Irish Diasporic Writing in Argentina, 1845-1907:

A Reconsideration of Emigrant Identity

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I, Sinéad Wall, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Departure from Ireland has long occupied a contradictory position in Irish national discourse, alternatively viewed as exile or betrayal. This thesis analyses how this departure as well as notions of home, identity and return are articulated in the narratives of three members of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina: John Brabazon's journal *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Ayres from the year 1845 by John Brabazon and His Own Adventures*; Kathleen Nevin's fictional memoir, *You'll Never Go Back* (1946); and William Bulfin's series of sketches for *The Southern Cross* newspaper, later published as *Tales of the Pampas* (1900) and *Rambles in Eirinn* (1907). I examine the extent to which each writer upholds or contests hegemonic constructions of Irishness and how their experience in the diaspora space, that is, what Avtar Brah defines as 'the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes' as well as their encounters with other inhabitants of that space influence identity construction. Drawing on Brah's notion of home as both a 'mythic place of desire' and 'lived experience of a locality', I explore how these writers imaginatively construct Irishness and negotiate the dual identity of emigrant and potential returnee. I contend that each of these writers, to varying degrees, challenges the orthodox positionings of the Irish diaspora subject as backward-looking and the Irish emigrant as bound to the national territory, paradigms which are an important feature of anti-colonial nationalism in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Furthermore, I argue that they construct multiple subject positions in addition to contradictory notions of Irishness: national (implying fixed in place), essentialist and homogenous versus transnational, defined in terms of diversity and multiplicity – ultimately contributing to the re-imagining of the Irish emigrant identity.

<u>Table of Contents</u>

Introduction

'Identity is as much about difference as shared belonging'.[1]

'There is the warmth and welcome from all. But there is something the heart seeks but does not get, because nothing can bring back old acquaintances either of scene or Personal reminiscences. So that the returned emigrant is as hazy as those who receive him. He is wedged in betwixt the old and the young. And it takes some time before he gets his bearings'.[2]

The focus of this thesis is Irish travel and migration to Argentina and literary constructions of emigrant identity, home and return in the works of three members of the Irish diasporic community there. The narratives of John Brabazon (1828-1914), Kathleen Nevin (approx 1898-1976) and William Bulfin (1864-1910), span a period of Irish and Argentine history from 1845 to 1907. This was a period of high cultural contestation as well as political and social change in both Ireland and Argentina. In Ireland, this was characterised by events such as the Great Famine (1845-1852), the Land Reform Act of 1883 and Wyndham Act of 1903, the Irish Literary Revival and the fight for Home Rule which culminated in the Easter Rising of 1916 and the Irish Free State in 1921.[3] On the other hand, Argentina won its independence from Spain in 1810 and throughout the nineteenth century struggled with new ways to define the identity of the fledgling republic. This struggle was hampered by divisions between the city of Buenos Aires and the outlying provinces. Politics in the 1820s was dominated by the

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[1] Paul Gilroy (2003: 301).

[2] From the notebook of returned emigrant Sean O'Keefe, cited in Arnold Schrier (1997: 132).

[3] The Famine or Great Hunger, *An Gorta Mhór* in Irish, saw the failure of the potato crop in Ireland in 1845, followed by a series of harvest failures until 1852. The Reform Act, which followed years of land clearances, evictions and clashes between tenants and landlords, opened up the opportunity to buy out a holding. Only partially effective, it was superseded by the Wyndham Act which saw the transfer of land to the farmers. The Literary Revival was spearheaded by W.B. Yeats and along with the Gaelic League (1882) attempted to evince a new sense of Irish identity divested of Anglicisation. For further information on this period see Cormac O'Gráda (1999) or J.C. Beckett (1969).

educated, liberal and bureaucratic Bernadino Rivadavia until 1829, when a conservative,
dictatorial regime under Juan Manual de Rosas was installed and remained in place until
1852. In attempts to extend territorial boundaries and civilise the vast region of the
pampas, General Julio Roca's 1879 *Campaña del desierto* [The Conquest of the Desert]
oversaw the extermination of almost all the native Indian population, after which Roca
served as President from 1880 to 1886.[4] This paved the way for one of the most
significant periods of mass European immigration to Argentina from the 1880s to the
1920s.[5]

Historical accounts of the global Irish dispersal provide us with one facet of the
migration experience, the collective. To access the experiences of individual migrants,
their hopes, personal circumstances, reception in or perception of the host community,
as well as to illuminate the history of settlement, we must turn to the narratives of that
experience. Luke Gibbons argues that 'understanding a community or culture does not
consist solely in establishing "neutral" facts and "objective" details: it means taking
seriously *their* ways of structuring experience, their popular narratives, the distinctive
manner in which they frame the social and political realities which affect their lives'
(1996: 17). In fact, each of the writers under study records their social and political
realities as well as their experiences from within a variety of contexts, in which matters
of class, gender, reason for departure to textual conventions, audience or lack thereof,
all inform their writing to some degree. The corpus encompasses the non-fictional diary
of John Brabazon, *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Ayres from the
year 1845 by John Brabazon and His Own Adventures,* which relates his encounters
with other nationalities and native Argentines in Buenos Aires and the pampas from
1845 to 1864. The second narrative is the fictional memoir of Kathleen Nevin, a second

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[4]Roca also served a second term from 1898 to 1904.
[5]See Leslie Bethell (1993), Fernando Devoto (2003) and José Moya (1998) for more on this period and
Argentina's immigration policies.

generation Irish-Argentine. Her novel, *You'll Never Go Back* (1946), is based on her

mother's journey to Buenos Aires in 1879 and her subsequent experiences in the city.

The final subject, William Bulfin, arrived in Buenos Aires in 1884 and after seven years

working on the pampas began writing travel 'sketches' for the Irish-Argentine

newspaper *The Southern Cross*.[6] Some of these sketches became the basis for the two

works under study: a volume of short stories called *Tales of the Pampas* (1900) and a

travel book entitled *Rambles in Eirinn* (1907). The combination of the genres of

personal memoir, fiction and travel narrative is 'instructive of how memory and

imagination are mutually dependent [and] apparent in the differing forms of narration

each writer chooses to mediate events and experiences and how, within individual texts,

shifts take place in both directions along the fact/fiction spectrum'.[7]

These 'shifts' are evident in the three diasporic voices I examine. Their

narratives move freely along the 'fact/fiction spectrum', reflecting the fluid parameters

of fiction as well as the literature of travel. This literature can be defined as an overall

thematic category, with 'loose and shifting borders [incorporating] a variety of texts

both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel' (Borm 2004:

13).[8] The parameters of the corpus under study extend from the actual journey over

land or water to the dialectics of 'home' and 'abroad' and the reconstruction of the

narrator's experiences of displacement. All three writers foreground their encounters

with the multiple others of Argentina: language, culture, other migrants as well as native

Argentines, rural and urban. Brabazon and Bulfin spend a lot of time with the native

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[6]His 'Sketches of Buenos Aires' chronicled life in the city while rural life was depicted in his 'Sketches: A camp story'. Camp is a Spanglish term meaning countryside, derived from the Spanish word *campo*.
[7]Tony Murray (2012: 9) examines contemporary London-Irish literature by drawing on a similar corpus of fictional and non-fictional texts.
[8]Jan Borm (2004) employs the term travel literature in an attempt to define the parameters of travel writing. Borm argues that rather than a travel genre as such, there are travelogues, which are predominantly non-fictional and travel literature, which is an overall thematic category that includes both fiction and non-fiction.

gauchos and they offer quasi-ethnographic studies of their habits and customs. Nevin, on the other hand, employs fiction as a means of engaging with and mediating past events (as well as her mother's memories) in addition to negotiating her own identity as a diaspora and Irish-Argentine subject. Indeed, similar to the hybridity intrinsic to travel literature itself in terms of generic and thematic crossings, the three authors cross genres and forms of writing in their literary constructions of home, return and encounters with other migrants in their travels and search for work in Argentina. It is precisely because of the 'loose and shifting borders' of their experiences, which morph from travelling and temporary work into permanent or semi-permanent settlement, that these narratives serve as exemplary forms for interrogating and interpreting the consequences of migration and the diasporic condition on the individual. A crucial difference I would highlight between travel and migration lies in the intention to stay or not in the country travelled. The narratives I explore reflect what could be deemed a sliding scale of intentions to return. This plan is pivotal to each author, their experience and narrativisation of the diaspora space as well as how they render themselves and others as diaspora subjects. Brabazon's narrative reveals no discernible intention to return, Nevin's protagonists intend to stay a short time while Bulfin makes his intention to return clear and he ultimately fulfils that intention. Concomitant to this intention is the problematic nature of home and perception of the returnee. I read all three writers, irrespective of genre, for ways in which they construct or subvert notions of home, return or identity. As the experience of living elsewhere has long been conceived of as exile in Irish cultural discourse, this introduction will also examine this key term.

These three writers leave behind a fascinating record of their experiences of travel and interaction with native Argentines, other nationalities as well as other members of the Irish community of Buenos Aires province. They form an essential part

of what little literary record survives of this particular diasporic culture.[9] To understand

the importance and uniqueness of Argentina as the site of the only major Irish

settlement outside of an English-speaking country, part one of this introduction will

contextualise travel to Argentina in relation to the Irish diaspora world wide. In

addition, I shall outline my research questions as they relate to the contradictory

perception of the emigrant in Irish national discourse in order to situate the diasporic

subjectivities articulated in the works in question. In part two I will discuss migration

to Argentina and the existing body of criticism of the authors I analyse. Finally, part

three provides an overview of the critical methodology I draw on in my analysis of the

three authors.

1. The Irish Diaspora Worldwide

Over the past four hundred years, an estimated ten million people have departed from

Ireland. From as early as the sixteenth century people left Ireland for reasons of religion,

self-betterment or asylum. The largest exodus took place during the nineteenth century

with around eight million departing between 1801 and 1921 (Fitzpatrick 1995: 1).

Without doubt the defining moment of the nineteenth century was the Great Famine,

during which period Cormac O'Gráda records that around one million people

permanently left Ireland and another million starved to death (1999: 105). Between

1841 and 1911 the census figures show the population halved from just over eight

million to around four million.[10] While the United States, Canada and Britain were the

most common destinations, there was also significant travel to South Africa, Australia,

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[9]Descendants of Irish settlers have slowly been coming forward with private correspondence and this may open up a new vein of information to be explored. See Murray (2004a) for an examination of the letters of four families. More recently, the Bulfin family have donated William Bulfin's letters to Dr Laura Izarra who is compiling them into a volume to be published in 2014. I am grateful to Dr Izarra for allowing me to view these letters.

[10]Donald Akenson (1993: 21) cites the census figures which show the population in 1841 totalling 8,175,125 and by 1911 at 4,390,219.

New Zealand and Latin America.[11] The latter destinations received proportionally

fewer emigrants, with the Irish population in South Africa for example, making up 3.8

per cent of the white population of the Cape Colony in 1891.[12] The consequences of the

enormous outflow of emigrants on Irish society and the Irish psyche cannot be

underplayed although until recently this migration has been under-researched in Irish

academia and 'is mainly the product of scholarship from outside Ireland'.[13] I would like

to turn now to some of the volumes which seek to redress this situation in order to

situate how my own research complements and furthers this work.

The first major, overarching, interdisciplinary study of Irish migration was

edited by Patrick O'Sullivan, Head of the Irish Diaspora Research Unit at the University

of Bradford. His series, *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, contains six

volumes: *Patterns of Migration* (1992), *The Irish in New Communities* (1993), *The

Creative Migrant* (1994), *Irish Women and Irish Migration* (1995), *Religion and

Identity* (1996), and *The Meaning of the Famine* (1997). The series was in part an

answer to and a further call for a comprehensive examination of the impact of migration

on Irish society and the need to put it 'stage-centre to the study of Irish history'

(O'Sullivan 1992: xiv). It focuses on a broad historical period from the seventeenth

century, beginning with the contribution of the Irish to European armies, through to the

late twentieth-century and illegal emigrants in New York. It draws on a variety of

methods from different academic disciplines such as history, sociolinguistics, literary

theory and ethnomusicology in order to interrogate Irish migration. The contributors

bring to bear a comparative analysis, predominantly historical in nature, of communities

in Australia, the United States, Latin America, Britain and Canada. In Volume Three,

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[11]During the time period under study the United States received an estimated 80 per cent of Irish emigrants while smaller migrations to Australia for example, made up an estimated 5 per cent.
[12]Donal McCracken (2000: 252) notes the peak period of Irish settlement was in 1875 when of the 28,200 immigrants in the Cape 13 per cent (3,759) were Irish.
[13]Piaras Mac Éinrí notes this in his introduction to *The Irish Diaspora* (2000: 3).

The Creative Migrant, they employ myriad sources to contextualise this history so as to study the effect of migration upon intellectual and artistic creativity in the host society. These sources vary from oral histories, surveys, census information, notebooks, and letters through to migrants' own creative output in autobiographies, drama, dance, songs, cinema and novels. The resulting chapters emphasise the complexity and diversity of Irish experiences, although there are elements of cross over and paralleling in some communities, as we shall see presently in the Argentine case.

O'Sullivan observes that, in general, the majority of research into Irish migration centred around the Famine and post-Famine movement and that much of it can be categorised as 'oppression history', thus keeping it within a conceptual framework shaped by the oppressor (1992: xviii).[14] As a way of 'writing back' or countering oppression, a compensation history (focussing on famous or successful migrants) or contribution history (where migrants were seen as nation-builders, like those in Australia, or praised for their participation in the American Civil War) was produced. The shortcomings of compensation and contribution history, he argues, point to where the gaps lie as this research can 'ignore the people whose sole historical accomplishment seems to have been that they lived [and they] become "lost" to us' (1992: xvii). Though he acknowledges that many of the contributors and chapters of his multi-volume study also engage in compensation and contribution research, the series balances this with the voices of the 'lost', or what O'Sullivan terms 'muted groups': women, Protestant migrants, rural communities in the United States and Australia, and female religious orders, to name a few. O'Sullivan also notes the difficulties in finding research into communities in non-English-speaking countries: 'language itself is one of the obstacles to research into the experiences of the Irish outside English-speaking

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[14]O'Sullivan notes that he is adapting here Gerda Lerner's 1979 exploration of women in history, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History.*

countries' (1992: 5). While I recognise that my own work engages, to some extent, with contribution (nation-building in Argentina) and compensation history (William Bulfin is of some renown in both Ireland and Argentina), it nonetheless takes an important step in moving the focus beyond Anglophone-centred studies. These analyses have long dominated research on the Irish diaspora, with, for instance, an 'overemphasis on the study of the United States' (Akenson 2010: 2). I focus attention instead on a marginalised minority which, despite its seemingly peripheral status, can help illuminate larger migration patterns. Moreover, my research helps recover some of these 'muted groups', namely female and Protestant voices which testify to the multiplicity of the migrant experience.

The overarching critical method adopted by O'Sullivan as editor is concerned with foregrounding questions dealing with the search for work, the effect of migration on women, on artistic creativity as well the impact of Catholicism, Protestantism and the Famine on different migrant traditions. These are themes reflected in my own research although I prioritise questions of home, modes of belonging, identity and return as critical concepts through which to examine diasporic consciousness, subjectivity and representation. Moreover, these concepts pave the way for further transnational comparisons not only with other Irish diaspora communities but with other migrant traditions. O'Sullivan chooses the neutral term migrant to describe those who depart and return as he argues that the term emigrant 'contains its own narrative, incorporates a point of view' (1995: 2). However, it is precisely this narrative and point of view that this thesis aims to reconsider. I re-examine the loaded term 'emigrant' as it is evinced in the texts under study. These texts express conflicting, though at times intersecting, notions of Irishness which incorporate essentialised versions (fixed, national, exilic) as well as more inclusive forms of transnational identities – sometimes

simultaneously. In unpacking this loaded term I aim to reclaim it from its entrenched history and resonance with absence, loss, and exile.

Another important contribution of this series is how it highlights research which debunks deep-rooted assumptions about Irish migration. For example, in Volume Two, Donald Akenson's chapter on the Irish in the United States demonstrates that by the mid-twentieth century, a census of the Irish population revealed that it was predominantly Protestant, not Catholic as was always presumed.[15] Moreover, a step to address the scarcity of scholars studying the Irish in the non-English speaking world is taken in Volume One. Patrick McKenna's chapter traces the history of this Irish migration and settlement in the provinces of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires, an important first contribution from a contemporary Irish scholar.[16] In addition, Volume Four of the series is the first major volume of work dedicated to women's experiences of migration. This volume offers a broad historical perspective of women's contribution to European armies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nineteenth-century migration to the United States and England and twentieth-century communities in New York and London. The paucity of research into women's migration is a refrain in each chapter and O'Sullivan acknowledges the work that remains to be carried out, not only in terms of gender, but also class. My research goes some way to redressing these gaps in terms of gender but where our approaches converge most closely is in allowing 'a place for the journey, which figures so largely in the migrant's own accounts of their experiences [...] and a place for the individual life' (O'Sullivan 1992: xvii). Like many of the volumes in the series, I also combine a historiography of Irish migration with individual case studies.

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[15]See Akenson (1992: 99-127). He argues that Protestant migrant patterns extended over longer periods and led to a larger Protestant ethnic group because of its multi-generational nature.
[16]See McKenna (1992: 63-83). I return to his contribution at a later stage.

O'Sullivan's series was paralleled by another important contribution to the study of Irish movement worldwide which, for the first time, positions this movement within diaspora studies. Donald Akenson's 1993 work *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* is a longitudinal study and historical in nature. He examines the primary destinations of the United States and Britain but also expands the field to include the first comprehensive survey of the smaller migration clusters and settlement within the British Empire: New Zealand and South Africa. In addition, and pertinent to my own research, is Akenson's chapter on what he describes as 'the great unknown' of the Irish diaspora: women and their experiences. His research reveals that over half of Ireland's nineteenth-century emigrants were female and signals a need to reconfigure the image of Irish women. Within Irish cultural discourse women have tended to be conceptualised and essentialised as those left behind, as mothers grieving, lamenting and waiting for their children to return. I investigate how the female emigrant and potential returnee are constituted within this discourse and that of the diasporic community in Argentina.

O'Sullivan's call for a comprehensive examination of the impact of migration on Irish society was answered in 1996 with the establishment of the Irish Centre for Migration Studies (ICMS) at University College, Cork. This was followed in 1997 by a conference on the Irish diaspora entitled 'The Scattering'. From this conference another important contribution to migration and diaspora studies emerged. Andy Bielenberg's 2000 compendium *The Irish Diaspora*, includes an introduction by the Head of ICMS, Piaras Mac Éinrí.[17] The volume explores nineteenth and twentieth-century migration to Britain and its Empire as well as the Americas. It also includes another chapter on Argentina by McKenna, this one examining how the community-based ethos of the Irish on the pampas incorporated a separatist tradition, which helped maintain a diasporic

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[17]ICMS, according to Mac Éinrí (2000: 6), 'aims to draw on a broad range of inter-disciplinary perspectives to explore the Irish experience of migration, past and present, through innovative programmes of teaching, research, publications, conferences and on-line databases'.

identity and culture. Like O'Sullivan and Akenson, Mac Éinrí stresses that while 'gender has belatedly begun to receive a degree of attention [...] the impact of class on migration is still under-theorised and studied [...] and the impact of return migration has only begun to be studied' (2000: 11). I will return to the latter gap in the next part of the introduction. There is one specific aspect which emerges from this volume which is also present in my work and demonstrates the importance of the narratives I examine. That aspect is the question of how the 'stereotypical image of Irish migrants as poorly-educated, rural, poor and Catholic, settling in large numbers in east coast American cities and making their way slowly in the host society is countered by a fascinating range of alternatives' (Bielenberg 2000: 7). The literate, Catholic and Protestant emigrants portrayed in the work of these three writers under study form part of this important counter-narrative and range of alternative voices in order to dismantle what Fitzpatrick deems 'the master narrative of Irish emigration'.[18] This narrative is one of discrimination, exile and resistance to the host society. With regards to the Irish migration experience in the United States, the narrative also entails a 'triumph-against-all-odds' perspective. Instead, in a similar fashion to the personal letters, the accounts under study move away from the monolithic stereotype and 'affirm the multiplicity and complexity of emigrant experiences and [...] place emphasis on seemingly aberrant minorities and subgroups'.[19]

Nineteenth-century Irish emigration to the United States, the emblematic destination of over 80 per cent of emigrants, has seen major historical studies by Arnold Schrier [1958](1997), and Kerby Miller (1985, 2008). Both scholars focus on emigration brought about by the trauma of the Great Famine. Miller's extensive 1985 study of the folksongs and letters of the Irish in the United States, *Emigrants or Exiles:*

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[18]From David Fitzpatrick's 2009 review of Edmundo Murray's *Becoming gauchos ingleses*, a compilation of Irish migrant letters from Argentina published the same year.
[19]Ibid.

Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America, argues that many emigrants viewed their departure from Ireland as forced and situated the blame for their departure on British misrule. That the United States was a 'promised land' can be deduced from the exodus of the title – depicting the United States as the end result of the journey to a supposed paradise. Enda Delaney notes that although elements of Miller's interpretation have been challenged, particularly the forced departure and 'exile' motif, 'his overarching argument that the Irish in the United States constructed a narrative of exile and dispossession which blended political rhetoric about Ireland with the practical concerns of forging an ethnic identity has stood the test of time' (2006: 42).

This argument is upheld in Matthew Frye Jacobson's 2002 comparative study *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States*.[20] Jacobson puts forward an interdisciplinary account of two major nation groups at home and in diaspora and examines how collective emigration nourishes a political culture based on ideas of injury and displacement. Catherine Nash's 2008 work, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, and the Politics of Belonging,* further demonstrates the resilience of the Irish diasporic imagination in the United States in reconfiguring expressions of Irishness among Irish descendants. This articulation of Irishness is constituted around an exclusivist reading of identity. In Patrick Ward's 2002 history of constructions of exile in artistic and literary output, *Exile, Emigration and Irish Writing*, he suggests that Irish America defined Irishness as: 'traditional, rural, Catholic and anti-English while the Irish in America were invariably exiles' (2002: 120). The conflated and clashing exile/emigrant dichotomy shapes nineteenth and twentieth-century discussions and discourses of identity.

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[20]Jacobson (2002: 7) defines diasporic imagination as referring to the 'realm of ideologies and engagement of mind: both the shared currency of cultural imagery and the mindset of the individual as he or she navigates the inner geographies of international migration'.

Exile as a signifier of difference became a crucial component of nationalist rhetoric as the nineteenth century progressed. Akenson refers to exile as an analgesic, 'a term taken up by successive generations of nationalist *colporteurs* [producing] a useful moral-free pass' (2010: 213). Famine survivors worldwide were encouraged to view themselves as victims of English misrule. This narrative serves a dual purpose as it 'absolves the emigrant of guilt and modernised traditional perceptions of emigration as exile [while it also] distinguished the Irish from other immigrant groups and reinforced the sense of themselves as banished exiles' (Ward 2002: 119). In Section Two of the thesis I examine constructions of Irishness and emigration as exile, particularly the extent to which the exile motif informs identity-building practices. I will then demonstrate how the reductive reading of Irishness as an exilic identity is transformed by encounters within Argentina to give way to more inclusive, transnational formations.

With regards to women and migration, the 'great unknown' is slowly being rendered visible. Despite Miller's major study on the Irish in the United States he does little to further knowledge of Irish women in diaspora. Bronwen Walter (2001) notes that in his 'apparently comprehensive text [...] only twenty references to women are given in the index' (4).[21] This omission is redressed however, in Miller's chapter on Irish women and domestic service in the United States in Volume Four of O'Sullivan's *The Irish World Wide* series.[22] Academic literature about the history of Irish women in the United States encompasses work by Grace Neville (1995), who examines the importance of the dowry as motive for dispersal and return, as well as the work of Hasia Diner (1983, 2008), Íde O'Carroll (1990) and Janet Nolan (1989). This research tends

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[21]Walter's 2001 comparison of women's experiences in the United States and Britain *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* compares oral histories of women's experiences and examines the importance of 'whiteness' in rendering these women (in)visible within the host societies.
[22]Miller (1995: 41-65) includes an analysis of the personal correspondence of seven Irish women in his examination of the motives for leaving and goals of Irish women in the United States.

to highlight the emancipatory nature of emigration, especially in terms of economic independence and improved marriage prospects. Paradoxically, however, Nolan suggests that remittances sent to Ireland sustained the status quo and resistance to change and 'helped maintain obsolete patterns of life in rural Ireland' (1989: 71). Within Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back* both economic independence and improved marriage prospects play a major role in three women's decisions to leave. In spite of this, their departure is not necessarily seen as a welcome or emancipatory move. The pattern of rural life in Ireland depicted in that novel, as I shall illustrate, reduced the protagonists' options to either a poor match with an older farmer or, in the case of no match, their dependence on their family's charity to survive. The role of the 'match' in Irish society will be examined in more detail in Section One of this thesis.

Women's migration to Britain on the other hand, particularly in the twentieth century, has been investigated by Breda Gray (2000a, 2000b), with a focus on the gendering of the Irish diaspora as well as on questions of home and belonging. Gray's 2004 *Women and the Irish Diaspora* reframes questions of migration in terms of not only those women who emigrated to London and Luton in the 1980s and 1990s but also those who stayed put. Through interviews she examines changing formations of belonging and different Irish 'modernity(ies)'. In a similar approach to Gray, I examine diasporic discourses in order to shed light on what she defines as the 'multi-located and overlapping practices and techniques by which men and women render themselves native, immigrant, ethnic, diasporic and gendered subjects' (2004: 5).[23] My research contributes to this branch of diaspora studies by addressing the impact of cultural

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[23]Examination of the private correspondence of emigrants in single countries does exist, however. See Fitzpatrick (1995) for Australia, Miller (1995) for the United States and Murray (2004a) for Argentina. Tony Murray (2012) analyses representations of diaspora in literature, specifically that of the London Irish.

practice on shifting formations of belonging and identity within three distinct narratives of diaspora: diary, fiction and travel sketches.

