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An Anthology of Irish Nationalism: Music, Verse, Speeches, and Interviews Regarding the Betterment of the State of Ireland, From the Sixth Century Until the Liberation of Ireland

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
English
British Literature

by

Sofía J. Gilmore-Montero

B.A. University of New Orleans, 2018
M.A. University of New Orleans, 2020

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Sofia J. Gilmore-Montero

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Abstract

When I started this project because in my extensive amount of research into Irish literature, I found that the common theme in many of the works was nationalism and the desire to have a free state. I could not find any books that focused on nationalistic literature over the lengthy history of Ireland, only collections that pertained to a specific time period. This thesis project proposes introductory material and a potential table of contents to an anthology that would be centered around the theme of Irish nationalism in literature between the ninth century and the liberation of Ireland. It covers a brief history of Ireland, a summary of major literary movements, the role of women in nationalism, and an overview of the function of music in the political movement over the years.

Keywords: Ireland, nationalism, freedom, liberation, literature

An Anthology of Irish Nationalism:
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"What is Irish nationalistic literature?" one might ask oneself upon reading the title of this anthology. Simply stated, Irish nationalistic literature is the recorded literature that propagated the Irish love for their country and/or the movement to be free from invaders and oppressors, beginning with the Vikings in the late eighth century and ending with their independence from the British in 1922. I wanted to create an anthology in which you could find a cohesive introductory understanding of the subject, one which creates steppingstones for discussion, and provides context in which to place individual works. There aren't a lot of resources for this topic in America. Awareness of this topic is crucial, as it creates a space for something that didn't previously have a space; while there are plenty of well-known works in this anthology, I attempted to include as many less-well-known works that would benefit the individual, enrich the classroom, and aid the teacher. I wanted something that is inaccessible to be accessible, rather than continuing to merely circulate the stereotypical fairy tales and love poems – which is not to say that they are not important, as they are merely another realm of Irish literature – but to emphasize the depth and expanse of Irish literature itself.

Literature and history are mutually enlightening. The purpose of anthologies is to record, remember, and make available the literature of a particular group of people: there is nothing more important than understanding the key aspects of nationalism, an idea which the people of any country can relate to. Literature concerning topics such as nationalism allows readers and scholars alike to discuss the nature of their nationalisms and promote crucial, intellectual discourse among those who might not otherwise participate in such conversations. It matters

even more so in conversation about Irish literature because it encompasses almost the entirety of their history.

The history included in this anthology is made concise for a reader just entering into the winding complexities of Irish history and culture. Additional reading pertinent to the historical aspects of the Irish nation can be found in the bibliography and works consulted.

Irish History and the Birth of Nationalism

Like many other European nations, Ireland was a collection of kingdoms; it consisted of many *tuatha*, semi-independent jurisdictional units that refer to both geographical territory and the people who lived there. There was no concrete vision of a unified Ireland, save for the attempts by ruling chiefdoms to become the High Kings of Ireland at the time. These High Kings claimed to have lordship over the whole island, but disagreements between the High King and the lesser kings that made up the rest of the island's hierarchy prevented a true unification. The High King received tributes from the lesser kings, which constantly kept them in limbo concerning their own desires to attain High Kingship. There was no unified Ireland until many centuries after the Vikings would relinquish power in the Emerald Isle.

The Vikings arrived in 795 and strove to acquire "not only liturgical utensils and reliquaries in precious metals, but livestock and provisions, which one could expect to find in monastic settlements."[1] Until 830, the raids were small, but afterwards, larger fleets of Viking ships began to find their way to the main rivers. From 840 and on, they began to establish permanent bases. Dublin was the most important, established at the mouth of the Liffey. The Vikings began to create alliances with certain Irish kings as they focused on reaching farther

[1] "Maier, Bernhard. "Ireland in the Time of the Vikings." *The Celts: a History from Earliest Times to the Present*, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p.134. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r2bc7.16.

across the Irish Sea and into the north-west of England and upwards into Iceland. While the Vikings did intermarry with the Irish, simultaneously because of "the growth of the kingdom of Wessex[2] in England, the foundation of the Duchy of Normandy and the gradual conclusion of the settlement of Iceland, Ireland from 914 was again afflicted by plundering bands of Scandinavian pirates."[3] The Emerald Isle was not safe from invasion merely by intermingling with the Vikings, despite the Anglo-Saxons' military resources being distracted by another series of battles on the English island. The annalists and historians of the time describe this era of raiding with tales of destruction, death, and greed, despite the Vikings' many settlements across the British Isles and Nordic countries.

Until the middle of the 10th century, the native Irish warred with the Vikings for control of their lands. Different dynasties with many fortunes attempted to gain some semblance of power over the island, but overall, the country was split into two major powers: the Uí Néill in the north (*Leth Cuinn*) and the Eóganachta in the south (*Leth Moga*). The emergence of the Dál Cais[4] dynasty of Munster gained dominance in the south and contested for a position of High Kingship. The ruler of the Dál Cais at this time was Mathgamain, who had defeated the Vikings in Limerick and sacked the city. Mathgamain was killed in 976, and his brother Brian Borúma, recognized most popularly now as Brian Boru, took control of the Dál Cais dynasty. He ended the centuries-long streak of power of the Uí Néill. From 1002 until his death in 1014, he ruled as king of most of Ireland. In 1014, Boru and his forces achieved a massive victory at the Battle of Clontarf, which would alter the history of Ireland. In this battle, Boru was killed fighting the

[2] The Great Danish Army, also known as the Great Heathen Army, was a group of Norse warriors that encompassed many warbands from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and came together to invade what was England in AD 865, an island comprised of four Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: Northumbria, East Anglia, Mercia, and Wessex. Alfred the Great defeated the Vikings in the Battle of Edington, thereby solidifying Anglo-Saxon control of Wessex.
[3] Maier, 135.
[4] The Dál Cais were also known as the Dalcassians and descended from the Eoganachta (*Leth Moga*).

