoned: 'We are bound to study those works by which God is known'.[180] He echoed official exhibition literature that celebrated the benefits of offering a 'stimulus to industry, and national enterprise' through 'interchange in commerce' to 'give employment to our half-starved population'.[181] Whilst significant contemporary exhibition literature narrated the Famine as a horror past, this is one of the few acknowledgements that the after-effects of the Famine were still ongoing. Delaney has convincingly argued that the contemporary reluctance to use the word 'famine' reflected an unwillingness to 'confront fully the human consequence of the failure of the potato crop'.[182] And similar terms such as 'distress', 'crisis', or 'destitution' were adopted instead, as a partial acknowledgment of structural starvation that avoided the larger pauperisation and demoralisation of Ireland and its economy.[183] The Presbyterian Church committed itself to ensuring that Irishmen and women absorbed the lessons of the display to further God and country in 1853.

The religious texts also advertised the accessibility of the 1853 Exhibition with free admission, free travel, appropriate clothing and free accommodation.[184] The pamphlets of

[180] J. Milligan, *The Great Exhibition of 1853. Its Utility Defended; And Its Glory Eclipsed! A Sermon Preached on the Lord's Day Succeeding the Opening of the Exhibition* (Dublin, 1853), p. 5. Shelf mark: 4477.a.75. British Library.
[181] Ibid., p. 7-8.
[182] Delaney, *The Curse of Reason*, p. 228.
[183] Ibid.
[184] *Good News! Or, Free Admission to the Great Exhibition* (Dublin, 1853), p. 4. Shelf mark: 4406.b.60. British Library.

Presbyterian Church propaganda epitomised the idea that the Irish Crystal Palace was a type of Heaven on earth; that there was a religious duty to industry and labour; and laziness and unemployment was a type of 'earthly sin'.[185] The widespread collusion of the Irish people with the exhibition enterprise indicates that many Irish businessmen and women desperately sought to industrialise the country. The recurring themes of the importance of dress and decorum reinforces the fact that the main consumers of the fair were wealthy magnates and industrialists, necessitating the need for extensive measures to include the urban working class.

The fact that the 1853 Exhibition encouraged the nationalist consumption of Ireland's wealthier classes to a greater extent than it triggered the production of the country's labouring classes has been convincingly argued by Stephanie Rains.[186] Certain stylistic features of the Dublin display, Rains notes, such as offering price labels furthered practices of consumption. The display of prices for saleable goods was a development of worldwide department stores as Rains has documented, and this elevated the capitalist inclinations of 1853.[187] The prioritisation of consumption is highlighted in the *Expositor's* remark that 'however elaborate and expensive articles of any kind are to be admired, […] their use is confined to the few; and in an educational and utilitarian point of view we are disposed to attach much more importance to an illustration of improved and tasteful construction in the articles coming within the reach of the middle-classes'.[188] Building on this, despite claims to the contrary, the middle-class were prioritised because they bought non-essential purchases. Whereas the

[185] Ibid., p. 10.
[186] S. Rains, '"Here Be Monsters": The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853 and the Growth of Dublin Department Stores', *Irish Studies Review*, 16: 4 (2008), pp. 487-506, p. 496.
[187] Ibid.
[188] 'Tenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1. Cited in Rains, 'Irish Industrial Exhibition', p. 499.

workers were expected to admire exhibits; simply to learn and later replicate innovative labour practices.

Strikingly, there was a two to one ratio of women with season tickets among the upper and middle-classes (12,952 season tickets were sold at three guineas for men and two guineas for women).[189] Despite the fact that Ireland's manufacturing recovery was masculinised in contemporary discourse, women played a unique role in the makeup of the country post-famine. In the 1850s, working-class women had their utility in domestic industries and the revival of rural trade, whilst middle-class women became the harbingers of a new consumerism. These women had disposable income and many social pressures to compete in the new market of luxury goods and delicate furnishings.[190] By the mid-nineteenth century, the class divisions of Ireland were entrenched along income lines and intersected with gender in a fixed way. Women of various social strata had their specific responsibilities in this revitalised Ireland. Both production and purchase were accommodated in the Dublin exhibition with clearly delineated expectations for working and middle-class women. 1853 therefore offers a microscope into the reorganisation of Ireland's economy and society post-tragedy along distinct classed and gendered axis.

To boost popular interest a royal visit to the exhibition was organised at the end of August 1853; Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and two of the royal children arrived in Dublin (**Figure 1.7**). Hundreds of Irishmen and women attended the royal celebrations. The elite nature of the visit saw a well-attired crowd, all excitedly observing the royal presence. The sketch allows the viewer to catch the upper floors of the exhibition packed with visitors, and

[189] Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, p. 21.
[190] Rains, 'Irish Industrial Exhibition', especially p. 499.

foliage adds to the sense of an enclosed tightly packed space. The Queen and Prince are being welcomed by the Fair's organisers, revealing the general pomp and pageantry of the occasion. It seems that much of Dublin was eager to see these royal festivities.

The royal party visited the exhibition four times and dined in William Dargan's home during their week-long stay. They bought ten season tickets, and Davies has shown that the Queen purchased the entire display of the lace exhibit of Messrs Forest of Grafton Street.[191] Business in Dublin was suspended for a week and it was proclaimed that the royal 'visit […] added a prestige to honest and successful enterprise and industry'.[192] Prince Albert declared that Dargan embodied the Victorian tenets of self-improvement for 'not long ago [he was] a common labourer himself, who has raised himself solely by his own industry and energy […becoming] an example of national hope' – the perceived opposite of lazy and negligent Irishmen and women deemed to have caused the Famine by their reliance on a single vegetable.[193]

Dargan epitomised national revival in the wake of the Famine responsible for the employment of almost 60,000 men at one point.[194] Dargan lost £20,000 at the exhibition's close, and he rejected the offer of peerage by the Queen citing his humble origins. Art historian Caroline Malloy has analysed Dargan's statue in the main hall of the 1853 Exhibition. Malloy claimed that the sculpture's Neoclassical style conveyed a 'simple moral

[191] *The Times*, 5 September 1853. Cited in Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace', p. 268.
[192] 'Eighteenth Week of the Exhibition', *Exhibition Expositor*, p. 1.
[193] Prince Albert, Memorandum, 28 September 1853. Cited in J. H. Murphy, *Abject Loyalty: Nationalism and Monarchy in Ireland during the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Cork, 2001), p. 112. See, J. Loughlin, *The British Monarchy and Ireland: 1800 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007).
[194] Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, p. v.

nobility' and ensured Dargan could 'oversee the throngs of visitors each day with a stoic gaze that reminded viewers of his actual presence'.[195] In 1864, the National Gallery of Ireland opened – the Fine Arts section of the Dublin Exhibition was its main collection and Dargan's statue remains at the entrance of the gallery today. Evidently, Dargan's omnipresent gaze operated throughout Dublin's artistic institutions to highlight his financial and physical contributions in Ireland's past recovery.

In the spirit of Dargan, the exhibition hoped to resolve all Irish problems with industry, even remedying emigration from the country: The *Freeman's Journal* wrote, 'We found every outport crowded with emigrants, every railway thriving by the myriads travelling by them'.[196] However, it does not damn these individuals indefinitely and recognises that: 'Those who went to America always talked of making money and returning at some time or another in their lives', and so sympathises with their suffering.[197] This solemn appraisal of emigration's impact on Ireland is echoed in Malloy's discussion of the sculpture 'The Emigrant' in the Fine Arts Hall of 1853. She writes that 'the tall, Classically-modelled young woman turns shamefully away from the viewer. In one hand, she pulls her insufficient drape around her; its Classical folds impart dignity, while the drop off her shoulder suggests an embarrassing nudity'.[198] Malloy argues that the sculpture 'addressed the pain, drama, and the human cost' of the Famine which 'stood as a lone reminder of the reality of ongoing emigration amidst the grand celebratory fiction of the Exhibition'.[199] The exhibition thus

[195] C. R. Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland: Irish Villages, Pavilions, Cottages, and Castles at International Exhibitions, 1853-1939', PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison (2013), p. 31-32. See, N. Netzer, 'Picturing an Exhibition: James Mahony's Watercolors of the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853' in A. M. Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualizing Ireland: National Identity and the Pictorial Tradition* (Boston 1993), pp. 89-98.
[196] 'Dublin Industrial Exhibition', *Freeman's Journal*.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 59-60.
[199] Ibid., p. 61.

adopted a two-pronged approach; if the exhibition did not convince Irish citizens to stay, the future development of Ireland would suture the continual departures for they 'never went without a souvenir of the old land. A sod, a pot of shamrock, or a little earth'.[200]

Whilst Christine Kinealy takes the following words of a contemporary in County Donegal to epitomise 1850s Ireland: 'The Famine killed everything', the 1853 Exhibition boasted to offering a 'commonwealth of industry and enterprise'.[201] The stark difference between these two contemporary statements decidedly reveals that exhibitions existed in the realm of fantasy and their utility rested in this utopian capacity. Display enabled individuals to revel in a fiction divorced from reality and this aspect offers the greatest value to historians. Studying exhibitions offers a unique insight into how people imagined themselves, a look into the very intimate field of their psyche – how they perceived and longed for their country to be. The Dublin exhibition also featured an international display of nearly 500 sculptures and over 1,000 paintings, from classics to contemporary items, in oil, watercolours, drawings and engravings.[202] Therefore, a wholescale transformation of Ireland's anachronistic economy that included the workers and consumers, the public and private, the landscape and its irrigation, circulated in a digestible dose of development in the fairs of the 1850s.

CONCLUSION

In the 1850s, popular narratives of Ireland's future in London, Cork and Dublin, like its exhibition, reporting, and reception was contradictory and subject to revision. By considering exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century, I have extended conversation between the impact

[200] 'Dublin Industrial Exhibition ', *Freeman's Journal*.
[201] Cited in Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine*, p. 155; Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, p. 1.
[202] See, *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue.*

of the Famine on Irish culture literature with Ireland and Empire debates. Through the consistent narration of Ireland as developing, the exhibitions did not demonstrate Ireland's prowess to the world but instead became an opportunity for Ireland to learn from the industry of others consistent with Trevelyanite arguments in the 1850s. Perspectives on how Ireland should develop shifted according to the exhibition's organisers. Whilst 1851 can be read as what the British government allied with Irish industrialists wanted for Ireland, 1852 and 1853 reveal how an Irish nationalism interacted with the period's broader imperialism for Ireland's benefit. The exhibitions of the 1850s demonstrate that a hybridity of politics on Irish development were held by Irishmen and women within the mixed loyalties of Irish Unionism and Irish Nationalism.

This chapter has shown how discourses on famine and empire intersected with gender and class in narratives of Irish development. For one, Ireland's exhibitions in the 1850s contributed to the entrenchment of class inequality. The individual bore the burden of their personal and national advancement and the state bowed down to the 'invisible hand' in the market. Such laissez-faire politics plagued famine relief policies in the 1840s and humanitarian concerns were overridden by free trade concerns.[203] In the aftermath of the Famine, the same belief in free markets featured in the international exhibitions of the 1850s, and the powerful in Ireland cemented capitalist economics as fundamental to Irish development.[204] Ireland's recovery was distinctly tied to gendered ideas of labour with discrete spheres for masculine and feminine industries. Within this, poor men and women were imagined to work for the consumption of the monied Irish class. And poor women in

[203] See, C. Kinealy, 'Was Ireland a Colony? The Evidence of the Great Famine' in T. McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 48-65, p. 62.
[204] Rains, 'Irish Industrial Exhibition', p. 501.

particular were held to possess the skills and techniques to further rural industries for Ireland's development, and develop the agricultural industry that poor men worked within.

The 'great open book' of the exhibitions did not transform the labour practices of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. It did not embolden the labouring classes to shoulder the entire burden of economic recovery. Practically, it did not provide material solutions to Irish poverty post-famine. Most of the industry displayed in the exhibitions of the 1850s were inappropriate for the predominantly agricultural economy of Ireland, and so stood as aspirational symbols. Further, sustained development through long-term state building and the creation of a robust manufacturing infrastructure needed to work alongside financial investment to emulate Britain.

The 'Genius of Erin' may have hovered 'in ecstasy over the splendid specimens of artistic and scientific enterprise' and 'with an honest smile' may have 'exclaim[ed] to all present – Céad Míle Fáilte', but the reorganisation of Ireland's economy and society remained in flux.[205] The 'Irish Problem' in the 1850s was vociferously contested and questions of the land and widespread poverty dominated Irish-British relations. The period was the quietest years of political agitation in the nineteenth century. But it paved the path for a reworking of Ireland's relationship with Britain in future years; was it a sister-country, a region, or a sovereign state? The 1850s may have been the blank slate for Ireland but exactly what was being re-written on that blank state was uncertain. And this is where we turn to next.

[205] *The Exhibition Guide through Dublin,* p. xx.

The discrepancies between the rising urban middle-class and rural peasantry which I have considered here took on a renewed significance in the United States. Ireland's development in the 1850s relied on the symbolism of respite and renewal, and Chicago in the 1890s became the breeding ground to consolidate these hallmarks of Irishness in the fairground. Irish migrants carried the trauma of the Famine across the Atlantic, which 'shap[ed] the Irish psyche for generations', and this burden of memory saw images of Ireland adapt for Irish migrants in the US.[206] During moments of political and social tension, an Irishness rooted in an expatriate nationalism, centred on the Anglophobia of Irish migrant communities, and sustained by aristocratic patronage was cultivated, and is the subject of Chapter Two.

[206] Delaney, *The Curse of Reason*, p. 235.

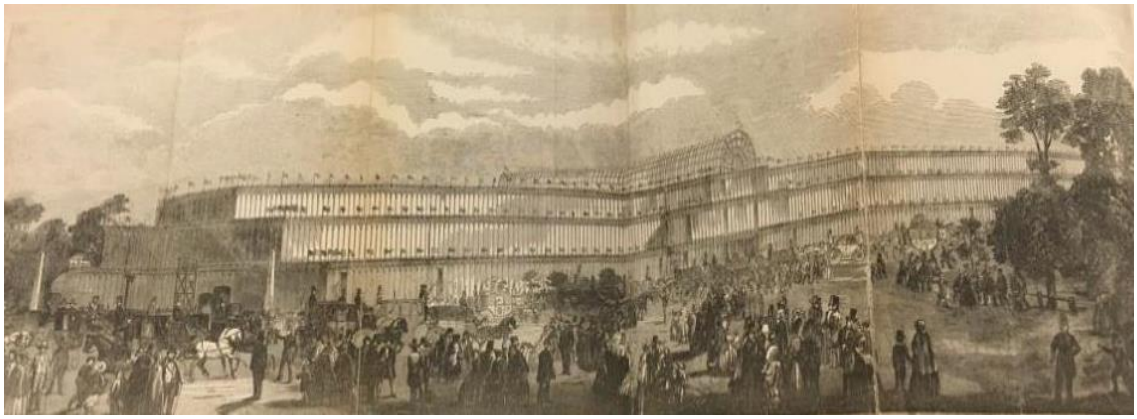
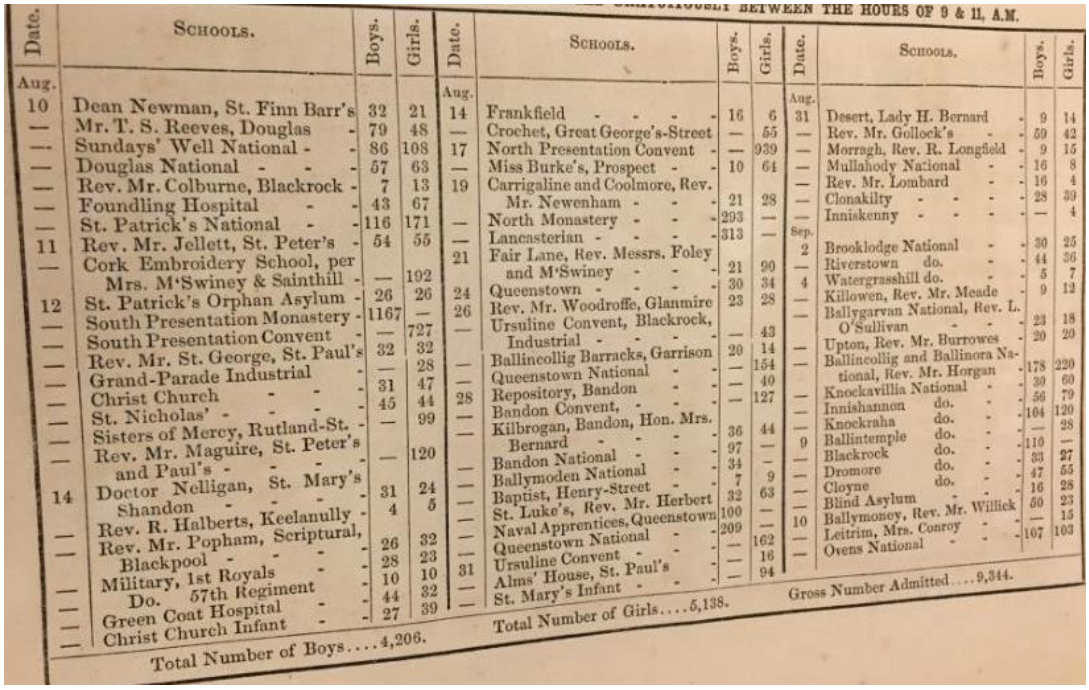


Figure 1.1 ‘The Exterior of the Great Exhibition Building’, J. Cassell, *The Illustrated Exhibitor, A Tribute to the World’s Industrial Jubilee: Comprising sketches, by pen and pencil, of the Principal Objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, 1851* (London, 1851). Shelf mark: 606 *48* DSC. British Library.

Figure 1.2. ‘Sideboard of Irish Bog Wood’, *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 147.

Figure 1.3. ‘Caractacus Unbound’, *Illustrated Exhibitor*, p. 150.



ADMITTED GRATUITOUSLY BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9 & 11, A.M.

Date.	Schools.	Boys.	Girls.
Aug.			
10	Dean Newman, St. Finn Barr's	32	21
—	Mr. T. S. Reeves, Douglas	79	48
—	Sundays' Well National	86	108
—	Douglas National	57	63
—	Rev. Mr. Colburne, Blackrock	7	13
—	Foundling Hospital	43	67
—	St. Patrick's National	116	171
11	Rev. Mr. Jellett, St. Peter's	54	55
—	Cork Embroidery School, per Mrs. M'Swiney & Sainthill	—	192
12	St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum	26	26
—	South Presentation Monastery	1167	—
—	South Presentation Convent	—	727
—	Rev. Mr. St. George, St. Paul's	32	32
—	Grand-Parade Industrial	—	28
—	Christ Church	31	47
—	St. Nicholas'	45	44
—	Sisters of Mercy, Rutland-St.	—	99
—	Rev. Mr. Maguire, St. Peter's and Paul's	—	120
14	Doctor Nelligan, St. Mary's Shandon	31	24
—	Rev. R. Halberts, Keelanully	4	5
—	Rev. Mr. Popham, Scriptural, Blackpool	26	32
—	Military, 1st Royals	28	23
—	Do. 57th Regiment	10	10
—	Green Coat Hospital	44	32
—	Christ Church Infant	27	39
Aug.			
14	Frankfield	16	6
—	Crochet, Great George's-Street	—	55
17	North Presentation Convent	—	939
—	Miss Burke's, Prospect	10	64
19	Carrigaline and Coolmore, Rev. Mr. Newenham	21	28
—	North Monastery	293	—
—	Lancasterian	313	—
21	Fair Lane, Rev. Messrs. Foley and M'Swiney	21	90
24	Queenstown	30	34
26	Rev. Mr. Woodroffe, Glanmire	23	28
—	Ursuline Convent, Blackrock, Industrial	—	43
—	Ballincollig Barracks, Garrison	20	14
—	Queenstown National	—	154
—	Repository, Bandon	—	40
28	Bandon Convent,	—	127
—	Kilbrogan, Bandon, Hon. Mrs. Bernard	36	44
—	Bandon National	97	—
—	Ballymoden National	34	—
—	Baptist, Henry-Street	7	9
—	St. Luke's, Rev. Mr. Herbert	32	63
—	Naval Apprentices, Queenstown	100	—
—	Queenstown National	209	—
—	Ursuline Convent	—	162
31	Alms' House, St. Paul's	—	16
—	St. Mary's Infant	—	94
Aug.			
31	Desert, Lady H. Bernard	9	14
—	Rev. Mr. Gollock's	59	42
—	Morragh, Rev. R. Longfield	9	15
—	Mullahody National	16	8
—	Rev. Mr. Lombard	16	4
—	Clonakilty	28	39
—	Inniskenny	—	4
Sep.			
2	Brooklodge National	30	25
—	Riverstown do.	44	36
4	Watergrasshill do.	5	7
—	Killowen, Rev. Mr. Meade	9	12
—	Ballygarvan National, Rev. L. O'Sullivan	23	18
—	Upton, Rev. Mr. Burrowes	20	20
—	Ballincollig and Ballinora National, Rev. Mr. Horgan	178	220
—	Knockavillia National	30	60
—	Innishannon do.	56	79
—	Knockraha do.	104	120
—	Ballintemple do.	—	28
9	Blackrock do.	110	—
—	Dromore do.	33	27
—	Cloyne do.	47	55
—	Blind Asylum	16	28
10	Ballymoney, Rev. Mr. Willick	50	23
—	Leitrim, Mrs. Conroy	—	15
—	Ovens National	107	103

Total Number of Boys....4,206. Total Number of Girls....5,138. Gross Number Admitted....9,344.

Figure 1.4. 'Return of the number of children admitted between the hours of 9am and 11am', J. F. Maguire, *The Industrial Movement in Ireland, as Illustrated by the National Exhibition of 1852* (Dublin, 1853), p. 469. Shelf mark: 7956.f.33. British Library.

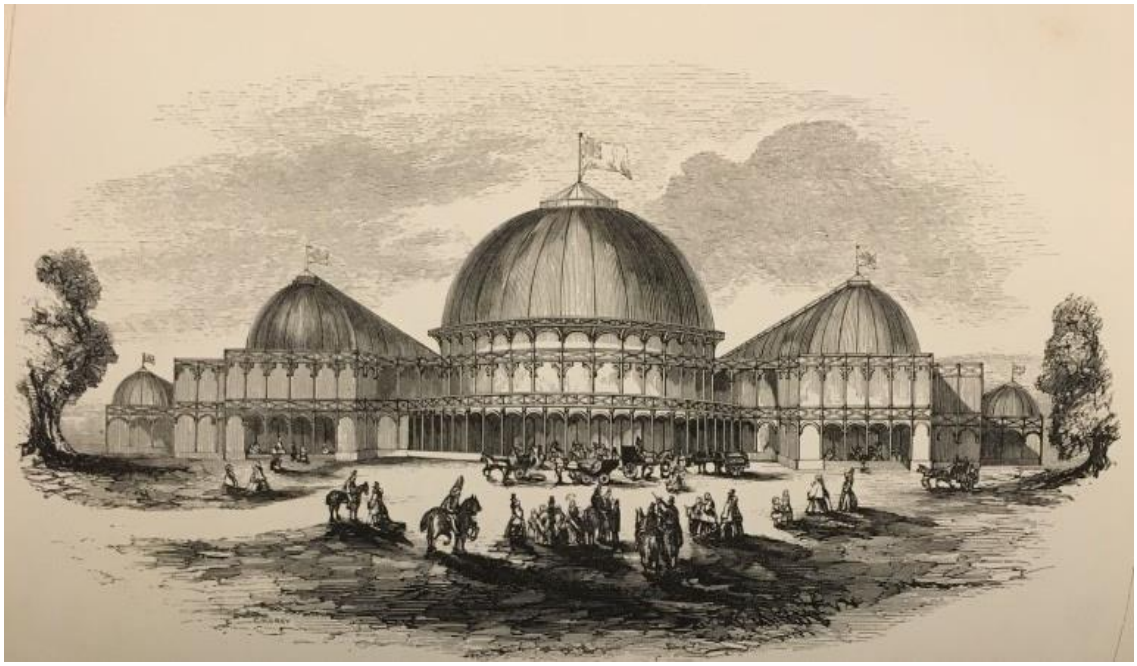


Figure 1.5. ‘Front view of the Irish Exhibition Building’, J. Sproule (ed.), *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853: A Detailed Catalogue of its Contents: with Critical Dissertations, Statistical information, and Accounts of Manufacturing processes in the Different Departments* (Dublin, 1854), p. 69. Shelf mark: 7957.c.17. British Library.

Figure 1.6. ‘Centre Hall of the Irish Industrial Exhibition Building’, Sproule, *Catalogue*, p. 53.

Figure 1.7. ‘The Procession of the Queen and Suite in the Crystal Palace’, *Illustrated Dublin Exhibition Catalogue, Published in Connection with the Art Journal* (Dublin, 1853). Shelf mark: J/7960.dd.29. British Library.

CHAPTER TWO:
'ONE WHO WAS MORE IRISH THAN THE IRISH THEMSELVES':[1] EXHIBITIONS OF THE IRISH IN THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION OF CHICAGO, 1893

The Irish featured in the Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893. Heralded as, 'Land of our hope!' the Chicago fair contained civilisation's most gloried possessions.[2] From industrial treasures, to arts and crafts, from mechanised progress to cultural artefacts and people – all celebrated aspects of the West were lauded in visual form. Visitor numbers reached enormous figures: 27 million attended from its opening to the public on 1 May 1893 to 30 October 1893. There were displays of the virtues and potential transformative powers of civilisation spanning 600 acres, demonstrating industry, architecture, and culture. Crucially, an in-between place operated in the form of the Midway Plaisance, acting as the bridge between progress and development.

The Midway Plaisance was a mile-long, 600-foot-wide strip of land linking Washington Park to Jackson Park.[3] Placed at the far end of the fairground the Midway acted as a barometer for the world's progress and development. Embodying a 'torch of civilization' it contained everything from a Japanese Bazaar, a Javanese, as well as a German village, even a Brazilian Concert Hall, an entire Street in Cairo, and was completed by a 'Wild East Show'

[1] W. T. Stead, *Lord and Lady Aberdeen: A Character Sketch* (London, 1893), p. 51. Shelf mark: Mic.F.232 [no. 13920]. British Library.
[2] K. Tynan, 'An Ode for the Opening of the Irish Village at Chicago', *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle. The Exhibit of the Irish Industries Association*. President, the Countess of Aberdeen. 'Éire go Bragh'. Published by the Irish Village Book Store. 25 cents. At the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago (Chicago, 1893), p. 29. Shelf mark: T500.K1. Library of Congress. See, E. Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (New York, 2003) and W. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (London, 1991).
[3] C. M. Rosenberg, *America at the Fair: Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition* (San Francisco, 2008), p. 254.

by the Ottoman's Arab Camp and Sitting Bull's Log Cabin.[4] In this presentation visitors could see the development of humanity, beginning with the 'white' Irish and Germans, closest to the fair's White City and then descending according to perceived civilisational status away from the fair. Visitors witnessed varying stages of mechanisation such as railway systems, irrigation networks and military achievements.[5] In this melange of the world's people, the Irish, curiously, featured twice for the affordable price of twenty-five cents. An Irish Village, including Donegal Castle by Alice Hart, neighboured Lady Aberdeen's Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle.

This chapter examines the motives, display and reception of Ireland in 1890s Chicago. It will ask how Ireland featured in the two separate villages and why. The villages reflect broader trends within the transnationalism of female activism and philanthropic endeavours in late-nineteenth century United States and Ireland.[6] Recognising the plight of the 'peasantry in the congested districts, the scenes of recurring famine', many monied women sought to rectify and reverse some of the life-threatening poverty they witnessed in the western counties of Ireland in a continuation of popular discourse on Irish development in the 1850s.[7] The chapter argues that the Chicago World's Fair demonstrates the importance of feminine philanthropy and female labour presented within the context of nostalgia and Irish-American nationalism in broader narratives of Ireland's perceived regeneration.

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[4] J. J. Flinn, *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance. Otherwise known as "The Highway Through The Nations"* (Chicago, 1893), p. 1. Shelf mark: T500.A1 F69. Library of Congress.
[5] See M. Armstrong, 'A Jumble of Foreignness: The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions', *Cultural Critique,* 23 (1992-93), pp. 199-250.
[6] See, C. Breathnach, 'Lady Dudley's District Nursing Scheme and the Congested Districts Board, 1903–1923' in M. Preston and M. Ó hÓgartaigh (eds.), *Gender and Medicine in Ireland, 1700-1950* (Syracuse, NY, 2012), pp. 138-153. The Lady Dudley scheme worked with the Congested Districts Board (CDB) to organise medical care in the home and to improve public health in the West of Ireland in the early 1900s.
[7] A. Hart, *The Cottage Industries of Ireland, With an Account of the Work of the Donegal Industrial Fund* (London, 1887, p. 4.Sixpence. Shelf mark: 8277.d.15.(5.). British Library.

Alice Hart, an Englishwoman interested in helping Donegal's poor, was the owner of the Irish Village including Donegal Castle, and Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, an aristocratic Scottish woman famed for her charitable projects, was owner of the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle, and both sought to remedy Irish poverty through a revival of rural industries. The two women recognised that women's work often supplemented the male householder's income in times of extreme poverty. Labouring men typically partook in seasonal work, which was weather dependent and naturally led to financial difficulties during the winter months.[8] Concurrently, Hart and Aberdeen saw the solution as rebirthing rural industries of spinning, sewing and weaving, and exhibitions became an important way to bolster sales, raise awareness and, most importantly, create trade and profit for the destitute Irish in Ireland. Like many other entrepreneurs, they recognised the advertising potential of display to initiate cross-cultural dialogue and purchasing, and organised separate exhibits in Chicago.

Hart and Aberdeen relied on the financial and political support of Irish immigrants in the United States; millions of Irish Americans participated enthusiastically in the fantasy of Ireland in the 1893 exhibition that represented their homeland and celebrated Irishness abroad. The two women recognised the vast opportunity of the United States, especially with Chicago's huge Irish population. In 1866, Irish-born men made up an estimated twenty-seven percent of police officers in Chicago.[9] Almost six out of the eight men in the detective department were of Irish citizenship, notes Sophie Cooper, as well as three captains and two sergeants in the force.[10] The rapid professionalisation and politicisation of the Irish immigrant

[8] D. Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 10-59, p. 16-19.
[9] *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1866. Cited in S. Cooper, 'Irish Migrant Identities and Community Life in Melbourne and Chicago, 1840-1890', PhD, University of Edinburgh (2017), p. 37-38.
[10] Ibid.

class in Chicago created an available community of Irishmen and women to target for the exhibition project. The success of Ireland's display in 1893 relied on the responsiveness of America's Irish immigrant community to feel sympathy for their homeland and expend financial and emotional labour to raise funds and sustain rural industry in Ireland.

This chapter will firstly consider how the Irish Industries Association (IIA) and the Donegal Industrial Fund (DIF) operated in Ireland and later the United States, demonstrating the organisation of the display of rural Ireland in the Chicago Irish Villages. What became important was witnessing an Irish past and an Irish history rooted in rural industries and tradition. This reveals the type of Irish modernity imagined. Aberdeen and Hart were convinced that a revival of rural industry would save Ireland, whereas most other countries (including at the Chicago fair) vied for increasing urban industrialisation in the form of technological mechanisation and modern architecture. The two women traded on a romanticised version of an Irish past that prioritised female labour as a source for good and a saviour to the Irish nation, revealing a continuation of Famine-era discourse. They recognised that rural industries were declining in Ireland but hoped that through reviving it, male wages would increase and the cost of living would be borne by both men and women regardless of the seasons. Clearly, an Irish modernity that was on the brink of industrialisation became concomitant with 'saving Ireland' for these elite women. Ireland's potential for development through rural industries translated into hope for the country's future. This had the effect of reinforcing both the imperial networks that sustained Irish poverty as well as the hierarchies within labour that reinforced unequal production and consumption.

Symbols were essential to convince Irish, American, British and international visitors of the vitality and prosperity of Ireland on the fairground. A visual politics emerged unique to an Irish American audience in order to exploit their feelings of dislocation fostered by migration for the benefit of those Irishmen and women who remained in Ireland. Narratives of nostalgia functioned amid ideas of the nation to resonate with the Irish American migratory experience. Irish images became integral to the process of settling into a new community, representing the transferable and fluid nature of symbols of Ireland. Recent and more established Irish migrants in the United States could identify with the picturesque Ireland they were seeing on the fairground that recreated their homeland as a lost utopia available for saving from destitution. The narrative projected was powerful to grasp and sustain through visiting the fairgrounds, buying souvenirs and celebrating a forgotten rural Ireland in the face of the unsettling process of migration.

I will end by considering the specific successes and failures of Aberdeen and Hart's projects of Irish rural revival and eventual Irish economic and social survival through display in 1893. As the title of this chapter indicates, 'One who was more Irish than the Irish themselves', the women's philanthropy saw them embody Irishness in a way that transcended their physical heritage of Scottish and English women respectively.[11] Their commitment to create a pseudo-Ireland rooted in a nostalgic remembrance of a communal solidarity, expanded beyond country of birth and commodified an Irish ethnicity for the socially conscious across transatlantic waters. I will conclude by assessing the individual legacies of Alice Hart and Lady Aberdeen's rural revival projects as exemplified in the Chicago Fair.

[11] Stead, *Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 51. For more recent work on charity see, S. Roddy, J. Strange and B. Taithe, *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870-1912* (London, 2018), especially Chapter Five, pp. 99-120.

TRANSATLANTIC PHILANTHROPY

Lady Ishbel Aberdeen (1857-1939) was an aristocratic woman born to the Majorbanks of Scotland. Ishbel is the Gaelic version of Isabella. Her husband, John Aberdeen, was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1886 and again in 1906-1915. He was also the seventh Governor-General of Canada making Lady Aberdeen viceregal consort of Canada from 1893-1898.[12] Husband and wife were avowed Home Rulers and supportive of the Gladstone administration. Alice Hart (1848-1931) was a middle-class English woman who dedicated her life to reversing the effects of poverty in the west of Ireland and helping prevent future famines. Her husband Ernest Hart shared her charitable instincts and both were social reformers committed to effecting positive change in the country.[13] Alice Hart was more radical than Aberdeen in the independence she wanted for Ireland, as she believed England to be responsible for much of Ireland's suffering, however, both women wanted Home Rule for the country. The two separate exhibits reflected their distinctive politics but functioned within a broader collective ideology of philanthropic activism for Ireland.

The Irish Home Rule debate dominated not only Irish-British politics but also the expatriate Irish-American community. Irish leaders of the Home Rule League, the predecessor of the Irish Parliamentary Party, under Isaac Butt, William Shaw, and Charles Stewart Parnell demanded a separatist form of Home Rule, with the creation of an Irish parliament within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ideas that the Union was responsible for the Famine became the bedrock for nationalist critiques of Britain and the

[12] D. F. Shackleton, *Ishbel and the Empire: A Biography of Lady Aberdeen* (Toronto, 1996), p. 17.
[13] J. Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880-1914. Marketing Craft, Making Fashion* (Dublin, 2007), p. 26. See also, J. Helland, 'Authenticity and identity as visual display: Scottish and Irish home arts and industries' in F. Cullen and J. Morrison (eds.), *A Shared Legacy: Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture* (London, 2005), pp. 157-172.

campaign for Home Rule in the 1870s and 1880s.[14] For instance, the Irish nationalist newspaper, *The Nation*, expounded: 'If this country were governed by its own people – governed by [those] who knew its resources and would willingly come together in brotherly love to save it, by willing labour and sacrifices […] these] evils might be turned aside'.[15] Historians have documented the period after the Famine as a time of infighting and political conflict and there were four Home Rule Bills by 1920.[16] Aberdeen and Hart championed their Home Rule politics of a devolved union through the means of exhibits to an interested public.

At the time of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Ireland had suffered agitation over Home Rule and land ownership as well as experiencing new forms of cultural nationalism. These political currents shaped the Irish diaspora in the United States in particular ways. By 1880, 1.2 million of 1.8 million Irish-born migrants lived in the same states in the US, or sixty-seven per cent.[17] David Noel Doyle posits that in contrast to the agricultural rurality of Ireland, the Irish in the United States were urban and industrial.[18] Viewed as a tradition of the past, in the nineteenth century rural industries became a method for saving the destitute Irish from a life of poverty. Whilst over the sea, the Irish had become city-like and urban; in their homeland however, rural and cottage-based industries remained

[14] E. Delaney, *The Curse of Reason: The Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 2012), p. 151-152.
[15] Cited in P. Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 177.
[16] M. Kelly, 'Home Rule and its Enemies' in A. Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 582-602; B. Barton, 'Northern Ireland, 1920-25' in J. R. Hill (eds.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol VII. Under the Auspices of the Royal Irish Academy planned and established by the late T. W. Moody 1921-84* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 161-198; Bew, *Ireland*, especially Chapter Ten, pp. 444-486; A. Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (Oxford, 2003); F. S. Lyons, 'The Developing Crisis, 1907-14' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol VI. Ireland under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 123-144.
[17] D. N. Doyle, 'The Remaking of Irish-America, 1845-1880' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol VI. Ireland Under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 725-763, p. 740.
[18] Ibid., p. 740-741. See also, E. Delaney, 'Diaspora' in R. Bourke and I. McBride (eds.), *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (Princeton, 2016), pp. 490-508; E. Delaney, 'Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37: 148 (2011), pp. 599-621; K. Kenny, 'Diaspora and Irish Migration History', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33 (2006), pp. 46-51.

the valued norm. Therefore, the exhibition in 1893 was operating within a dual influence of aspirational rural revival industry as well as a lost past for the Irish diasporic citizens. Irish American nostalgia for their homeland was particularly sensitive to these discourses of their country ailing under the rigours of industrialised modernity, which could only be saved through charity and clinging to their past.

Many Irish communities in America expressed some dislike toward Britain and, a significant number of Irish Catholics felt concern about Irish Protestants.[19] Ulster Protestants made up the majority of eighteenth and early nineteenth century immigrants, Rochelle Raineri Zuck notes, while Irish Catholics comprised the largest percentage of the famine immigrants of the 1840s.[20] Declining capacity for agricultural labour in Ireland, alongside the reduction of Irish wages compared with those in America, pushed millions to settle in the US. In the United States, Doyle argues, Irish communities grew by continuous arrivals from Ireland in industrial hot spots inhabited by successive generations of different families.[21] Overall, the varying Irish nationalist ideologies among the Irish at home in this period created an Irish subculture that burgeoned in the overseas communities, which became integral in funding and furthering the Irish independence movement, especially in the 1880s and from 1910 to 1922.[22]

[19] R. R. Zuck, *Divided Sovereignties: Race, Nationhood, and Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century America* (Georgia, 2016), p. 143.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Doyle, 'The Remaking of Irish-America, 1845-1880', p. 725-726.
[22] Ibid. For divisions between these communities, see, D. H. Akenson, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence and the Irish in North America* (Virginia, 1985); R. A. Wells, 'Aspects of Northern Ireland Migration to America: Definitions and Directions', *Ethnic Forum*, 4 (1984), pp. 49-63; C. McGimpsey, 'Internal Ethnic Friction: Orange and Green in Nineteenth Century New York, 1868-1872', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicities, Migration and Diaspora*, 1 (1982), pp. 39-59; D. Doyle, *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection: The Proceedings of the United States Bicentennial Conference of Cumann Merriman, Ennis, August 1976* (Virginia, 1980); O. MacDonagh, 'The Irish Famine Emigration to the United States', *Perspectives in American History*, 10 (1976), pp. 430-446; C. Wittke, *The Irish in America* (Louisiana, 1956), especially Chapter Three.

My conceptual framework in this chapter fits within the 'diasporic imagination' that Bruce Nelson and others have utilised to explain the common symbols, ideologies, and rituals that became popular to specific Irish American groups.[23] There was a shared currency of cultural imagery that enabled Irish men and women to navigate their migration in the realm of the social, and how significant labour was extended in creating accessible narratives of Ireland for popular consumption. This extends the work of scholars like Kevin Kenny who have shown that the peaks of Irish migration to the US saw a parallel increase in ideas of national liberation both in Ireland and in America.[24] Visions of an Irish home therefore had resonance within the realm of politics as well as entertainment and popular nostalgia.

The backdrop of Irish-American nationalism interacted with feminine philanthropy and labour. A broad-based coalition of peoples and groups emerged in the late 1880s and 1890s who again believed that Ireland's agricultural economy needed overhauling to become

[23] B. Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Oxford, 2012), p. 11. See also, M. H. Thuente, 'The Folklore of Irish Nationalism' in T. Hachey and L. McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (Lexington, 2015), pp. 42-60; K. A. Miller, 'Ulster Presbyterians and the "Two Traditions" in Ireland and America' in J. J. Lee and M. R. Casey (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York, 2007), pp. 255-270; M. F. Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge, 1996); K. A. Miller, 'Class, Culture, and Immigrant Group Identity in the US: The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity' in V. Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York, 1990), pp. 96-129.

[24] See, K. Kenny, 'Irish Emigrants in a Comparative Perspective' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 405-422, p. 420; T. Meagher, 'Irish America' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 497-514; K. Kenny, 'American-Irish Nationalism' in J. J. Lee and M. R. Casey (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York, 2007), pp. 289-301; K. Kenny, 'Diaspora and Irish Migration History', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33 (2006), pp. 46-51; K. Kenny, 'Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study', *Journal of American History*, 90: 1 (2003), pp. 134-162; R. Scally, *The End of Hidden Ireland: Rebellion, Famine, and Emigration* (Oxford, 1995); L. C. Wade, *Chicago's Pride: The Stockyards, Packingtown, and Environs in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, 1987); R. A. Wells, 'Aspects of Northern Ireland Migration to America: Definitions and Directions', *Ethnic Forum*, 4 (1984), pp. 49-63; C. McGimpsey, 'Internal Ethnic Friction: Orange and Green in Nineteenth Century New York, 1868-1872', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicities, Migration and Diaspora*, 1 (1982), pp. 39-59; D. Doyle, *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection: The Proceedings of the United States Bicentennial Conference of Cumann Merriman, Ennis, August 1976* (Virginia, 1980).

more sustainable to compete on the world's market. Hart and Aberdeen's Irish villages navigated the broader context of reforming Ireland; activists and politicians alike championed the revival of rural industries through state intervention and individual operations. In the 1880s, many people in the West of Ireland were suffering from the effects of the 1879 famine when the potato crop failed for a third successive year.[25] Consequently, Chief Secretary of Ireland, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) established the Congested Districts Board (CDB) in 1891.[26] Historian Carla King has shown that the responsibilities assigned to the CDB were vast; it was able to buy tenants' interest in their holdings, facilitate emigration and migration, furnish seed potatoes or oats when required, help the fishing industry, aid agriculture and support weaving, spinning and other industries.[27] Hart and Aberdeen's exhibits in Chicago therefore contributed to this wider project of reviving Ireland's rural industries to relieve poverty.

As a form of 'Constructive Unionism', the CDB aimed at 'pacifying' Irish agrarian unrest through a 'combination of coercive and conciliatory measures'.[28] The board addressed rural poverty in regions of the western counties of Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Kerry and the west riding of Cork. Before this policy, Ciara Breathnach has shown that the imperial exchequer offered aid to the alleviation of distress in Ireland under the specificities of different acts.[29] The board was the first of its kind to suggest long-term solutions to rural poverty instead of the ineffective short-term policies of outdoor relief.

[25] See, C. Ó Gráda, *Famine: A Short History* (Princeton, 2009), p. 25.
[26] C. B. Shannon, *Arthur J. Balfour and Ireland, 1874-1922* (Washington, D.C., 1988), p. 22.
[27] C. King, *Michael Davitt: After the Land League, 1882-1906* (Dublin, 2016), p. 436.
[28] C. Breathnach, *Congested Districts Board, 1891-1923* (Cork, 2005), p. 11. See L. P. Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland: A Study in Conservative Unionism* (Princeton, 1963).
[29] Ibid. See also, C. Breathnach, 'Handywomen and Birthing in Rural Ireland, 1851-1955', *Gender and History*, 28: 1 (2016), pp. 34-56.

'Congested', Breathnach explains, was a label given to the western counties in 1882 in the first report of 'Mr Tuke's Fund'; these reports facilitated the system of assisted emigration from the west of Ireland to North America, which became a traditional remedy for overpopulation.[30] But despite all its efforts, the board was unable to prevent the recurrence of crisis in the late 1880s. Aberdeen and Hart echoed this official state legislature through their individual philanthropic enterprise and the exhibits in Chicago formed part of this larger rural revival charity initiative to help the Irish poor.

Lady Aberdeen fits within this larger scale intervention to help Ireland's poor. She founded the Irish Industries Association in the late 1880s. It aimed '[t]o organise the Home, Cottage, and other Industries of Ireland, and to bring the various centres of these industries into communication with one another'.[31] The IIA was the institutional body of the Royal Dublin Society that triennially organised exhibitions in Ireland to stimulate agriculture and industry. The IIA sought to facilitate arrangements: 'whereby good designs may be brought within the reach of workers in all parts of Ireland; [find] suitable markets for Irish work; promote the establishment of local centres and committees [and] offer advice'; promote and advertise the use of Irish goods; collect donations to bolster the trade and ultimately to make profitable again rural industries in Ireland for the benefit of the poor.[32]

[30] Ibid. Overpopulation was used synonymously with the term 'congestion'. See, G. P. Moran, *Sending out Ireland's Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2004).
[31] *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 17.
[32] Ibid., p. 17-18.

Horace Plunkett, a founder of agricultural co-operatives was an active member of the Irish Industries Association.[33] Local branches of the Irish Industries Association appeared with rapidity in Clones, Limerick, Cork, and elsewhere in the 1880s and 1890s.[34] Aberdeen's ultimate aim was to organise and develop the rural industries for profit (local and regional) in Ireland and she garnered a great deal of support for it, both financial and personal. She was generally interested in reviving bog-oak carving, spinning, weaving, and knitting. The revival of bog-oak reinforces the importance of the material in evoking an Irish identity connected to the land that was popular in the 1850s. Aberdeen considered national and international exhibitions a valuable and necessary way to exhibit Irish industry and ensure its survival, as well as the survival of the Irish people.[35]

The Congested Districts Board and the IIA worked together on a project in the early 1890s. Ciara Breathnach has shown that they attempted to develop and improve the manufacture of homespun tweeds in rural Ireland in a scheme known as South Donegal Industries. The board lent several hundred pounds to the IIA to offer technical instruction and introduce modern looms in the country. Breathnach demonstrates that the CDB gave weavers loans to purchase new looms and state-of-the-art spinning wheels after completing the IIA's training.[36] The improved methods of dyeing, spinning and weaving were initially successful,

[33] See, K. T. Hoppen, 'Gladstone, Salisbury and the End of Irish Assimilation' in M. E. Daly and K. T. Hoppen (eds.), *Gladstone: Ireland and Beyond* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 45-63; M. McAteer, 'Reactionary Conservatism or Radical Utopianism? AE and the Irish Cooperative Movement', *Éire-Ireland*, 35: 3-4 (2000-1), pp. 148-162; C. Nash, 'Visionary Geographies: Designs for Developing Ireland', *History Workshop Journal*, 45: 1 (1998), pp. 49-78; A. Gailey, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The Experience of Constructive Unionism, 1890-1905* (Cork, 1987).
[34] A. Mackay, 'Selection of the Fittest: Or, How Irish Colleens were chosen to represent Ireland at the World's Fair. A Tour on behalf of the Irish Village', *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 31.
[35] See, J. C. G. Aberdeen and Temair (1st Marquis Of), I. G. Aberdeen and Temair (Marchioness Of), *'We Twa': Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, Volume 1 & 2 (London, 1925). Shelf mark: W47/3147. British Library.
[36] Breathnach, *Congested Districts Board*, p. 60.

although it failed in the longer-term revival of tweed as cheaper, lesser quality goods were readily available. Many workers left due to the lack of sustained investment by the CDB, and there was an irrevocable decline in the tweed industry in the late nineteenth century.[37] Overall, a convergence of individualised philanthropy and larger-scale charity initiatives attempted to ameliorate poverty in Ireland with varying degrees of success.

Alice Hart sought to 'revive the old cottage industries and to develop the ancient arts of spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, and embroidery' amongst peasants in the Congested Districts of Donegal.[38] She planned to build a network of technical schools in Donegal and 'find new markets for the goods'.[39] A 'carefully devised system of village technical training' skilled in the 'making of homespuns of a kind and quality never before attempted in Ireland' would in Hart's mind 'enable a peasantry so honest, industrious, virtuous, and estimable as that of Donegal to live in homesteads in the country, instead of being driven to inhabit the slums of a city'.[40] This may have been inspired by Michael Davitt's plan for a 'People's Institute' as discussed by Laurence Marley. Davitt was an Irish nationalist and agrarian campaigner who planned for the Institute to span the districts of Ireland, to be constructed by volunteer labour, and funded through a local tax raised by the district's inhabitants.[41] Similar to Hart's enterprise, there would be evening classes and lectures on improved agricultural and machinery techniques.[42] Clearly, there was a productive dynamic between state-based and more localised activist policies in late nineteenth-century Ireland, England and Scotland – reflecting the transnationalism of charity-based Irish rural revival policies.

[37] Ibid.
[38] A. Hart, 'Mrs Ernest Hart and Donegal Cottage Industries', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 June 1889.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] L. Marley, *Michael Davitt: Freelance Radical and Frondeur* (Dublin, 2007), p. 145.
[42] Ibid.

Hart set up a permanent depot for the sale of her industries at 43, Donegal House, Wigmore Street, London, where the 'Kells embroideries, hand-knit and hand woven hosiery and gloves, hand-sewn under-linen, lace, crochet, embroidered handkerchiefs, Irish linens […could] be purchased, or orders given by post'.[43] She travelled to Ireland in March 1883 to appraise the situation of the country. Her tour of Irish poverty coincided with the trial of Charles Stewart Parnell and his colleagues in the Land League for their suspected involvement in the Phoenix Park murders. Hart's biographer, Janice Helland, speculates that the timing of her visit at the same time as the trial may have been 'more than mere coincidence', reflecting a more nationalist bent to Hart's politics.[44] Hart, like Aberdeen, also recognised the potential of exhibits to advertise Irish cottage industries and took part in various exhibitions such as the London International Inventions Exhibition in 1885, the Edinburgh Exhibition in 1886 and the International Exposition in Paris in 1889. Helland has neatly surmised that Hart's venture sought a 'cultural biography of [Irish] things' to rescue crisis-stricken Ireland, which relied on the most familiar images of Irish land, people and object to attract and sustain the consumption of Irish-made products.[45]

Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart shared many similarities, they both wanted to revive Irish industries and demonstrate Irish ingenuity in the face of popular negative prejudices about the country in the 1890s. Yet, both were outsiders to the Irish project; they both understood how and why the English had exploited Ireland but they also succumbed to the reductive desire to romanticise the Irish folk and the peasantry. They both saw the utility of national and international exhibitions and sought a spot at the Columbian Exposition in

[43] A. Hart, 'Irish Cottage Industries. To the Editor of the Northern Whig', *Northern Whig*, 16 June 1887.
[44] Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 27-28.
[45] Ibid., p. 34.

Chicago. The early 1890s was an ideal time for their exhibit given that successive waves of Irish emigration were continuing unabated, inflating the significant numbers of second and third generation Irish men and women who had already settled in the United States. Unlike in England, where Irish migrants remained amongst the working classes of Britain's populace, mainly labourers, the Irish generally occupied a better economic position in the United States – with Irish civil servants becoming a common feature, particularly in the War Department.[46] The relative success of migrant Irishmen and women in the United States not only fostered feelings of solidarity with family members and friends in Ireland suffering because of hardship and deprivation but meant they could spend money on charity for their homeland.