In addition to these comparative studies there are wide-ranging studies of migration to other single destinations. Akenson's 1990 work on New Zealand, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*, offers insights into the impact of religious background on migration, as does his 1988 work *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922: An International Perspective* which concentrates on communities in South Africa. David Fitzpatrick has contributed greatly to the history of Irish migration to Australia. Interestingly, similar to Akenson, Fitzpatrick's examination of the private correspondence of fourteen emigrants from 1841 to 1915 in *Oceans of Consolation* (1995) finds no notable difference in the experiences and mentality of Irish Catholic and Protestant groups, nor is there any overt nationalism or exile motif. This runs counter to Miller's research on the exilic nature of the Irish experience in the United States. Instead, Fitzpatrick argues the private letters serve a 'consolatory' function:

> a letter from a distant relative, whether received in Ireland, Britain, America, or Australia was a token of solidarity and an instrument of reassurance, confirming the durability of long-established familial groups [and] often contained practical details of employment options, wage rates, transport costs, diet and network of Irish contacts. (1995: 24)

The Irish in Argentina offer an exceptional case study and a further dimension to research into the Irish worldwide. The literary output this thesis analyses seems to be, like the returned emigrant in the second epigraph, 'wedged in betwixt' the migration experiences of the United States and Australia. Irish difference in Argentina is not only demarcated by colour, but also by language and conflated Irish/English identities. Unlike the United States this migration does not form what Jacobson (2002) calls a

political culture based on the notion of injury and displacement, as this migration spans most of the nineteenth century and is not concentrated around the Famine years, therefore falling outside the paradigm of Miller's 'banished exiles'. Moreover, the experiences of the Irish in Argentina offer a counter-narrative to the anti-English prejudices of the Irish in the United States. There was also no 'notable difference' in how Irish and English immigrants were received by the host society as all English speakers, whether Catholic or Protestant, were deemed to be *inglés*. That is not to say that the entire Irish community were subsumed into this identity, but as I will argue in Section One, it was initially exploited in order to carve out a niche within Argentine society.

We see the transnational aspects of the Australian diasporic community mirrored in Argentina, with networks of Irish contacts predominantly created and maintained by the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the motif of exile is also appropriated by sections of the community which embody characteristics of Miller's exilic 'Irish in America' narrative. Despite the initial exploitation of the *inglés* identity, this is increasingly resisted in the latter part of the nineteenth century when a distinct *irlandés* identity is asserted as nationalist rhetoric resonated with anti-English prejudice. This is when the 'Irish in America' paradigm of a people forced from their homes and yearning for Ireland becomes more notable in Argentina. There are increasing attempts at appropriating and propagating the exilic status favoured in the United States, specifically as we shall see, in *The Southern Cross* newspaper and certain sketches by William Bulfin.

The gaps highlighted in Irish migration studies by O'Sullivan, Akenson and Mac Éinrí, that is the role of gender, the impact of class, lack of work on non-English speaking communities, are slowly being addressed and my work contributes to filling

these gaps with regards to the Irish-Argentine experience. Nonetheless, other gaps

persist. One of these, which both O'Sullivan and Mac Éinrí acknowledge, is return

migration and how the potential returnee is constructed within diaspora theory and

cultural discourse. O'Sullivan notes that 'the counterstream has been less studied partly,

perhaps, because it does not figure so largely in Irish history' (1992: xvii).[24] I believe

there is some misrepresentation here. Return has been less studied, though not because

it has not 'figured so largely' in Irish history. It may be true that return from the United

States was not as common in the Irish migration tradition as the European, as

Fitzpatrick points out: 'reverse migration (gross migratory inflow into Ireland from

overseas) from the United States, though sometimes considerable in recessionary years

such as the late 1850s and mid-1870s, was probably less common among the Irish than

among almost any other ethnic group by the early twentieth century' (1995: 5).[25]

However, as we will see in the Argentine case, evidence of a more fluid intra-diaspora

movement and return migration is higher than that of the United States experience.

Moreover, it cannot be stated with any certainty that the Irish experience significantly

differs. Although the records of out-migration in the nineteenth century are thorough,

there has been no systematic nor substantial record of return migration and most

statistical information is based on estimations. As Fitzpatrick also notes of the Irish

case, return migration is 'poorly recorded, being primarily a movement of citizens

entitled to re-enter their country of origin with inquisition' (1995: 3-4). Thus any

examination of return(ees) is hampered by the lack of concrete statistics and has led to

the assumption that the Irish tended to travel far and rarely return. While emigrants

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[24]Mac Éinrí (2000: 11), on the other hand, recognises the need for research into this area and declares that 'it has only begun to be studied'.
[25]Miller and Wagner (1994: 125) estimate that fewer than 10% of those who emigrated to the United States, for example, returned.

most certainly travelled far, some did return though they may have done so in smaller numbers compared to others from Europe.[26]

It is not only in Irish migration and diaspora studies that work is needed however. Within general diaspora studies there is a need to synthesise ideas and research around return migration. My research directly engages with an emerging critical question within migration and diaspora studies - the status of the potential returnee, within both host and home societies. This thesis offers another prism through which to consider how emigrants 'render themselves subjects', namely an analysis of the perception of return and the figure of the returnee in Irish culture as depicted in oral histories, ballads and the diasporic narratives under study. It is crucial to interrogate not only how departure is perceived but also the figure of 'potential' return(ee) as this directly informs consideration of emigrant identities as constituted in both home and host societies, especially given that the negative perception of the returnee in Irish national discourse could, in itself, be part of the reason so few Irish returned. What emerges from the narratives I analyse is a conflicted and contradictory notion of the returnee as a subject who is alternatively hailed as 'returning exile' while at the same time rejected as a 'tainted' figure who is potentially 'contaminating' upon return. The evolution of this discourse of 'contaminated' or 'corrupted' subject will be addressed in the next part of the introduction.

Return or reverse migration is not without scholarly representation or study. Examples of work on reverse migration include Eric Richards' 1992 work on migrant strategies in colonial Australia. In depth studies on the Caribbean region include the 2005 volume *The Experience of Return Migration: Caribbean Perspectives* edited by Robert Potter, Dennis Conway and Joan Phillips and Juan Flores' 2009 *The Diaspora*

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[26]Hart (1983: 96) estimates that about 10 per cent of Irish-Americans returned in the second half of the nineteenth century, whereas the average rate for United States emigrant groups as a whole was around 30 per cent.

Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning. Both these works analyse the importance of 'cultural remittances', that is 'the ensemble of ideas, values, and expressive form introduced into societies of origin by emigrants and their families as they return "home" sometimes for the first time, for temporary visits or permanent settlement' (Flores 2009: 4). In the Irish case, an early attempt at analysing returned emigrants is Marjolein 'T Hart's 1983 study, '"Heading for Paddy's Green shamrock shore": The returned emigrants in nineteenth-century Ireland'. 'T Hart, in this two-page summary of anecdotal evidence from the National Folklore Archives, outlines four types of returnees: those who intended to return after fulfilling the aim of departure - earning a dowry for example; those who returned because of an inheritance; retirees; and, finally, emigrants who could not cope with life abroad and were seen as 'unsuccessful emigrants'.[27] Elizabeth Malcolm's 1996 report, *Elderly Return Migration from Britain to Ireland: A Preliminary Study* focuses on one of the categories Hart outlines: retirees. The report notes that around one thousand elderly returnees migrate to Ireland annually, though she acknowledges that there is no systematic study of the key questions of how many wish to return or why (1996: 46).

Thus, despite evidence that some emigrants did, and indeed do, return, little has been done to investigate more than statistical evidence. There are two significant exceptions to this, however, a 2003 article by Aidan Arrowsmith and Tony Murray's 2012 examination of London-Irish literature. Arrowsmith's 'Fantasy Ireland: The figure of the returnee in Irish culture' specifically explores the figure of the returnee and the construction of 'fantasy' Ireland in late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century plays

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[27]Their website states: 'The Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, houses the National Folklore Archives. The Collection, which continues to be developed and expanded, is one of the largest of its kind internationally. It documents Irish oral literature, historical tradition, folk music, song and dance, custom and belief, material culture and Irish life generally. It comprises some four thousand bound manuscripts, thousands of hours of audio and video recordings and approximately 70,000 images, in addition to a specialist library of almost 50,000 printed books'. See http://www.ucd.ie/folklore/en/.

and novels. Murray, on the other hand, investigates mid-twentieth to early-twenty-first

century novels and autobiographies by migrants living in London, part of which relates

to return. He dedicates one chapter of his book, 'Departures and Returns', to the novels

of John McGahern. Murray reads these novels as positive interpretations of London as

a diaspora space which affords the characters a sense of individuality and freedom not

available to them in Ireland. The characters' return to Ireland is depicted as haunted by

memories of migrant life in London. In addition, Murray analyses the ambivalent

relationship to 'home' of the second-generation Irish and in particular, the role of

childhood memories in how identity is configured.[28] Because of the integral part the

binary of home/return plays in diaspora theory, perceptions of emigration and those who

become 'returnees' offer new means of exploring emigrant identity. I do not mean to

suggest that there is one unifying narrative of return but examining how the potential

return(ee) is constructed in Irish national discourse as well as in diasporic narratives

allows for a reconsideration of emigrant identity and belonging which moves beyond

the confines of homeland or national territory. It is to the various identity formations,

research into the Irish in Argentina, and the figure of the returnee that I now turn.

2. Emigration to Argentina

The official number of emigrants to Argentina is difficult to pin down as government

census records often registered Irish nationality as English.[29] Moreover, there was more

intra-diaspora movement from Argentina to the United States and back to Ireland than

seen in other communities.[30] In a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin in 1864, Fr

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[28]This is explored in part three of his work, entitled 'The Second Generation'.
[29]British subjects, whether Irish, Welsh or Scottish, were referred to as *ingleses* and very often recorded as such.
[30]Kirby (1992: 102) estimates 45,000 Irish people left Ireland to seek out a new life in the Río de la Plata region and of that figure about 20,000 of these either re-emigrated to North America or Australia and others returned to Ireland.

Anthony Fahy estimates the number of parishioners under his care at around 30,000,

while the founder of *The Southern Cross* newspaper, Patrick J. Dillon, addresses

'26,000 Irish souls' in the newspaper's first editorial on January 16, 1875. Peader Kirby

(1992) records numbers of around 25,000 by 1890 whereas Eduardo Coghlan (1982)

posits it as a much more conservative 7,450. Coghlan's work on the genealogy of Irish

families is extrapolated from census returns of 1855, 1869 and 1895. Between 1822

and 1850 around 1,659 Irish emigrants were recorded. This increased between 1851

and 1889 to 5,419, peaking in the 1860s with the rise in sheep farming on the pampas

(1982: 16). Coghlan's research suggests that by 1895 the Irish-Argentine population

was around 16,284, a figure which includes Argentine-born second generation Irish and

with which most historians and critics concur, with one exception. Patrick McKenna

(1994) argues that there is room for a reassessment of Coghlan's statistics as his review

of the census data might not have captured the details of every emigrant. Moreover, the

second-generation numbers are based on assumptions rather than statistics. Only places

of birth other than Argentina were documented so McKenna asserts that the population

could be between 40,000 and 45,000 (210). I tend to agree with McKenna as my

examination of the census lists compiled by Coghlan revealed no record of the entry of

any of the four Brabazon siblings, nor Kathleen Nevin's parents, Thomas Nevin and

Catherine Smyth. Pat Nally (1992), meanwhile, argues that there are currently more

than 350,000 Argentines of Irish descent.

Similar to the settlement in Australasia and South Africa, Irish migration to

Argentina is much smaller in relation to the overall diaspora. Figures for the United

States in the period 1841 to 1900 for example reach 3,102, 591 people, around 80 per

cent of the total for this period (Akenson 1993: 56).[31] Nonetheless, these figures may not reflect the influence of the smaller numbers as we can see in the case of Australia for example. Only 5 per cent of the overall number of Irish emigrants of this period went to Australia, but this 5 per cent made up 25 per cent of the total Australian population (Hickman 2005: 118). Similarly, Argentina post-independence had a population of around half a million and Samuel Amaral notes the rural population of Buenos Aires province at around 170,000 in 1850 (1998: 169), signifying that the Irish potentially composed around 2.5 per cent of the rural population at this time and were integral to the development of the Argentine sheep industry: 'La inmigración irlandesa en Argentina tuvo un papel decisivo en la configuración y en la transformación de la estructura agrícola del país y en la formación de la pequeña burguesía rural en la provincial de Buenos Aires' (Izarra 2011: 62-3) [Irish immigration played a decisive role in the shaping and transformation of the agricultural sector of Argentina and in the establishment of a rural middle class in Buenos Aires province].[32]

The pattern of settlement by the Irish in Argentina was remarkably similar from the 1840s to the 1880s and, unlike much of Irish migration to the United States, the Irish diaspora community in Argentina did not cluster together in cities as the majority of work was rural in nature. After the 1880s, when Buenos Aires city expanded, the need for urban labourers and professionals saw the pattern of settlement change again. By the 1890s the diaspora community were supported by a host of Irish institutions and associations such as St Bridget's School for Girls, The Church of the Holy Cross, Passionist Father and St Patrick Church and an Irish hospital in Belgrano. The interior of the province was also catered for with Sister of Mercy School in San Antonio de

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[31]Mary Hickman (2005: 117) notes that after 1921 'there was an almost complete reorientation of this pattern, so that, overall 80 per cent settled in Britain during the rest of the twentieth century'.
[32]This is by no means definitive but based on a total of approximately 5,000 Irish emigrants on the pampas at this time. Translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

Areco, St Patrick's School and Cathedral in Mercedes (known as the Irish capital of

Argentina) and societies such as the Gaelic League, the Irish Catholic Association and

the St Joseph Society (Izarra 2011: 63). Thus, in Argentina, as in the Australian pattern

of migration:

> the Irish were part of the nation-building process as nation-builder rather than
> late arrivals competing against an entrenched population for living space, jobs,
> and spouses, [and so] were able to choose between a wide range of locations for
> settlement, find work in farming and even clerical occupations as well as
> unskilled labour. (Fitzpatrick 1995: 19)[33]

The history of this migration has witnessed increasing interest but, until recently,

mainly has come from outside Ireland. As early as 1919, the historian Thomas Murray

chronicled Irish immigration to Argentina in *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*.[34] In

1951, James Ussher published a biography of Fr Fahy, the Irish priest who was

invaluable in encouraging and cementing Irish migration to the pampas for over thirty

years between 1840 and 1871. In the 1980s, Argentine scholars of Irish and English

descent, such as Eduardo Coghlan (1982, 1987) and Juan Carlos Korol and Hilda

Sábato (1981) published histories of the Irish and their contribution to the formation of

the Argentine nation. This was accompanied by broader research into the history of

English-speaking communities in Argentina by Andrew Graham-Yooll (1981). Their

work was added to in the 1990s by scholars such as Oliver Marshall (1996), who

investigated the influence of English and Irish press in Latin America. As already

mentioned, McKenna (1992, 1994, 2000a, 2000b) has traced the formation of Irish

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[33]An indication of the increasing attention (and importance) of not only diaspora in general but the
Argentine diaspora in particular can be seen in the changes to the National Curriculum in primary schools
in Ireland. The history programme now includes a reader on diaspora and one of the main texts used for
4th to 6th class (key stage 2 in the UK) is Seán Sheehan's 2008 text. This includes a reference to 40,000
Irish people in Argentina in 1880 and dedicates two pages (the same as Canada, Australia and the
Caribbean receive) to South America.
[34]Murray (2003) notes that Thomas Murray emigrated to Argentina from Ireland in 1892 but there is no
further indication of which county he was from nor what age he was.

communities on the Argentine pampas and their specific links to sheep farming. Helen

Kelly (2009) documents a history of the Irish in Argentina based upon census data,

deviancy and prison records as well as newspaper sources. She highlights the

ambivalence felt by the Irish because of their incorporation into the broader English-

speaking community in Buenos Aires. The subsequent conflict and divisions within the

diasporic community are attested to in the title, *Irish 'ingleses': A History of the Irish in

Argentina.* Research into the historical experience of diaspora in Argentina is

expanding and has been paralleled over the last decade by investigation into its cultural

and literary dimensions.

Recent research into these dimensions has been propelled by members of the

Society for Irish Latin American Studies (SILAS) founded in 2003.[35] Argentine

scholars such as Juan José Delaney, Edmundo Murray and Laura Izarra have

investigated various diasporic subjectivities in Latin America. The focus until now

reflects, to a certain degree, research into Irish voices elsewhere. Murray (2004a) for

example, analyses the private letters of four Irish families in Argentina to family in

Ireland and England. Apart from this there has been increased attention to areas of Irish

cultural practice and values (language, music, religion, education etc) with regards to

identity construction as seen in Murray (2009) and Izarra (2001, 2011). There have

been chapters on the Irish press in Argentina, specifically *The Fianna, The Southern

Cross* and *The Irish Argentine* by Delaney (2004) and Izarra (2001, 2004). An

important contribution is the 2011 book by Izarra, *Narrativas de la diaspora irlandesa

bajo la cruz del sur*, which looks at literary representations of diaspora in Argentina and

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[35]SILAS was founded to promote the study of relations between Ireland and Latin America. It publishes the *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, a journal of original research about relations between Ireland and Latin America, the Caribbean and Iberia, from all academic disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Another platform for research is the *Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies* (*ABEI*) published annually by the Irish Studies department in the University of Sao Paolo in partnership with the National University of Ireland.

Brazil. She includes a range of voices from Argentine and Brazilian newspapers (*The Fianna, The Southern Cross* and *The Anglo-Brazilian Times*), the Amazon travel account of Roger Casement, Paul Durcan's poetry about Brazil, literary representations of Eliza Lynch by Anne Enright and many of William Bulfin's sketches in *The Southern Cross* newspaper. In each of these texts, Izarra interrogates the extent to which they contribute to a diasporic literary aesthetic.

With regards to the authors in this study, two of the three, Brabazon and Nevin, have received little critical attention as yet and were in danger of becoming part of the group characterised by O'Sullivan as 'lost voices'. This may be due in part to the difficulty in obtaining the original manuscript of John Brabazon's work, although a Spanish translation was commissioned in 1981.[36] Furthermore, Kathleen Nevin's novel is now out of print in English but the Literature of Latin America (LOLA) publishers in Buenos Aires have published a Spanish translation, *Nunca regresarás* (2000).[37] LOLA have also published a bilingual version of William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas/Cuentos de la pampa* (1998). This attests to the interest in the Spanish-speaking world of the impact and contribution of the Irish community to Argentina while at the same time drawing attention to a phenomenon identified by O'Sullivan, that is, how language itself offers obstacles to research into non-English-speaking communities. Murray (2009) offers a critique of both writers and aligns Brabazon on the *inglés* side of the identity divisions highlighted in Kelly's study. Murray reads Nevin's narrative as a racialised discourse in which Irish superiority is clearly evident. I address his readings of the authors in Chapter 3 and 4 of Section Two, 'Unsettling Notions of Home, Return and Identity', and argue that their works express far more

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[36]The Irish Embassy in Argentina used to hold a copy but it has been mislaid and the original is held by Mercedes Beitia, great-grandniece of Brabazon who now resides in Alabama. My thanks to Patrick McKenna for allowing me access to his photocopy. The Spanish translation is edited by Eduardo Coghlan and entitled *Andanzas de un irlandés en el campo porteño, 1845-1864.*
[37]I am grateful to Laura Izarra for sending me her copy of Nevin's novel.

inclusive modes of belonging and contest rigid notions of what constitutes Irishness, whether in the diasporic community or Ireland.

Of the three authors, William Bulfin has received most critical attention, mainly owing to his prominent position as editor and owner of *The Southern Cross* (*TSC*) newspaper and his prolific output. From my consultation of *TSC* I estimate that he published approximately 269 articles under the pseudonym Che Buono between 1891 and 1903.[38] A selection of these articles were published as *Tales of the Pampas* (1900) and Bulfin's 1902 articles about his travels in Ireland were compiled into a travel book entitled *Rambles in Eirinn* (1907). Critical focus has centred on either the linguistic aspects of Bulfin's writing and his incorporation of *porteño* slang into his sketches (Delaney 2000, 2004), his cultural nationalism (Murphy 2001, Ryle 1999), or, as mentioned above, the extent to which his literary representations of diaspora contribute to a literary aesthetic (Izarra 2011). Izarra, drawing on post-colonial critics Homi Bhabha (2000) and Avtar Brah (1996), argues that Bulfin's sketches represent an attempt to recreate a new 'home' or locality in Argentina. Her reading of Bulfin is insightful but although I agree with her analysis, I contend that rather than trying to recreate 'home' in Argentina, Bulfin's sketches attempt to extend the boundaries of Irishness and the national territory to incorporate the diaspora space of Buenos Aires.

This brings me to the central critical question with which my work engages: how the emigrant and potential return(ee) identities are perceived in Irish national discourse and what impact this has on literary representations of emigration. As stated earlier, these identities were fused into the monolithic notion of 'exile'. The concept of emigration as exile is deeply ingrained in Irish literary and historical tradition. As Miller notes 'Gaelic poets used the word *deoraí* (literally exile) for anyone who left

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[38]This figure is based on a monthly contribution starting with his first article in May 29 1891 until December 1895 and then an alternating fortnightly and weekly contribution between 1896 and March 1903. Bulfin also had articles published in *The Irish Argentine* in 1888 under the pseudonym 'Bullfinch'.

Ireland for any reason' (1990: 92). One's sense of identity was bound up in the concept

to such an extent that exile, emigration and the dream of return were inextricably linked,

although often the return home only existed in a remote future. Emigration was an

absence from Ireland, something that left the motherland deficient or lacking. Moreover,

it made victims of those leaving, as external forces were always to blame and in the

nineteenth century English misrule was seen as the main cause.[39] Ward suggests that

this 'effectively silenced the victims and mandated them to underwrite their own

exclusion through the emotional and affective obligations imposed upon them to remit

large sums of money home to subsidise parents, the homeplace, and to provide the

passage money for siblings to emigrate' (2002: 147). In addition, this negates the need

of the individual for self-betterment and turns emigration into a communal necessity,

thus not only denying the individual a voice in their choosing to leave, but also the

destination the right to be called 'home'. Instead it becomes a place which can only be

looked upon in negative terms and with negative connotations: uprooting, displacement,

alienation, victimisation and loss. Emigrants then become rooted in a concept of home

and place that cannot ever be accessed again, as it only exists in the past.

The exile motif itself erases difference, whether in class, gender or true motives

for departure and assumes 'that there is such an entity or essence as the Irish soul –

something pure, unique and quintessentially distilled by the experience of birth, spiritual

inheritance and upbringing: an indelibility which marks out Irish people from all other

peoples of the earth' (Ward 2002: 11). The motif was maintained in songs, ballads,

stories and newspapers, in which the image of the emigrant was always one pining for

home and never 'at home' in their chosen destination. Nonetheless, the idea of one day

returning is omnipresent; as Hamid Naficy asserts, it is 'the elusiveness of the return

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[39]See Miller (1990) for an alternative look at the roots of emigration brought about by a burgeoning, profit-maximising, Catholic merchant class.

which makes it magically potent […] The lost homeland is potentially recoverable and it is this potentiality – however imaginary – that drives the exiles' multifaceted desire to return' (1991: 3). This 'multifaceted desire' encompasses various contradictions, not least of which is that return can only remain alluring as long as it remains unrealised.

For Nationalist Ireland, that the national territory remains an 'unrealised fantasy' is paramount for two main reasons. Firstly, in order to serve the cause of independence as examples of those Irish forced into exile because of British misrule in Ireland. These communities only functioned as such if they perpetually postponed fulfilment of the return fantasy, thus averting a possible personal disenchantment as well as a political one. To return would negate claims of forced exile and undermine the cause of Home Rule. Secondly, the idealised Irish society was 'static, organic and paternalistic […] insulated by faith from potential "contamination" […] its fundamental social unit was the peasant family, also paternalistic and static' (Miller 1985: 457). By remaining in exile, those seeking to govern in Ireland would not have to deal with any returnees' potential taint or corruption of cultural or religious practices. This notion of the contaminated or potentially corrupting returnee is central to my analysis of the three writers. In the act of leaving Irish territory and crossing the sea, the emigrant and potential returnee 'is conjured as a spectre of miscegenation, threatening the "pure" nation with dilution and pollution' (Arrowsmith 2003: 107).

Indeed, this pollution can take many forms. Irish mythology for example, depicts the returnee as physiologically altered because of moving beyond the national space and the act of return is seen as a potentially fatal act, both psychologically as well as physically. In the Irish myth of *Tír na nÓg*, the Land of Eternal Youth, when the warrior Oisín is tempted by Niamh to leave Ireland to live with her in this eternal youth,

he does so on the proviso that he could never actually *set foot* on Irish soil again.[40] He

eventually begs to be allowed visit Ireland, not realising that centuries have passed, and

when he returns he is not recognised by anyone and he knows no-one. When he gets off

his horse to help an old man, his feet touch the ground and he instantly ages and dies.

The message is clear; once you leave the safety of the national territory you will be

changed beyond all recognition. This transformation entails more than just a

physiological element, but a psychological one too. This is manifested in the lament by

Jim Cashman, an emigrant returning from Boston in 1925: 'I couldn't get my eyes to

see things as they were to me before I left' (Miller and Wagner 1994: 126).

As highlighted earlier, the position and status of the returnee is an

underdeveloped but emerging field in Irish cultural discourse and diaspora theory in

general. When the returnee *is* discussed in Irish cultural discourse, it is generally

through the paradigm of the 'returned Yank'.[41] This figure is one generally associated

with affluence and constructions of the returned Yank reveal a subject cast as not

authentically Irish, but somehow altered by their time outside the national territory.

Moreover, according to Arrowsmith, in some novels, such as Seán O'Faoláin's 1940,

Come Back to Erin, 'aim is taken at the fantasy Ireland constructed by the economically

powerful returnee […] and the influence of the wealthy, nostalgic returnee is to trap

Ireland as a fantastical rural idyll, an underdeveloped status quo of social inequality and

injustice' (2003: 108-9). Not only is the fantasy Ireland constructed by the returned

Yank a threat, but their very wealth, new clothes and accents are all seen as an incentive

to further emigration and certain novels and plays were modified to make departure less

attractive. Arrowsmith refers to plays such as Lady Gregory's 1903, *A Losing Game,*

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[40]That Niamh rhymes with Eve is perhaps no coincidence as she is posited as a temptress who causes the fall of Oisín.

[41]This is not wholly unreasonable given that around 80 per cent of post-Famine Irish emigrants settled in the United States.

which had to be modified before it could be staged in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. The play depicts an Irishman returning from the United States with £100 after just three years' work, a figure which was deemed too high by nationalist-leaning actor-producers, the Fay Brothers, and which Gregory later reduced to £50 (2003: 101).

The bitterness and anger directed at the returnees who come back to buy land which may have been worked by another local family for many years, converts the returnee into a figure treated with suspicion and fear.[42] The paradigm of the returned Yank who has 'forfeited' his right to Irishness by leaving Ireland contrasts sharply with that of the 'returning *irlandés*' as we shall see in the case of William Bulfin. Bulfin was praised and admired upon his return, even though he too bought his family land and home in Derrinalough. This may indicate that the diaspora space of Argentina was seen as less corrosive to Irishness given its shared Catholicism. However, it may also be true that the segregation of the Irish in linguistic terms helped these communities retain an Irish accent so that there was no foreign 'twang' corrupting their speech nor exposing their identity as a returnee. Furthermore, in the case of some returnees their activism on behalf of Irish independence and support for Irish Ireland may have served to negate any potential taint by the host culture.[43]

Since the 1990s scholars have begun to re-frame questions of migration as diaspora in order to examine the complexity and diversity of Irish experiences abroad. Moreover, this re-framing serves to expand migration studies beyond its geographical and historical disciplines to incorporate literary criticism, gender, religious and cultural

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[42]John B. Keane's 1965 play *The Field* typifies this attitude and the main character refers to the returned Irish man as 'outsider', 'foreign cock' and 'imported landgrabber'. Cited in Arrowsmith (2003: 107).
[43]Irish Ireland is a generic term for the forms of cultural nationalism established during the latter part of the nineteenth century, which found expression in associations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (1884), the Gaelic League (1893), and Cumann na nGaedheal (1893) as well as socio-political groups such as the Land League and the Home Rule movement. http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Irish_Ireland [accessed 3 August 2011].

studies to name but a few.[44] Scholars began to utilise the concept of diaspora as a means of unsettling fixed notions (and the fixity) of Irish identity and belonging and to extend the concept of Irishness beyond the boundaries of the national territory. This was supported by the President at the time, Mary Robinson, who, after her inauguration in 1990, employed the term 'cherished diaspora' in order to bring about an extension and re-imagining of the boundaries of the Irish nation. The critical methodology of this thesis foregrounds questions of home, identity and return and I draw on a wide body of theory around travel, migration and diaspora to address these questions. The final part of this introduction is dedicated to this methodology and to the shape of the remainder of the thesis.