Vikings, under the command of Sitric[5], who had an alliance with the Mael Mórdha, the King of Leinster. It was the victory, although resulting in his death, that made Brian Boru a national hero, as he popularized the idea of a unified – and Christian – kingdom of Ireland.

The commemoration of the Battle of Clontarf, *The War of the Irish with the Foreigners, or* the *Cogadh Gaedhil re Gallaibh* (p. 14) was recorded in the *Book of Leinster,* which was written about 100 years after the battle itself, at the behest of Muirchetach, Brian Boru's great-grandson. Many scholars believe that it was written as propaganda to promote Brian Boru's vision of a unified Ireland so that Muirchetach could gain control for the Ui Briain[6]. Ireland was still divided into many lesser kingdoms, and while chiefdoms and kings continued to quarrel over land and titles, most of the Celtic tribes had one ideal in common: keep the Irish in the country and the foreigners attempting invasion of their lands out. While Brian Boru's reign was the closest thing to a unified Ireland for its time, it promoted a vision of Ireland that would not be realized until the end of the 20th century. The story of Brian Boru and his unification of a Christian Ireland is a famous one and was perpetuated throughout history in literature to urge Irish citizens to vie for what they yearned and deserved. Even in the early 19th century, John Corry's *Ireland: An Ode* (p. 115) exemplifies this use of Ireland's national hero and his sacrifice on the battlefield.[7]

> Here Liberty's inspiring voice
> Made her courageous sons rejoice
> Their nerves by cooling breezes brac'd

[5] Sitric Cáech was a Viking leader who ruled Dublin and then Viking Northumbria in the 10th century. His rule of Dublin ended with the victory of Brian Boru.
[6] Ui Briain was the name of the family of the descendants of Brian Boru.
[7] John Corry, Irish historian and topographer, fl. 1825.

And oft the fierce invading Danes,
Defeated on our warlike plains,
Fled with tumultuous haste.
How glow'd our Bards with patriot fire,
While heav'nly freedom's praise they sung;
Their eager fingers swept the lyre,
To sounds of martial glory strung:
The lyre, concordant with the song,
With love of virtue fill'd the breast;
Contlarf's gay groves the strain resound,
Where with unfading laurels crown'd,
Bold Conquest rear'd her crest."[8]

The eleventh and twelfth centuries brought the arrival of the Normans in Ireland. In 1155, Henry II, King of England – but a Norman king of England – received permission from the Pope to invade Ireland.[9] However, Ireland succeeded in joining the papacy in Rome, and officially became a Christian nation. The religious unity was what held off Britain's invasion of Ireland; however, their national vision was not shared, and the kings still quarreled. Many historians agree that if Ireland had succeeded in the creation of a strong and unified monarchy at this point in time, Henry II might not have used the grant to take over. But this was not the case. Between 1169 and 1300, the Norman-English invasion of Ireland took place. It was the result of two squabbling, native warrior kings: Dermot MacMurrough of Leinster and Tiernan O'Rourke of

[8] Corry, John. "Ireland: An Ode." *Odes and elegies, with The Patriot, a poem,* R. Moffet, 1797, pp.17-8.
[9] This permission was known as the Laudabiliter grant; it gave permission Henry II permission to conquer and govern Ireland and to enforce the Gregorian Reforms upon the churches of Ireland.

Breifne. MacMurrough had sided with Murtough Maclochlainn of Eilech, the High King of Ireland from 1156-1166, in the struggle for power over Ireland, while O'Rourke had sided with Rory O'Connor, King of Connacht. MacMurrough kidnapped O'Rourke's wife, which created O'Rourke's desire for revenge. In 1166, MacMurrough's support had waned and MacLochlainn was dead. O'Rourke, O'Melaghin[10], and the northern tribes of Leinster were gaining on one border, and the Vikings in Wexford were prepared to attack on the other border. Ferns in County Wexford was taken, and MacMurrough's castle was destroyed, so he fled.

MacMurrough landed in Bristol and went in search of King Henry II; Henry was the king of England, but nonetheless a Norman. Henry accepted MacMurrough's fealty oath and openly encouraged his support of the intended raid in a public letter. MacMurrough found his supporting militia in the Normans along the Welsh border, with their leader Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, better known as Strongbow. By the summer of 1171, Strongbow had assumed control of Leinster, and taken the Norse-Irish cities of Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford. That same year, the exiled King of Connacht, Ruaidri Ua Conchobair, leaned on King Henry II of England for help to rule his lands and launch a counter attack; Henry said yes, but when he landed, he took the throne of Ireland for himself and established control over both the Irish and the Anglo-Normans. Here marks the beginning of the Irish struggle against the British that will last for almost 800 years. It is at this point that the stories of the *Fianna* began to circulate the island and are recorded in writing; the *Fianna* were bands of warriors in Celtic legend who kept law and order throughout the land for the lords and kings who housed and fed them in the colder months of the year. One of the most important tales is that of *Acallam na Senórach, or Colloquy with the*

[10] O'Melaghin is better known as Murchad O'Maeil-Sheachlainn, who was a King of Meath and founded Bective Abbey in 1147.