IRELAND IN THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION OF 1893

Despite plans for the two women to work together on a single Irish village in Chicago the final display included two Irish villages.[47] The two activists fell out over the material conditions of their respective exhibits and their ideological justifications and methods of improving the Irish lot. Aberdeen held a 'position in the inner [circle] of British rule', whereas Alice Hart was a middle-class woman with less political prestige and status.[48] A competing difference in class within aristocratic and bourgeois spheres fermented tensions between the two women, as well as the specificities of their activism. For instance, Aberdeen exercised her power by seeking to influence the wealthy and elite to sympathise with Ireland's

[46] R. Swift and S. Campbell, 'The Irish in Britain' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 515-533 argue that by the end of the nineteenth century Irish migrants largely occupied unskilled and semi-skilled labour in England, and a small proportion of second-generation Irish men found skilled employment in industrial districts as mechanics, boilermakers, smiths, fitters and Irish women were engaged in a variety of low-paid professional occupations, including social work and nursing, p. 518. See also, R. Swift, 'Heroes or Villains?' The Irish, Crime and Disorder in Victorian England', *Albion*, 29: 3 (1997), pp. 399-421.

[47] See, Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*; 'Politics and Persons', *St James's Gazette*, 9 May 1892; 'The Countess of Aberdeen in Ulster', *Northern Whig*, 19 July 1893; 'Lady Aberdeen's Tour', *Flag of Ireland*, 22 July 1893 for initial plans for the two women to work together.

[48] Stead, *Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 42.

plight; Hart's activism revolved around the high street and the encouragement of a popular mass-market appeal of Irish goods and products amongst the rapidly growing middle class. The stories of how these women displayed two different Irish exhibits at the 1893 fair therefore reveals the broader machinations of female activism and philanthropy in the nineteenth century.

Irish women were fundamental to the survival of their families in this period and it became the preserve of relatively wealthy outsider women to formulate and sustain their valuable industriousness. Evidently, the inadequacies of local government provisions saw charities alleviate hardship to make the poor economically independent in the wake of famine and competition. The popular adoption of mass-produced, machine-spun goods, Breathnach notes, had had a detrimental effect on the textile industry by the 1890s.[49] Hart wanted to compete in this market by cultivating hand-made textiles as a unique specialised good only available in prestigious high street businesses. Whilst Aberdeen and Hart possessed shared politics regarding the revival of rural industries to save the Irish poor, they came unstuck as to exactly how they should bring this about. One was concerned with the elite and the other with the mass public; both were convinced her scheme was the only effective method.

Differences between the two women emerged on varying scales – Aberdeen vehemently believed that the entrepreneurial capacity to promote Irish industry should continue unabated in the domestic and public sphere. She was an ardent advocate of advertising Irish clothing and design through her own body. She frequently wore Irish made clothing, encouraged her peers to do the same and generally performed an imagined Irishness.

[49] Breathnach, *Congested Districts Board*, p. 15. See, C. Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland, 1850-1922* (Manchester, 2007), p. 25-26.

For instance, Aberdeen held a garden party at the Vice-Regal Lodge in Dublin in the summer of 1886. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* noted that 'all the guests should come clothed in garments of Irish manufacture as far as possible'.[50]

Many local designers avidly picked up the dress code: R. T. Martin, a Costumier and Ladies Tailor, of Grafton Street had several advertisements in local newspapers to attendees of the garden party of 'suitable Irish Materials […] in accordance with the styles requested by Her Excellency'.[51] Contemporaries described the 'party [as] a brilliant success', and the *Freeman's Journal* was not alone in expounding: 'a gayer, brighter and pleasanter scene has not been witnessed for many years' with its nearly two thousand costumed guests.[52] Irish materials and Irish manufactures abounded; Lord Aberdeen wore an 'electric suit of silvery grey poplin cloth and white hat' and their children wore 'Irish costumes modelled in conformity with authentic designs taken from the Royal Irish Academy'.[53]

Aberdeen took the dress code one step further and personified Irish industries (**Figure 2.1**). She conflated her own personhood with Ireland by dressing as Aoife, the twelfth century Irish bride of Norman invader Strongbow, 'in a wealth of white poplin and gold lace'.[54] In the image, she is wearing a crown and her two sons are holding the train of her dress.[55] Aberdeen offered elite, socially minded contemporaries an opportunity to emulate her activism, which tied entertainment with pleasure. She even went as far as wearing Balbriggan stockings

[50] 'Lady Aberdeen and Irish Industries', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 21 November 1903.
[51] 'The Countess of Aberdeen's Garden Party', *Dublin Daily Express*, 12 April 1886.
[52] 'Aberdeen's Garden Party', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 7 June 1886. See also in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 29 May 1886.
[53] 'Aberdeen's Garden Party', *Freeman's Journal*. See Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 84-85.
[54] Ibid. See Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 82- 88.
[55] Aberdeen wore the dress at a later occasion as well and that is the image that is being analysed.

'embroidered with shamrocks by Mr Smyth'.[56] This gaudy identification with Ireland unhelpfully romanticised rural poverty as a lowly position that resolved itself through hard labour and the creation of worthwhile rural products. Whilst Aberdeen recognised that the many injustices suffered by Ireland's poor were beyond their control, such reductive stereotypes of rurality reinforced tragedy as the norm for Ireland and its peoples, instead of highlighting it as an exceptional occurrence rallied against by Irishmen and women.

Utilising the poor as symbols and appendages to aristocratic entertainment emphasises the overwhelming hypocrisies of elite female activism in the nineteenth century. Aberdeen and others may have had the best intentions but their ownership over the revival industries hinted at a more sinister dismissal of poverty as an individualised ailment that Irish citizens could independently overcome. These expensive dresses were only available to the wealthiest. Clearly, Aberdeen did raise awareness of Irish poverty and Irish rural industry (and concurrently debates on Irish Home Rule) but the extent to which her philanthropy facilitated change with its sole targeting of the upper echelons of British and Irish society was questionable.

Alice Hart criticised women who bought non-Irish clothing and products but she did not suggest or perform a mimetic response between herself and Irish rural revival/survival. Unlike Aberdeen, Hart was less visible in the arena of public and private spectacles. Helland has comprehensively shown that Hart's focus was on the development of tweed, frieze and knitting, particularly on the production and purchase of decorated fabrics.[57] A capitalism

[56] 'Aberdeen's Garden Party', *Freeman's Journal.*
[57] Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 29.

allied with charity was Hart's raison d'être, as she responded to market processes and market demands, consistently bartering for the best price and the best location for her Irish textiles.

Hart was more critical of England's role in Ireland than Aberdeen and championed her opinions in public lectures throughout her life and during the 1893 display.[58] Her lectures also included striking photographs of poverty in Ireland taken during her visits to the country – reaffirming constantly the connection between philanthropy and the visual in the rural revival project. Whilst both women were operating independently of state help, and relied on their personal resources to liberate the Irish from the shackles of poverty and 'lived' their politics, they complemented and reinforced the more state-based, collective Congested Districts Board enterprises.

Apart from their personal endeavours, a more broad-based audience was targeted with Hart and Aberdeen's involvement in Chicago. These were popular affairs made accessible for the workers, the middling and the elite of British, Irish and American society. However, tensions began to emerge between the two women. Aberdeen's Irish Industries Association had a rigid bureaucratic structure and mainly lordly men and women were on its committee.[59] However, Hart resisted merging the Donegal Industrial Fund under the umbrella organisation of the IIA. She may have disliked the committee's exclusively aristocratic composition and the DIF had an established brand. Moreover, alliance with Aberdeen cost individual success

[58] The first lecture Alice Hart gave in London on the Donegal Industrial Fund was in 1885, titled 'Cottage Industries, and that they can do for Ireland' (London, 1885). Shelf mark: 8275.cc.24.(9.). British Library. Hart's lectures in the village were based on previous talks she had given. For instance, she discussed Home Arts as a branch of technical education at a conference held at the Leeds Philosophical Hall on Wednesday 7 December 1887. See, *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 8 December 1887.
[59] 'Irish Home Industries', *Kerry Evening Post*, 31 July 1886.

and recognition, for instance, at the 1886 International Exhibition Association of Industry, Science, and Art in Edinburgh, the Countess of Aberdeen received the highest award, the Diploma of Honour for the 'whole exhibit of Irish women's industries'.[60]

It may be that 'conflict between the two women quite likely was inevitable' as Helland surmises but it is interesting that even within the same cause of reviving rural industries the hierarchies of class interfered.[61] The machinations of benevolent philanthropy were subject to tensions of class privilege and preoccupations with the types of products advertised, methods of advertisement, and intended audience in 1890s Chicago. This period carried the class divisions from earlier centuries, and particularly the 1850s, onto an international stage. The two women were engaged in an opposition that is hinted at in the archival records – a confrontation of sorts can be inferred but a very polite, particular sort.

The two differed on the specificities of their Home Rule project. Aberdeen and her husband were staunch supporters of a continued devolved union with Britain in the form of Home Rule. They admired the Irish character and praised Irish land and industry, but Aberdeen still advocated for an English monarchy and aristocracy within the functioning of nineteenth century society. However, Hart considered the English aristocracy largely responsible for the ills of Ireland and vied against Lady Aberdeen's power and prestige. Their differences became visible to the public during the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Aberdeen wrote, 'The idea of a village had first been evolved by [Alice] Hart, in connection with her Donegal Industrial Fund, but we persuaded her that it would be better for all

[60] *The Queen*, 6 November 1886, p. 535. Cited in Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 45.
[61] Helland, *British and Irish Industries*, p. 45.

concerned if the Irish Industries Association and the Donegal Industrial Fund combined for a joint effort, each taking shares of the expenses and profits'.[62] However, according to Aberdeen's memoir, 'differences arose between the two sections; on one occasion we found ourselves obliged to adjourn our meeting for a week in order to consider what could be done to come to an agreement. When we met again, we received a cable informing us that [Alice] Hart had arrived in Chicago and was in treaty for a concession for a second Irish village', and she concludes: 'we had just to make the best of it'.[63]

Fair organisers granted Hart a separate commission for a second Irish village in a bid to boost profits, albeit on the same plot and only a few metres away from Aberdeen's village with almost entirely the same ambitions and similar materials on display. Specifically, Hart differed with her interest in the Celtic Revival project, particularly embroidered Book of Kells motifs. Hart largely sought to rectify the ills caused by 'machine competition' and held that the 'Donegal peasant women [were] the finest knitters in the United Kingdom', and her Kells embroidery showcased designs 'worked in flax on flax' – all were 'genuine specimens of the work of the Irish people' and had popular appeal in England, Ireland and the United States.[64] Her ultimate aim was to help 'distressed ladies' and through a 'steady outlet for the work of the Irish peasants' she hoped to 'rescu[e] thousands from destitution, [by] planting in large districts hope and industry in the place of despair and idleness'.[65] Hart believed that such 'self-acting and self-sustaining' work would further lead to the 'salvation of Ireland' and she employed up to '800 cottagers [proficient in] spinning, weaving, and dyeing' at any time.[66]

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[62] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen,* p. 323.
[63] Ibid., p. 323-324.
[64] Hart, 'Donegal Cottage Industries', *Londonderry Sentinel*; 'Irish Cottage Industries', *The Globe*, 14 July 1885.
[65] A. Hart, 'Irish Cottage Industries. To the Editor of the Northern Whig', *Northern Whig,* 16 June 1887.
[66] *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 28 May 1887; 'Letter to the Ladies. Irish Industries', *Dundee Evening Telegraph,* 1 January 1887.

Hart also had entertainments to expand her pedagogic and charitable empire; offering a complete vision of her heritage-based revival.

Approximately 70,000 square feet at the Midway Plaisance entrance was dedicated to the two Irish villages and their buildings of industry, shops, entertainments and greenery (**Figure 2.2**). The Midway boasted of containing: 'All the world'; with a 'contrast in the extremes of humanity' and featuring a 'confusion of life', including dancers, music, the first Ferris Wheel, food from around the world, theatres, villages, huts, squares, and an 'opportunity for a study of national character of great variety'.[67] It was home to 'beautiful displays of the liberal arts, the glories of the fine arts, the wonders of the mechanic arts, the marvels of electrical science; also the agricultural, forestry, fishery, horticultural [were on display]'.[68] Ireland was next to the Japanese Bazaar and the Javanese Village, and close to the popular Street in Cairo and the Moorish Palace, complete with a Garden Café, in the strict Social Darwinist logic of the Midway. Ireland was thereby located within the earlier stages of perceived civilisation in the racialised organisation of the broader Chicago Fair.

Exhibition literature claimed that in the Midway:

> Mankind saw his brothers – unseen brothers that hitherto were but names or scarce even that to him. They came from the night some North and the splendid South, from the wasty [*sic*] West and the effete East, bringing their manners, customs, dress, religions, legends, amusements, that we might know them the better [...] man, woman and child and they lent life and colour to the evanescent panorama that charmed so

[67] *Oriental and Occidental Northern and Southern Portraits of the Midway: A Collection of Photographs of Individual Types of Various Nations from All Parts of the World who represented, in the Department of Ethnology, the Manners, Customs, Dress, Religions, Music and other Distinctive Traits and Peculiarities of their Race* (Chicago, 1894). No page numbers available. Shelf mark: T500.C1 O8. Library of Congress.
[68] Ibid.

> many million eyes [...] We must not forget however that in the midst of peoples so new and strange to us there were others nearer akin. To many Americans 'Old Vienna', the 'German Village' and the 'Irish Villages' gave information of the customs of their fathers.[69]

The Midway therefore operated in a dual space of inviting wonder and shock towards countries outside of Europe and Britain but further reaffirming and admiring the ostensible triumphs of white societies. The presence of the Viennese, German and Irish villages in particular was suggestive of an ancestry inclined towards industrial development and offered a template for future progress to the perceived lesser industrialised nations.

The Irish villages stood amid the spectacle of a 'jumble of foreignness' that Meg Armstrong has described. Armstrong explains that an aesthetic ideology existed on the Midway of 'exotic [as] chaos, a jumble, a sublimely grotesque and bawdy array of colours, sights, scents, and sounds'.[70] Clearly, on the spectrum of cultures displayed, Ireland represented the apex of civilisational narratives, equal to Germany and Austria. Positioned at the front of the Plaisance, the Irish villages depicted the penultimate achievement of human progress before entering the 'civilised' space of the fair's 'White City'. Ireland was on the fringes of civilisation, en route to the industrious excellence that would warrant it a ticket to

[69] Ibid. For recent works that complicate the space of the exhibitions, see, N. Cardon, 'The South's New Negroes and African American Visions of Progress at the Atlanta and Nashville International Expositions, 1895-1897', *Journal of Southern History*, 80: 2 (2014), pp. 287-326. See also, W. F. Brundage, 'Meta Warrick's 1907 "Negro Tableaux" and (Re)Presenting African American Historical Memory', *The Journal of American History,* 89: 4 (2003), pp. 1368-1400; C. R. Reed, *All the World is Here: The Black Presence at the White City* (Indiana, 2002); D. M. Guss, *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (Berkeley, 2000); P. Kramer, 'Making Concessions: Race and Empire Revisited at the Philippine Exposition, St. Louis, 1901–1905', *Radical History Review,* 73 (1999), pp. 75-114.

[70] Armstrong, 'A Jumble of Foreignness', p. 201.

the main fairground that housed the machinery, electrical, technical and cultural achievements of the United States, Britain and the other world powers of the nineteenth century.[71]

Ireland's capacity for industrial civilisation was the narrative that Aberdeen and Hart worked within in their activism. They championed the potential of the Irish people and made it their life's work to unlock that potential through the development of rural industry for immediate survival and eventually for the good of the country as a whole. On the Midway, the Irish performed an Irish modernity through industrial labour engaging in the mechanisms of product and production physically, and in part as a response to racialised international concerns of perceived Irish backwardness and idleness.[72] Therefore, a hopeful narrative for future progress and development existed within reductive stereotypes of Irish labour practices. The possible transformation of Ireland's economy was firmly rooted in an imagined history of the country's underdevelopment and weaknesses due to the Irish character that carried on from the 1850s. The corrective was visualised through the literal performance of rural labour by the exhibited Irish.

For Aberdeen and Hart, rural industry would keep the Irish from poverty and allow them to compete with large-scale mechanisation through their unique high-quality goods

[71] See, L. Kruger, "'White Cites", "Diamond Zulus", and the "African Contribution to Human Advancement": African Modernities and the World's Fairs', *TDR: The Drama Review*, 51: 3 (2007), pp. 19-45. Kruger argues that a working disjuncture allowed African communities to cherish their past traditions and cultures whilst simultaneously embracing the technological advances of the future by analysing the 'Zulu Show' in the Midway and the African diamond mines exhibits within the main fair. Kruger reveals how a celebration of African modernity co-existed with reductive portrayals of the Africans, and this can also be seen in the case of the Irish. See also, B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (London, 1998); R. Corbey, 'Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930', 8: 3, *Cultural Anthropology* (1993), pp. 338-369; A. E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (Yale, 1984); B. Benedict, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (London, 1983).

[72] See, L. Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Dublin, 1996), p. 165-170.

opening up a space for trade and profit in a transatlantic business. This narrative resonated with Irish American communities generally, and in Chicago specifically. The immediate sensory exposure to rural Ireland on the fairground heightened the valuable opportunity to capitalise on feelings of guilt from migration, as well as exploiting the emotions of loss and pride taken in native Irish goods. Heralded as a final hope for the country the solution seemed obvious, easy even. Thus, it made sense for the Irish villages to feature on the Midway – here, was the entry point for their future prosperity, and if contemporaries sold enough, visited enough, and bought enough, Ireland could be as profitable as her neighbouring countries.

The exhibition grounds and the labours of Aberdeen and Hart can be conceptualised within Mary Louise Pratt's 'contact zones' of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated came into contact with each other and established ongoing relations, usually involving 'conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict'.[73] For instance, through international exhibitions Ireland intimately came in contact with the imperial power of Britain through spectacle. It further competed on a grand scale with the industrial, architectural and societal prowess of former colonies. Yet, it was consigned to the space reserved for present colonies and racialised Others on the Midway Plaisance. Here, as Pratt has conceptualised imperial and colonial trajectories intersected, and a co-presence emerged relying on interaction and mutual understandings and practices, 'within radically asymmetrical relations of power'.[74] Pratt coined 'autoethnography' or 'autoethnographic expression' to refer to instances in which colonised subjects chose to

[73] M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 2008), p. 8.
[74] Ibid.

represent themselves through the coloniser's terms and we can productively consider the international exhibitions in this way.[75]

Alice Hart's Village was made up of 'typical Irish residences', and was entered through a replica of the St Lawrence Gate in Drogheda. The 'scene [wa]s quaint, picturesque, and uniquely Irish' with a reproduction of Donegal castle and a tall Round Tower (**Figure 2.3**).[76] There was a series of whitewashed cottages where 'homespuns [we]re made by hand'.[77] The village had a medieval feel with a castellated gateway complemented by trees and foliage. The sketch reveals the different heights of the various buildings to offer a sense of the wholesome nature of the displayed Irishness as a composite vision of an Irish past. Irish art and industry took centre stage with demonstrations of spinning, weaving, embroidered hangings, coverlets, curtains, lace, and hosiery exhibited in the Village Hall. An Irish history was carefully cultivated with a wishing chair 'exactly reproduced to scale and measurement' from the Giant's Causeway 'standing on Irish soil, brought from Ireland in crates'.[78] Visitors could also witness the dancing of the Irish jig on the village green in an immersive Irish paradise.

Irish Americans supportive of Home Rule would likely have derived the most interest and pleasure from Hart's village with her politics of a devolved union with Britain in order to revitalise Ireland and its industries. Hart, like Aberdeen, charged a standard twenty-five cents entrance fee, and all monies from tickets and goods went to the respective charities. Like the exhibitions of the Irish in the 1850s, there was a vibrant interest in Irish connectedness to the

[75] Ibid., p. 9.
[76] Flinn, 'Mrs Hart's Irish Industrial Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 13-14.
[77] Ibid., p. 14.
[78] Ibid., p. 15.

land, and 'Souvenirs of bog oak', Irish jewellery and illustrated books were a few of the many items sold in the village's shops. In a similar fashion, official literature from the exhibition celebrated that the historical and artistic objects attracted most attention from visitors, particularly the Druidical stones and early Christian crosses, reflecting the interest in a sense of an Irish past and an Irish history amongst Irish Chicagoans and visitors more broadly.

The English *Dover Express* expounded that Donegal Village was 'one of the most quaint and picturesque of [the] presentments [on the Midway]'.[79] However, the Plaisance was anything but peaceful and whimsical being home to dozens of stalls, mock villages, pavilions, and a whole host of entertainment spectacles. Such newspaper reporting responded directly to the needs of an emigrant Irish population in the United States to see their homeland as unspoiled and prosperous.

Newspapers and magazines in the United States, Britain and Ireland reported positively on the villages. According to the *Dundee Evening Telegraph,* Hart's village 'wonderfully exemplifie[d] the deftness of hand and artistic ability of Irish women'.[80] And the *Chicago Tribune* celebrated the 'vivacious cosmopolitan medley' of the Midway.[81] Moreover, the *Dublin Evening Telegraph* reported that 'Six [medals were awarded to Hart's Donegal Village …] for dyeing, woodcarving, jewellery, silversmith's work, altar furnishings, and ironwork, respectively'.[82] Helland has discussed that Kells art embroideries epitomised for Hart an Irishness unspoiled by Englishness.[83] The Chicago Village became an attainable

[79] 'The Donegal Village at the World's Fair', *Dover Express,* 7 April 1893.
[80] 'Letter to the Ladies. Irish Industries', *Dundee Evening Telegraph,* 1 January 1887.
[81] *Chicago Tribune*, 30 April 1893. Cited in Armstrong, 'A Jumble of Foreignness', p. 202.
[82] 'British Awards at the World's Fair, Chicago', *Dublin Evening Telegraph,* 31 October 1893.
[83] Helland, *British and Irish Industries,* p. 62. For a discussion on "Kells Embroidery" Cottage', see Flinn, 'Mrs Hart's Irish Industrial Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 15-16.

project to remedy Irish poverty particularly in the extreme climes of Donegal's 'bogs and moors' where Hart and others held that 'distress is the normal condition of the villages and country districts'.[84] Visiting the exhibition was a sound business decision to revive once flourishing rural industries that combined patriotism and profit in a transatlantic forum.

Peter White was the manager of Aberdeen's Irish village. He had experience in the United States, knowledge of Irish industries and was the first secretary of the Irish Woollen Company. He received a salary of £500 a year and a permanent organising secretary of the Irish Industries Association. However, he died of pneumonia on 7 April before the fair opened and his wife took over. Mrs White 'fulfilled her promise to take his place as far as she could. The Irish village would have been a failure had it not been for her. As it is, it has been a triumphant success'.[85] The committee employed an assistant manager and secretary to oversee the despatch of the goods to Chicago. Annie O'Brien was Lady Aberdeen's secretary, and female labour in general was integral to the exhibition of Ireland in 1893. The importance of women to the project of Ireland more broadly is evident in Diane Urquhart's discussion of the Ladies Land League in the 1880s, as forming a central part in the propaganda and success of the broader Land League movement.[86] Therefore, the late nineteenth century offered a productive platform for female activism both politically and socially within a transnational arena.

[84] *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 28 May 1887.
[85] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 327.
[86] D. Urquhart, 'A "crust to share with you": The Rhetoric of the Ladies' Land League's British Campaign, 1881-1882' in T. O'Toole, G. McIntosh, M. Ó'Cinnéide (eds.), *Women Writing War Ireland 1880-1922* (Dublin, 2016), pp. 11-25.

The Midway's bazaars, cottages and villages complemented one another. The entrance to Aberdeen's Irish Village was a replica of the 'north doorway to the chapel built by Cormac, the bishop king of Munster, in the early part of the twelfth century' (**Figure 2.4**).[87] The photograph depicts besuited men and women, and so highlights the social spectacle of the Fair as a place where visitors wanted to be seen with its coded messages of edification and prosperity. The image reveals signs of Irish industries and the 'hundred thousand welcomes' on offer with visitors walking and observing – this became a postcard popularly circulated during the exhibition and later.

Aberdeen's village contained a replica of the ruins of Muckross Abbey and several cottages 'where the inhabitants of this busy little community ply their industries'.[88] Visitors could see lace and crochet work, homespuns, hosiery, and bog-oak carving. They could also observe Celtic jewellery in the making as well as finished pieces, replicas of the Tara brooch, and various antiquities. The model of the ancient Celtic cross completed the historic portrayal of the country reflecting the 'early civilization and art of Ireland'.[89] Stephen Rohs argues that nationalist identity in Ireland was 'white' first and foremost as well as 'distinctive[ly] Celtic'.[90] Building on this, Aberdeen's village was less explicitly Celtic than Hart's, as she did not object to England as much as her peer, but both traded on ideas of a Celtic Irish whiteness that was productive and valuable.

[87] Flinn, 'Lady Aberdeen's Irish Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 45.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., p. 48.
[90] S. Rohs, *Eccentric Nation: Irish Performance in Nineteenth Century New York City* (Cranbury, 2009), p. 133-134, p. 188.

Public ways and purposefully placed yards allowed visitors to circulate effectively in Aberdeen's section of the Chicago Fair. Ishbel Aberdeen's Irish village replicated Blarney Castle (**Figure 2.5**) – a gargantuan symbol of true Irishness. The ground floor plan of Aberdeen's Village shows the vast green space in the centre amid numerous buildings. Visitors congregated in the middle of the village green and sequentially worked their way through, admiring the various exhibits on show. Here, there were trees to stimulate the effect of a village, and shops in strategic positions enabled the purchase of countless souvenirs. Visitors could wind their way from music to woodcarving, and even a dairy over a relatively short distance.

Blarney Castle allowed visitors to kiss the 'magic stone' for ten cents and get 'a view of all Ireland' from the battlements.[91] The Castle, a medieval fortress in Cork, Ireland, witnessed battles for its possession from different warring families over the centuries; it traded hands from the King of Munster, to Queen Elizabeth I, Oliver Cromwell and innumerable lords and castellans. Its compelling history and rumours of magical powers from the famed Blarney Stone established it as a popular site of tourism by the nineteenth century.[92] Aberdeen's recreation of it in her village signified the steady consumerisation of stereotypical Irishness for profit and play.

The Aberdeens' attempted to use their joint political power and prestige to get a visit from President Cleveland to their village. However, John Aberdeen failed to solicit a visit, as the President did not stop at any of the nation or state buildings of the Fair. Lady Aberdeen

[91] Flinn, 'Lady Aberdeen's Irish Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 47.
[92] Bestowing loquaciousness and an 'Irish wit' was the perceived magic of the stone. See, M. W. Samuel and K. Hamlyn, *Blarney Castle: Its History, Development, and Purpose* (Cork, 2007).

resolved to take some of her Irish (Limerick) girls and introduce them to the President. Aberdeen hired these women during her tour of Ireland before the Chicago Fair opened. They caught the President as he was waiting by his private car. In their memoirs, John Aberdeen wrote, 'Lady A. was permitted to enter the car in order to give the lace handkerchief to Mrs Cleveland, while I handed to [Mr Cleveland] the blackthorn stick and in a few moments we were all joining in cheers for the departing President'.[93] Crucially, the purpose of the entire village extravaganza was to garner publicity for rural industries for the long-term benefit of thousands of women and girls in Ireland, which was largely achieved by their popular existence in the fairgrounds.

Personified symbolism of Ireland was rampant within the Chicago exhibition and beyond. This conflation between the soil of Ireland and the bodies of its inhabitants inferred that the agency of the individual was separate and unaffected by the functioning of the state. To place such importance on the corporeal form, and particularly the female form, reinforced narratives of individual labour supplanting environmental disaster, and the inefficiencies of poor relief. Regardless, in the same way that Aberdeen's politics took her own body as synonymous with the rural revival movement, both women saw the bodily action of Irish women as indistinguishable from their activism.

Hart mused during her tour of Donegal; 'People are wild for work', and these Irish people were prominently displayed in the village.[94] Aberdeen's founding of the Onward and Upward Association in 1881, which sought to raise the standard of living amongst young

[93] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen,* p. 331-332.
[94] Hart, *The Cottage Industries of Ireland,* p. 11.

women, especially servant girls exemplified her concern for the people more broadly.[95] She was interested in preserving elite lines of distinction between classed groups and enforcing strictly decorous behaviour.

Aberdeen held female labour as sacred and this is made clear in the way she picked the 'colleens' to 'work' and display themselves in the village. Aberdeen undertook a tour of the industries in western Ireland in the 1890s to select women to work in the Chicago village, accompanied by seven of the IIA's Committee and her daughter, Lady Marjorie Gordon, visiting Clones, Carrickmacross, Limerick, Cork, Skibereen, Youghal, Kinsale, and finally New Ross. Aberdeen wrote in her memoirs: 'Everywhere I met with a most extraordinary reception, and addresses and meetings were arranged, at which were present persons of the most opposing creeds and politics. Committees of representative men were appointed at [different counties …] Lord Mayor[s], county people, bishops, and mayors […] all kinds of representative folk [attended]. The enthusiasm shown everywhere was remarkable'.[96]

Aberdeen visualised an image of a non-partisan politics – a conciliatory vision of vast support for the revival of rural industries for the good of Ireland as a whole. Aberdeen valued authenticity when representing Ireland, revealing how claims to realism interacted with trade and profit. She selected only the 'fittest colleens' (**Figure 2.6**) – skilled in their trade and eager to develop. Interestingly, appraisals of beauty and youth surfaced during the selection process with Aberdeen frequently complementing her 'bevy of pretty, fresh-looking Irish

[95] J. Drummond, *Onward and Upward: Extracts (1891-96) from the Magazine of the Onward and Upward Association founded by Lady Aberdeen for the Material, Mental and Moral Elevation of Women* (Aberdeen, 1983). Shelf mark: 83/30328. British Library.
[96] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 325.

colleens'.[97] The 'bright worker' in the photograph was smiling and dressed in traditional Irish garb. She stood in front of a slightly worn Irish cottage, which had peeling paint and a general overgrown feel. Connotations of rusticity and authenticity were artfully composed to celebrate the industry of these fair women. With her hands crossed in front of her chest, the viewer could feel confident in the ability of this 'colleen' in particular, and the countless Irish women she represented. The woman photographed was happy in her labour and its production. The whiteness of the women was taken as granted and associated beautiful white Irish women with the country of Ireland.

The revival of rural industries relied on a comely image of Irishness presented as skilled, quaint, and inviting – ripe for investment and trade, and its success depended on the normative male gaze of the fairgoer. Female labour personified itself in the village with an opportunity to observe the 'making of many of the different kinds of lace and crochet-work manufactured in Ireland'.[98] For instance, the *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance* published several accounts of the different trades daily performed. To pick a few examples of Irish industry being individualised and so humanised and made accessible:

> Ellen Aher trained at the Presentation Convent at Youghal County Cork, makes the beautiful needle-point lace which is so highly prized; Kate Kennedy illustrates the making of *applique* lace as it is done in the cottage homes of Carrickmacross, and Mary Flynn [makes the] much admired fine crochet work made by the poor women around Clones, in County Monaghan, and which is already much appreciated in America; Ellen Murphy shows how the pretty light Limerick lace is made […] Bridget McGinley works at her old-fashioned wheel in the next cottage […] delightful homespuns whose merits have been found out of late years by the

[97] Ibid., p. 328.
[98] Flinn, 'Lady Aberdeen's Irish Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 45.

> fashionable world; […] Maggie Dennehy, who talks real Irish, also sits nearby and shows how Miss Fitzgerald has taught the women of Valencia Island, County Kerry, to earn their livelihood by knitting.[99]

Figure 2.7 shows a 'colleen' lace making in the Irish Village. She was in a kitchen with a dresser full of plates as well as cutlery and a pot boils over the fire. The woman's surroundings are indicative of a domestic hub, with fabric and thread spooled over her dressing table where she sits at work. The 'colleen' is focused in her endeavours, revealing a degree of skill and expertise. The image neatly encapsulates how such rural industries were imagined to be productive – in the domestic sphere of women's homes where they could privately labour to save Ireland in an extension of discourse from the exhibition organisers of the 1850s.

Authentic female labour had financially profitable appeal in both Ireland and the United States. Images of female industry particularly appealed to Irish Americans, who were potentially triggered to think of their past lives in Ireland envisioning their mothers, grandmothers or great grandmothers participating in such work. A romantic image of an Irish past rooted in the domesticised body of femininity and rural industry was thereby cultivated by prompting memories, or at the very least some kind of nostalgic remembering, of an Irishness experienced, heard or read about. The women did not only perform traditional industry but also married it with new techniques and inventions. For instance, in the display of the dairy industry 'three dairymaids at the Village ha[d] been trained at the Munster Dairy School [near Cork]' famed for its scientific agriculture.[100] The *Guide to the Midway Plaisance*

[99] Ibid., p. 45-46.
[100] Ibid., p. 46.

celebrated the 'delights of a well-trained dairymaid's profession […] what dainty and appetizing results can be turned out by a deft pair of hands with the aid of the convenient recently-introduced dairy utensils in comparison with the older-fashioned methods' in a productive blend of rural industry and technology that was also vied for in the 1850s fairs of Ireland.[101]

Irish progress was ultimately rooted in traditional rural industry tethered to the future labouring in the present. The disconnect of the Irish villages made obvious with the images of the future on display in the White City was negotiated by the two women's attachment to a rustic Ireland which they could save. The refusal to let an imagined quaint Ireland expire sustained their rural revival project. Their ideological understanding of Ireland championed a dying industry and emulated the tenets of colonialism that sought to transform colonised countries from the outside – from an external perspective of what needed to be done for the good of the people as opposed to attempting to engage with the cycles of industrialised modernity of the broader nineteenth century. Preserving the rural aesthetics of Ireland for elite consumption became equal to 'saving Ireland' within the well-established hierarchies of colonialism in the nineteenth century.

Beauty was distinctly profitable within the terms of female employment, as Aberdeen wrote: 'Our only difficulty to the selection of the girls was that the gentlemen of the party always wished to choose the prettiest, without reference to their qualifications in connection

[101] Ibid. For recent literature on the importance of women to the exhibition project, see L. K. Langlois, 'Japan – Modern, Ancient, and Gendered at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair' in T. J. Boisseau and A. M. Markwyn (eds.), *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs* (Chicago, 2010), pp. 56-74. See also, M. J. Weimann, *The Fair Women* (Chicago, 1981).

with their various industries'.[102] Clearly, 'working' and 'acting' for the good of Ireland was a sensible economic opportunity for many women. This uneasy tension problematises gendered notions of industry. On the one hand, women became saviours at times of disaster but further their crucial labour became redundant during seasons of prosperity in Ireland. This disjuncture is exacerbated by the fact that Aberdeen hired 'colleens' based on attractiveness not necessarily skill as it insidiously suggested that female labour was superfluous to the everyday grind of workplace hardship. Women emerged at moments of difficulty only to return to the home when the exhibition was over or the winter months ended. In instances where the women were taken from factories, their new roles required them to perform work on the smaller scale of an exhibition village: a disorientating project of acting one's lived reality. According to Aberdeen's hiring practices, women only needed to be industrious in times of real tragedy or because of aristocratic demand.

An intimate symbiosis between the exhibited Irish women and the Irish land was crucial in convincing visitors that things were in fact exactly like this in Ireland and were worth investing in. The interior of the Blarney Castle was living and sleeping rooms for the village workers. In the end, White had 105 employees working in the Village, including the band and restaurant girls. Irish women who worked abroad temporarily were seen as limiting the perceived harm of migration to the country. It was often lamented that: 'Donegal now sends her away her comely sons and daughters. Everywhere one hears the same sad story of emigration; everywhere resounds the cry, "If the people could only be kept in the country!" What they want is manufactures and such industries as sewing, embroidering, and lace-

[102] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 326.

making'.[103] Here, the benefits of rural female labour that taught and celebrated the display of a skill abroad in order to continue its practice at home in Ireland is evident. The return was crucial; Aberdeen wrote, 'Everywhere there were hosts of candidates, but I had to promise the mothers that I would guarantee the safety of their daughters and bring them safe back'.[104] It was contended that Irish female labour would return to the home country and continue to be productive in a two-way lucrative international settlement between Ireland and the United States.

The exhibition space epitomised the voyeuristic display of female bodies in an international setting as visitors could linger, observe, interact or converse in English or Irish with the female workers. Tens of thousands of season tickets were sold and it is interesting to reflect on whether those who repeatedly visited the exhibition had certain favourite exhibits or actors.[105] The women held employment for six months and it is probable that they forged relationships with those who came to visit them as a one-off or periodically. Within the fair women were consigned to the fictional home for the consumption of the public and particularly aristocratic consumers in Aberdeen's case.

At an exhibition held at the Royal School of Art Needlework in 1885, Hart not only exhibited 'Several pieces of hand-spun tweeds, hand-knitted hosiery, and hand-woven and hand-worked handkerchiefs' but further 'photographs of the workers at these industries

[103] K. Tynan, 'The Cottage Industries of Donegal', *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 56.
[104] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 326.
[105] Mackay, *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 40-41. See, Helland, *British and Irish Industries*¸ p. 56-57.

[we]re hung about the show'.[106] Moreover, in Hart's 1893 village her 'colleens' were dressed 'in Connemara red petticoats, fishwife skirts and blouses, and scarlet cloaks […] look very pretty'.[107] These popular demonstrations reveal the importance of the performance of female labour, with beauty and youth closely tied to convincing visitors that such rural industry in Ireland was worth protecting.

The success of the Irish exhibitions in 1893 Chicago came from the perceived sense of a true Irishness, and spoke mainly to Catholic ideals of Home Rule with their Scottish and English organisers. For the most part Irish Americans participated enthusiastically with the perceived authentic Ireland in the fairground (**Figure 2.8**) whatever the specificities of their political affiliation.[108] The birds-eye view of Aberdeen's village revealed the centrality of the Blarney Castle and the general interest of visitors in the display of Ireland at the Columbian Exposition. The village did not reside in any countryside but the sketch contained individuals and groups admiring and pointing to the village amidst a backdrop of trees and greenery. There were tall buildings and pavilions in the distance and the congenial atmosphere reflected a broader satisfaction and interest in Aberdeen's fiction.

However, the fact that Aberdeen wanted to continue a partial alliance with Britain (within a devolved Home Rule) caused tension for some. Early in the autumn of 1893, 'A very serious disturbance arose at Lady Aberdeen's Irish Village' when a group of Irishmen attempted 'to pull down the British flag which was floating from the tower of Blarney Castle

[106] 'Irish Cottage Industries', *The Globe*, 14 July 1885.
[107] 'The Irish Industrial Villages at the Chicago Exhibition. A Chat with Mrs Hart', *Derry Journal*, 6 July 1892.
[108] F. Cullen, *Ireland on Show: Art, Union, and Nationhood* (London, 2012), especially Chapter Four, pp. 125-152.

in honour of the visit of the Governor General of Canada'.[109] The flags were visible in the image and the men 'made an attempt to tear down the flag, because they did not think it ought to be unfurled there'.[110] Employees and guards 'drove the offenders into the Plaisance' but before they could be arrested 'thousands […] congregated around the [police] wagon' sympathising with the men's attempts and even 'set[ting] three of [those apprehended] at liberty'.[111] Eventually, 'the ringleaders were taken prisoners after a conflict with the guards and police'.[112]

The protests and arrests highlight the fractious workings of a display sponsored by aristocratic men and women and the fragility of the support for Home Rule in the United States, while also illustrating the popularity of more extreme Irish nationalist movements. The 'Earl of Aberdeen and his private secretary arrived in the village after the trouble had ended, and his Excellency expressed great concern at the incident'.[113] Jeffrey M. O'Leary has discussed this event in terms of the story's global dissemination. For instance, Lady Aberdeen told the *Evening Star*: 'I have seen it printed that several thousand of Irishmen aided in pulling down the British flag at the Irish village in Chicago on Saturday. I was present and know that only a few roughs participated in that incident, and that there were the strongest indications that the great mass of Irishmen present had no sympathy whatever with the attempted outrage. These facts I would like to have published and as widely as possible, for I

[109] 'Lady Aberdeen's Irish Village. Attempt to haul down the British Flag', *Ulster Gazette*, 28 October 1893.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

feel that much needless harm may arise from the misrepresentation of the actual occurrences'.[114]

However, her statement was unheeded by the press and news of this incident even travelled to Ireland. Reports appeared in newspapers such as the *Freeman's Journal* and *The Irish Daily Star* to name a few.[115] Apart from this, journalist reporting on the Irish villages in Chicago in both England and Ireland was quite complimentary but their focus on this story reveals both the attractiveness of strife and discord and also the existence of an audience ready to consume stories of tensions in Irish America. This may reflect the naivety under which Aberdeen operated. Perhaps a British flag was appropriate to an English or Scottish audience but this was certainly not the case for Irish-Chicagoans.

Historians have documented that the Irish community in Chicago and America more broadly disagreed over how to achieve Irish independence, whether to engage in violence or a more peaceful process to gain constitutional change. Whilst some Irish Americans accepted a form of devolved Home Rule as an ideal political gain, others wanted a complete separation from England in the form of a Republic.[116] This brings into question who the intended audience for the village was – certainly, some Irish in America did not adhere to Aberdeen's politics and were avowedly nationalist and so it is curious to consider whether the village was more for American or British visitors' not necessarily Irishmen and women. Clearly, a

[114] 'A Much Exaggerated Flag Incident', *Washington, D.C., Evening Star*, 25 October 1893; 'Lady Aberdeen on Flag Episode', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 23 October 1893; 'The Irish Village at the World's Fair', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 23 October 1893. Cited in J. M. O'Leary, 'Manufacturing Reality: The Display of the Irish at World's Fairs and Exhibitions, 1893-1965', PhD, Kent University (2015), p. 146.
[115] Ibid.
[116] M. F. Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge, 1995), especially, p. 30-32.

sympathy for Home Rule was expounded and encouraged while only occasionally bristled against.

Exhibitionary narratives of an Irish nation operated within nostalgic remembering and interacted with accessible Irish symbolism to salve the pain of migration for Irish diasporic citizens. I have shown so far in this chapter how Irish migrants navigated their new homes in the United States through exhibits and charity.[117] Jeffery K. Olick and Joyce Robbins have argued 'that history is the remembered past to which we no longer have an "organic" relation', further, 'the past that is no longer an important part of our lives, while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities'.[118] Consequently, historical memory allows us to 'celebrate even what we did not directly experience, keeping the given past alive for us'.[119] Building on this, international exhibitions were memory sites and practices that functioned as central *loci* for identity formation. Clearly, the past produces itself in the present and is thus malleable – offering fertile ground for multiple constructions of Irishness on the fairground in a productive cacophony of Irish images that soothed, attracted and enlivened experiences of being Irish in America.

Nostalgia in the nineteenth century and in the case of the Irish refers broadly to a fluid, vague, collective longing for a 'bygone time rather than an individual desire to return to a particular place'.[120] And we can see how this operated both in Hart and Aberdeen's exhibits.

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[117] For statistics on Irish migration, see C. Ó Gráda, 'A Note on Nineteenth Century Emigration Statistics', *A Journal of Demography*, 29 (1975), pp. 143-149.
[118] J. K. Olick and J. Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 105-140, p. 111.
[119] Ibid.
[120] P. Fritzsche, 'Spectres of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity', *The American Historical Review*, 106: 5 (2001), pp. 1587-1618, p. 1591.

Peter Fritzsche argues that nostalgia embodies the melancholy feeling of dispossession, and narratives of loss involve the recognition of bodily and societal difference, which has enabled the construction of distinct national identities.[121] From the 1970s onwards, significant historical literature interpreted Irish migration as undertaken reluctantly, suffocated by feelings of loss and political banishment.[122] Whilst it is true that migration took place within a context of broad social and political crisis, the complementary complex narratives of hope and belonging remain overlooked. Historians such as Matthew Frye Jacobson have been integral in widening the discourse of Irish migration as a story of 'departure and absence', as well as 'arrival'. He states that for the Irish 'in the New World [migration] entailed a poignant absence from the Old; […] packing off to North America meant taking up residence on the periphery of one's former world, and yet former centres did not necessarily lose their centrality'.[123]

Whether or not these migrants were voluntary or forced exiles has dominated much of the debate but it is clear that they encountered a complex set of social and political currents imbibed within celebratory and hurtful relocations.[124] Significant literature has debunked

[121] Ibid., p. 1589.
[122] See K. Kenny, 'Twenty Years of Irish American Historiography', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 28: 4 (2009), pp. 67-75; F. S. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1971).
[123] Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, p. 2. See also, K. Kenny (ed.), *New Directions in Irish-American Historiography* (Madison, 2003); P. Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, American's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton, 2001).
[124] For scholarship on Irish migration to Britain, see, E. Delaney, 'Diaspora' in R. Bourke and I. McBride (eds.), *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (Princeton, 2016), pp. 490-508; E. Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2007); G. Davis, 'The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939' in A. Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 19-36; E. Delaney, *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971* (Liverpool, 2000); R. Swift, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914: A Documentary History* (Cork, 1990); A. O'Day, 'The Political Organization of the Irish in Britain, 1867-90' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 183-211; D. Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 10-59; D. Fitzpatrick, "'A Peculiar Tramping People": The Irish in Britain, 1801-70' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol V. Ireland under the Union, I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 623-660.

these narratives of loss as a result of famine and disaster based on its simplicity and over-reliance on the most dramatic stories of migration.[125] David Noel Doyle has recently argued that Irish immigrants held onto earlier attachments of Irishness within American communities. Doyle argues that Irish migrants continually engaged with Ireland on a social and political level, and his thesis challenges linear models of assimilation.[126] A straightforward perception of migration as a process of departure and settlement skews the organic transference of home and diaspora narratives that were common in this period. A new transatlantic historical consciousness formed rooted in a sense of exclusivity and conciliation or aversion to white Britons. This might explain the riot in Aberdeen's Irish Village – the similarities to a foreign interloper creating a utopian version of Irishness hinted suggestively to the ongoing power of colonialism in the nineteenth century.

In the fairgrounds, we can see in operation the type of nostalgia that Svetlana Boym has been crucial in discussing: one that involves a 'longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed'.[127] The revival of rural industries displayed in the 1893 exhibition relied on the renewed mechanisation of traditional crafts, the creation of new global markets and the publicity of unique handmade Irish goods. The industry was in decline at the highpoint of Irish migration to the US in the mid-nineteenth century, and so the Chicago display enabled a connection with a lost past possibly experienced in childhood if only through stories of

[125] See, J. Bodnar, *Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Indiana, 1985); O. Macdonough, 'The Irish Famine Emigration to the United States', *Perspectives in American History*, 10 (1976), pp. 430-446; C. Wittke, *The Irish in America* (Louisiana, 1956); O. Handlin, *Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that made the American People* (Pennsylvania, 1952). Also, J. P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (London, 2008).
[126] D. N. Doyle, 'The Remaking of Irish-America, 1845-1880' in J. J. Lee and M. R. Casey (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York, 2007), pp. 213-252, p. 243 and in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. VI. Ireland Under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 725-763, p. 762.
[127] S. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (London, 2001), p. xiii.

grandparents. Boym considers nostalgia as a 'romance with one's own fantasy' possessing a utopian dimension directed toward the future.[128]

The display of Ireland in 1893 makes it clear that nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective in the sense that it held the potential to display what a future Ireland could look like.[129] Fantasies of the past emerged out of the harsh conditions and needs of the present and so shaped the imagined realities of the future. Fairgoers and fair organisers relied on the revival of rural industries to save Ireland's present and future. A fiction of a future that profited from rural female labour for the harmonious working of Irish society as a whole was presented, a future devoid of poverty and hardship and allied constitutionally (and partially) with Britain for the prosperity of all.

Popular nostalgia of Ireland in the 1893 exhibition intersects with touristic images of the country in the same period. Martin Ryle has shown that tourism of Ireland emerged out of Romantic landscape aesthetics of remote Celticism, which was concerned with the overdevelopment in European cities, the mass migration from rural areas, as well as discourses of 'tradition' and environmentalism.[130] The exhibits of the Irish in Chicago relied on the connection between tradition and history as a legitimate and sought after Irishness. Similar to the way that English literary travellers' representations of Ireland focused on the extinction of rural England; the exhibits within the Irish villages functioned within a messy temporal space always at threat by famine and poverty (and broader industrialised modernity and competition).

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., p. xvi.
[130] M. Ryle, *Journeys in Ireland: Literary Travellers, Rural Landscapes, Cultural Relations* (London, 1999), p. 3.

In both Irish tourism and the Irish villages the rurality in Ireland and the rural revival project were celebrated, in part responding to a displaced sense of longing for an idealised vision of the past. The political and cultural position of the British, including the Scottish Lady Aberdeen and the English Alice Hart brings into question considerations of representation and cultural authority given Ireland's contested colonial status.[131] Crucially, there existed a focus on untouched landscapes within Irish tourism. This was similar to the supposed pure, native, authentic Irish rurality on display within popular female philanthropy of the nineteenth century. In the case of tourism and display, such tropes of Ireland had enormous value for trade and profit, as they circulated to positive effect in the fair.

George Lipsitz has demonstrated how the disconnection experienced by migrants in the late nineteenth century reacted to popular culture, such as exhibitions, which offered a remedy to the cognitive dissonance experienced as a by-product of modernity.[132] Jacobson takes Lipsitz's thesis to document how immigrant journals addressed loneliness and overcame transatlantic separation by characterising their audience as part of a unified diaspora community.[133] Similarly, the 1893 exhibition saw a flourishing of literature such as official guides, descriptive catalogues, reports of exhibits and various different maps and information

[131] See, D. Cairns and S. Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (Manchester, 1988). Also, J. T. Leerssen, 'The Western Mirage: On the Celtic Chronotope in the European Imagination' in T. Collins (ed.), *Decoding the Landscape: Contributions Towards a Synthesis of Thought in Irish Studies on the Landscape* (Galway, 2003), pp. 1-11; T. Eagleton, 'The Ideology of Irish Studies', *Bullan*, 3 (1997), pp. 5-14.
[132] G. Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minnesota, 1990), p. 6. See also, T. G. Lynch, '"A Kindred and Congenial Element": Irish-American Nationalism's Embrace of Republican Rhetoric', *New Hibernia Review*, 13: 2 (2009), pp. 77-91; D. M. Moloney, 'Land League Activism in Transnational Perspective', *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 22: 3 (2004), pp. 61-74; T. J. Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class, and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880–1928* (Paris, 2001); A. Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Carolina, 1997).
[133] Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, p. 56-57.

leaflets all sold hundreds of thousands of copies.[134] This is not to mention the innumerable reviews that proliferated in popular newspapers and magazines of the time.

The transatlantic dialogue laboured on mutable constraints enveloping and obscuring partisan allegiances and subsuming factionalism within an umbrella of Irishness. Countless postcards from the exhibition to family members in Ireland and England circulated; however, they mainly contained basic details regarding the weather and a general positive appraisal of their enjoyment of the village. Nationalist discourse within state-run newspapers and the more localised texts produced for the exhibition accommodated contemporary uncertainty over Home Rule through generalised positive statements. Jacobson argues that popular culture centred on the hope of national liberation for Irish Americans, infused with historic and inspirational references, strengthened the dimensions of 'immigrant exile, pilgrimage, and wanderer in the New World'.[135] And this is exemplified in the popular narratives circulated in conjunction with Ireland's exhibitions in the US.

NATIONALISM AND IRELAND IN THE FAIRGROUND

We can broadly see that Irish migration cultivated and fermented the development of a wide range of Irish nationalist views that appealed to the homeland and so lent support to the revival of a rural untouched sacred Ireland.[136] The Irish land question amalgamated into issues

[134] A. N. Marquis & Co, *Official Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition and Vicinity* (Chicago, 1893). Shelf mark: Map Div. 15-5866. New York Public Library. *World's Fair Album: Containing Photographic Views from Columbian Exposition* (Chicago, 1893). Shelf mark: T500.C1 C585. New York Public Library. *Picturesque World's Fair: An Elaborate Collection of Coloured Views* (Chicago, 1893). Shelf mark: 05028712. New York Public Library.
[135] Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, p. 56.
[136] See, K. A. Miller, 'Class, Culture, and Immigrant Group Identity in the US: The Case of Irish-American Ethnicity' in V. Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York, 1990), pp. 96-129; M. E. Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800* (Dublin, 1981); R. Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (London, 1972); T. A. Jackson, *Ireland her Own* (Dublin, 1970); J. C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland* (London, 1966).

of Home Rule, which subsumed discontent into a large metaphor of Irish nationalism. The displays in 1893 belong to this broader nativist Irish project that favoured continued, yet regulated contact with England with a separate Irish government. Kerby Miller amongst others has documented the vast web of Irish nationalism in the United States from groups such as the Fenian Brotherhood and the Ladies Land League, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Clan na Gael – with Irish migration becoming the greatest symbol of Ireland's suffering because of England.[137]

The mass politicisation of Irish economic and political hardship mobilised an immigrant movement that complemented the activism in Ireland itself, and visitors carried their politics on Home Rule to the Irish Villages in Chicago.[138] The Fenians were the most significant Irish political group in nineteenth century America and Ireland. Brian Jenkins has shown that the Fenians relied heavily on Irish American sympathy and support, particularly when they attempted large-scale raids across the international border into British North America. The group initially perceived armed conflict as the only possible method of securing Ireland's wholescale independence from the shackles of the British.[139] An Irish Republic imagined itself along dualistic lines rooted in the historical past, in the uncertain arena of the present, with ambitions for the future, for Irishmen and women in both Ireland and the United States.