3. Critical Methodology

As can be seen from the earlier review of research into the Irish world wide, diaspora has begun to serve as an analytical category to examine various aspects of Irish migration processes. In particular, the paradigm of diaspora is useful in the study of questions of social and political change as well as central questions about identity construction. In order to situate my examination of John Brabazon, Kathleen Nevin and William Bulfin I will first outline the two main theoretical approaches to the analysis of diasporas, constituted around what Mary Hickman terms a 'traditional paradigm' and a 'post-modern reading' (2005: 118). The former relates to the paradigm of diaspora, which focuses on displacement, enforced departure and the myth of return. William Safran (1991) for instance, suggests diasporas are constituted by the following characteristics: a movement from a centre to at least two peripheries; a collective vision of the homeland is retained; a lack of belief of its members that they can be fully

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[44]Mac Éinrí (2000: 10) does note an early usage of the term diaspora, however, in J.A O'Brien (1956) *Vanishing Ireland.*

accepted by host country; the view of the ancestral home as eventual place of return; a commitment to restoration of the homeland and the definition of the group's consciousness by continuous relations to the homeland. Diasporic formations are then examined through their compliance with this model or not.

This somewhat restrictive perspective is countered by the post-modern approach which proposes a more nuanced typology of diaspora. The complexities inherent to the concept are reflected in the broad range of subject positions and communities the term and theory now encompass: '[it] shares meaning with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (Clifford 1997: 245). Another example of this more fluid typology comes from Robin Cohen (1997) who identifies five distinct types of diasporic formation: labour, victim, imperial, cultural and trade. Cohen positions the nineteenth-century Irish diaspora as 'victim' because of the enforced departure and trauma brought about by the Great Famine. This typology of nineteenth-century diaspora as 'victim' may reflect the experience of the Irish in United States and feed into the exilic status engendered because of that but crucially, the Argentine diasporic formation cannot be characterised in the same way. As discussed earlier, this formation lies outside the mass movement of 1845 to 1852, spanning a much earlier period and peaking in the 1860s. Thus this migration could be classified as 'labour' diaspora.

The latter approach, Pnina Werbner observes, is attractive to post-colonial theorists as it highlights diasporas as transnational social formations which are characterised by cultural hybridity and as such 'challenge the hegemony and boundedness of the nation-state' (2000: 6).[45] Among the many theorists who adopt such an approach are Stuart Hall (1990, 1996), James Clifford (1994, 1997) Paul Gilroy

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[45]Werbner (2000) offers a critique of both approaches to diasporas in her introduction to the Special Issue of the journal *Diaspora* dedicated to exploring new ways of theorising diasporas.

(1993, 2003) and Avtar Brah (1996). The divisions within the approaches do not clarify the concept or theory, instead, as Werbner argues they 'serve to separate analytically what needs to be read as mutually constitutive' (2000: 5). That is to say, that in privileging the transnational element, the post-modern reading of diaspora runs the risk of underplaying (or even dismissing) the role the national continues to play in the diasporic imagination. In terms of exploring Irish diasporas then, how can the two approaches frame the reconsideration of emigrant identity to allow for a re-evaluation of identity-building practices and identifications beyond national boundaries?

The tensions between the two approaches are not insurmountable. In essence, the questions around diaspora have not changed. How are they constituted? What are the discourses that define them? What are the consequences for host/origin nation state or institutions and diasporans themselves? What has changed are the boundaries of the concept of diaspora, much like the literature of travel with 'its loose and shifting borders'. Globalisation has transformed the pace of movement and communications and downplayed the importance of the myth of return within diasporic discourse. I contend that the examination and theorisation of all diasporic formations should reflect both strands in order to re-work and re-frame our understanding of what constitutes diaspora, especially as the reductive reading of earlier formations belies their capacity to also express cultural hybridity. Transnationalism and transnational subjects are not recent phenomena as we shall see in the case of Brabazon and Bulfin. Indeed, all three writers foreground questions of how to create an identity constituted beyond the borders of the nation state or indeed, how to extend the boundaries of the state to include the diaspora subject.

Both approaches conceptualise notions of home, identity, modes of belonging as well as the multiple subject positioning of the diasporan. Therefore, in order to examine

the narratives in question, I draw on elements of both approaches, reflecting what Werbner notes as the 'dual orientation' within diaspora communities. On the one hand, diasporas, as historical formations in process, 'fight for citizenship and equal rights in the place of settlement [while on the other] they continue to foster transnational relations and to live with a sense of displacement and loyalty to other places and groups beyond the place of settlement' (2000: 5-6). We see this dual orientation reflected in all three narratives. The early diasporic formation that we witness in Brabazon's account is more concerned with the struggle to buy land and carve out a niche for the Irish on the pampas than becoming Argentine citizens.[46] Nevin's account testifies to an ongoing sense of displacement and loyalty to both Ireland and Argentina while towards the end of the century this historical formation is transformed again. Bulfin's sketches reflect a community and writer who is intent on carving out a distinct Irish-Argentine identity as well as cultivating networks within and beyond Argentina. To that end I utilise three main sources to re-examine these literary constructions of home and return in light of recent diaspora theory: the work of Avtar Brah (1996), James Clifford (1994, 1997) and Hamid Naficy (1991, 1993, 1999). The framework for my analysis of the diasporic narratives is constructed around both the traditional 'myth of return' and newer reading of diaspora as expression of cultural and identity hybridity. I shall now provide an overview of how home, return and belonging are conceptualised within diaspora theory in general and these three theorists in particular.

In *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996) Brah notes that diasporas are contradictory in nature. Although the image of a journey lies at the heart of it, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting down roots elsewhere. Historicising these journeys is essential if we are to use diaspora as a heuristic tool with which to

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[46]Citizenship, as will be explored in more detail in Section One, offered limited rights to the immigrant as they could not vote. This restriction of rights was balanced by not being conscripted into the Argentine army who fought numerous battles in the nineteenth century.

interrogate identity-building practices, so that we must ask not only who travels, but when do they do travel, how and under what conditions? The circumstances of leaving are seen an essential to diaspora, but Brah also argues that the circumstances of arriving and settling down are equally important (1996: 182). Each diaspora is a unique historical experience composed of numerous journeys to various locations and peripheries, out of which multiple histories and narratives may emerge. The journeys 'are composite in many senses as they are embarked upon, lived and re-lived through multiple modalities: modalities, for example, of gender, race, class, religion, language and generation [they are] differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common "we"'(Brah 1996: 184). Any discussion of diaspora will feature the recurring notions of home and return. The concept of home in diasporic discourse, often idealised or romanticised, reveals complex issues surrounding identity, memory, belonging and resistance to host and origin society. The nature of home is variously constructed as fixed, stable and unchanging or primarily constructed through memory. Gray suggests we consider home 'as a plurality of experiences, experiences which can be lived in numerous locations in the diasporic imaginary' (2000a: 157). Indeed, as Brah points out, the multi-placedness of home 'does not exclude feeling anchored, or rooted in the place of settlement' (1996: 194). This multi-placedness resonates throughout the narratives I examine and all three writers construct identity as linked to multiple locations. The consequence of this is that despite attempts by Bulfin, for example, to configure emigration as exile, his time in the diaspora space transforms fixed notions about identity into a more fluid construct.

A common feature of the two approaches to diaspora is that of home and/or homeland, its (un)attainability and whether events in the homeland continue to matter. Home and homeland become constructs through which diaspora subjects maintain a

sense of identity and reinforce links to the origin society. Thoughts of home can lead to fantasies of return subtended, as mentioned earlier, by the fantasy's 'magical potential regarding the recovery of home', a potentiality that has several fates. As Leon and Rebeca Grinberg assert: 'the idea remains a future possibility and meanwhile acts as a source of secret pleasure to compensate for the persistent discomfort of uprootedness; the fantasies are acted out in sporadic visits; or the fantasies lead one to make concrete arrangements to return' (1989: 179). On the other hand, home is not always seen as a lost paradise as the diaspora subject may not be able to go home for a variety of reasons. As Safran argues, it is possible that 'there is no homeland or it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially' (1991: 91). For the diasporan it may not be economically viable to leave the diaspora community, or they may embark on an intra-diaspora journey to a more attractive location.

According to Brah, therefore, home is a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality' (1996: 192). The dichotomous home/return debate is imbued with sentiments of longing and desire which can spark feelings of nostalgia. As John Durham Peters notes, the term comes from the Greek *nostos* (return home) plus *algos* (pain) and was first used to describe the pathologies of those long separated from their homelands: 'the history of nostalgia also evinces a shift from a lost home in space (the patria) to a lost home in time (the past)' (1999: 30). Nostalgia in diaspora discourse becomes a restrictive device which propagates resistance to the host society and unattainable fantasies. Naficy maintains that 'nostalgia for one's homeland has a fundamentally interpsychic source expressed in the trope of an eternal desire for return – a return that is structurally unrealisable' (1991: 285).

Diasporans may share elements of nostalgia, longing, identification, memory and history and the experiences of diaspora mediate 'in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here, and remembering and desiring another place' (Clifford 1994: 311). Crucially, this other place does not necessarily signify the country of origin, as the connotations of displacement, loss, absence, alienation and victimisation can become rooted or related to other locations. Clifford argues that diaspora discourse 'articulates, or bends together, both roots *and* routes to construct […] alternate public spheres, forms of continuity and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference' (1997: 251). Although connection to the homeland is cited by Safran as a constituting factor of diaspora, a real or symbolic homeland does not have to be the primary connection as 'decentred, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return. A shared history of displacement [or] adaptation may be as important as the projection of a specific origin' (Clifford 1997: 249-50).

Traditionally, there has been an opposition between exile and emigration. The key contrast lies in diaspora's emphasis on these lateral and decentred relationships among the dispersed. Exile is depicted as solitary and implies yearning for home. In the oft-cited phrase by Edward Said, it is characterised as 'the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its sadness can never be surmounted' (2000: 173). Diaspora, on the contrary, suggests networks and connections to sites other than the origin country and is collective in nature. Another salient feature of course, is the intention or possibility of return. For the exile, return may be achieved owing to various factors. Compelled movement may be negated by political regime change for example, or monetary motivations and goals may be achieved. Rather than embodying the desire to return to a lost origin as the exile does,

the emigrant is seen to reject that origin and desire assimilation to the host culture instead.

The divisions between exilic and emigrant status are not so clear cut, however. Not all exilic subjects feel the rift is unhealable or even sustain the fantasy of return. In this respect, Naficy theorises exile 'as a "process of becoming", involving a separation from home, a period of liminality and in-betweeness that can be temporary or permanent, and finally incorporation into the dominant host country' (1993: xvi). Crucially, in debates around home and return Brah proposes that diaspora 'offers a critique of discourse of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a "homeland"'(1996: 180). The 'process of becoming' as well as the 'homing desire' are evident in Brabazon's experience as he is eventually incorporated into Argentine society, becoming a Justice for the Peace in Necochea. They are also visible in Nevin's characterisation of her female characters Nancy, Bessie and Kate, all three of whom marry and remain in Argentina. Bulfin on the other hand, asserts a desire for 'homeland' which problematises his construction of a transnational subject, the Irish-Argentine, as well as his relationships and links within Argentina.

What further informs my reading of all three writers is what Naficy marks as exilic: 'the demonstration of ambivalences, resistances, slippages, dissimulations, doubling, and even subversions of the cultural codes of *both* the home and host society' (1993: xvi). Diaspora subjects maintain multiple subject positions and locations and one position (exile or emigrant) may give way to another (settler or returnee). The possibility of change sees the diaspora subject in a constant process of 'becoming other'. The diasporan, though possibly settled in a new location, does not necessarily surrender the possibility of return. The chapters of Section Two of the thesis will explore how the writers configure and mediate individual and collective identities through historical,

political, cultural and imaginative discourses in what Brah defines as diaspora space.

That is, 'the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of

confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes' (1996: 188). Central

to Brah's notion of diaspora space and diasporic identity is the role of narrative. She

suggests that multiple journeys:

> configure into one journey via a *confluence of narratives* as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through the individual as well as collective memory and re-memory […] the identity of the diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life; in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively. (1996: 183)

Therefore, drawing on this *confluence of narratives* and Brah's notion of home as both

'mythic place of desire' and 'lived experience of a locality' I analyse how these writers

imaginatively negotiate the multiple identities of exile/emigrant and potential returnee.

The thesis is divided into two sections, reflecting the title and content of Paul

Gilroy's 1991 article advocating a multi-located sense of identity subtended on roots -

'where you're from' and routes - 'where you're at'. Accordingly, Section One, entitled

'Irish Roots/Routes in Latin America', maps out the contours of Irish journeys in Latin

America, some of which are problematised because of being in service to the Spanish

empire. It also serves to lay the groundwork for the analysis of the three writers and

their literary output in Section Two, 'Unsettling Notions of Home, Return and Identity'.

Chapter 1 outlines a historiography of Irish travel, migration and settlement in Latin

America. As Brah observes, all diasporas begin with a journey and no journey takes

place in a vacuum. Thus this chapter contextualises movement out of Ireland and

responds to Brah's questions as to who travels, when, how and under what circumstance

they leave. It traces the profile of the emigrant and outlines the social, cultural and

historical forces in nineteenth-century Ireland which inform departure and how the emigrant is perceived both inside and outside Ireland. These forces vary from the general push/pull factors behind emigration, the specific factors contributing to how Irish men and women experienced emigration to the changing status of women in Ireland as well as the impact of religious and nationalist ideology. Nationalist ideology in particular, revolves around an appropriation of emigration as exile. This, in turn, devalues individual agency and has a detrimental effect on how the emigrant was viewed.

As discussed earlier, Irish diasporic formation in Argentina can be classified as 'labour' rather than 'victim'. Part of the explanation for this lies in the longitudinal nature of Irish involvement in Latin America. This involvement forms the backdrop to the ultimate formation of an Irish community in Argentina, so I examine the early routes which would later give way to permanent settlement. The nature of this involvement encompasses travel by missionaries, soldiers as well as trading settlements, many of which were engendered by Ireland's close links with Spain. Concomitant to this is an exploration of those links and Irish complicity in Spain's colonial enterprise. Chapter 1 also considers attempts at settlement in Mexico and Brazil as comparisons for the Argentine pattern. The central focus of the chapter, then, is two-fold, addressing who travelled, where and why as well as what delineates Irish migration and settlement in Latin America and sets it apart from other migration patterns.

Chapter 2 argues the case for the unique nineteenth-century Irish migration pattern in Argentina and compares this pattern with experiences elsewhere. Pertinent to this are the questions: 'what socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys? […] what makes one diasporic formation similar or different from another?' (Brah 1996: 182). Therefore I examine the socio-political

forces shaping Argentina's post-independence society, how immigration was viewed and how the Irish were perceived as part of the preferred, Rivadavian, Anglo-Saxon immigration. The community that evolves in Argentina is heterogeneous in nature, incorporating a mix of Protestant and Catholic emigrants, both Nationalist and Unionist in ideology, though extremely localised in terms of the counties where these emigrants hail from. This chapter goes on to investigate the role of the Catholic Church and one priest in particular, Fr Anthony Fahy, in the establishment and survival of this diaspora community. Two other factors are pivotal in the positive reception of the Irish settlers in Argentina: their involvement in Argentine military affairs and their skills and experience in sheep farming. It is the Irish labour involved in developing the pampas and converting it to sheep farming, the genesis and evolution of which I trace in this chapter, which constitutes and demarcates the diasporic formation in Argentina. Finally, the chapter will demonstrate how the cultural resources that the Irish draw upon, whether institutional or material, reflect attempts at keeping the Irish community English-speaking and endogamous.

In Section Two I consider the literary representations of three members of this particular diasporic experience. The narratives of Brabazon, Nevin and Bulfin demonstrate ambivalence, resistance and subversion of both home and host cultural codes. Chapter 3 explores the diary of John Brabazon who departs Ireland in 1844 with no expectation or clear intention to return. Brabazon's account bears witness to diaspora as an historical formation in process and through his narrative we see the emergence of an Irish diasporic consciousness in Argentina. Indeed, the Irish community he depicts bears the seeds of that consciousness. His diary formed part of the 'lost voices' of the Irish world wide for over 120 years as it was not until 1982 that a Spanish translation recovered that voice. Though the diary spans nearly twenty years of

travel and work in Argentina (from 1845 to 1864), it is by no means the whole story of John Brabazon as he lived until 1914. This makes the Brabazon narrative an even more precious recovery as, according to O'Sullivan, within much of compensation and contribution history 'there is a tendency for any narrative [of migration] to seek tidiness, a beginning and an end, to become a drama with a plot and resolution' (1992: xx). The lack of resolution in Brabazon might have placed it outside scholarly interest because of this search for tidiness. Brabazon instead simply hints at what might come next, leaving the reader to fill in the gap between the end of his narrative in 1864 and his death in 1914.

What is evident from Brabazon's diary is a questioning of not only the cultural values of the other nationalities and *gauchos* he encounters, but his own and those of the Irish diaspora community he is part of. This interrogation establishes new parameters for identity construction. As Stuart Hall argues: 'identities are […] points of temporary attachments to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (1996: 6). Thus identity is multi-faceted and not necessarily secured through ethnicity or nationality. Importantly, Brabazon locates himself outside the paradigm of diaspora as forced exile and instead writes as emigrant and diasporan. In doing so he does not romanticise Ireland nor is Ireland seen as a site of nostalgia or a reason for homesickness in his narrative. This underpins his depiction of the host community and society, as well as how he perceives his place within that culture and that of the Ireland he has left.

Chapter 4 focuses on the gendered dimension of the Irish diaspora as depicted in Kathleen Nevin's novel *You'll Never Go Back* (1946).[47] In this text, Nevin engages and mediates her mother's memories and experiences of emigrating to Argentina, offering

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[47]The novel was first published in the U.S.A by Bruce Humphries Press in Boston. In 2000 it was translated into Spanish under the title *Nunca regresarás* and published in Argentina by L.O.L.A. Hereafter it will be referred to with page numbers in parenthesis.

us insights into her negotiation of the diasporic condition as a second-generation Irish-Argentine subject. Written as a retrospective overview of Kate Connolly's first year and a half in Argentina, the narrative moves from the departure of Kate, her cousin Bessie and best friend Nancy from winter in County Longford in December 1879 to summer in Buenos Aires in January 1880. It follows Kate's interactions with different cultures and societies, both Irish and native. She begins her journey with a clear intention to return to her family in Ireland once she is financially independent. It is this intention which, in contrast to Brabazon, informs Nevin's construction of experience and I approach this narrative with two distinct, but inter-related, strands of enquiry in mind. The first strand considers how Nevin conceptualises women's travel to and encounters in Buenos Aires while the second concerns her portrayal of the potential return(ee). The community her protagonist becomes part of is concerned primarily with the preservation of a sense of Irishness based on exclusiveness. Some of its female constituents such as Kate's cousin Bessie and Julia Brophy are obsessed with making successful, status-enhancing marriage contracts. Nevin mocks the burgeoning rural gentry on the pampas and their proclivities for non-traditional Irish names through the figure of Margaret Kerrigan. Nevin depicts her as representative of the emerging middle class on the pampas, which she hints are not as far removed from their peasant or working class roots in Ireland as they claim to be. Nevin also signals her distaste of the whitewashing of the Irish on the pampas by the local Irish journalist, Felix Considine, who could, in fact, be William Bulfin himself as the Nevin and Bulfin families knew each other well.[48]

With regards to the second strand of enquiry, it becomes clear that maintaining an intention to return is seen as a rejection of the diasporic community's values.

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[48]The personal correspondence between William Bulfin and his wife Anne, were given to Dr Laura Izarra and I am grateful to her for allowing me to access them. Bulfin often mentions dinner with the Nevins and their two daughters Winifred and Kathleen.

Contradictorily, while espousing Irish cultural values as being superior to native values in addition to romanticising Ireland as the 'true' homeland, the potential returnee is perceived by both the Irish in Argentina as well as elements of the home society as an unwelcome and potentially corrupting character. This chapter investigates the consequences of this and the challenges it poses to cultural identity and notions of class and place. In her literary representation of migration, Nevin reflects the dual orientation of the diasporic subject discussed earlier: on the one hand her protagonist struggles for equal rights in Argentina while living with a sense of displacement and loyalty to Ireland. The chapter goes on to examine Kate's encounters with multiple forms of otherness (language, culture, landscapes, diasporans and native Argentines), her feelings of displacement and then eventual acceptance of the differences she encounters.

Finally, Chapter 5 explores William Bulfin's literary appropriation of exile and how his fervent nationalism is tempered and unsettled by his experience of diaspora. The chapter examines Bulfin's encounters with the various others he meets on his travels, in particular the figure of the *gaucho*. The sketches which make up *Tales of the Pampas* reveal an accommodation and empathy for *gaucho* culture, affinity for the Spanish language while at the same time offer signs of resistance to the host culture and society. Various nationalist projects in Ireland (the Gaelic League, Literary Revival and calls for Home Rule) continue to shape his migration or what he terms, exilic experience. Bulfin, for instance, was instrumental in establishing branches of the Gaelic League in Argentina and sent subscription fees back to Dublin on a regular basis, encapsulating how 'diasporas are deeply implicated both ideologically and materially in the nationalist projects of their homeland' (Werbner 2000: 6). Events in South Africa are also inscribed into these nationalist projects as Bulfin used *TSC* newspaper to champion the cause of the Boers against British colonial enterprise in South Africa in

the Second Boer War of 1899 to 1902. Bulfin's sketches offer a contradictory picture of the Irish emigrant as an exile and later, a transnational Irish-Argentine subject. The boundedness of Irish identity is ruptured in Bulfin's writing in order to expand Irishness beyond the nation-state and national territory.

The final part of the chapter discusses the contradictory space that Bulfin occupies as a returnee. Bulfin's intention to return is the only one which is realised and Bulfin spends seven months travelling around Ireland in 1902. The resulting sketches were compiled into *Rambles in Eirinn,* a staunchly nationalist text which romanticises the Irish landscape and critiques the impact of British rule on that landscape. Despite this, as I will demonstrate, Bulfin's experiences of the diaspora space and the figure of the *gaucho* follow him on his return to Ireland and become part of this nationalist discourse. The diaspora space is inscribed onto the national territory and his narrative. In his preface, and throughout his narrative, Bulfin addresses and incorporates not only the Irish-Argentine diasporic formation but the globally-dispersed Irish into his travels. In doing so he attempts to transcend the rooted element of nationalist constructions of identity, thereby contesting this hegemonic imposition of place as a primary referent for identity formation. However, I also examine the contradictory nature of *Rambles in Eirinn* and how the movement beyond one essentialism, bounded, fixed belonging, is replaced by the equally delimiting boundaries of race and blood as seen in his encounters with elements of the Anglo-Irish and Jewish communities in Ireland.

The narratives of these three authors are productive sites for examining Brah's notions of 'homing desire' and desire for homeland. In addition, similar to the emigrant letters in Australia, they provide 'an exploration of the location and boundaries of "home" and its widening connotations abroad' (Fitzpatrick 1991: 328). I interrogate whether these writers can be viewed as contesting rather than propagating essentialisms

and stereotypes about emigrant identity and, if so, to what extent they challenge the hegemonic construction of Irish identity. However, I do not imply by this that each subject is the same or reduced to one essentialist position. These writers bring us closer to the complex experiences of diaspora but they cannot, of course, speak for the entire diaspora community in Argentina. They interact in different ways with issues of identity, power relations, social interaction, historical change and the myth of return. Thus I outline their commonalities as diaspora subjects as well as highlighting the disjunctures and what this entails for their representations of self. I believe my analysis of these three diasporic voices in Argentina sheds new light on salient debates about Irish migration and diaspora, and specifically around how the emigrant and potential return is perceived. I do this by drawing on a post-modern reading of diasporas as expressions of identity and cultural hybridity while bearing in mind the continued importance of loyalties and identifications beyond the place of settlement. This is crucial as it broadens the parameters for reconsidering the experiences of those globally-dispersed people who identify themselves as Irish. It is this global dispersion that Section One addresses and to which I now turn.

SECTION ONE:

Irish Routes/Roots in Latin America

Chapter 1: Irish Missionaries, Soldiers and Settlers

'To live in Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century was

to have the possibility of emigration on one's personal horizon'.[1]

'Would to God that Irish emigrants would come to [Argentina], instead of the United States.

Here they would feel at home; they would have employment, and experience

a sympathy from the natives very different from what now drives

too many of them from the United States back to Ireland'.[2]

Introduction

Sectors of the Irish population have departed Ireland in search of opportunities and

adventure around the world since the sixteenth century. The end of the Napoleonic

Wars in 1815 saw an accelerated leave-taking and departure became the norm by the

second half of the nineteenth century, as the first epigraph notes. Emigration peaked in

the 1850s when famine led to a massive outflow which continued throughout that

century so that by 1900, the population was half its pre-Famine levels of over eight

million. The resulting Irish diaspora 'is an immensely complicated phenomenon,

covering a long span of time and encircling the globe' (Akenson 2010: 183). The dual

nature of this diaspora in terms of duration and dispersion is closely reflected in the

Irish experiences in Spain and Latin America. The 'long span of time' begins in 1588

with Irish involvement in European wars, when soldiers aided France and Spain against

England. In addition, the Penal Laws in Ireland saw families sending their sons to be

educated in Spain in the hope of achieving better opportunities and advancement denied

[1] Akenson (1990: 11).
[2] From a letter from Fr Anthony Fahy to his parish in Dublin in 1850. Cited in Ussher (1951: 57). The Irish use of 'native' Irish or Argentine denotes someone born in that national territory as opposed to a marker of difference.

to them in Ireland. Because of these links to Spain there was subsequently significant travel and settlement within Latin America. This chapter seeks to explore the factors which influenced the decision of Irish missionaries, traders, soldiers and settlers to travel within non-English-speaking destinations, especially given that their own process of Anglicisation 'gave them access to the vast and rapidly-expanding English-speaking world that was culturally familiar (in comparison to the utter strangeness that met some other European migrants)' (Akenson 2010: 188). Contrary to this, in Latin America it was the Irish who were met and marked by strangeness and difference, not least in terms of the language they spoke. The central question of this chapter then, is what is unique to the Irish encounters in Latin America and what distinguishes them from patterns elsewhere?