Ancients (p. 25); it is found in the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythological literature. One of the central heroes from the tale is Fionn mac Cumhaill, which was the inspiration for the term "Fenian" that can be found in much of Irish literature and politics, such as the title of the Fenian Rising of 1857 and in a line of the famous song "Down by the Glenside" (p. 384) by Peadar Kearney: "We may have brave men, but we'll never have better. Glory O, Glory O, to the bold Fenian men." This mythological, yet impactful, influence made its appearance just before the end of the 12th century and the entrance of the English colonists into Ireland but would forever alter the course of the Irish view of their own country and history.

In 1216, the Great Charter of Ireland was issued by Henry III; it was an issue of the English Magna Carta that granted rights to the Anglo-Normans in Ireland, but not to the native Irish. By 1297, England created an Irish Parliament to hold some authority over the country of Ireland, but positions of power were mostly held by those loyal to the English throne, rather than the Irish citizens it was supposed to govern. In the 13th century, the Normans still controlled large portions of Ireland, and there were Hiberno-Norman earldoms, such as the Butlers and the Burkes, who also controlled vast portions of land that were independent from the Irish government controlled by the English crown. However, in the 14th century, Gaelic lords launched a series of surprise attacks and depleted the Hiberno-Norman resources. This setback, coupled with the lack of direction from King Henry III and Edward I, his successor, led to the Normans' dwindling financial support of the English crown, which, in turn, led to main Irish chieftains regaining territory.

Four events greatly impacted Ireland under the rule of the Norman-English. The first was the invasion of Edward Bruce of Scotland; in 1315, he rallied many of the Irish lordships against the English. Many Irish lords won back their previously-family-owned lands, and a few English

partisans turned against the English throne due to personal disagreements. The European Famine also swept through Ireland, which left ports unable to import vital crops like wheat. This was devastating because it was coupled with the widespread crop-burning practices that occurred during the Bruce invasion. The last two events were the murder of William Donn Burke, 3rd Earl of Ulster in 1333, which led to a civil war, and the Black Death, which hit the Emerald Isle in 1348 and killed far more Normans than native Irish (due to the fact that the English and the Normans lived in towns and villages in which disease spread faster, while the native Irish lived in sporadic rural settlements). Simultaneously, in England, the Hundred Years' War between the French and the English raged on and distracted the English from protecting their hold on Ireland. This, coupled with the local Irish lords expanding their powers into Dublin, created a major point of contention that would not end until after the Tudor Conquest of Ireland.

Despite the "support" of the King, Ireland still struggled. Edward Poyning, the deputy of Ireland under Henry VII, passed Poynings' Law[11] in 1494, which prevented the Irish Parliament from passing any laws without first having approval from the English Parliament. The 16th century brought contention between the Irish and the English due to the conversion to Protestantism that swept through the English monarchy. In 1570, the Pope declared Queen Elizabeth I a heretic; the Irish, historically Catholic, rebelled in 1579 against the now-Protestant ruler of England. Ireland offered kingship to both the Pope and Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1594, the Nine Years War began, in an attempt by the Irish to rebel against the Queen's authority in Ulster, Ireland. In 1603, James I, who had become King of England in 1567, united the kingdoms of Scotland and England. In 1617, he added on Ireland to his title and

[11] Poynings' Law was also known as the Statute of Drogheda. In chapter seven, the *Annalecta Hibernica* states: "An Act that no Parliament be holden in this Land until the Acts be certified into England."

named himself “King of Great Britain and Ireland.” James I reigned until 1625, at which point Charles I succeeded him.

Between 1607 and 1690, there occurred many wars and battles, the most notable of which were the Irish Rebellion of 1641, the Irish Confederate Wars, and the Battle of the Boyne. The Irish Confederate Wars, also known as the Eleven Years’ War, started with the Irish Rebellion of 1641 as an Irish attempt to seize a number of strongholds in Ireland that were being held by the English government. The resentment of gathering Protestant settlers unsettled the Irish, and by 1642 the Irish insurgents joined forces with the Catholic Anglo-Irish social class. Military forces were sent from England and Scotland to squash the uprising.

While King Charles tried to come to an agreement with the Irish, there was a divide in the Irish Parliament: the followers of the Pope at the time wanted the Catholic Church to be reinstated and in control, whereas the Anglo-Irish class tried to work things out because that was in their best interest. No party was able to devise a successful plan. The Marquis of Ormand organized the Second Ormand Peace, which created a precarious alliance between the Irish supporters of the Crown, the rebel Irish, and the Ulster Scots, and the English. The Confederate War eventually ended with the conquest of Ireland by Oliver Cromwell and the execution of Charles I. Cromwell arrived in Ireland in 1649 and proceeded to launch his siege. There were a great many battles, including the Siege of Limerick (see “An Account of the Surrender of Limerick,” p. 44), the Siege of Drogheda, the sack of Wexford, and the conquest of Munster. Cromwell had completed his siege of Ireland in 1659, which successfully merged Ireland into part of the British commonwealth. Ballads such as *Alasdair MacColla*, (p. 49) an Irish song about a Scottish hero, sang of protesting the prejudice against Catholics while under British rule and Cromwell’s siege:

Alasdair, son of the exile Coll
In your hand
I would entrust great deeds
The Lord of Ach-nam-breac
would be killed by you
He would be buried
At the edge of the loch
And although I would get a blow
I heard yesterday a sad story
That Glasgow was going down
And Aberdeen is being pillaged.[12]

The Cromwellian conquest of Ireland destroyed many of the families that had been in the native Irish land-owning class and replaced them with British colonists. This caused bitterness and fueled much of Irish nationalism in the 1800s and onwards.