[137] K. A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, 1985), see especially, p. 441-446.
[138] See, L. J. McCaffrey, E. Skerrett, M. F. Funchion, C. Fanning, *The Irish in Chicago (Ethnic History of Chicago)* (Illinois, 1987) and M. F. Funchion, *Chicago's Irish Nationalists, 1881-1890* (Chicago, 1976).
[139] B. Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874* (Liverpool, 2008), p. x. See Zuck, *Divided Sovereignties*, p. 139-174.

With the failure of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1867, a transatlantic activism, which the 1893 displays were part of, was nurtured and the Gaelic movement emerged in tandem – epitomised in Douglas Hyde's presidential address to the National Literary Society in Dublin on 'the necessity for de-anglicising the Irish nation' in November 1892.[140] Hyde rallied against 'West-Britonism' and championed an exclusive Irish lifestyle, involving the Irish language, clothing and food, even music and games. Consequently, on 31 July 1893 the Gaelic League was founded. The League's prime objective, Brian Ó Cuív notes, was to ensure the survival of the Irish language in and around Ireland. To this end, it hoped to be apolitical and devoid of religious factions – it received substantial interest for around twenty years.[141]

The sum of all these groups was the production of a wide-ranging spirit of independence that encompassed those with divergent views, interests and loyalties.[142] Chicago's Irish Villages visualised and furthered a relationship between home and migration by encouraging Irish Americans to experience their homeland through the exhibits of Ireland in 1893. It became a celebration of Irishness for recent Irish immigrants and American descendants of immigrants. Hart expounded that the display and demonstration of: 'Irish hand industry […] from County Donegal' will 'pave the way for their permanent introduction into America'.[143] Roy Foster has described the Irish exodus to America as creating 'fierce' and

[140] Cited in B. Ó Cuív, 'Irish Language and Literature, 1845-1921' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol. VI. Ireland Under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 385-435, p. 402-403. See, K. Moss, 'St Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875', *Journal of Social History*, 29: 1 (1995), pp. 125-148. Also, C. G. Duffy, G. Sigerson and D. Hyde, *The Revival of Irish Literature: 1816-1903* (Dublin, 1894), p. 117-161.
[141] Cuív, 'Irish Language and Literature', p. 403-404.
[142] Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, p. 54. See, E. Delaney, 'The Irish Diaspora', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33 (2006), pp. 35-45; K. Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (London, 2000); D. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Ithaca, 1994).
[143] *Leeds Mercury*, 26 March 1892; 'A Chat with Mrs Hart', *Derry Journal*.

'obsessive identification' to the homeland, which is epitomised in the displays of 1893.[144] The *Guide* was full of sensory invitations to experience Ireland; from the sights, to the smells of the fair, and the taste of Irish goods, there was even a restaurant to take refreshment 'under the shade of trees' in an immersive Irish paradise.[145]

Irishmen and women could also read the political in the exhibition. Hart included a model of Daniel O'Connell's (1775-1847) Memorial Chapel. The representation of O'Connell with his vehement opposition against the Act of Union and avowed championing of Home Rule may have irked Lady Aberdeen as a too extreme form of Irish independence.[146] This reading of the political relates to Steven Conn's argument in *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (2000), that the narrative of the exhibition, much to the organiser's distress, was entirely fluid and subject to revision by the visitors.[147] Kerby Miller has shown that by 1900 a 'good Irish American' came to adopt particular characteristics around being a Democrat, a Catholic, a member of a union, and a 'passive supporter of Ireland's "'sacred cause'".[148] The 1893 exhibit could alternatively highlight an Irish history to demonstrate how the country had profited from a union with Britain and still maintained its own national identity or visitors could read the exhibit as an example of nationalist symbolism to reaffirm their politics of an independent Irish state.

[144] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 372.
[145] Flinn, 'Mrs Hart's Irish Industrial Village', *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 16.
[146] D. Harkness, 'Ireland' in R. W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol V. Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 114-133, p. 115-116.
[147] S. Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago, 1998), p. 3-13.
[148] Miller, 'Class, Culture, and Immigrant Group Identity in the US', p. 124.

Moreover, the politics of a historic Ireland permeated not only the objects on display but also the souvenirs available for purchase. If one wished to continue the fantasy of Ireland beyond the fairground, they merely had to expend a few cents to 'carry [a] bit of "Ould Ireland" in the New World!'[149] This transfiguration of a native Ireland onto portable paraphernalia enabled Irishness to transcend geographical and material boundaries and circulate within the imaginary and lived spheres of Irish migrants. Souvenirs allowed the transference of politics to continue through the trajectories of display and its larger dissemination.

Declan Kiberd came up with the concept of an 'Irish consciousness' to account for the Gaelic Revival in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1996).[150] I have shown how exhibitions became an important platform of revival symbolism for individuals like Aberdeen and Hart, and advertisers that lobbied for a stall, a mention or a printed advertisement during the 1893 Fair frequently defined themselves and their products in terms of 'Irishness'. This type of Irishness, John Strachan and Claire Nally argue, often emerged in 'brand name, visual image, font and typography, and – sometimes – in overtly nationalist rhetoric of various political hues', and the Irish villages in the Chicago fair were resplendent with Irish motifs of spinning, weaving and sewing – neatly encapsulated in the form of the Irish woman.[151]

[149] *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 15.
[150] D. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 3.
[151] J. Strachan and C. Nally, *Advertising, Literature and Print Culture in Ireland, 1891-1922* (London, 2012), p. 1.

From the 1890s onwards, advertisers on a broad scale, and philanthropists such as Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart appealed to the patriotic spirit of the consumer and profited from exploiting it financially. Strachan and Nally have convincingly argued that the Irish Revival's literary and cultural project complimented Irish economic nationalism.[152] 'De-anglicizing' was encouraged through popular Irish activism in the form of Aberdeen and Hart's 'buy Irish campaigns' for example. Strachan and Nally have shown how this ushered in a type of 'protectionism by the back door' and functioned as a 'voluntary protectionism', which circumvented the reliance on British imported goods and British ideals of free trade.[153] The legacy of nationalist Irish trading continued from the 1850s with the desire to increase Irish consumption of Irish goods (not English ones), expounded by John Francis Maguire in the 1852 Cork Exhibition and William Dargan in the 1853 Dublin Exhibition. In the 1890s, Irishness remained profitable for both producers and activists; organisers could expound their national allegiance whilst concurrently making money. The national cause and commerce interacted in a way that appeased the consumer, their politics, and Irish production. Prioritising home goods over imported products was an attractive, easy-fix to bigger questions of Irish Home Rule that complemented the capitalism of the late nineteenth century and the tense nature of Irish-British politics.

ENDINGS

The lifespans of Hart and Aberdeen's projects responded to the broader social-political context. Helland has shown how Alice Hart's business sought to ferment Irishness through prioritising the 'achievements of Ireland's Golden Age' as part of the Gaelic Revival tradition

[152] Ibid., p. 37-38.
[153] Ibid., p. 39.

that romanticised the rural peasantry.[154] Importantly, the influence of the Donegal Industrial Fund peaked in the 1880s and the 1890s, and Dun Emer, part of the Celtic Revival movement, replaced it in the early twentieth century.

Moreover, Aberdeen encouraged Irish art and manufacture and ardently encouraged consumers to buy Irish goods exclusively, with the entire process of production and consumption to benefit the Irish manufacturer. She embraced Celtic culture and this type of philanthropic benevolence worked in tandem with the British state and sought to improve the Irish lot through individual diligence instead of external state help.[155] She became an aristocratic champion of the Irish poor, furthering Home Rule through crafts, industries and clothing – using her body as a point of replication. Aberdeen declared in the Women's Building at the Chicago World's Fair: 'Look at the homespun skirt I am wearing, made in the wilds of Donegal […]; this fine crochet work from Clones, this point lace handkerchief from Youghal. In work of trained human fingers is still superior […] to the iron monsters devised by human brains'.[156]

Doris French Shackleton has documented how Aberdeen engaged with a range of 'Irish nationalists projects [centred around Home Rule], both practical and symbolic', which spanned from 'introducing the Irish jig at Dublin Castle' to personal acts such as 'dressing her small children in Paddy green coats' to more economic activism like 'lobbying for the sale of Irish laces in the world markets'.[157] The exhibition of Irish goods displayed under the banner

[154] Helland, *British and Irish Industries,* p. 65.
[155] Ibid., p. 104.
[156] 'Lady Aberdeen on Irish Domestic Industries', *Aberdeen Press and Journal,* 13 November 1893.
[157] Shackleton, *Ishbel and the Empire,* p. 9.

of the Irish Industries Association continued with an aristocratic audience until the final exhibition in 1900 in Windsor, which promoted the two most expensive fabrics sold by the Irish Industries Association, tweed and lace.[158]

Both these women's revival projects continued to function along the lines of benevolent colonialism. They offered a unity of product and people to humanise the poor and sell their wares. The trend of charitable investment and the moral win persisted in the advertising of rural industries by elite entrepreneurs, and campaigns to buy Irish goods made by the Irish poor into the early twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

Aberdeen's Irish village made a gross profit of £50,000 with half of that taken by the exhibition authorities, £20,000 paid to the workers in Ireland and some settling the balance of hiring out a depot in Chicago and paying the salary of the manager, White.[159] It was noted in Aberdeen's memoirs that, 'Mr. Horace Plunkett pronounced himself well satisfied with the efficiency and economy with which the whole enterprise had been conducted'.[160] Hart wanted to 'rescue an agricultural population, living on smallholdings, from destruction'.[161] To this end, relatively extant industries became accessible for the 'idle and poverty-stricken' and from her 1886 exhibition alone the DIF sold '£6,000 worth of Irish lace and homespun goods' and '10,000 yards [of homespuns]'.[162]

[158] See, P. Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Dublin, 1992).
[159] Aberdeen's, *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, p. 333.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Hart, 'Donegal Cottage Industries', *Londonderry Sentinel*.
[162] *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 28 May 1887; 'The Donegal Industrial Fund', *Donegal Independent*, 28 May 1887.

Both women's philanthropy was in keeping with the revival ethos popular in nineteenth-century Ireland, and supported the renewal of cottage industries by presenting Ireland as a tranquil space in the fairground. Here, the people were docile and friendly and a coalition between the nobility, the middle-class and peasantry sought a revitalised Ireland. Both the Irish Industries Association and the Donegal Industrial Fund implemented large-scale improvements. Helland has shown how the DIF facilitated the machinery for improved expert weaving, regulated the practice of natural dyes, and popularised innovative patterns for tweed, lace, and knitted products.[163] Aberdeen opened the market for Irish products to an elite society prepared to expend large sums in keeping with the late nineteenth century trend of reviving rural industries. The aristocrats and upper classes sported different types of Irish fabric, which by their very possession raised awareness and furthered sales in a productive cyclical way to the benefit of the workers in the west counties of Ireland.

This chapter has revealed how the story of nineteenth-century Ireland changes when we take seriously the work of women. Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart were crucial to the rural revival project and were integral in creating transnational conceptions of Irishness. Their respective Irish villages shaped visitor opinions and further instigated and spearheaded a movement to develop the industrial structures of Ireland for the benefit of the poor. Their split and the eventual presentation of two Irish villages reveals differences in the Irish Home Rule movement, with Aberdeen adopting a more moderate vision in contrast to Alice Hart's more radical perspective. Aberdeen did not seek to change the status quo significantly regarding the elite makeup of the English monarchical class but wanted a devolved union for Ireland within it. Whereas Hart was convinced of England's historic mistreatment of Ireland and sought a

[163] Helland, *British and Irish Industries,* p. 10.

more nationalist solution to the country's independence. Clearly, the philanthropic movement was expansive enough in the nineteenth century to accommodate such divergent views within the larger project of female labour. Ireland in the 1893 Columbian Exhibition embodied a rural nation that had vast potential for development, initially with cottage industries and later with broader mechanisation and trade opportunities.

Most importantly, the two activists' displays interacted with the wider political conditions affecting Ireland. This becomes a story of how individuals and often women navigated the gaps left by poor government funding, and how within this exhibitions functioned as a core platform for change and hope – continuing trends from the 1850s. Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart manoeuvred their way through the high and activist politics of the time by championing rural industries. They offered a direct solution to questions of the land in Ireland and recurring poverty – here was a clear example of what the country could do with a profitable and sustainable rural industrial enterprise. The advertising of Ireland tugged on the heartstrings in a clever profitable way – visitors could buy a trinket or souvenir and simultaneously feel like they were helping further Irish industry.

Displays of Irishness whether through exhibitions or print media enabled a language of nationalism to emerge that reinforced a separation from England and a connectedness with Ireland in the United States. They addressed issues of migration and an Irish nation by offering a transnational representation of a rural Ireland accessible to migrant Irishmen and women so that they could embrace an Irish-American identity. In the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, a 'heady mix of nostalgia, romance, and high drama [was] provided',

to further rural Ireland in modern America.[164] The two women's avowed stance on Home Rule and broader liberal political activism remained consistent in both of their exhibits and they interacted and engaged with various different nationalist movements, particularly the Gaelic Revival. Clearly, world's fairs were not just rhetorical but primarily experiential in nature and they reacted fluidly with the contemporary climate.

Everything was made available to the visitor, from bog oak carving, Galway marble carving, wood carving, a dairy, knitting and embroidery, hand-loom weaving and spinning, lace marking, and Celtic jewellery to create an ethnic Irish solidarity. Due to the sources available, this chapter has focused on organisations and its organisers, however, I am keenly aware that the work was done by rural Irish men and women, and the labour of those engaged in cottage industries should not be lost. Female activism interacted with serious poverty and political tension to offer viable answers through the medium of exhibits – Ireland was on the cusp of being saved, if only its rural industries were revived, which extended discourse about the country's potential for development from the post-famine era. Irish recovery contributed to the commercialisation of Irishness, and this continued into the twentieth century, however, with a heightened focus on profit and state building. The next chapter advances the discussion on the intersections between capitalism and Irishness, and analyses how a single Irish business came to represent Ireland in the fairgrounds as both a charitable and a profitable enterprise by selling soap in the early twentieth century.

[164] Cooper, 'Irish Migrant Identities and Community Life in Melbourne and Chicago', p. 193.

Figure 2.1. 'Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen and her Pages at the St. Patrick's Eve Pageant of Irish Industries', *The Gentlewoman*, 20 March 1909, p. 54. Cited in J. Helland, 'Ishbel Aberdeen's "Irish" Dresses: Embroidery, Display and Meaning, 1886–1909', *Journal of Design History*, 26: 2 (2012), pp. 152-167, p. 160.

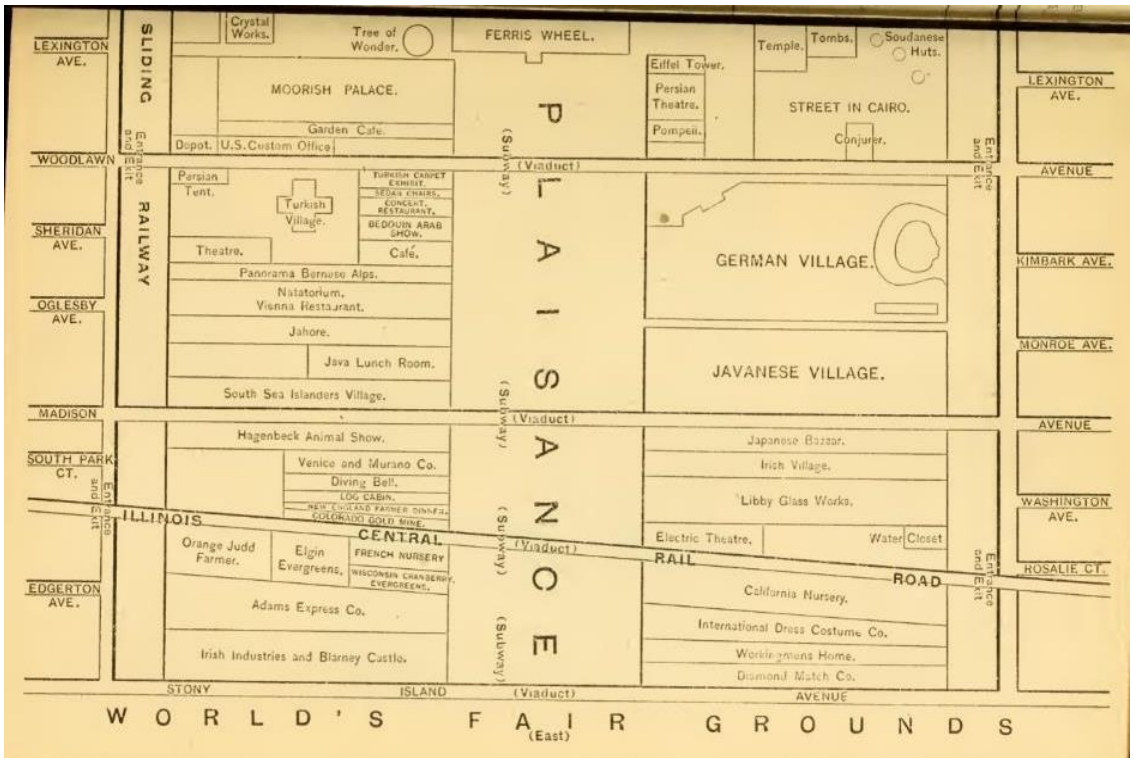

Figure 2.2. 'Key to the Midway Plaisance', J. J. Flinn, *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance. Otherwise known as "The Highway Through The Nations"* (Chicago, 1893), p. 25. Shelf mark: T500.A1 F69. Library of Congress.

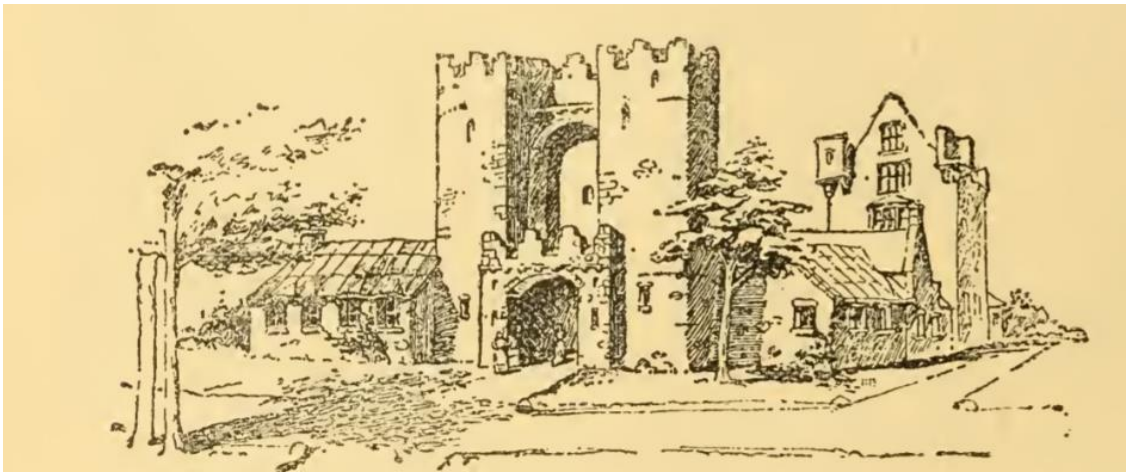

Figure 2.3. ‘Donegal Castle. The Irish Village, Midway Plaisance’, Flinn, *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 14.

Figure 2.4. ‘Irish Village, Midway Plaisance’. Postcard. Library of Congress.

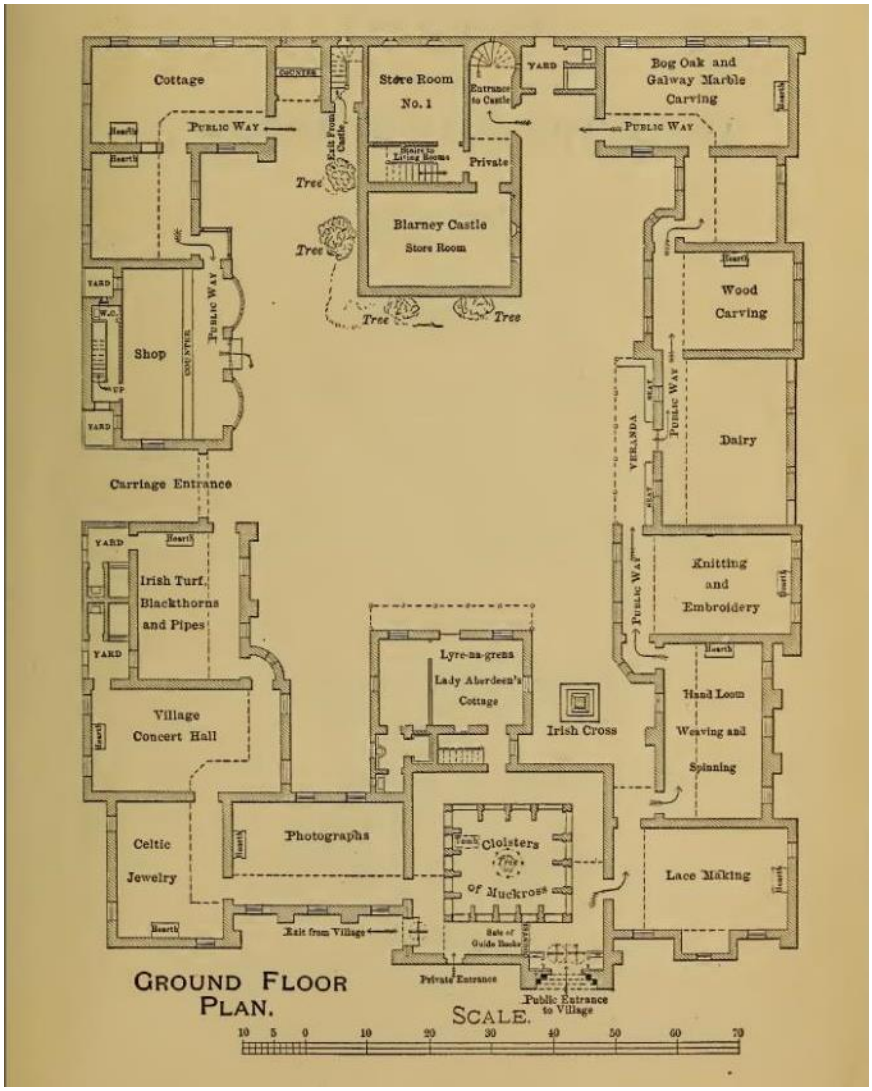

Figure 2.5. Ground floor plan of Aberdeen's Irish Industrial Village. *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle. The Exhibit of the Irish Industries Association. President, the Countess of Aberdeen. 'Éire go Bragh'. Published by the Irish Village Book Store. Price, 25 cents. At the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago* (Chicago, 1893). No page number available. Shelf mark: T500.K1. Library of Congress.

Figure 2.6. ‘A Bright Worker’, *Guide to the Irish Industrial Village and Blarney Castle*, p. 32.

Figure 2.7. ‘Lace making in the Irish Village’, Flinn, *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 15.

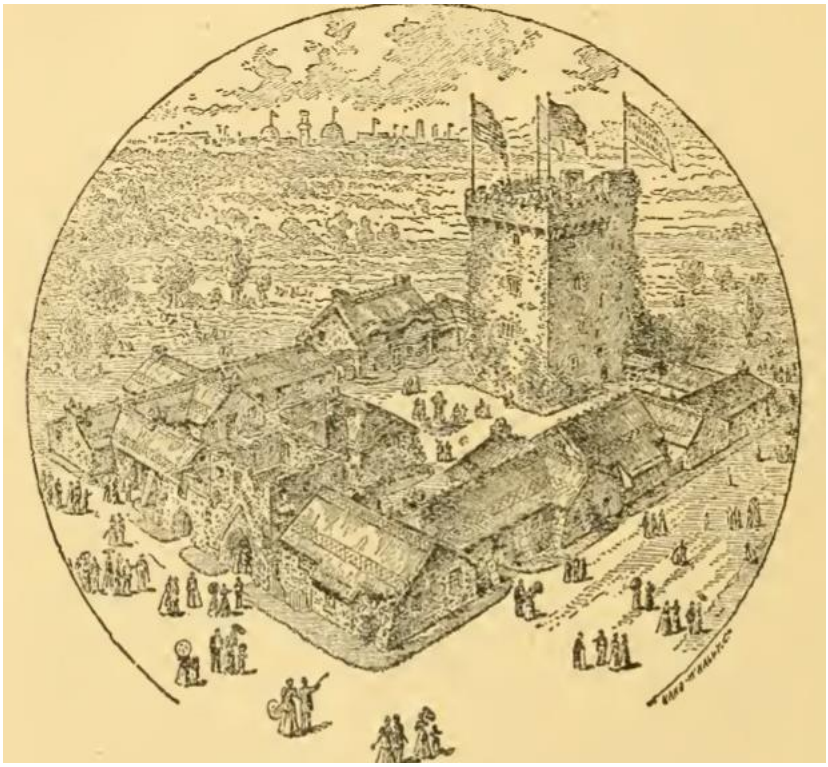

Figure 2.8. ‘Birds-eye view of the Irish Village’, Flinn, *Official Guide to the Midway Plaisance*, p. 46.

CHAPTER THREE:
'ALL-IRELAND INDUSTRIAL FETE':[1] DISPLAYED IRISH MODERNITIES IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITAIN

One exhibit of Ireland stands out in the early twentieth-century; that of an Irish Village named Ballymaclinton, in Britain and Ireland. The prefix 'Bally' simply means 'town of' and is not named after any real Irish Village. However, it began to take on this persona. In the early twentieth-century, exhibitions of the Irish took on a renewed significance; as grand spectacles of a country's power, prowess and prestige they heralded new modernities. Images of Ireland continued to envision the country according to the beliefs of the organisers and two brothers, David and Robert Brown, built Ballymaclinton. Their birth and death dates are unknown. The brothers owned a soap factory in Donaghmore, County Tyrone and their specialist luxury soaps were made using plant ash and vegetable oils rather than the harsher animal fats used by other soap producers.[2]

The brothers were committed to the expansion of their soap company and believed a continued union with Britain was vital to their success. I prove that membership of the Union relied on affirming a political whiteness and demonstrating compatibility and suitability with the English market (by espousing a popular Protestant Unionist position) in a genuine contribution to scholarship in whiteness studies. These two brothers erected a model village of Ireland in various exhibitions to advertise their soap on a commercial basis, while also confirming their political whiteness. This chapter traces the trajectory of the village in its

[1] R. Brown, 'Where is Ballymaclinton? Guess Girls. Shall we really tell you?', *Waterford Standard*, 15 May 1908.
[2] 'Ballymaclinton and the Crusade against Tuberculosis in Ireland: Some Particulars Concerning One of the Most Remarkable and Successful of Modern Health Movements', *Good Health: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine devoted to Hygiene and the Principles of Healthful Living*, 6: 8 (1908), p. 231. Shelf mark: P.P.2706.aka. British Library. See also, *Herald of the Golden Age and British Health Review*, 15: 4 (1912). There are no page numbers. Shelf mark: LOU.EW S159. British Library.

various iterations, from the 1907 Irish International Exhibition in Dublin, the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition in London, to the exhibitions held at Shepherd's Bush (1909 Imperial International Exhibition and the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition). These exhibitions were not organised by the state or through organisations such as the Irish Industries Association but were funded and constructed by Irish men and women who tied commerce to a public health initiative.

The Irish Village first materialised at the 1907 Irish Industrial Exhibition and it toured several British Empire Exhibitions. Interestingly, the brothers were also committed to the anti-consumption campaign in Britain and educated the populace on tuberculosis preventative behaviours in the village. Continuing the trend of earlier displays the brothers advertised native Irish labour practices to support declining rural industries in Ireland. Their tripartite motivations to sell soap by proving a political whiteness, to combat tuberculosis and to help revive rural industries sustained the popular display over successive exhibitions. The overarching aim was to ensure healthy Irish bodies ready for industry and international consumption. The most important component of their village was its inhabitants; populated with over 200 'colleens' and 100 'bhoys'. Barbara O'Connor explains that 'colleen' is a direct translation from the Irish language term for young girl – cailín – and the suffix 'in' 'denotes the diminutive and connotes both affection and junior status, not just in age terms', but also in 'social standing'.[3] 'Bhoys' is a Celtic term for young men. The 'colleens' and 'bhoys' lived in Ballymaclinton for six months at a time, as the village transformed into '[the] real ould country'.[4]

[3] B. O'Connor, "'Colleens and Comely Maidens": Representing and Performing Irish Femininity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' in E. Flannery and M. Griffin (eds.), *Ireland in Focus: Film, Photography, and Popular Culture* (Syracuse, NY, 2009), pp. 144-165, p. 145.
[4] 'Ballymaclinton', *Wharfedale & Airedale Observer*, 28 August 1908.

The Browns are unique in exhibition history as this was the first time that an exclusively Irish-based business individually organised a display of Ireland for their corporation's profit. The family-owned soap company sought to increase its revenue by appealing to a foreign market and establishing soap as a viable international commodity that relied on familiar Irish stereotypes. Their Irish 'brand' was utilised to convince international visitors of the Irishmen and women's political whiteness, seen as necessary for commercial profit. The display organised by a privately-owned Irish-controlled company held women as central to their commercial project, revealing a continuation of practices adopted by Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart in the nineteenth century. The value of performing Irishness through an attractive people was readily deployed by the brothers to encourage attraction and consumption. We can read the Village in different ways but it was centred in advertisement and sales – through Ballymaclinton we can see how Irishness became a lucrative, saleable commodity, in its advertising of soap and promotion of a political whiteness by championing Protestant Unionism.

Curiously, this picturesque rural idyll existed during turbulent British-Irish relations. The foundation of Britain's historic relationship with Ireland was called into question with the Home Rule debate. The call for self-government had its roots in the 1870s and continued to shape debate in the early twentieth-century. Forceful iterations of Irish nationalism rocked the status quo and challenged the two countries. The Brown brothers were ardently against Home Rule and were committed Unionists (and Presbyterians). Their display thus spoke to a desire to maintain the Union and demonstrate a rural, peaceful, quaint Irish populace who wanted to maintain British alliances. Irish imperial and domestic harmony was visualised and affirmed in the village by performing a political whiteness. Irish whiteness became synonymous with

Unionism in the Brown brothers display and emerged through the villagers who sold soap. This display showcased how Irishness was compatible with Britishness, and by extension the Union, and how trading with Ireland created profit with Irishmen and women who were familiar and white like the British.

Many Protestants opposed Home Rule.[5] The issue of Home Rule for Ireland began with the then Prime Minister Gladstone's (1809-1898) attempts to pass devolution legislation in the late nineteenth century. Roger Swift argues that after Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule in 1886 most Irish Catholics supported the Liberal Party, whilst Irish Protestants supported the Conservative and Unionist Party, but many of the Irish Catholic working-class voted for the emerging Labour Party in twentieth century Britain.[6] There were three Home Rule Bills which were modified and defeated, when in 1910 Sir Edward Carson (1854-1935) became leader of the Unionist Party in Ireland.[7] A widespread unionist propaganda campaign circulated that reached its peak in 1912 with the formulation of the Solemn League and Covenant on 28 September. This was signed by almost 500,000 Unionists (including the Brown brothers) who vowed that they would use 'any means which may be found necessary' including armed rebellion to protect the Union.[8] David Fitzpatrick reminds us that a quarter of northern Protestants refused to sign it, particularly amongst ministers and the clergy.[9]

[5] A. R. Holmes and E. F. Biagini, 'Protestants' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 88-112, p. 100. See also, G. K. Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government, 1865-1925. From Unionism to Liberal Commonwealth* (Dublin, 2001).
[6] R. Swift and S. Campbell, 'The Irish in Britain' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 515-533, p. 522.
[7] L. J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Question: Two Centuries of Conflict* (Kentucky, 1995), p. 126-127.
[8] Cited in J. G.V. McGaughey, *Ulster's Men: Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization in the North of Ireland, 1912-1923* (Dublin, 2012), p. 17.
[9] Cited in Holmes and Biagini, 'Protestants', p. 100.

Irish Unionist commitment to Britain was passionately demonstrated during World War One; the 36th (Ulster) Division fought at the opening day of the Somme on 1 July 1916. The battle was immortalised within Unionist narratives as a benevolent sacrifice made by Ulstermen for the British Empire to keep Ulster joined with Britain.[10] Subsequently, the demands for Home Rule escalated leading to the Irish War of Independence (January 1919 to July 1921) between the Irish Republican Army and British security forces in Ireland which killed thousands. Militia tactics, brutal assassinations and siege-like warfare gripped the country for almost two years. The conflict ended with the Anglo-Irish Treaty that provided for the establishment of the Irish Free State within a year as a self-governing dominion, similar to Canada. It also allowed Northern Ireland (six counties), which had been created by the Government of Ireland Act 1920 to opt out of the Irish Free State.[11]

The post-treaty conflict led to the Irish Civil War (June 1922 to May 1923), yet, despite such turbulent politics, Ireland in the fairground was presented as an apolitical, non-partisan space – to great success. The Brown brothers created a convincing image of Irish people as happy within the Union and labouring for the benefit of Ireland, and concurrently Britain. Home Rule emerged as a non-issue within Ballymaclinton despite it dominating Irish-British politics in the early twentieth-century. Their project rested on performing an Irish political whiteness through the labour of the village's inhabitants. The Browns deployed convincing images of contentment, industry and progress within the Irish Village to bolster the Union and assure British visitors that all was well within the Unionist portion of Ireland.

[10] McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*, p. 18.
[11] See, B. Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Oxford, 2012), p. 242-253.

Much has been written about the Irish in twentieth-century Britain.[12] According to some scholars, the Irish in Britain assimilated rapidly. For instance, Fitzpatrick has argued that the Irish failed to develop an 'autonomous community' and quickly merged within British life and politics.[13] Moreover, Alan O'Day has written extensively on the 'mutative ethnicity' of the Irish, which allowed them to integrate intermittently into the fabric of British society.[14] The literature on assimilation that imagines a peaceable integration of the Irish into British society has witnessed significant backlash. Historians such as Mary Hickman have led the challenge against the 'narrative of homogeneity', which subsumed all difference within the functioning of the British state.[15] Hickman referred to Stuart Hall's contention that nation-states tended to falsify national unity despite tensions to perform a peaceful national community.[16] Recent historiography has attempted to bridge the polarised camps; Mo Moulton has argued that the Irish Catholic minority in interwar England was a distinctive subculture within a larger story of incorporation.[17]

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[12] See, M. M. Ghaill, 'The Irish in Britain: The Invisibility of Ethnicity and Anti-Irish Racism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 26: 1 (2000), pp. 137-147; G. Davis, 'The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939' in A. Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 19-36; R. Swift, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914: A Documentary History* (Cork, 1990); A. O'Day, 'The Political Organization of the Irish in Britain, 1867-90' in S. Gilley and R. Swift (eds.), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 183-211; D. Fitzpatrick, '"A Peculiar Tramping People": The Irish in Britain, 1801-70' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland. Vol V. Ireland under the Union, I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 623-660.

[13] D. Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 10-59, p. 41.

[14] A. O'Day, 'A Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity: Mutative Ethnicity', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicities, Migration and Diaspora*, 27: 2 (2009), pp. 317-339, p. 317. See also, R. Swift, 'Identifying the Irish in Victorian Britain: Recent Trends in Historiography', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicities, Migration and Diaspora*, 27: 2 (2009), pp. 134-151; A. O'Day, 'Varieties of Anti-Irish Behaviour in Britain, 1846-1922' in P. Panayi (ed.), *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, 1996), pp. 26-43.

[15] M. J. Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies of the Irish in Britain: A Critique of the Segregation/Assimilation Model' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 236-253, p. 244.

[16] Ibid. See, See S. Hall, 'Our Mongrel Selves', *New Statesmen and Society*, 19 June 1992 and E. Balibar, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (Verso, 1991).

[17] M. Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 9.

The assimilation/segregation debate is important for Ballymaclinton as it reveals how exhibitions became a platform through which to affirm a politically white affinity with the English. This whiteness was seen to be crucial as the Union held central significance for the Browns' plans to establish an international market for their goods. Catholic and Protestant women who lived in the Irish village bodily performed Irish political whiteness. The Browns' project of political whiteness was expansive and included the whole Irish populace. The village sought to furnish an Irish utopia inhabited by peaceful, diverse and happy inhabitants, for the furtherance of soap sales. Their twentieth century commercial project interacted with structural changes in the country; Enda Delaney argues that in Britain the arrival of 'more visible migrants' had the function of allowing the Irish 'to move up the [ranking] of newcomers in British society'.[18] The Village was therefore one of many processes that consolidated and confirmed the whiteness of Britain's Irish population.

My research complicates reductive understandings of race, which regard hierarchies of skin colour as the prime locator of difference in access to power and privilege as discussed in the introduction to my thesis.[19] I show that complexion works within the framework of empire, class and gender to construct 'whiteness' as desirable, progressive and Irish. Thus, I take whiteness as a socially constructed and politically contested category with an ideological connection to those who we might recognise as 'white'.[20] Specifically, a political whiteness was concerned with accessing socio-economic privileges associated with whiteness, which was refused based on a racialised discourse of civilisation.

[18] E. Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2007), p. 125-126.
[19] See R. Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (New York, 1997) and p. 25-34, esp. p. 30-32.
[20] P. Jackson, 'Constructions of 'Whiteness' in the Geographical Imagination', *Area*, 30: 2 (1998), pp. 99-106, p. 100.

There is also a class-based consideration to the Browns' project; the 1901 census revealed that one-seventh of Irish male migrants and nearly one-quarter of Irish female migrants in Britain were employed in occupations of mining, factory work, public works, railways and general labourers on short contracts.[21] It is interesting to consider whether brothers David and Robert Brown wanted to appeal to this type of audience – labouring Irish men, often Catholic. It is likely not. In the late Victorian period, Roy Foster has shown that a small Irish middle-class of professional men developed in the medical, legal, educational and commercial spheres. London attracted many Irish individuals of the literary and artistic persuasion.[22] This middle-class could afford and, crucially, had the time to visit exhibitions and so consume and invest in Irish industries thereby becoming the village's targeted audience of the Irish in Britain.

This chapter will consider snapshots of Irish exhibitions in the early twentieth-century to ask questions about the broader significance of Irish display. I will first map out how the brothers created the commercial village at different exhibitions and for what purpose. I will relate this to the context of the time and assess whether the village existed as an anomaly or a complementary accompaniment to the Irish Question in the early twentieth-century. I will consider the gendered roles exercised within this project – honing in on the lives of the exhibited women and men. Ultimately, this is a story of how commercialised images of Ireland centred on white femininity navigated a complex Irish existence. I will specifically analyse the displayed symbols of Ireland and their popular monetary and aesthetic value,

[21] Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place', p. 18.
[22] R. F. Foster, 'An Irish Power in London': Making it in the Victorian Metropolis' in F. Cullen and R. F. Foster (eds.), *Conquering England: Ireland in Victorian London* (London, 2005), pp. 12-25, p. 12; R. Swift and S. Campbell, 'The Irish in Britain' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 515-533, p. 518.

particularly in relation to touristic portrayals of Ireland. I contrast this to exhibits of other countries, such as the Somali, Senegalese and Japanese Villages, as case studies to highlight how stories of Ireland's progress and development were reinforced through comparison and difference. There was a continuation in motifs of Irishness related to rural industries and the production of sewing, spinning and weaving in the figure of the Irish women, however, by the twentieth century, a distinct capitalist motive took precedent and the figure of the white woman as related to industries from textiles to soap became the figure of productive value.

The Irish exhibition's unique function as state propaganda took on an inflated significance during the turbulent political climate of the Home Rule debate and increasing Irish nationalism of the early twentieth-century. This became intimately connected to the capitalist project of profit and trade, which relied on a quasi-authentic Ireland, imbibed with a political whiteness. Ballymaclinton village expounded a Protestant Unionist project against any kind of separation from England or devolved Home Rule. Recognising the success of this project highlights the broader role of the nostalgic power of white Irishness for selling the country and its politics.

1907 IRISH INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION, DUBLIN

The Brown brothers first exhibited at the Irish Industrial Exhibition in 1907 held in Dublin from May to October. They contributed a small display of model white-washed cottages complete with white 'colleens' selling Colleen Soap, Sheila Soap and Hibernia Shaving Cream in the Home Industries section.[23] Almost half a million-people visited the Brown's

[23] *Herald of the Golden Age and British Health Review.* Rains has discussed the 1907 display in relation to empire and labour politics in *Commodity Culture and Social Class in Dublin, 1850–1916* (Dublin, 2010), p. 185-197.

cottages in 1907 and they sold more than 30,000 bars of McClinton's soap.[24] Robert Brown included a photograph of the cottage in the fair's official souvenir guide, notes John Philip O'Connor, that gave pre-paid McClinton's soap samples to any address within the United Kingdom. Consequently they received a substantial number of orders, fundamentally convincing the Browns of their soap's profitability in the national market.[25]

Prominent Dublin businessman William Martin Murphy (1845-1919) spearheaded the creation of the 1907 exhibition. He notably owned the Dublin Tramway Company and the *Irish Independent* newspaper.[26] The commercial enterprise relied on vast public support, generous funds from the wealthy and a large bureaucratic structure. The organisation of the display was a mammoth task facilitated by innumerable committees and sub-committees, each populated by mainly elite men although there were some women. Around 1,500 people in total sat on these committees, which involved weekly meetings, constant communications via letters and travels throughout Ireland and beyond to solicit exhibits.

The overall aim of the exhibition was to 'promote the Industries, Art, and Science of Ireland, by a display of the products for which the country is famous, and the products of partially developed industries, for which special facilities exist in the country' and 'to stimulate Commercial Development and promote Industrial Education by inviting all nations

[24] Cited in Brown, 'Where is Ballymaclinton?', *Waterford Standard*.
[25] J. P. O'Connor, "'For a Colleen's Complexion": Soap and the Politicization of a Brand Personality, 1888-1916', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing,* 6: 1 (2014), pp. 29-55, p. 38. See also, J. P. O'Connor, "'Déanta i nÉirinn": The Reconstruction of Irish Stereotypes, 1888-1914', PhD, University of Limerick (2012).
[26] B. McCabe, 'Irish International Exhibition of 1907', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland,* 137 (2007), pp. 149-152, p. 149.

to exhibit their products, both in the raw and finished state'.[27] There was an interest in reciprocal learning and transference of skills: 'full share of the benefits [through exhibiting …] their machinery, and most recent industrial methods, in order that mutual benefits of great value may be secured'.[28] In the immediate sense, the exhibition offered employment for hundreds and thousands of people in Dublin, as only local labour was used for construction and Irish materials were exclusively utilised. Brian Siggins has worked out that there were '100 plasterers, 200 painters, 150 plumbers and over 100 carpenters employed'.[29] Moreover, he has shown that 938 people were directly employed by the organisers including 'six clerks, twenty-seven ground staff, sixty-five turnstile operators and watchmen, twenty-nine engineers, thirty-seven cloak room and lavatory assistants, seventy-four carpenters and labourers, forty-two firemen, twenty-four home industry workers, fifty-one side show attendants, twelve attendants in concert and cinema halls' and even more worked in the catering department' – all Irish.[30]

Nationalist feeling saw some individuals arguing against the exhibition in its early stages. Significant criticism was directed by the Gaelic League, Siggins notes, who felt that only Irish goods should be displayed. One of the funders, Joseph Mooney wrote, 'good, earnest Irishmen, […] thought the project would be injurious to Ireland instead of doing good' by stalling efforts to revive Irish industries.[31] However, the perceived utility of exhibitions to stimulate financial profit by showcasing the country's wares overcame these debates. A

[27] *Official Catalogue for the Irish International Exhibition, Dublin 1907* (Dublin, 1907), p. 15. Shelf mark: 10390.df.21. British Library. See also, *Irish International Exhibition 1907 Prospectus* (Dublin 1906). Shelf mark: Mic.A.8120(9). British Library.
[28] Ibid.
[29] B. Siggins, *The Great White Fair: the Herbert Park Exhibition of 1907* (Dublin, 2007), p. 107.
[30] Ibid. Siggins has calculated that a total of £23,057 in wages was paid, p. 107.
[31] Ibid., p. 33; K. Finlay, *The Biggest Show in Town: Record of the International Exhibition, Dublin 1907* (Dublin, 2007), p. 11-19.

secondary motivation of the project was to establish an Institute of Commerce for Ireland through consolidating the exhibits after the six-month display was over. The Institute would offer commercial and industrial training for Irish men and women. The exhibition was a top-down showcase of Irish industry and modernity privileged for the profit of a few but the consumption and long-term benefit of many.

The 1907 exhibition contained a Grand Central Palace, a Palace of Mechanical Arts, a Palace of Industries, a Palace of Fine Arts, a Canadian Pavilion, a Gas Pavilion and a Home Industries 'village', as well as sideshow areas, a concert hall and a restaurant (**Figure 3.1**). These were interspersed by landscaped gardens and a large lake. Individuals, couples and groups admiring the exhibition from the lawn were depicted. Openness and space was cultivated as, unlike the images discussed in previous chapters, a crowd was not prioritised. Instead, an imposing building was being thoughtfully admired by selected guests. The length of the building was signalled with the front of it spread over the image to indicate vastness and grandeur. The 1907 exhibition received almost three million visitors in total and around £80,000 in entrance fees.[32] There were 538 Irish exhibitors in sum and the French, English, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, German, Belgian, Hungarian, Armenian, and Argentine presented the rest of the exhibits (1,044 in total).[33]

Newspapers and periodicals were part of a widespread movement to encourage visits to the exhibition. Printed arguments related to the pedagogic capabilities of the visual to the convenience of visiting were effectively deployed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

[32] See, W. F. Dennehy, *Record of the Irish International Exhibition* (Dublin, 1907). Shelf mark: D-7956.dd.13. British Library. Cited in Rains, *Commodity Culture*, p. 187.
[33] Finlay, *Biggest Show in Town*, p. 77.

Notably, publications reported increased accessibility because of improvements in public transport. For instance, the *Official Catalogue for the Irish International Exhibition* boasted that Herbert Park was 'within a mile and a half of the centre of the city, served by three lines of tramways'.[34] A comprehensive advertising machine energetically convinced visitors to attend the exhibition.

The exhibition facilitated a wider interest in promoting tourism to Ireland; the *Official Catalogue* stated how Ireland had 'a fresh and balmy air, and an unequalled greenness of verdure, the gift of the Atlantic, which washes her western coast'.[35] Similar to the 1893 Chicago Fair, the exhibition was perceived as a salve for the cognitive and physical dislocations experienced by migration. For Irish immigrants to Dublin, the 1907 exhibition would allow them to 'revisit the old country', as well as experience Ireland in its entirety through the 'excursions […] organised'.[36] The *Catalogue* discussed those who migrated in sympathetic tones, exiled because they had 'energies and abilities which they were unable to exercise at home'.[37] Such loving rhetoric created a welcoming atmosphere in Ireland for migrants with little fear of reprisal or judgement from the family and friends who remained in the country.

International development in the early twentieth-century relied on a constant commerce of people and goods, for the *Catalogue* urged that '[visitors] take away with them kindly remembrances of what they have learned and enjoyed'.[38] Further, John Cooke in his

[34] *Official Catalogue for the Irish International Exhibition*, p. 9.
[35] Ibid., p. 17.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., p. 29.

essay ‘Ireland as a Tourist Resort’ published in *Irish Rural Life and Industry* (1907), emphasised tourism to Ireland as a corrective to well-worn negative stereotypes: ‘… a poor or erroneous idea of the characteristics of the country […] notion that Ireland is wet, and Ireland is all bog’.[39] A comprehensive advertising network expounded repeatedly that a panoply of experiences of Ireland were available if one attended the Exhibition, both in and around the capital.

An attractive image of Ireland relied on the interaction of past, present and future. Similar to previous exhibitions, the commitment to an ancient Irish history permeated the 1907 Exhibition. The main entrance hall contained a reproduction of the famous High Cross at Monasterboice, a seventeen-foot-high sculpture carved out of stone, elaborately chiselled with geometric designs. The reproduced famous Irish round tower was one of seventy that remained in Ireland in the early twentieth-century, most of which were in ruins.[40] Abraham ‘Bram’ Stoker, journalist of *The World’s Work* magazine invented the phrase ‘The Great White Fair’ – related to the white stone prominently used in the Fair’s buildings. Stoker expounded that ‘a strenuous, industrious spirit’ was ‘spreading […] rapidly over the old country’ and replacing ‘historical bitterness’.[41] 1907 was triumphant proof that Ireland was witnessing the end of an era of turbulent Irish politics related to the land and the constitution. The unionist *Irish Times* celebrated the non-partisan experience of the exhibition with ‘representatives of every interest and every class in Ireland’ present.[42] A peaceful, celebratory

[39] J. Cooke, ‘Ireland a Tourist Resort’, *Irish Rural Life and Industry with Suggestions for the Future. Issued in connection with the Home Industries section Irish International Exhibition 1907* (Dublin, 1907), p. 14. Shelf mark: 50042968. New York Public Library.
[40] Ibid., p. 20.
[41] Cited in Siggins, *The Great White Fair,* p. 33.
[42] Ibid., p. 38.

image of Dublin (and Ireland simultaneously) was carefully cultivated in both text and image in exhibition materials.

At the same time as the exhibition, Lady Aberdeen formed the Women's National Health Association of Ireland. Aberdeen's philanthropic project related to home industries expanded to include public health improvements in the early twentieth-century, particularly prevention of Tuberculosis schemes. For instance, Aberdeen replicated itinerant Tuberculosis exhibits popular in other countries. The Dublin Exhibition featured a Tuberculosis exhibit that educated the vulnerable populace on healthy behaviours to avoid contracting the disease.[43] The exhibit included specimens of diseased organs and bones, human and animal, shown in bottles, as well as various hygienic appliances.[44] Furthermore, local doctors and surgeons gave lectures on cleanliness of person and premises, care as to the disposal of the sputum, the need of fresh air day and night and on a varied and wholesome diet.[45]

The *Illustrated Monthly Magazine devoted to Hygiene and the Principles of Healthful Living* (1908) produced in connection with the exhibition positioned the combat of tuberculosis as a problem for the world. They encouraged charitable donations to outlay their initial cost of £35,000.[46] Aberdeen's popular tuberculosis exhibit toured the north and south of the country – visiting over fifty towns and villages in the early twentieth-century. The success of Aberdeen's campaign relied on the involvement of local doctors and clergy, as

[43] G. Jones, *'Captain of all these men of death': The History of Tuberculosis in Ireland in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Ireland* (New York, 2001), p. 101-102.
[44] *Good Health*, p. 236-237.
[45] Ibid., p. 237.
[46] Ibid., p. 239.

well as the members of district councils and boards of guardians, as it sought to present scientific facts in a popular style that was intelligible to the masses.

Moreover, Aberdeen's sympathies with the improvement of home industries saw her display cottage industries of damasks, wool, yarn and many other textiles.[47] Similar to her exhibitions in the United States in the 1890s, Aberdeen promoted a comprehensive enterprise of rural industries, supporting the weaver in her home and then facilitating the purchase of their goods to the consumer market, as well as the continual development of their technical experience. Again, the niche market of luxury goods that Aberdeen belonged to in the 1890s continued to hold traction for the small number of customers who could afford such items, as opposed to mass-produced ones.