The answer to this question is complex and indeed, contradictory at times. For a variety of reasons Irish experiences in Latin America are qualitatively distinct from Anglophone destinations such as the United States or Great Britain which received the majority of Irish immigrants. First of all, the sheer magnitude of Irish emigrants to the latter destinations, especially during the Famine, brings with it its own difficulties in terms of reception. Many emigrants to the United States during this period for instance, were travelling on unsuitable ships and arrived malnourished and ill, leading to them being treated with fear and suspicion. The vast numbers then, in addition to the assumed Catholic religious identity of these emigrants meant that the nature of Irish interaction with certain Anglophone host societies was often problematised by anti-Catholic prejudice. Akenson has postulated that despite the fragmented records on emigration it is more than likely that the religious composition of Famine emigrants mirrors that of Ireland at the time: 80 per cent Catholic, 10% Anglican (Church of Ireland) and 10% Presbyterian (1993: 29). Regardless of true religious background then,

emigrants were simply constructed as 'Catholic Irish' thus erasing demarcations of social class, occupation, cultural traditions or religious identity.[3]

In the United States for example, this is especially true of Irish experiences in the 1850s when thousands of Irish were arriving each day.[4] That the Irish in the United States faced such prejudice and that it was a well-known phenomenon is demonstrated in the second epigraph, written by an Irish priest in Argentina in 1850. Fr Anthony Fahy arrived in Argentina in 1844 after spending two years ministering to an Irish community in Ohio (1834-36), an indication of the intra-diaspora movement Brabazon attests to in Chapter 3. Fr Fahy laments the treatment of the Irish in the United States and implies a kinship with the native Argentines in his efforts to promote Argentina as a zone which is far more receptive of the Irish immigrant. This kinship is a crucial defining feature of Irish experiences in Latin America, although Fr Fahy is more than likely referring to a Catholic kinship. Despite this positioning of Argentina as a more receptive space for Catholics, Irish travel and emigration in Latin America was far from a homogeneous social, religious or demographic experience.

Irish encounters in Latin America, while admittedly fewer in comparison to Anglophone countries, span almost the whole of 'New World' exploration. The diversity of these encounters range from early collaboration with Spain's colonial enterprise from the seventeenth century (through links with religious communities and administrators), seventeenth-century trading settlements in Brazil, involvement in mid-nineteenth-century battles in Mexico to the concerted push to establish an Irish

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[3]James White McAuley (1996: 43-69) traces Protestant experiences of emigration to Anglophone destinations such as Canada, the United States, Scotland and Liverpool in his chapter in Volume Four of *The Irish World Wide* series. Referring to emigrants from Protestant or Unionist cultural traditions in the United Kingdom, he argues that they are in fact, double migrants: 'on the one hand they do not regard themselves either symbolically, socially or politically part of the mainstream "imagined community" of the Irish overseas [while they also feel] alienated from the very society to which many claim such strong allegiance'.
[4]Akenson (2010: 190) notes that the status of the Irish changed by the end of the nineteenth century when they roughly achieved parity in occupational levels with native-born Americans.

community in Argentina throughout the nineteenth century. This chapter traces how the diaspora space of Latin America, a space Brah defines as 'the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes' (1996: 188), becomes a receptive space for Irish missionaries and travellers. This is in part due to the perceived compatibility of religious identities and also, paradoxically, as we shall see in the Argentine case, to their Anglicisation which converts them into desirable immigrants. More importantly, the 'cultural and psychic processes' differ from many Anglophone spaces as the construction and articulation of the emigrant experience lies outside the exile or 'victim of Famine' paradigm which is how the emigrant experience in the United States, for instance, was characterised and constructed. In short, part of the exceptionality of the Irish experience in Latin America is predicated on absences. The first is the lack of the myth-making narrative of 'forced departure' from Ireland. Nationalist-leaning elements of the Irish community in Argentina do attempt to promulgate this exilic narrative but as the next Section contends, it fails to take root. The second absence is that of the anti-Catholic prejudice which so marked Irish experiences in the United States and United Kingdom and indeed, brings about a trickle of intra-diaspora movement to Latin America, as Brabazon details in Chapter 3.

Religious identity therefore, is one of the elements which delimits Irish encounters with Latin America and is paramount in examining Irish journeys in this space. These journeys result in forms of co-existence in Latin America that are progressive and enabling for the Irish emigrant and contrast with experiences elsewhere. In the case of Argentina it was one of the few Catholic countries to receive a high number of Irish immigrants, thus shaping the resulting diaspora experience into a unique form in which Irish identity and ethnicity take on distinct meanings from those

engendered in Anglophone countries. Another factor which subtends the generally positive reception and perception of the Irish is their involvement in the early nineteenth-century Wars of Independence and subsequent struggles throughout that century. This chapter explores the extent of this influence and its impact on the Irish traveller and settler as well as on the native populations they encounter.

Who were those who left Ireland to seek out a different life in the 'New World'? The journeys undertaken by Irish men and women at this time need to be historicised in order to understand what form their diaspora experience takes and how Irish identity evolves in the new space. What is crucial to our understanding of this experience is not only who travels, but also when and under what conditions. Brah asks 'What socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys? […] what makes one diasporic formation similar or different from another?' (1996: 182). How each formation is constituted, whether through slavery, persecution, political strife or as part of global flows of labour, and what its cultural representations are, are central to understanding these formations. Furthermore, Brah argues that 'the circumstances of leaving are [also] important' (1996: 182). Thus, in order to contextualise movement out of Ireland and its intersection with Latin America, this chapter is divided into two parts.

Part one traces early Irish experiences in Chile, Brazil and Mexico and explores the impact of the Cross and the Sword on perceptions and receptions of the Irish. As I mentioned earlier, the answer to what distinguishes Irish encounters in Latin America from those elsewhere is complex and, at times, contradictory. The paradoxical element lies in Irish engagement, consciously or not, with imperialism. Although travel and settlement in Latin America may have arguably been a more positive experience for the Irish, especially in terms of the reception of the emigrant, the same does not necessarily hold true for the indigenous societies and populations they encounter and even displace.

In their global intersections with imperialising nations many Irish benefited from what Akenson (2010) terms their 'collective collaboration'. While Akenson examines this collaboration in relation to Anglophone countries, especially the United States and Britain, it must equally be borne in mind when examining Irish interactions in Latin America.

It is with this 'imperialising' in mind, for example, that this chapter examines Ambrose O'Higgins' journey in Chile as well as the role of the Irish in the process of displacement and dispossession of the Araucanian Indians in Argentina in Chapter 2. On the other hand, this 'collaboration' is given a twist in Mexico when we see Irish soldiers rejecting the imperialising ambitions of the United States in order to fight alongside Santa Ana in the War of Intervention of 1848. Part two shifts the focus to nineteenth-century patterns of migration in order to lay the groundwork for examining movement to Argentina. It outlines the socio-economic and historical context of this emigration as well as the elements which characterise departure. These range from the general push/pull factors to the profile of the emigrant and specific factors contributing to how Irish women experienced emigration. I would like to turn now to the early encounters of the Irish with the Hispanic world.

1. The Cross and the Sword: Early Routes in Latin America

The Catholic Church was an essential factor in establishing Irish communities in Latin America and in Argentina in particular. The groundwork for the formation of these communities can be found in the pre-established links between Ireland and Spain. In the sixteenth century, King Philip II no doubt saw the Irish as a bulwark against Protestant England. Their shared religion and its persecution in Ireland through the Penal Laws throughout most of the eighteenth century forged a strong relationship

between the two countries. The Penal Laws, introduced in Ireland in 1695, were in fact, a series of codes which prohibited Catholics from voting or serving in Parliament, holding public office or living within the limits of incorporated towns. Furthermore, Catholics were prohibited from practising law or holding a post in the military or civil service, opening or teaching in a school. They might not buy, inherit or receive gifts of land from Protestants, nor rent land worth more than thirty shillings a year.[5] In essence, as Noel Ignatiev notes, the Penal Laws 'regulated every aspect of Irish life, civil, domestic and spiritual [and] established Ireland as a country in which Irish Catholics formed an oppressed race' (1995: 35).

Until 1829 and the Act of Emancipation, Irish Catholics had limited opportunities in their homeland, so Spain was an ideal destination for an aspiring Irish Catholic family to send their offspring. In 1574 the first Irish college was opened in Salamanca, and later, another was opened in Alcalá de Henares in 1649.[6] Consequently, from 1574 Irish men went to Spain 'in an effort to acquire through Spanish generosity the education they found so difficult to obtain at home. The archives of the University of Salamanca list many petitions from Irishmen between 1574 and 1591, seeking financial aid from the authorities to enable them to complete their degree course' (Henchy 1981: 221). Education provided these students the opportunity to have a career in public service or the military, especially when Phillip II launched his Armada at England in 1588 and thousands of Irish men volunteered to fight for Spain or France.[7] In turn, many of these men sailed to the New World to serve their surrogate homeland in civil or military affairs, working within the constructs of Imperialism to help Spain

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[5]This list is abstracted from the much longer one in Ignatiev (1995).
[6]The Salamanca College survived until 1951 while the college at Alcalá closed in 1785. Henchy (1981) and O'Connell (1997) give details of the lives the students led during their seven years of study for the priesthood and how they financed these studies during a time of religious persecution in Ireland. The Four Courts Press in Dublin has published a series of books about links between Ireland and Spain. For further reading on Phillip II and Ireland see García Hernán (2009).
[7]For further reading about the Spanish and Irish military relationship see Stradling (1994).

administer her colony, thus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries becoming agents

of colonialism themselves. Many Irish men were given opportunities and promotions

not afforded them in Ireland through 'a royal *cédula* of 1680 [which] provided that they

should enjoy the same rights as Spaniards in obtaining official posts to which their

merits entitled them' (Clissold 1968: 11).[8]

One example of how elements of the Irish population flourished under Spanish

patrimony can be seen in the case of Ambrose O'Higgins. O'Higgins was born in

County Sligo in 1720 and worked in a bank in Cadiz during the 1750s before leaving

for Chile in 1763 in the service of Spain as assistant to the military engineer, John

Garland – also Irish.[9] Upon returning to Spain in 1766 for health reasons, he was

commissioned to write a report on Chile. One year later when back in Chile, he sent

back a report which, similar to many of the accounts of Latin America at the time,

reflected mercantilist intentions for Chile.[10] The report was entitled *Description of the*

Realm of Chile, its Products, Commerce, and Inhabitants; Reflexions on its Present

State, Together with Some Proposals Regarding the Reduction of the Heathen Indians

and the Progress of these Dominions of his Majesty. Interestingly, O'Higgins also saw

the possibility of using Irish emigration as a defensive line to defend the Spanish

crown's territory in the New World. He wanted to encourage 'large-scale Irish

immigration and to use the Jesuits' confiscated property in strategically important areas

for Irish settlement which would serve as defence ports against possible English

aggression and also help in the general development of the country' (Clissold 1968: 31).

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[8]Clissold records the names of many Irishmen who rose through the ranks in Spain, such as Richard Wall, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the 1750s.

[9]Sepúlveda (2006) notes that though Sligo-born, O'Higgins was brought up in Meath, reflecting the lack of factual information surrounding O'Higgins origins, something Clissold (1968) also points out.

[10]Kristine L. Jones outlines the commoditisation of many early nineteenth century travel accounts about Latin America, and Argentina in particular. She notes that in the first thirty years of that century, British publishing houses released over a dozen travel accounts about Argentina and argues, 'the intent of these travelogues seldom was hidden, as is demonstrated in such titles as Beaumont (1828) *Travels in Buenos Ayres, and the Adjacent Provinces of the Rio de la Plata. With Observations Intended for the Use of Persons Who Contemplate Emigrating to that Country; or Embarking Capital in its Affairs*' (1986: 198).

O'Higgins met and had an affair with Isabel Riquelme, the daughter of a respectable Creole landowner – the result of which was the birth of their son, Bernardo Riquelme, in 1778. That same year he achieved 'renown in the eyes of the Spanish civilian authorities by defeating indigenous rebellions' (Sepúlveda 2006). O'Higgins' personal life was less of a success as his lover, Isabel, was installed in a house in the country and Bernardo sent to live with neighbours. O'Higgins did not see his son for many years though he did arrange for him to go to Spain and England for education (Sepúlveda 2006). In 1788 O'Higgins became the Governor General of Chile and later rose to the position of Viceroy of Peru. It was not until after Ambrose's death in 1801 that Bernardo was officially recognised as his son. Bernardo was left an estate and finally took the O' Higgins name. He subsequently became involved in Chilean politics and contrary to all his father had stood for, worked beside the Argentine San Martín in the liberation of Chile, becoming 'Supreme Director' in 1817. His policy of ruling with an 'iron fist' won him little popularity in Chile as he tried to banish aristocracy and religious fanaticism. In January 1823, he resigned and fled to exile to Peru. Although he had spent some time in Spain and Richmond, Surrey, he had never set foot in Ireland. Nonetheless, he 'declared himself desirous of proceeding to Ireland to reside there for some time in the bosom of [his] family' (Clissold 1968: 219). Here we have an early example of a diasporic and transnational subject proclaiming loyalty to two spaces, in this case, Chile and Ireland. O'Higgins did not travel to Ireland, however, and he lived the rest of his life in double exile from both Chile and Ireland. The last eighteen years of this exile was spent on an estate south of Lima, where he died in 1842. The O'Higgins story of a father's initial collaboration with imperialism juxtaposed with the son's war against it exemplifies the highly conflicted and contradictory nature of Irish intersectionality with Latin American space.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Spain was again briefly promoted as a possible destination for Irish emigrants as they were people 'who might prefer to find a home in the ancient cradle of the Hibernian Milesian race, within two or three days from Ireland' (Marshall 2005: 36). However, there seems to be no evidence that these Spanish opportunities were pursued. The proximity of Britain and the ease in journeying there may have been an overriding factor in this. O'Gráda suggests that emigration to Britain at this time played the role of a 'psychic barrier' because of its seasonal and temporary nature: 'In the 1850s and 1860s such seasonal migration would complement permanent emigration' (1997: 228). Britain was a close and convenient outlet for overcrowding. Nonetheless, for many years aspiring travellers looked much further afield.

Early attempts at settlement in Brazil

Oliver Marshall observes that Latin America 'had long offered tantalising and even realistic opportunities to Irish emigrants of all social backgrounds' (2005: 37). In the early 1600s, Irish tobacco planters attempted to establish colonies in Brazil. Joyce Lorimer, for example, details the attempts of certain tobacco planters to colonise part of the Amazon. One such planter was Philip Purcell, an Irish trader who first heard about the possibilities for commerce on the Amazon in 1609, while he was trading for tobacco in Trinidad. For the tobacco planter: 'one of the great attractions of the Amazon was their ability to develop their plantations and factories without undue interference from proprietor or chartered companies' (Lorimer 1980: 50). Therefore, planters could work outside a colonial framework, but more importantly they could avoid paying any duties to Britain by using Irish ports. The goods marketed were dyes, hardwood and of course tobacco, which yielded great profit as it was very much in demand in the European markets at the time. Exact figures are difficult to ascertain, and the confusion of Irish

for *ingleses* is a recurrent problem through to the end of the nineteenth century in attempts to establish an exact number of Irish settlers in Latin America, a problem exacerbated by their status as British subjects, a subject to which I shall return in the next chapter.

By 1620, there were an estimated 250 to 400 Irish, English or Dutch settlers scattered along the channel from Cabo de Norte to the Equator (Lorimer 1980: 58). These settlers were liked by the tribes, and were well-acquainted with Indian languages. However, the Portuguese resented their interference and in 1625 they expelled twelve Irish settlers who had set up near Purcell so the Irish settlers looked to Spain to help to rebuild and maintain the subsequent settlements along the Taurenge River. By using their shared religion as leverage the Irish settlers were able to convince King Philip that 'working in partnership with the missionaries, [they] were much more likely to bring the heathen to the acceptance of Christianity' (Lorimer 1980: 112). Although these colonies did not survive, there were repeated attempts to recruit Irish labourers to Brazil, culminating in the efforts during the latter part of the nineteenth century to recruit a white, Catholic population which would act as a counterweight to the slave population. In some quarters it was hoped it would speed up the abolition of slavery. This cause had a major proponent in the figure of William Scully, who set up an Anglo-Irish newspaper based in Rio de Janeiro in 1865, but which closed in 1884, called *The Anglo-Brazilian Times*. In an article about editorial and journalistic efforts to encourage a policy of Irish recruitment, Miguel Alexandre de Araujo Neto notes: 'It is largely unacknowledged that Irish immigration, along with free immigration, was regarded in Brazil, at a certain point in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, as a component of a policy designed to people the country in such a way that the process leading up to the abolition of slavery would be accelerated' (2003:111).

Between 1865 and 1870, Scully used his paper to try to influence public policy in Brazil. Immigration would help ease the labour shortages caused by the prohibition on the importation of slave labour from Africa in 1850 and the death of many of the existing labourers in Brazil's war with Paraguay in 1864. The reason for seeking Irish immigrants was mainly because of their religion. The conservative Catholic elements of Brazilian society wanted to 'enlarge the flocks of those truly faithful to the Holy See' (De Araujo Neto 2003: 117). Recruitment for immigration was overseen in many cases by Catholic priests – a pattern that is repeated throughout Latin America. In 1868, the Minister for Agriculture contracted agents to recruit about 20,000 'English' emigrants to Brazil, though the actual number to arrive did not come close to those levels. There were only sporadic incidents of immigration, such as those detailed by Marshall. He notes that in 1868:

> The largest single group was made up of 339 desperately poor Irish labourers and their families, recruited in the English "Black Country" coal and iron town of Wednesbury by their parish priest, who was attracted to Brazil as a Catholic country and as an apparent haven from the vice and poverty of industrial England. (2000: 237)

These immigrants were directed to the Santa Catarina province, where they were joined by German and Irish immigrants who had been recruited from the United States. The colony lasted only a year and then collapsed due to poor organisation, unworkable land and the huge distances from markets. Some re-emigrated to the United States and others joined other colonies in Cananeia and Assunguy, where the lack of need for existing capital to achieve success was a great incentive for immigrants. Marshall sees this as one of the many schemes which were:

part of an immigration process that was ill-conceived, confused in purpose, under-financed and poorly administered […] the settlement that received most Irish migrants was also representative of the all-too-commonly hopelessly located, physically isolated, maladministered agricultural colonies established in mid-nineteenth century Brazil. (2005: 38)

Because of this, the drive to draw Irish emigrants to Brazil never got off the ground. A contributing factor may be the way in which some Brazilians, who were against any form of British interference in matters of policy, perceived Irish immigrants. As they were British subjects, they may have been seen as potential colonisers or possibly even spies for the British government. Since 1833, Britain had been firmly anti-slavery and intent on seeing it abolished in Brazil, thus giving land and employment to British subjects implied a British colony on Brazilian soil which could add impetus to the emancipation issue. With so much of Brazil's exports depending on slavery, some felt this would be disastrous to the economy and so used what influence they had to avert it. It worked, as after 1880 there is only sporadic mention of the remnants of the Irish settlers in articles written in Ireland.[11]

Irish routes in Mexico

Mexico is another country that saw Irish involvement from the early days of Spanish settlement through to the end of the nineteenth century. Jesuits who had trained at the Irish colleges in Salamanca or Alcalá de Henares went to Mexico and ran schools there. Serving Spain, Irish soldiers were stationed in Mexico during the seventeenth century: 'occasionally Irish émigrés from the Ultonia and Hibernia regiments were sent [to Mexico]' (Hogan 1997: 146). There were varied attempts at settlement and one in particular was on the Mexican frontier province of Texas. Irish emigrants who had

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[11]Marshall (2002: 28-33) references files of articles from the 1920s and 1930s by John Byrne Newell about the condition of the Irish in Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina, all of which are held in the National Library of Ireland.

some capital behind them were attracted to the area between 1829 and 1834. This business venture attracted those who were 'mainly from small and medium farming families frustrated by Irish laws of primogeniture, high rents and low prices for their produce and who fully intended to make a fortune by investing in land in Mexican Texas' (Marshall 2005: 37). The Mexican government had no qualms about this as it was hoped they would serve as a buffer against any further encroachment by the United States. This was to no avail however, as Mexico lost that land in 1848 in the War of Intervention.[12]

It was this war in mid-nineteenth century Mexico which became the scene of one of the most unusual and tragic incidents of Irish military involvement in Latin American affairs. This concerned the legendary *San Patricios,* a unit set up in 1846 by John Riley from Galway, out of what was formerly known as the Legion of Foreigners. This unit of men fought alongside Mexicans during their war against the United States in 1847. Legend has it that the unit comprised over 100 Irishmen who had left the United States to help in Mexico's fight against the United States. However, Michael Hogan refutes the myth and estimates that of the 120 or so in the unit, probably a third were native Irish and another third second generation, with Germans, Poles and English making up the rest. On why it became synonymous with the Irish, he notes: 'Its distinctive flag, its name, the idealism of the group and its *esprits de corps* was central to the values of both Catholic and Irish which included among others: a) defending a weaker country against a powerful aggressor b) defending a Catholic nation against a Protestant invader, c) feeling comfortable in the ritual and symbolism of Catholicism as expressed in Mexico' (1997:17).

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[12]See Davis (2002) for further information about these settlers.

Religion then, once again, is the impetus for resettlement and an incentive for both the Irish and Mexicans. Many of the Irish who had emigrated to the United States found that religious intolerance and fear of Catholicism meant exclusion or discrimination and being mistreated in the army.[13] Whilst many Irish enrolled in the army, few rose through the ranks as 'the Irishman like the Mexican was considered lazy, loud, undisciplined, dangerous, unfit for self-government or for a leadership role in the army' (Hogan 1997: 99). Thus many of the infantry deserted and crossed the border into Mexico, though not all for the noble cause of defending a country from a larger aggressor. Santa Ana promised land and riches to those who would come and fight, something that many Irish would have given their lives for. Because of this, the *San Patricios* became an infamous unit in the United States as they were branded traitors. This attitude was hardened further still after the Battle of Angostura in February 1847 when the *San Patricios* captured two United States' cannons. Their status and legacy in Mexico came about because of the Battle of Churabusco in August 1847. The *San Patricios* fought alongside Mexican soldiers to defend a monastery which was under attack. They lost this fight and eighty-five *San Patricios* were captured. They were either whipped and branded on the cheek or hip with a 'D' or hanged for treason after similar punishment, which at first horrified Mexican observers and then served to enhance their reputation as martyrs in Mexico. Although the unit was disbanded in 1848, many soldiers stayed in the army and decided to settle. Both the Irish and the Mexicans shared the same threat to nationhood and loss of land. In fact, Mexico lost two-fifths of its landmass to the United States after the war. However, there was no further attempt at settlement although there are a few reminders of an Irish presence such as the Irish school of Guadalajara. There is also a plaque, inserted below, in the

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[13]Though not all emigrants felt that way and many joined and fought in the American Civil War scarcely over a decade later. See Bruce (2006) for more on the Irish volunteers in the Union army.

Plaza San Jacinto in Mexico City. [14] It reads: 'En memoria de los soldados irlandeses

del heroico batallón de San Patricio mártires que dieron su vida por la causa de México

durante la injusta invasión Norteamericana de 1847, con la gratitud de México'. [With

gratitude from the Republic of Mexico this plaque is dedicated to the memory of the

heroic Irish soldiers of the St. Patrick's Batallion, martyrs who gave their lives for

Mexico during the unjust North American invasion of 1847].

Despite efforts to the contrary, there was no permanent settlement in either Brazil or

Mexico. It would be Argentina which drew significant numbers and socio-economic

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[14]Photograph from <http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-s/01/bf/c1/7f/san-jacinto-plaza.jpg>
[accessed 30 July 2013].

conditions in the nineteenth century play an integral part in this migration pattern. It this period that part two examines in order to provide a more complete picture within which to situate not only travel to Argentina but also the individual narratives which are considered in Section Two.

2. Profile of the Nineteenth-Century Emigrant

As the first epigraph suggests, emigration was a well-acknowledged feature of Irish life in the nineteenth century. Within Irish cultural discourse the hegemonic construction of emigration is predicated on it originating during the Famine and being mainly male, rural and Catholic in nature. Women have tended to be conceptualised as those left behind, as mothers grieving and waiting for their children to return. As previously mentioned, recent studies such as those outlined in the introduction have revealed that emigration was far from a homogeneous social or demographic experience. Who left, why and to where is often problematised in the nineteenth century because of the lack of detailed records before the Famine period, patchy record-taking in the United States emigrant experience and the confusion of Irish for *ingleses* in the Argentine diaspora. Fortunately, despite the *irlandés/inglés* confusion, census records and shipping manifests in Argentina were better documented. We can, then, extrapolate a general profile of the emigrant as well as when they left. Akenson, in fact, identifies five distinct periods of Irish emigration beginning at the end of the Napoleonic Wars from 1815 to 1845. The next is from 1845 to 1851, though the statistics for this period are unclear because of the vast numbers departing Ireland. The classical era of Irish emigration was between 1851 and 1876, while 1876 to 1920 saw a brief resurgence in Irish emigration, which is consistent with European patterns. The final period from 1920 to the present has its own special features which are not within the scope of this

study (1993: 166-71). In the three decades after 1815 Ireland 'was established as the major supplier of overseas labour to both Britain and America' (Fitzpatrick 1984: 3). Although the post-Famine period saw an accelerated leave-taking of Ireland, the push behind that departure remained consistent.

It is important to understand the structure of rural Irish society in order to provide a context for a discussion of emigration. In pre-Famine Ireland, farms were family run, sub-divided and shared out among the children. In essence, they were the main social units of society. A shift in this structure occurred in the 1850s with the introduction of the system of impartible inheritance which signified that farmers would leave their holdings to only one person, usually the eldest son. They would then search for a suitable daughter from another farm with a sizeable dowry which would enable his other children to establish themselves elsewhere. This was called 'The Match'. Marriage in Ireland in post-Famine society 'became rigid, and for marrying men, the timing was largely determined by succession to land, and the arrangements of the dowry' (MacCurtain 2008: 266). This 'stem family' system was one in which:

> control of households and of property was transferred between generations. Typically, a single selected inheritor brought his wife into the parental household before the death of one or both parents, the marriage being a parentally-arranged 'match'. Before assuming household control, the inheritor would undertake to make provision for his parents and offer compensation to his siblings in the form of cash, training, board and lodging, or an emigrant passage. (Fitzpatrick 1984: 44)

For those who had no prospects of the inheriting the family plot or had few marriage prospects, emigration became the optimum strategy.