In 1688 during the Glorious Revolution, King William of Orange outed King James II from the throne of England and Scotland, who then fled to France. There were two major conflicts behind this event: the first was that William of Orange was Protestant, and the people of Ireland were predominately Catholic and supported James II. Under the Protestant rulers, the Catholic Irish faced losses of land and legal rights were taken away, due to the siege of Cromwell and some predetermined laws. Those who supported William of Orange were known as the Williamites, and those who supported James II were known as the Jacobites. By the end of

[12] Alasdair MacColla ballad.

1688, James's lord deputy had occupied all the forts in Ireland except for Derry. In 1689, James II led a force of over 5,000 troops from France and landed in Kinsale; from there he marched to Dublin, and by April 1689 he had started the Siege of Derry. In May of the same year, he called the Irish parliament (which consisted of almost entirely of Catholic nobility) to assembly, who told him that in exchange for their support in this war against William of Orange, the Irish parliament must have independence from England and that all of the Catholic possessions confiscated in 1652 be returned. Despite James's support by the Irish, William of Orange met every attempt James made to return to power with an equal, if not stronger, opposing force. William defeated attacks at Derry, Connacht, Ulster, and Inniskillen, among others. In the Battle of the Boyne, one of the more well-known battles, William scored a decisive victory over the Jacobites. After William's victory at Dublin, James II fled, once again, back to France. Even after James's defeat, William continued to seek control over Ireland and won many sieges and battles; at the end of 1691, The Treaty of Limerick[13] was signed, resulting in the Jacobites surrendering, which ended the Williamite-Jacobite War. In 1701, James II died and was replaced by his son, James III. While the Catholic Irish seemed to have gained some of their freedom back, the inability to gain complete independence and the English throne being ruled by a Protestant were the basis for more Irish-British conflicts to come.

In 1760, the French attempted an invasion, while Ireland was still under British rule, resulting in the Battle of Carrickfergus; the Irish fought them off successfully – they wanted to be free from tyranny, not merely change the masters of their confinement. Still, they had the British to deal with. In 1782, the English Parliament repealed Poynings' Law and passed a

[13] The Treaty of Limerick allowed the Jacobite army to honorably withdraw to France, which is known as the Flight of the Wild Geese. The Catholics re-gained their rights, but they must pledge allegiance to William.

number of other reforms. There was still much strife politically speaking. In 1786, the French attempted another unsuccessful invasion, and by 1798, the Irish were, again, at war with the British.

For years building up to the Rebellion of 1798, there were many advances towards war and nationalism. Nationalists used the culture of the Irish to urge them to fight against the common enemy: England. Some of the songs common still today are good examples of the lyrical push for the cause. Leading up to the rebellion, many tried to get the Irish to collectively work towards freedom. A group known as the United Irishmen produced a songbook with songs and ballads urging the countrymen to fight for their country. This was known as *Paddy's Resource* (p. 102), and it took tunes that the Irish already knew and dubbed them with new, nationalist lyrics. By doing so, they were able to permeate nationalism into the culture of Ireland itself.

In the spring of 1798, the English attempted to crush the secret movement for freedom; they arrested the main leaders and disarmed the forces. While this hindered the Irish rebels, it did not discourage them from attempting another revolt. In May, they attempted rebellion in Kildare, Meath, and Dublin. The forces in Meath and Kildare were crushed. Meanwhile, Wexford rebels stayed in control of a significant portion of Dublin and the south-east until their camp was invaded by English troops. With cruelty institutionalized against the native Irish throughout the country, Ireland had no choice but to fight for their right to live and die in peace. It is ironic that the peace the Irish sought was the terrifying to the British, who were fighting to uphold their tyranny in the Emerald Isle as a means of economic abundance and control. Ireland offered England land with which to repay their soldiers, food to feed their countrymen and nobility, and

money paid to the crown in the form of taxes. In 1801, Ireland was officially considered part of the United Kingdom.

The Irish Famine was a time of widespread starvation, and thus, emigration from the state of Ireland. The Potato Blight of 1845 – which lasted until 1849 – was one of the primary causes of this long span of suffering: the fungus-like organism called *Phytophthora infestans* swept across Ireland quickly, and attacked both the leaves and the edible roots of the potato plants across the country. It limited the diet of over half of the population of Ireland, as many were extremely reliant on the potato crop to feed themselves, because it produced a nutritional vegetable like corn at one-third the cost.[14] The other cause that fueled the Great Famine was the fact that England treated Ireland as it's personal garden. The British shipped mass amounts of food from Ireland to the English in order to feed their own people, while leaving Ireland to suffer in hungry and sorrowful misery. Due to both emigration and crop failure, the country saw a 20-25% population decrease. Ireland, crushed in spirit and body, needed to rise from the rubble and continue their fight for freedom against their oppressors.