The Brown brothers tapped into this luxury market to expand their commercial enterprise. Robert Brown registered McClinton's with the Irish Industries Development Association (IIDA), discussed in the previous chapter, and McClinton's Soap resplendent with 'colleen' iconography was their most popular product. Between 1907 and 1920, John Philip O'Connor notes that the IIDA licensed around 700 Irish companies to use its corporate trademark (of a Celtic motif inside a circle, containing the words 'Déanta in Éirinn', or 'Made in Ireland') on advertisements in both domestic and overseas markets.[48] The Browns established their commercial enterprise with a specific focus on the white 'colleen' and female beauty. This luxury market had a growing appeal amongst the wealthier inhabitants of Britain and Ireland in the early twentieth-century. Increased disposable income and the rise of

[47] Rains, *Commodity Culture*, p. 188.
[48] O'Connor, "For a Colleen's Complexion", p. 36.

the middle-class swelled the demands for exclusive quality products and exhibitions became a key way to showcase such fashionable goods, whether soap or hand-made fabrics.

The brothers encouraged the use of state subsidies to develop Irish industries. Robert Brown and his brother built cottages for their workers in Donaghmore, County Tyrone, which were represented in the 1907 exhibition. In 'The Housing of the Irish Artizan [*sic*]' published in *Irish Rural Life and Industry*, Robert Brown suggested Irish entrepreneurs use the Labourers Act (Ireland), 1906 for the benefit of their employees. The Act dictated that all manual workers earning under fifteen shillings weekly could be supplied with four-roomed cottages, and from half to one acre of land through state subsidies.[49] There were many ambitions tied to improved housing for the Browns; it was hoped to reduce tuberculosis, control emigration by '[reviving the] decay' of many Irish districts, and through building 'bright homes' not only would 'new money find its way in, either through Irish manufactures or […] from across the Channel' but ultimately 'the days of poverty and *ennui* [would] soon be replaced by those of prosperity and energy'.[50] The 1907 display sought a large-scale transformation of the Irish landscape, its society and economy. This was a change from prominent discourses in the 1850s and 1890s that largely relied on individual labour and points to a move towards more state and nation based support to improve conditions in Ireland.

The Dublin exhibition had many sideshows, such as entertainments typically found in a fun fair as well as villages of distant lands. There were 'Musical Entertainments, vocal and

[49] R. Brown, 'The Housing of the Irish Artizan', *Irish Rural Life and Industry*, p. 295.
[50] Ibid., p. 303.

instrumental, of a high class'.[51] The most popular and profitable sideshow exhibit was the Somali village. The *Record of the Irish International Exhibition* announced that '… a party of Somalis has been imported from British Somaliland, which is situated in the North East of Africa. This village has been erected to represent the huts in which natives live in this country' (**Figure 3.2**).[52] A family in outfits of patterned cloth are standing or sitting in various poses.[53] They are all making eye contact with the camera aware of being observed. Efforts at authenticity explain the wooden logs and roof structures reminiscent of Somaliland. Spears and sticks clutter the surroundings and cultivated images of a warrior people for popular consumption. A schoolroom was also built where visitors could watch Somali children being taught their lessons – literally visualising their perceived educative transformation toward urban modernity. Rains notes that admission was six pence for adults and three pence for children and the exhibit made a return significantly higher than its cost.[54] The Somali village exemplifies how colonial groups were treated within the Dublin exhibition specifically and showcases how colonial people in general were displayed in international exhibitions of the time.

Official exhibition literature avidly stressed that the workers really were Somalis and strongly implied that they came to Ireland from Somaliland specifically for the exhibition. This professed commitment to authenticity in exhibits featured repeatedly in exhibition planning and particularly in discussions of the Irish 'colleen'. The desire to witness

[51] *Official Catalogue for the Irish International Exhibition*, p. 17. There was also a water chute and a switchback ride (rollercoaster).
[52] Dennehy, *Record of the Irish International Exhibition*, p. 110. See Rains' discussion of the village in *Commodity Culture*, p. 193-197.
[53] See, H. M. Akou, *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture* (Indiana, 2011), p. 27-64.
[54] Rains, *Commodity Culture*, p. 194.

authenticity became synonymous with how successful an exhibit was through positive visitor engagement. Within the fiction of the fair it seems that visitors possessed a critical gaze that desired to be convinced, and tricked almost, that what they were seeing on show was in actual fact real.[55] Indications that suggested an inauthentic display such as the exhibited being unable to speak fluently in their indigenous language were discarded as part of the spectacle, and hints at broader trends within museums in this period that prioritised a veneer of factual truth for their presentations.[56]

The exhibited Somalis likely belonged to a group of actors under one hiring manager who were exhibited throughout the United Kingdom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. For instance, Somali actors were hired by Herr Carl Hagenbeck, '[a] well-known collector and trainer of animals at Hamburg, and Herr Josef Menges, a scientific explorer in Africa', to be exhibited at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1895.[57] In 1895, there were 'sixty-six natives of Somaliland' who had travelled to England and their exhibition was similar to the Dublin display in 1907. They engaged in 'mimic battle, peace festivities, native sports, native dances, native racing'.[58]

A crucial difference in 1895, however, was that Hagenbeck also exhibited animals alongside the Somali actors. There were 'African lions, racing dromedaries, Somali racing ponies, ostriches, elephants, and Somali sheep, goats, cheetahs and hunting panthers, zebras,

[55] See, J. W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Harvard, 2001), p. 1-29.
[56] For a discussion on authenticity, see A. Swenson, 'Under False Pretences' in A. Buckland and S. Qureshi (eds.), *Time Travelers: Victorian Perspectives on the Past* (Chicago, forthcoming).
[57] 'A Somali Village at the Crystal Palace', *Worcester Journal*, 18 May 1895; E. Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck's Empire of Entertainments* (Washington, D.C., 2008), p. 47-49.
[58] 'The African Village in London', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 13 May 1895.

leopards, hyenas, gazelles, antelopes, giant pythons, wild dogs, wild donkeys, monkeys, baboons'.[59] The *Worcester Journal* described the exhibited Somalis in the following terms: 'The men have a habit of combing their hair. The few women in the detachment are not very attractive in features or dress […] men and women alike wear long white robes called 'tobe', though the chiefs are attired in coloured garments'.[60] There are a whole host of derogatory opinions evident here and trading in negative stereotypes seemingly enhanced the authentic quality of the exhibited peoples in contemporary discourse. The same Somali village may have also been exhibited at the Bradford Exhibition in 1904. Therefore, by the 1907 display, there was a well-established Somali Village repeatedly exhibited and its display in Dublin was not unusual but characteristically profitable.[61]

The Dublin crowd directly subjected the Somali Village to racist stereotypes and prejudices relating to their person and culture. For instance, in response to complaints that the Somali village was dirty and unhygienic, the *Irish Times* assured: 'We are officially informed that the rumours regarding the health of the occupants of the Somali Village are quite uninformed. Dr. C. Preston Ball, who visits the Village twice daily, certifies that, with the exception of slight colds, which a few have contracted on account of the severe weather, the Somalis are in good health. There have been no deaths, and no case of infectious disease'.[62] Clearly, a considerable number of visitors to the village had racialised fears related to the spread of disease and infection in the Somali huts.

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[59] 'East African (Somali) Village', *South London Press*, 18 May 1895. See, Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck*, p. 80-83.
[60] 'A Somali Village at the Crystal Palace', *Worcester Journal*, 18 May 1895; 'Somaliland at Sydenham', *The Graphic*, 3 August 1895.
[61] See, Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck*, p. 77-79, p. 85-88 for the popularisation of domestic life scenes in exhibitions.
[62] 'The Somali Village', *The Irish Times*, 14 May 1907. Deaths of workers during exhibitions was a real practical concern, see S. Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire and Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Chicago, 2011), p. 219.

Lord and Lady Aberdeen described the village and represented the Somali group in stereotyped ways:

> [We] were greeted by the dusky inhabitants of that settlement in barbaric but friendly fashion. The men of the party were in full attire, carrying their swords, spears and shields, and, as the vice regal procession approached, they brandished and clashed these accoutrements, uttering wild cries of applause and welcome […] the Somali indulged in a series of whoops, which was their nearest approach to cheering, and as the Vice-Regal party drove away bowing and smiling, the Chief urged his followers to another series of yells, which was given with energy and much brandishing of weapons.[63]

It is evident that the Somali exhibit fulfilled a vital ideological function in 1907. For instance, the *Official Catalogue* boasted that the exhibition 'show[ed] the remarkable progress [Ireland] ha[s] made in a few years, and what further development they are capable of'.[64] This presented Ireland as being on the brink of modernity – if visitors only visited the exhibition enough, bought enough, and invested enough then Ireland would become modern. Evidently, a saleable Irish modernity within the British Empire was carefully cultivated with a purposeful mixing of rural industries, innovative soap practices and the display of people of colour. The Somali Village may have acted as an example of a nation assumed to be pre-modern; a reminder of what Ireland once was and had changed from through industry, thus affirming the political whiteness of the Irish. Further, as Ireland was the country doing the displaying, power shifted in their favour – suggestive of the imperial inflections of displayed colonial villages in twentieth-century international exhibitions. A hillside development of houses built in Howth at the time was known affectionately as 'the Somali Village'.[65]

[63] Dennehy, *Record of the Irish International Exhibition*, p. 78.
[64] *Official Catalogue of the Irish Industrial Exhibition*, p. 15.
[65] Siggins, *The Great White Fair*, p. 65.

The Irish used the Somali Village in Dublin to position themselves in ongoing debates about development and civilisational status. For the Somalis their display was rooted in opportunities to work as actors for a wage and for the Irish organisers the Somalis existed as an illustration of a perceived earlier civilisation in order to assert their current progress. This demonstrates a shift in language – in the nineteenth-century Ireland was presented as in need of serious development, however, by the earlier twentieth century, Ireland was confident enough in its own technological capacities and whiteness to contrast it positively with Africans who were assumed to be less capable.

During the fair, a child was born to Zave Zellom, described as the Chief of the Somalis. However, even the new-born was not spared exhibition; for it was excitedly reported that the: '[Child] may be seen in the harem of the Chief within five or six days'.[66] The *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette* declared that: 'there has been born in Dublin a genuine black Irishman [whose] birth […] in the Somali village' though both his parents are Somalis 'entitles the little blackamore to call himself an Irishman'.[67]

The Somali display was subject to the complex contradictions that the Irish villages often experienced within imperial displays – they were both lauded and fawned over but kept at a distance for racist fears of contracting primitivity or exposure to dirt. Colonial villages had a changeable existence within the boundaries of international exhibitions, although physically side-lined into the entertainment section they were often the most visited and most

[66] 'Ceremony in Somali Village', *Evening Herald (Dublin),* 26 August 1907. See also, 'Birth in the Chief's Family', *Dublin Evening Mail*, 23 August 1907. *Larne Times* reported that a 'Son was born to Java Yellow and Maro Marchmed. Name will be Mohamed Ebiana which is intended to be a complement to the country in which he was born. He is the fourth child of his mother', 'Somali Born in Dublin', 31 August 1907.
[67] 'A Black Irishman', *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette*, 23 September 1907.

profitable exhibits. Ireland was idiosyncratically displayed in the early twentieth-century – its positioning on the exhibition grounds being determined by the organisers of the Irish village. Its chameleon-like status unlike the Somali village meant that it could occasionally feature in the colonial section (as Chapter Two's discussion on the Midway revealed) or become amalgamated with Britain (as Chapter One demonstrated) but it could also hold its own exhibition and become the central power. The positive yet racialised reactions to the Somali village by visitors in Dublin indicates the popular nature of colonial villages within early-twentieth century exhibitions and the desire to experience difference as a way to bolster the Irish citizen and the Irish nation as being more advanced.

Curious scenes of rioting marked the closing of the 1907 exhibition. Several newspapers reported that 'A large body of young men, said to be students […] had in their possession an […] unlimited supply of crackers and squibs. [One of the men] waved aloft a Union Jack, which was attached to a walking stick'. And 'the rowdies [began] running up and down […] cheering and bellowing'.[68] They smashed, looted and shouted and the police were mocked and abused. Throughout all of this, an Irish band was playing and the 'mob yelled for them to play "God save the King" and non-compliance with the request seemed to exasperate them beyond all bounds'.[69]

Finally, the police 'ejected them by force […] many of the mob being bodily thrown out'.[70] This spectacular incident may have revealed the unspoken political motivations of the display, as the men sported Union Jack flags and asked for God Save the King to be played

[68] 'Rowdies dispersed', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 17 November 1907. See, Finlay, *Biggest Show in Town*, p. 19-20.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

we can assume that they were supporters of the Union, like Robert and David Brown. The brothers of the village were avowedly against Home Rule and the outbreak of rioting may have been an unusual example of support for the project. The 1907 display as a whole, and Ballymaclinton Village specifically, supported the Union with Britain but wanted to maintain a unique Irish identity through industry, manufacture and culture. These men may have been the final display celebrating the successful Unionist politics of the 1907 enterprise.

1908 FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION, LONDON

The Franco-British Exhibition opened in Shepherd's Bush London between 14 May and 31 October 1908 to celebrate the entente cordiale between Britain and France, which settled existing colonial disputes in North Africa and prioritised shared interests. It was affectionately termed the 'White City' with its palatial white buildings and lake – offering a continuity from the 'White City' of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Here, in a 'cosy corner […] in the big show', was the Irish Village, designed to sell soap by profiting from an Irish whiteness.[71] Ballymaclinton's ten and a half acres was complete with thatched cottages, a Round Tower of old Kilcullen, a cross of Donaghmore, various Irish monuments such as the Ogham Stone, a Galway's Fisherman's Cottage, Village Shop, a Post and Telegraph Office, a Forge, Laundry, Blarney Stone, Restaurant, Sanatorium, Village Hall, an Industrial Hall, and houses composed of 'genuine colleens at work at lace, embroidery, carpets' (**Figure 3.3**).[72] The image revealed that there was also a farmyard containing the traditional pig of Paddy, a herd of Kerry cows

[71] *Tyrone Courier*, 14 May 1908. See, C. R. Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland: Irish Villages, Pavilions, Cottages, and Castles at International Exhibitions, 1853-1939', PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison (2013), p. 119-158 for a discussion of the village.
[72] *Official Guide for the Franco-British Exhibition, 1908* (London, 1908), p. 53. Shelf mark: 7957.de.32. British Library. See, M. C. Sheehan, 'Issues of Cultural Representation and National Identity explored in the Irish Village, Ballymaclinton at the Franco-British Exhibition, Shepherd's Bush, London, 1908', MA thesis, Royal College of Art (2000).

and fowls. ‘Colleens’ with donkeys carrying baskets of unidentifiable goods circulated in the scene. The women were typically facing away from the camera and so unveiled a working snapshot of village life. Villagers were standing with their hands on their hips, either solitarily or with friends, in a backdrop of the exhibition space, complete with cottages and a boat. A well-dressed man observed the ‘colleens’ and a crowd was captured on one side of the village, which effected a dual image of distance, yet proximity, in the presentation of the exhibit.

The *Official Guide* declared that the commercial village of Ballymaclinton had a popular appeal and ‘cannot fail both to interest and amuse’; ‘Whatever [connection] one has in the Emerald Isle – by birth, friends, or visits’.[73] The immersive sensory effect of the village was repeatedly noted in contemporary literature with many commenting on the ‘fresh young voices’ who sang the Irish songs, the ponies, and jaunting cars idling through the village, and the ‘veritable chatter of the women busy with their various handicrafts’.[74] This was more than an experiential affair with ‘dancing on the village green, hornpipes, jigs, reels […] fiddles, melodeons, and bagpipes’.[75] Clearly, the village sought to stimulate ‘actual contact with Irish life, its poetry and romance, its abounding joy and its deep pathos’ in the Brown’s effort to market their soaps.[76]

Through the archival material, it is possible to map the lives of those who inhabited and worked within the multi-national commercial venture of the village. The Brown brothers advertisements for ‘colleens’ to work in the village were widely circulated, appearing in the *Waterford Standard*, the *Irish Independent*, and the *Tyrone Courier*. The *Tyrone Courier*

[73] Ibid., p. 54.
[74] S. A. Tooley, ‘Night at Ballymaclinton’, *London Daily News*, 8 July 1908.
[75] ‘Frolics at Ballymaclinton’, *Mid-Ulster Mail*, 11 July 1908.
[76] *Good Health*, p. 234.

specifically, was invested in covering the village as the soap factory was in the same county, and so it acted as good publicity for the area. The brothers assured prospective female employees that they 'make no charge for space; we pay all expenses and take all risk'.[77] The working schedule was 'a healthy life […] eight hours sleep, eight hours work and eight hours play'.[78] They also reassured the women that a 'real home life' waited for them in Ballymaclinton during their six-month emigration from Ireland. The 'colleens' stayed in four-roomed cottages that each contained a kitchen, a sitting-room and two bedrooms.

Moreover, clergy of all denominations, doctors and nurses were provided. Importantly, all travelling expenses as well as board, lodgings and clothes were given to the selected applicants (a subsidised two shillings in rent was required for the cottages). Overall, the Browns presented village life as a wonderful opportunity to live and work in London temporarily. It does not seem that actors were mainly hired; instead, middle-class women as well as women who worked in rural industries in Ireland were prioritised. Assuredly, 'Girls of good social position [we]re desired and those with distinctively Irish accents w[ere] preferred' (**Figure 3.4**).[79] The image captured the 'colleens' waiting in line for King Edward VII's visit on 14 May 1908, and they were all dressed in traditional Irish costume in eager anticipation of the royal arrival. It was unspoken that all of these women would be white. The continuation of nineteenth-century ideas of authenticity in celebrating Irishness by the reification of Irish tradition, whether through clothes or speech is evident in the women's presentation. The entire village enterprise hinged on convincing visitors that they were experiencing Ireland;

[77] 'Where is Ballymaclinton?', *Waterford Standard*. Also printed in the *Tyrone Constitution* on 15 May 1908 and *Tyrone Courier* on 14 May 1908.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

authenticity was marked physically by the material buildings and also through the corporeal body of the female inhabitants.

In the Franco-British exhibition, Ballymaclinton was entered through a castellated gateway with a sixteenth-century portcullis (**Figure 3.5**). The gateway featured Christian crosses carved into the stone and a famed Irish round tower was visible in the background. The image sought to depict as much of the village as possible; there were men working in the village farm on the left of the scene and women worked in the cottages to the far right of the image. All of this industry existed for the guests captured in the foreground, who were generally admiring the exhibits. There were visitors walking in both directions, suggesting a constant flow of British and international visitors keen to witness an Ireland on display. Overall, a neat picture of village life was evoked with picturesque cottages enveloped in a generalised rurality with bright colours and an appealing atmosphere.

The cottages the 'colleens' stayed in were built in the style of a 'typical peasant's home of the olden times'.[80] The accommodation was also a replica of the cottages erected by the Brown brothers in their home county of Donaghmore in the 1900s for their soap factory workers. The homes therefore existed within a dual realism – both of a past history and present industry – visitors could observe the 'colleens' as they would be in the Browns' factory, making and packaging soap. The desire for an authentic commercialised Irishness extended to all the buildings displayed in the Irish Village. For instance, the Donegal fisherman's cottage '[wa]s built with boulders taken from the beach of Donegal' and the

[80] 'The Irish Village: A Typical Irish Cottage', *Irish Independent*, 11 April 1908.

'windows and doors [we]re taken from the local cottage which served as a model for th[e] structure'.[81]

The landscape of the village cultivated an idealised vision of rural Ireland. Once visitors entered the grounds of the village, they saw the 'inevitable pig' and all the smells and sounds associated with a farmyard. From here, visitors could wander over to the factory to see men and women making McClinton's soap and, crucially, buy soap. Further on visitors could admire 'the weaving of damask linens, for which the North of Ireland [was] famed', and a number of girls were 'engaged in the making of Irish lace and embroidery'.[82] The voyeuristic display of women present in the 1893 Chicago Fair was again deployed to complement the surroundings and passing along the 'Main Street' visitors could enjoy the traditional round tower and a representation of one of the old ruined abbeys, built in a 'Hiberno-Romanesque' style. The women formed part of the landscape and vice versa.

Dumas's *Illustrated Review* boasted that in Ballymaclinton 'you are with quiet and peace'; 'Here you are free of the hurdy-gurdy air […] of the Outside City'.[83] Dumas identified cleanliness as the prime attraction of the village, describing it as: 'spick and span at every turn and twist, wide and white and clean'.[84] The fact that a rural village was unlikely to be as clean was ignored; instead the constructed fantasy of Ireland was celebrated. The focus on cleanliness proved that the Irish were indeed becoming politically white (and civilised), like

[81] *London Evening News*, 27 April 1908. The *Tyrone Constitution* reported that the fisherman's cottage was home to a 'typical West Coast fisher family' in 'Ballymaclinton. The Model Irish Village (Visit by a Paris Correspondent)', 31 July 1908.
[82] 'Irish Village', *Irish Independent*.
[83] F. G. Dumas, *The Franco-British Exhibition: Illustrated Review* (London, 1908), p. 287. Shelf mark: J/7957.h.15. British Library.
[84] Ibid.

their British compatriots. A true Irishness may not have been replicated but an ideal, imagined, utopian one was certainly simulated.

The delights of the village continued with the Blarney Stone, designed to appeal to American visitors, which reveals a continuation of popular Irish attractions from the nineteenth century. Ireland's history was constructed with a representation of an ancient Irish holy well and a facsimile of a high cross, evoking symbols of an ancient Christianity, and a replica of the Donaghmore cross.[85] High Crosses, almost twenty feet high, were characterised by a ring encircling the intersection of the shafts and arms. As historiography on Irish tourism has argued, the tropes of a traditional Irishness had become a profitable method to stimulate travel and interest in Ireland by the early twentieth-century through its emphasis on the nation's Gaelic heritage and the Gaelic language.[86] Spurgeon Thompson, amongst others, has convincingly demonstrated how clichés of Irish life gained currency in tourism discourse with the sale of Irish history, hospitality, and entertainment.[87] The Browns effectively capitalised on popular Irish images to encourage the consumption of their soap and investment in their country. Overall, a quaint Irish experience was displayed that featured inflections of an Irish modernity through the sophisticated soap factory, yet also contained within a stereotypical Irishness rooted in the past with the 'colleens' dress and their cottages.

Ireland's proposed steady march towards white Western European progress functioned through Ballymaclinton's tuberculosis exhibit. It contrasted a clean and an unclean room.

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[85] 'Irish Village', *Irish Independent*.
[86] E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Dublin, 2009), p. xxxii. This will be discussed in the next chapter.
[87] S. W. Thompson, *The Postcolonial Tourist: Irish Tourism and Decolonization since 1850* (Paris, 2000), p. 11-12.

Given that cleanliness was synonymous with racialised narratives of civilisation in this period, the exhibit showed the country performatively ridding itself of disease to prove its political whiteness. Ireland was moving from disease to cure in the same way it was progressing from dirt and backwardness to progress and effective white society. The *Mid-Ulster Mail* explained that the first contrast bedroom contained thick, dirty carpets, thick, dusty curtains, 'with dusty nick-nacks and stuffed blinds and dingy wallpaper'.[88] The second room had a floor of polished wood and 'all the dust-gathered objects w[ere] banished' (**Figure 3.6**).[89] The contrast was stark and the left half of the image revealed an appealing and clean environment, compared with the dank, depressing room on the opposite side. Lighting exacerbated the difference in both scenarios of the photograph with the dirty side almost black in its representation. A clear visualisation of the medical and civilisational harm caused by uncleanliness and the easy way out through cleanliness was forcefully conveyed.

Copies of literature on avoiding tuberculosis were distributed throughout the exhibit and the furniture was supplied by the Kilkenny Woodworkers, available to purchase for £5 5s 0d.[90] The 'well-organised and aggressive campaign' against tuberculosis in Ballymaclinton also included lectures in the village hall that discussed ventilation practices, cleanliness, and food and milk supply.[91]

The *Irish Independent* described Ballymaclinton as an example of 'Ireland's villages as they ought to be – not what, unfortunately, in many cases they are, crumbling to decay and

[88] "'Ballymaclinton'" in London', *Mid-Ulster Mail*, 16 May 1908.
[89] Ibid.
[90] *Tyrone Courier*, 23 July 1908.
[91] *Good Health*, p. 229, p. 235-236.

depopulated by emigration'.[92] The lively nature of Irish rural life was epitomised in the 'typical Ulster farm, rich in live-stock, and with the characteristic big stock of peat'.[93] Visitors experienced 'the smiles and greeting of Irish [men and colleens] who [were] engaged in many occupations, including the tending of cows [and] poultry…'.[94] The Irish 'bhoys' could also be seen in the Village Forge 'busy at work making Lucky Horse Shoes', available for purchase for six pence each.[95] The typology of the village relied on the commercialisation of tradition with the restaurant nearby selling soda bread 'baked by Irish girls on Irish griddles, heated by Irish peat'.[96]

A bustling rural Irish village became home to the 'colleens' and 'bhoys' for six months at a time. Great efforts were taken to make sure that 'everything and everybody in the village' was Irish.[97] The fact that the profits from the village were donated to the anti-consumption campaign turned the village from being exclusively a source of entertainment to a joint act of philanthropy. The spectacle of the fairground did not end with the turnstiles, for the 'colleens' even 'when off duty on Sunday' wore their 'red or blue cloaks, bearing a shamrock badge' and so their 'comely looks' transcended the landscape of the Franco-British exhibition, and percolated within the city of London to have tangible effects on profits from 'colleen' soap.[98] The Brown brothers' triptych of motivations – to encourage the purchase of

[92] 'Irish Village', *Irish Independent*.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] *Tyrone Courier*, 26 August 1909.
[96] 'The Irish Village', *Irish Independent*. See, J. C. Simpson, 'At Ballymaclinton', *Tyrone Courier*, 26 August 1909 reported that the 'waitresses [wore …] green linen uniforms with pretty white muslin aprons and looked the picture of comfort amidst the good cheer'.
[97] *Daily Chronicle*, 18 April 1908.
[98] 'Irish Village', *Irish Independent*.

their soap, to combat tuberculosis and to support rural industries – together birthed an attractive Irish village for visitors.

There was an official Post Office in the British Industries Palace where visitors could buy stamps and send postcards, letters, parcels, and make telephone calls, which included special handstamps for the 1908 Franco-British exhibition.[99] There was also a Post Office in the Irish Village, which received two handstamps in use from 10 July to 31 October. Valentine and Sons Ltd of Dundee, London and New York printed the official postcards. 3,800,000 picture postcards were dispatched as well as an average of 200 telegrams each day from the Ballymaclinton Post Office.[100] Robert Brown keenly promoted the village Post Office and advertised it as a way to enjoy 'real Ireland': 'can see what [Ballymaclinton] looks like by sending [one shilling] for fourteen picture postcards, reproduced from actual photographs'.[101] This reinforced the development of Declan Kiberd's concept of an 'Irish consciousness' discussed in the previous chapter through sustained efforts to sell Ireland within distinctive, affable imagery of the country.[102]

The postcard entitled 'Post Office, Ballymaclinton' (**Figure 3.7**) depicted the post office in the style of a white-washed, thatched cottage. Despite its exterior rurality, its interior revealed a modern communications structure. This was personified by the village's white 'colleens' who were busy reading letters they had received, delivering letters or otherwise

[99] 'The Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign. £10,000 from Ballymaclinton', *Belfast Weekly News*, 22 October 1908. See, D. R. Knight, *The Exhibitions: Great White City, Shepherds Bush, London: 70th Anniversary, 1908-1978* (London, 1978), p. 60.
[100] Ibid. Knight, *The Exhibitions*, p. 60.
[101] *Tyrone Constitution*, 21 August 1908. See, R. Rydell, 'Souvenirs of Imperialism: World's Fairs' Postcards' in C. M. Geary and V. Webb (eds.), *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards* (Washington, D.C., 1998), pp. 147-177.
[102] See, D. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 3.

chatting in groups.[103] This bustling image of rural life and the modern network of sending letters was juxtaposed with the donkey and cart prominently positioned in the centre of the scene. Some 'colleens' were perched on the donkey, others on the cart – revealing that this ancient transportation system was still in use in the village. The bright red and green of the 'colleens'' costumes painted a picturesque atmosphere, along with the ostensible Englishman tending to the horse. His presence revealed the omnipresence of the visitors, who were the much vied for recipients of this village extravaganza through their commercial value.

Moreover, the *Hall and Theatre Review* reported that the profits made by Ballymaclinton were daily loaded onto a 'sack and sl[u]ng across the back of a donkey, in the same way as Irish peasant women t[ook] their produce to market'.[104] We can see how the Brown brothers married tradition and rurality with urban and modernity to capitalise on profit from soap. Images like the one described above were popular and there remains an international circulation of the Village's paraphernalia with postcards still widely available on eBay today.[105]

There are some interesting letters in existence written between the 'colleens' and their friends and family. Familiar themes crop up in the messages; that of the longing felt by a partner left behind in Ireland, joy and excitement at being in London and praise of the entire exhibition enterprise. For instance, a 'colleen' named Molly O'Reilly wrote home that 'Mr

[103] See, S. Rains, 'The Ideal Home (Rule) Exhibition: Ballymaclinton and the 1908 Franco British Exhibition', *Field Day Review*, 7 (2011), pp. 4-21, p. 9 for a discussion of a similar postcard.
[104] *Hall and Theatre Review*, 24 July 1908.
[105] https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/POSTCARD-EXHIBITIONS-1908-Ballymaclinton-Main-Entrance-/232494931479 (Accessed: 24 August 2018).

Brown is a true Irishman' in a letter that was later published in a newspaper.[106] She goes on to say that the village was peopled 'with a lot of boys and girls of which any nation might be proud, gathered from every part of Ireland'.[107] Here, we see the importance of an authentic Irishness as marking the true value of the village.

Another popular theme was how much fun all the 'colleens' were having and how they were well-received by the London populace. For example, Rhea I. Carson wrote home that 'we entertain the general public by singing and reciting, and those who are nimble with their feet dance […] the Irish Jig' (**Figure 3.8**).[108] The 'colleens' were engaged in synchronised dancing in pairs and groups. Their homes had perfectly manicured lawns within a gated environment. There were spectators on the outside of the Irish Village admiring the Australian Pavilion opposite. Some of the 'colleens' were stood to the side, perhaps waiting for an opportunity to dance. A congenial atmosphere of fun and frivolity in the exhibition was conveyed in the image. There were also games such as one which involved catching fish and '[Visitors] w[o]n a prize if they ca[ught] three fish in succession'.[109] However, the 'colleens' and the 'bhoys' enjoyment did not end with the exhibition's opening hours. Sheila M'Davis wrote of how sometimes 'all the colleens and the bhoys [we]re taken out at night by Mr. Brown to see the shows in the exhibition'.[110]

[106] 'Impressions of Four Ladies', *Tyrone Courier*, 26 August 1909.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.

Furthermore, the 'colleens' attended concerts at the village hall and visited the theatre and local London shops during their days off.[111] The whole village enterprise was presented as an immersive, enjoyable almost holiday-like experience. However, some of the letters I have analysed above were printed in newspapers in an attempt to advertise the village and boost visitor numbers. We must question the reliability of these sources, as only the most positive appraisals would have been selected by the Brown brothers to circulate in the popular press. Despite this, the letters are undoubtedly useful at revealing the support of the press in bolstering the village and the great satisfaction of many of the village's workers. The village was a white Irish unionist utopia and affirmed the affinity (read *whiteness*) of Irishmen and women in Britain's imperial matrix.

In a column printed in the *Tyrone Courier*, Mrs. Bull of John Bull fame wrote a piece on Ballymaclinton that revealed fears of vulnerable female sexuality in the perceived sinful metropolis. She noted that the 'genuine peasant girls' of the Irish Village were 'mostly young and pretty'.[112] Barbara O'Connor argues that within colonial discourse Irish women were represented as chaste because of their whiteness but sufficiently different to be deemed 'exotic', 'softer' and 'warmer' becoming objects of 'romantic longing and desire'.[113] Bull regarded their youth and beauty as a path to moral corruption, echoing the patriarchal inclinations of the twentieth-century British state. For instance, she remarked positively that every evening ended with a merry dance but assured readers that 'mere outsiders may only look on, lest all the male youth of London town should flock in to waltz with the light-footed

[111] 'Snatches of Irish Songs' reported that 'a large party visit[ed] the Zoological Gardens as guests of a lady member of the society; and [colleens were] taken to Hampstead Heath as the guests of Mr. Amos, one of the officials at the village' in *London Evening Standard*, 10 August 1908.
[112] 'Impressions of Four Ladies', *Tyrone Courier*.
[113] O'Connor, "'Colleens and Comely Maidens'", p. 151, p. 153.

‘colleens’’.[114] Bull stressed that the village and visitor space were clearly demarcated, creating a type of protective barrier around the sought-after ‘colleens’. This piece may have existed to reassure the families and friends of the village’s ‘colleens’, however, its attempt to control the sexuality of the women hints at broader prejudices about the urban space, popular in the twentieth-century. Bull insisted that the priority for these ‘colleens’ was that they return to Ireland ‘as rustic and unsophisticated as if they had never left their native hamlets’.[115]

The narrative of contamination through contact was a popular trope of the early twentieth-century; Stephanie Rains has shown that there were fervent fears of increasing urbanisation and its potential negative impact on immaculate rural life.[116] The perceived degradation of industrialisation imagined a hopeful solution in village life. The village therefore functioned through a working juxtaposition – it celebrated the traditional peasantry both through the village itself and the inhabitants, yet it boasted an Irish modernity with the soap factory, the niche market for luxury rural Irish goods and for the combat of tuberculosis – all within the urban metropolis. The boundaries between the rural and modern were preciously protected within the urban environment – occasionally allowed in with the circulation of visitors but jealously guarded for fear of despoilment. The ‘colleens’ therefore worked within a strict patriarchy delineating the rigours of acceptable behaviours.

[114] ‘Impressions of Four Ladies’, *Tyrone Courier*.
[115] Ibid. For fears about the migration of Irish women, see S. Caslin, *Save the Womanhood! Vice, Urban Immorality and Social Control in Liverpool, c. 1900-1976* (Liverpool, 2018) and L. Earner-Byrne, ‘Gender Roles in Ireland since 1740’ in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 312-326.
[116] S. Rains, ‘Colleens, Cottages and Kraals: The Politics of “Native” Village Exhibitions’, *History Ireland*, 19: 2 (2011), pp. 30-33, p. 32-33. See also, Rains, ‘The Ideal Home (Rule) Exhibition’, p. 19.

However, the agency of the 'colleens' was still paramount – Bull worried that the 'colleens' sometimes danced '[as if] forgetful of any audience'.[117] It was possible therefore for the 'colleens' to flirt with the imposed restrictions on their existence and employment in the village. Rest assured, Bull repeated that the 'girls sleep in dormitories within the guarded precincts of the village'.[118] The excerpt reveals how important the women were to the village enterprise and also how integral their moral behaviour and virtuous conduct became in insulating rural confines within the urbanity of early twentieth-century London. The perceived virtue and innocence of the 'colleens' may have been the prime attraction for visitors in opposition to the freer sexuality of women in the English metropolis and the above extract reveals the instability of these imposed boundaries.

Ballymaclinton also featured in stories of spurned hearts and lost loves. There is an amusing story in the *Tyrone Courier* of a love-struck boyfriend named Barney from County Kerry appealing to his girlfriend Bridget working as a 'colleen' to avoid the 'Saxons in London' during the 1908 exhibition.[119] He appealed: 'I [am] breaking my heart' reading how, 'the boys over in London are gone mad over the girls at the exhibition and are buying them all sorts of presents'.[120] He had heard rumours of one 'colleen' in particular who was gifted 'a new red cloak to go to mass every Sunday'.[121] He implored her to stay faithful whilst recognising the new opportunities in her life. For instance, he hoped she did not go 'to Ameriky when she's done at the Ballysomething place' to 'make soap' and thereby make her

[117] 'Impressions of Four Ladies', *Tyrone Courier*.
[118] Ibid.
[119] 'Agony Aunt', *Tyrone Courier*, 19 November 1908.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

fortune and get married in the United States to a wealthy man.[122] Barney implored Bridget to be happy being a miner's wife and return home to Ireland.

Bridget responded cuttingly and dramatically by declaring a complete disinterest in Barney now she is in 'this big place'.[123] She claimed to have 'forgotten all about County Kerry' and relished in the male attention she received. For instance, she boasted of having sold 'more Soap' than any of the other 'colleens'.[124] Further, that she had had the pleasure of the custom of 'Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Danes, Spaniards, Americans, and one of the Greeks'.[125]

As the story progresses it becomes clear that this exchange between two lovers was a marketing ploy by the Brown and Son Soap Company. For the 'colleen', Bridget, remarkably claimed that as soon as she began to wash her face with the colleen soap 'no more Irish for me, I'm going to be a lady'.[126] She declared to have transformed from using the soap and become 'all English now' and is disinterested both in Barney and in Ireland itself.[127] The complete transformation to civilised whiteness saw Bridget change her name to Marie Theresa Moriarty. This is an interesting deception and reveals how the Browns envisioned the utility of their soap; it had the potential to change one's physical virtues and, importantly, to complete the project of Unionism, as individuals could now become English if they only used the soap, both physically and politically. Embodying a political whiteness was central to the Brown's project of selling soap by selling Irishness – the displayed Ireland for sale was white

[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

and familiar, peaceful and allied with Britain. The fact that these women would return home ensured that their transformation could spread amongst Irish citizens in a fluid interaction of whiteness and Unionism.

The fiction of colleen soap echoes the narratives of soap advertisements discussed by Anne McClintock, which claimed one could become white by using popular British soaps. McClintock contends that Victorian soap advertising typically visualised a metaphor for civilisational growth and the cleansing of the private sphere became synonymous with the ablution of the public sphere, both in the metropolis and the periphery. This regeneration was available to all ethnicities and soap's perceived ability to create whiteness and 'purity' was a stereotyped promotional image in popular commodity culture.[128] The imagined exchange between the two lovers fulfilled the fantastical properties of the Browns' soap and visualised soap's ability to enact miracles and change one's heritage (political and otherwise) to become fully unionised with Britain. Ballymaclinton's success relied on the 'colleens' convincing visitors of the village's realism and selling soap to customers. Concurrently, the soap with its magical virtues dually attracted visitors to the product and the woman. The phantasmagoria of exhibitions involved the transformation of the village workers and their complete commodification into women to be wooed and consumed. Everyone and everything was commodified for the selling of the Brown brothers' soaps.

Some Irish contemporaries objected to Ballymaclinton Village's campaign against tuberculosis. The *Guide and Souvenir of Ballymaclinton* stated that tuberculosis in Ireland

[128] A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge, 1994), especially Chapter Five, pp. 207-231, p. 208-210, p. 212-213; O'Connor, "For a Colleen's Complexion", p. 37.

killed between 10,000 to 12,000 men and women every year, primarily between the ages of 15 and 35.[129] An exhibition official named A. B. Amos wrote the *Guide* and these statistics were printed in most newspapers of the time. However, a journalist in the *Irish News and Belfast Morning News* insisted that Amos's numbers were a 'gross exaggeration, and those who circulate[d] it [we]re no friends to Ireland'.[130] The journalist attacked Amos's reporting integrity and stated that his mistaken numbers were explained by the fact that he was an Englishman and so prejudiced against Ireland. F. W. Crossley, the leader of the Irish Tourist and Shannon Development movements, shared this opinion and resented the focus given to the anti-consumption campaign, as giving people an inaccurate idea of the incidence of tuberculosis in Ireland.[131] However, a contemporary named Sir William Thompson, registrar general for Ireland, corroborated Amos's figures and accounted for 10,000 deaths from tuberculosis in 1912.[132] The volatile debate therefore reflected concerns of reinforcing negative prejudices of Ireland in spite of factual accuracy.

The Brown brothers first and foremost wanted to promote and sell their soap, although they also wanted to improve the health and industry of Ireland through supporting the anti-consumption campaign and by displaying rural industries. Both these latter projects were rectifying negative developments in Ireland, one relating to public health and the other to declining rural investment. The anti-consumption campaign was tangibly linked to the brothers' soap industry. For the brothers, soap created cleanliness (through whitening and

[129] *Guide and Souvenir of Ballymaclinton* (London, 1908). No page numbers available. Shelf mark: H.3986.hh.(21.). British Library. *Good Health* reported that the '[tuberculosis] carrie[d] off some 12,000 of [Ireland's] fairest sons and daughters every year', p. 234.
[130]'Response in "'Ballymaclinton'", *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 23 September 1908.
[131] 'Ballymaclinton', *The Lancet*, 22 August 1908.
[132] Jones, *The History of Tuberculosis in Ireland*, p. 162.

cleaning) and by proxy, good health; the actual properties of soap were highly prized in an era of industrialisation and inadequate public health. The transformative qualities of soap therefore established a link to the robust rural life of the 'colleens' and their use of the product as Rains has shown.[133]

The complaint that the tuberculosis exhibit's prominence and the focus on cleanliness inadvertently affirmed Irish dirtiness is supported by Bronwen Walter's thesis, which argues that the depiction of 'unkempt and slovenly houses' was directly contrasted with the 'cleanliness and order of British homes' that reified the cult of domesticity and maintained industrial capitalism in the twentieth century.[134] In this narrative, Irish men and women, and particularly the women, held responsibility for the spread of tuberculosis, reinforcing ideas of Irish people's inherent dirtiness, and the role of Irish women in alleviating the crisis by consuming soap and acting as a role model.

Most of the village postcards were captioned: 'the Irish colleens use this soap, note their beautiful complexions' – the Browns artfully constructed a fantasy of rural life with the 'colleens' personifying the benefits of soap. *Good Health* reported that the complexion of the Irish women is the 'envy of [many …] fashionable ladies'.[135] These 'colleens' embodied good British citizens engaged in an affirmative political whiteness that respected the Union. Colleen's soaps main selling point was that one could be healthy, clean and beautiful with

[133] Rains, 'The Ideal Home (Rule) Exhibition', p. 19.
[134] B. Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London, 2001), p. 110. See, C. Clear, *Social Change and Everyday Life in Ireland, 1850-1922* (Manchester, 2007), p. 142-145.
[135] *Good Health*, p. 234.

ease (even in the busy, polluted metropolis).[136] However, it may have unintentionally indicated that the 'colleens' *needed* copious washing. Racialised discourses, notes Kavita Philip, relied on a 'functional incoherence – an oscillation between contradictory ideas – that legitimated specific political positions'.[137] At times, and particularly with the tuberculosis campaign, the brothers, whilst attempting to better Ireland, undermined their own project of displaying an Irish modernity allied to the Union for soap sales. Clearly, the complex project was open to misinterpretation and contradiction, which inadvertently became a function of its present subjectivity and later longevity.

Ballymaclinton Village was also criticised from various angles by a number of people. The brothers rejected that the village was a self-serving enterprise by framing their display through an altruistic lens: 'had there been no consumption there would have been no Ballymaclinton'.[138] They prided themselves in their health propaganda which claimed that the village reduced deaths from tuberculosis. Significant criticism related to questions of authenticity. For instance, Crossley argued that the girls were not Irish and denounced the whole Village as a 'fake'.[139] Robert Brown responded that: 'every girl here […] came straight from Ireland'.[140] He boasted that the 'colleens' '[we]re dressed in Irish linen, and linen mesh underwear, with Balbriggan stockings, scarlet Galway cloaks, or blue Kerry ones'.[141] The

[136] For discussions on the history of soap advertising, see J. Sivulka, St*ronger than Dirt: A Cultural History of Advertising Personal Hygiene in America, 1875- 1940* (Amherst, NY, 2001) and A. McClintock, 'Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising' in N. Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (London, 1998), pp. 304-316.
[137] K. Philip, 'Race, Class and the Imperial Politics of Ethnography in India, Ireland and London, 1850-1910', *Irish Studies Review,* 10: 3 (2002), pp. 289-302, p. 298.
[138] 'Ballymaclinton and its Critics', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser,* 15 August 1908. Also printed in the *Tyrone Constitution*, 21 August 1908.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

detail offered here reinforces the patriarchal control the brothers exercised over their workers. The fact that every item of the 'colleens'' garb was prescribed, even down to the type of underwear is suggestive of a voyeuristic gaze common to exhibited colonial women.[142] The brothers' commitment to authenticity enabled a stringent regulation of the 'colleens' along the lines of dispossessed exhibited female bodies in other popular displays of the time.

Whilst the Irish costume was revered by the Browns as a measure of authenticity – it hinted towards a fantasy of Ireland. Irish peasants in the early twentieth century did not wear these red and green clothes, nor were the 'colleens' peasants, but employees working for a wage. Robert Brown veered into distinctly nationalist language to defend the white Irish idyll of his making: '[It is] surely better to have Irish linen than the cheap finery (the cast off clothes of English swells, or the rubbish turned out by Whitechapel sweaters) which is so much worn in Ireland'.[143] The symbolism of the village (both clothes and objects) heighted in significance when physically reproduced on the 'colleens'; they became repositories for a white Unionist politics and a distinct Irish identity within the framework of Britain. A political Irish whiteness was bodily enacted through the display. The use of Celtic revival motifs throughout the exhibit demonstrates a continuation of discourses popular in the Gaelic League founded in the last century and so important to Aberdeen and Hart.[144]

The picturesque exhibit further contradicted the village's claims to authenticity. Visitors cast doubt on any Irish village being 'decorated with flower gardens and kept so trim'

[142] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 144-145, p. 146-147, p. 153. See, A. E. Coombes and A. Brah, 'Introduction: The Conundrum of "Mixing" in A. E. Coombes and A. Brah (eds.), *Hybridity and Its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture* (New York, 2000), pp. 1-17.
[143] 'Ballymaclinton and its Critics', *Freeman's Journal*.
[144] See, McCaffrey, *The Irish Question*, especially p. 112-114.

– raising suspicions about the entire village enterprise.[145] A writer in the *Lancet* described the cleanliness as 'positively depressing'.[146] Contrastingly, some accepted that the village was not an actual portrayal of real Ireland but remained supportive of the project. For instance, the *Northern Whig* printed: 'Where are we to find such wide streets, such neatly thatched roofs, so much clean white-wash on the cottage walls?' but there is 'quite [an] impressive realism'.[147] Steve Garner argues that racialisation involved discursively associating bodies to fixed identities and the static nature of the Irish Village affirmed its features as forming the fabric of Irishness.[148]

Overall, the criticisms of Ballymaclinton mainly argued that it was an unconvincing, inaccurate portrayal of Ireland – despite this being the brothers' prime intention. However, this suggests that the target audience of the village may not have been Irishmen and women themselves but British and international visitors who likely would have been unfamiliar with rural Ireland, and therefore more likely to have been satisfied with the exhibit. Further, it reveals that an imagined realism was key – a fictional portrayal of ideal Ireland was paramount – to present the country as (white) safe, inviting, healthy and clean, ripe for trade and investment. The gritty reality of a rural space could be washed over if only wealthy businessmen were convinced to expend money on Irish products in London, and later in Ireland.

[145] 'Ballymaclinton and its Critics', *Freeman's Journal*.
[146] 'The Irish Village: The Tuberculosis Exhibition: A Comparison between an Irish Labourer's Home and that of his fellow in Rural Norfolk', *The Lancet*, 25 July 1908.
[147] 'The Irish Village in London. An English Appreciation', *Northern Whig*, 22 August 1908.
[148] S. Garner, 'Ireland: From Racism without "Race" to 'Racism without Racists', *Radical History Review*, 104 (2009), pp. 41-56, p. 46.

If, as the *Official Guide for the Franco-British Exhibition* expounded: 'Modern exhibitions [were] the stock-taking of the resources of civilisation; […] present a periodical summing up of the achievements of a progressive age, and mark […] the milestones by which we may judge the advance[s] made in Science, Art, and Industry', – it is curious to consider what the overall impression of the Irish village was with its idiosyncratic jumble of the past, present and future of Irish industries.[149] Nowhere is this more obvious then by comparing the Irish village to the Senegalese colonial village on display in 1908, which neighboured the Ceylon Village.

The Ceylon Village was composed of a 'cluster of gaily coloured houses and huts' with bazaars, a huge Pagoda, and a temple in the rocks. It too, was populated by indigenous inhabitants in the form of 'Cingalee dancers, musicians, jugglers, and beautiful Nautch girls'.[150] Moreover, the Senegalese village contained huts 'constructed in the most simple way', a village school and over a hundred African men, women and children 'living exactly as they d[id]' in their native Africa.[151]

Historian Annie Coombes has argued that colonial villages created a sense of the 'availability' and the 'containability' of those societies depicted, carefully creating conditions of geographical closeness, while maintaining the cultural distinction.[152] Ireland's political whiteness was performed by juxtaposing the village to other displayed peoples. In many of

[149] *Official Guide for the Franco-British Exhibition*, p. 1.
[150] Ibid., p. 47-48.
[151] Ibid., p. 57.
[152] A. E. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', *Oxford Art Journal*, 11: 2 (1988), pp. 57-68, p. 59. See, B. Shephard, *Kitty And The Prince: A Victorian Tragedy* (London, 2003); B. Shephard, 'Showbiz Imperialism: The Case of Peter Lobengula' in J. M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 94-112.

Ballymaclinton's postcards, visitors tended to be observing – standing outside invisible markers of the exhibition space. The village's whiteness was regulated and accessibility was measured and tightly controlled for fear of despoilment, and Figure 3.3 in particular (discussed earlier), reveals an English visitor centrally observing the spectacle within the confines of the village, showing how boundaries could be negotiated.

In official exhibition literature, Ireland functioned as part of a homogeneous white British culture through the 'discourse of orgination'.[153] Coombes argues that while both European and African villages were represented as 'primitive' the closeness of the villages had the reverse impact of furthering the separation between the European 'primitive' and their colonial neighbour.[154] This was highlighted through the village guides, as Coombes demonstrates, since even within perceived backward European states, an enforced dominance operated in comparison to the displayed colonies.[155] Coombes explains that the frequency of terms such as 'healthy', 'beautiful' and 'industrious' compared positively to the remonstrations that the Africans were not only healthy as discussed earlier with the Somali Village but also 'much cleaner than they look[ed]'.[156] Similarly, Coombes concludes that the hierarchy of colonised groups was complete by the lack of history or tradition attached to the Africans compared to the significant discussion on the ancient stories of the white Irish.[157]

[153] A. E. Coombes, 'Ethnography and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities' in S. Hiller (ed.), *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art* (London, 1991), pp. 189-214, p. 207.
[154] Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', p. 65.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.

Irish political whiteness tentatively straddled difference and contradiction as its defining characteristics. Paul Greenhalgh has argued that the display of Irish rural industries and soaps equated Ireland's potential industrial revolution with Africa's.[158] He demonstrates how particular trends in display dominated the presentation of colonies or former colonies as rural and backward while imperial nations emerged as city-like and industrial. Greenhalgh contends that exhibits of industrial technology created and expanded the power as well as the superiority of core countries.[159] The imbalance of power was furthered both visually and textually and Greenhalgh highlights that by depicting Ireland 'as a nation of hand-loom weavers and Gaelic singers' they were subsumed as 'part of the empire'.[160] For the Brown brothers, Ireland's association with the United Kingdom was central to their business expansion, and such a conflation may have been interpreted positively since it consolidated their Irish brand, despite Greenhalgh's reading of the exhibit as reinforcing subordination.