Other factors behind the continuous outflow include poor living standards, poverty, a lack of employment and land ownership. Up until the mid-century, Ireland saw an enormous growth in population. This was overwhelmingly rural in nature and

peaked at about eight million. The Irish economy however, simply could not sustain such growth at that time. Ireland, with the exception of Belfast, was not an industrialised society and agriculture was the main source of labour, yet only ten per cent were actively engaged in that labour. O'Gráda notes that 'almost two-thirds of the males deriving a livelihood from the land held little or no land themselves' (1999: 25). Land distribution was unequal and consisted mainly of smallholdings of less than an acre (mini-holdings) and farms occupying twenty acres or less. These tenant farmers held short leases in marginal areas and in the west of Ireland shared joint tenancy in order to exploit the land to its utmost (O'Gráda 1999: 25).

Furthermore, a feature of the mercantilist policies pursued by colonial powers was to ban specific exports from the colony to the colonial home country, in Ireland's case; woollen goods, sheep, pigs and cattle. This policy, which was also followed in Latin America, 'sought to circumscribe economic activities in the colonies which competed directly with established interests in the colonial home countries' (King 1991: 2).[15] After the Act of Union came into effect in 1801 'Ireland became a supplier of agricultural products to England, and a market for English manufacturers, just at the time the Napoleonic Wars [1799-1815] closed normal sources of supply to Britain' (Ignatiev 1995: 37). This initially led to a boom in production but a fall in prices at the end of the Wars led to inability to pay rents, evictions and further consolidation of land holdings. The consolidation of holdings occurred at the same time as Irish manufacturers were forced out by British competition. This, in combination with the increasing population in Ireland, meant that there was a surplus of agricultural labour and emigration was a convenient solution.

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[15]For further reading on the effect of these mercantilist policies in Latin America see Bulmer-Thomas (1994), chapter two.

There are various anomalies within the Irish emigrant experience in comparison with the general European profile. In European patterns men tended to dominate but in Ireland women were equally migratory. In relation to women's migration, Akenson estimates that the smallest group were widows with children (1.5 per cent), followed by childless couples in their twenties (7 per cent), then married women with husband or child accompanying them (12 per cent). The group of dependent unmarried females (29 per cent), mostly children, were hard to quantify as were the women who may have been dependents at home or domestic servants. The final group of non-dependent females of marriageable age, who could leave the constrictions of the Irish countryside to settle and maybe form a family in a new home, made up 50.5 per cent of emigrants in the 1870s.[16] Generally-speaking, Irish emigrants were more likely to be single and the average age for both men and women was under 25. Before the Famine, Fitzpatrick notes that about two-thirds of those travelling to North America were young adults under 35 whereas from 1855 to 1914 those aged 20 to 24 made up around 44% (1984: 8). This is, in fact, also echoed in the migration patterns in Argentina as the authors under study verify. Brabazon was seventeen when he arrived in Buenos Aires, Kathleen Nevin's mother was twenty-two and William Bulfin was twenty.

In terms of class, Akenson notes that the 'very poor were under-represented [while] the landless male agricultural labourers and their female counterparts were over-represented' (1993: 47), something which again, is mirrored in the corpus under study. Another striking feature of Irish emigration is the specificity of the local or regional migration which in turn, set up streams of migration (or chain migration). These streams often saw entire families follow in the footsteps of older siblings or friends as we shall see in the case of the Brabazon family in Chapter 3. In an analysis of this

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[16]Abstracted from Akenson (1993: 166-71).

specificity, Fitzpatrick (1984) reveals that between 1876 and 1914 for example, in the United States Irish migrants were most likely from the province of Connaught, in the west of Ireland, while those in Canada mainly hailed from the province of Ulster, in the north. In relation to Scotland emigrants came from the north-east of Ireland while many of those in England were from the eastern and southern coastal regions in the province of Leinster. Fitzpatrick also records that during this period recognizable local links developed between Waterford and Newfoundland, Wexford and Argentina but acknowledges that 'these localised axes were swamped statistically by the mighty migratory scattering which mixed up virtually every county of origin with virtually every destination' (1984: 11).

The cost of the passage from Ireland suggests that emigrants could not have been the very poor of Irish society. Within families money was often saved so that one member could leave and they in turn engendered further emigration by providing remittances or pre-paid tickets for siblings to follow them to their destinations.[17] For those who may not have had sufficient funds to travel, assisted emigration served to enable their departure. This assistance came in many forms, from landlords, the British treasury, Poor Law relief funds and even private philanthropists as in the case of Peter Robinson who funded over 2,300 people in family groups from the province of Munster (in the southwest of Ireland) to Canada. Gerald Moran (2004) registers a total of 250,000 to 300,000 emigrants who received assisted or partial assistance to North America in the nineteenth century, with similar numbers to Australia.[18] Fitzpatrick stresses that 'official assistance from colonial and foreign funds was of great importance [and] incentives such as land grants, shipping subsidies and internal transport facilities were occasionally made available in Canada, South Africa and some Latin American

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[17]Remittances figures between 1848 and 1854 are estimated around £7.5 million pounds (Akenson 1993).
[18]See Fitzpatrick (1984) or Moran (2004) for more details of the private schemes to fund emigration.

countries' (1984: 18). Most emigrants departed as steerage passengers, the price of
which (from 2 to 6 pounds) did not vary much throughout the century. Some schemes
simply covered the actual fare, leaving the emigrant to pay for basic provisions for the
journey, while other schemes paid for provisions for the 35-day voyage to the Americas.
The lack of food often lead to malnutrition and many passengers died during the
crossing or soon after disembarking.[19]

It is worth noting here that the actual crossing to South America was a different
experience to that of those journeying to the United States, particularly in the decade
after the Famine. The ships heading north were graded as third class, intended for short
journeys only because of their lack of seaworthiness. On those crossings the appalling
conditions led to so many deaths that they infamously became known as *coffin ships*.
Moran (2004) alludes to ships 'being barely seaworthy or unsuitable to carry
passengers' as well as having 'certificates [which] were dubiously obtained so they
could carry human cargoes' (91), resulting in the loss of many lives. However, official
figures do not substantiate the claims of high mortality on the crossings and while
anecdotal evidence and folklore play an important part in the cultural memory of
emigration, they may obfuscate fact. O'Gráda argues that 'fewer perished in transit
than might have been expected in the circumstances, or implied by many popular
accounts. The famine migration occurred just before steamships won out over sail on
the North Atlantic route' (1999: 105). These ships were actively involved in 'emigrant'
trade*,* something that Latin America did not see in full swing until the late nineteenth
century, when people from the Mediterranean flocked to many Latin American
countries. In contrast, ships to Argentina and Brazil were mostly classified as first and
second class.

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[19]Miller (1985: 292) estimates that over 30% of those passengers to British North America and 9% to the
United States perished on or soon after landing.

There are two distinct periods which characterise sea travel to Latin America: the sail period from 1824 to 1851 and the steam era from 1852 to the late 1880s. During the sail period the voyage to Buenos Aires from Liverpool took up to three months with fares from £10 to £35. The early ships, or packets, carried mail, passengers and cargo, and when needed there was space allotted to steerage passengers. Brabazon's journey to Buenos Aires was on one of these ships, the *Filomena*. Though the journey to Argentina was in better built ships, there are accounts of steerage passengers suffering typhus and malnutrition, albeit in far fewer numbers than the North American crossings. Murray (2003) documents the journey of Edward Robinson and his family in 1849. Of the thirteen who disembarked, his wife and two of his children died in the Irish hospital two weeks after arrival. Nonetheless, these cases were the exception rather than the rule. The later years of steam travel witnessed a much-reduced journey time of only 30 days and may account for the increase in immigration in the 1850s and 1860s (see insert of the steam ship *Galileo* which was pressed into the South American trade in 1864).[20] The relatively higher cost of the passage to Argentina (around £16 in the 1880s) suggests that the demographic profile of passengers to Latin America was a more affluent one. This is corroborated by the fact that the 'immigration funding schemes' to Argentina peaked in the 1830s so those leaving needed funds to do so and, more importantly, to survive. In addition, these emigrants were more likely a more skilled work force. This is corroborated by O'Brien who affirms 'the fact that emigrants [to South America] were advised to bring a revolver as well as a saddle may not have deterred farmers who had been forced to protect their stocks from starving labourers' (1999: 55). This would imply that some of the emigrants to Argentina possessed horse-riding skills, an added advantage on the Argentine pampas.

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[20]The *Galileo* was a steamer typical of the 1851 to 1889 period.
http://www.merchantnavyofficers.com/lamportandholt.html [accessed 29 July 2013].
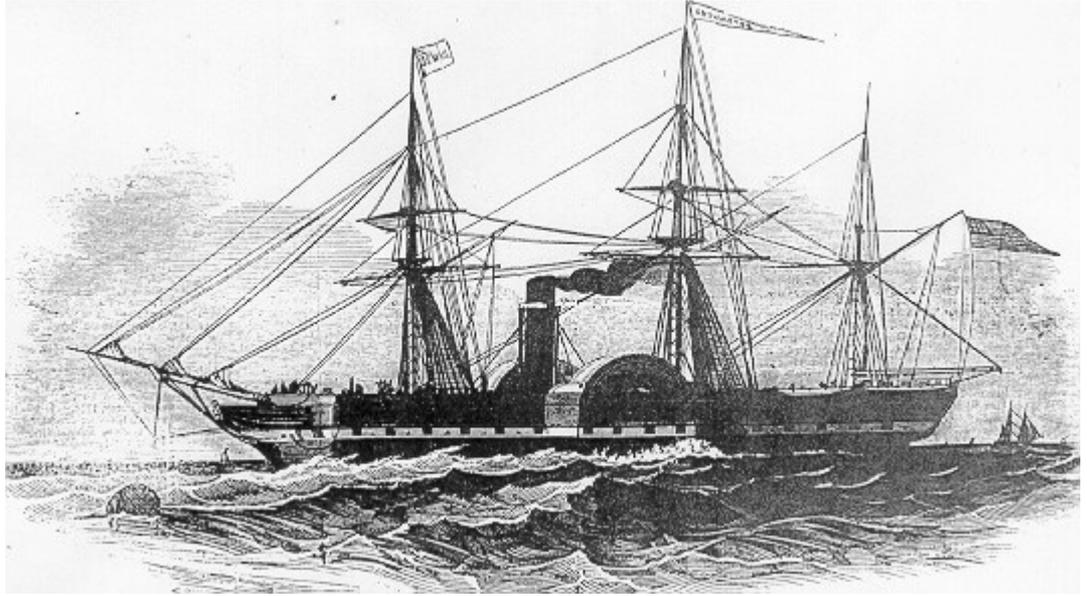
In the nineteenth century, the New Worlds of the Americas were chronically short of labour and, very quickly, Irish emigrants began to fill that gap. As a result, an emigrant market was created at a crucial time in both Irish (and European) history. Many began to take the boat from Dublin across the water to Liverpool, where the local ship merchants saw the Irish emigrant as 'a conveniently located, self-loading, fare paying ballast on their journey to the Americas' (McKenna 2000b: 80). The experience of many Irish passing through Liverpool on the way to Latin America is chronicled by Murray (2003) who details the emigrant journey from their doorstep to Liverpool and then on to the port of Buenos Aires. Many were tricked out of their fares, waylaid by robbers and even had to pass a sham medical examination. This all-important examination, intended to prevent disease on board, consisted of queues of thousands being asked: 'Are you quite well? Show your tongue' (Murray 2003: 4). As stated, the lack of rigorous control and oversight regarding the physical condition of many passengers lead to illness and death on many crossings, though the better conditions and relative affluence of the emigrants to Argentina seem to have circumvented this. As

research has revealed that around half of Irish emigrants were female, I now turn to this experience in order to contextualise the diasporic experience depicted by Kathleen Nevin in Chapter 4.

Women and emigration

If the circumstances of leaving are, as Brah suggests, crucial to understanding the nature of diaspora formation, then the departure of women from Ireland is intrinsically linked to their declining status in nineteenth century Irish society, especially after the Famine. Until 1845, the family economy depended on the economic contribution of women, through labour on the farm or in local textile factories but 'with the devastation of domestic industry (especially wool, cotton and linen-except in Belfast), the change from tillage to livestock and fall in proportion of agricultural labourers to farmers, the shift in the direction of men became more pronounced' (Lee 1978: 37). With the exception of the Belfast linen industry, there was little work outside the home for women in post-Famine Ireland. One of the few choices was domestic service. Margaret MacCurtain describes this employment pool as 'an economic necessity and, in a warped way, also an apprenticeship for the burgeoning domesticity that was increasingly defining the position of women' (2008: 265). In tune with Victorian mores of the time, domestic service was seen as suitable employment for young country girls, who in turn became a crucial element in establishing the new Irish bourgeoisie.

This employment was by no means an easy option: 'Isolating in its working environment and an impediment to marriage prospects, domestic service offered a precarious sanctuary to the docile' (MacCurtain 2008: 266). However, at a time when women's status had been steadily declining, an important aspect of domestic service was that for young, unattached Irish women, this occupation offered several advantages:

'familiarity as it mirrored aspects of the life they had known at home; security as it provided previously arranged board and lodgings and the opportunity to save most of their wages, as outgoings were negligible' (Neville 1995: 204). Domestic service was also an occupation that would be of use to women in the New World and could help further their own goals. However, as Miller points out, it was often temporary and 'the extent to which Irishwomen resented its negative aspects only encouraged their escape to what they regarded as the shelters of husband and homemaking' (2008: 320).

With the shift in labour away from women their marriage prospects were also adversely affected. What made a marriage beneficial to a couple before the famine i.e. women's earnings in the factory or agricultural labour, was severely curtailed as a result of the economic downturn after the Famine. Consequently, the marriage rate fell and Irish women married later than their European counterparts, if at all. Janet Nolan points out that 'altogether, two-thirds of the Irish women in the four decades after 1880 never married' (1989: 52). In any analysis of women's emigration, the dowry is an essential element as: 'dowries acquired unprecedented importance [...] once a woman earned [it] their successful return home to a desirable lifestyle (and the status of married woman) was guaranteed' (Neville 1995: 208). Thus, seeking a dowry became an important push factor behind female emigration and one which, conversely, also helped to maintain the status quo in Ireland. In order to move beyond the boundaries of patriarchy, and indeed, to have a *choice* in whom to marry, many women chose to emigrate and seek independence by working outside Ireland. Unfortunately, the act of leaving Ireland did not in itself signify an unshackling of the patriarchal chains, as many women sent money back to Ireland to help their families, or to be put in the safekeeping of a matchmaker who would help them to find a suitable mate on their eventual return. As Nolan argues, in the post-Famine period 'marriage was an economic institution,

arranged by a professional matchmaker and designed to ensure the preservation and the improvement of a family's well-being' (1989: 20).

While their earnings may have liberated women initially, they may ultimately have served to ensnare them in the patriarchal fold from which they had left:

> Earned often with difficulty and even heartbreak in a foreign country, it now went like the mailed remittances into propping up the patriarchy that had been unable to support the women in the first place and ensured that other women would consequently, like them, and for the same reasons, be forced onto the emigrant ship. (Neville 1995: 209)

Not only were these remittances hard-earned but it is estimated that Irish women remitted more money than their male counterparts. In 1861 for example, it is recorded that eight out of every ten who sent money home from the United States were women (Schrier 1997: 110). Women, or rather, financially-independent women, returned ostensibly at times on holidays but according to the numerous accounts in the National Folklore Archives, in reality they returned to Ireland to find a husband.

Another significant feature of the general emigrant profile was the increase in literacy. From the 1850s onwards most emigrants were functionally literate as in 1831 the 'national system of education' was established. Akenson estimates that over 55% of the population were literate in English by mid-century (2010: 189). In relation to women, by the 1860s, literacy and education were crucial components of their lives, and though national schools only required voluntary attendance 'existing roll books reveal that female children were attending school in accelerating numbers from the 1860s onwards […] and the connection between startlingly high school attendance rates among both sexes and work-related emigration is obvious' (MacCurtain 2008: 267).[21]

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[21]The percentage of illiteracy among the population of the province of Leinster, which is where the majority of emigrants to Latin America originated, went from an estimated 29.5% in 1851 to 11.2% in 1881, the lowest number of the four provinces.

Women emigrated to regions where spoken or written English were proven qualifications for seeking positions. Access to a life overseas became the viable alternative for women with even a little education, in both Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries. Consequently, as British subjects young Irish governesses were looked favourably upon by the Anglophile elites in Argentina, exemplified by Nevin's account in Chapter 4. The ability to teach or instruct their charges in English was attractive to not only the middle classes of Buenos Aires society however, as in the late nineteenth century the emerging middle class Irish of the Pampas saw governesses and domestic servants as a means of showing off their newly-earned wealth and status as landowners. Therefore, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, literacy became synonymous with preparing to emigrate: 'As young women lost their demographic and economic importance in peasant society they were more likely than boys to be "trained" to emigrate by staying in school longer and thereby acquiring the literacy needed to succeed in urban environments abroad' (Nolan 1989: 50).

A feature common to global experiences of Irish women in the New Worlds of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina is their treatment as almost commodities. Akenson notes how in Australia for example, 'in 1848 and again in 1855, South Australia *imported* 5,000 – mostly Irish girls' (my emphasis 1993: 175). Many of these girls had no family to claim them and were juveniles with little training or education in housecraft. However, from the initial group of 600 orphans and poorhouse residents in 1848, many did quite well as they learned fast and by 1852 most of them were married. In a pattern that we see repeated in Argentina, as well as many other Irish diaspora spaces, very soon these emigrants began employing their own servants and thus implicitly encouraging further female migration. These initial groups, however, had no connections or family where they settled, an

unusual occurrence as one the main features of women's emigration was having someone, usually a family member, 'claim' them upon arrival.

Women's departure from Ireland was not unobstructed, however. Contrary to the support that many Irish men received from the Church, there were repeated attempts by the clergy to stop women from emigrating. The Famine had brought about many changes in the Church, the primary of which meant that it: 'was able to preach its doctrines in detail for perhaps the first time in Irish history to the mass of the people just at the moment when the new image of woman, and the new public obsession with sex, was gaining the ascendancy' (Lee 1978: 39). A concerted effort was made to present women who departed Ireland as victims, subjected by emigration to a fate worse than death. One priest, Fr Guinan, describes these women as 'poor, sheepish, unsuspecting country girls'. He states:

> How happy, in comparison and how blessed would have been the lot of an Irish girl, the poor betrayed victim of hellish agencies of vice, had she remained at home and passed her days in the poverty, aye and wretchedness, of a mud wall cabin – a wife and mother, mayhap – her path in life smoothened by the blessed influences of religion and domestic peace until it ended at a green old age in the calm, peaceful repose of God's justice. (Cited in Lee 1978: 43)

The inherent contradictions in his statement show a blindness to the situation women were in, as it was the fact that there was little opportunity to become a 'wife and mother' and thus conform to the values of family held to be the essence of Irish cultural identity which prompted many women to emigrate. Therefore, women were either relegated to the role of passive victim or traitor to their family and family values. By extension, they were seen as traitors to their Irish identity as they were portrayed as easily seduced by the lure of the foreign instead of being capable of independently choosing to leave a country because of the lack of opportunity or status afforded them.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, at a time when the decadence of England was decried, Ireland was in fact absorbing the values of Victorian middle class morality, which idealised and repressed women at the same time, especially those from the middle classes. For many in Ireland, emigration could only be utilised as a necessity or duty in order to ensure the survival of the family but not as a means for independence or escape.[22] Gray (1997) suggests that not only were Irish female emigrants constructed as wives and mothers-in-waiting for future generations but that 'women emigrants were pathologised for leaving, for being attracted or lured away from the country where they rightly belonged [indicating] the potential of Irish women to undermine a patriarchal and family-oriented Irish national identity' (210). By leaving, they were depleting the natural resources of Ireland, 'exporting' a commodity, to use Akenson's imagery, which could be detrimental to Irish society. It is the construction of women's experience and the pathologising tendencies which will be the subject of Chapter 4.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the diversity of Irish interactions and intersections with the social, economic and political history of Latin America. Much of the positive reception and perception of the Irish in Latin America is predicated on assumed religious compatibility with certain Latin American societies such as Brazil and Mexico. In addition, post-1801 and the Act of Union, Irish citizens held a British-subject status which served to enhance their desirability as Anglophone immigrants. As a potential area for settlement, Latin America was exceptional as it offered a space relatively free of the anti-Catholic prejudice which so marked Irish experiences in the United States and Britain. Moreover, the nineteenth-century pattern of migration is paradigmatic as it

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[22]Ignatiev notes that Irish emigrants sent 'about 34 million pounds in remittances between 1848 and 1887, two-fifths of which came as pre-paid passage' (1995: 17). This enormous figure highlights how important emigration and remittances were to the survival of a family.

is not propelled by Famine migration of 1845 to 1850. Instead, we see a trickle of emigrants to Argentina, for instance, from the 1820s, peaking in the 1860s while attempted settlement in Brazil took place in the 1600s as well as in the 1870s and 1880s. Thus the histories of these communities lie outside the master narrative of much Famine history in other destinations. I do not mean to suggest by this that Irish journeys and interactions in Latin America were unproblematic. In fact, they vary between extremes. Some experiences were problematised by Irish collaboration in Spain's colonial ambitions while there was also military involvement liberating countries from that very Empire.

Another important feature of this chapter is that it serves to contextualise movement out of Ireland. It examines who left and why they chose a non-English-speaking destination over areas which might have been viewed as more compatible English-speaking zones. The high cost of the passage and demographic profile of nineteenth-century emigrants suggests that as opposed to the United States, for example, more affluent and literate emigrants embarked for Latin America. When Irish migratory flows are compared to European patterns of the same period disjunctures are revealed. For example, the Irish were less likely to reverse migrate with estimates at around 10 per cent of the total, unlike Italy, for instance, which saw up to 58 per cent of its emigrants return. Another crucial difference is that over half of Irish emigrants worldwide were, in fact, women as compared to around 30 per cent in European patterns. An analysis of the status of women in nineteenth-century Ireland and the push and pull factors which lead to their departure lays the groundwork for an examination of Kathleen Nevin's narrative.

Finally, this chapter traces attempts at settlement in Chile, Brazil and Mexico, which for a variety of reasons did not survive. Tim Pat Coogan (2000) documents an

Irish presence in other countries in Latin America and parts of the Caribbean, while in a series of articles on the Irish in South America, Brian McGinn (1998) documents some of those involved in the fields of medicine, engineering and journalism. Nevertheless, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, the largest concerted effort at settlement was in Argentina and this chapter establishes the basis for the exceptionality of the Irish diasporic formation there and what could be called the Irish legacy in Latin America. Why Argentina became the locus of Irish emigration is the focus of Chapter 2, in which I examine this unique Irish community

Chapter 2: The Road to Argentina

'Sometimes it is possible to describe individuals and communities
as behaving as ethnics in one sphere of life, as diasporans in others
and frequently as shifting from one to another'.[1]

Introduction

The location of Ireland's largest non-English-speaking diaspora space is nineteenth-century Argentina. While Chapter 1 addresses the importance of the circumstances behind a diasporan's decision to leave their country of origin, this chapter turns to the end result of that decision, to the diasporan's arrival and settling down in order to trace the formation and evolution of this diaspora community, its routes to and roots in Argentine society.[2] As a means of contextualising this evolution, this chapter is divided into two parts. Part one surveys the changes in Argentine society, how immigration was perceived in the immediate post-independence era (1810-29) and then through the rest of the nineteenth century. These circumstances underpin the nature of Irish reception in Argentina and the extent to which emigrants were able to forge a unique community in this diaspora space. In addition, part one appraises the role of two other elements leading to the positive reception of the Irish settlers in Argentina: their involvement in military affairs and their skill and experience in sheep farming. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the Irish population were aided by the support of the Catholic Church, both inside and beyond the national territory. Thus, part two traces the impact of the Church on the evolution of the community in Argentina. Brah's question of who travels and under what conditions is addressed by analysing the distinctly site-specific origin of the

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[1] Hickman (2005: 131).
[2] In 1816 the former Spanish Viceroyalty of La Plata became known as the United Provinces of the River Plate and then in 1853, the United Provinces of the Argentine. I refer to the region as either Argentina or the Río de la Plata.

majority of Irish emigrants to Argentina. Finally, this chapter outlines the cultural resources that Irish emigrants draw upon in order to voice and record their experiences in Argentina. Both parts come together to form a basis for the subsequent examination of the cultural representations of this diaspora community in Section Two.

1. Argentine Society and Immigration

The end of Spanish rule in the Río de la Plata in 1810 brought about many challenges for the new Republic. The first half of the nineteenth century was characterised by 'regional economies, provincial society and political atomization' (Sábato 1990: 1). Conflicts between *criollos*, *peninsulares*, and *unitarios* (who advocated for strong central government) and *federales* (who wanted autonomous provinces) complicated political and economic agendas. One pertinent factor was what to do with the many Spanish subjects who continued to reside in the region after independence. The 1810 census 'indica que el componente regional más numeroso en esa fecha son los gallegos (30%) seguidos por andaluces y vascos' (Devoto 2003: 203) [indicates that of the Spanish subjects resident in Argentina Galicians were in greatest numbers (30%), followed by Andalusians and Basques]. However, the new governments wanted to define the fledgling state in anti-Spanish terms. To that effect Juan Manuel Pueyrredón (1816-9) passed a resolution in 1817 which prohibited Spaniards from marrying *criollos* and the Spanish crown prohibited its citizens from travelling to its former colony (a prohibition not rescinded until 1857). Anti-Spanish, however, did not mean anti-European. In fact, the opposite was the case.

There were concerted efforts throughout the 1820s to attract European immigrants, especially those of British origin. In 1824, La Comisión de Inmigración was established and in its charter, in an effort to sever the links with its colonial and

Catholic past, 'se inscribía su voluntad de promover una inmigración de protestantes' (Devoto 2003: 212) [it recorded its intent to encourage the immigration of Protestants]. Under the Rivadavia administration of 1826-7, an administration which was actively Anglophile, the state became a secular one. This may have been part of the reason early Irish emigrants initially embraced and stressed the linguistic and British aspect of their *inglés* identity as it was only with Rosas' regime that the Catholic Church was allowed to return, albeit in a much reduced capacity. There were also trade agreements with Britain and immigration schemes were promoted through agents in London hoping to attract English, Scottish and other Northern European immigrants to the Río de la Plata with offers of free passage, free land and start-up money. This was supported later in the century by the Mulhall Brothers' *Handbook of the River Plate*. The handbook published adverts offering lodging, help to find work and even, if it were harvest or shearing time, transport to that employment and I will return to this publication in the final part of the chapter. Eventually, 'with their superior resources, their capital, shipping and contacts in Europe, the British took over the entrepreneurial role previously filled by Spaniards' (Lynch 1993:1).