The emergence of the Fenians, otherwise known as the Brotherhood, added a new aspect to the fight for freedom. After the English government had managed to quell the Fenian publication and suppress the IRB[15] newspaper called the *Irish People,* the rebels attempted an uprising. The Fenian Rising in 1867 was a rebellion against the British and was organized by the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), also known as The Fenians.[16] Just as with the rest of the rebellions in Ireland against British rule, there were many casualties and injustices that led up to the attempt at rebellion. The main leaders of the rebellion were detained, but they still openingly

[14] O Grada, Cormac. *The Great Irish Famine*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 3.
[15] The Irish movement called the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood.
[16] The term "Fenian" refers to the ancient warriors of Ireland and was used to describe this group of nationalists who founded their revolutionary group in 1858.

encouraged all attempts at freedom by the Irish people; the idea of lyrical propaganda only got more popular because it allowed even illiterate citizens to show their support for the idealized Irish freedom.

After the Rising in 1867, a few brothers left the organization; one notable figure was Eamon de Valera, who became the main political leader of Ireland at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. De Valera vied for a freedom that Ireland was intent on achieving, though different revolutionary organizations disagreed on just how to achieve that freedom. Throughout his political career, de Valera's main goal was to encourage the people to join the cause, and he was intent on sharing with the people of Ireland just what he envisioned to bring to them. However, de Valera also intended to recruit support from the Americans and Irish Americans and participated in multiple interviews; one of his more famous interviews was with an American Press Representative (p. 387). Interviews like these spread awareness of the cause for Irish freedom in America, and the United States felt kindred in spirit, having once been a colony of the British Empire; not only did they support the cause in spirit, but also monetarily. To raise the Irish cause in America was to succeed in a place where England could not; American empathized with Ireland in their quest for freedom because it echoed their own history just a few hundred years earlier.

In 1914, it seemed that Ireland was winning control over their country after more than 600 years. The Government of Ireland Act was passed, allowing Irish Home Rule, but the right was postponed until after the end of World War I. Once again, freedom was within grasp and then suddenly disappeared. In April of 1916, Ireland was given another opportunity to launch an attack. Beginning Monday, April 24th, the IRB led a force comprised of 1,200 volunteers to seize the British-controlled government buildings in Dublin; they issued the Proclamation, which

announced their independence from Ireland and fought for five days against the British troops. The rebels seized control of the city center, but failed to acquire Dublin Castle and Trinity College, which were major strategic battle locations. Due to this, the British were able to send in artillery and the city center was left in destruction; the IRB surrendered on Saturday, April 29th. The leaders of the Rising were given death sentences by firing squad the next day; poems like William Butler Yeats' *Easter, 1916* (p. 272) recount the horrors of this awful and gruesome week. It stroked the heart strings of the Irish people and reminded them about what they were fighting for and who they were fighting for: like their forefathers who had begun this quest for freedom so many years ago, they searched for a better way for the Irish future; they needed to give up the few luxuries they had now to fight for the ability for the next generations to have a better life and country.

Many of those that would survive the Rising and the death sentences would continue to be a valuable part of the cause for Irish freedom. After the Easter Rising, the collection of Irish volunteer forces reformed and became known as the Irish Republican Army (the IRA); they were controlled by Eamon De Valera and Arthur Griffith in a political party called Sinn Féin, which literally translates to "[We] Ourselves." Michael Collins, a very well-loved man who had been a part of the Easter Rising, was a crucial part of the IRB intelligence. In 1918, a general election was held in which Sinn Féin won but refused to sit at the House of Commons. They then created their own parliament known as Dáil Eireann, or "Irish Parliament." However, before the very first meeting, Collins was tipped off by many of his spies that the English forces were going to arrest the members of the Dáil Eireann during the night. De Valera and others ignored the warnings, knowing the arrests of the leaders of the people would create a coup and was arrested. In the absence of de Valera, the Dáil Eireann met in January 1919 and elected Cathal Brugha as

Prime Minister. Eventually, Collins helped create a successful escape plan to extract de Valera from prison in England and get him back to Ireland to lead once again. At this point, de Valera appointed Collins as the Minister of Finance. By the end of 1919, England had banned both the Dáil Eireann and the Sinn Féin.

The War of Independence is thought to have started at an ambush in Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary in 1919, the same day as the first meeting of the Dáil Eireann. The republicans ambushed British troops. Eventually, England sent skilled police task forces to Ireland, who were known as the Black and Tans because of the color of their uniform; they were undisciplined and brutal, and killed even women and children with no remorse. If the British hadn't taken the hint already, it was now clear, by this point, that the Irish had always fought for the right to their identity and would continue to do so; political parties were being named to invoke a sense of Irish pride, which they would not allow to be taken away.

In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act was passed, which created a bi-parliament system, with one branch in Belfast and the other in Dublin. The Sinn Féin were elected into the Dublin office and rebranded themselves as the Second Dáil. At the end of 1921, British Prime Minister Lloyd George coined a truce, in which both sides would halt troop movements and remove spies and informers. De Valera did not go to London to sign the treaty, and instead, sent a number of trusted politicians, including Collins. While Collins and his companions did the best they could to attain the complete freedom of Ireland, the parliament refused many aspects of the proposed treaty. Many of Collins' speeches became crucial to understanding why he accepted amended terms for the treaty (p. 395). The Treaty was signed on the 6th of December of 1921, but Collins reluctantly gave up the six counties in the north to the English throne. Thus, Ireland

was free, but split. The IRA moved into the former British barracks in the Southern part of Ireland; however, the force was dividing itself between Pro-Treaty and Anti-Treaty members, and on top of the IRA, a Free State Army was then formed by the Anti-Treaty reformers. In June of 1922, the Free State Army attacked the Four Courts in Dublin that were controlled by the IRA. The IRA leaders were forced to surrender after three days, and this marked the beginning of the civil war. In 1937, the Constitution of Ireland was formed and replaced the Irish Free State with a new entity known as "Éire" (p. 153) or Ireland in English. In 1949, the Republic of Ireland act was signed by the President of Ireland which ended the remaining appointments to the British monarchy within the Irish government. From this point forward, Ireland had to deal with the internal struggles: the division between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