Images of the white 'colleens' on donkeys reinforced Ireland's dual colonial position rooted in the past (**Figure 3.9**). One woman sat atop the donkey and two stood beside her. Again, they were in Irish costume and looking nonchalantly at the camera and the viewers beyond. Barbara O'Connor argues that the symbolic importance of red home spun and home-dyed cloth of the 'colleens'' costumes comes from its associations with 'indigenous authenticity and sexuality'.[161] As discussed in the previous chapter, the transnational currency of the attractive costumed Irish woman united the landscape, to local crafts and peasant self-sufficiency. In the image, the spindle visible in the corner evoked the centrality of rural

[158] P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1990), p 107.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., p. 108.
[161] O'Connor, "'Colleens and Comely Maidens'", p. 155.

industries to the village enterprise. The open windows and the debris surrounding the whitewashed cottage suggested the everyday use of the space by Ballymaclinton's inhabitants. My analysis of the centrality of white Irish women to the Brown's imperial project is underscored by Walter's contention that Irish women occupied 'discursive positions at both the margins and the heart of the British nation', necessary in constructing national identities.[162] Irish women in allegorical representations mediated the extremities of violence and political upheaval often associated with Irish men in the popular British press, to encourage attraction to, and the consumption of, Ireland, in a welcoming space.

There was an obvious similarity between the Irish village to the African villages in 1908 in their presentation of rusticity and rurality but there also existed a pronounced segregation as well, based on their whiteness. Coombes' and Greenhalgh's interpretations offer productive readings on Ireland's display. I contend that an Irish political whiteness united the Browns' project to Britain's imperial enterprise. The Brown's desire to sell soap relied on enacting a whiteness associated with Britain, based on traditional forms of Irishness that were attractive and authentic which commodified the country as a whole. Moreover, whilst the African villages depicted a rural way of life – it became conflated to representing all of Somaliland or Senegal, rooted in a separation from Britain. Whereas, Ireland's rurality emphasised connectedness and affability to Britain. And so the past and present, rurality and modernity, tradition and commerce, worked in unison for Ireland.

One author wrote that the 'most exotic thrill in the [1908 Exhibition] is Ballymaclinton […] The Village Senegalais [*sic*] is not nearly so strange'.[163] The author

[162] Walter, *Whiteness, Place and Irish Women*, p. 81.
[163] J. Douglas, 'Ballymaclinton. Irish Exiles at Shepherd's Bush', *Tyrone Courier*, 28 May 1908.

explained that seeing the true 'Gael' in the form of the 'Irish peasant' was so shocking that visitors did not need to visit the Senegalese village for strangeness. He held that in actuality, the Irish displayed in 1908 were different to the 'grotesque monstrosity, the stage Irishman' and 'utterly unlike the caricature of the music halls' and it was the shock of seeing this rural Irishness as distinct from their urban compatriots that was the 'exotic thrill'.[164] The high esteem with which rural life was held and the power of Irish exhibits to change visitor's minds and challenge their prejudices are highlighted in this piece.

Philip has shown that while the 'ludicrous stage-Irishman, "Paddy", and the simian, savage Celt' were often depicted in the popular press of the early nineteenth century, the latter heightened in significance as political disputes became increasingly polarised throughout the century.[165] Further, Philip argues that British ethnography represented groups such as the Irish as 'racially degraded and inherently backward' due to their position on the margins of the Empire.[166] Established racial stereotypes concerned with Irish duplicity, violence and ignorance created constructs of Irish inferiority by the early twentieth-century. Compared to the 'rational' Protestant work ethic of the English, Mary Hickman has demonstrated that the Irish emerged as blood-thirsty sectarians and uninformed Catholics.[167]

By the mid-twentieth century, Gavin Schaffer and Saima Nasar have argued that Irishness was at times associated with dirt, disease and ignorance, and Irish people were

[164] Ibid.
[165] Philip, 'Race, Class and the Imperial Politics of Ethnography', p. 296. See also, T. Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York, 2002).
[166] Ibid., p. 295.
[167] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, p. 213. See, K. Kumar, 'Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective', *Theory and Society*, 29: 5 (2000), pp. 575-608, p. 604.

characterised as alcoholics and petty criminals, however, such stereotypes often functioned alongside reductive tropes of 'jolly, happy-go-lucky, friendly Irish'.[168] The Browns were part of this larger project and monopolised on the assimilationist narratives offered to the Protestant Irish, however, they also included Catholics within their modernising non-sectarian project. John Philip O'Connor has shown that colleen soap sought to cleanse the Catholic elements of Irish identity most vigorously, to prove that Irish contemporaries were becoming white and part of the United Kingdom under an expansive British citizenship.[169] Linda Colley argues that by the nineteenth century Protestantism was central to English national identity in antithesis to Catholicism, which represented the danger of invasion from outside and local violence from political factions within.[170] Uniquely in the fairground – under the umbrella of a political whiteness – Ireland was appealing, alluring and united across Protestant and Catholic divides.

The author who wrote about the 'exotic thrill' of Ballymaclinton channelled familiar historical prejudices. He at once celebrated Irishness while giving voice to a problematic discourse that sensationalised a rural existence. The author insisted that the peasant was untainted by modernity and '[a] pure Celt', 'a splendid type of the sturdy Irish peasant'.[171] He continued the objectification of rural peasant life by describing the women as 'specimens' – objects to be admired like the ruined cottage or the high cross. He talked positively of the 'shy Irish colleen' with 'short skirts show[ing] their black shoes and shapely ankles'.[172] He

[168] G. Schaffer and S. Nasar, 'The White Essential Subject: Race, Ethnicity, and the Irish in Post-War Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 32: 2 (2018), pp. 209-230, p. 213.
[169] O'Connor, "For a Colleen's Complexion", p. 42. See also, Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 147-150.
[170] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (London, 1992), p. 7 and p. 11-54.
[171] Douglas, 'Ballymaclinton', *Tyrone Courier*.
[172] Ibid.

completed his voyeuristic appraisal: 'girls sit shyly together in groups, making their Carrickmacross lace, and embroidering and knitting with lowered eyes'.[173] This author's infantilising description of Irish rurality revealed the reductive opinions of Ireland that visitors possessed. The author's review contained patronising and harmful stereotypes of the backwards Irish. The contradictions of his position remained uninterrogated, and so contrary portrayals of the Irish were common by the early twentieth-century.

Furthermore, the village worked on many contradictory levels; it stressed rurality and tradition to appeal to Irish history and authenticity. It further displayed industry and mechanisation to stimulate future trade and investment in the country. This was achieved primarily through the consumption of McClinton's Soap. Yet, it packaged trade within stereotypical presentations of a white Ireland, revealing how an accessible, relatable (if prejudiced) vision of Irishness became important. The history of anti-Irish feeling explains conflicting audience responses and a sympathetic reading of the exhibition was entirely dependent on the visitors themselves.

The Browns navigated their display within negative stereotypes of Ireland (related to dirt, disease and femininity) that they themselves traded on, even in their attempt to shift them. By the twentieth century, Walter notes that dirt became equated to Irish homes as the result of general female uncleanliness which ignored the structural conditions of inadequate pay and poor housing quality.[174] Consequently, an ostensible cleanliness was cultivated in the village's paraphernalia. The postcard 'Colleens Dancing' (**See Figure 3.8**) depicted white Irish women dressed in traditional Irish garb, participating joyfully in a dance. Well-

[173] Ibid.
[174] Walter, *Whiteness, Place and Irish Women*, p. 88.

manicured front gardens and white-washed thatched cottages were displayed. The scene of quaint rurality painted the village as an inviting space populated by young women in a clean environment. The 'colleens' existence was meticulously planned and paid for by the Brown brothers to stimulate an axiomatic contrast to stereotypes of Irish uncleanliness.

A contemporary author, Dermond O'Brien celebrated Irish dancing in *Irish Rural Life and Industry*. O'Brien expounded how important 'suitable exercise' such as dancing was to 'Irish workers'. He insisted that 'Irish Traditional Dancing […] brings with it a stimulus to mind and body […] it carries on and augments the feeling of nationality'.[175] The act of dancing was thus a patriotic endeavour (both for Ireland and England) and the Ballymaclinton 'colleens' personified 'love' for 'old traditions' which stimulated a pride 'in […] nationality and in […] country'.[176] Such rhetoric can be seen in the formalisation of Irish dance with the establishment of the Irish Dancing Commission in 1927 to regulate rules of movement and presentation.[177]

O'Brien emphasised the importance of labour – dancing was only engaged in to make one more productive, not as a replacement to industry. Like the 'colleens' who were busily engaged in the cottage industries of the village, they danced as a form of recreation after productivity. Ireland was not a desolate place where there was always dancing but dancing was efficient; one engaged in 'physical [and] mental exercise' for enhanced capabilities and industriousness.[178] Therefore, the village itself and the village's paraphernalia executed a

[175] D. O'Brien, 'Irish Traditional Dancing. In relation to Home Industries and Irish Manufactures', *Irish Rural Life and Industry*, p. 32.
[176] Ibid., p. 33.
[177] O'Connor, "'Colleens and Comely Maidens'", p. 157.
[178] O'Brien, 'Irish Traditional Dancing', *Irish Rural Life and Industry*, p. 34.

portrait of Irish life that amalgamated labour and leisure, past and present, tradition and modernity.

A true Irish utopia was constructed by the Browns – the ultimate aim of their Unionism was for Catholics and Protestants to peacefully co-exist under the joint enterprise of capitalism. Therefore, religious arrangements were made for both Protestant and Catholic worship. Every Sunday during the six months of the exhibition Revered Father Daly conducted a Catholic service in the village hall, attended by around fifty people each time.[179] The *Tyrone Courier* reported that over a hundred Ballymaclinton 'colleens' were Catholic. Further that every Sunday the: 'village was astir with worshippers wending their way to the village hall' and 'differences of creed were forgotten at the Sabbath morning meal [...] Protestant and Roman Catholic, stern Orangeman and laughing "colleen" were united in appreciation of fruit and nut butter'.[180] A congenial space for diverse religious practice existed and for Protestant worship, 'Gone were crucifix, bell and candles'.[181] The 'colleens'' whiteness and desire for capitalist profit united them. Ballymaclinton offered a hopeful vision of a peaceful Irish identity within the United Kingdom during terse Home Rule politics and the consolidation of extreme Irish nationalism.[182]

The *Mid-Ulster Mail* celebrated that 'every Englishman has a warm place in [their] heart for Ireland and the Irish.[183] The magic of Ballymaclinton 'taken complete from the

[179] 'Mass at Ballymaclinton', *Tyrone Courier,* 2 July 1908.
[180] 'Church services in the Irish Village', *Tyrone Courier,* 27 August 1908.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Fitzpatrick in 'A Curious Middle Place', argues that the largest Irish society in Britain was the Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain with hundreds of branches, formed in October 1919, p. 43.
[183] "'Ballymaclinton'" in London', *Mid-Ulster Mail*.

Emerald isle and dropped within the walls of the Exhibition'– was presented as an apolitical, non-partisan space where factional groups co-existed without tension.[184] The strength of Unionism, supported by the militant Orange Order in Ulster and Britain furthered the radicalisation of Irish politics after 1900.[185] Donald MacPherson has shown how women became 'Orange Sisters' to push a British world founded on the Empire and Protestantism in the early twentieth century.[186] However, there was no violence or strife reported in Ballymaclinton and the brothers went to great efforts to present a peaceful, positive, conciliatory portrait of Ireland. The fiction of a calm Irish politics was not mentioned by visitors, the press, or any other contemporary publication. International exhibitions were exceptional spaces and they were designed to be laudatory and grand, however, it is curious that obvious connections were not made between the often violent Irish political expression in the early twentieth-century and the peculiar absence of Irish politics in the Franco-British exhibition. Clearly, an imagined space was sacred and this became a vision of a potential future Ireland – free from violence, and with white Catholics and Protestants co-producing a profitable Ireland.

The village also contained a replica of the ancestral cottage of former United States President William McKinley (In Office 4 March 1897 – 14 September 1901). McKinley was fatally shot in 1901 while attending the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York.[187] The *Official Guide* wrote that the cottage was of particular interest to Americans with the

[184] *London Evening News*, 27 April 1908.
[185] D. M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850-1920* (Liverpool, 2005), p. 4.
[186] D. MacPherson, *Women and the Orange Order: Female Activism, Diaspora and Empire in the British World, 1850-1940* (Manchester, 2016), p. 3.
[187] Rains, 'The Ideal Home (Rule) Exhibition', p. 9. See, J. M. O'Leary, 'Manufacturing Reality: The Display of the Irish at World's Fairs and Exhibitions 1893 to 1965', PhD, Kent State University (2015), p. 218-242.

'actual doors and windows, stairs, flooring, and rafters, the large iron griddle and crane, the lucky horse shoe […] from the old home at Ballymoney, County Antrim'.[188] The imported materials elevated the building from a model to a complete replica of the birthplace and home of McKinley's grandfather. Robert Brown found the cottage in North Antrim, in use as a cowshed and repurposed it for the village.[189] Within the cottage, occupants such as 'the cheery soul who knits in front of the peat fire, while the teapot simmers on the hob' could be observed.[190] As a 'typical example of an Irish yeoman's dwelling', the village offered American visitors on British soil a transnational history, revealing the international currency of display, and the sensitive consideration of Irish diaspora citizens settled in the United States.[191]

Ballymaclinton Village unintentionally became the site of at least fourteen engagements and ended with a wedding. The story of the wedding was printed in the *Weekly Irish Times* and went as follows: 'Two years ago [in the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908] a Civil Servant […] paid a visit to the Irish Village for tea. He was attended to by a very pretty black-eyed Irish girl, and he fell in love with her so much that he proposed there and then. Last week the happy couple were married [in the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910], and the wedding breakfast was given in the Irish village'.[192] The wedding is corroborated in the *Mid-Ulster Mail*: 'After the ceremony a reception was given by the Messrs. Brown in the Irish Village, when over 100 were entertained in the staff dining-room. R[obert] Brown, in proposing the health of the bride and groom said that Ballymaclinton had succeeded in doing

[188] *Official Guide for the Franco-British Exhibition*, p. 53.
[189] "'Ballymaclinton'" in London', *Mid-Ulster Mail*.
[190] *Good Health*, p. 230.
[191] 'Ballymaclinton. A Tour Around', *Tyrone Courier*, 9 July 1908.
[192] 'A Little Romance of the Irish Village', *Weekly Irish Times*, 5 November 1910.

what statesmen and politician had failed to accomplish – namely, the union of Ireland and England – a true union of hearts'.[193] Whilst Barney and Bridget earlier mentioned had broken up because of the village; this mixed-ethnic marriage between an Englishman and an Irish woman was formed in the village – the fiction of the village thereby became the ultimate achievement in Unionist propaganda based on a political whiteness.

The Irish Village (like the 1907 display) was part of larger interests to bolster the Irish economy, particularly trade and profit through tourism. For instance, the *Official Guide* contained many advertisements to visit Ireland via bus, railway, or ship. It advertised tours to see mountain, lake and sea, and recommended hotels with the promise of cheap tourist tickets sold daily. Its prime attractions was the natural environment and outdoor activities such as fishing, boating, cycling, and coaching.[194] Therefore, the village was part of a broader, more comprehensive consolidation of international interest in Ireland.

Attraction to Ireland's inhabitants also stimulated tourism. Robert Brown boasted that a 'prettier, wittier, more modest set [of colleens] never left Ireland, and no firm ever had more willing helpers; the girls are splendid. We think there is not a merrier set of people on the planet'.[195] And it was this merriness that created appeal for the country. Countless newspapers participated in an advertising network to encourage tourism to Ireland; many commented on positive interactions with the 'colleens'. The *Wharfedale & Airedale Observer* typically

[193] 'Good-bye Ballymaclinton', *Mid-Ulster Mail*, 5 November 1910. I was not able to find any marriage records from the time, however, the story's power came from its fiction and also its widespread circulation – for many in Britain, this narrative of a peaceful union was what they wanted to hear devoid of contemporary reality.
[194] *Official Guide for the Franco-British Exhibition*. There are no page numbers because these adverts were placed at the back of the catalogue.
[195] 'Ballymaclinton and its Critics', *Freeman's Journal*.

celebrated the 'winsome and sprightly Irish lasses, garbed in green and red, short-petticoated' and the 'native wit' supposedly the 'prerogative of every colleen'.[196] Historian L. P. Curtis has shown that the growth of tourism coincided with images of Erin and Hibernia depicted on 'every kind of artefact including cards, china, silverware […] harps' by the early twentieth century.[197] In the fairground, the white 'colleens' were integral in creating a 'happier, healthier and more prosperous Ireland' and their primary role was as saleswomen – both selling soap in the present and selling Ireland as a tourist destination in the future.[198]

BALLYMACLINTON'S TOUR OF ENGLAND

Ballymaclinton Village continued its display after 1908 where it received two million visitors. Total attendance to the Franco-British Exhibition was more than 8.4 million visitors. Receipts totalled 1.2 million; it eventually made a profit of almost £40,000.[199] In the planning for the 1909 Imperial International Exhibition, there were proposals for a Scottish Village to replace the Irish Village. However, the Marquis of Breadalbane argued against any type of Scottish village altogether, stating that it 'would be degrading Scots to the level of African savages to show them in their habit as they live'.[200] This echoes Philip Kramer's analysis of colonial villages in international exhibitions, as spectacles that celebrated the conquering achievements of colonising countries to the detriment of the colonised themselves.[201]

[196] 'Ballymaclinton', *Wharfedale & Airedale Observer*.
[197] L. P. Curtis, *Images of Erin in the Age of Parnell* (Dublin, 2000), p. 11.
[198] 'Guess Girls', *Waterford Standard*.
[199] 'Exhibition Attendances', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 56: 5 (1908), p. 733.
[200] 'A Scotch Village', *Dundee Courier*, 10 April 1909.
[201] P. Kramer, 'Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World', *The American Historical Review*, 116: 5 (2011), pp. 1348-1391, p. 1356.

Whilst we can consider Ireland's portrayal in 1908 as cementing Britain's power over the country, this position is uncoupled since the display was organised and funded by two Irish businessmen, not the British or Irish state. Caroline Malloy considers the Irish village's construction at the 'furthest corner of the fairgrounds' in 1908 to reflect 'British imperial domination over Ireland by making it invisible within the Empire'.[202] She contends that Ballymaclinton was difficult to see and hard to reach because it was so far, thus reflecting its metaphorical inferiority.[203] However, Ireland's position in the colonial space of the 1908 exhibition revealed its Unionist politics – illustrating a physical connection within the United Kingdom but working for Ireland's profit, albeit for a select number of its entrepreneurs. The Brown brothers' Unionism needed an alliance with Britain for the expansion of their soap trade and, by affirming their political whiteness, their position in the fairgrounds supported this purpose.

Interestingly, *Lady Pictorial* responded to the Marquis of Breadalbane by imposing a demarcation of visitor interest and experience. *Pictorial* insisted that visitors attended because of an: 'interest in modes of life and pursuits unfamiliar to us [… to] bring into notice industries that are either not known or but little recognised'.[204] The author explained that this was different to the Senegalese and Ceylon villages which were apparently devoid of any industry and designed for popular entertainment, not instruction, like the Irish village. A curious hierarchy of observation emerges here that separated the viewing of villages for learning in opposition to mere ogling. Evidently, the didactic motivations behind the village project supposedly legitimised consumption of it (reflective of the Brown brothers position).

[202] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 125, p. 128.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Cited in 'A Scotch Village', *Dundee Courier*, 10 April 1909.

In the end, both a Scottish village demonstrating 'various Scottish industries […] especially that of homespun tweeds' and Ballymaclinton Village emerged in the 1909 Imperial International exhibition.[205]

In order to heighten demand and interest, the Brown brothers expanded the commercial Irish village in 1909. They included a poultry farm with model incubators hatching out chickens daily, a banshee cottage, 'where [a] ghost […] has taken up its quarters' and a 'typical Irish fun fair'.[206] The fun fair contained a Palace of Illusions, Mystic 'Colleen', Magic and Wishing Wells, Haunted Swing, Hoop-la, Archery Lawn and Rifle Range, Electric Fish Pond, Aunt Sally, Football Kicking.[207] Again, 'colleens' were advertised for, and mainly came from Dublin, Sligo, and Belfast to work in the exhibition. The displayed industries included woollens, friezes, Beleek china, metal work, umbrellas, muslins, toys, brushes, ties, caps, collars, rosary beads, blackthorns, leather work, cigars, cigarettes, pipes; also 'Little Shamrock' silk ties.[208] This larger village enterprise proved to be a 'great draw' and materialised in the Japan-British Exhibition in 1910.[209] It became an 'outstanding feature' and 400,000 people attended the Irish concerts held during the exhibition.[210]

Ballymaclinton received fifteen medals, including the Grand Prize awarded to the Bank Buildings, Belfast, and Fry's Poplin, Dublin, and McClinton's soap won gold prizes for the most popular product.[211] The village continually expanded to maintain public interest but

[205] 'Scotch and Irish', *Belper News*, 30 July 1909.
[206] 'New Irish Village of Ballymaclinton', *Newry Reporter*, 8 June 1911.
[207] *Todmorden Advertiser and Hebden Bridge Newsletter*, 30 July 1909.
[208] 'Ballymaclinton', *Tyrone Constitution*, 20 August 1909.
[209] 'Ballymaclinton at the White City', *Uxbridge and W. Drayton Gazette*, 29 May 1909.
[210] 'Good-bye Ballymaclinton', *Mid-Ulster Mail*.
[211] Ibid.

many of the original features of the 1908 display remained, creating a longevity to images of Ireland within international exhibitions. The changes to the village grew the Browns' commercial enterprise and additional entertainment stimulated further profit and popularity. Each iteration of the exhibition moved the function of the exhibit away from an exclusive display of soap to an entertaining spectacle complete with thrill rides. Evidently, the Brown brothers' entrepreneurial instincts became the overriding motivation behind each of the village's displays.

The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 opened from 14 May to 29 October to celebrate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, signed in 1902. An interesting comparison exists with Japan and Ireland's displays in early twentieth century exhibitions. The exhibition celebrated the relationship between Britain and Japan in the interests of commerce, trade and profit for both nations. The 1910 Exhibition became Japan's introduction to the West – a showcase of all things Japanese for the British, and international market. Like the Franco-British Exhibition, there was a huge organisational drive behind representing the countries wares. Overall, there were 2,200 exhibitors and it took more than two months in 1910 to bring a single cargo from Japan to London: 'over 14,000 miles of water'.[212] The result was 'a 'unique and complete representation […] of what [Japan] has been in the past, what [Japan] is now, and what [Japan] is likely to become in the future'.[213]

Like the owners of Ballymaclinton Village, the organisers of Japan's display were committed to authenticity. Japanese authorities shipped building materials, plants, stones and

[212] *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition 1910, at the Great White City, Shepherd's Bush, London* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 137. Shelf mark: 7954.ff.10. British Library.
[213] Ibid., p. 134.

entire buildings that were dismantled for the voyage and reassembled in Shepherd's Bush. About 200 leading Japanese craftsmen and artists assembled and produced the extensive models of buildings, gardens and village scenes in the 1910 exhibition, there was even 'Japanese carp [in a] fish pond […] Everything ha[d] been brought from Japan'.[214] Whilst Ireland keenly displayed its native culture and distinctive Irish identity within the British Empire, Japan eagerly asserted that its Empire was equal in status to that of Britain and so Japan exhibited its colonies with the Ainu and Formosan villages.

To visualise imperial domination and industrial civilisation, Japanese rural life was compared with the modern Japanese industry and architecture in the exhibition grounds. Traditional rural life in Japan emerged in the Uji Village, which contained thatched houses and 'rural workers of Nippon […] busy in the fields'.[215] The villagers demonstrated the 'cultivation of tea and rice' and the women were clothed in 'native dress with bright handkerchiefs on their heads, some washing clothes and others gossiping at dainty little tea-houses'.[216]

In the first of the colonial villages the Formosan were exhibited in their 'peculiar native-built houses, and [were] seen at their occupations and sports'.[217] Official exhibition literature stressed that they were a 'warlike people' and they performed war dances and mimic battles.[218] In the second colonial village, (**Figure 3.10**) the Ainu were seen 'at home in native

[214] P. Philips, 'Treasures of 1,000 years: Wonderful Scenes of Japan in London: First Day at the Bushido', *Daily Express*, 16 May 1910. Cited in H. Mutsu (ed.), *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910* (Tokyo, 2001), p. 67-68.
[215] *Official Guide for Japan-British Exhibition, Shepherd's Bush, London, 1910* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 87. Shelf mark: 7960.a.69. British Library.
[216] Ibid., p. 88.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.

huts', engaged in 'wood-carving, embroidering, and household work' within a traditional landscape containing a pond and water features.[219] The numerous trees and foliage visible created a composite vision of Japanese village life. As became typical in these images, men and women were strolling through the space in an admiring and interested manner. The straw roofs on show created height and texture in the scene. The *Official Guide* described the inhabitants in the following terms: 'men ha[d] long flowing hair and full beards, and the women [we]re tattooed about the mouth and arms'.[220] The organisers hoped that such displays of Japan's conquering prowess would 'justify the Eastern Empire's claim to respect as a colonising power'.[221]

The Japanese villages in the 1910 Exhibition received mixed reviews; many Japanese migrants in Britain criticised the exhibits. For instance, a correspondent of the *Mainichi Dempo* newspaper complained: 'the Japanese Village is a mere sketch of life of the lowest class of peasants in the northeast of Japan and is a sight which must fill [the] Japanese with nothing but displeasure and shame'.[222] Historian Ayoka Hotta-Lister interprets these negative appraisals as reflecting the desire of Japanese migrants in Britain to see their home country as a modern place that resembled the 'type of urban environments characteristic of London or Paris, rather than what they perceived as a low and vulgar version of Japanese street life'.[223] Many of the Japanese living in Britain wanted increased professionalisation and modernisation for their country and so objected to the displayed rurality. This contrasts with

[219] Ibid., p. 89.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid., p. 48.
[222] Cited in A. Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East* (Routledge, 2013), p. 133.
[223] Ibid., p. 142.

the Irish who held representation of their past rural history as pleasurable, nostalgic and conducive to reviving cottage industries and tourism to the country.

The polarised opinions are understood by the fact that whilst Japan sought to prove its dominant, imperial status – Ireland possessed a general reputation as being underdeveloped with an in-between national status in the early twentieth century. Ireland was less trying to justify an existence on the global stage and more advertising the country's wares. Ireland's portrayal of rurality was more likely to have stimulated tourism and investment as it was already part of the globalised United Kingdom, whereas, Japan's may have hindered its future capitalist interests through a partial portrayal of its perceived past backwardness.

Moreover, the narrative of exile did not exist for Japanese migrants, as there was in the Irish case, which saw Irish display become a chance to reconnect with a lost homeland. Furthermore, Ireland's display was organised by its entrepreneurs whereas the Japanese exhibition was orchestrated by the government. These Japanese visitors might have been expressing a disapproval of the state – exploiting its aboriginal population for its imperial expansion instead of focusing on mechanised and technological industries. An interesting duality of display and reception is evident in exhibitions of the Irish and the Japanese that was entirely dependent on national context.

We can productively compare the treatment of women in both the Japanese and Irish displays. *The Guide to the Japan-British Exhibition* (1910) included many discussions on women; it notably deliberated over the ideal traits of femininity – obsequiousness being highly praised. These patriarchal opinions were visualised in the popular paintings in the Fine

Art section of the 1910 exhibition. For instance, Japanese woman were indiscriminately titled 'Beauty' and characteristically engaged in a non-activity, whether standing, gazing or lounging (**Figure 3.11**). 'A Beauty in her Bed' by Hosoda Eishi depicts a Japanese woman in a long flowing nightgown standing in front of a mirror with her hair styled and a fan in her mouth. The scene is set in the privacy of her bedroom and heightens the sense of domesticity. Sometimes the 'beauties' drawn were more active and they were seen playing or chatting. These women were portrayed for the male gaze – beautifully illustrated in splendid costume with serene expressions. Images of traditional Japanese female life circulated in the paintings with women calmly engaged in embroidery, playing board games and drinking tea.[224]

These visual tropes are reminiscent of the portrayal of women in Ballymaclinton. In the postcard, 'A Ballymaclinton Colleen' (**Figure 3.12**), a woman is dressed in traditional Irish clothing of red and green. The 'colleen' has her hand on the door handle – as if she was stopped midway through entering her cottage. Like the paintings of Japanese women, there is an aura of sexual awareness – here, the 'colleen' may be offering the viewer a look into the intimate space of her home. Scenes of domestic life are visible through the fishermen's net hung outside the cottage and baskets artfully placed on the cottage's steps.[225] In many of the paintings in the Japanese Fine Arts section, women were painted in picturesque outfits in the private domestic space. Any observation or painting of them then was intruding on their solitude. Images of women in both the Irish and Japanese exhibitions relied on the mingling of public and private spheres with the predominantly female-only space of the exhibition

[224] *An Illustrated Catalogue of Japanese Old Fine Arts displayed at the Japan-British Exhibition, London 1910* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 33. Shelf mark: K.T.C.27.b.7. British Library.
[225] See, Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 153-154.

grounds. The 'colleen' in the postcard makes direct eye contact with the observer as if inviting the viewer inside.

Overall, 8,350,000 people visited the 1910 Exhibition and £60,000 worth of Japanese exhibits were sold. Whilst the exhibition may have been 'representative of Japan in all the phases of national life', trade figures did not show any overall improvement in Japanese exports to Britain.[226] Whether it 'strengthen[ed] the bonds of fellowship' between 'eastern and western empires', is impossible to measure – similar to the Irish display, the advertising of country and culture was considered most important.[227] As in the 1850s, for organisers, an exhibition itself was enough to leave a legacy in the country displayed and those who visited. The British press reporting on the 1910 display was largely positive, whereas, the Japanese press was overwhelmingly negative (aside from state newspapers).[228] Similarly, the Irish Village received contradictory responses from Irishmen and women as well as the British. Comparing the Japanese village with the Irish village highlights parallels between the two countries efforts to create profit and commerce from their displays despite criticism. Indigenous ways of life materialised in the Japanese and Irish Villages despite contemporary complaints that it entrenched negative stereotypes of the respective countries, while both exhibits also used their histories to generate interest and tourism to the country. Evidently, exhibitions interacted with a prism of prejudices, hopes, and politics that were subject to revision and criticism at all times.

[226] *Official Report of the Japan-British Exhibition 1910*, p. 135.
[227] 'The Closing Day', *The Times*, 29 October 1910. Cited in Mutsu, *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition*, p. 176-177.
[228] See for example, 'For the Glory of the Rising Sun: Japanese Labourers at the Exhibition: Patriotic Workers', *Daily Express*, 29 April 1910; 'Conference of the Institute of Journalists. A Japanese Welcome', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 September 1910. Cited in Mutsu, *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition*, p. 47-49, p. 164-165. Also, Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, especially Chapter Five.

CONCLUSION

The Brown brothers cleverly combined practical business ability and philanthropy to sell soap in their commercial extravaganza. As an advertising vehicle, they offered 'a sleepy rurality, a vision free from violence, discord and threat to the English' that appealed to millions of visitors in each six-month exhibition.[229] Whilst it was described as an 'Irish Colony in London' – the romantic but static image of white rural Ireland was profitable.[230] The Village created the most widespread images of Ireland in the first few decades of the twentieth century with its popular circulation of photographs, souvenirs and postcards.[231] The Brown brothers gave visitors 'Ireland in a nutshell. Ireland in an English atmosphere, built upon English soil and in the centre of a London suburb'.[232] Ballymaclinton took a strident stance against Home Rule and visualised the benefits of Unionism for the broader Irish and British populace. It cultivated a white Irishness that amalgamated an Irish past – rooted in history and tradition, and an Irish present and future – stemmed in industry and investment. The coupling of these two narratives often became unstuck and revealed the internal contradictions of the village project.

Ballymaclinton traded on stereotypes of Ireland to create an accessible vision for consumption and, to a certain extent, it succeeded with its popular display. The village displayed reductive narratives of becoming civilised (and white) in the early twentieth-century with its focus on cleanliness and soap. This inadvertently suggested an inherent dirtiness, epitomised by their anti-tuberculosis campaign. The Village was a commercial

[229] P. Greenhalgh, 'Art, Politics and Society at the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908', *Art History*, 8: 4 (1985), pp. 434-452, p. 440.
[230] *Tyrone Courier*, 26 August 1909.
[231] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 158; O'Leary, 'Manufacturing Reality', p. 241.
[232] 'A Visit to Ballymaclinton by a London Irishman', *Tyrone Courier*, 3 September 1908.

project devoid of the Irish state, and so the brothers did not need to offer any 'accurate' representation of Ireland as they worked within the unregulated forum of advertising. That Ballymaclinton did not mention the factionalism of Irish politics reinforces the exceptional nature of the fairground and its raison d'être to feature an aspirational politics and a utopian dream. A lived reality of Irishness was insignificant. The village relied on white women to sell soap but they were also exhibited as features of attraction. They could exist as examples of quaint, rustic, picturesque Irishness and as objects of sexual desire, all the while affirming a political whiteness.

Comparing Ballymaclinton to the other villages it was exhibited alongside, such as the Somali, Senegalese and Japanese Villages, reveals how narratives of nation and identity interacted with the broader mechanisms of commerce within international exhibitions. The exhibition project relied on middle-class investors and businessmen, as well as profits from admission and souvenir sales. The Somali and Senegalese Village in particular allowed Irish organisers to assert a superiority in ways of life and industry by means of comparison. Whereas the Japanese Village highlighted similar concerns and tensions involved in exhibiting one's country within an imperial platform without reaffirming racialised prejudices related to global status. Comparison further highlights the conflicting moments in asserting an Irish political whiteness; in the case of the Somali Village a whiteness was used to assert Irish supremacy, however, an Irish whiteness was at times denied, in instances of visitor responses who inferred parallels with the Senegalese Village on display and held dirt as central to Irish existence. Ballymaclinton proves that an Irish whiteness emerged in terms of colonial status, ethnic difference, or industrial capabilities and was not neatly assigned to differences in skin colour.

The satirical magazine *Punch* commented on the commitment to profit by the organisers of the Exhibition. It wrote 'We trust that there is no truth in the rumour that Imre Kiralfy is seriously indisposed in consequence of the discovery that persons living in the neighbourhood of the Exhibition can see his fireworks without paying for the privilege. The suggestion that householders shall be forced to keep their blinds drawn during the display is clearly impracticable'.[233] Kiralfy was the architect of the 1908 Exhibition and Alexander Geppert describes him as the 'British Empire's public relations agent, glorifying imperialism'.[234] The satire above reveals how capitalism and Empire productively intersected to sustain an exhibition enterprise that sold all that was within it.

The Brown brothers expended significant energy in creating a contended white Ireland despite the tensions of Home Rule, and they did indeed (*again*) offer 'Céad Míle Fáilte' (a hundred thousand welcomes) – all in a bid to sell soap.[235] The development of Irish commerce is extended in the next chapter which reveals how exhibitions became enmeshed in the project of Irish nation building by state actors, all of whom were Irish.

[233] *Punch*, 22 July 1908, p. 55.
[234] A. C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-De-Siècle Europe* (New York, 2010), p. 104.
[235] Simpson, 'At Ballymaclinton', *Tyrone Courier*.

Figure 3.1. ‘View of Central Building. Irish International Exhibition’, *Official Catalogue for the Irish International Exhibition, Dublin 1907* (Dublin, 1907), p. 1. Shelf mark: 10390.df.21. British Library.

Figure 3.2. ‘The Somali Village, Irish International Exhibition Dublin 1907’. Postcard. Cited in Donal, ‘The Somali Village’, *Dublin Life and Culture* (2013), https://comeheretome.com/2013/02/17/the-somali-village-1907/ (Accessed: 24 August 2018).

Figure 3.3. ‘The Irish Village at the Franco-British Exhibition’, *Good Health: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine devoted to Hygiene and the Principles of Healthful Living*, 6: 8 (1908), p. 228. Shelf mark: P.P.2706.aka. British Library.

Figure 3.4. ‘Colleens Awaiting the King’, *Good Health*, p. 232.

Figure 3.5. 'Main Entrance, Ballymaclinton'. Postcard. Author's collection.

Figure 3.6. 'Tuberculosis Exhibit at the Franco-British Exhibition with "healthy" and "unhealthy" rooms', *Good Health,* p. 238.

Figure 3.7. 'Post Office, Ballymaclinton (McClinton's town, erected by the makers of McClinton's Soap', http://www.postcardsireland.com/postcard/post-office-ballymaclinton-mclintons-town-erected-makers-mclintons-soap (Accessed: 24 August 2018).

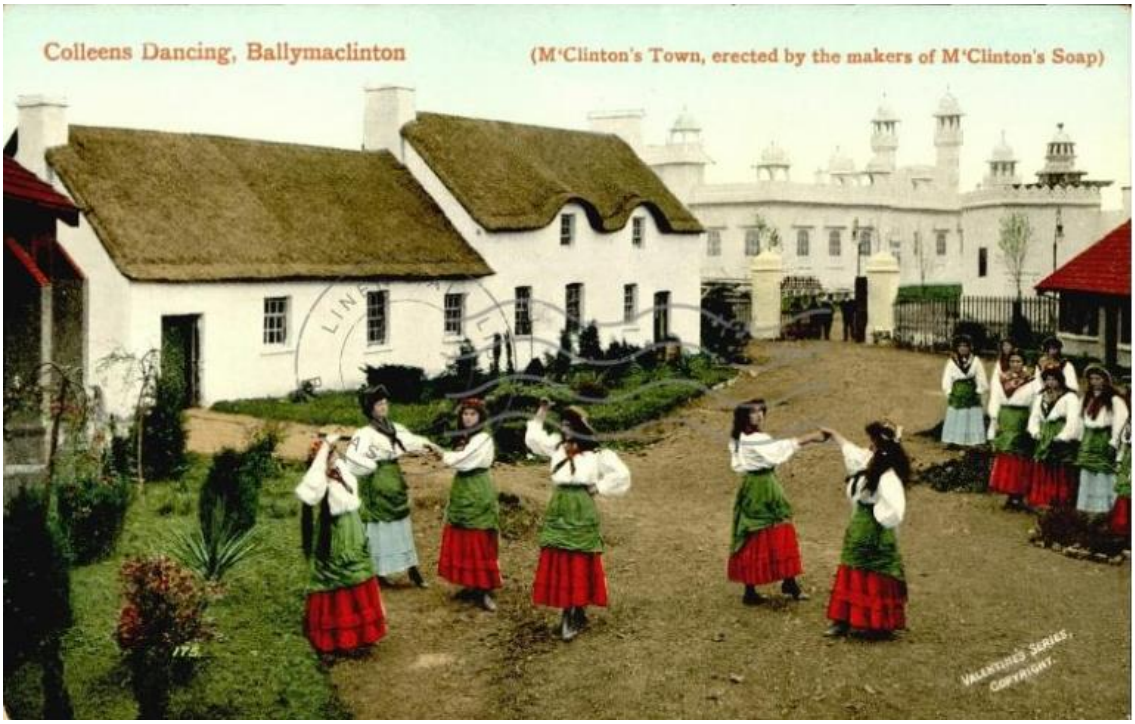

Figure 3.8. 'Colleen Dancing at Ballymaclinton', http://www.postcardsireland.com/postcard/colleens-dancing-ballymaclinton-mclintons-town-erected-makers-mclintons-soap (Accessed: 24 August 2018).

Figure 3.9. ‘Colleens Riding Donkeys at Ballymaclinton’, *Good Health*, p. 230.

Figure 3.10. ‘Ainu Homes’, *Official Report of the Japan British Exhibition 1910, at the Great White City, Shepherd's Bush, London* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 129. Shelf mark: 7954.ff.10. British Library.

Figure 3.11. H. Eishi, 'A Beauty in her Bed', *An Illustrated Catalogue of Japanese Old Fine Arts Displayed at the Japan-British Exhibition, London 1910* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 137. Shelf mark: K.T.C.27.b.7. British Library and Figure 3.12. 'A Ballymaclinton Colleen', https://www.postcardsireland.com/postcard/ballymaclinton-colleen (Accessed: 24 August 2018).

CHAPTER FOUR:
'ALL THE NATIONS FLYING THE UNION JACK WILL TAKE PART…':[1] INTERWAR EXHIBITIONS OF THE IRISH

The malleability of Irish selfhood took on a greater significance in interwar Irish Exhibitions as it encompassed diverse national identities. Existing literature on interwar Ireland has mainly focused on state politics examining the Irish War of Independence (1919-21) and the Irish Civil War (1922-23).[2] However, during the political upheaval of the time Ireland continually reimagined its position within the British Empire both socially and culturally. Exhibitions thus became a notable way for the island to evoke its distinct relationships to imperial Britain to a global audience. Specific tensions arose over the exact style and content of the two countries' representations in the interwar British Empire Exhibitions. Various imaginings of an Irish nation competed for power and prestige. Both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland envisioned social, economic and cultural harmony despite their geographic separation. However, each territory championed their specific political and religious differences for national and international visitors. The Free State imagined the unification of the county, whereas, Northern Ireland enmeshed itself in the United Kingdom. Whilst broader symbols of Irishness circulated in both country's exhibits, distinctions were made across a host of sectarian ideologies. How these discrete visions of Irishness were constructed and contested in interwar displays is the subject of this chapter.

The 1924 British Empire Exhibition (re-opened in 1925) featured an Ulster Pavilion, representing the new state of Northern Ireland only, as the Irish Free State did not participate,

[1] *British Empire Exhibition, 1924: Wembley, London, April to October* (London, 1924). No page number available as it was printed on the back of the pamphlet. Shelf mark: X.410/2758. British Library.
[2] See for instance, M. Farrell, *Party Politics in a New Democracy: The Irish Free State, 1922-37* (Dublin, 2017), especially Chapter Three, pp. 53-99; G. Keown, *First of the Small Nations: The Beginnings of Irish Foreign Policy in the Interwar Years, 1919-1932* (Oxford, 2016).

and its exhibits affirmed the nation's union with the United Kingdom. The Irish Free State notably organised a Catholic Eucharistic Congress in 1932 – although an outlier to the national and international exhibitions considered so far it reveals how Irish nation building spanned across multiple public spectacles and displays. Later, both Irish blocs participated in the 1938 British Empire Exhibition; the Irish Free State had an individual pavilion and emphasised its separation from the British imperial project under de Valera's independent polices. Whereas Northern Ireland continued its Unionist politics and exhibited in the British section in 1938. The division of Ireland on display continued to the last international exhibition in the New York World's Fair of 1939 and I will end by assessing the success of these diverse exhibits in furthering Irish state formation across the partitioned countries.

The above exhibitions highlight that participation was politically charged and ideologically motivated – Irish and British newspapers avidly reported on whether or not Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State would exhibit in British Empire Exhibitions and in what form. International exhibitions worked together with the growing Irish tourist industry, which capitalised on accessible images of Ireland, to encourage visits to a six-month exhibit or the country for a holiday. Mo Moulton argues that Irishness in interwar England mainly emerged through 'memory, nostalgia, and entertainment rather than political struggle' to redress the importance of culture and its connection to Irish-British high politics.[3] Building on this, displays of Irish identity reveal how an Irish culture circulated in exhibitions was reinforced in the tourist enterprise – both these projects created the most popularly consumed symbols of Irishness within the United Kingdom and Ireland in the interwar period.

[3] M. Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 174.

The changing status of Ireland was powerfully evoked in international exhibitions according to local and national identity politics. Exhibits reflected both the popularisation of Irish culture for mass audiences and an Irish politics made accessible to visitors. Overall, I will reveal the variety and scope of the divisive identities of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland in fairs. Using exhibitions to map Irishness dynamically reinstates the value of the visual as a mediator between government and the Irish people. Exhibitions were the labour of politicised Irishmen and women engaged in imagining themselves through display and the interwar years are key flashpoints in this story.

IRELAND IN THE 1920S

Conflict and contestation overwhelmed interwar Irish politics. The Government of Ireland Act 1920 created Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) and the Irish War of Independence (January 1919 to July 1921) was brought to a close by the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921. The Treaty ended British rule in most of Ireland and led to the creation of the Irish Free State as a self-governing Dominion.[4] The new Free State would have the same constitutional status to Canada; members of the Free State Parliament were required to take an oath of allegiance and a Governor-General was appointed to represent the British Crown.[5] Fearghal McGarry describes the 1920s as a long and violent struggle for political independence with IRA killings in the Dáil and retaliatory death sentences issued by the new nation.[6] The Free State contained a measure of self-government that could evolve towards

[4] G. K. Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government, 1865-1925. From Unionism to Liberal Commonwealth* (Dublin, 2001), p. 9, p. 100-101, p. 174.
[5] D. McMahon, 'Ireland, the Empire, and the Commonwealth' in K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 182-219, p. 208-209.
[6] F. McGarry, 'Southern Ireland, 1922-32: A Free State?' in A. Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 647-669, p. 648.

greater sovereignty; however, it was not the Republic that Irish separatists had fought for since 1916 and its connection with Britain was not voluntary but enforced by fear of reprisal.[7]

Underlying discontent in the interwar period stemmed from several unresolved issues, the main one being the Boundary Commission and its failed attempt to redraw the line separating the Free State from Northern Ireland in the 1920s. The governments of Northern Ireland, the Irish Free State and Britain established the Boundary Commission decreed in Article 12 of the Treaty. The findings of the commission were leaked to the press in 1925 and revealed that Catholic majority counties would not go to southern control and only minor changes would be recommended. This caused a national furore and initiated a series of angry protests.[8] Consequently the Commission lay stagnant for years and in the end the existing borders were preserved.[9] Ireland's borders remained a source of contention for decades after and became a catalyst for intermittent fighting in the interwar period.

Violence was a recurring feature in interwar Ireland. The Northern Protestant Irish were subjected to IRA violence, while violent acts by Unionists targeted Southern Irish Catholics. Such conflict varied in scale from minor skirmishes to more dangerous assaults.[10] Andrew Holmes and Eugenio Biagini have documented that in 1922 sectarian rioting in Belfast left 500 dead and forced a further 23,000, mainly Catholics, from their homes.[11]

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[7] Ibid., p. 649. See also, P. Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question: Ulster Unionism and Irish Nationalism 1912-1916* (Oxford, 1994), p. 153-160.
[8] Ibid., p. 656-657. See, I. Gibbons, *The British Labour Party and the Establishment of the Irish Free State, 1918-1924* (London, 2015), especially Chapter Five, pp. 149-212.
[9] See, J. Anderson and L. O'Dowd, 'Contested Borders: Globalization and Ethno-National Conflict in Ireland', *Regional Studies*, 33: 7 (1999), pp. 681-697.
[10] Moulton, *Irish in Interwar England*, p. 160-162.
[11] A. R. Holmes and E. F. Biagini, 'Protestants' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 88-112, p. 101.

Republican forces continued their military operations including a machine-gun attack on British soldiers in Cobh in 1924 and the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins on 10 July 1927. An assortment of protections materialised to defend vulnerable groups, with differing effects.[12] In the context of this political upheaval, sometimes expressed through outward conflict and at other times manifested in localised hatreds, the two territories engaged in formative processes of identity formation. Whether through their religious practices, national myths, or public celebrations – the creation of an identifiable Irishness was fundamental to the two areas as a source of national unity and ideas of an Irish nation continued to be contested through spectacle.

1924 BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION, LONDON

The 1924 British Empire Exhibition, London (23 April 1924 to 31 October 1924) opened in Wembley Park over 220 acres (**Figure 4.1**).[13] Northern Ireland used the exhibition to expound its allegiance to the United Kingdom after the turbulence of partition. Uniquely, Northern Ireland was no longer displayed next to the colonial villages and instead housed in the Palace of Industry and amalgamated within Britain's displayed modernity. Moreover, the Free State's non-participation in the exhibition reinforced the country's separation from the Unionist project and heightened Northern Ireland's loyalty to the UK. The Palace of Industry and the Palace of Engineering along with the Garden and Empire Stadium occupied the majority of space in Wembley. Multiple train routes made the exhibition accessible for visitors. King George V declared at the exhibition's opening ceremony: 'You see before you a

[12] C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983), especially Chapter Eight, pp. 365-405.
[13] *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to London and the British Empire Exhibition 1924*. 45th edition, revised. Shelf mark: W27/8577. British Library. See, K. Walthew, 'The British Empire Exhibition of 1924', *History Today*, 31: 8 (1981), pp. 34-39.

complete and vivid representation of [Britain's] Empire. The Dominions, India, the Colonies, the Protectorates, and Mandated Territories […] picture of our Commonwealth of Nations […] shows the craftsmanship, the agricultural skill, the trading and transport organisation of [Britain's] territories. [And] a living picture of the history of the Empire [… reveals] that the most powerful agency of civilization has […] peaceful aims [for] the good of mankind'.[14] The speech was considered a technological marvel being broadcast live via radio to millions in the United Kingdom.[15]

The address revealed the desire to re-establish Britain as a benevolent world power following the trauma of World War I; the exhibition epitomised the height of imperial propaganda – an urgent call for visitors to 'unitedly and energetically develop the resources of the British race'.[16] Newspapers, official exhibition literature and visitor reviews declared that the jingoistic enterprise was popularly received by mass audiences. Hyperbolic claims that the 1924 Exhibition was 'the greatest exhibition contrived by human hands in historic time' were common.[17] This stocktaking of the 'wonders […] of the world' cost one shilling six pence for adults and was half-price for children.[18] 'Hope', pride and education enveloped the encyclopaedic portrait of Britain's Empire circulated to seventeen million visitors in 1924.[19]

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[14] *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to London*, p. D, E [*sic*].
[15] The King also sent a telegram that travelled around the world in eighty seconds. See S. Akhtar, 'British Empire Exhibition, 1924' in M. Doyle (ed.), *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopaedia, Vol. 2* (California, 2018), pp. 13-15. Also, *Daily News Souvenir Guide to the British Empire Exhibition: Concise 'Where is it' Index and complete train, tram and bus guide*, p. 7. Shelf mark: YD.2017.a.1616. British Library.
[16] 'British Empire Exhibition', *Nature*, 3 May 1924, p. 648.
[17] Ibid.
[18] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*. Price: One shilling (London, 1924), p. 9. Shelf mark: W66/0147. British Library. See A. C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-De-Siècle Europe* (New York, 2010), p. 177.
[19] *Daily News Souvenir Guide* notes that estimated visitor numbers were hoped to be twenty-five to thirty million, p. 7. See also, *British Empire Exhibition, 1924: Wembley, London, April-October: Handbook of General Information* (London, 1924). Shelf mark: YD.2007.a.9700. British Library.

As on the Midway in the 1890s the 'study of Europe, of America […] Arcadian communities of the Pacific, dreamers of the mystic East' was encouraged.[20] Modern industry and human development existed as perceived comparative lessons in the development of humanity in Wembley. However, I demonstrate that the exhibition's laudatory proclamations are undone through a consideration of the controversies surrounding Ireland's display. I argue that issues of participation underscored greater Irish disputes over the role of empire and the power of the English metropole in the interwar period.

The Irish Free State and exhibition organisers extensively debated the country's involvement in the 1924 Exhibition.[21] William Cavendish, the Duke of Devonshire (Chairman of the Exhibition Executive Committee) wrote several letters to Tim Healy (Governor-General of the Irish Free State) asking Ireland to participate in the display. From as early as December 1922, Cavendish, who was also Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to Healy explaining that acceptance of the invitation: 'would not only produce an excellent impression over here and no doubt also in the other Dominions, but would be of material assistance to the Free State in advertising their economic resources and industries'.[22] The most significant financial contributors to the Fair, apart from the British government, notes Deborah Hughes, were British industrialists and their investors as they scouted opportunities to grow their inter-imperial markets and develop contacts with investors in Africa, Australasia, Asia and the

[20] *British Empire Exhibition*, p. 12. See, D. Hughes, 'Kenya, India and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924', *Race and Class*, 47: 4 (2006), pp. 66-85 and D. R. Knight and A. D. Sabey, *The Lion Roars at Wembley: British Empire Exhibition 60th Anniversary, 1924-1925* (London, 1984).
[21] Much of this is documented in letters, minutes of meetings and memorandums in several files with a single shelf mark in the National Archives of Ireland. *British Empire Exhibition, 1924-1925. Articles of Association. Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings, Balance Sheets, etc*. Shelf mark: BT 61/31/2. National Archives of Ireland. I will only give the title of the sources from now as the archival information is the same. The addresses and titles of the sources will be reproduced exactly (note the inconsistencies in the names applied to individuals).
[22] Letter to Mr Healy from the Duke of Devonshire, 30 December 1922. FM/29.4.24.