These immigration schemes offered attractive terms and in one such scheme in 1824 the province of Buenos Aires negotiated a contract with an Englishman, Mr Beaumont, and his colonising company, to settle 200 families from Plymouth. The potential settlers were offered land at extremely low prices which caused such outrage among the local *estancieros* (landowners) that the governor was obliged to resign and the settlers had to be dispersed to various places in Buenos Aires (Stølen 1996: 38). Nonetheless, despite all its efforts, the Commission met with little success and, as José Moya points out, it 'tells us more about the Rivadavia generation's Anglophilia than about the settlement of the pampas [...] it brought fewer than a 1,000 British colonists,

and fewer than a tenth stayed' (1996: 51). It was under the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas (1829-52) that the region saw the beginning of sustained immigration, though it was not that of the Rivadavian model. This immigration is intimately linked to political as well as economic factors. The question of how to move from an insular colonial society to one which would expand its frontiers and enter world markets was hampered by one major factor, a shortage of labour.

In 1810, the Río de la Plata region comprised one million square miles (almost the size of Europe) and had less than half a million inhabitants. It was divided into four main areas: a quarter of the land was Patagonia to the South, followed by the Andean region to the west, the Northern lowlands from Corrientes to Entre Ríos and finally the pampas, a fertile coastal zone incorporating Buenos Aires province, Santa Fe, Córdoba and La Pampa, all of which was less than a fifth of the country. This pampas however, was 'one of the three finest farm belts on the planet' (Moya 1996: 45).[3] Ownership of this land was a controversial issue and it was control over this key resource that transformed Argentine society into a land-owning oligarchy. Though public land could not be sold, it was leased on a long-term basis and this land tenure system 'saw huge tracts of land transferred into private hands [and] the initial distribution of public lands [...] favoured a privileged few' (Sábato 1990:14-5).

The *estancieros* of the pampas held a subordinate status in colonial society but that changed with independence and landowners wanted to establish a rural base with *estancias* at the heart of it. At first they saw cattle as a way of diversifying their interests but later, sheep farming offered new markets and sources of wealth if the labour could be found to service it. The speed with which a new *estanciero* elite was born is highlighted by the fact that 'by the 1830s some 21 million acres of public land

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[3]The other two are the Ukrainian Steppes and the Great Plains of North America.

had been transferred to 500 individuals, many of them wealthy recruits from urban society [...] founders of Argentina's landed oligarchy' (Lynch 1993:3). This wealthy region did not escape the notice of British interests either, and in 1842 *The Times* described Argentina as a 'vast and fertile region [...] full of natural resources despite the barbarous and cruel assassinations of Rosas' (29 June: 5). By then 'the great plains of Buenos Aires were divided into well-stocked *estancias* and supported some three million head of cattle, the prime wealth of the province and the source of an export economy' (Lynch 1993: 4). The 'vast and fertile region' with its abundance of land was used by Rosas as a means of financing his dictatorship by pursuing a policy of systematically transferring public land into private hands by either selling it to *estancieros* in an effort to make more land available for them and to solve many of his regime's financial problems, or simply giving it away as a gift or reward for his followers. This caused some difficulties in 1852 as, when the regime fell, 'the provincial government decided to review past donations and by a law of 1858, all land grants made between December 1829 and February of 1852 were cancelled, unless you had fought the Indians' (Sábato 1990: 43).

Under Rosas, however, the region saw more immigration than under the liberal Rivadavia, though the typical migrant was not the Anglo-Saxon yeoman preferred by Rivadavia but Spanish and Italian labourers instead. There were no concerted efforts to encourage emigration as such, but factors such as the rise in sheep farming gave their own impetus to those willing to brave the vagaries of the dictatorship. English immigration declined but the English maintained a vital presence in the region. Towards the end of the Rosas regime 'los ingleses conservaron todo su predominio en la actividad comercial, dadas las espaldas diplomáticas poderosas de que disponían' (Devoto 2003: 215) [the English maintained their dominance in commercial affairs

owing to the powerful diplomatic support they had at their disposal]. Though Argentina relied upon British manufacturers, shipping and markets, as Lynch notes, 'it made its own economic decisions, and its independence was never in doubt' (1993: 12).

The huge tracts of land that the new landowning elite had obtained were not without complications as 'only part of the region comprising the northern part of Buenos Aires province and southern part of Santa Fe were "liberated" territories (*pampa húmeda*). The southern part (*pampa seca*) was controlled by Indian tribes and in the "liberated" areas the rural inhabitants were *gaucho* cowboys' (Stølen 1996: 36). These *gauchos* were seen as lawless vagrants who would not conform to the demands of the newly-risen elites and were, in fact, a threat to their prosperity. Consequently, the *estancieros*' main concerns were law and order as well as security of tenure on the pampas, something which they looked first to Rosas, and then to later governments, to help them achieve: with mixed results as I will illustrate later. A treaty in 1833 between Rosas and Indians in Southern Buenos Aires opened up more tracts of land but still the question remained as to how to exploit this fertile ground. Though the provincial and national governments in the 1850s had ambitious plans for the pampas, both the Indian threats to those outside these liberated areas and internal disputes over customs charges on trade through Buenos Aires seriously compromised these ambitions. The dispute about charges eventually led to Buenos Aires seceding from the territory for almost a decade until it was finally re-integrated in 1862.[4]

After Rosas's fall in 1852, there were renewed efforts and energy to populate the pampas. The 1853 Constitution was largely based on the document of exiled Unitarian Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la Confederación Argentina.* Alberdi's famous motto 'gobernar es poblar' [to rule is to

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[4]For further details on this period see Lynch (1993).

populate] stresses the importance of immigration to Argentine society. The 1853
Constitution lasted until 1949 and gave immigrants the civil rights of citizens with the
exception of voting. More importantly, they were exempted from military service and,
as there were numerous internal and external struggles, this proved to be extremely
beneficial to the immigrant:

> Internally, the commercialisation and financing networks were running smoothly
> by [1865] and transportation was developing rapidly, reducing freights and
> losses. Irish, Basques, French, and Scots had become familiar faces in rural
> Buenos Aires province, providing the necessary and adequate labour force for
> the expanding industry. In some cases these immigrants developed into farmers,
> investing their small capital in the business, which asked for relatively little
> initial investment but required skilled labour power, frequently provided by the
> family of the farmer. (Sábato 1990: 26-7)

The development of an articulate agrarian society was a little longer in the
making as there were huge distances separating settlers from their neighbours, children
from schools, and the majority of the settlers had little, if any, means of communication
with the rest of the country. Agricultural labourers had lower standards of living when
compared to urban dwellers and, as immigrants had no right to participate in the
political life of the country, they had no voice to make any of their concerns known.
Re-locating to the city was generally not a viable option as not only did any type of
urban-based emigration run counter to the government's plans and expectations for
immigrants but demand for labour was, initially at least, overwhelmingly rural-based.
The preferred immigrant was one who could contribute to that rural economy which in
turn directly affected Argentina's export economy.

Immigrants were classified in varying ways upon entering the region. Social
distinctions were important as was whether you had money when you arrived. There
were many limitations and restrictions, especially after the 1853 Constitution's outlining

of immigrant rights. An immigrant, as opposed to *emigré* or political exile, had to arrive in either second or third class, they had to be under sixty years of age so they could work and could not have physical defects or illnesses. The immigrant, it was assumed, was also European in origin. To this end, the Law of Emigration and Colonisation of 1876:

> daba una definición de inmigrantes que sería para delimitar quiénes tenían derecho a los beneficios que ofrecía el Estado argentino. En sus términos, inmigrante era el europeo, aunque ello […] estaba dicho con un eufemismo. El artículo 12 de la ley señalaba: "Reputase inmigrante, para los efectos de esta ley, a todo extranjero (que) llegase a la República para establecerse en ella, en buques de vapor o vela [aquellos] que llegaban de los puertos de Europa o de los situados cabos afuera". (Devoto 2003: 31)

> [provided a definition of immigrants which would demarcate who would be entitled to the benefits of the Argentine State. It defined the immigrant as European, although this was a euphemism. Article 12 of the law stated: "For those immigrants affected by this law, to all foreigners arriving in the Republic to settle here, by steam ships or sail [those] who arrive from European ports or from further afield"]

It was in the 1880s that Argentina saw the beginnings of a massive influx of European immigration as a result of its flourishing economy. The statistics for the immigrant component of the population rose startlingly towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century: 'En 1895, [los inmigrantes] eran el 25,5% de la población total […] en el censo de 1914, alcanzaban la asombrosa cifra del 30% del total de la población'(Devoto 2003: 49) [In 1895 immigrants made up 25.5% of the total population [by] the census of 1914, this figure had risen to an incredible 30%]. Between 1881 and 1914 there was mass European immigration of mostly young, rural males.

There were occasional periods during which immigration slowed, such as the financial crisis of 1890 which led to 1891 being a year when the number of departures

was greater than arrivals. In this time period, passages between England and Buenos

Aires were subsidised and between 1888 and 1890 there were 133,428 free passages to

Buenos Aires (Moya 1998: 51). The administrations of J.A. Roca (1880-86), M.J.

Celman (1886-90) and later Roca again (1898-1904) were left with the difficult problem

of how to integrate so many distinct cultures and diaspora communities into the new

nation. This problem was compounded by the social networks engendered by chain

migration:

> dadas las redes sociales premigratorias y posmigratorias y la preferencia étnica
> (es decir, la tendencia a elegir un propietario, un inquilino o un obrero de la
> misma nacionalidad) una buena parte de los recién llegados unieron en una casa
> propiedad de un conacional y trabajaba en una fábrica de la que era dueño otro
> de su misma nación. (Devoto 2003: 266)
>
> [because of pre- and post-migration social networks and ethnic preferences (that
> is to say, the tendency to choose a landlord, lodger or a worker of the same
> nationality) a large number of new arrivals would meet in a house owned by a
> co-national and would work in a factory owned by someone else of the same
> nationality]

These close links ensured that foreign cultural practices and languages were maintained

in the region, as we shall see in the case of certain Irish cultural practices and the

English language.

Irish settlement patterns

During the 1800s an estimated 45,000 Irish people left the shores of Ireland to seek out

a new life in the Americas, with the initial destination being the Río de la Plata region.

These numbers have been disputed as the *inglés* status has caused difficulties in

correctly assessing how many Irish travelled to Argentina. Coghlan notes that:

esa dificultad se presenta, por una parte como consecuencia de que muchos, sino la mayoría, de los individuos de esa nacionalidad declararon en las ocasiones en que tuvieron que hacerlo ante las autoridades, o al ser censados justamente con el resto de la población, que eran "ingleses", y por la otra a causa de las lagunas que existen en la información estadística. (1982: 15)

[this difficulty came about partly because most, if not all, [Irish] declared themselves to be English on those occasions when they found it necessary to do so, whether to local authorities or part of the census with the rest of the population and partly because of the gaps which exist in the statistical information available]

Coghlan puts the figure closer to 10,000 between 1822 and 1880 and by 1895 estimates the Irish-Argentine community to be around 16,284 (1982: 16), though, as indicated in the Introduction, this is most likely an underestimate. While small in comparison with the overall Irish diaspora, an Irish-Argentine community still exists today and we have access to the experiences of individual diasporans through letters, newspapers and the travel narratives of the authors who will be examined in the next Section. What is more, this emigration extends throughout the whole period of New World settlement, not solely in the peak period between 1880 and 1930 when: 'six countries absorbed 90% of the total [of overseas migration] and among these six Argentina ranked second in the number of immigrants with a total of 6,405,000' (Whittaker 1964: 54).

The Irish arriving in the Río de la Plata in the nineteenth century were doing so at a time of national expansion and they would benefit from an emerging rural economy which would shape the form and scope of that emigration. The diaspora community which emerges is multi-faceted, containing elements of Protestant and Catholic Irish, Irish with pro-British sentiments and those with a fiercely nationalist mentality. The borders of this community are ever-changing and creating new meanings. Thus, some emigrants integrate and assimilate quicker and feel fully accepted by the host society, whilst others proclaim loyalties beyond the host society. The result of this constant change allows space for the diasporan to view both the host country and their own

ethnicity from multiple perspectives as well as space for the host country to emerge as a site where new connections can be made both within and outside of the diaspora community. It can also be a place from where a return journey is planned or not. As Clifford argues 'decentred, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/return. A shared history of displacement […] adaptation […] may be as important as the projection of a specific origin' (1997: 249-50).

Who were those who left Ireland to seek out a new life in Argentina? As discussed in Chapter 1, Ireland was a society and country of divisions and regionally-specific emigration. Generally, though there were a number of native Irish speakers, most emigrants were English-speaking Catholics. Leinster, where 73.43% of all recorded immigrants to Argentina originate, was a relatively prosperous province and its three counties which contributed most emigrants were Wexford, Westmeath and Longford (Kelly 2009: 4). These were areas of rich farming lands which provided both profit and surplus livestock for both domestic and export markets. Longford was the central point of Ireland, yet was the most densely populated region in pre-Famine Ireland, leading to extreme land hunger. Westmeath, on the other hand, had fertile, arable land but the rural economy could not support pre-Famine population levels, and many of the emigrants from these two counties were landless labourers. The third county, Wexford, was regarded as one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the country but the holdings were typically no more than five to twenty acres (Kelly 2009: 5). Many of the men who emigrated from here had some education and were non-inheriting younger sons (McKenna: 2000b). We see these two profiles clash in the next Section in John Brabazon's account of his experiences on the pampas. The decision of the migrant to leave is thus subject to either the pull of unsatisfied markets in the receiving country (labour demand in Argentina) or the push of unsatisfied labour in the

country of origin. The pull to Argentina 'indicat[es] an effective information flow between communities as to prevailing opportunities' (Murray 2004a: 11).

It was relatively easy to keep the communities English-speaking for several reasons. As already mentioned, the communities were spread out, with huge distances between *estancias*, and speaking Spanish was often frowned upon in Irish homes, even among the second and third generations. The Irish community was largely endogamous and courtships were set up between Irish men and women, whether by local priests or other Irish matchmakers. Rodolfo Walsh, a writer and journalist of Irish descent, described his family as 'tres o cuatro generaciones de irlandeses casados con irlandeses' (Murray 2004a: 40) [three or four generations of Irish men and women married to other Irish men and women]. Nonetheless, there were occasions of intermarriage and Coghlan (1982) documents a number of marriages between Irish emigrants and other nationalities, including French, Italian and native in the 1855 census.[5]

There is debate about the exact date of the first Irish person to set foot on Argentine soil. McKenna dates the first arrivals to 1520. These were two cabin boys from Galway who sailed with Magellan on his circumnavigation (2000a: 195). However, Andrew Graham-Yooll writes that it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that the first Irishman arrived. He was a Jesuit priest named Thomas Fehily, who later died in Paraguay in 1625 (1981: 139). Izarra corroborates this information, but dates his arrival as 1587 (2004: 341). Whatever the exact date, it is clear that there was an Irish presence from the earliest days of settlement, although it was not until after the formation of the Viceroyalty of La Plata in 1776 that a significant number of Irish names began to appear in Argentina. The formation of the Viceroyalty created a surge in migration as it needed personnel to administer and govern it, and a number of those

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[5]Though the census information does not furnish us with details on everyone, there are at least seven recorded marriages between Irish immigrants and Argentines in 1855.

officials were born in Ireland. Michael O'Gorman, for instance, went to Buenos Aires from Spain in 1777 under a Royal Order with responsibility for sanitation (McKenna 2000b: 83). His descendants made their marks on Argentine history, too. During the 1840s, his granddaughter Camila was a frequent visitor at the home of General Manuel de Rosas, governor of Buenos Aires between 1829 and 1852. She became infamous through her affair with a priest, Uladislao Gutiérrez, with whom she eloped in the late 1840s. They fled and attempted to evade capture after Rosas had ordered them to be arrested for offending the morality of the time. It is possible that his popularity had waned so much that he was afraid they would become symbols of opposition and so felt the need to deal with them swiftly. Unfortunately, they had set up a home and a school in the Corrientes province and its success was their undoing. She was recognised at a dinner celebrating the achievements of the school by a relation of hers, a Father Gannon, who betrayed her and, in 1848, Camila, her husband and her unborn baby were killed by firing squad. Her story was made into a film in 1984, directed by Maria Luisa Bemberg.

It was not only in civil affairs that Irish names appeared. At the turn of the century, merchants and landowners with names such as Cullen, Sheridan, Lynch and Butler had become a part of the *porteño* establishment and so a new Irish merchant class was born thousands of miles from Ireland. Furthermore, Irish experience in food production and goods such as flax, wool and leather made them highly desirable emigrants. In 1785, about 100 tanners and butchers were recruited to Buenos Aires. Their skills, and the subsequent twenty years of similar recruitment are said to 'have laid the foundation for the Argentine beef industry' (McKenna 2000b: 83). Agriculture was not the only area of opportunity, however, as many found work in construction and stevedoring. Agricultural labour surplus was a major factor in persuading people to leave Irish shores, but as Coghlan points out, there were other incentives. Some went

'por su vocación religiosa, o por causa de los vaivenes de las condiciones sociales y políticas, o por alistarse en los ejércitos que ganaron (nuestra) independencia política, o por un simple espíritu de aventura' (1982: 1) [because of their religious vocation, the vagaries of socio-political situation, to enlist in the army which won our political independence or simply out of a spirit of adventure].

To those Irish looking for better prospects, the possibility of becoming successful in business or owning their own land, Argentina seemed to provide opportunities for all. It was an enormous country (almost thirty-five times the size of Ireland), and must have seemed empty to those arriving at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Argentina, with its combination of an 'abundance of land, urban expansion, labour shortage and the promise of a more just society, real or imagined, provided an attractive and necessary alternative to the misery of overpopulation, economic stagnation and social wilderness experienced in native homelands' and in Ireland in particular (Kelly 2009: xiii). This abundance of land was not unpopulated, despite accounts which construct it as such. Anne McClintock notes that constructing lands as 'empty' is 'a recurrent feature of colonial discourse. Since indigenous peoples are not supposed to be spatially there – for the lands are "empty" – they are symbolically displaced onto *anachronistic space*' (1995: 30) That is, they exist in an anterior time within the geographic space, lacking agency and embodying the 'primitive'. The land of the pampas, however, was visibly peopled and the Irish and other emigrants were displacing the native tribes, collaborating in a policy of exterminating Indians, appropriating their lands and so enmeshing these migrants with colonising enterprises. In this case, that of the Argentine authorities: as mentioned earlier, this policy was fulfilled by Roca in the late 1870s. By 1840, Mgr James Ussher reports much of the province of Buenos Aires had been divided in two, with Christians

from the Atlantic up the southwest banks of the Río de la Plata and river Paraná and 'the

remainder was still the domain of the aboriginal Patagonian tribes, who fiercely resisted

the encroachments of the advancing Europeans' (1951: 39). To help defend the settlers,

forts were built but they inexorably pushed into Indian space and their land was

confiscated.

In addition to civil and agricultural affairs, Irish military involvement in

Argentine affairs was strengthened in 1806-07 when Irishmen participated in the failed

British invasion of Argentina. Led by the Irishman Captain William Beresford, the

navy included hundreds of Irish troops. So many of the Irish troops deserted on landing

that the incoming troops had to be confined to barracks (Kirby 1992: 95). The

O'Gorman family appear in this affair too. Coogan notes that a nephew of Michael

O'Gorman, Thomas, a wealthy merchant, was a British spy who facilitated the invasion

and did not seem to suffer any ill effects when it failed (2000: 632). Many of the Irish

prisoners who had been confined to barracks or left behind after the failed invasion,

went on to fight for Argentina in its War of Independence, 1816.[6] Though the exact

number of prisoners who participated in these struggles is difficult to ascertain,

estimates from the prison records of the time put the figure at around 1,151 men

(Coghlan 1982: 80). Finally, one of the most-renowned Irish contributors to the

development of Latin American society was Admiral William Brown from Mayo, who

founded the Argentine navy. The Admiral Brown Club in Buenos Aires was

established in 1879 and 'el Instituto Browniano, fue fundada para mantener viva la

memoria del gran admirante, el 22 de febrero de 1948' (Gálvez 2002: 39) [The Brown

Institute was established February 22nd, 1948 to keep the memory of the great Admiral

alive]. Thus Irish involvement in various aspects of military and civil affairs resulted in

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[6]Many Irish also participated in the independence struggles of other Latin American countries. Daniel O'
Leary fought beside Simón Bolívar and one of the most famous Irishmen to fight in the wars of
independence was Bernardo O'Higgins, discussed earlier.

a certain respect for the Irish throughout Argentine society. This opened up the country to subsequent Irish immigrants and McKenna suggests their 'patriotism to their adopted country contributed greatly to the acceptability of the Irish as immigrants throughout the nineteenth century' (2000a: 199).

An example of an attempt to strengthen the Irish presence in the post-independence era was in 1823 when General Thomond O' Brien was commissioned to bring more than 200 men from Ireland. These were to be mechanics, carpenters, bricklayers and saddlers but losing skilled labourers was seen as detrimental to the British economy. Moreover, enmity owing to the recent failed invasion may have played a part and the British government refused to let them leave (Ussher 1951: 37). This is not a practice restricted solely to Irish emigration to Argentina as the British government also attempted to discourage emigration to the United States. Miller notes that they 'circulated reports in the 1810s, for example, that North America was "a vast and snowy desert" (2008: 106). After the failed invasion, many Irishmen stayed and worked on *estancias*, sending word to those in Ireland about the opportunities to be had in Argentina, thus becoming part of the process of chain migration. That migration would find success and renown in one main area: sheep farming.

The impact of sheep farming

In a striking parallel, both Argentina and Ireland experienced land clearances in the mid to late nineteenth century. Both countries suffered from policies of evictions (in Ireland's case) and extermination (in the case of the Araucanian Indians) in the name of economic progress. Ironically, the confiscated land in Argentina became an opportunity for some of those who were evicted from land in Ireland, as the strategy behind the campaign to exterminate the Indians was to develop the confiscated land for sheep

farming. The local *estancieros,* on the other hand, concentrated on cattle, as sheep were considered a low-status activity, even though they brought in high returns. Therefore, the key to exploiting sheep farming seemed to lie in immigration. Attracting Irish sheep farmers to work the land would serve the dual purpose of creating a barrier between the Indians and the *estancieros,* as well as allowing the latter to make money from sheep farming without 'soiling' their hands, so to speak.

The native g*auchos*, those Argentines who worked almost exclusively on the pampas, expressed little interest in sheep farming initially, as it was seen as the antithesis of their nomadic, wandering lifestyle. However, an ever-increasing demand for wool up until the 1860s saw sheep farming expand rapidly in the province, pushing cattle southward, attracting capital and men, igniting new ambitions and ultimately aiding the incorporation of Buenos Aires into world markets. The side-effects of this increased demand were twofold. Firstly, it introduced a new type of labour demand as sheep raising was not labour-intensive all year round, and so seasonal demand became high. Since sheep did not roam around as much as cattle, a shepherd could actually build and set up a home whilst managing a huge herd of sheep. There was a hectically busy time around lambing and shearing season and then farming became routine for the rest of the year. An important factor in the demand for *Irish* sheep farmers was the fact that after independence, Spain prohibited its subjects from emigrating to Argentina until 1857, which resulted in the loss of the only other group believed capable of independent sheep farming: the Basques.[7] Secondly, as a result, a new type of labourer appeared on the pampas – the *medianero.* A share worker would be given a flock of sheep to take care of and his share would be to receive half the annual production in return. This system of labour suited Irish emigrants and they quickly took advantage of it in order to

[7]For information on the extent of Spanish immigration see Moya (1996).

carve out a niche for themselves on the pampas. MacCann noted the results of their industry: 'The majority of British subjects among the labouring class are Irish; many of them are careful men who save their earnings until they have sufficient to purchase half a flock of sheep; this they do with facility in two or three years' (1853: 282-3). The possibility of becoming independent as well as being able to buy land made this an ideal combination for the establishment of an Irish community, many of whom were involved in innovations in the sheep industry.

The settlement model which was to emerge from Irish emigration to Argentina highlighted that 'only in Argentina were the Irish able to formulate a model [...] that, for better or worse, was largely independent of British influence' (McKenna 2000b: 82). Under the British model, an immigrant was given a specific lot, which he was thereafter tied to and tried to make a success of on his own. Immigrants usually did this by copying the European way of farming (mixed agriculture on a small plot), whereas the Irish model consisted of bringing together the whole community's knowledge, skill, experience and capital. This type of settlement was further promoted by the *estancieros*, who would finance the purchase of stock, while permitting the settler to earn equity in that stock by contributing his labour and becoming a *medianero*. This model created an opening in the market, which the Irish emigrants made their own; producing wool and sheep to fill the European market. This market is, without doubt, one of the major factors contributing to the formation of an Irish community on the pampas and as Sábato argues 'sheep can be said to be the core around which Irish immigration developed [...] amongst the most successful [...] of all immigrants in this country have been the Irish [...] they generally arrived with little or no capital and set to work and save as shepherds' (1990: 90-1). The strength of this market is reflected in the rise of annual wool exports from an average of 6,000 tons in the 1840s to 120,000 tons four

decades later, and an increase of six million sheep in 1864 to 74 million in 1895 (Moya 1996: 53).

As discussed earlier, huge areas of land and resources were seized from the native Indian populations on the pampas, and structural changes were needed to tackle the problem of how to denote private property. To this end in 1844, Jorge Newton introduced wire fencing to Argentina, making selective breeding and herd control possible (MacLachlan 2006: 6). The area to the south-west of Buenos Aires saw sheep raising expand rapidly and:

> the southern counties of Cañuelas, Las Heras, San Vicente, and Ranchos were the first districts where breeding experiments took place, in famous cabañas like those of Plomer, Sheridan (Los Galpones), the Harrat (Los Galpones Chicos). Soon, Chascomús, Lobos, Navarro, and the Monte were incorporated into this leading sheep raising area. (Sábato 1998: 36)

A side-effect of this demand for labour was a new degree of antagonism between the *estancieros* and Rosas. With the ever-increasing demands for labour on the pampas, the competing need for men by both *estancieros* and Rosas's army were not easily fulfilled, especially as the army was mainly recruited from the rural population. Natives between the ages of seventeen and forty-five had compulsory military service. Though many of Rosas's *unitario* enemies were co-opted into military service, they fell short of the numbers needed to safeguard the ever-increasing territory and though Rosas had forced the Indians into a treaty in 1833, this did not ensure an end to surprise attacks. In order to provide enough men for the army, repressive legislation, such as introducing the *papeleta* or passport and job certificates, was enacted. These measures, intended to discourage mobility, jarred with the need of workers to be able to move around the province to find work, and show an ignorance of the nature of pampas life. The legislation was supported by the *estancieros*, who wanted to ensure a steady supply of

labour for their ever-expanding (and profitable) estancias. They defined 'any man with no legal property and no established job, with no passport or *papeleta*, as a *vago,* liable of being arrested by the local authorities and sent to the army for a few years to serve as a soldier' (Sábato 1998: 87). This intimidated workers and the authorities hoped it would aid the creation of a dependable workforce as well as ensuring that the army would have a supply of men. Under Rosas, many workers had the choice of either wage labour or the front and the regime effectively applied the measures to 'certify' the rural population, leaving many at the mercy of their employers who, if they wanted, could accuse them of being a *vago*, and send them to serve in the army.