History of Irish Writing and Its Movements

Early Irish Literature

The writings throughout the history of Ireland continuously changed due to the evolving nature of those in power. However, early Irish literature is one of the oldest examples of vernacular writing in Europe. The earliest of such records are recorded in Ogham characters, the original Irish form of writing that dates back to the fourth century; many of these can be found on stones to record events and burial sites – simple memoriams. Historians believe that the Roman alphabet and the use of Latin, was in use by the middle of the fifth century, which correlates with the date that the Romans landed on the Irish shore. There is little recorded proof of the exact names of the earliest Irish writers, but Coelius Sedulius, a 5th century Christian poet and author of *Carmen Paschale,* was believed to have been born in Ireland. Saint Patrick's two

works, *Confessio* and *Epistola,* survive, written in Latin, and also serve as one of the basic building blocks for Irish, Christian pride. Saint Colum Cille of the sixth century composed *Cathach*, known as "Book of Battles," which is now preserved in the Royal Irish Academy.

The oldest surviving manuscripts written in the Irish language (not Ogham) date back to the ninth century; they are glosses written in between lines or in margins of works in Latin, usually religious works, and are preserved in monasteries around Western and Southern Europe. They were hardly touched – unlike the manuscripts that remained in Ireland - as no one understood the writing; however, they exemplify the development of the Irish language in such an early period.

In the early 12th century, we begin to see the development of literature - rather than merely religious texts; one of the best and earliest examples is *Lebor na hUidre,* or the "Book of the Dun Cow." This manuscript was named after the legend of its creation, as it was said to have been constructed from the hide of a dun cow[17] by Saint Ciaran of Clonmacnoise[18]. While the book is damaged, the construction is apparent: there is much Irish and British history translated into Irish, but there are also many mythological tales and poems, such as "The Wooing of Etain" and "The Cattle Raid of Cooley." Later, in the mid-12th century, the *Book of Leinster* represents the rise in popularity of the prose epic (saga), which continued to change and develop. The *Book of Leinster* contains the names of over 180 sagas which were divided into categories such as cattle-raids, courtships, battles, feasts, tragic deaths, invasions, slaughters, and visions. Many of these mythological tales influenced authors in later centuries. Padriac Colum's "The Story of

[17] A dun cow is a popular motif in English and Celtic literature. "Dun" is a shade of brown-grey; there are many legends concerning dun cows in the British Isles.

[18] Saint Ciaran of Clonmacnoise was one of the 12 Apostles of Ireland and the first abbot of Clonmacnoise. The monastery at Clonmacnoise was one of the most important centers of learning and religious activities in Ireland. Saint Ciaran was a part of many legends but was also a part of many Christian ideals of Ireland.

Lowry Maen," for example, features a young man and his father, courage, cattle, and invasions. These types of tales promoted the ideas of pride and bravery to the Irish, which would be helpful in their seemingly-never ending quest for freedom.

The Aisling

The *aisling,* which translates literally to "dream" or "vision," is a vision poem that was created in the 17th century. Aogan Ó Rathaille was credited as the first of the aisling poets, and he used it as a powerful tool to promote his political standing in works such as "The Vision" (p. 75) and "No Help I'll Call" (p. 80). In aislings, Ireland appears as a woman, who is usually referred to as the *Spéirbhean*[19]. Sometimes she is young and beautiful, and sometimes she is ugly and old; the woman laments to the poet about the state of Ireland at the time and predicts that the future will bring a turn for the better in the fortune of Ireland and her people, thus bringing forth the aspiration of hope. At its creation, the aisling was an Irish language poem, but later in Irish literary history, many other writers and poets would use the form, such as William Butler Yeats and Seamus Heaney, in many of their more traditional poems involving Celtic mythology.

The Influence of Europe

The 13th and 14th centuries brought a new light to the literature of Ireland. Through the English colonization under King Henry II, European civilization made its way into Ireland and brought new forms of learning into the country. The upper-class citizens of Ireland spoke French, due to the Norman influence, and a code of chivalry marked Gaelic literature, along with ideals such as courtly love. These Gaelic-Norman characteristics led to the creation of a new kind of love poetry: the *danta gradha* or *amour courtois.*[20] The middle- and lower-class settlers also

[19] *Spéirbhean* translates to "heavenly woman."
[20] *Amour courtois* was the Medieval European literary ideal that love emphasized nobility and chivalry.

developed their own form of writing, which is what is now called Anglo-Irish poetry. Drama began to take hold of the country, and plays were held in larger cities like Dublin and Kilkenny. As literature began to develop and become a more popular passtime, so did the class system of Ireland. As a result, the formation of the Anglo-Irish class was formed, and with it, began a new era of literature.