Caribbean.[23] Arguments concerned with trade and profit sought to convince Ireland to participate despite the obvious imperial ambitions of the 1924 event.

Cavendish argued that if Ireland agreed to exhibit it would be depicted alongside the other five self-governing Dominions (Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and Newfoundland). Their Pavilions hoped to illustrate: 'the existing position of [each Dominions'] industries, and the opportunities of which advantage might be taken for the expansion of [their] trade and the development of [their] resources'.[24] Cavendish enthusiastically described the enterprise as, 'afford[ing] a valuable impetus to trade and promot[ing] in no small measure the mutual interests of the British Commonwealth of Nations' after each Dominion financed the cost of their pavilion.[25]

However, the Free State refused to take part in the Wembley exhibition and instead protected its newly found independence. Months and then years of political wrangling by the Exhibition Affairs Industry and Commerce Committee to solicit the Free State's participation in the display followed. Cavendish and others argued that there were economic benefits to exhibiting, a degree of national status would be conferred, while insisting that Ireland's absence would harm the unity of Britain's Dominions. Early in 1923, the Free State provisionally agreed to participate in the exhibition and their involvement was initially estimated at 'an expenditure not exceeding £30,000 [by the Dáil]'.[26] However, there was

[23] Hughes, 'British Empire Exhibition', p. 69.
[24] Letter to Mr Healy from the Duke of Devonshire.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Meeting of the Executive Council, 2 February 1923; Letter to Duke of Devonshire from T. M. Healy, 14 February 1923. C.1/41.

significant disagreement over the cost of the country's pavilion and the Free State withdrew their decision citing economic constraints post-conflict.

The Irish Minister of Industry and Commerce, Joseph McGrath, wrote in March 1923 that 'difficulties arising from the present condition of the country in organising an adequate display of its products and industries [render] the participation of [the Free State …] impractical'.[27] Consequently, Sir Travers Clarke (Deputy Chairman of the Exhibition Committee) engaged in protracted negotiation to reduce the cost of the Free State's involvement. He sought to increase the contributions made by the British government and reduce the size of the Free State's pavilion to lower the rent. Letters repeatedly informed that 'all the countries, dominions and colonies of the British Commonwealth of Nations, except the Irish Free State, Gambia and North Borneo' were exhibiting and so the absence of the Free State would be a disaster.[28]

In January 1924, the Irish Free State was offered the Civic Hall for their pavilion: 'very fine […] with a floor space of approximately 10,000 square feet' at the head of the Western Avenue.[29] Clarke held that the Civic Hall would also feature the resources of Scotland and Wales and offer 'specially [*sic*] intensive propaganda' at a lower cost.[30] High Commissioner in London, James McNeill, carried out the arrangements for the Free State's Pavilion. McNeil argued that 'even if the net cost to the state rose to £5,000 [at most] the

[27] Letter to Duke of Devonshire – Secretary of State for the Colonies, 31 March 1923. C.1/41.
[28] Letter to the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Dublin, 7 December 1923. C.1/41.
[29] Letter from Travers Clarke to Mr McNeill, 18 January 1924. 1/39/507.
[30] Ibid.

advertisement would be more valuable than newspaper adverts costing the same amount'.[31] McNeill further argued that 'a reputable and valuable exhibit of Irish produce and manufactures' was desired and 'if no effort [wa]s made to use this means of advertisement there w[ould] not only be loss by default but loss by antagonism'.[32] It was hoped that the Civil Hall location would rectify earlier concerns by McGrath that too small a space would 'neutralise' the advantages of an Irish display as 'the importance of Saorstát trade in relation to Great Britain and the Dominions would be unduly depreciated'.[33]

Dáil Éireann repeatedly discussed participation.[34] Concerns over 'loss of advertisement' were paramount as the fledgling Free State could have advertised the country's trade and resources to stimulate much needed commerce and investment, whether through business or tourism.[35] James Hatchell's memorandum on the British Empire Exhibition described it as a 'vast window display' for the Dominions. The memorandum reported that the other dominions were all participating with around 20,000 to 150,000 square feet of space respectively. Australia and Canada had 150,000 square feet each, New Zealand had 40,000 square feet, and Burma 22,000 square feet.[36] Hatchell noted that if the Irish Free State did not want to share with Scotland and Wales: 'there [wa]s a general Agricultural Section which [could] be useful for displaying any articles which could not be housed in the

[31] Letter to the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Dublin from the Office of the High Commissioner (London), 19 January 1924. 1/39/507.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Letter to Secretary, Executive Council, 12 December 1923. C.1/41.
[34] Numerous letters were sent from the Exhibition Commissioners and the Ministry of External Affairs (UK) to the Secretary of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State and the President of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture (Free State). Some were responded to and many were ignored.
[35] See E. Delaney, *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971* (Liverpool, 2000), especially Chapter Two, pp. 36-111.
[36] Memorandum by J. Hatchell on the British Empire Exhibition, April – October 1924. C.2/148.

Irish Free State Pavilion'.[37] By late 1923, the Governor-General of the Irish Free State wrote that there was little enthusiasm in the exhibition by the Free State's various industries and shipping and railway companies. It was concluded that 'since traders and manufacturers [were not taking] interest in the matter [it was] unlikely that any great commercial advantages would result from [the exhibition]'.[38]

Confidential meeting minutes reveal that the British Exhibition Committee was tacitly aware that it was more than just lack of public interest that prevented Irish participation: 'the question appears to the Ministry largely a political one'.[39] The new state's reluctance to ally itself with the British Empire meant that arguments for Irish participation which emphasised that 'abstention seem[ed] to be neither good politics or good business' were ignored.[40] After all the discussion and debate the Free State did not exhibit in 1924 because 'the name of the exhibition d[id] not attract' according to Hatchell.[41] The British government objected to the Free State's abstention but for the smaller country inclusion in Wembley may have suggested an Irish camaraderie or perhaps subjugation to the imperial power in the aftermath of partition and war.

In the decade after 1921, Ireland played a major role in expanding the constitutional independence of the Commonwealth. Deirdre McMahon has shown that Ireland pushed for the Balfour Report of 1926 which stated that Britain and its Dominions of Canada, South Africa, Australia and the Irish Free State were constitutionally equal to one another: as

[37] Ibid.
[38] Letter to Secretary, Executive Council.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Memorandum by Hatchell.
[41] Ibid.

'autonomous Communities within the British Empire' and 'in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs' and 'freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations'.[42] The Report was a decisive move in disavowing the disputed appendages of the British Empire for the Dominions and an important step for Ireland to achieve greater sovereignty.[43] The report became law in the Statute of Westminster of 1931 which repealed the right of the British Parliament to legislate for the Dominions and became the founding document of the Commonwealth.

For the new Irish Free State dominion status was contentious and its independence already came with the largely reviled oath of loyalty to the British Crown.[44] Commonwealth membership for some Irish nationalists signified a partial continuation of British rule and the Free State's refusal to exhibit alongside the British Empire in Wembley prevented any further association with the imperial nation, either voluntary or forced. Any allegiance with Britain through the 'display [of] the Natural Resources of the various countries within the Empire and the activities, industrial and social, of their peoples' was actively avoided by the Irish Free State and the architects of its new independence.[45] Whilst the potential financial profit of advertising Irish products dominated its exhibits from the 1850s, the interwar period saw a new Irish nation committed to their sovereign independence and a separation from Britain even at the cost of precious advertising.

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[42] D. McMahon, 'Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1900-1948' in W. R. Louis and J. M. Brown (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol IV. The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 138-162, p. 156.
[43] D. W. Harkness, 'Ireland' in R. W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol V. Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 114-133, p. 125-126. See also, D. W. Harkness, *The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-31* (London, 1970) and D. W. Harkness, 'Mr de Valera's Dominion: Irish Relations with Britain and the Commonwealth, 1932-1938', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 8: 3 (1970), pp. 206-228.
[44] L. J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Question: Two Centuries of Conflict* (Kentucky, 1995), p. 145-148.
[45] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 1.

Following the Free State's absence in the 1924 British Empire Exhibition, Ireland emerged in the 'Ulster Pavilion'. All of Northern Ireland was subsumed under the identification of 'Ulster', which offered a distinctive unity to the various provinces and also conflated the industrial capacities of the region with the larger country. The Pavilion was situated in the Palace of Industry (one of the largest buildings in the entire exhibition) that covered over ten acres and 40,000 square feet (**Figure 4.2**).[46] The British flag and the flags of the countries of the world flew prominently atop poles evoking the internationalism of the fair and its global audience. A steady stream of visitors, on the walkways, the bridge and inside the Pavilion reflected the popularity of the Exhibition more broadly. The Palace of Industry featured the raw materials of Britain's Empire and 'every form of industrial activity in [the Empire's] Islands [wa]s represented'.[47]

The Palace of Industry sat along the North Walk next to exhibits of Textiles, Jewellery and Gas with a large Chemical Section neighbouring the displays. The South Walk contained exhibits of Pottery and Glass, Sports and Games, Rubber, Domestic Utilities, Leather and Food. Northern Ireland was therefore foregrounded within the bustling heart of imperial commerce depicted in the fairground. The *Official Guide* declared that 'one of the most prominent sites [wa]s occupied by Northern Ireland'.[48] Ulster's Pavilion covered 6,187 square feet and revealed 'the unique status of the Government of Northern Ireland […] by the fact that instead of exhibiting in a separate pavilion the government preferred to come under the wing of the Mother Country and show Ulster's resources beside those of the United Kingdom' according to the *Guide*.[49]

[46] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 20.
[47] *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to London*, p. L [*sic*].
[48] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 25.
[49] Ibid.

A vast bureaucratic enterprise founded the display which revealed a continuation in organising practices from the early twentieth century exhibitions. In November 1922 a Central Committee was formed to decide the nature of Northern Ireland's participation in the Wembley Exhibition, which consisted of nominees from various trade associations and the Chamber of Commerce in Northern Ireland. The Central Committee appointed an Executive Committee of traders and manufacturers and it sent invitations to participate in the exhibition to a number of associations, bodies and individual firms representing the country's assorted industrial branches.[50] Advertisements to exhibit also appeared in multiple newspapers throughout the Six Counties. The *Mid-Ulster Mail*, the *Belfast News-Letter* and others each ran several printed announcements calling on: 'All associations, firms and persons desiring to rent space in the Ulster Pavilion, [to] apply to the Ministry of Commerce, no later than 31 August 1923'.[51] The Parliament of Northern Ireland gave £5,000 for the rent of the Pavilion and the exhibits were organised by individual companies.

The Pavilion was near the entrance of the Palace of Industry and was affectionately described as the 'Donegal Place of the Exhibition'.[52] It contained a range of the arts and industries of Northern Ireland to educate visitors on the 'the idea of Ulster as an entity' and 'to acquaint them with Ulster people and their achievements'.[53] The wording here is crucial – the presentation of Ulster as an 'entity' positioned it as separate from the rest of Ireland, namely the Free State. In the exhibit Northern Ireland's Union with Britain emerged as an assurance of its loyalty following the divisive violence of the successive wars, the treaty and

[50] 'The Ulster Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter,* 30 May 1924.
[51] 'British Empire Exhibition: Ulster Pavilion', *Mid-Ulster Mail*, 11 August 1923; 'British Empire Exhibition: Ulster Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter,* 13 August 1923.
[52] 'The Empire Exhibition. An Ulster Pavilion', *Ballymena Observer,* 20 July 1923.
[53] Ibid.

partition. The Pavilion's Unionist stance was discussed by various newspapers; the *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph* explained that the site was 'chosen in order to preserve the idea that Ulster although enjoying political autonomy [wa]s still an integral part of the United Kingdom' in opposition to the Free State's new independence.[54]

Northern Ireland's valued relationship to Britain materialised symbolically and architecturally within both the exhibits and the design of the pavilion itself. The Pavilion featured two grand entrance porticoes to the south and east of the pavilion. 'Above the colonnaded entrance of the south portico [… wa]s emblazoned the Red Hand of Ulster between two symbolic devices of trireme form' and the words 'Ulster Pavilion' were lettered in gold above the entrance.[55] The patriotism of Ireland was continually signalled visually and textually but a distinctive Irishness was maintained. Outside the building the Arms of Belfast and Londonderry were showcased and the walls contained paintings of the heraldic arms of the chief cities of the Province.[56] Overall, the aesthetics of the Ulster Pavilion identified its close partnership within the United Kingdom, but within an Irish selfhood.

Northern Ireland's involvement in British Empire Exhibition's, notes Philip Ollerenshaw, was one way that Northern Irish businesspersons used their government and the Ministry of Commerce to 'extract maximum psychological and material benefit for the fledgling state of Northern Ireland'.[57] Ollerenshaw discussed the debate in the Northern Ireland Cabinet in February 1924 about which flag to include in Ulster's Pavilion as an

[54] 'The Ulster Pavilion. Great centre of interest. Lady Craig and the display', *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, 3 May 1924.
[55] Ibid.
[56] 'Ulster Pavilion. Thronged Yesterday', *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 April 1924.
[57] P. Ollerenshaw, 'Businessmen in Northern Ireland and the Imperial Connection, 1886-1939' in K. Jeffrey (ed.), *An Irish Empire: Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 169-190, p. 174.

example of this. Edward Archdale, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce petitioned for a distinctive flag 'similar to Canada and the other overseas dominions' in the form of the Red Ensign with an inset containing the Red Hand of Ulster, evoking similarity with the special flags used by Scotland and Wales at Empire Exhibitions.[58] Ollerenshaw explains that J. M. Andrews, Minister of Labour argued against this in order to emphasise the difference between Northern Ireland and the overseas dominions and to '[stress] [the] Union [with] the United Kingdom by flying the Union Jack without any special symbol'.[59] In the end, both the Union Jack and the Red Ensign with the Red Hand symbol flew. This debate is interpreted by Ollerenshaw as illustrating how the pre-partition ideals of loyalism and Unionism persisted among notable politicians within Ulster during the 1920s, which balanced desires to demonstrate the continued integration of Northern Ireland with the rest of the United Kingdom and emphasise its distinction from other dominions.[60] This convincing analysis can be extended since the country's larger exhibits straddled a home in the United Kingdom with its own national Irish story.

The Pavilion depicted Northern Ireland as a 'commercial and industrial centre' through a display of its chief industries: linen and shipbuilding.[61] The linen exhibits were positively received in contemporary literature; the *Official Guide* described Northern Ireland as the 'hub' of linen manufacture evidenced by the fact that it utilised over a million spindles.[62] The Pavilion specifically contained dress linens of various colours, damask fabrics

[58] Cabinet conclusions, 15 February 1924, PRONI CAB 4/100. Cited in Ollerenshaw, 'Businessmen in Northern Ireland', p 175.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 25.
[62] Ibid., p. 26.

of ‘surprising loveliness’, table and bed linen of different varieties, handkerchiefs, embroideries, ‘all the textile marvels for which Ulster is famous’.[63] Irish products were not only exhibited in 1924 they were also manufactured in the exhibition; an electrically driven power-loom wove damask napkins inside the pavilion for immediate sale as exhibition souvenirs in a dynamic circulation of Irishness. Moreover the Pavilion’s commissioners dressed entirely in linen to extend sales of the fabric. The personification of Irish industry extended to ‘A pretty Irish colleen [who could be] seen working at embroidery’ – making real the process of manufacture.[64] The Wembley exhibition demonstrated a continuity in using the body as a source of replication that emerged in Ireland’s display in the 1893 Chicago Fair. The embodiment of Irishness was therefore profitably enacted over successive decades. The ‘linen [exhibit] [stimulated] immediate attention’– through an interaction of object and person, together producing an attractive and lucrative Ireland.[65]

The Shipping Exhibit contained a large-scale model of Belfast Harbour that recreated Cross-Channel steamers arriving and departing between English, Scottish and Belfast ports.[66] The realistic model sought to encourage the use of its transport services (built on a scale of fifty feet to one inch).[67] It also included famous shipbuilding yards and a miniature modern leviathan in an attempt to solicit global trade. The *Belfast News-Letter* described it as ‘a remarkable ocular demonstration’ that successfully ‘conjure[d] up the vision of a real launch’.[68] Education and play worked in partnership to solicit interest and investment with

[63] ‘Ulster Pavilion’, *Belfast News-Letter*.
[64] Ibid.
[65] *Daily News Souvenir Guide*, p. 67.
[66] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 26; ‘Progress at the Ulster Pavilion’, *Northern Whig*, 23 January 1924.
[67] ‘The Ulster Pavilion’, *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 December 1923.
[68] ‘Ulster Pavilion’, *Belfast News-Letter*.

Northern Ireland. For instance, the exhibit of the rope, cordage and twine industries of the country saw 'two girl workers demonstrat[ing] the manufacture of nets for fishing and other purposes'.[69] Again, while the popular practice of exhibiting female workers in earlier Irish villages had traction decades later, by the twentieth century ideas that rural female labour would miraculously save Ireland had dissipated and a mechanised economy had emerged.

A global capitalism united the project to sell Ireland and its products whether through trade nationally or the purchase of souvenirs locally and so larger ideologies of Irish Unionism and its closeness to the British Empire permeated the display. Aside from the bodies of Irishwomen, Northern Ireland was primarily depicted through multiple objects exemplifying its valuable trades such as tobacco, whiskey and aerated waters, soaps, candles, woollen goods, jams and biscuits amongst others. The transfer of goods in exhibitions, argues Julie F. Codell, was part of wider 'processes of communication, transportation and imperialism' that were represented using 'intense visualisation [in] commercial and museum display systems, photography, illustrated magazines [and] newspapers'.[70] Building on this argument, the representation of Northern Ireland's industries purposefully blended the material and textual. Irishmen and women became part of the display by performing various industries and humanising mechanisation, thereby embodying a living form of promotion for their country and its allegiance to Britain.

A large diagrammatic map of Northern Ireland comprehensively visualised the province's wares: 'upon which the distribution of industries, the locality of pleasure resorts,

[69] Ibid.
[70] J. F. Codell, 'International Exhibitions: Linking Culture, Commerce, and Nation' in D. Arnold and D. P. Corbett (eds.), *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present* (London, 2013), pp. 220-240, p. 224.

railway and steamer routes [we]re lit electrically in turn'.[71] Friezes of Northern Ireland's industries of shipbuilding, linen, flax and tobacco decorated the interior of the pavilion. The *Northern Whig* described it as a 'harmony of colour', however the author criticised the absence of authenticity in recreating the County Down atmosphere as there was a '[lack] in smell'.[72] Crucially, Ireland in the 1924 Exhibition was expected to trade in stereotypes and familiar prejudices of the country as indicated by the *Northern Whig's* comments. An absorbing experience was offered to visitors whether through the objects or Irish women – and some visitors objected to the lack of sensory stimulation which negatively tempered the realistic effect sold in the Ulster Pavilion. Smells may have circulated in the agricultural section of the exhibit, which contained eggs, potatoes, and grass seeds for those who wanted a more immersive visit. An art section also displayed pottery and paintings by Northern Irish artists to complete the composite vision of the country.

The Ulster Pavilion received prominent visitors such as the Queen, Dukes, Ministers of Commerce and Finance, the Lord Mayor of Belfast, various chairmen, managers, presidents of large corporations and leaders of different associations.[73] The *Ballymena Observer* described the Ulster Pavilion as 'a centre of attraction to visitors from every corner', which may have reflected the successful enterprise of the cheap fares advertised by rail, shipping and tourist companies.[74] Lady Craig (wife of the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland) celebrated that the Pavilion revealed 'the high place Ulster occupie[d] in the industrial world'

[71] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 25.
[72] 'The Ulster Pavilion. Mr. Gordon's Paintings', *Northern Whig*, 29 March 1924.
[73] 'The Queen at Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig*, 1 July 1924; 'The Queen at Wembley. Visit to Ulster Pavilion', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 1 July 1924; 'Distinguished Visitor at Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig*, 14 July 1924; 'The Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig*, 12 August 1924. The final article reported that MP's, senators and representatives from Ulster Farmer's Union also visited the Pavilion.
[74] 'The Empire Exhibition. An Ulster Pavilion', *Ballymena Observer*, 20 July 1923; 'The Ulster Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 January 1924.

and also the 'prominent and worthy […] position [it held] among the industries of the Empire' to innumerable visitors.[75]

Prime Minister James Craig's (1871-1940) attempts to establish a predominantly Protestant Unionist administration and parliament, after northern nationalists refused to recognise the state, underscored Northern Ireland's presentation in 1924. A populist rhetoric that defined Northern Ireland in contrast to the Catholic Nationalist South, argue Holmes and Biagini, emerged in response to widespread unemployment and social deprivation during the Great Depression.[76] The heightening polarisation of partition politics saw around one-third of Southern Protestants leave the Free State by 1926 and the increased hostility between the two countries bolstered the separate identification of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom in the Wembley display.[77]

In direct opposition to official exhibition literature there was concerted criticism of the Ulster Pavilion by Northern Irish visitors. Robert McKeown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce and Production for Northern Ireland) noted that 'he had heard some people say [that the Northern Ireland Pavilion] was splendid and others say that it was not at all representative'.[78] Criticisms of Northern Ireland's display encompassed two related strands; one that the Pavilion suffered negatively by comparison to the other exhibits in design and product; two, that the exhibits were unrepresentative of the province's industries. For instance, a harsh review in the *Northern Whig* claimed that the 'exhibit put up by the

[75] 'The Ulster Pavilion', *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*.
[76] Holmes and Biagini, 'Protestants', p. 101.
[77] A. Bielenberg, 'Exodus: The Emigration of Southern Irish Protestants during the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War', *Past and Present*, 218 (2013), pp. 199-232, p. 221.
[78] 'The Ulster Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter*.

whole linen trade of Northern Ireland [wa]s eclipsed by that of one single linen firm from Scotland'.[79] This 'discredit[ed] Ulster' and gave 'an entirely wrong impression to [visitors] of the status and importance of Ulster industry' because Ulster had 'small[er] floor space' than the other countries.[80] Even Belfast's reputation as the 'world's greatest linen centre' was apparently not conferred in its exhibit as it 'suffer[ed] [in] comparison with the high standards which other exhibitors […] set up'.[81] Similarly a contemporary visitor to the exhibition, Robert Angus, called the Pavilion 'a travesty of Ulster industry' and claimed that the 'Industries of Ulster [we]re inadequately represented and g[a]ve no true picture of their size and importance'.[82]

Yet, the *Belfast News-Letter* described Northern Ireland's Pavilion as an 'outstanding success' and positively commented on the 'endless stream of people – English, Scottish, Welsh, Dominion, and foreign [who] passed through […] to inspect the fascinating exhibits within'.[83] The divergent opinions may be explained by a number of reasons. Perhaps some felt that Northern Ireland had sacrificed its industrial capacities for identification with Britain and a separate pavilion (not one located in the Palace of Industry) might have been more appropriate. The Pavilion did not emphasise the diversity of Northern Ireland and prioritised a homogeneity with Britain in order to dichotomise the distance between a Gaelic Catholic South and a Protestant Northern Ireland, perhaps to the frustration of some contemporaries in 1924.[84] A dual separation was enacted in the country's exhibit to create a distinct Irish economy and culture, but also to maintain a separation from the Free State to secure a

[79] 'Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig,* 21 May 1924.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid; 'Complaint', *Northern Whig*, 31 May.
[83] 'Ulster Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter*.
[84] Holmes and Biagini, 'Protestants', p. 102.

stronger relationship with England. Clearly, conditions of Irishness were readily contested and a greater disapproval of Northern Ireland's allegiance to Britain or unsuccessful attempts to adequately display the country might have underscored these criticisms.

The British Empire Exhibition was re-opened for a second season from 9 May to 31 October 1925 because the organisers made a loss of more than £600,000 and sought to recoup some of their investment.[85] Twenty-five million people visited the Wembley exhibition over the two years of its display and the 1925 Exhibition was largely the same as the previous one.[86] Northern Ireland's new exhibit addressed the criticism of the preceding year – the British government doubled the floor space it occupied to 12,825 square feet in the Palace of Industry. Many of the Ulster Pavilion's features were similar to the 1924 display but on a larger scale and it was often described as 'bigger and better'.[87] The *Northern Whig* reported that UK exports to the overseas parts of the British Empire had increased after the 1924 Exhibition, although I have not been able to verify this and the claim was likely circulated as propaganda for the exhibition.[88] Moreover, Archdale informed the *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph* that Ulster's export trade benefited through 'a sustained co-operative advertising effort' as 'it had been abundantly proved that good publicity could indeed create a demand'.[89] This may have been a rebuke against the Free State who again refused to exhibit despite the promise of trade and profit from advertisement.[90] Aesthetically the Pavilion's decorations and colour scheme were similar to the 1924 Exhibition but the increased size made it 'stand out

[85] Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, p. 146.
[86] 'The British Empire Exhibition, 1925. Opened by the King', *Coventry Herald*, 15 May 1925.
[87] 'An Exhibition worthy of the Six Counties', *Northern Whig*, 9 May 1925.
[88] 'Space in Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig*, 24 February 1925.
[89] 'Lessons of Wembley. Features of Ulster Pavilion. Publicity Value of Scheme', *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, 28 February 1925.
[90] See, Meeting of the Exhibition Council (Free State), 1 December 1924. C.2/148. Meeting of the Exhibition Council (Free State), 5 March 1925. c.2/172.

like a detached building' as it had a 'much more imposing and extensive frontage on the main avenue'.[91]

The 'biggest collection of the Ulster linen industry ever shown in one place' was organised by sixty or seventy firms of the Irish Linen Industry Committee in 1925.[92] The *Northern Whig* described the Ulster Pavilion as a successful representation of 'a go-ahead industrious province like Northern Ireland' in contrast to criticism of the country's exhibits in 1924.[93] Northern Ireland's exhibits were akin to the past Wembley Exhibition with Belleek pottery and jewellery available for sale. For instance, handkerchiefs 'dressed in the shape of roses' became a 'constant source of wonderment and admiration' and there was a 'beautiful [painted] panoramic view of the Antrim Coast' by Ulster artist, Boyd Morrison.[94] The increased size may largely have rectified earlier discontent as there did not seem to have been the sustained disapproval of Ulster's Pavilion in the 1925 British Empire Exhibition as occurred in the previous year.

Northern Ireland's pavilions in the two Empire Exhibitions of the 1920s revealed that popular symbols of Ireland easily recognised as 'Irish' readily circulated in the interwar period. Carol Breckenridge argues that world fairs created new forms of seeing and constructed objects for the exclusive purpose of commerce and the nation-state.[95] Extending this argument through Northern Ireland's display, Irish images and economies such as linen,

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[91] 'An Exhibition worthy of the Six Counties', *Northern Whig*; 'Wembley in 1925. Ulster Pavilion to be enlarged', *Ballymena Observer*, 30 January 1925. Also printed in: 'The Wembley Exhibition. Ulster Pavilion to be Enlarged', *Belfast News-Letter,* 28 January 1925.
[92] 'An Exhibition worthy of the Six Counties', *Northern Whig*.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] C. A. Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 31: 2 (1989), pp. 195-216, p. 195-196.

shipping or Irish women became synonymous with Northern Ireland in negation of the Free State. Whether or not this had any tangible effect on trade to and from the province was unclear, but Ireland's exhibitions packaged the Irish brand in an accessible manner. The symbolism and motifs of the Union distinguished Northern Ireland from the Irish Free State to assure Britain of the country's loyalty and closeness. The display exhaustively expounded a Northern Irish identity allied with Britain and separate from the Free State.

IRELAND IN THE 1930S

In the 1930s the Free State was formatively shaped through domestic and foreign policies and historical discussion on interwar Irish-British relations has often been divided.[96] My discussion of the Free State's exhibits in the 1930s proves that there was a continuation between Cosgrave's Cumman na nGaedheal party and Éamon de Valera's (1882-1975) Fianna Fáil. Whilst Cosgrave laboured to reformulate the Commonwealth, de Valera's strategy heightened the separation between the Free State and the Commonwealth following his policy of external association.[97] External association referred to an ideology that 'Ireland would be associated with, but not be a member of, the British Empire'.[98] D. W. Harkness has argued that de Valera pursued a unilateral stance whereas Cosgrave sought change through bilateral agreement.[99] There was a continuity in Irish policies relating to autonomy, economic development and modernising between the two governments. Specifically, de Valera's campaign of increased national independence did not immediately confer a republican status

[96] See, S. Howe, 'Historiography' in K. Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 220-250, p. 235.
[97] Moulton, *Irish in Interwar England*, p, 168-169; Harkness, *Restless Dominion*, p. 249-253.
[98] McMahon, 'Ireland, the Empire, and the Commonwealth', p. 208.
[99] Harkness, 'Ireland', p. 128. See L. Kohn, *The Constitution of the Irish Free State* (London, 1932).

to the Free State, however, he did abolish the oath to the Crown and played a vital role in discussions over the characteristics of dominion status and its relationship to Britain.[100]

Independent Ireland successfully navigated itself in the realm of international diplomacy and the small nation became a notable figure on the world stage. For instance, by 1930 the Free State sat on the Council of the League – building on its previous membership to the League of Nations in 1923 under Cosgrave.[101] De Valera's campaign for increased social and economic independence from Britain saw the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1935 replace British citizenship with Irish, which reinforced a separate Irish identity in legal terms.[102] His government pursued socially conservative policies that focused on the Irish language in education and administration.[103]

The Anglo-Irish Economic War (1932-38) began when de Valera's government stopped the payment of land annuities to Britain (around £5 million per year) arguing that it was the money of the Irish Free State.[104] Consequently the British government enforced exorbitant tariffs on agricultural exports from the Free State, such as cattle. A retaliatory policy ensued with de Valera restricting various British imports and both sides escalated the

[100] D. McMahon, *Republican and Imperialists: Anglo-Irish Relations in the 1930s* (London, 1984), p. 287-289; N. Mansergh, *The Unresolved Question: The Anglo-Irish Settlement and its Undoing, 1912-72* (Yale, 1991), p. 283-289.
[101] McGarry, 'Southern Ireland', p. 657.
[102] Mansergh, *The Unresolved Question*, p. 290. See also, N. Mansergh, *The Commonwealth and the Nations: Studies in British Commonwealth relations* (London, 1948).
[103] Moulton, *Irish in Interwar England*, p. 172; D. Ferriter, 'De Valera's Ireland, 1932-58' in A. Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 670-691, p. 677-678.
[104] Land annuities were British government loans offered to Irish tenant farmers enabling them to purchase lands from their former landlords under the Irish Land Acts of the 1880s. In the 1920s, the Irish government acknowledged its debts to Britain regarding the land annuities and other expenses. However, the 1925 London Agreement exempted the Free State from its treaty obligation to contribute towards the United Kingdom's public debt. De Valera held the annuities to be part of this public debt and passed the Land Act of 1933 which assigned the money to local government projects. Ibid., p. 165; McMahon, 'Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth', p. 157.

Economic War with different sanctions, embargos and restrictions. The strategy of intensifying reprisals ended with the 1938 Trade Agreements. It was resolved that ports retained under the 1921 Treaty would be returned to the Irish and the land annuity fees would be cancelled in return for a payment of £10 million.[105]

In the realm of the social and political, de Valera announced a new constitution in 1937 that removed almost all references to the King and instituted a central place for the Catholic Church in the Free State.[106] In a bid to maintain unity, the British government insisted that the new constitution did not impact Irish membership of the Commonwealth.[107] Crucially, de Valera politically claimed all of Ireland; regarded partition as temporary and illegitimate and maintained that the island of Ireland was a thirty-two county one rather than the twenty-six counties of the Free State.[108] Overall in the 1920s and 1930s, Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State worked to equate Dominionhood with complete independence in a period of 'constitutional argument, innovation, and advance'.[109] The Free State sought to revise and formulate its relationship with empire not only through policy but also via cultural means, and I will now consider how Irish displays reflected and accommodated the Free State's negotiation of its dominion status in the British Commonwealth of the 1930s.

1932 EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS, DUBLIN

The Irish Free State entered the politics of spectacle with the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. The country unveiled itself as an independent Catholic nation both for religious consumption

[105] Ibid., p. 167-168.
[106] Mansergh, *The Unresolved Question*, p. 299-301.
[107] McMahon, 'Ireland, the Empire, and the Commonwealth', p. 212.
[108] See, D. K. Coffey, *Drafting the Irish Constitution, 1935-1937: Transnational Influences in Interwar Europe* (Dublin, 2018); R. Fanning, *Éamon de Valera* (Harvard, 2015).
[109] Harkness, 'Ireland', p. 127.

and as a spiritual demonstration to the international press in a boastful exhibit of its independent Irishness. The Congress was a five-day event held in Dublin between 20 and 26 June 1932. It was distinct from the international and national exhibitions considered thus far but reveals how an independent Irish identity was constructed through many cultural platforms, whether in exhibits or public spectacles. Ireland did not petition for exhibits or invite foreign competitors, rather the Congress celebrated the Irish Free State as a Catholic nation socially, culturally and politically by offering 'a fitting welcome to Christ, her King'.[110] Tourism to the country was also encouraged as a form of Catholic worship to expand Ireland's commercial profit. The Free State's relationship to Britain was distanced in 1932 and there was an obvious separation from Protestant England. The Eucharistic Congress followed an established religious tradition that began in France in 1881 and took place every two years from Antwerp to Sydney for hundreds and thousands of Catholics.[111]

The significance of the event was twofold; for one, it was decidedly Catholic (and Irish) and secondly, it reflected a nation-wide organisational triumph. Only a decade after the Free State emerged, a Congress Committee worked with 'indefatigable zeal' to co-ordinate the celebration from as early as 1929.[112] Dublin's Eucharistic Congress coincided with the fifteenth centenary of the arrival of St. Patrick and the *Eucharistic Triumph* described it as a 'magnificent and unparalleled gesture of graceful Faith […] from the whole Irish race'.[113] The

[110] J. O'Callaghan, *The Eucharistic Triumph. The Story of the Origin and Development of International Eucharistic Congresses, Together with an Account of the Dublin Congress of 1932, and Historical Examples of Ireland's Undying Devotion to the Blessed Eucharist* (Glasgow, 1932), p. 8. Shelf mark: 4324.d.24. British Library.
[111] Ibid., p. 18.
[112] Ibid., p. 23. See, 'Eucharistic Congress Arrangements', *Derry Journal*, 1 April 1932. Delegates representing the following districts were in attendance at the meeting: Edinfagh, Barnesmore, Ballybofey, Ardaghey, Killybegs, Lettermore, Dungloe, Ballyshannon, Donegal, Glendowan, Castlefinn, Kilcar, and Clonleigh.
[113] Ibid., p. 8.

act of ‘unswerving loyalty’ thus revealed the country’s Catholic identity and overall bureaucratic (and by extension, national) competence to an international audience.[114]

The Cardinal Legate (representative of the Pope), Archbishop Byrne and de Valera attended the 1932 Congress. Free State newspapers, pamphlets and advertisements were largely complimentary about the event. Many reporters evoked motifs of light after darkness, a period of celebration after prostration which resembled Famine iconography in the mid-nineteenth century exhibitions that celebrated a new moment of revival and hope. The *Leinster Leader* joyously narrated that the ‘sad days [had] passed’ – evidently many believed that the founding of the Irish Free State ended previous oppression and birthed a new nation for Irish citizens to exist in peace without the conflict of British rule.[115]

In the interwar period the Congress hoped to further the civic and national ideals of the Free State along Catholic lines. The Fianna Fáil government reinforced the legislation of the 1920s, notes Diarmaid Ferriter, to extend Irish Catholic values by restricting the import of foreign literature and banning the trade of contraceptives.[116] The extent to which the Congress successfully consolidated a Catholic Irish identity is unquantifiable but it was well-received by worshippers at the time. The Congress was different to international exhibitions as it was not a celebration of wealth, territory, art or science but a celebration of Faith: a ‘national act of homage to the Eucharistic Christ’.[117] However, it followed the tenets of display in offering a visual spectacle resplendent with national symbolism for popular consumption.

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[114] Ibid., p. 23.
[115] ‘Message from Pope. The Verdant Island of Saints. Tribute to Irish People’, *Leinster Leader*, 25 June 1932.
[116] Ferriter, ‘De Valera’s Ireland’, p. 672.
[117] O’Callaghan, *The Eucharistic Triumph*, p. 20. See, ‘Ireland’s Historic Week: A Nation in Prayer’, *Leinster Leader*, 25 June 1932.

Similar to the entertainments provided at exhibitions such as dancing, mock battles, and rural industries the festivities of the Congress involved daily prayers and celebrations during the course of the five-day fair. 1932 was explicitly a religious enterprise, more akin to a pilgrimage than a visit to an exhibition; however, there was some overlap in the specific expressions of public performance in the interwar period. On the first day the Cardinal Legate processed around Dublin to much fan-fare; the streets lined with devoted Catholics singing and praying (over a nine-mile route). Bishops and Priests in churches led special prayers that were broadcast on speakers.[118] There is some similarity here with the opening and closing celebrations of exhibitions that I have discussed in earlier chapters. The analogous events relied on a collective engagement with public pomp and pageantry from visitors.

Different to the exhibitions however, the Congress involved Catholic ritual; the Blessed Sacrament was 'held in every church in Dublin and the suburbs' and Masses in Phoenix Park invited special choirs to sing hymns in English and Irish.[119] The displayed religiosity caused the Cardinal Legate to exclaim that 'never in his life had he witnessed such soul-stirring […] scene[s]'.[120] On the final day of the Congress 1,000,000 crowded into Phoenix Park – 'the largest number that ever attended a single Mass in the history of the world', the *Eucharist Triumph* declared.[121] The pageant of Catholicism united the Irishness of the Free State to its spiritual beliefs in the same way that an Irish people were united to the

[118] See, 'Eucharistic Congress News. Bishop of Bobbio coming. Gesture of gratitude to Ireland', *Derry Journal*, 28 March 1932.
[119] 'Eucharistic Congress. Order of Celebrations. Cardinal Legate's Arrival', *Kildare Observer and Eastern Counties Advertiser*, 18 June 1932.
[120] O'Callaghan, *The Eucharistic Triumph*, p. 22.
[121] Ibid. See, *Éire: The Handmaid of the Eucharist: A Eucharistic Pageant for 1932* (Dublin, 1932). Shelf mark: 011779.i.88. British Library.

Irish land and its products in exhibits from the 1850s. Both projects equated Irishness with a *thing* – whether religion or objects.

Similar to the exhibitions previously analysed, the large-scale involvement of local and national visitors was essential. For instance, the celebrations' familial nature was readily commented on by the Irish press: the *Leinster Leader* praised the 'mighty throng of 100,000 children clothed in white – 3,000 of them s[u]ng to offer up the Holy Sacrifice' outside Dublin's Pro-Cathedral.[122] Irishmen and women exercised their Catholic agency and put up 'streamers [with] sacred mottoes, bunting, flagging [Papal and Congress Flags] and floral decorations' – side streets, houses and main roads were 'beautified beyond description'.[123] In the same way that local businesses contributed exhibits; each locality decorated their areas with statues, crucifixes, pictures, candlesticks, ornaments, altar cloths [and] drapery in a 'labour of love and veneration' throughout the country.[124] Again an Irish iconography circulated widely; for instance, the National Museum of Ireland loaned St Patrick's bell for the Pontifical Mass on the final day of the Congress.[125] The success of these events relied on public involvement and visitor numbers read alongside press reports reveals a positive engagement from Catholic worshippers.

Aside from the imperial jingoism of many of the exhibitions under consideration the Congress celebrated the accord between the Church and State and signified the complete identification of the Irish Free State as a Catholic entity including 'the entire country, both

[122] Ibid. See, 'Regal Welcome for Papal Legate. Dublin Thronged with Pilgrims', *Leinster Leader*, 25 June 1932.
[123] 'Message from the Pope', *Leinster Leader*.
[124] 'Regal Welcome for Papal Legate', *Leinster Leader*.
[125] Y. Whelan, 'Landscape and Politics' in A. Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 83-103, p. 90-93.

North and South'.[126] The political notion that the island of Ireland was made up of thirty-two counties and not twenty-six was central to de Valera's government in the 1930s.[127] Consequently, the Free State's hopes to overturn the principles of partition for the unification of the island was popularly evoked to the Congresses' Catholic visitors and those consuming it in the international press.

The festivities suffered from partition-related violence when Catholic communities from Northern Ireland travelled to and from Dublin to participate in the celebrations. For instance, the *Derry Journal* reported that a 'renegade Protestantism' attacked trains leaving Dublin for Belfast and hurled 'stones and broken bottles' at 'Catholic faces'.[128] The violence escalated to train stations in Derry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Larne, Lisburn and Portadown and, as a result, armoured cars and numerous policemen were stationed in key areas. The newspaper described the attacks as a 'great act of northern abasement and shame' explaining that the 'Northern government [came] strongly out in denunciation'.[129] The ongoing sectarian fighting within Northern Ireland emerged partly from its political situation and was also a reaction against de Valera's claims to the whole of Ireland.[130] The wave of religious violence in 1932 reveals the ongoing unsettled tensions between the separated countries decades after partition.

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[126] O'Callaghan, *The Eucharistic Triumph*, p. 20.
[127] Ferriter notes that de Valera kept 'a map of the partitioned island close to hand' to illustrate his anti-partition policies to foreign diplomats and international politicians, 'De Valera's Ireland', p. 681.
[128] 'Methodists and Eucharistic Congress', *Derry Journal*, 11 June 1932.
[129] Ibid. See, P. Leary, *Unapproved Routes: Histories of the Irish Border, 1922-1972* (Oxford, 2016), p. 61-81 for the dispute over fishing waters in Ireland.
[130] See, H. Donnan, 'Identity and Victimhood among Northern Ireland border Protestants' in M. Busteed, F. Neal and J. Tonge (eds.), *Irish Protestant Identities* (Manchester, 2008), pp. 235-246, p. 236-238.

The 1932 Congress sought to expand the country's state building project: the *Derry Journal* amongst others described it as a 'national event of unique magnitude and grandeur' that would 'awaken memories that stir[red] the faith and piety of every Irishm[a]n!'[131] The Eucharistic Congress offered the economically fledgling Free State, in Yvonne Whelan's words, 'an opportunity to showcase to the world a vision of a new, independent, and overtly Catholic nation' as a parade of unity and strength.[132] Building on this, the complimentary reports of Dublin's national endeavour in the international and British press demonstrated that the Free State was thriving under its dominion status and capable of governing itself. Even the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* celebrated the 'national welcome' of 1932.[133] Therefore, an independent Irish power was successfully constructed on the global stage in spite of the country's economic and social difficulties at the time.[134]

Similar to previous events, special discounted trains and buses sought to attract visitors; for those who were unable to travel to Dublin a wireless broadcast of the ceremonies was made available in community halls and schools. In past exhibitions, such as the previously discussed Cork Industrial Exhibition of 1852, local businesses purchased tickets for their employees to attend Ireland on display, however, this was not the case in 1932 – reflecting a demarcation in the importance attached to secular versus religious events. Ordinary (Catholic) people's involvement was therefore restricted to listening and observing from a distance and not necessarily being physically present. Observing industry was

[131] 'The Eucharistic Congress. Fifteenth Centenary of St. Patrick. Ireland's Biggest Celebration. National Collection next Sunday. Hierarchy's Letter', *Derry Journal*, 24 November 1930.
[132] Whelan, 'Landscape and Politics', p. 88. See, G. Boyd, 'Supernational Catholicity', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 5: 3 (2007), pp. 317-333 and D. G. Holmes, 'The Eucharistic Congress of 1932 and Irish Identity', *New Hibernia Review*, 4: 1 (2000), pp. 55-78.
[133] *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 21 June 1932.
[134] See, McMahon, *Republican and Imperialists*, p. 147.

evidently considered by some to be more useful and worthwhile for Irish advancement than a celebration of faith in the 1930s.

The edifying experience of Catholicism had broader implications for tourism to the country. Newspapers noted that 'Ireland [… was] the centre of world-wide attention' during the 1932 Eucharistic Congress.[135] An estimated 20,000 international visitors came from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and South America: 'to join the Mother Country in honouring St. Patrick and celebrating the glories of Christ' – bolstering the national prestige of the Free State.[136] The Californian Council of the Ancient Order of Hibernians organised 'Onto Ireland in 1932' Clubs throughout the US to co-ordinate worshippers travelling to Dublin for the Congress.[137] For thousands of Catholics visiting Dublin in 1932 the tourism infrastructure sourced hotels, transport and guides, while a few decades earlier the Brown brothers used Ireland's tourist enterprise to sell soap – revealing the expansive nature of the growing Irish tourist business.[138]

A singular image of Irish Catholicism was cultivated in the show of Irish power and independence. The 'Crusade of Prayer' cost over £80,000 and every parish in Ireland had a collection pot, Catholics from Tuam to Waterford, Cork and Limerick, to Meath and Kilmore 'g[a]ve generously to the collection'.[139] The Congress asserted the Free State as a Catholic nation through its devout visitors and printed consumption of the event. The event occupied

[135] 'The Eucharistic Congress', *Derry Journal*.
[136] Ibid. See also, 'American Visitors to the Eucharistic Congress. Plans for Congressists from Diocese of Rochester', *Derry Journal,* 4 March 1931.
[137] Ibid.
[138] *Kildare Observer and Eastern Counties Advertiser,* 26 September 1931.
[139] 'Unauthorised exploitation of Eucharistic Congress', *Derry Journal*, 18 February 1931; 'The Eucharistic Congress', *Derry Journal*.

the space of display although separate to the national and international exhibitions previously considered. However, it formed an important part of Irish self-fashioning in the realm of culture and spectacle. In similar but distinct ways from the images of Ireland I have analysed so far, in 1932, the Free State showcased itself in a moment of 'arrival' and celebration. This expounded the dominion's independent politics for religious consumption and also as a bold statement to the international press. Overall in public and private domains, which encompassed social and cultural spaces, domestic and foreign policy, the people of Ireland produced a Free State united with Catholicism and the Eucharistic Congress became the heroic emblem of this new Irish nation.

1938 BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION, GLASGOW

The interwar period's second official British Empire Exhibition opened from 3 May to 29 October 1938 in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park. The two territories of the island of Ireland unusually featured in the 'complete extent of the variety, colour and dimensions of the British Empire [in the fair]'.[140] This was the first appearance of both countries of Ireland in a single international exhibition. The two nations imagined their relationship to the British Empire along distinct trajectories. The Free State emphasised a distance from the imperial project whereas Northern Ireland demonstrated a closeness to the British Empire. Specifically, the Free State used its varied exhibits to showcase the benefits of independence in accordance with de Valera's policy of external association. Whilst Northern Ireland highlighted the country's economic industries that relied on the Union in its exhibits.

[140] '1938 Empire Exhibition', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 10 April 1937.

The Glasgow exhibition covered 175 acres (**Figure 4.3**) and attracted twelve million visitors. The Pavilions were grouped around the left side of the grounds and green space featured on the right. The buildings were interspersed with a concert hall, cafes and tea stands. The Scottish Development Council centrally organised the Exhibition, which was a non-political organisation comprised of Local Authorities, Commercial Bodies, Representatives of Trade Union Organisations, Industrialists and private individuals.[141] Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth and a host of other municipalities as well as individual firms contributed to the Guarantee Fund of £750,000.[142] Like previous empire exhibitions, Glasgow displayed a '[characteristic] selection of the foodstuffs and raw materials of the Empire overseas and its potentialities, social, industrial, and economic' as well as the 'latest developments in the industrial equipment of the Home Country'.[143]

The 1938 Exhibition operated on a dual national and international front; to 'See the Empire at your door in its exhortation to the Scots who still live[d] at home' – reminiscent of the 1850s Fairs that sought to inspire Irish citizens to compete alongside the empire's industries.[144] In official exhibition literature Glasgow was often described as 'One of the greatest industrial centres and ports in the British Empire' – heralded as the 'Empire's Second

[141] Affordable public transport for travel to the exhibition was reported in the following: 'Forfar Factory Workers' Union', *Forfar Dispatch*, 9 June 1938; 'London Midland and Scottish Railway, Empire Exhibition 1938', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 27 April 1938; 'Empire Exhibition 1938 Scotland Bellahouston Park, Glasgow', *Dundee Courier*, 14 May 1938. Excursions typically cost six shillings which included admission to the exhibition and half-price at three shillings for children, and ran daily.
[142] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938* (Glasgow, 1938), p. 74. Shelf mark: W15/4654. British Library. Guarantors ranged from banks, corporations, oil companies, car companies, food manufacturers, newspapers, insurance companies, shipping and industry, steam ships, brewers and insurance groups. See, 'Exhibition for Glasgow. Empire display to be staged in 1938', *Linlithgowshire Gazette*, 9 October 1936.
[143] *Come to Scotland in 1938* (Glasgow, 1938). This was a folio inside the *Official Guide* and does not have page numbers. See also, *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938* (Glasgow, 1938). Shelf mark: D-7959.ff.19. British Library.
[144] Ibid.

City'.[145] The types of buildings that the two countries occupied revealed their connection to empire. Northern Ireland's Unionist position saw it exhibit in the Industries, Shipping and Travel Pavilion and the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry Pavilion. It was next to general exhibits of the 'raw materials, finished products, fauna and flora, scenic beauties and cultural achievements of the countries of the British Empire'.[146] Whereas the Free State's independence was embodied in a separate Irish Pavilion in the 'fairyland of beauty' of the 1938 British Empire Exhibition.[147]

A 'counter-exhibition' (ran over two months) was staged by the Glasgow Independent Labour Party (ILP) to coincide with the 1938 Empire Exhibition and historian Sarah Britton argues that the anti-imperial counter-exhibition was a working-class movement opposed to the main display and its jingoism.[148] It was extensively reported on in Scotland's left-wing press. Also known as the 'Workers Exhibition' it detailed the abusive practices in the colonies and offered the 'real facts' about the British Empire's impact on people of colour. It denounced the main exhibition as capitalist propaganda by offering statistics on the exploitation of people in the colonies, from low wages to poor living and working conditions. For instance, the display noted that a fifty-five to sixty hour week was normal for jute mills workers in Bombay and that in Jamaica, wages for sugar workers were regularly insufficient to buy two loaves of bread.[149]

[145] *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition.* No page number is available as this was in an advert at the beginning of the Catalogue. *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 72.
[146] *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 77.
[147] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition,* p. 72.
[148] S. Britton, '"Come and See the Empire by the All Red Route!": Anti-Imperialism and Exhibitions in Interwar Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, 69 (2010), pp. 68-89, p. 78.
[149] Ibid., p. 79-80.

In the counter-exhibition a nationalist perspective assessed Britain's relationship with Ireland. In the display Britain was held responsible for the Famine in the 1840s and subsequent Irish depopulation from mass emigration and death. Moreover, the exhibit focused on the 'fascist atrocities of the Black and Tans' to popular approval.[150] The official pamphlet for the exhibition titled 'Come and See the Empire by the All Red Route' described conditions in Ireland as 'An infamy on our own doorstep'.[151] I have found no evidence on how Irishmen and women reacted to this display, both Nationalist and Unionist. The silence of Irish press reporting and contemporary responses suggests that coverage of this counter-exhibition was ignored or suppressed by newspapers, both Irish and otherwise. Overall, Britton's analysis of the Workers Exhibition demonstrates the vast public interest in imperialism during the interwar period, which supports my analysis on the importance of interwar Irish exhibitions in visualising the two countries distinct relationships to the British Empire.

Similar to the 1924 British Empire Exhibition there was significant debate over the Free State's participation in the Glasgow display.[152] Deliberations centred on the themes discussed previously such as the value of display to the Free State economy, the costs of a Pavilion in the context of poverty, unemployment and mass immigration and more implicitly the problems of exhibiting alongside the British Empire.[153] At early meetings in 1937, the Minister for Industry and Commerce and the Minister for Agriculture argued in favour of

[150] Ibid., p. 80.
[151] *Come and See the Empire by the All Red Route*. Cited in Britton, 'Anti-Imperialism and Exhibitions', p. 81.
[152] Discussions related to Ireland's participation in the 1938 Exhibition were filed under one shelf mark in the National Archives of Ireland. *EXHIBITIONS. General: British Empire Exhibition (Scotland) 1938; participation by Service departments*. Shelf mark: T 161/843/4. National Archives of Ireland. I will only give the title of the sources from now on. The names of the texts will be reproduced exactly (note inconsistencies and incomplete information in the addresses).
[153] Meeting of Inter-Departmental Committee appointed to examine the question of Saorstát participation in the Empire Exhibition, Scotland, to be held in Glasgow from May to October, 1938. 235/100.

participation on the grounds of international diplomacy. They insisted that Commonwealth competitors in the British market such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had Pavilions and the absence of an Irish display 'would be marked [negatively] by the general British public particularly in Glasgow and surrounding districts where a large proportion of Irish eggs, butter and bacon [was] sold'.[154] These arguments of trade and prestige echoed the discussions that took place in the 1920s.