The rural workforce had been supplemented by slaves in the latter half of the eighteenth century, but 'the slow vanishing of slavery between the 1810s and the 1840s due to the prohibition of slave imports and the effects of the Free Birth Law made room for permanent free workers in the countryside' (Amaral 1998: 180). Unfortunately, the need for permanent workers was not high as the nature of work on the pampas was seasonal, necessitating mobility and flexibility among workers to move from place to place to find work. Amaral argues that a shortage of labour was not the problem, it was underemployment which saw such a high turnover of *peones*. He notes: 'vagrancy, cattle rustling, and the condition of *agregado* [living on someone else's land] were the result of a pattern of labour demand that in its seasonal peak left about 17% of the active male population without a salaried job, and in the seasonal low, about 78%'(1998: 167). This meant that workers had to be able to move freely about the pampas in order to find work or they would have no way of surviving the low seasons. There were very few posts as a permanent worker, leaving a high number of men roaming the pampas: 'The total demand for labour (agriculture, cattle ranching and sheep breeding) in the peak season [...] would have been 27,526 workers. Total rural population around 1850 can be

estimated at 170,000 inhabitants' (Amaral 1998: 169). Under Rosas, extreme social stratification along landowner/labourer lines was further concreted as was the abasement of the *gaucho*, with various *códigos rurales de malentretenidos y vagos* [rural codes for vagrants]. This stratification along with the utter dependence of the *peón* became indelible patterns of society.[8]

Exercising control over this rural workforce was therefore increasingly difficult, as the pampas provided alternative ways of earning money, from stealing horses or cattle, hunting foxes or ostriches, leaving many *estancieros* with problems retaining workers and getting them to finish a job. They looked to the government to help control the situation:

> The usual practice of occupying land which had no apparent owner and stealing cattle for personal consumption or sale became a threat to private property. Moreover, as produce increased in value, the loss of a horse, a few hides, or the wool of a flock became a significant loss in terms of income. The *Codigo Rural* 1856 and 1863 intended to impose law and order on the province. It hoped to prevent rural settlers from having alternative means of subsistence and controlling and repressing the population. (Sábato 1990: 85)

Thus, immigrants' lives, as well as those of the *gaucho* population, were economically controlled by market conditions and demand, and one of the main characteristics of immigration to the Río de la Plata is that of transience and movement, something the government did not support. For many immigrants, locations were at first of a temporary nature. Most started off in Buenos Aires, from where after a few weeks they would go to an *estancia* and then, when the work dried up they moved to another. Some moved about until they got enough money to buy their own plot of land, but for most, as the authors of study in the next Section will highlight, there was

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[8]The changing face of *gaucho* identity will be examined in detail in Section Two.

constant movement throughout the province, thus they followed the demands of the country they had moved to, rather than imposing their will on it.

In the 1820s, Peter Sheridan was the largest sheep farmer in Argentina and is credited by Pat Nally with introducing the Merino sheep to the country (1992: 71).[9] This breed was gradually replaced with imported, long wool Rambouillets (Scobie 1964: 83). This marked the beginning of an influx of Irish emigrants to Argentina, which lasted most of the nineteenth century. Coghlan records that between 1822 and 1850 about 1,659 emigrants arrived, while between 1851 and 1889 around 5,419 arrived (1982: 9). Emigration related to sheep farming peaked during the 1860s as did the market itself and much of this emigration was the logical consequence of years of hard work and calculated planning, culminating in the efforts of two men, Fr Anthony Fahy and Thomas Armstrong, who did their utmost to attract Irish immigrants and settle as many of them as possible in Argentina. This was facilitated by the notion of new life far from the restrictive conditions and landless status of many in Ireland. The promise of land and improved socio-economic conditions were planted in the minds of those seeking a new life and so the impetus to emigrate grew. At first most emigrants stayed close to the city of Buenos Aires and their spiritual needs could be administered by the one English-speaking priest there, Fr Burke (who died in 1828). As people began to move further into the province, another priest was needed to provide spiritual and economic advice to the burgeoning community. In 1844 a Dominican prior, Fr Anthony Fahy, arrived in Buenos Aires and with the help of an Irish protestant, Thomas Armstrong, oversaw the foundation of what would eventually become an Irish-Argentine community.

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[9]The merino is a sheep of French origin which helped to rapidly increase both the quality of the fleece of the native stock and their number.

2. The Influence of the Church

The Irish Catholic Church was extremely active in Argentina, as it was in many other migrant destinations. Akenson notes that 'from the 1860s onward it was successful in gaining control over the Church in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, English-speaking Canada, and the United States' (2010: 197). The main task of the Catholic Church was to minister to Irish migrants and their descendants, as well as to other Catholics. This task was initially somewhat complicated in Argentina as its status was conflicted. In 1757 the Jesuits were expelled and the church became marginalised, its land and wealth reduced. Under Rivadavia, Argentina became a secular state and while Rosas allowed the return of the Jesuits, conditions improved slowly. Under his regime, the Church was tolerated but held little power. Under the 1853 constitution, pluralism was espoused so the arrival of priests serving the Irish Catholic Church would certainly have been welcomed initially, if only by the native Church because: 'in this regard, Irish Catholic immigration contributed to the immediate homogeny, albeit superficial, of the native and immigrant Church […] the Catholic umbrella facilitated a cultural fusion between established and arriving ecclesiastical populations' (Kelly 2009: 93). However, as Murray points out 'the establishment of the Irish Roman Catholic Church was not dependent upon integration within native institutional structures' (1919: 87). Indeed, there were concerted efforts on behalf of the Irish priests to keep the Irish and native clergy separate by propagating a more Irish version of Roman Catholicism. This complies with what Naficy refers to as the construction of codes of distinction. This is done in order to 'establish both cultural and ethnic differentiation (from the host society) and cultural and ethnic continuity (with an idealised past and the homeland)' (Naficy 1991: 290). Therefore, the retention of a particularly Irish mode of religious expression functions to distinguish the Irish from the broader English-speaking community on the

pampas, as well as from the native Catholic Church. The dispersed nature of the Irish settlement on the pampas aided that cause. At first, priests would say mass in one of the designated 'mass houses' which served as places of worship. Later on, as communities became more settled and numerous, a church would be built.

Without someone to oversee or guide the new emigrants, no doubt many Irish would have ended up staying in the city of Buenos Aires and possibly integrating into Argentine society more quickly. A pivotal figure in encouraging and maintaining a distinct Irish community was Fr Anthony Fahy. When Fr Fahy arrived in 1844 he established himself in Buenos Aires and paid visits to the grasslands on a regular basis to say mass, marry or baptise his congregation. As Maria Palleiro points out, 'este sacerdote se encargó de establecer mecanismos de conexión entre los grupos de irlandeses dispersos, posibilitando su articulación con la sociedad argentina' (2006: 38) [this priest took charge of establishing connections between dispersed groups of Irish people in order to facilitate their articulation within Argentine society]. He actively inspired many of the city-dwelling Irish to move to the countryside beyond Buenos Aires and a descendent of these settlers records how 'entre 1840 y 1850, Fahy recibía a los irlandeses en el puerto de Buenos Aires y los convencía de que se fueran al campo, al Oeste a criar ovejas. Después los visitaba y los iba casando entre ellos' (Palleiro 2006: 38) [between 1840 and 1850 Fahy would meet Irish immigrants at the port of Buenos Aires and convince them to go to the countryside, go west to raise sheep. He would later visit them and marry many of them].

That these communities not only survived but also remained Irish- and English-speaking for years to come was partly due to both his and Thomas Armstrong's efforts. Having emigrated to Argentina in 1819, Armstrong was uniquely placed to be of help to the Irish community as he was respected by not only the Irish, but the British and the

criollos as he married the Mayor of Buenos Aires' daughter in 1829. As a result, Armstrong had influential connections within the Argentine administration. The Fahy-Armstrong relationship, which lasted from 1844 to 1870, helped to strengthen the Irish settlement model and its success owes a great deal to them. From the beginning, their aim was to preserve an Irish identity based on difference, by ensuring that communities were rural-based and ethnically distinct from Argentine society. The land available was of course Indian grassland, and now one of the richest areas in Buenos Aires province, and the pattern of settlement was, as Gálvez notes 'primero hacia el sur (Cañuelas, Chascomús, Rancho), luego hacia el oeste (Monte, Lobos, Navarro, Las Heras) y, a partir de 1865, hacia el norte (Luján, San Andrés de Giles, Pilar, Baradero, Rojas). De allí se extenderían a los campos de Santa Fe, Entre Ríos y Córdoba' (2002: 97) [first towards the south, (Cañuelas, Chascomús, Rancho), then later westwards (Monte, Lobos, Navarro, Las Heras) and, from 1865, northwards (Luján, San Andrés de Giles, Pilar, Baradero, Rojas). From there it extended outwards to Sante Fe, Entre Ríos and Córdoba].

Fr Fahy realised that maintaining an Irish clergy in Argentina was vital to this cause and he repeatedly requested that priests be trained to come to minister the flock in Argentina and even sent funds to Ireland to help train these priests. He succeeded in recruiting a number of priests to the region and 'by 1870 a total of 12 secular clergy had arrived from All Hallows Seminary College in Dublin' (Kelly 2009: 98). Fahy was a consummate diplomat, however, and he insisted that the priests be able to speak Spanish, serving the dual purpose of showing his 'commitment to the development of the native church and extending the usefulness of Irish ecclesiastics beyond the Irish community itself' (Kelly 2009: 115). If Irish priests were to progress in the native hierarchy and within the native community, they would have to speak the language. Fr Fahy met the

new arrivals at the port in Buenos Aires, thus ensuring they would not lapse into immoral city ways. Kelly notes that Fahy's 'obsession with social and moral control within the Irish community was extended to the clerics under his auspices' (2009: 102). His obsession gives the impression that many dangers and temptations lurked in the city of Buenos Aires. He also found them work and, if necessary, an Irish husband or wife thus protecting the traditional values and ethnic difference he hoped to preserve.

Women made up half the emigrants during the 1850s and in fact Irish women were different to most immigrant women of this time to any country in terms of numbers: 'they were the only significant group of foreign-born women who outnumbered men: they were the only significant group of foreign-born women who chose to migrate in primarily female cliques' (Diner 1983: xiv).[10] Arranging marriages between members of the community formed part of a priest's work and helped to maintain a distinctly Irish, as well as English-speaking, presence on the pampas. By meeting and vetting new arrivals Fr Fahy could find and match appropriate spouses, a practice we see heavily criticised in Nevin's narrative, examined in Chapter 4. Matchmaking was only one part of a priest's involvement in social and economic affairs. The distances required to travel to Buenos Aires to deal with any financial transactions meant leaving the holding unprotected for some time but Fr Fahy found a solution to this problem. There was a tradition in Argentina whereby the Catholic Church enjoyed a tax-free status on property transactions. Because of this loophole, many settlers allowed the priest to put their farms in his name and allowed him to do the banking, and so avoid taxes and make it easier for people to inherit land. Any savings were deposited in Armstrong's own bank, *Banco Provincia* (not the same one as presently exists) so it meant there was money to invest or lend to new immigrants to help them get started. It

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[10]In the period 1880-1920, the ratio of women to men from continental Europe was around a third.

seems that in all the years Fr Fahy oversaw this there were no complaints. In reality

what he was doing, however, was retarding the integration of the Irish immigrants. As

to how the Irish community remained separate for so long we can again look to the

Church for some answers.

Fr Fahy was not unaware of his contribution to Irish settlement in Argentina as

he stated in a letter to his superiors in Dublin in 1855: 'I have laid the foundation of a

good Irish colony [with] upwards of 500 families up to the present established in the

country' (Ussher 1951: 56). This community was ever increasing. Interestingly, and

supporting the commonly-held belief that many Irish felt unwelcome in the United

States, he writes in a letter in 1850:

> Would to God that Irish emigrants would come to this country, instead of the
> United States. Here they would feel at home; they would have employment, and
> experience a sympathy from the natives very different from what now drives too
> many of them from the States back to Ireland […] vast plains lying idle for the
> want of hands to cultivate them, and where the government offers every
> protection and encouragement to the foreigner. (Ussher 1951: 57)

As it is estimated that fewer than 10 per cent of Irish men and women returned to

Ireland from the United States, this depiction of the United States as an unsympathetic

space for Irish emigrants reflects not only many emigrants' experiences of the United

States but the clergy's bias against the Protestant United States and their attempts to

promote emigration to Catholic countries instead. In this letter we also observe Fr

Fahy's complicity in the discourse of dispossession as the 'vast plains lying idle' were,

in fact, Indian land.

This appropriation of Indian land did not go unnoticed, however. When Fr Fahy

asked permission from the Argentine Church to build a new church in the Mercedes

parish, Fr Luis Copello complained to the bishop, noting:

> The natives of the country now residing there are scarce; they have moved out with their flocks and herds towards Chivilcoy, Bragado, etc. they have been replaced by the Irish specially in the direction of Lujan and Giles. And these have increased so much that they now form two thirds of the population and time will come when these camp districts will be nothing more than an Irish colony. (Ussher 1951: 154)

This sentiment echoes to some extent the fears in Brazil about the Irish settlers and hints at the problems the Argentine government would face later in the century in attempts at assimilating the newly-arrived immigrants. There is resistance to what is seen as Irish encroachment, and though it may have simply been the Argentine church being wary of losing too much ground to the Irish priests, it could also be a sign that they were unwelcome by some on the pampas. In the end the church was not built.

Irish cultural resources

As the Irish diaspora community began to expand, intermarry and have children, in the 1850s the nature and demands of that community began to evolve. Palleiro records that 'emergieron en este período instituciones creadas por y para los irlandeses, que sirvieron como instrumentos para la transmisión de valores, normas y pautas de conductas consideradas fundamentales para una transferencia cultural especifica' (2006: 39) [during this period, institutions were set up for and by Irish people. These institutions served as instruments for the transmission of values, rules and norms of conduct considered fundamental for the transfer of specific cultural values]. For example, one of the first responsibilities of a new community was to erect a church. Local churches were not used as that would beholden the users to the authorities of that church and also the tithes would go to them. These new churches became the epicentre of social activities and they contained libraries, with editions of county newspapers.

Letters from friends and family in Ireland or in other diaspora spaces were read out and passed around and, generally, people were kept well-informed about what was going on in Ireland.

To remain self-sufficient, schools, medical and welfare needs were all met by the Church. For instance, Fr Fahy required donations from each family, especially the *estancia* owners and no one could plead poverty as he knew exactly how much everyone could afford. In order to assure cultural separatism, Fr Fahy oversaw the building of an Irish hospital and orphanage in Buenos Aires. Geraghty notes that when the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Argentina in 1856 they opened a number of schools for Irish children to attend and in 1899, the Irish Catholic Association founded St. Brigid's College in Caballito, now one of the oldest bilingual schools in Argentina.[11] Cultural events were organised by the St Patrick's Society and the Ladies Irish Beneficent Society. We also see sections of the Irish community attempt to integrate into Argentine society through existing social structures later in the nineteenth century: 'Fue así como, entre los fundadores del *Jockey Club*, junto con los argentinos Alvear, Ortiz y Basulado, también participaron los Casey, Gahan, Garrahan, Ham y Murphy' (Palleiro 2006: 39) [thus we can see among the founders of the Jockey Club Argentines such as Alvear, Ortiz and Basulado alongside Irish founders such as Casey, Gahan Ham and Murphy].

The Church helped in its way to establish distinctions between the Irish and the broader Anglophone population. The setting up of Irish- and English-oriented newspapers in the latter part of the nineteenth century also played its part.[12] The first Irish newspaper, *The Standard*, was established in 1861 (closed in 1959) by the Dublin born Mulhall brothers, Michael George and Edward Thomas. It was a four-page weekly,

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[11]For Geraghty's 1999 article in the Buenos Aires Herald and more details of the hospital and orphanage see http://www.irlandeses.org/
[12]Marshall (1996) documents a comprehensive list of Irish-owned or funded titles.

later a daily, originally published in English and French. It was perceived as an urban based, British-biased newspaper and Marshall notes that 'the Mulhall brothers usually referred to themselves as English, championing the interests of the British community'. By 1875 they claimed they were shipping 20,000 copies of *The Weekly Standard* (1996: 15). *The Standard* became quite influential and 'during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was one of the most quoted authorities on Argentina's national and international affairs chiefly because of its perceived editorial neutrality, as it was published by Irishmen' (Marshall 1996: 15). The Mulhall brothers also produced a popular reference book for foreign residents entitled *The Handbook of the River Plate*. The first edition had a print run of 2,000 in 1864, followed by three more editions in 1875, 1885 and the final edition in 1892. In the preface to the first edition Michael Mulhall sets out his hopes for the *Handbook*:

> We claim for it no niche in the temple of Literature, nor a place in fashionable libraries. It is simply a *vade-mecum*, and if it ministers any useful information to those settled on the shores of La Plata, or induce a dozen of our trans-atlantic brethren to come hither, we shall feel that we have been duly mindful of the Italian adage which says "A man has lived to no purpose unless he has got a son, built a house, or writ a book."'

The handbook includes descriptions of the city of Buenos Aires as well as a list of foreign residents there. It also contains data on the rest of the province and on neighbouring Paraguay and Uruguay. The 1875 edition contains maps, pages of advertisements and plans of the city, indicating its target readership was potential immigrants. This is borne out by the first sentence of the introduction to this edition: 'The River Plate offers a fine field for immigrants, as is proved by the thousands of Europeans here who have gained fortune during the last twenty years'.

The newspaper that established itself as a rival to *The Standard* and seemed to carry most weight with rural-based Irish immigrants was *The Southern Cross*. Set up by the Reverend Patrick Dillon in 1875, it was a Catholic and later, an Irish nationalist organ. It published articles and stories about life on the grasslands and in the city. It was only in 1964 that *The Southern Cross* assimilated the Spanish language and finally started to publish in Spanish, reflecting the eventual linguistic integration of the descendants of Irish settlers into Argentine society. The polarisation of the Irish community into broadly pro- or anti-British lines is reflected in the readership of both papers. *The Standard* contained extensive advertising for bank and shipping companies as well as employment pages for clerks and shop assistants, indicating it was directed at an urban readership. The tone of the newspaper was imperialist as is borne out by the 1875 editorial comment which declared that 'emigration had been the "saving of the Irish people" and that without the British Empire, Irishmen "could hardly have attained eminence in so many fields of renown"'.[13] Its pro-British stance engendered a bitter rivalry with *The Southern Cross* and its editor from 1896, William Bulfin. Bulfin made his feelings clear about the paper and its owner Edward Mulhall in his obituary of Mulhall. He was responding to what he regarded as a 'eulogistic obituary' of Mulhall, praising his contribution to the Irish community, published a week earlier in *The Irish Times*:

> No doubt he may have been actuated towards them with the most friendly feelings; but, still it is only right and fair to say that the Irish community of the River Plate always looked upon the late Mr Mulhall as the mouth-piece of English commercial interests; and never for one moment as an Irish resident or an Irish journalist specially devoting himself to the maintenance of a single Irish principle, religious, political or social. (April 22, 1899: 11)

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[13]This editorial appeared on St. Patrick's Day in 1875 and is cited in Kelly (2009: 172).

The motto of *The Southern Cross* reaffirms Irish commitment to Argentine society, though this commitment comes after religion and nationality. It states 'we are, in the first place, Catholics, then Irish, and lovers and admirers of our new adopted country. We are liberal in politics, conservative in religion, respectful of the opinion of others and well-disposed toward all'. The newspaper's founder, PJ Dillon, and subsequent editors wanted to declare their allegiance to their adopted country but only as a distinct Irish community.

There were other short-lived publications such as *The Fianna,* which was published from 1910 to 1912. This was a nationalist publication with openly anti-British sentiments. Another of these publications was the *Hibernian-Argentine Review* (1906 to 1927) which featured society news as well as news from the countryside and provided detailed information about the wool market and other economic sectors which the Irish community had interests in. The multiple media which emerge to cater for the Irish population reflect both the diversity of their backgrounds, and potential for conflict. This resonates with Werbner's assertion that 'diasporic formations are rarely internally homogenous and can split into opposing factions' (2000: 8). In fact, this split will become more apparent by the end of the nineteenth century, aided by William Bulfin's editorials as I will detail in Chapter 5.

With Fr Fahy's death in 1871, however, the old obligations died away and wealthier families stopped sending their children to the Irish schools. Neither Fr Fahy nor Armstrong had thought to groom someone else to take over and maintain the settlement model, which in part caused its demise. Without a forceful character like Fr Fahy, emigrants began to stay in the city as more opportunities for employment were obtainable and all the more necessary because of the decline of the sheep industry in the 1890s. The 'goldmine' for the Irish emigrant had petered out and those emigrants to

arrive between 1889 and 1900 settled in the Bahía Blanca area of Buenos Aires (Nally 1992: 74). It was in 1889 that one of the largest number of emigrants arrived, and their treatment upon arrival received such bad press that it halted immigration for years. Emigrants from poor, urban areas fell foul of a fraudulent immigration scheme organised by Argentine agents in Ireland. The ship, *The City of Dresden,* sailed from Cobh (then known as Queenstown) with the largest group, 1,772 passengers, ever to arrive in Argentina on any one ship. When they got to Buenos Aires there was no-one there to orient them and no jobs awaiting them. A large number died of hunger and hunger-related illnesses, the threat of which had led many to flee Ireland in the first place. Murray, in the earliest work on Irish-Argentine history, quotes Fr Gaughran, who was present the day they arrived:

> Men, women and children, hungry and exhausted after the fatigues of the day, had to sleep as best they might on the flags of the court-yard. To say they were treated like cattle would at least provide them with food and drink, but these people were left to live or die unaided by the officials who are paid to look after them, and without the slightest sign of sympathy from these officials. (1919: 443-4)

After this, there was only a trickle of Irish people into Argentina, aside from a brief surge in the 1920s, which was mainly made up of urban professionals. Ireland at this stage was in turmoil with its own War of Independence (1919 to 1921), which then led to the civil war of 1922. But by 1929 this surge had ended, curtailed when economic crisis became a worldwide problem. What remained however, was the largest Irish community in a non-English-speaking country.

Conclusion

This chapter has served to shed light on the nature and distinct characteristics of Irish settlement in Argentina. Part of the exceptionality of this settlement resides in the positive perception of the Irish as *ingleses,* which transforms the Irish subject into a desirable immigrant, bearing witness to the 'shift' in identities to which the chapter's epigraph alludes. Emigrants to Argentina were likely to be more affluent than those going to the United States, for example, and there was a high incidence of regional specificity to the profile of the emigrant. Counties Longford, Westmeath and Wexford provided the bulk of this population. Another factor in the positive reception was involvement in military affairs in addition to the importance of Irish sheep farmers to Argentina's expanding economic enterprise. This chapter delineates the experiences on the pampas that so mark John Brabazon's trajectory in Chapter 3 with regards to both sheep farming and his interactions with the native *gaucho.* It also contextualises the cultural resources that the Irish drew on in the second half of the nineteenth century in preparation for the evaluation of the distinct cultural representations by three members of the Irish diasporic community, which is the focus of the next Section.

How were the Irish seen in Argentina by the indigenous Indians, the *gauchos* and the *criollos*? From the campaigns against them and the subsequent loss of territory, the Pampas Indians can only have viewed any incursion into their space as invasion or appropriation, and so they would have viewed these immigrants as invaders and colonisers of the grasslands of Buenos Aires province. The *gauchos* on the pampas may have had a different reaction. At first the influx of immigrants would not have unduly affected the *gaucho* way of life as the gaucho 'partially defined his world and his position in it through preference based on this equestrian subculture. The self-definition

created a sense of distinctiveness among gauchos, who scorned those from the city or foreign lands who lacked their skills' (Slatta 1983: 16). As many of the Irish settlers on the pampas established themselves as sheep farmers, they did not directly impose on the *gaucho* who mainly worked in stock raising and cattle farming. However, the *gaucho* faced 'relentless oppression of successive administrations acting on behalf of a powerful landed elite that sought to eradicate rather than educate him [...] Established customs of a formerly entrenched *gaucho* subculture conflicted sharply with the new rights and concepts of private property inherent in Argentina's burgeoning export capitalism' (Slatta 1983: 1). It was hoped that mass immigration would expedite the removal of the *gaucho* from Argentine society and towards the late 1880s there is evidence of clashes between *gauchos* and *gringos* (the name for Italians and foreigners). Evidence of unwanted change is signified in not only farming, but the fencing-off of land and building of railroads, all of which served to curtail the long-standing tradition of freedom of movement through the pampas.

As for the *criollo* elite, during the first half of the nineteenth century, Indian land was parcelled out and rapidly sold off. First the Rivadavia administration, then the Federalist Rosas welcomed *los ingleses* and the investment they brought and no doubt many Irish took advantage of this title to insinuate themselves into the upper echelons of Buenos Aires society; as could be seen in the case of the O'Gormans. As Buenos Aires was one of the largest cities in the hemisphere at this time and many of its *porteño* inhabitants looked to Europe for new ideas and fashions, the presence of more Europeans, with their 'civilising' influence meant that Irish immigrants met with a warmer reception than in many other diaspora locations. How these Irish immigrants viewed the host country, its culture and the 'native', whether *gaucho,* Indian or *criollo,* as well as the other ethnicities they encounter and what this signifies for their own

identity construction will be examined in the next Section. The emergence of a narrative of this experience begins with John Brabazon and in the next chapter I explore how the Irish community strategically used the *inglés* umbrella and take advantage of the cultural assumptions of the Argentine elite to serve Irish purposes. This marks the initial phase of Irish emigration to the Río de la Plata, a phase which will later give way to the need to cleave the Irish identity from the *inglés* so as to carve out a distinct transnational Irish-Argentine identity.

SECTION TWO:

Unsettling Notions of Home, Return and Identity

Chapter 3: John Brabazon – Mediating and Contesting Identity

'Their non-inheriting sons they either educated for businesses or trade,

or else they sent them to America [...] despite the fact the transatlantic

communications were then so uncertain – and the voyage conditions so dangerous –

that the likelihood that parents would ever hear from their emigrant children

(much less see them again) was at best quite problematic'.[1]

1. Introduction

This chapter examines John Brabazon (1828-1914) and his narrative *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Ayres from the year 1845 by John Brabazon and His Own Adventures.*[2] It locates him within the narratives of diasporic writing, reading him as both a recorder and subject of a burgeoning Irish community in mid-nineteenth-century Argentina. Spanning a time of enormous political, economic and social change within Argentina from the final years of the Rosas regime through to the rise and peak of sheep farming on the pampas, Brabazon recounts the first twenty years of his life and travels in the province of Buenos Aires. He records a nomadic and precarious existence on the pampas, encounters with multiple others, and a mediation of Irish and other cultural values. Brabazon provides us with a unique narrative which documents both a personal and social history of pampas life as well as Irish movement and settlement within this society.