Anglo-Irish Literature

The formation of the Anglo-Irish tradition in literature began around the 1690, due to the completion of the Glorious Revolution[21] of 1689 in England, which resulted in the New English settlers gaining complete authority over the native Irish and the Old English (the descendants of Anglo-Normans who invaded in the 12th century). The Anglican Ascendency caused a rift in the religious composition of Ireland: the Irish were predominantly Catholic, and in Northern Ireland were Scottish Presbyterians. Those who did not conform to the Anglican Church were famously known as the Irish Dissenters, and, as a result, disbarred from full civil rights and political power. The term "Anglo-Irish" refers to the New English who owned property and controlled Ireland from 1690 until the mid-19th century. However, the term in literature refers to the literature produced both by that class and by those who belonged to neither the Anglicans nor the descendants of the English settlers. This literature is written in the English language, but the literature itself reflects many aspects that were crucial to the development of the Irish nation throughout history. Anglo-Irish literature displays ties to Gaelic, English, Scottish and other European cultures, while also keeping its own independent tradition. The subordination of Ireland, the famine, and emigration all play a part in the form of nationalism that arrives during

[21] James II, a Catholic, was replaced by his nephew (and son-in-law) William of Orange, who was a Protestant. This change in religion and power created yet another shift in the social dynamic of Ireland.

this era of literature. Writers like Swift and Burke were expatriates, but spent much time writing about the injustices of corruption within the English government in Ireland; many argued that it was this corruption that led to a distrust of the government officials by the Irish people, which in turn caused more problems. An example of satire of this type is Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (p. 64), in which he mockingly suggests that a good way to help the impoverished Irish would be to allow them to sell their children as food to the rich classes; this satirical essay brought attention to the cruel policies and general attitudes towards the Irish by British policy. While the development of Anglo-Irish literature continues to evolve, the Irish natives begin to form their own movement of literature.

The Celtic Revival

While the Anglo-Irish class continued to thrive both economically and in the prolific production of literature, the native Irish struggled. The Celtic Revival, as so many scholars have referred to this period, began in 1780 and lasted for the following hundred years. Seamus Deane wrote in his *A Short History of Irish Literature,* "The reasons for the failure of the Glorious Revolution to provide in Ireland the relative peace and harmony which had been its consequence in England could be endlessly disputed. But it was beyond dispute that Irish experience was profoundly affected by a sense of insecurity and crisis."[22] Thus, the "Irish experience" in literature would inevitably surround the suffering and sense of urgency for freedom from the English that the Irish felt; the recreation of the true Ireland and the sense of pride for the country would begin anew.

[22] Deane, Seamus. *A Short History of Irish Literature,* 1986, University of Notre Dame Press, p.31.

Nationalist figures such as Wolfe Tone, Roger Casement, William Drennan, and William Orr wrote about the cruelty that still ruled over the Irish island. In Tone's autobiography, he discussed the mistreatment of the Irish by the English and his goals in uniting the whole of Ireland:

> To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never failing course of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country - these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter - these were my means. [23]

His memoirs (p. 172) were published by his son in 1821.

While the Celtic Revival started first with the Welsh and the Scottish, translations of old and ancient works and the increase in cultural nationalism allowed for the Irish people to find in themselves a vision of what they could be as a country. Writers such as Thomas Moore took this renaissance of cultural pride to be one of the many to use old native music and adapt it with modern lyrics in order to create a politically Irish vision. Between 1807 and 1834, Moore published the *Irish Melodies*, which produced songs such as "The Last Rose of Summer" (p. 165). Many of these songs were imbued with the love for Ireland and a necessity for change in the political system.

The decline of the Irish language in the last few hundred years of Irish history was in part due to the disappearance of the Irish education in the school system, but also due to the fact that over 1 million of the Irish emigrated and 1 million died during the decade of the Famine.

[23] Tone, Theobald Wolfe. *The Autobiography of Theobald Wolfe Tone,* ed. R.B. O'Brien, 2 vols (London, 1893), I, pp. 50-1.

However, with the decline of its quotidian use, the scholarly interest in the Irish language increased. Many organizations such as the Ulster Gaelic Society, established in 1830, and the Celtic Society, established in 1845, were created and produced many translations. By the mid-19th century, Ireland had realized that the lower classes and their language was in pending extinction, leading to both cultural and literary impacts. In John Mitchel's works and Fenianism as a whole, an extreme hatred for the British was recorded; he believed that the British were guilty of genocide of the Irish people. Much of Mitchel's work, such as *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps),* became a cornerstone of revolutionary literature.

Many of the works in this anthology are nationalistic in that they analyze the English government in literary form. By satirizing the reality of the situation, the authors made their political stand against the British, which inevitably evolved into a Pro-Ireland stance.[24] Educational reform, civil rights, and other such political issues were promoted to benefit Ireland as a whole, rather than separate Ireland into its different groups. Love of country and the desire for betterment, not merely the call to war, is what truly makes a piece nationalistic in nature. It is for the sake of the future of Ireland that the writers wrote and the soldiers fought – many did both.