The cost of a separate Irish Pavilion (of at least 5,000 square feet) was initially estimated at £5,000 to be paid for by the Irish government not private firms. Canada spent at least £20,000 on its Pavilion and South Africa about £10,000.[155] The Irish Exhibition Committee argued that a maximum cost of £15,000 'would be small relative to [Ireland's] total export to the British market' (about twenty million pounds worth) and so participation made sense from a trade perspective.[156] A secondary aim of the exhibition was 'to demonstrate the national progress of the participating countries' and this finally secured the Free State's display in Scotland.[157] The 1938 event moved beyond an exhibition of Empire and encouraged the individual agency of the participating countries. The Irish Executive Council solicited exhibits that served the 'dual purpose of trade and national publicity and prestige'.[158] Ireland's display did not focus on investment and development like previous exhibitions of the country and instead highlighted the country's dominant position in global trade. Britain already bought Irish cattle, horses, eggs, butter and bacon in vast quantities and

[154] Ibid.
[155] Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938, May to October 1938 (under the auspices of the Scottish Development Council), 8 July 1937. ES (B) MJ 60.
[156] Meeting of Inter-Departmental Committee.
[157] Empire Exhibition, Scotland. See, *Report of Proceedings held at the Empire Exhibition, Glasgow, Scotland, on July 18, 19, and 20, 1938. Imperial Conference on Agricultural Co-operation* (Glasgow, 1938). Shelf mark: 334 i 4. National Library of Ireland.
[158] Memorandum for the Executive Council, 21 August 1937; Meeting of Executive Council, 24 August 1937 on extent of Saorstát Participation. 235/100.

the country's display aimed to expand the market for its products as part of de Valera's policy of external association.

The Free State Pavilion demonstrated the country's economic and national independence through exhibits related to its agricultural and industrial products, an Irish history, tourist attractions, displays of industrial production, aviation, electricity, and the mining of turf.[159] The Free State's national status was conferred by its participation with other Commonwealth countries in Glasgow and developments in Ireland contributed to greater sovereignty for emerging Dominions, notably in India.[160] Different to earlier displays the country's exhibits presented an assertive, prosperous Ireland with valuable economic and religious capacities as an independent nation. Ireland had 'arrived' and its presence in the exhibition was to celebrate not to improve. As in 1932, spectacle aimed to display Irish strength and prowess.

3,500,000 people visited the Free State's Pavilion in the 1938 Exhibition including repeat visits by season ticket holders (of which there were 125,000).[161] The exhibition coincided with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Trade Treaty (April 1938) and boosted Irish-British diplomatic relations. J. D. Brennan, Staff Officer in the High Commissioner's Office, London and Sean Keavy, Trade Inspector for Great Britain organised the Irish Pavilion in

[159] Memorandum for the Executive Council. In 1938, Ireland's advances in electricity were showcased in the Shannon Scheme display, developments in aviation and transport through an exhibit of Rineanna Airport, and fuel through literature on the Turf Development Board and Industrial Alcohol.
[160] D. McMahon, 'A Larger and Noisier Southern Ireland: Ireland and the Evolution of Dominion Status in India, Burma and the Commonwealth, 1942–9' in M. Kennedy and J. M. Skelly (eds.), *Irish Foreign Policy, 1919–66* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 155-191.
[161] D. Keary, 'Irish Pavilion – Report', 28 November 1938, p. 1.

Glasgow.[162] A competition to find the 'very best architectural brains of the country' secured an architect of Free State citizenship to design the Irish Pavilion.[163] The front of the rectangular building (**Figure 4.4**) was all white and bordered by a series of bays. Two prominently placed Irish flags dominated the façade and balconies contained potted plants and small manicured trees. The signage read 'Ireland' in bold capital letters and evoked national confidence by visually claiming the whole island rather than just the twenty-six county Free State. Smartly dressed men and women strolled in front of the Pavilion signifying interest and approval. Ireland's display was architecturally simple and large in size and ambition.

The Irish Exhibition Committee considered exhibiting an Irish Village complete with an Old Thatched Roof Inn, a Dairy Farm, shops, Weavers Cottages, working exhibits of Lace Making and Linen Manufacture, a Village road entitled O'Connell Street and a Blarney Castle. However this was decided against – I read this as a rejection of the stereotypical representations of Ireland common to its displays in past international exhibitions. Irish independence signalled a new era in the country apart from earlier negative discourse largely circulated by the British press.[164] The 1938 Exhibition was therefore an opportunity for the Free State to showcase its national modernity without the baggage of reductive discourses associated with the Irish landscape and the Irish people.

[162] 'Extra remuneration for Mr. Keavy trade inspector Glasgow and Mr. Brennan High Commissioners Office in connection with work on Glasgow Exhibition 1938', Letter to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 April 1939. DFA/4/246/22.
[163] Letter from the Architectural Graduates' Association, N.U.I. in regard to the design of the Saorstát Pavilion for the forthcoming exhibition at Glasgow to President De Valera, 20 September 1937. TSCH/3/S10075.
[164] See, M. de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Wisconsin, 2004), p. 4-35 and 'A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes': The British Press and Transatlantic Fenianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 40: 2 (2001), pp. 213-240, p. 215-220.

The Free State exhibit asserted its difference to both the Scottish exhibit as well as previous Irish exhibits by choosing not to construct an Irish Village in 1938, becoming a decisive statement of an Ireland opposed to its past identifications with the British Empire. Scotland's Highland Village, An Clachan, '[offered] impression of the real old Scotland, the Land of the Gael, the Scotland that [wa]s fast passing before the relentless onrush of modernity'.[165] Similar to previous Irish Villages, authenticity was key and the Scottish organiser Colin Sinclair, imported 'plaster casts […] from actual walls to reproduce cottages typical to those of Argyll, Skye and the Outer Isles'.[166] Comparable to Ballymaclinton a rural idyll was constructed with white-walled structures some 'grey with age, moss and linen'; there was also a Post Office, a shop, a smithy, and an inn.[167] An ancient church and a stone cross signified a Scottish Gaelic heritage. The Highland Village was inhabited by a Gaelic-speaking population and visitors could observe 'men mending the nets, making creels and the women tending their homes and spinning the yarn of the wheel'.[168] The similarities between Scotland's display and Ireland's extended to souvenirs; a collection of Highland tweeds and native crafts were on sale. The overlap in motifs of rurality in both the Scottish and Irish Villages proves that certain logics of display persisted throughout the period. Similar to the early twentieth century Irish exhibitions, an immersiveness of country and person circulated and 'Plaintive songs of the Islanders' were sung, offering a 'mystic quality of the Isles of the West'.[169] A continuity in the profit motive from capitalising on cultural heritage evidently remained.

[165] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 121.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid., p. 122.
[169] Ibid.

The image of the Highland Village in the *Official Guide* (**Figure 4.5**) offers parallels to Ballymaclinton. Cottages set amid trees were surrounded by signs of activity such as boats and paddles as if in use. Curiously in the background of the scene was a tall telecoms building of concrete. Here, the dual project of tradition and modernity materialised for visitors. The placing of a modern structure directly behind the village may have been an attempt to subvert criticism after viewing the exhibit that Scotland was a country stuck in the past. The juxtaposition of old and new illustrated Scotland's history as well as its position in the modern world alongside the technology and industry of the other participating countries. The possible negative connotations after viewing village life also concerned the Brown brothers at the start of the century. By the interwar period, the Free State's refusal to capitalise on an ancient, quaint and traditional model of Irishness underscored its commitment to a modernist independent project.

The Free State's rejection of an Irish Village in 1938 was financially risky as the Clachan was one of the few exhibits that made an overall profit in the entire exhibition.[170] Nineteenth and twentieth century Irish Villages created income by encouraging trade and investment in their Irish products as well as securing longer-term profit for Ireland by facilitating tourism. In 1938 however, organisers stimulated tourism by focusing on the beauty of the rural landscape, rather than the decaying Irish land and culture that typified earlier Irish villages and earlier iterations of tourism to Ireland. The Irish Tourist Association occupied a prominent position within the Pavilion and a cinema in the exhibition grounds showed several Irish films related to tourism to the country.

[170] S. Britton, 'Urban Futures/Rural Pasts: Representing Scotland in the 1938 Glasgow Empire Exhibition', *Cultural and Social History*, 8: 2 (2011), pp. 213-232, p. 217.

The construction of an authentic Ireland remained a central concern of exhibition organisers in the interwar period to attract visitors and solicit trade with the country. Efforts to offer an 'accurate picture of Ireland' meant that only Irish materials were used to furnish the pavilion with Irish-made furniture, 'floor coverings […] of marble, matting or carpets, […] of Irish manufacture' and only Irish staff in attendance.[171] Bodily performance interacted with objects to extend the fiction of Ireland. An immersive atmosphere was cultivated with sights intermingling with scents and sound.[172] A radiogram played Irish vocal and instrumental songs on loop and 'subdued, hidden lights' and '[a] comfortable carpet underfoot' greeted visitors.[173] The Pavilion's organisers therefore made great efforts to envelop fairgoers in Irishness.

Once visitors were inside the pavilion they were exposed to a diversity of an Irish past, present and future. Working models and relief maps illustrated the Free State's current industrial, agricultural, technological and engineering products and developments. The contemporary world interacted with an Irish past – evoked with decorative church articles of stained-glass windows, marble floor pieces, vestments, metalwork and a display of early ornaments such as replicas of the Lismore Crozier, Shrine of Misach, Cross of Cong and the Ardagh Brooch.[174] In a dizzying whirlwind of Irishness visitors were again reminded of present Irish industry with displays of linens, lace, poplins, knitwear, embroidery and tweeds.

[171] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 144. See, Empire Exhibition Glasgow, 1938. Contains Photocopy Set of Plans & Drawings for the Irish Pavilion and two originals on greaseproof paper. DFA/4/235/100.
[172] See, M. M. Smith, *Sensory History* (California, 2007), p. 119.
[173] Keary, 'Irish Pavilion', p. 4.
[174] *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 191. The Irish Pavilion was numbered 55 on the Map of the 1938 British Empire Exhibition.

The effective representation of different temporal spheres, complemented by the material and the visual in the Pavilion, showcased Ireland to its fullest diversity.

Ireland's technological achievements featured in a wall map that illustrated the Northern Transatlantic air route and the *Official Catalogue* declared that the 'Governments of the UK, Ireland, Newfoundland and Canada […] and the US, [agreed that] all traffic in either direction over the Northern air route would pass through the Shannon Airport' – establishing the Free State as a notable figure in global affairs.[175] Should visitors be unconcerned with Irish technology, their interest was again piqued by art in the Pavilion. Lady Glenavy and Mainie Jellett painted colourful and innovative frescoes of Irish life that reimagined traditional scenes of farming, fishing, and spinning in abstract and modern designs. Dublin-born Protestant Jellett, notes Caroline Malloy, offered creative interpretations of an Irish culture adapted to a modern outlook.[176]

An Irish present was again aroused in the sale of butter, eggs, bacon, cheese, cream and biscuit samples. The exhibit of Irish food stuffs proved popular and a total of 257,060 samples were sold for £4,500,000 in total.[177] Visitors were therefore able to experience an Irish history, absorb an Irish culture and consume an authentic Irishness – in this instance, food. As a 'practical advertisement' for Irish produce, 'several repeat orders were received'

[175] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 141, p. 143.
[176] C. R. Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland: Irish Villages, Pavilions, Cottages, and Castles at International Exhibitions, 1853-1939', PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison (2013), p. 239. See Malloy's discussion on Jellett, p. 242-252. Mainie Jellett wrote a postcard to fellow artist Margaret Clark on the arrangement of their paintings: 'picture[s] look very well' and 'friezes fit in well', *Postcard from Mainie Jellett to Margaret Clarke about the Irish Pavilion at the Empire Exhibition in Scotland, 1938*. Shelf mark: MS 48,425/6/2. National Library of Ireland.
[177] Letter to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 April 1939. No. 135/6.

from those who had sampled the Irish goods at the Pavilion.[178] Therefore practical profit was tied to Ireland's blend of natural beauty and industrial achievement in Glasgow. Malloy's contention that Ireland 'looked to the past, embraced the present, and projected Ireland into an international, multi-national future through Jellett's artwork' is convincing for the Free State's politics more broadly.[179] Both in the 1938 Exhibition and in interwar domestic and foreign policy de Valera's government laboured to frame Ireland as modern, progressive and historically rich.

The alluring image of Ireland in the pavilion consolidated Irish products in the international market with a precious Irish culture to decisive effect. The all-encompassing Free State section saw many high-profile visitors such as Queen Mary, members of the Royal Family and Ministers of State who added notoriety to the country's exhibits. Moreover, the *Official Catalogue* boasted that Glasgow had the 'largest external markets for Irish goods' and was 'home [to] many thousands of Irish exiles' and so 'a quarter of a million people in the West of Scotland [had] racial and religious connections with Éire'.[180] The positive response to the exhibit was in part created because of an affinity between the exhibits and visitors, whether Scottish locals or more international guests.

Overall, a grand portrait of the Free State visually testified to the success of Irish independence and de Valera's policy of external association in 1938. A large number of the industrial classes visited the exhibition from England and Wales through organised tours and

[178] Keary, 'Irish Pavilion', p. 9.
[179] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 252.
[180] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition,* p. 141. See, K. A. Miller, "'Scotch-Irish" Myths and "Irish" Identities in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century America' in C. Fanning (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora* (Illinois, 2000), pp. 81-98.

excursions. The Irish Pavilion Report noted that: '[In] June there was a large influx of school children from all over Great Britain' and around twenty per cent of the visitors to the pavilion were 'money people' (read middle-class).[181] Visitors did not fill in surveys of their economic background so these statistics cannot be verified. However, the framing of the pavilion as popular with the working-class (roughly the remaining eighty per cent) suggests labourers were among the target audience, similar to Ireland's exhibitions in the 1850s.

It does not seem however that these visitors were encouraged to emulate the technology on display; they were not required to observe the lessons of the fair in the same way that visitors to London and Dublin were in the mid-nineteenth century. They were simply there to enjoy Irish achievement and join Ireland in their celebration. They did not have to act as saviours of the country, demonstrating that ideas of Irish development had largely dissipated by the 1930s since the country had already achieved a degree of industrial success and it was only concerned with showcasing its triumphs. Further, whereas in the 1853 Dublin Exhibition the country's products were perceived by some as being insufficient and underdeveloped in comparison to the 1851 London Exhibition, the Glasgow Exhibition forcefully rejected these arguments. Visitors of varied social backgrounds witnessed a 'vivid […] idea of the progress made [by the Free State] in industry, culture and social development'.[182] Ireland had developed and a new Irish nation was indeed being celebrated by 1938.

Northern Ireland's participation in the Glasgow event was contested regarding its form and cost. John M. Davidson of Belfast petitioned for a separate pavilion to highlight Northern

[181] Keary, 'Irish Pavilion', p. 2.
[182] *Official Guide of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 143.

Ireland's economic and national utility in the United Kingdom. However, 'neither the government nor representatives of local industrial and trade interests [offered] the necessary financial backing'.[183] Belfast only gave £1,000 to the exhibition and so the *Northern Whig* complained that the country's display was not 'commensurate with its importance as a unit of Empire'.[184] Instead of a separate pavilion, the Northern Irish Exhibition Committee 'organise[d] two separate exhibits' one in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Pavilion where Ireland exhibited her farm and dairy produce combined with England, Wales and Scotland.[185] The other was in the Industries, Shipping and Travel Pavilion where Northern Ireland exhibited 'her scenic beauties and industrial potentialities' (**Figure 4.6**) related to tourist interests.[186] The lack of financial and public support meant that Northern Ireland was obscured next to a cinema and a restaurant.

Northern Irish businesses may have prioritised their investment elsewhere as the country underwent economic stagnation in the interwar period.[187] While some may have considered exhibitions to be a frivolous endeavour the absence of enthusiasm did not deter the few patriotic organisers. Northern Ireland's exhibits sought to 'bring home to the visitor with unmistakable effect […] the industrial quality of the Province, its wide-range of existing industries and suitability for new ones; [and] the superb attractions of [the country] as an arcadia for the tourist, the golfer and the fisherman'.[188] Unlike the Free State Pavilion,

[183] 'Ulster at the Empire Exhibition', *Northern Whig*, 11 January 1938.
[184] Ibid; 'Disgraceful', *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 August 1938.
[185] 'Ulster at the Empire Exhibition', *Northern Whig.*
[186] *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 79.
[187] J. Ruane and J. Todd, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict and Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1996), especially Chapter Six, p. 150-177 for the impact of violence on post-war reconstruction. See also, M. E. Daly, *Industrial Development and Irish National Identity, 1922-1939* (Syracuse, NY, 1992), p. 37-58 for the economic depression in the Free State.
[188] 'Ulster at the Empire Exhibition', *Northern Whig*.

Northern Ireland wanted to 'make known both the present productive resources and the untapped potentialities of the Province' and not simply celebrate its current state.[189] The priorities of the two parts of Ireland were notably demarcated; the Free State championed its independent wares and Northern Ireland continued to solicit trade and investment allied to Britain.

The reception of Northern Ireland's Pavilion in 1938 resembled the divisive responses to the country's exhibits in the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. The *Official Catalogue* declared that 'Ulster is strongly represented […] emphasising her identity as part of the United Kingdom' and whilst the King, Lord Craigavon and 'several distinguished visitors' received 'great satisfaction' by the exhibits, Alderman Henderson (of a Unionist background) described the display as a 'disgraceful inefficiency'.[190] He complained that financial contributions had been 'squandered and destroyed' and denounced the exhibit as occupying '… merely a corner'.[191] Henderson claimed that there was only 'a few dummy bottles of whisky and "not enough rope to put up a line for a dozen people in a side street"'.[192] He emphasised that it was the country's exhibits that bore fault not the country's industry as 'the greatest linen place in Northern Ireland [had less space than] a Belfast shop window'.[193]

Contrastingly, Henderson described the Free State exhibit as 'equal to any of the Dominions of the British Commonwealth of Nations'. He ended by stating that 'At the Free

[189] Ibid.
[190] *Official Catalogue of the British Empire Exhibition*, p. 79; 'Visit to Ulster Pavilion. Chorus of Praise for a Striking Exhibit', *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 May 1938; 'Disgraceful', *Belfast News-Letter*. The latter article was also printed in *Northern Whig*, 3 August 1938.
[191] 'Disgraceful', *Belfast News-Letter*. See also, 'Criticism at Belfast City Council. Corner in Pavilion', *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 August 1938.
[192] Ibid. See also, 'Ulster Exhibit Criticised', *Northern Whig*, 3 August 1938.
[193] Ibid.

State Pavilion the visitors were given bundles of pamphlets but at the Ulster Stand they got nothing, "not even a glass of water"'.[194] There is no evidence that 'tens of thousands of Ulster-men bowed their heads in shame when they saw the display' but the response highlights the polarised opinions of Northern Irish citizens.[195] Some who perceived the country's union with Britain as a productive relationship perhaps saw the benefits of an integrated display within the Empire's exhibits. Whilst others who may have wanted a more independent outlook for Northern Ireland possibly desired an autonomous set of exhibits.[196] Northern Ireland's disputed reception broadly revealed the contested politics of visitors to the Glasgow Exhibition.

Importantly, comparing the two Irish displays immediately placed the Northern Ireland exhibits at a disadvantage as the Free State Pavilion was on a Dominion scale. In the same way that comparing London's display in 1851 and Dublin's in 1853 offered unfair comparisons due to the contexts of the respective countries. Northern Ireland's exhibit was disjointed because it was separated in the Agricultures, Fisheries and Forestry Pavilion and the Industries, Shipping and Travel Pavilion. Sir Crawford was not alone in suggesting that it would have been 'much better […] to have had the two together'.[197] Therefore, visitor responses reflected immediate judgments more useful for appraising their politics and the concerns of the exhibitions organisers.

[194] Ibid. See also, 'Ulster Pavilion at Glasgow. Portadown Disappointed', *Northern Whig*, 18 January 1938.
[195] Ibid. See also, 'Ulster and Publicity', *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 August 1938.
[196] See, S. Elliott, 'The Northern Ireland electoral system: a vehicle for disputation' in P. Roche and B. Barton (eds.), *The Northern Ireland Question: Nationalism, Unionism and Partition* (Kent, 1999), pp. 122-138.
[197] 'A Good Show', *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 August 1938.

There were early plans for Northern Ireland to join with the Free State in 1938 and expand its display by demanding 'the rights and privileges of the British Commonwealth of Nations' however, this was decided against due to irreconcilable differences between the two countries.[198] Northern Ireland's prioritisation of its Union with Britain set against the Free State in the Glasgow Exhibition may be explained by historian Henry Patterson's discussion on Unionism. Unionist propaganda during the Home Rule period, notes Patterson, emphasised the distinctive traits of the Protestant population as creating economic development since they were the 'embodiment of honesty, hard work, resolution and resourcefulness' compared to the 'lazy' Irish Catholics.[199] Such historical prejudices partially continued in the post-1920 era following partition.

Efforts to emulate this narrative in Glasgow may explain the presentation of Irish exhibits in Britain's Pavilions to illustrate the closeness between Protestant England and Northern Ireland. Moreover, some Unionists explained Irish economic and social underdevelopment as the result of Catholic violence and perceived criminality.[200] This may have underscored desires to present the country as separate and distant from the Free State in interwar exhibitions. Northern Ireland's display within Britain's exhibits pointed to the hold of historical discourses related to the 'regional and psychological distinctiveness' of Northern Ireland as well as broader political and religious tensions with the Free State.[201] Northern Irish organisers refused concession to Free State identification in a heightening of nationalist tension between the two countries.

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[198] 'Disgraceful', *Belfast News-Letter*.
[199] H. Patterson, 'Unionism, 1921-72' in A. Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 692-710, p. 692.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.

Irish citizens from industrialists to councillors disagreed over Northern Ireland's display in the clearest example of the continuing tensions surrounding the new nation. Some celebrated that there was 'no dull corner' in Northern Ireland's display.[202] Over 35,000 visitors signed the visitor's book and many commented on the whisky-distilling exhibit as a highlight.[203] The butteries exhibit uniquely featured an Irish homestead modelled in butter by a local trader named Bickerdite and the *Northern Whig* reported that it was 'a definite hit with visitors'.[204] Yet, Councillor F. Lavery amongst others argued that the display did not 'show that Ulster was the centre of five of the largest industries […] in the world' and Councillor J. Kilpatrick described the exhibits as in 'no man's land'.[205] Finally Guy Locock, Director of the Federation of British Industries exclaimed that the linen display was a 'revelation […] for beauty both of colour and texture' and the General Manager of the Export Credit Guarantee Department 'congratulated Northern Ireland on the excellence of the display'.[206] Overall, issues of the Union and the broader question of partition plagued the country's display in 1938 and created passionate disavowals as well as laudatory appraisals representing larger trends of a contested Northern Irishness.

It is interesting to consider whether the lack of support from Irish industrialists, businesspersons and municipalities could be explained by the *Belfast News-Letter's* speculation that there was undue reliance on government with a 'spirit of helplessness possess[ing] the community' in the interwar years.[207] However, this broadly reveals the continued influence of free trade discourses that were popular in the nineteenth century and

[202] 'Ulster Pavilion', *Northern Whig*, 27 April 1938.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid; 'A Definite "Hit" with Visitors', *Northern Whig*, 5 May 1938.
[205] 'The Ulster Exhibit at Glasgow. Strong criticism. Disgrace to the Province', *Northern Whig*, 3 August 1938.
[206] 'A Definite "Hit" with Visitors', *Northern Whig.*
[207] 'Ulster and Publicity', *Belfast News-Letter*.

held the individual to be responsible for industry and progress rather than the state. Northern Ireland's economy suffered significantly in the 1920s and 30s; the staple industries of the country were left to expire, there were problems of rebuilding after violent conflict and the country's natural resources were not being mined.[208] Within this context, the country's less extensive and disseminated set of exhibits in 1938 and the conflicting opinions on Northern Ireland's display reflected larger discontent with the Northern Irish Government by its citizens and hostility to the Free State in a Unionist nationalism.

1939 NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

The New York World's Fair of 1939 (30 April 1939 to 27 October 1940) was the last official international exhibition in the twentieth century. The Irish Free State and Northern Ireland featured in the display albeit separately.[209] Continuing the trend of previous exhibitions, Northern Ireland presented its Union with Britain as central to its political and cultural identity whilst the Free State used experimental architecture to illustrate the success of independence. The Fair presented a 'clear, unified and comprehensive picture of the epochal achievements of […] civilization in the fields of art and literature, of science and industry, of government and the social services' – this time over a mammoth 1,000 acres to over forty-four million visitors.[210] The event was described as 'Futuropolis' with its focus on technical progress and the two countries depicted their national histories and present industries within a

[208] Patterson, 'Unionism', p. 692.
[209] *Prospectus of the New York World's Fair, 1939*. Created and supervised by Lord and Thomas, and the Administrative Staff of the New York World's Fair 1939 Incorporated (New York, 1939). There are no page numbers. Shelf mark: X 1187. British Library. See, N. J. Cull, 'Overture to an Alliance: British Propaganda at the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940', *Journal of British Studies*, 36: 3 (1997), pp. 325-354. Cull argues that Britain attempted to use the fair as a way to solicit American support against Nazi Germany in the lead up to World War II.
[210] *Prospectus of the New York World's Fair*. See also, M. Duranti, 'Utopia, Nostalgia and World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4: 4 (2006), pp. 663-683 and R. Wurts, *The New York World's Fair, 1939-1940: in 155 Photographs* (New York, 1978).

vast technological modernity.[211] This was the final amalgamation of a displayed Irishness in the interwar period.

Questions of Free State participation created heated discussion between the exhibition's organisers and the Free State government. In 1935 the Irish Consul in New York, Leo T. McCauley, invited Ireland to participate in the 1939 Fair; however both this and the official invitation sent to the Irish Department of External Affairs a year later were ignored.[212] In 1937 the Consul again beseeched the Secretary of the Department arguing that: 'The question of prestige is involved and the absence of an official Irish government would be noted and resented especially by the Irish-American population of New York'.[213] After intense deliberation, in August 1937 Ireland agreed to take part in the 1939 Fair. Historian Sean Rothery explains that there was 'energetic lobbying and manoeuvring to make absolutely sure that Ireland's Pavilion would be as far away as possible from anything to do with "Empire"'.[214] The display thus became an essential part of de Valera's broader policies to establish an Irish nationhood in the 1930s removed from the British Empire.

There were a few complications to de Valera's independent politics in New York. Rothery has discussed a coded telegram sent to the Irish Consul General in Washington which detailed that the Irish space 'should be entirely apart' from the British Empire in the fairground.[215] The British Foreign Office proposed a section 'showing as much as we can of

[211] P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles. Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988), p. 24.
[212] Letter from Patrick McCartan to Joseph McGarrity regarding the setting up of an Executive Committee to organise Ireland's participation in the World Fair to be held in New York in 1939, 15 June 1936. Shelf mark: MS 17,457/241. National Library of Ireland.
[213] Cited in S. Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900-1940* (Dublin, 1991), p. 222.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Cited in Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture*, p. 222.

the British Isles and Empire, our way of life; its foundations, development, enduring qualities, dignity and harmony'.[216] Ireland was unwillingly included in this project. However, in the end, Ireland's Pavilion sat on a site shared with Denmark, close to the US Federal Building and removed from Britain's Pavilion.[217] Michael Scott was appointed architect of the Free State Pavilion in June 1938 under the instruction to present something 'Irish'; he was made an honorary citizen of New York after the Fair.[218] Unlike the displays of Ireland in nineteenth century Chicago, Ireland's exhibit did not focus on Irish Americans and was aimed at a global audience to unveil a modern independent nation. Issues of dislocation were not as pressing a concern to interwar (and later) Irish migrants since they were not escaping from tragedy or famine and successive waves of relocation had formed substantial communities of Irish-Americans.[219]

Scott worked with American architect L. H. Bucknell (designer of the Irish Pavilion at Glasgow) to plan the country's display.[220] Scott has been described by Paul Larmour as 'a committed modernist and [an] active advocate of the "new architecture" in Ireland'.[221] The Irish Pavilion was notable for its arresting architecture (**Figure 4.7**). The front of the building was largely made out of glass and Irish flags flew prominently on the lawn. Nature was absent in this image, with only a single tree present, which reflected the organisers' desire to convey an urban Irish modernity. A solitary couple drawn in front of the pavilion epitomised a minimalist aesthetic with the open space and sparse objects illustrating an expansive

[216] Cited in Cull, 'British Propaganda at the New York World's Fair', p. 332.
[217] Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture*, p. 224.
[218] P. Larmour, *Free State Architecture: Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922-1949* (Cork, 2009), p. 66.
[219] See, L. D. Almeida, 'Irish America, 1940-2000' in J. J. Lee and M. R. Casey (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York, 2007), pp. 548-573.
[220] See, J. O'Regan and N. Dearey (eds.), *Michael Scott, Architect, in (Casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale, 1995), pp. 96-102.
[221] Larmour, *Free State Architecture*, p. 62.

Irishness. Many visual tricks operated in the building. For instance, the all-white building was shamrock-shaped but only from the air. Moreover, the entrance was painted green and had an orange hood over it – depending on the viewer's perspective it transformed itself into an Irish flag. Therefore, emblems of Ireland were concealed throughout and if visitors stood in the right place or looked in a particular direction they were able to see these illusions of Irishness. The structure was deceptive in its simplicity and obscurity and its architects creatively showcased their country. The experimental modernist design sought to symbolically position the Free State alongside the world's powers in 1939, which was already conferred practically by the country's seat on the Council of the League.

Ireland's modernist project decisively offered a separate identity from Britain in a continuation of priorities from earlier interwar exhibitions. For instance, Irish motifs circulated throughout the pavilion with an outside pool that resembled the entire map of Ireland and a statue of Éire on the lawn by sculptor Frederick Herkner. Moreover, Scott explained that the shamrock-shaped design fitted the brief given by the Department of External Affairs to create a distinctive Irishness.[222] Fintan Cullen has argued that the 'traditionalism of the clichéd shamrock was balanced by the uncompromising modernism of steel and glass'.[223] The recognisable Irishness portrayed in the New York Fair traded in popular touristic images of the country that may have furthered national stereotypes. For those interested in self-fashioning Irishness, it seemed that exploiting nation-wide prejudices was a worthwhile cost in the quest for an affable and convincing Irish identity (apart from the Empire).

[222] Cited in Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture*, p. 226. See, *Michael John Scott Drawings, 1937-39*. Shelf mark: 0079/010.001/001-104. Irish Architectural Archive.
[223] F. Cullen, *Ireland on Show: Art, Union, Nationhood* (London, 2012), p. 174.

As was the case in 1938, Ireland's modernity was balanced with its art and culture. The 8,000 square feet pavilion contained a gigantic mural by Sean Keating titled 'The Shannon Basin'. The Ardnacrusha power plant harnessed the energy of the River Shannon and bought electricity to some of the remotest districts in the South of Ireland in what became a symbolic scheme of Ireland's innovation and strength.[224] Keating's mural has been described by Malloy as an 'explicit combination of patriotism, realist style, and technological innovation' acting as a 'tribute to Irish modernisation'.[225] Building on the technological and artistic showcase, bays with exhibits of both an 'industrial and cultural' nature featured in the stylish Irish Pavilion to extend the Free State's prowess.[226]

As in past exhibits an authentic Irishness was sought. There was extended correspondence about setting up a hand-loom to demonstrate the weaving of Irish homespuns in the Irish Pavilion as in 1890s Chicago.[227] However the weavers Richard and Thomas Senier of Boston, Massachusetts practised hand weaving in the United States and McCauley decided that this compromised claims of an authentic Ireland and, even though they trained at Clifden, Connemara the American residents did not feature in the display.[228] The seriousness with which claims to a past Irishness were taken is highlighted in this exchange. Whilst

[224] For a discussion on the Shannon Scheme, see Larmour, *Free State Architecture*, p. 13-17. Also, S. O'Brien, *Powering the Nation: Images of the Shannon Scheme and the Electrification of Ireland* (Dublin, 2017); P. Larmour, '"The Drunken Man of Genius": William A. Scott (1871-1921)', *Irish Architectural Review*, 3 (2001), pp. 28-41.
[225] Malloy, 'Exhibiting Ireland', p. 263-264.
[226] 'The Book of Kells. Suggestion that it should be shown in New York', *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 April 1938. Documents related to Ireland's participation in New York ranged from petitions for exhibits to costs and the discussion of shipping. These were all filed under one shelf mark at the National Archives of Ireland and I will only use the title from now on. Many of these texts had multiple folios. *New York World's Fair, 1939*. Shelf mark: CO 852/243/12. National Archives of Ireland.
[227] R. Senior, Boston, Demonstration of Irish Hand Weaving in the Irish Pavilion at the New York World Fair. 8/12/38. 25/12/38. 28/12/39. 2/8/1. See, Exhibit at New York World Fair dealing with the Irish Horse. 8/11/38; 15/12/38; 18/11/38; 20/12/38; 16/2/39; 20/3/38; 13/6/38.
[228] Letter by L. T. McCauley to Consulate General of Ireland, Chrysler Building, New York, 28 November 1938. 307/1/38.

financially profitable motifs of Irishness (related to rural industries) persisted throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – questions of authenticity also remained a central concern for exhibition organisers.[229]

As the country's final display, Ireland's ambition to develop 'a more modern type of […] agricultural economy, reducing its abject dependence [o]n the potato' after the tragedy of the Famine was authoritatively imagined in the well-crafted image of an Irish past, present and future in the 1939 display.[230] The 'World of Tomorrow' did allow for history and the Ardagh Chalice and Tara Brooch loaned from the Victoria and Albert Museum featured in an exhibit of early Celtic craftsmanship.[231] Overall, 1939 exemplified the Free State's assertive representation as an independent Irish nation in the exhibitions of the interwar period.

Interwar Irish exhibitions notably coincided with the formation of a thriving Irish tourist industry and the two projects reinforced each other. Tourism was increasingly democratised in the interwar years for the middle and working classes who generally had more time and disposable income for leisure.[232] The Irish Tourism Association (ITA) was founded by the Free State government in 1925, as Eric Zuelow has shown, to centralise the

[229] Padraic Colum, a well-known Irish poet living in New York, suggested an old Bardic poem titled 'Amergin's Invocation', to be put on a plaque at the entrance of Ireland's Pavilion, in old Irish and in English translation. It conjured evocative images of the 'land of Ireland' with a wistful desire to see the 'fertile sea', the 'mountain', and the 'woods' of the country. However, the plaque was not erected due to delays in communication. Financially profitable motifs of Irishness (related to rural industries) and connectedness to the land that were explored in Chapter One's discussion of bogwood continued to 1939. Letter by L. T. McCauley to the Consulate General of Ireland, Department of External Affairs, 29 March 1939. DFA/4/238/62. Letters from F. H. Boland, 15 April, 25 April, 29 April 1939. 235/100.
[230] P. Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 211.
[231] Letter to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 21 March 1938, 19 December 1938, 23 February 1939, 15 March 1939, 9 October 1940 all discussed the immediate return of the replicas to the Victoria and Albert Museum and the insurance taken out. DFA/4/238/160.
[232] I. Furlong, *Irish Tourism 1880-1980* (Dublin, 2009) and M. Ryle, *Journeys in Ireland: Literary Travellers, Rural Landscapes, Cultural Relations* (London, 1999).

infrastructure of travel and accommodation in Ireland. A complex bureaucratic structure advertised affordable rail and air connections, liaised with hotels and established tourist information centres.[233] Demonstrating the desire to make Ireland accessible for travel, a guidebook on tourism was sold at the Irish Pavilion in New York. The book revealed 'life of a country […] which only those who visit it can ever really know and understand' according to Éamon de Valera.[234] *Commemorating Ireland's Participation* (1939) illustrates the similarities between the Irish exhibition project and the tourism enterprise. Everything in Ireland, from its landscape, to its history, its lifestyle and culture was made available for international tourism.

There was significant debate on the type of Ireland to advertise in the interwar period. Zuelow has shown that Irish tourism officials largely sought to offer difference and a 'distinctive Gaelicism' to holiday makers.[235] An Irish 'foreignness' was partly constructed based on an Irish history. In a similar style, organisers of Irish exhibitions were concerned with cultivating a specific Irish language, history and landscape. For instance, tourism literature highlighted innumerable examples of 'Hiberno-Romanesque style' churches and doorways.[236] The 1939 Fair also featured objects of an ancient Irish Christianity. Together, both the exhibition and the tourist business invited visitors to observe an Irish Christian

[233] E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse, NY, 2009), p. 4.
[234] *Commemorating Ireland's Participation at the World's Fair, New York, 1939* (Dublin, 1938). There are no page numbers. Shelf mark: LO 5172. National Library of Ireland.
[235] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish,* p. xxiii. See, M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 2008) for how these 'othering' processes were mirrored in travel writing.
[236] 'An Ancient Cathedral Doorway', *Commemorating Ireland's Participation*.

history – 'relics of the past to quicken the imagination' such as Celtic crosses, chapels and round towers whether in a pavilion or the country itself.[237]

In the Fair and in tourism literature Irish bodies were used to sell an attractive Ireland. An 'Irish friendliness', notes Zuelow, became a 'positive "other" to the harried people of industrial Europe and America' in popular tourist discourse.[238] Moreover, *Commemorating Ireland's Participation* noted that 'girls […] trained in dairying and poultry keeping' were common to Ireland.[239] In both instances, the attractiveness of Irish women in particular famed for their beauty and hospitality functioned to authenticate Irishness. The allure of Irish bodies reveals that the Brown brothers' earlier efforts to encourage tourism to Ireland by conflating an Irish land and its people was consolidated in the 1920s and 30s. Discourse on an authentic Irishness embodied efforts to exclusively employ Irishmen and women as trade ambassadors in interwar Irish exhibitions.[240] Tropes of Ireland used by contemporaries thereby created exports of Irishness for entertainment purposes within capitalist structures of display or travel. Simultaneous initiatives to heighten the commodification of the country's people and its attractions therefore emerged for international consumption.

Historiography on Irish tourism has shown that Gaelic lettering, language and costume signified Irish 'foreignness'.[241] An Irish difference was evoked in the shamrock building at New York and the distinct symbols of Éire constructed in 1939. Benedict Anderson's theory

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[237] Cited in 'Celtic Cross', *Commemorating Ireland's Participation*. See also, 'Ruins at Glendalough', 'County Wicklow'; 'A Round Tower by the Sea'; 'Cross at Monasterboice'; 'Ireland's Most Perfect Ruin'; 'Ireland's Holy Mountain'.
[238] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish,* p. xxxii. See, M. Clancy, *Brand New Ireland?: Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic* (London, 2009), especially Chapter Five, pp. 81-98.
[239] 'Pleasure and Profit', *Commemorating Ireland's Participation*.
[240] See, 'Ulster at the Empire Exhibition', *Northern Whig*.
[241] Moulton, *Irish in Interwar England*, p. 196-205.

of ‘imagined communities’ as the essence of nationalism has informed Zuelow’s conception that ‘nations are always in process, always changing’.[242] This changing process ensured that adaptability became central to Irish identity which transformed itself ‘from a revolutionary identity to a state building one’ during the interwar years.[243] An Irish mutability can be mapped onto its exhibition throughout the period, for instance, the Free State used its exhibits in the 1930s to heighten the country’s distance from the British Empire to emphasise its independence in both economic and social spheres. This was part of de Valera’s larger negotiation of dominion status within the Commonwealth. In contrast during the 1920s and 30s, Northern Ireland’s state building efforts constructed a closeness with the British Empire and the country’s exhibits highlighted the mutual benefits of trade with the United Kingdom.

An apolitical utopia emerged within the fairground and tourism to the country – both branded Ireland as safe, inviting and welcoming for visitors. Past conflicts were replaced, as Zuelow demonstrates, with stories of a ‘united Irish people [that had] a proud legacy of saints and scholars rather than a long-standing penchant for violent confrontation’.[244] Interestingly, Ireland’s display in New York occurred shortly after the IRA’s bombing campaign in England and was decidedly overlooked in contemporary reports of the 1939 Fair. On 12 January 1939 the IRA gave an ultimatum to the British government demanding solutions to partition and when no response was made the IRA set off planned bombs in Birmingham, London, and Manchester (cities with large Irish populations) with further attacks on the electrical grid system. One man died in Manchester. The police response was swift but the campaign continued on an ad hoc basis throughout the spring and summer of 1939. The attacks spread

[242] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. xxx.
[243] Ibid. See, B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), p. 49.
[244] Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. xxxii.

throughout Liverpool, Coventry, Lancashire and Cheshire. The final and bloodiest iteration of the bombing campaign occurred in late August with an explosion in Coventry that injured hundreds and killed five people.[245] Consequently the Prevention of Violence Act gave the British Home Secretary powers to 'deport, exclude and detain any persons who he [*sic*] was satisfied were engaged in the IRA campaign' and required 'all Irish citizens on the mainland' to register with police.[246] Events of the bombing and the British government's suppression of it led to the end of the IRA in Britain but it was not mentioned in the press or in responses to Ireland's exhibits in New York. A non-partisan fantasy created by exhibition organisers persisted in Ireland's displays from the 1850s to the 1930s for the benefit of visitors.

The projects to construct Ireland in tourism and exhibitions had many similarities and both solicited visits to the country. Common motifs of Irishness related to an Irish self and Irish objects circulated in the two forums. The nation building project of the island was enacted through exhibits and the founding of commercial tourism. The tensions of partition were ignored in both tourism and exhibition literature. As in the 1939 New York Fair and the international exhibitions that preceded it, tourism to Ireland promised visitors experiences of a wholesome, authentic Ireland. Irish self-fashioning within its exhibitions and popular tourism mutually created an attractive Ireland for consumption related to the land and its people. Whilst New York was the last fair of the period, the tourist business grew steadily through the 1930s and the Irish Tourist Board was established in 1939 (budget of half a million).[247]

[245] Moulton, *Irish in Interwar England*, p. 307-309.
[246] J. Bailkin, 'Leaving Home: The Politics of Deportation in Postwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 47: 4 (2008), pp. 852-882, p. 873; R. Swift and S. Campbell, 'The Irish in Britain' in E. F. Biagini and M. E. Daly (eds.), *Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 515-533, p. 525-526.
[247] See, S. Thompson, "'Not Only Beef, But Beauty …'": Tourism, Dependency, and the Post-colonial Irish State, 1925-30' in M. Cronin and B. O'Connor (eds.), *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture, and Identity* (Toronto, 2003), pp. 263-281, p. 281.

Northern Ireland continued its Unionist project in the New York World's Fair in the Pavilion of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the British Colonial Empire (**Figure 4.8**). Northern Ireland's exhibits were next to the maritime hall and a bandstand further into the Pavilion. Visitors walked through the royal room, silver room and Westminster Bridge to observe Ireland's goods. The first floor contained the exhibits of Australia, New Zealand and the British Colonial Empire. The second floor held Britain's exhibits (which included Ireland in the Gallery Hall). Britain used the Pavilion to narrate a history of its exceptionalism that began in the early Christian epoch up to the contemporary period. A royal room contained historic books such as the New Testament in Greek and a popular replica exhibit of the crown jewels of Britain featured a sceptre, staff, crowns, diamonds and rubies.

The careful construction of Britain's history featured the Union with Ireland in its story. For instance, in the Maritime Hall recesses contained models of the Lincoln Cathedral in England, the Stirling Castle in Scotland, the Caernarvon Castle in Wales and the Carrickfergus Castle in Northern Ireland. Carrickfergus was an Irish seaport town situated on the north shore of Belfast lough and on the south-eastern border of County Antrim. The castle stood on a rock and was 'reputed to have been founded by John de Courcy in the twelfth century [during] the partial conquest and settlement of Ireland under Henry II' according to the *Guide to the Pavilion*.[248] Evidently, within the 1939 display Northern Ireland was entirely (and *willingly*) subsumed in the project of Britishness.

[248] *Guide to the Pavilion of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the British Colonial Empire: New York World's Fair, 1939* (New York, 1939), p. 51. Shelf mark: 7960.df.20. British Library.

The Northern Irish section in New York replicated the conventions of past exhibits by featuring woollen goods, Irish linen, fine china and leather. Members of the Irish Linen Guild, Belfast organised an exhibit as was standard practice. By 1939 Northern Ireland had a monopoly in the international market for textiles and the *Guide to the Pavilion* celebrated that the 'wool of the small hardy Irish sheep […] favour[ed] the production of rough, sturdy fabrics'.[249] The Irish Linen exhibit claimed that linen had its 'first beginnings in ancient Egypt' and had been a staple in 'Ireland since at least the thirteenth century'.[250] This archaic history conjured images of 'crofters' wives' who '[sat] before their cottages using spinning wheels which b[ore] the indelible mark of time' and the trade's survival through 'skilled craftsmanship [with] modern methods'– was presented as a triumph of the interwar period.[251] Such stories heightened the attractiveness of the material – an emphasis on the singular Irish origin and character of the fabric boosted sales of Irish linen in New York. The author relayed the contemporary practice of linen-making which involved 'girls drawing threads by hand' who then passed the fabric 'to the country districts where the embroidering [wa]s carried out carefully'.[252] The display revealed the success of the project to sustain rural industries that spread with Lady Aberdeen and Alice Hart in 1890s Chicago. A valuable network of Irish homespuns distinctive to Northern Ireland thereby circulated through discourse and sales.

Northern Ireland's display in New York was similar to its previous representations in international exhibitions; however there was no sustained criticism or praise. This may have been because an exhibition in the United States received less traction in the British and Irish press and so the Fair received less attention in Britain and Ireland. Northern Ireland continued

[249] Ibid., p. 54.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid., p. 55.

its portrayal as allied to Britain for trade, commerce and national prestige in the 1939 Fair with a focus on its specialist industry, linen. Over 14,320,000 visitors attended the British Pavilion and of this it is unclear how many visited the Irish section.[253] Northern Ireland's membership of the Union saw it celebrate the British monarchy; during the royal visit on 10 June 1939, 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Rule Britannia' were sung with gusto and 'Union Jacks flew everywhere'.[254] The country's last show in international exhibitions vociferously showcased its nationalist home in the Union to a global audience.

CONCLUSION

'All the nations flying the Union Jack will take part…' is the title to this chapter and reveals the central contention of Ireland's participation in international exhibitions.[255] Exhibitions were imperial in nature; they emerged in 1851 to celebrate Britain's Empire and for countries to vie for increased trade with various colonies and international businesses. However, exhibitions in the interwar period were adapted and modified for broader participation, specifically in the case of Ireland where they became a notable way for the countries to evoke their distinct relationships to Britain.

In the exhibitions of the 1920s, the image of Ireland was dominated by Northern Ireland and its Union with Britain as the Free State refused to participate. Symbols of Ireland related to Irish industries (such as linen and shipping) became important for profit and capitalism. Northern Ireland expressly used exhibitions to demonstrate its allegiance to the United Kingdom to further its trade and national standing. However, some Irish citizens

[253] Cited in Cull, 'British Propaganda at the New York World's Fair', p. 346.
[254] Ibid., p. 347.
[255] *British Empire Exhibition*.

critiqued this imperial identification as sacrificing and obfuscating the power and autonomy of Northern Ireland, which revealed the ongoing nationalist tensions of the Unionist project. Broader discontent with the Northern Irish government by its citizens and antagonism to the Free State underscored the country's disputed display and reception in a revealing post-partition endeavour of state-making.

Exhibitions of the 1930s saw a narrative shift as the Free State embraced exhibitions in their nation building project. Irish cultural and political nationalism materialised in the exhibits. Organisers constructed displays of traditional arts and crafts alongside technological advancement and history to bolster their new country. They rejected past depictions of Irishness and espoused a confident portrayal of Ireland. The country's dominion status in the Commonwealth was negotiated and set apart from the British Empire. Further the Eucharistic Congress formed part of the larger processes of emphasising the country's independence and Catholicism in a moment of 'arrival' and celebration. The Irish nation was formed cumulatively through its exhibits and festivities as thriving under its new-claimed sovereignty.

For both the Free State and Northern Ireland, exhibitions were a platform to create new forms of Ireland and Irishness in the interwar period. The two countries presented discrete images of themselves to global audiences and, whilst Northern Ireland maintained its geographical separation, the Free State visualised the unification of the island of Ireland (along the lines of external association). Traditional motifs of Ireland were coupled alongside modern achievements to stimulate consumption of product and person. Distinct visions of industry, modernity, urbanity, authenticity, and rusticity were deployed according to specific

needs. The common visual geographies in the Irish exhibition project and the Irish tourist industry revealed similar concerns in creating and profiting from Irishness in a mutually reinforced enterprise to solicit visits to the country.

By analysing how Irishness was crafted in exhibitions the importance of cultural history in understanding interwar Ireland is revealed. The project of Irishness was divided along Catholic and Protestant, Free State and Northern Irish, Nationalist and Unionist lines. International exhibitions were important in the formation of Irishness after formal empire and they became an important forum through which an Irishness was debated and imagined. Different political and ideological positions on empire worked themselves out in the display whether through the exhibits or the subsequent reception of the country's display. The politics of Irish exhibitions sought a collective experience for Irishmen and women and international visitors. As the final display of Ireland before the outbreak of WWII, interwar Irish exhibitions notably revealed how Irishness was being conceived, contested and performed.

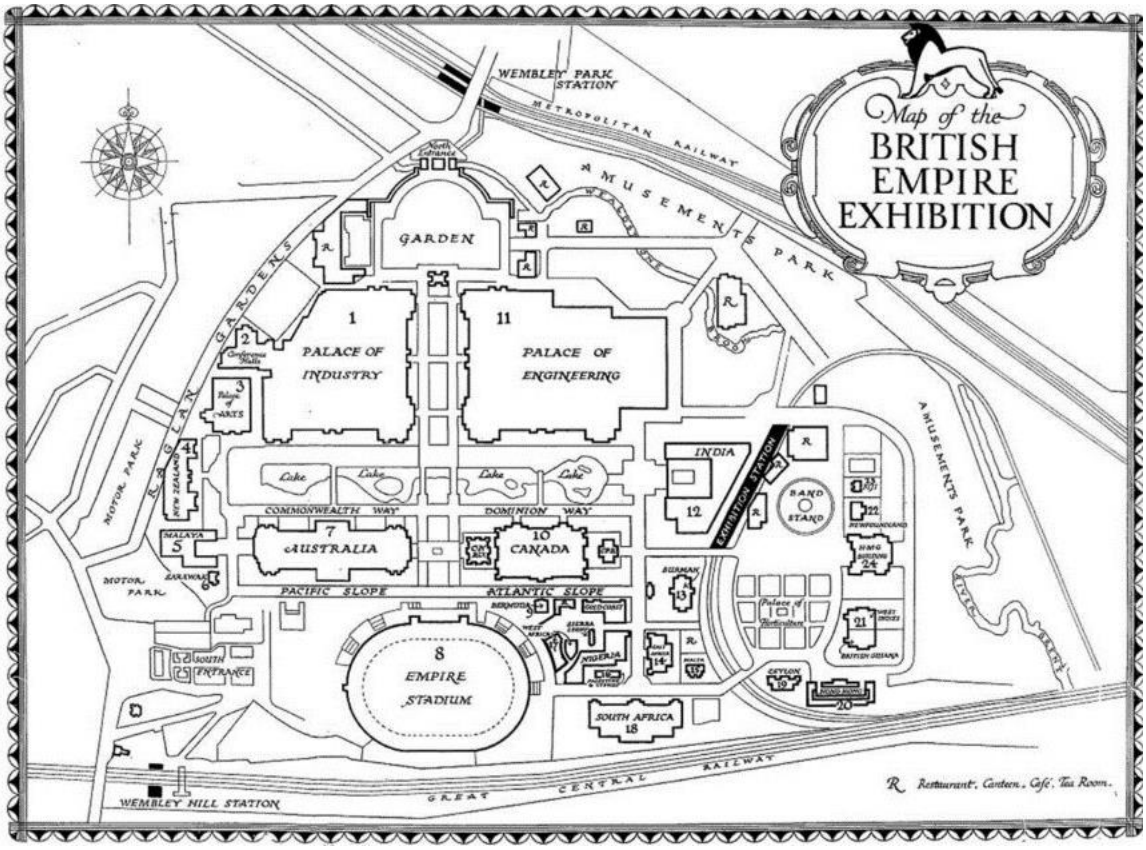

Figure 4.1. 'Map of the British Empire Exhibition', *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition, 1924* (London, 1924), p. 6. Shelf mark: W66/0147. British Library.