Nationalism in Irish Music

Ireland has a hearty background in oral tradition, and songs and legends were commonly shared among groups of people during free time and in the family home. The importance of music didn't stop after the wars ended, though. In most Irish pubs around the country, live music

[24] Pro-Ireland can take on a variation of definitions; however, I am using the term to mean that those who were Pro-Ireland were supporters of the revolution and the goal of a free Ireland.

incorporates or is completely centered around traditional Irish songs. Most sing about love and war, and many are about both. Throughout the ages, the songs served as a call to arms to fight for freedom, and now they embody the sense of history that all Irish know determined their lives and the lives of the people before them. As Elie Wiesel said, “Neutrality always helps the oppressor, never the victim.” This applies to the Irish quest for freedom; by supporting those fighting in the revolution, and Irishman or Irishwoman could only help the cause. One way that all citizens, even the illiterate, could support the revolution, was by singing – something that was already a big part of the culture. Songs and ballads evolved throughout the history of Ireland; they served as a call to arms at the beginning, but also permitted the Irish who couldn’t fight to still show their support for the nationalist cause by including political phrases and even overwriting non-political lyrics with political ones. These nationalist songs are reminders of the country’s history of oppression, and they will continue to serve as a symbol for the success of crushing the British oppression that the Irish population will pass on to the next generations: that is, they continue to assert Irish nationalism and perpetuate the continual goal to better the country.

Many might be familiar with contemporary Irish folk and rock bands whose songs grace our ears with lyrics regarding battles, hardships and love that the Irish conquered throughout the years. Groups like the Dropkick Murphys, Flogging Molly, The High Kings, The Dubliners, The Wolfe Tones, The Clancy Brothers, and many more all have a special place in the modern music scene when it comes to remembering the glories and sorrows of Ireland throughout the years. But music provided more than just entertainment for the Irish during their fight for freedom. It functioned as the main form of revolution for some groups of people. From love to loss, sickness and health, and war and peace, these collections of words are the lifeblood that goes through the Irish people. Music was, and still is, a crucial way to help the citizens of Ireland get through their

thousand-year rough patch, especially during their fight against the British rule. Nationalist groups utilized the culture of oral tradition in Ireland to expand their cause, which successfully combined politics, heritage, history, and music all in one to easily feed into the quotidian lifestyle of the Emerald Isle.

The glories of Ireland were offered to its citizens in the form of music. Those who were illiterate or did not have time to read due to any number of factors were able to love and gain knowledge about Ireland and its fight for freedom. One of the oldest recorded nationalist ballads is "Follow Me Up to Carlow" (p. 283), which celebrates the defeat of an army of English soldiers at the Battle of Glenmalure during the Second Desmond Rebellion in 1580. In the years leading up to the 1798 Rebellion, the most modern ideas of nationalism in music began to form: nationalists used the culture of the Irish to urge them to fight against the common enemy: England. Some of the songs still common today are good examples of the lyrical push for the cause. Leading up to the rebellion, many leaders tried to get the Irish to collectively work towards freedom. A group known as the United Irishmen produced a songbook with songs and ballads urging the countrymen to fight for their country. This was known as *Paddy's Resource*, and it took tunes that the Irish already knew and dubbed them with new, nationalist lyrics. By doing so, they were able to infuse nationalism into the culture of Ireland itself.

In 1842, Thomas Davis, a Protestant, started *The Nation,* with two Catholic friends, James Clarence Mangan and John Blake Dillon. Davis's public writings concerned education, music, art, and the virtues of the Repeal, which later failed. Most importantly, he preached of cultural unity and propelled the use of song lyrics into the political sphere, rather than merely using them as a rallying call. Davis was, apart from *The Nation,* a nationalist through and

through; “Clare’s Dragoons” (p. 205) was written by Davis about one of the Irish brigades during the Jacobite War.

These ballads, songs, and limericks appear chronologically throughout the rest of the literature. I did not put them in a separate section, because doing so would decrease the readers’ understanding of their importance as a nationalistic tool. Music has always been one of the most popular and accessible ways into the minds, hearts, and souls of the Irish, but also encouraged a kind of political activism that gave strength to the revolution.

Women in Irish Nationalism

Women and their literature are not always taught as an essential part of the nationalistic movements. Before the 20th century, women played a vital role in the furthering of nationalism; however, the conception of the extent of their participation was somewhat skewed, meaning history employs a chauvinist approach to realizing the full influence they had on the attainment of Irish freedom. Most of their support was in the form of supporting the men who fought physically, but many female writers used their literature and poems to create an underlying message for freedom. Outward participation in politics was frowned upon, and so women took to setting their ideals into their artwork. For example, we see this in Dora Sigerson’s “The Flight of the Wild Geese” (p. 259) in which she writes of the darkness and panic that come over the citizens during the Flight of the Wild Geese, in which a Jacobite force arrived in France under the terms of the Treaty of Limerick. Sigerson’s “What We Must Do” (p. 262) tells of what she views her role as a woman is during Ireland’s time of strife and involving the advancement of the country.

However, in the last 100-150 years of the fight for freedom against England, women played vital roles in outwardly advocating for their own ideas of nationalism and freedom, while also attempting to still support the male-centered movements that advocated for similar ideals regarding the freedom of the Irish. Many people agree that these women are not spoken about because their literature is not easily accessible; that is both correct and incorrect. The true reason that women are not often talked about in this movement is that their literature had less of a chance to circulate. Women created many women's social groups with the intention to further the nationalistic cause; they had been rejected from joining the freedom groups that already existed by virtue of their gender. It is safe to say that not all men *wanted* women to be a part of the cause. While their literature is not always inaccessible, it is not easy to find. By including female authors in an anthology such as this, I hope to emphasize the importance of these women's literary and political contributions and more widely inform the reader of the complete vision of Irish nationalism.

Having reviewed much of the historical, political, and literary history of the nationalism of Ireland, this anthology stands as a testament to the strength of character that the Irish exhibited in their lengthy journey towards freedom. Anyone, even you, can learn something valuable from their struggle and success.

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