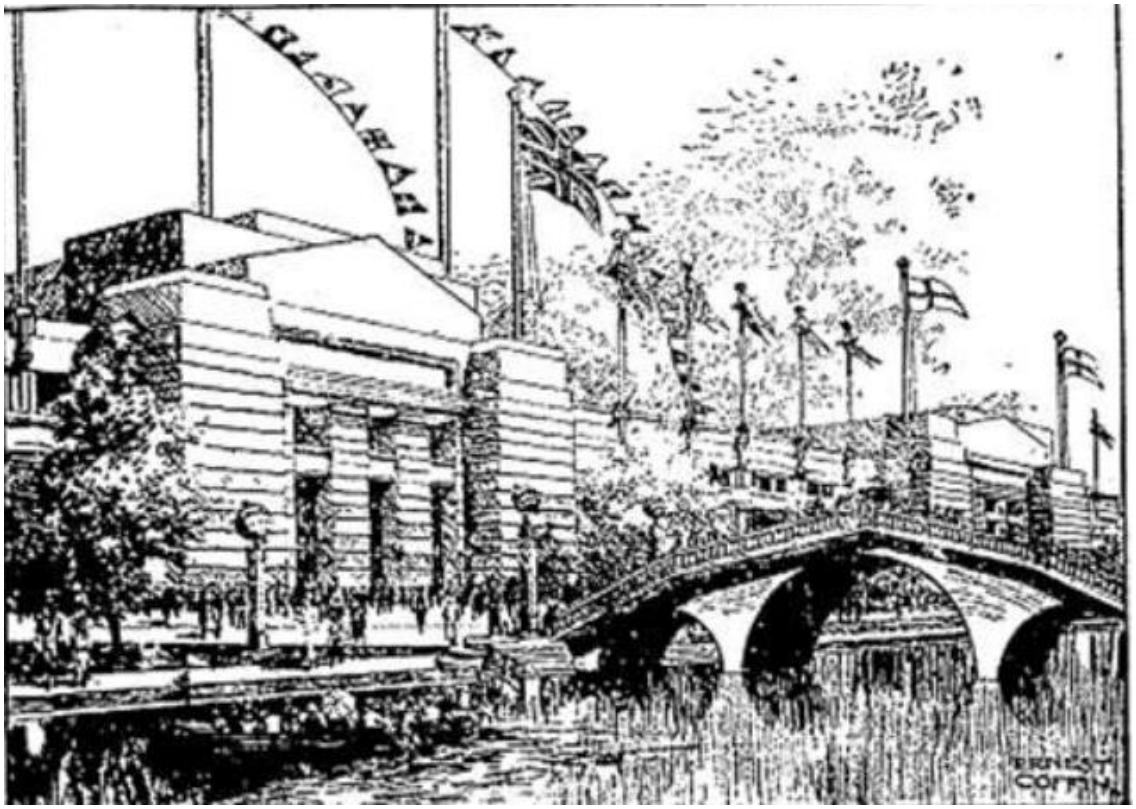

Figure 4.2. ‘Palace of Industry’, *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition, 1924*, p. 23.

Figure 4.3. 'Plan of Exhibition', *Official Catalogue of the Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938* (Glasgow, 1938), p. 3. Shelf mark: W15/4654. British Library.

Figure 4.4. 'Irish Pavilion', *Official Guide of the Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938* (Glasgow, 1938), p. 142. Shelf mark: W15/4655. British Library.

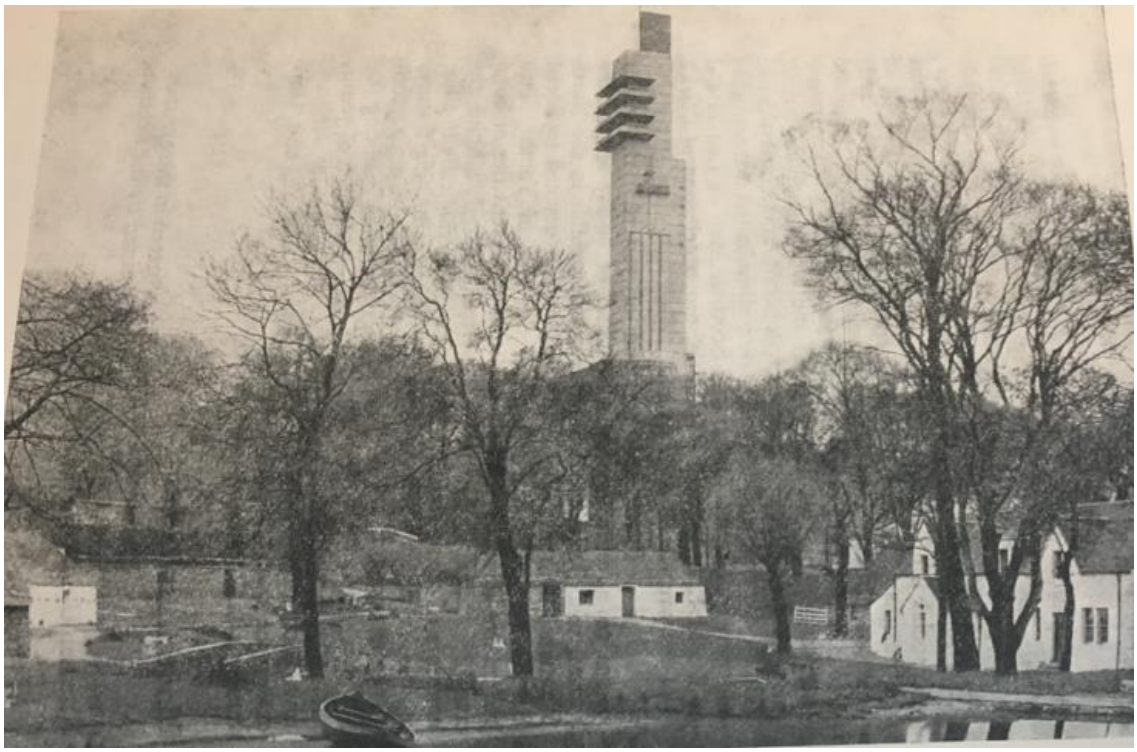

Figure 4.5. 'A Corner of the Clachan', *Official Guide of the Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938*, p. 120.

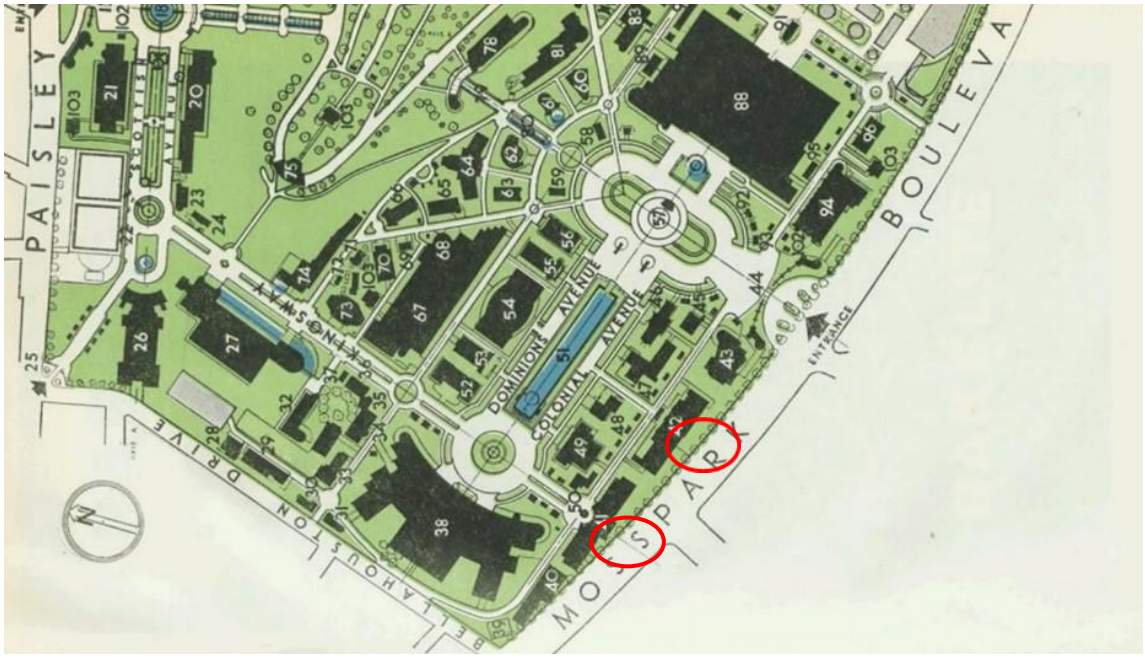

Figure 4.6. '41: Industries, Shipping and Travel. 42: Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry', *Official Guide of the Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938*, p. 3.

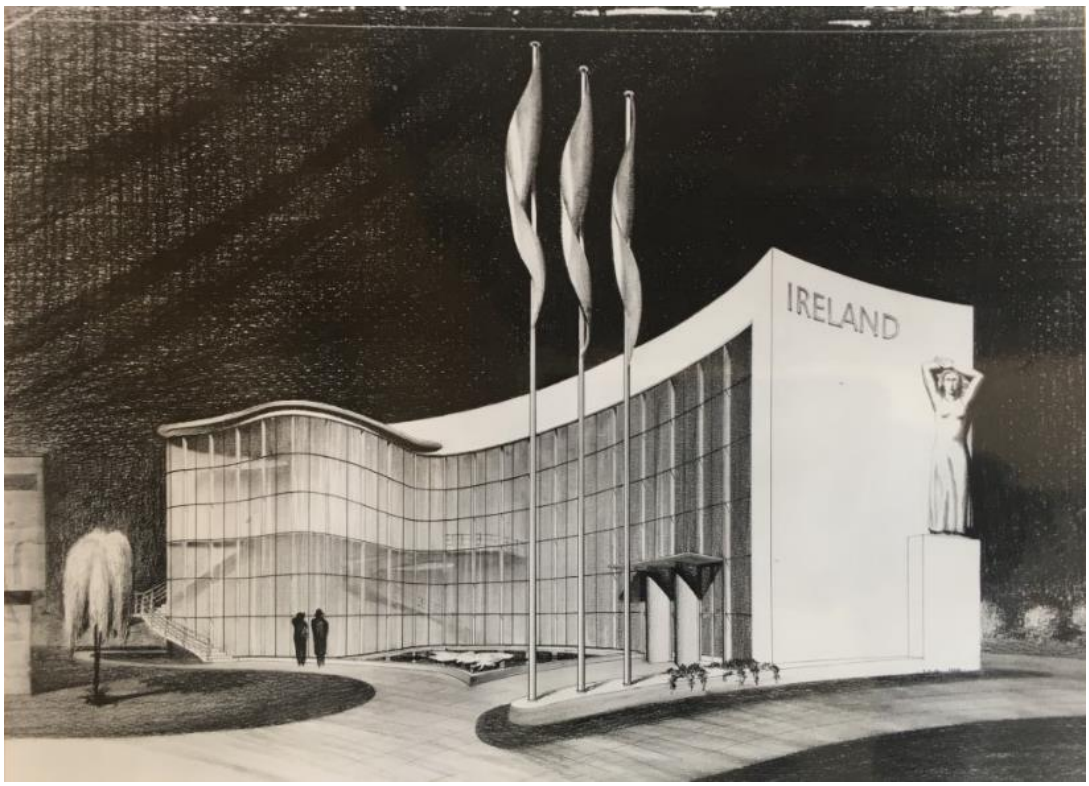

Figure 4.7. *Michael Scott's Drawings* (1937-1939). Shelf mark: 0079/010.001/001-104. Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin.

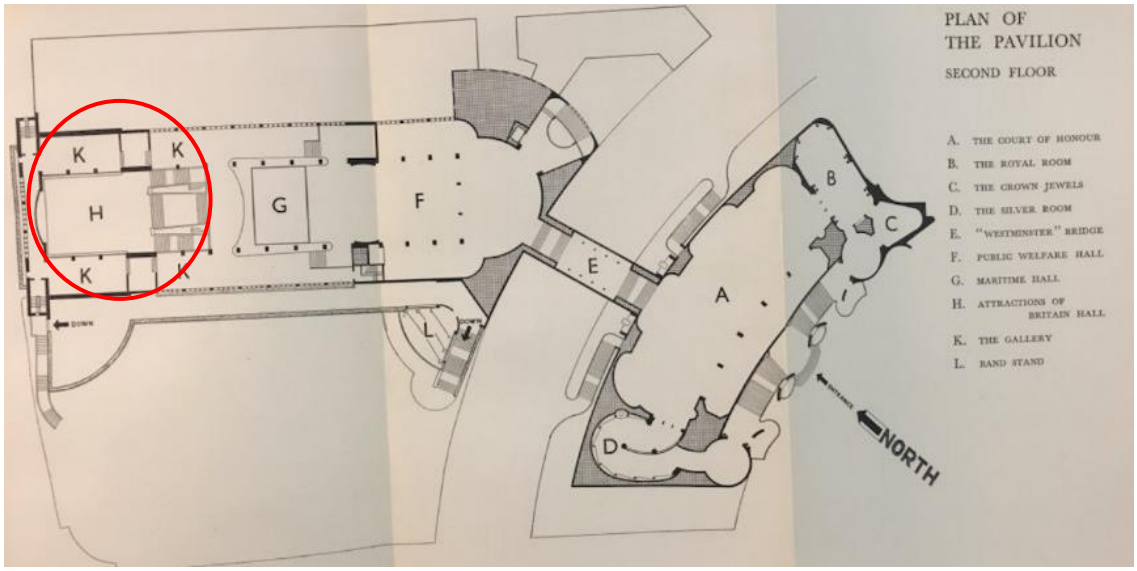

Figure 4.8. 'Plan of the Pavilion', *Guide to the Pavilion of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the British Colonial Empire: New York World's Fair, 1939* (New York, 1939), p. 8. Ireland's displays were in 'The Gallery' (K). Shelf mark: 7960.df.20. British Library.

CONCLUSION: 'A NATIONAL TRIBUTE TO IRELAND'S INDUSTRY AND GENIUS'[1]

The impulse to display Ireland continued unabated into the twenty-first century. As an introduction to the conclusion, I will consider some recent exhibits of Ireland to highlight the themes that 'A Cultural History of Irish Identity on Display' has investigated. The Irish displays of the 2000s and 2010s offer instances of continuity and divergences in the images of Irishness at exhibitions. National and international spectacles were central to Irish identity not only in the first Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in 1851 but throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Exhibitions had a multitude of functions, from accelerating industrialisation, to reviving extant rural industries, from nation making and state building to vehicles of trade and profit through commerce and tourism. This thesis has traced the display of Ireland and Irish identity at international events over two centuries ending with the outbreak of World War II. Exhibitions were important spaces through which an Irishness was constructed while addressing issues related to Ireland and Britain at key historical moments.

Ireland was at the first international display of the millennium in the 2000 Hanover Exposition in Germany. The Hanover Expo was open from 1 June to 31 October and covered 395 acres enjoyed by eighteen million visitors. More than 180 countries participated and the theme of the Expo was 'Humankind, Nature, Technology: A New World Arising' which focused on the possibilities of the future.[2] As in the last two centuries, Ireland was not always forthcoming in exhibitions and this continued in the late 1990s. Chancellor Helmut Kohl

[1] 'No. 9. Ireland's Contributions to the World's Fair', *Illustrated Exhibitor,* 2 August 1851, p. 141-160, p. 143.
[2] See, 'Expo 2000: Hanover' (2000), http://www.expomuseum.com/2000/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).

asked the Irish government to participate in the Hanover Expo in 1998 and the Irish government initially refused. They cited financial reasons, scepticism about the utility of the project and the overall labour of being involved.[3] The Expo Commissioner Birgit Breuel travelled to Dublin 'to personally and distinctly request Ireland's participation'.[4] Sinead McCormack, project manager for the Expo claimed: 'Ireland was the only EU country which had shown no interest and our German hosts found that hard to understand'. She continued: 'The Germans placed a lot of value on Ireland as a participant'.[5] Ingo Herbert, director of the Expo's International Division reported that the participation of EU member states was crucial and 'non-confirmations' would not be accepted as this was 'a European event and it was crucial to have all the members take part'.[6] Ireland eventually agreed and the Department of Labour, Trade and Consumer Affairs initiated plans to 'decorate an Irish Pavilion which would […] showcase [its] culture and history' as well as 'emphasise [its] current booming economy and […] position at the cutting edge of modern technology'.[7]

During the new Millennium, the Irish Pavilion sought to 'raise the profile of Ireland among visitors in an entertaining manner' in 'a working example of innovative sustainable' principles.[8] The Irish government instructed that the building be re-used to serve a different function in Ireland after the Expo. This was a break from past exhibitionary models which were rooted in the ephemeral sphere and destroyed immediately after a few months of

[3] See, D. Staunton, 'Expo 2000 Opens in Hanover', *Irish Times*, 1 June 2000.
[4] Cited in G. Flynn, 'Ireland Urged to Join EXPO', *Irish Independent*, 18 September 1997.
[5] Cited in D. Cunningham, 'Expo 2000: Why Ireland Almost Missed The Boat', *Irish Independent*, 22 May 2000.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] 'Irish Pavilion Expo 2000 Hanover Germany', *Architecture Gallery* (2000), http://www.irisharchitectureawards.ie/annual-awards/2001/irish-pavilion-expo-2000-hanover-germany (Accessed: 7 December 2018).

exhibiting (with some exceptions) and reveals the new concern to convince taxpayers that their contributions were being well spent.[9]

Following established practice the architect Murray Ó Laoire had a brief to construct a pavilion exclusively in Irish design and materials. Ó Laoire described the building as 'derived from the Irish landscape' (**Figure 5.1**).[10] The photograph shows visitors walking into the pavilion and circulating outside it in an interested manner. The 1,300 square metre building was environmentally friendly and had two contrasting walls; one was a gabion wall of metal baskets of undressed stone laid by hand to emulate the old stone walls of Ireland and the other was a black polished Kilkenny limestone wall covered in Celtic symbols that 'symbolise[d] the contrast between old and new, rural and urban, tradition and modernity'.[11] The latter wall used technology so visitors could experience the feel of Ireland's wind and rain through special apertures cut into the exterior of the wall.

The inside of the pavilion had a spiral design (adorned with popular Celtic symbols) and lined with sculptures and paintings by Irish artists. Journalist Dominic Cunningham described it as a 'journey through Ireland's history, from pre-historic times to today and onward to the possibilities of tomorrow'.[12] This 'tomorrow' was epitomised in the computerised Book of Kells exhibit that uniquely allowed visitors to turn the pages. The narrative of Ireland continued the trend of the past two centuries in blending tradition and

[9] Chapter One discussed how William Dargan's statue from the 1853 Exhibition was placed in the National Gallery of Ireland. See, E. O'Leary, *Irish Economic Development: High-performing EU State or Serial Under-Achiever?* (Routledge, 2015).
[10] 'Irish Pavilion Expo 2000 Hanover Germany', *Architecture Gallery.*
[11] Ibid.
[12] Cunningham, 'Expo 2000'. See, 'Logo for EXPO 2000', *Irish Times*, 27 July 1999.

modernity but the display of technology revealed the new concerns of the twenty-first century.

There was a focus on entertainment in the Irish Pavilion and around 450 artists, musicians, actors, singers and writers performed during the five-month display. Irish tradition was evoked with a demonstration of hurling and a famed Irish model wore an outfit made entirely of Irish knitwear in celebration of Ireland's participation (**Figure 5.2**).[13] The photograph circulated in many newspapers and reveals the popular reception of the model and her Irish dress. The image demonstrates a continuity to physical enactments of Irishness seen in the Chicago Fair of 1893. The process of replication through admiring someone whether aristocratic women or the above model remained an effective way to stimulate the monetary consumption of Irishness. Whilst the power of bodily visualising Ireland clearly had traction decades later, the 'colleens' themselves were no longer exhibited.

A further distinction from past exhibitions was the Pavilion's being entirely funded by public taxes, which ensured the economic return for the populace took precedence as Minister Kitt was keen to reassure Irish citizens that after an expense of €9 million 'we w[ould get] good value for the taxpayers'.[14] Earlier exhibitions were exclusively funded by industrialists and private benefactors who were more willing to take a financial loss.[15] The exhibition sought to 'promote investment [with Ireland] on the back of the cultural programme. It's a gentle sell'.[16] However, Ireland did not make a profit nor did the German organisers and

[13] 'Full Exposure', *Irish Independent*, 20 June 2000.
[14] Cited in Cunningham, 'Expo 2000'.
[15] See for instance my discussion on Dargan who made a £20,000 loss after the 1853 Dublin Fair.
[16] Minister Kitt cited in Cunningham, 'Expo 2000'.

Ireland's immediate concern became re-purposing the pavilion to recoup its vast expenditure. The *Irish Independent* declared that the building is 'up for grabs literally' and many ideas including an arts centre were considered.[17] Many of the suggestions were costly and impractical and it 'ended up being sold for scrap and dumped on a rubbish tip – not before million[s] was spent dismantling it'.[18]

Journalist Fionnan Sheahan reveals that independent consultants, Indecon, were hired to evaluate Ireland's participation in the Expo and concluded that 'it resulted in minimal impact on foreign investment or trade and that some of the State agencies involved were uncertain whether the benefits exceeded the costs'.[19] The Dáil Public Accounts Committee described the exhibition as a 'shambles' and a 'fairy-tale'.[20] The economic capacities of exhibits were clearly elusive and so a change in exhibition style emerged in the later exhibitions of Ireland in the twenty-first century. Exhibitions were no longer necessary for state building and whilst economic profit was so unlikely, organisers of Irish display found new ways to justify their continued participation in the expositions of this period.

Ireland's tour of exhibitions in the 2000s took it to Aichi for the Japan Expo of 2005.[21] Following the financial losses of the 2000 Expo, Ireland sought to increase its chances of economic profit by focusing on a saleable Irish culture and creating a 'little piece of

[17] 'Irish Pavilion May Return Home', *Irish Independent,* 15 November 2000; 'Irish Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover Germany', *Irish Independent,* 7 November 2000.
[18] F. Sheahan, 'All the Fun of World's Fair - To the Tune of 4 Million Euro', *Irish Independent,* 16 March 2005. See, D. Silkenat, 'Workers in the White City: Working Class Culture at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893', *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 104: 4 (2011), pp. 266-300, for a discussion of the former workers and 'tramps' who destroyed the Chicago World's Fair in the months after its closure, p. 293-295.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] See, 'Expo 2005: Aichi Japan' (2005), http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).

Ireland'.[22] Unlike the Hanover Expo which blended an Irish modernity with Irish history through displaying technology and the Irish landscape, in the Japan Expo, organisers presented a comprehensive set of exhibits exclusively related to Irish culture and heritage – primarily Celtic art. Irish exhibition organisers throughout the centuries therefore considered an Irish heritage to be the most likely avenue to profit. The theme of Ireland's Pavilion was the 'Art of Life' (**Figure 5.3**) and it was organised with the company 'Culture Ireland' founded as part of the Irish Tourism body in February 2005 to 'sell Irish heritage across the world'.[23] The image shows, as in past exhibitions, an Irish Christian history was carefully constructed. Six replica 'High Crosses' up to seven metres tall 'create[d] a powerful impression'.[24] Interested visitors took photos and the layout of the crosses meant visitors could circulate through them. The open plan area heightened the size of the crosses as the only exhibits in the gallery, both literally and figuratively visualising their centrality to Irish history. The Expo website informs that the replicas 'were originally created by the National Museum of Ireland 100 years ago and have never been displayed overseas'.[25]

Authenticity was prized in Aichi and there was a desire to make visitors 'feel as if they [we]re in Ireland'.[26] However, unlike in previous exhibitions, technology was utilised to this effect with changing lights, colours and sounds in the pavilion that recreated different seasons in Ireland. In past displays such as the popular Irish Village, Ballymaclinton, actual animals and food smells functioned as part of an authentic Irishness to offer an immersive experience

[22] J. Ryall, 'Big in Japan', *Irish Independent*, 23 April 2005, p. 56.
[23] Sheahan, 'All the Fun of World's Fair'.
[24] 'Ireland', *Expo 2005 Aichi Japan* (2005), http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/nations/4d.html (Accessed: 7 December 2018). The Office of Public Works reported that the crosses could be dismantled and transported to Ireland.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

for visitors that combined a sensory immersion with a bodily presence and physical engagement.

The focus on entertainment heightened in these twenty-first century exhibitions; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries live demonstrations of rural industries occasionally featured dancing and singing. Yet in the 2000s entertainment was offered daily. Irish traditional dancing, accompanied by the flute, tin whistle and guitar, was popularly received by visitors. Renowned harpist Sayaka Ikuyama played the Irish Harp and advertisements declared 'The harp has [always] been tremendously important to Ireland and to the Irish. Its music is both beautiful and bewitching'.[27] Numerous press releases noted, 'Make sure not to miss this rare opportunity to see one of Irish dance/music's greatest acts!'[28] This reveals the hyper-commercialisation of these Expo's as celebrities stimulated attendance. Further, entertainment in the Irish Pavilion intersected with the popular creation of a feigned Irishness. For instance, promotion of the band 'The West Wind' declared 'Come on down to the Irish Pavilion […] As we say in Ireland: "The craic will be mighty!"'[29] Consumers of Irishness thereby engaged with an Irish brand rooted in stereotypical images of the joviality and hospitality of Irishmen and women through the interwar period into the twenty-first.

The Expo furthered the diplomatic relations between Ireland and China; the Irish President Mary McAleese attended the event to much excitement and a Japanese Parliament

[27] 'Press Release: 'The Ireland Pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005 is Proud to Announce' (3 June)', *Expo 2005 Aichi Japan* (2005), http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/nations/4d.html (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[28] 'Press Release: 'The Ireland Pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005 is Proud to Announce' (11 July)', *Expo 2005 Aichi Japan* (2005), http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/nations/4d.html (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[29] 'Press Release: 'The Ireland Pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005 is Proud to Announce' (15 May)', *Expo 2005 Aichi Japan* (2005), http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/nations/4d.html (Accessed: 7 December 2018).

delegation visited Dublin shortly after the Expo.[30] Overall, images of Ireland deemed to have cultural currency abroad (mainly Celtic motifs) materialised to stimulate an identifiable Irishness to attract visitors and so justify the expense to taxpayers. The Pavilion relied exclusively on an Irish culture at the expense of displaying Ireland's technology. Ireland's continued participation in the expensive expositions of the twenty first century reflected how concerns of international diplomacy trumped issues of commercial profit, since financial losses were so likely.

Despite the country's financial troubles, Ireland participated in the Shanghai Expo in 2010. The Minister of State Martin Mansergh argued: 'It has been the policy of successive governments that Ireland should be represented at such events and not be conspicuous among developed countries by its absence accepting that a presence there serves […] a diplomatic and cultural function'.[31] This recognition that exhibitions had spurious financial gain and instead their value came from being seen on the world stage marked a distinctive change from displays of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that prioritised trade and profit. It does however reinforce Tony Bennett's 'Exhibitionary Complex' theory on the importance of presence.[32] Although, this was an example of presence between nations not between visitors in Irish efforts to compete on the world stage.

The Office of Public Works designed the Irish Pavilion themed 'Urban Space and the Evolution of Urban Life Style' (**Figure 5.4**). Many visitors were visible in front of a Ferris

[30] 'High-Level Visits between Japan and Ireland 2005', *Embassy of Japan in Ireland* (2014), https://www.ie.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/00_000075.html (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[31] K. Doyle, 'Liffey meets Yangtze as Ireland goes to Shanghai', *Evening Herald (Dublin)*, 14 October 2009. See, 'Why I'm Reversing Trend and Sending Irish to China', *Evening Herald (Dublin)*, 11 May 2007, p. 15.
[32] T. Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, 4 (1988), pp. 73-102, p. 74.

wheel – the fair-like feel revealed that public entertainment had become fundamental to the exhibition experience from its origins in the United States in the 1890s. Architect Michael Bradley and Deputy Commissioner John Lynam spent €8 million on Ireland's Pavilion which 'set the creativity of the Irish, their ancient history and vibrant modern culture into the context of a small but beautiful island'.[33] The Irish Pavilion's main exhibition area featured Celtic art on a huge television screen and the Irish stone crosses from the 2005 Expo made a second showcase. The design used 'immersive images, video walls and multiple projections to transcend language' reflecting the importance of identifiable symbols of Irishness to attract and engage visitors in observing an Irish landscape, people, economy, art and literature in the different galleries.[34] Efforts to offer an exhaustive vision of Ireland persisted in these more recent exhibitions.

Discourse that advertised display as an opportunity to travel the world continued from the 1850s; *Irish Architecture News* described the event as a must-see 'once in a lifetime' experience.[35] Again a blended vision of Ireland visualised the relationship between urban and nature and contained Ireland's history, modern culture and technological innovations with changing light, colour and sound recreating the Irish climate. Visitors were also able to walk along a recreated River Liffey and O'Connell Street to enjoy full immersion.[36] Daniel O'Connell's quest for the repeal of the Union in the 1840s reached its peak in the 'monster meetings' that attracted tens of thousands at any one time.[37] By 2010 the independence of

[33] 'The Ireland Pavilion, EXPO 2010', *Martello Architects* (2010), http://martellomedia.com/?portfolio=project-3-example-larger-body (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[34] Ibid.
[35] 'Irish Pavilion – Shanghai Expo 2010', *Irish Architecture News* (2010), http://archiseek.com/2010/irish-pavilion-shanghai-expo-2010/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[36] Doyle, 'Ireland goes to Shanghai'.
[37] P. Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 159-160.

Ireland was visually complete – its modern displays and veneration of nationalist leaders firmly situated the country as a republican state.

In the 2010 Shanghai Expo Ireland's exhibits competed with the technological giants of Japan, Germany and Saudi Arabia. A group of students from Dublin City University Business School visited Ireland's Pavilion and they remarked that 'it lacked some […] ground-breaking technology or multi-media pieces' and 'lacked insights [of] Ireland as a hub for high technology'.[38] Ireland balanced its technological innovation with its history in these expositions but refused to utilise harmful stereotypes of the country to appeal to visitors. For instance, the students expressed surprise at the lack of an 'Irish pub' to explain what they perceived to be a disinterest in Ireland's Pavilion compared to the advanced technology depicted in Japan's Pavilion.[39] These students were being reflexive as to the type of Ireland that was commonly on show abroad, whether through the tourist industry or the mass market, and they may have felt an opportunity for profit was lost.

The symbols of Ireland in the form of the Irish pub resplendent with shamrocks and leprechauns had, by the twenty-first century, become a multi-million pound industry.[40] Ireland may have compensated for its disparity in technological prowess (compared to other countries) by furthering the highly identifiable and profitable motifs of a commercialised Irishness. However the Irish organisers refuted this narrative to present millions of Chinese visitors with a vision of Ireland related to 'the full potential of urban life […] and [the] urban

[38] 'Blog on "Ireland National Day at World Expo 2010, Shanghai" – Day Four of the DCU Business School Trip to Shanghai 2010' (2010), https://theolynn.wordpress.com/2010/07/18/ireland-national-day-at-world-expo-2010-shanghai-day-four/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[39] Ibid.
[40] See, 'Discover Ireland', https://www.discoverireland.ie/ (Accessed: 9 December 2018).

revolution'.[41] The tensions of stimulating interest in Ireland and its peoples without recreating harmful stereotypes therefore concerned both earlier and contemporary exhibitors.

Ireland's last exhibition to date was at the EXPO Milan 2015. Architect Kieran O'Connor and Gerry Harvey designed Ireland's Pavilion based on the theme 'Origin Green: Working with Nature' which was 'the world's first national sustainable food movement' across 'farm to factory' to establish the country as a 'world-leading producer of sustainably produced food and drink'.[42] The Pavilion functioned along three levels: 'introducing the visitor to Ireland's wealth of natural resources, its stunning landscape and unique culture'.[43] The ground floor contained an immersive filmic experience showcasing Ireland's landscapes, people, culture, food – and technology again created a sensory absorption for visitors.[44] The Pavilion was built primarily out of wood due to its low carbon footprint (**Figure 5.5**). The wood was enmeshed together to create a façade 'woven [in] a bread basket effect – a metaphor for Ireland's agricultural DNA' according to the *Irish Independent*.[45] There is a clear continuity here in popular nineteenth century imaginations of an Irishness tied to the land but this time the land was productive as a result of sustainability not just extraction. Architect O'Connor stated: 'we wanted to capture the essence of [Ireland] in a new and progressive way; […] [the] pond represents the fact that we're [*sic*] an island'.[46] Ireland's

[41] Doyle, 'Ireland goes to Shanghai'.
[42] 'Find out more about Ireland's New Contract with Nature at the Ireland Pavilion at EXPO 2015 from May 1st – October 31st', *Origin Green*, https://www.ireland.com/what-is-available/food-and-drink/articles/expo-origin-green/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[43] 'Ireland's Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan, Showcases our Green Credentials', *Irish Independent*, 29 May 2015; 'Ireland at Expo Milan 2015', *Embassy of Ireland* (2015), https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/italy/news-and-events/2015/ireland-expo-milan-2015/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[44] C. Keogh, 'Ireland and Origin Green at EXPO Milan 2015', *Irish Food Board* (2015), https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/manufacturers/insight/alerts/pages/irelandandorigingreenatexpomilan2015.aspx (Accessed: 7 December 2018).
[45] 'Ireland's Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan', *Irish Independent*.
[46] Ibid.

tourist potential materialised with the promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way. Music and art together created an 'intimate and welcoming place' in the country's last exhibition to date.[47]

The presentation and meaning of Irish identity changed throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries along discrete axes related to style and purpose. However, similarities persisted in efforts to create an authentic Ireland, to showcase a historic yet modern country and the issues of profit. Distinct to the 2000s and 2010s, success was not defined by immediate financial profit but within the diplomatic sphere. Yet, there were continuities in offering an Irish landscape and people to consume for national prestige whilst the funding of the events moved from private industrialists to public taxes. Tracing Irishness throughout this period has productive benefits in assessing how an Irish self-hood adapted to diverse contexts.

My thesis extends multiple historiographies on Exhibitions, Ireland and Empire and Race. By taking case studies from different decades and various junctures in Ireland's history it is clear that display functioned idiosyncratically for Irishmen and women to further their individual and national causes. The visual was a rich site for Irish individuals and groups to work out their politicised existences in a transatlantic forum. Each iteration of Ireland's display crafted a powerful vision of Ireland as a country and a people. Ideas of Irish development and recovery dominated its exhibits in the nineteenth century, while issues of nation building and commerce became the central concern in twentieth century Irish displays. Earlier ideas of Irish progress in exhibits were largely created by non-Irish groups and individuals such as British industrialists and philanthropists, whereas Irish state-actors

[47] *MilanIngegneria*, http://buromilan.com/en/project/irish-pavilion-expo-2015-milan-italy/ (Accessed: 7 December 2018).

directed the largely commercial exhibitions of the latter period. The changing images of Irishness highlighted in my study are therefore also broadly revealing of the transforming agency of Irish contemporaries.

Showing how Irishness was debated and imagined and how different political and ideological positions manifested through display bridges scholarship on the Irish with literature on exhibitions. Highlighting the geographic specificities of Irishness through its diachronic constructions over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries offers a meaningful contribution to cultural histories of Ireland. Considering how the visual metamorphosed into a vital arena of knowledge creation and the production of selfhood furthers existing literature on Ireland's political and social history. By analysing how Irish peoples used the imperial platform of exhibitions to imagine their own state building, scholarship on Ireland and Empire are expanded as it is evident that Irishness relied on mutability to appeal to different audiences across various historical moments.

The Irish were typical to the history of exhibitions in their criticism of its form by gradually taking ownership over their display and using it as an important part of their self-definition along multiple arenas such as public festivals and celebrations. My research expands debates about Irish identities as the essential malleability of Irishness across historical periods is made clear. There was no singular and cohesive identity of Irishness. Similarly, adaptability and disconnect were fundamental to the exhibition project and the ambitions of the organisers were constantly negotiated and challenged. Away from earlier conceptions of exhibitions that have highlighted perceived unity and evolutionary teachings, more recent ideas of exhibitions underline their inherent instability. The case study of Ireland

furthers this reading of exhibitions, as it reveals how fragmentation became key to Irish identity because it was in constant formulation and flux. Multiple versions of Irishness co-existed. Display was therefore important to both identity formation and also the fluid constructions of the Irish nation and its politics. Fracture thereby became a necessary and productive element of Irish identity-making more broadly, both within display and outside of it.

The idea of Irish whiteness is disputed in the historiography. Display highlights that the Irish laboured for the political privileges associated with whiteness that had been denied to them based on discourses of civilisation and class. Representations of Irish identity at expositions revealed that a political whiteness emerged through commerce and Home Rule propaganda in the twentieth century. This advances discussion on Irish whiteness by considering its formation through capitalist structures and Irish women which challenges reductive scholarship on race and Irishness. It further proves that whiteness historically operated along a spectrum in terms of access to privilege that was itself gendered, sexualised and dependent on ethnicity. Another contested phenomena among historians is the issue of the Irish diaspora; significant scholarship takes Irish migration to be a form of exile. Considering an Irish agency during the process of migration and settlement as an exchange between home and abroad is made clear when analysing the visual work of female philanthropy and female labour in transatlantic Irish communities. Irish visitors to Fairs actively participated in the rural revival project, purchased souvenirs and celebrated symbols of an Irish home in the United States via an organic process of transaction and consumption.

Through interrogating the synecdochal representations of Ireland available for popular audiences, the many functions of adaptability within Irishness are highlighted. Whilst fluidity became central to discourses of Ireland it also imposed an unpredictable character to its exhibits, which extended to visitor responses. The emblems and motifs of Ireland encompassed shifting political expressions and enveloped divergences in a permanent tension. The exhibition platform in its transitory, ephemeral nature enabled nuanced notions of Irishness to exist alongside one another that revealed the politics of its organisers and the biases of the visitors. Discrete historical moments intersected with turbulent Irish politics to alternatively visualise rurality, quaintness and rusticity or else, industry, technology and modernity – all within an accessible idyll.

The cultural praxis of display utilised experimentation and contradiction to allow multiple constructions of Irishness to proliferate in tandem with each other. Within the omnipresent nature of the fairground, both reactionary, revolutionary or conciliatory and peaceful visions of Ireland circulated in the backdrop of Irish social and political tensions. The compression of time and space in this ideal view of Ireland was subsumed by paradoxes and yet nevertheless allowed tangible, if hyperbolic, forms of the country to exist. The exigencies of Irishness relied on artifice within the phantasmagoria of display and utilised marketable identifications of Ireland, which became key signifiers of Irishness within the geographic and political boundaries throughout the period studied.

Exhibitions were not only a forum to create popular visions of Irishness but further the platform for voicing divergent political expressions to mass audiences. This was not a straightforward process and was often subject to revision and compromise as my chapters

reveal. Each chapter shows something unique to Irishness and Exhibitions and relates to different moments in Irish social, cultural and political history. Studying Irishness originally contributes to the history of exhibitions by interrogating the dynamic types of Irish identity in circulation. Chapters One and Two are broadly linked to narratives of Irish poverty and recovery after tragedy in the form of recurring famines. Chapters Three and Four are concerned with the larger project of commerce and state building during the Home Rule period and after Partition.

Chapter One argues that Ireland was theorised as a transitional space in constant need of development after suffering from long-term famine and poverty. A progressive timeline for Irish advancement was visualised in the fairs of the 1850s that evoked an Irish past as a means for surviving in the present through hope for the future. This relied on laissez-faire politics and the power of the individual (mainly women) to survive hardship based on their individual labour through a unionist or more nationalist framework. Chapter Two argues that the preservation and revival of rural aesthetics of Ireland for elite consumption became equal to 'saving Ireland' for many female philanthropists who practiced a benevolent charitable politics. Female philanthropy and labour worked within the context of Irish-American nationalism and nostalgia to accommodate the Irish diasporic migration to the United States. It relied on their active desire to see Ireland regain prosperity whether through a revival of rural industry or the purchase of souvenirs in the fairground for a better Irish future.

Chapter Three argues that an Irish brand was used to convince international visitors of Irish political whiteness, which was deemed to be central for commercial profit. For the first time exhibits of Ireland were organised exclusively by Irish entrepreneurs. They traded on

familiar stereotypes of Ireland to create an accessible and financially lucrative image of the country to further their company's sales which was tied to the politics of Home Rule considered necessary for the business's expansion. Chapter Four argues that Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State each created discrete visions of themselves through exhibits during the turbulent interwar period and used display to evoke their distinct relationships to the British Empire. Northern Ireland visualised its loyalty and union with the United Kingdom whereas the Free State championed its independence and emphasised its separation from the imperial project. By demonstrating that Ireland's exhibits in the 1850s were organised by industrialists, by non-Irish women in the 1890s, Irish entrepreneurs in the twentieth century and Irish citizens in the interwar period, broader state politics are mapped to the level of Irish organisers, industrialists, philanthropists and visitors.

The visual and the cultural are essential to understand Irish identity alongside discussions of state formation and national politics. Interrogating displays of Ireland offers a unique vantage point that we cannot obtain from other exhibitions as it demonstrates how fluidity became central to self-fashioning through display. This adaptability enabled an independent image of Ireland to emerge within the confines of an imperial platform. Questions of Irishness intersected with broader ideas of citizenship, race and ethnic formation and my research changes the way we think about discursive Irish identities for Irish scholars. Irish identities changed significantly in this period and with different degrees of labour; organisers in the 1850s utilised religion to encourage visits, Irish-American audiences in the 1890s participated in a fictitious Ireland to soothe their cognitive dissonance post-migration, visitors in the early-twentieth century avidly participated in the commercialisation of Ireland through postcards, souvenirs and letter-writing, and interwar audiences demonstrated a

reflexive awareness of an Irish nation evident through the many criticisms and critiques analysed. Irishmen and women exercised their agency and demonstrated whether they approved of an exhibition or not. This potential for the visual to elicit multiple and contrasting responses demonstrates how exhibitions could respond to and encourage an ever-changing understanding of what it meant to be Irish.

The value of exhibitions comes from the presence they created in terms of the image of Ireland and the significant labour this required. These huge endeavours had powerful potential; planned for years, exhibited over months, and its goods circulated over decades. Their impact carried on for centuries after with each exhibition constantly referring to a previous one to learn, adapt and perfect an Ireland on display. Organisers and visitors engaged in the fiction of the fair to affirm, mediate and even transform their politics. The popular consumption of Ireland flitted between utilising stereotypes of Ireland to create an accessible, attractive vision of the country, to offering a contrast to British versions of themselves. Exhibitions were a capitalist project and a method to sustain commerce, create trade and profit over international borders. The export of Irishness for entertainment purposes imbued itself with vitality and creativity. As utopian visions, they are immensely revealing of the dream of Ireland devoid of the reality of Irish politics. The exhibitions studied prove the animus between Britain and Ireland on a global stage while highlighting the attempts to reconcile conflicting discourses of Irish identity.

'A Cultural History of Irish Identity on Display' reveals themes that intersected over the two centuries of Ireland's display. My chapters uncover connections in the importance of women to the project of Ireland; female labour was connected to ideas of an Irish recovery in

the nineteenth century within post-famine discourse and the rural revival project. Moreover, women later became important for creating an Irish nation allied with Britain and one that stimulated tourism in the twentieth century. Class also navigated the transatlantic sphere of display; philanthropy and activism combined to save Ireland from poverty in efforts directed by the wealthy during the 1890s. Meanwhile, later Irish organisers combated deaths from tuberculosis through the commercial enterprise of Irish villages tying trade and charity with elite concerns for the poor. The project of Irish tourism had its roots in the early twentieth century, which was formalised in the interwar period. Further, my chapters reveal the importance of both future consumption of, and production in, Ireland, by facilitating the commodification of Irishness via the networks of capitalist trade emerging during the 1850s to the 1930s.

Competing notions of development influenced Irish display and its broader history. Differing state and non-state, Irish and non-Irish actors envisaged industrialisation or rural commodification and tourism – all within a reflexive nationalist or unionist framework – as key for Ireland's potential progress. Visitors were cognisant to claims of authenticity that concerned exhibition organisers. The similarities of the exhibition project and the Irish tourist industry reveals how an authentic history and culture made Irishness accessible and profitable through the internationalism of a saleable Irish land and Irish character.

By comparing Irish exhibits with groups such as the Somalis, Senegalese, Japanese, and Scottish a change in Irish political thinking is illustrated. In the early twentieth century, African colonial exhibits were contrasted to Ireland's display as a visual demonstration of perceived progress according to racialised civilisational narratives. The village's juxtaposition

to one another highlighted difference for Ireland's benefit. However, in the late twentieth century Ireland's exhibits were no longer in village form but in more modern exhibits within pavilions and larger displays. The country's exhibits rejected the styles utilised by the Japanese and Scottish nations in celebrating an agricultural or colonial past and focused its efforts on technology and modernity. No longer was a peasant way of life seen as authentic and attractive for the Irish but as harmful stereotypes to be actively avoided. This rejection continued into the later formation of the Irish tourist industry that highlighted rurality as opposed to poverty, landscapes not backwards people. It also solidified the increasing perception of Ireland as a white and developed nation free from the shackles of colonialism.

Exhibitions operated under a triptych of motivations and outcomes; to stimulate trade for the tourist industry, to encourage sales for exhibitors and to provide the employment of local labourers – all within a capitalist sale of goods. This synthesis of diverse practices demonstrates that using exhibitions as a lens for reading Irish history shows us concepts and themes that are eclipsed in primary political analyses. Irish women advertised an Irish past, present, and future, embodied modernity and rurality, and had their femininity used to push the sale of Ireland and its products. Considering gendered ideas of the nation may extend to a future project comparing Irish exhibitions with Scottish and Welsh displays to analyse competing (and transforming) visions of Britishness in the past.

My thesis traced the fluid nature of Irish identity through its national and international displays in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as it moved from a colonial to an independent state. The politics of display influenced the production of Irish identity according to a host of contexts which in turn reinforced Irish understandings of themselves politically,

economically, socially and culturally. As a cultural history of Irish identity through display, my thesis argues that the visual became a formative platform to both evoke organisers' and visitors' concerns and the forum through which to mediate and transform those ideals. Organisers of Irish exhibits reacted fluidly to the contexts of famine and poverty, migration and diasporic settlement, independence movements and partition, and my unique insight highlights the agency of Irishmen and women in presenting their own version of themselves.

Overall, distinctive visions of Ireland became important at different historical moments. In the nineteenth century, Ireland was concerned with development and industry and made efforts to recover from poverty and famine by highlighting the capacities of labour, mainly through women. In the twentieth century, Irishmen and women were preoccupied with state building and sought to consolidate an Irish image for financial and political gain (whether Unionism or independence) through tourism and a distinct Irish brand. Legacies of Ireland changed from concerns of development and migration, commerce and trade and finally state building and imagined a host of Irish pasts, presents and futures. Irish identity on display is a key conduit in assessing the changing landscape of Irishness over its formative centuries. Display emerged in tandem with the unfolding of Ireland's political transformation from a colony of the British Empire, a migrant community in the United States and a divided Ireland in the form of the Republic and Northern Ireland – a separation that continues today.

The *Irish Times* acknowledged the importance of expositions in the twenty-first century stating that it was the 'world's biggest non-sporting recurring event'.[48] In the 2000s and 2010s, Ireland's displays alternatively presented the country as historical, technologically

[48] P. Agnew, 'Higgins to Open Irish Exhibition in Expo 2015 in Milan: Timed to Coincide with Bloomsday, Irish Participation is called "Origin Green"', *Irish Times*, 16 June 2015.

advanced, resplendent with culture and heritage and as keen competitors in the global market. Established exhibitionary models emerged in a final consolidation of Irish history, culture and tradition, evoking an attractive past, present and future aside from the needs of Empire and active state building. Despite this recent history, exhibits have largely become redundant in the development of modern nations and so the contemporary public has generally stopped paying attention to such exhibits.

Instead, mass media and its innumerable visual and textual forms accommodate the needs of identity formation. Exhibitions are no longer needed for mass advertising and the advent of social media has seen the diversification of political movements and national activism, which has made the ideological motives of exhibits obsolete. However there are still plans for exhibitions in the future.[49] International Olympics, local and national elections, and the mass market have absorbed the space that international exhibitions of the past typically occupied. Yet, the power of exhibitions is still present. In September 2018, Prime Minister Theresa May announced plans for a festival celebrating the UK in 2022. She reported, 'We want to showcase what makes our country great today. We want to capture that spirit for a new generation, celebrate our nation's diversity and talent, and mark this moment of national renewal [referring to Britain's exit from the European Union] with a once-in-a-generation celebration'.[50] The event is to be called the 'Festival' (estimated cost of £120 million) and in contemporary reporting connections with the Great Exhibition of 1851 are common. It will be

[49] Expos are planned in the UAE for 2020; Argentina in 2023 and Japan in 2025. See, 'Expo 2020 Dubai', https://www.expo2020dubai.com/; 'Expo 2023 Argentina', http://en.expo2023argentina.com.ar/; 'Expo 2025 Osaka', https://www.expo2025-osaka-japan.jp/en/ (Accessed: 9 December 2018). It will be interesting to see if Ireland participates.
[50] A. Sparrow, 'Tory Conference: Hunt says UK will "fight" if EU refuses to compromise in Brexit talks - as it happened', *The Guardian*, 30 September 2018.

interesting to see, if this event does take place, in what form Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are presented, if at all.[51]

The commodification of Irishness now articulates itself in a multi-billion pound industry with Irish pubs in almost every country of Europe. Stereotypical images of Irishness rooted in the land and its people have a currency and traction that transcends borders and we can see their origins in international exhibitions. The exhibitions created marketable symbols of Irishness that now have a life of their own. In the same way that exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries accommodated for different politics and biases, the mass market of Irishness is deluged with predictable motifs of Irishness, typically divorced from its political sphere. A saleable Irishness emerged in exhibits of the past and are now the product of a lucrative global phenomena of Irish culture, whether related to the Irish landscape, the Irish people, or Irish products. 'A Cultural History of Irish Identity on Display' tells the story of how an international Irish identity has always been about selling Irishness – an Irish identity always on sale.

[51] Northern Ireland participated in the 1951 Festival of Britain. See, B. E. Conekin, '*The Autobiography of a Nation': The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester, 2003), especially p. 68-69, p. 116, p. 129-130.

Figure 5.1. ‘Ireland Pavilion’, *EUmiesaward19*, https://miesarch.com/work/1196 (Accessed: 9 December 2018).

Figure 5.2. ‘Full Exposure’, *Irish Independent,* 20 June 2000.

Figure 5.3. ‘High Crosses in the Irish Pavilion at Aichi Expo 2005’, http://www.expo2005.or.jp/en/nations/4d.html (Accessed: 9 December 2018).

Figure 5.4. J. Ryall, ‘Big in Japan’, *Irish Independent*, 23 April 2005, p. 56.

Figure 5.5. ‘Ireland’s Pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan, Showcases our Green Credentials’, *Irish Independent,* 29 May 2015.

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