Part of what constitutes diasporic formation is an awareness of other diaspora communities in locations around the world. Brabazon's narrative, as well as family background, bears witness to the globally-dispersed Irish in sites such as the United States and United Kingdom. This is central to diaspora and Flores notes: 'the life of any

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[1]Miller (2008: 57) refers to the impact of impartible inheritance on pre-Famine emigration from Ireland.
[2]Hereafter the narrative will be referred to as *Customs and Habits.*

given diaspora starts not with the arrival of people to the host setting, but only when the group has begun to develop a consciousness about its new social location, a disposition towards its place of origin, as well as some relation to other sites within the full diasporic formation' (2009: 16). Diaspora, then, involves networks among compatriots and relationships with scattered members of these networks, all of which are apparent in *Customs and Habits*. This particular formation, as conveyed in his account, is not a fixed entity but 'in process', capable of transforming, growing and at times, contesting fixed boundaries in the construction of self and others. Indeed, the identity of the Irish community depicted in Brabazon's diary would be transformed by the end of the century, ultimately culminating in a distinct Irish-Argentine identity, a hybrid identity into which Brabazon will be incorporated.

Argentina becomes the location for the formation of multiple hybrid and trans-national identities and the encounters of not only multiple foreigners, but multiple foreigners and multiple indigenous subjects, ranging from Indians and *gauchos* to *criollos*. The diaspora space of the pampas is shared, intersected and negotiated by all of these subjects. Brah argues that this space 'is "inhabited" not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous' (1996: 181). Consequently, I examine the extent to which Brabazon questions not only the cultural values he encounters, but his own and those of the Irish diaspora community he is part of. This interrogation establishes new parameters for identity construction. As Stuart Hall argues: 'identities are [...] points of temporary attachments to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (1996: 6). Thus we observe the shifts in these attachments as Brabazon negotiates emigrant, Irish, Protestant and *inglés* identities. This negotiation attests to the multi-faceted and complex nature of identity, one which is not necessarily secured through

ethnicity or nationality. The diasporic condition, moreover, helps articulate this complexity as it 'offers new possibilities for understanding identity, to visualise a future to form social solidarity not necessarily determined by place or nationality' (Gilroy 2003: 304). Social solidarity in *Customs and Habits* moves outside or beyond place or nationality to encompass empathy for different native subjects, a factor which is central to circumventing the fixed, religious and territorially-based assertion of Irish identity.

In order to analyse Brabazon's memoir within the framework of diasporic writing, it is crucial to point out that his narrative is not inscribed with a visible desire for return. This directly contests the later nationalist construction of emigrants from Ireland as being forever 'unsettled' outside the national territory and always yearning to return to the homeland. Thus Brabazon locates himself outside the paradigm of diaspora as forced exile and instead writes as emigrant or diasporan. In writing from outside the exile paradigm, Brabazon does not romanticise Ireland nor is it seen as a site of nostalgia or a reason for homesickness in his narrative. This underpins his depiction of the host community and society, as well as how he perceives his place within that culture and how he is received and perceived in Argentina. This chapter will explore how Brabazon's account challenges the orthodox positionings of the diaspora subject as backward-looking and the Irish emigrant as bound to the national territory, paradigms which are 'an important feature of anti-colonial nationalism' (Gray 1999: 199), as outlined in the Introduction.

The first part of this chapter will provide biographical details about Brabazon and his family and trace the journey his own manuscript has undergone. In addition, it will examine how Brabazon's account refracts and mediates the perception of Irish immigrants in Argentina. Entangled in this perception is not only the driving need for rural workers and soldiers but also the status of Irish immigrants as British subjects –

ingleses – a status seen as highly desirable, as discussed in the previous chapter. In Brabazon's narrative, we see the act of nation-building running parallel to an ever-growing immigrant population, with language and cultural practices from the homeland vying with a push for assimilation. This debate would become more heated as the century progressed, culminating in efforts by the Argentine government in the 1890s and 1900s to define national identity and turn immigrants into Argentines and part of *la raza argentina*.[3]

Part two of this chapter examines Brabazon's interactions with the *gauchos* and Indians, Scots and Spanish, as well as his portrayal of the Irish community and their exploitation of the *inglés* status. In addition, it will analyse Brabazon's mediation of Irish and other cultural values, specifically those related to work, social behaviour and customs and explore the extent to which he contests or propagates essentialisms about emigrant identity. From the post-independence period, Argentina is simultaneously evolving not just one, singular Argentine populace but a multi-faceted population with different histories, stories, cultural practices and languages. Brabazon's text exemplifies 'how the same geographical and psychic space comes to articulate different "histories"' (Brah 1996: 180). Multiple histories and stories are evident in Brabazon's account and are a key component of his narrative as he articulates an emerging Irish diasporic consciousness paralleled by the development of the Argentine nation state. *Customs and Habits* reveals a subject willing to embrace elements of the host culture whilst at the same time questioning and challenging those practices as well as those of his origin culture. I turn now to the emigrant himself and what little is known about him.

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[3]See De Laney (1996) for more on how the government tries to construct national identity during this period. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on William Bulfin.

John Brabazon

John Brabazon was born in Mullingar, County Westmeath in the province of Leinster in 1828. As outlined in Section One, this province yielded the majority of emigrants to Argentina, with towns like Ballymore, Ballynacarrigy, Drumraney and Mullingar providing the highest numbers. The extent of chain migration from these towns was particularly high and Murray notes that: 'Durante años Ballymore fue conocido en Irlanda como "el pueblo con dos puntas y nada en el centro", porque todas las familias que habitaban en el centro emigraron a la Argentina en la década de 1860' (Murray 2004a: 30) [For years Ballymore was known in Ireland as the town with two ends and nothing in the centre because all the families who had lived there had emigrated to Argentina in the 1860s]. This migration was brought about because Westmeath, despite its fertile arable land, was not able to support pre-Famine population levels. Options were limited for families and Brabazon's was no different. His parents, Thomas Brabazon and Anne Ferguson, Protestant, Anglo-Irish descendants of sixteenth century settlers, had ten children. Mary, the eldest, died of TB and, in keeping with the practice of impartible inheritance referred to in the epigraph, they passed on their land to one child only; the eldest female in this case. Thus all of the Brabazon children bar Eliza left Ireland to seek new lives and employment in the United States and Argentina.[4] With no prospects in Ireland 'the decision of the migrant to leave is thus subject to either the pull of unsatisfied markets in the receiving country or the push of unsatisfied labour in the sending' (Kelly 2009: 10). In this case, there was a push out of Ireland and a pull towards Argentina which was in need of labour to support the burgeoning sheep and cattle industry.

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[4]Eliza married a local Westmeath man, Thomas Cannon. For further details see http://www.brabazonarchive.com.

What were the circumstances of his leaving? At the time of his departure three of his siblings, Jane, Ann and Thomas, had already arrived and found work in Argentina.[5] The family's link to Buenos Aires could possibly be explained through their connections with the Armstrong family, also Protestant, who had relations in the same part of Westmeath. As chain migration is such a distinct feature of the Irish diaspora in Argentina, with many leaving from the same county and even the same town or village, it is possible that the influential figure mentioned in the previous Section, Thomas Armstrong, encouraged the Brabazons to move to Buenos Aires, hailing Argentina as a location for enterprising young Irish women and men.[6] There was, clearly, an effective flow of information regarding economic opportunities to be exploited in the New World, even if these opportunities did not always live up to expectations. Armstrong wanted to expand the Irish community in Argentina and so his motives may not have been entirely altruistic. The result of this information flow is that in 1845 Brabazon travels to Argentina and in 1851 marries a Catholic Irish immigrant, Honor MacDonnell (1834-1859). Their marriage is performed by none other than Fr Anthony Fahy, whose contribution to the Irish community is detailed in Section One.[7] Brabazon's journey from rural Ireland to Buenos Aires involves him negotiating different trades, languages and cultural codes in order to adapt to the diaspora space. He starts off in the city of Buenos Aires but soon finds work outside the capital and travels throughout the region southwest of Buenos Aires. The *estancia* El Arazá becomes a base for him when his sister Jane moves there and his concerns are mostly connected to finding work, visiting and helping his sisters and brother and recounting stories of the habits and customs of the natives he encounters.

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[5]Jane married Henry Andrew Daniels a 'British subject' in Dec 1844 and Ann married Henry Gould, an Englishman, in 1851, the same year John married Honor MacDonnell.

[6]I am grateful to Pat McKenna for his insights into the local history and families of Westmeath.

[7]They had four children, John, Tom, Mary and Anne between 1851 and 1859. Honor and her sister Mary were killed by an unnamed assailant in an apparently random attack in 1859.

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires on the 12th of December, 1845 on the *Filomena*
after a three-month sea voyage, Brabazon is immediately subsumed into the existing
Irish community and he stays in an Irish-owned *pensión*, 'a boarding house that was
kept by a man the name of Michael Heavy'(15). That chain migration is one of the
main features of the Irish community in Argentina is borne out by the fact that not only
is his brother Thomas staying there but also some other friends from Mullingar,
substantiating Devoto's earlier point about the pre-eminence of pre- and post-migratory
social networks (2003: 266). Thus Brabazon is not entering into a completely unknown
society as such, as he has a safety net in family and friends to help alleviate any
symptoms of homesickness or displacement. The circumstances of Brabazon staying,
however, are somewhat more uncertain. In his particular case, the very nature of Irish
chain migration may have moderated any desire to return as his family had already
become part of the growing Irish diaspora. Offering a foretaste of later periods of
global migration, the Brabazon family are the prototype for global movement with four
of John's siblings migrating to the United States and three to Argentina.[8] By having
some of his family close to him, Brabazon steps outside an older form of diaspora
which, as the epigraph indicates, saw families 'cut off from each other as
communication was slow and any contribution to decision making or participation in
familial events could only come from a considerable distance in both space and time'
(Clifford 1997: 245).

This distinct experience of diaspora positions Brabazon as a forward-looking
diaspora subject, with ties not just to his origin country but beyond the national territory
with roots and connections in disparate diaspora communities beyond the borders of his
own host country. Crucially, Brabazon's experience of diaspora differs from the forced

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[8]His brothers William, Andrew, Robert and Samuel emigrate to the United States, where all but Samuel
marry Irish-born women and all live and die in Hartford, Connecticut, reflecting the close intra-diaspora
links they maintain there. For more details on Brabazon ancestry see http://www.brabazonarchive.com

emigration which would begin scarcely a year later when Famine devastated Ireland (1845-52). He thus evades the trauma that a forced departure entails, where 'reactions to the traumatic experience of migration are characterised by "helplessness" […] anxiety and sorrow' (Grinberg 1989: 12-3). This does not mean to imply that he does not experience these emotions, rather that they are mitigated by the nature of his emigration. Brabazon's arrival also coincides with the beginning of the boom in sheep farming and wool exportation in Argentina, an industry which would speed up Argentina's economic development:

> Será a través de la exportación de lana que la Argentina logrará una participación importante en el mercado mundial, desarrollando en consecuencia su capacidad productiva y llevando adelante un proceso acelerado de acumulación que tendrá como zona central la provincia de Buenos Aires. (Korol and Sábato 1981: 70)

> [It was through the export of wool that Argentina managed to contribute significantly to world markets, developing as a result its productive capacity and a markedly accelerated process of wealth acquisition, with the province of Buenos Aires at its centre]

Not only would Buenos Aires reap the benefits of a burgeoning wool market but this industry also had an enormous impact on the creation and sustaining of an Irish community in Argentina, without which there would probably be no Irish-Argentine diaspora.

The Brabazon family, with links to the United States, Argentina and Ireland, highlight the trans-national dimension of diaspora as well as the intra-diaspora movement that typified nineteenth-century displacement from Ireland. One's initial destination was not necessarily the final one and, despite the distances involved, many emigrants re-emigrated to the United States and vice versa rather than returning to Ireland, especially in the post-Famine period. Indeed, on two occasions Brabazon talks

about leaving Argentina to go to the United States. The first time is in January 1849, in the middle of the California Gold Rush. Brabazon needs help to do some of the jobs he is contracted for and hires a man called Daniel Dickson who, because of the French-English blockade, is out of work. Dickson was a sailor on the *Filomena,* the same brig that Brabazon arrived on and like many others is looking to make a living. Brabazon tells us that:

> Dickson had made up his mind to go to California to the gold diggings, we intended to go together and to cross the Andes mountains and cross to Chile but I was put off it by Tom my brother, he told me to wait until Richard Nevels and some others with Michele Nugent were going by sea later on and told me it was better to stop inside about San Vincent. (88)

Though Tom puts him off the idea, he himself becomes part of the intra-diaspora community when he re-emigrates to California a few years later, exemplifying how 'diasporas are places of long-term, if not permanent, community formations, even if some households or members move on elsewhere [and] are composite formations, with members of the diaspora "sowing" seeds, spreading to different parts of the world' (Brah 1996: 193-5).[9]

In March 1851 Brabazon again recalls the possibility of going to visit his family in the United States, this time he is dissuaded by his sister Ann who is also thinking of leaving Argentina: 'I always thought of taking a trip to the United States as all the family was there except my sister Eliza [who] got married to Thomas Canon and my sister Ana got married to Henry Gould but they [my sisters] advised me not for a year or two more as they said they would like to go if there means would allow them' (117). This attitude typifies the pattern of intra-diaspora movement in which it is normal to

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[9]Thomas Brabazon actually settled in California, the only one of the family living outside of Connecticut, where he married a Westmeath woman called Agnes Foley with whom he had seven children.

spend a few years in one place and move on if better prospects emerged elsewhere.
Those prospects could only be taken advantage of if their means allow it and at this
stage of their residence they are not able to leave. The host country is still an
intermediary location, an 'in-between' place, host to them but they are not bound to it.
This intra-diaspora movement also saw a trickle *into* Argentina from the United States.
The equally harsh conditions in the cities and countryside of the northern United States,
along with the discrimination suffered there, may have caused a few people to consider
Argentina as a better option.[10] Brabazon informs us of one man, Thomas Gaynor, who
came from New York to Buenos Aires in search of a new life. In a footnote Coghlan
describes how 'Thomas Gaynor llegó a la Plata en 1842 [y] no habiendo sido casado
dejó la mitad de su fortuna al Orfelinato Irlandés y la otra a unos parientes que residían
en los EE.UU.' (32-3) [Thomas Gaynor arrived in Buenos Aires in 1842. He died a
single man and left half his fortune the Irish Orphanage and the other half to relatives
living in the United States]. As far as we know John Brabazon never visited his family
outside of Argentina although he frequently refers to his dispersed family and expresses
a desire to visit them (117).[11]

Brabazon's memoir encompasses a period during which Argentina received a
relatively small number of Irish immigrants in the Famine and post-Famine period, up
to the 1860s when the majority of Irish emigrants arrived. Devoto notes that during this
initial period and until the end of the Rosas regime: 'el principal país europea de
inmigración fue Gran Bretaña, incluyendo en ella desde la industrializada Inglaterra
hasta la atrasada Irlanda […] en algunos flujos del norte, como los irlandeses, menos de
0,5% llega por entonces [1845-52] al territorio de la actual Argentina' (2003: 48, 216)
[Most of the European immigrants came from Britain, which included industrialised

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[10]New York, Connecticut and Boston were areas of high Irish emigration.
[11]In a telephone interview Mercedes Beitia stated John Brabazon never left Argentina.

England and backward Ireland […] in some of the migratory flows from the north, such as from Ireland, less than 0.5% came to Argentina during the 1845 to 1852 period]. This migratory flow is closely paralleled in the history and movement of the manuscript under study.

Texts as diasporans

We are accustomed to the notion that individuals, ideas, or even theory, as Edward Said has famously argued, can travel but perhaps less common is the concept of migratory texts or texts as intra-diaspora subjects (1983: 157). John Brabazon's manuscript has, like its progenitor, undertaken its own journey and indeed, become diasporan. From its birth on the Argentine pampas it has travelled to Buenos Aires and on to Birmingham, Alabama, where it now dwells in the hands of Brabazon's great, great granddaughter, Mercedes Ortega Beitia, another diasporan. From its status as an early record of life and the Irish community on the pampas this manuscript has taken on a new identity and is now a family heirloom, awaiting the time when it will be published and its contents made available to all.[12] My own journey to this text has not been without obstacles. The family one day hope to find a publisher but until then, given the fragile nature of the manuscript, they would prefer it not to be handled. Consequently, though I have spoken with its caretaker and she has provided me with photographs of the manuscript in addition to pictures of John Brabazon, his daughter and granddaughter, I have yet to consult or observe the original subject. Nonetheless, I have consulted a photocopy which resides in Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland (not quite a return of the manuscript to

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[12]In a series of telephone interviews with Mercedes Beitia between January and April 2010, she expressed a desire to seek out a publisher in the near future.

Brabazon's home county but very close).[13] The text's own journey does not stop there, however. Though an English version of the manuscript has yet to be published, the manuscript underwent a transformation in 1981 when it fell into the hands of the Irish-Argentine historian Eduardo Coghlan.

Coghlan, after reading the manuscript, which Brabazon's great granddaughter Ana Beitia de Coire had in her possession, translated the memoir under the title, *Andanzas de un irlandés en el campo porteño, 1845-1864.* Coghlan notes in his introduction: 'Llegaron a mis manos las memorias que escribió John Brabazon […] que están manuscritas en idioma inglés por el mismo autor, y actualmente en poder de su bisnieta, la Sra. Ana Beitia de Coire' (Brabazon 1981: 9) [John Brabazon's memoir, hand-written in English, came to me via his great-granddaughter, Ms Ana Beitia de Coire, in whose hands it now lies]. He believed it merited translating because its pages 'constituyen un valioso documento sobre aspectos poco conocidos en la vida nacional, como son los de la efectiva incorporación a la civilización de la mayor parte del territorio de la provincia de Buenos Aires' (9) [represent an important document about little-known aspects of Argentine national life, such as the incorporation into the State of a large part of the territory of the province of Buenos Aires]. Based upon my own consultation with the photocopy of the original, the result is a faithful translation of the English text with footnotes to indicate where conversations were originally recorded in Spanish or to give more information about an emigrant or place.[14] The free translation of the title however, reveals Coghlan's desire to place ownership of it squarely on Irish shoulders and so explicitly places it within an Irish-Argentine context. The original English title, *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Ayres from the year*

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[13]My gratitude to Edmundo Murray for generously providing me with both Mercedes Beitia and McKenna's contact information. My thanks also to independent scholar Pat McKenna for allowing me to consult his copy. He has honoured the Brabazon family's wishes and has made no copy of the manuscript.
[14]Throughout this chapter I cite from the manuscript accompanied by the page number of the Spanish translation in parenthesis. Original spelling is maintained throughout.

1845 by John Brabazon and His Own Adventures, indicates Brabazon's primary interest to be ethnographic while his own adventures were of secondary importance. He deems nationality, in fact, irrelevant to the title of his own work although this might have been evident from his surname. Coghlan, on the other hand, translates the title with the adventures and nationality being of prime importance. The emphasis on his 'adventures' may signal Coghlan's efforts to transform Brabazon into a heroic figure who negotiates the treacherous space of the pampas, allowing for a more imaginative reading of the text in which the hero overcomes various trials during his journey. On the other hand, the stress on Irishness marks the continuation of attempts to build an Irish-Argentine literary canon and to document the Irish community in Argentina, a process which began in 1919 with the publication of Thomas Murray's *The Story of the Irish in Argentina.*

Despite its own travels and translation, much is still unknown about Brabazon's narrative apart from it being the only surviving diary of the early days of the Irish community in Argentina. There is uncertainty as to when it was written or why it ends abruptly in 1864 with the words 'to be continued'. Anecdotal evidence from his family relates that Brabazon wrote in notebooks at night by the light of fireflies, but this image may be more family myth than fact. The title raises the question of the ethnographic nature of his text and reflects the concerns of many of similar published titles of the 1820s to the 1860s. From the early nineteenth century, travel accounts concerned with economic opportunities such as Francis Bond Head's *Rough Notes Taken During Some Rapid Journeys Across the Pampas and Among the Andes* (1826), Colonel J. Anthony King's 1846 account of his personal adventures in *Twenty- four Years in the Argentine Republic* or William MacCann's *Two Thousand Miles' Ride Through the Argentine Provinces* (1853), became popular in their own right as travel texts and provide an

overview of the changing interaction between 'native' and Western cultures on the pampas and, as Jones argues, 'now filled in a picture, rather than providing the only window' (1986: 200). It would appear that Brabazon may have intended for his own 'adventures' to be published and the content and style of his writing certainly lend weight to this theory.

Customs and Habits is a mix of journal, memoir, history and anecdotes written in a simple, unadorned style in which Brabazon relates, in chronological order, his travels and experiences on the pampas near Chascomús, south of the city of Buenos Aires. The narrative is punctuated by diary-style entries. At times, he notes just the date and the number of sheep sheared or a friend visited, reflecting the routine and solitude of pampas life. As memoir Brabazon's narrative 'historically situates the subject in a social environment, as either observer or participant; the memoir directs attention more toward the lives and actions of others than to the narrator' (Smith 2001: 198). These narrow terms serve Brabazon's text well as there is little of his own personal feelings and reactions to events even when these are horrific, such as the murder of his wife and sister-in-law, whose deaths are recorded in a matter-of-fact tone. This might also imply that there was some distance between the event and the recording of it, although as mentioned, there is no evidence of when the work was written. This sublimation of affect in the text bears out the possibility that Brabazon's focus was ethnographic rather than biographic as he does not examine or reflect upon his personal life. The implied rationality and objectivity of his diary is echoed in McClintock's suggestion that the diary 'is the literary genre most appropriate to the logic of linear, rational individualism and the idea of progress' (1995: 169). Brabazon is more interested in moving forward than looking back, in both a linear and diasporic sense.

To that end, he inscribes the present and Argentina into his text rather than Ireland and his past.

Brabazon records different jobs and the amount paid (or unpaid), the names of the *estancia* owners and conversations with the people he meets, in Spanish as well as English, as he picked up the language within a year. Indeed, his commitment to the people and customs of Buenos Aires can be seen in his attempts to learn Spanish. He was initially taught by a *peón* on the *estancia* El Arazá and his account is sprinkled with Argentine-Spanish words and conversations. Learning this new language 'helps him perceive the specific reality of his surroundings and helps him communicate with others who are part of that reality' (Grinberg 1989: 99). Thus Brabazon sets himself apart from the many witnesses to pampas life who dwelt on landscapes rather than the people of the land.[15] The narrative balances the harsh working conditions, from shearing to digging ditches with his interaction, both positive and negative, with other nationalities. Moreover, *Customs and Habits* documents the mediation of his own and other cultural values, be they Irish, English, Spanish, Argentine, Indian or *gaucho*.

Given the difficulties in consulting the original text it is perhaps not surprising that critical attention to Brabazon is lacking. One eight-page examination of his work focuses on his 'Britishness', possibly because of his Protestant background and argues that 'Brabazon considers himself an *inglés* [and] the narrator firmly shares with the English their beliefs regarding European superiority' (Murray 2009: 52).[16] There is a danger here of essentialising Irish identity as Catholic and though I agree to a certain extent that Brabazon reveals a conflicted, often superior attitude towards the native

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[15]See Walker (1994) for titles such as *The Ipané* by Robert Cunningham Graham (1899) which produced impressionistic sketches of pampas life. One witness to pampas life who did integrate the people of the pampas, especially the Irish community, into his travel writing was William MacCann (1853), who was travelling in the region when Brabazon arrived and who also offers some interesting insights into life on the pampas.

[16]Murray also notes that he was not able to view the copy of the original in Patrick McKenna's hands, 48 n.12.

Argentine, this attitude is, in fact, prevalent throughout the Irish community right up to the end of the century, as will also be demonstrated in the other two authors' work examined in this thesis. The *inglés* identity itself signifies far more than a religious persuasion and instead combines a number of factors and survival strategies for the distinct English-speaking diaporic communities in Argentina. *All* British subjects on the pampas at this time were considered *inglés*, be they of Irish, Scottish, Welsh or English origin. The Anglophile nature of the post-independence Rivadavian government led to 'alliances' with other British subjects on the pampas. In addition, during the Rosas regime this status offered protection for the emigrant under the auspices of the British Diplomatic service, hence the Consuls aided all *ingleses* and this will be explored in the next section. Nonetheless, adopting and exploiting an *inglés* identity did not preclude the emigrant from asserting other identities and values. Murray arrives at a similar conclusion, stating that 'Brabazon's discourse harmonises with the general values of many Irish who emigrated to Argentina during the first half of the nineteenth century' (2009: 54).

One of the most interesting elements of Murray's study is how Brabazon's memoir, like the letters from Irish emigrants to family and friends, highlights the role of the personal and individual in history, as opposed to famous public figures. As Sábato notes of Brabazon and other Irish emigrants in her introduction to *Devenir Irlandés*: 'Sus memorias son, entonces, papeles privados de inmigrantes que no tuvieron figuración pública, pero que ofrecen ricas vetas para internarse el pasado' (Murray 2004a: 15) [their memoirs are private papers by immigrants who did not play a public role but which offer rich veins with which to understand the past]. Despite the importance of private papers and memoirs, this is the only analysis of Brabazon's diary that I have come across and it stresses Brabazon's religious identity as a constituting

factor in his experiences in Argentina. I, on the other hand, contend it is the *inglés*
identity which is paradigmatic and influences Brabazon's interactions with the host
community as well as other migrants on the pampas. Furthermore, unpublished journals
and memoirs highlight 'the critical role played by unofficial and often hidden narratives
in representing the experience of those who find themselves, through a variety of
political, social and economic factors, displaced' (Ní Éigertaigh 2007: 2). Subsequently,
as part of the reconsideration of emigrant identity, I investigate how Brabazon
contributes to the recuperation of voices displaced in the post-Famine Irish nationalist
appropriation of emigration as forced exile and offers an alternative view of emigrant
discourse. His narrative evinces a figure capable of being uprooted from the national
territory and putting down roots elsewhere, capable of transformation and adaptation
without the concomitant loss or denial of origin identity often associated with
adaptation. Nevertheless, given the possibility of the sublimation of affect mentioned
earlier, Brabazon may well have buried any issues he had with his origin society.
Bearing this in mind, in what follows I consider Brabazon's interest in and depiction of
the people and customs of Buenos Aires and how this shapes his interaction with the
diaspora space of Argentina and ultimately, the construction of a diasporic cultural
identity within that country.

The perception of the *inglés*

The independence and post-independence period in Argentina was characterised by a
need to counter the Spanish legacy, to populate the severely under-populated country
and forge a new nation.[17] Crucially however, as discussed in Section One, the concept
of the nation in the post-independence period and indeed during the Rosas regime was

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[17]Amaral (1998: 169) notes that the total rural population by 1850 was still small at around 170,000
inhabitants.

seen in political rather than cultural or ethnic terms. Consequently, the Rivadavia administration encouraged high numbers of immigrants, especially those from Northern Europe who, it was hoped, 'would improve the defective Creole population' (De Laney 1996: 151). The perception of the Northern European immigrant as being highly desirable is one which is integral to the success of the Irish diaspora community. Brah asks:

> How and in what ways is a group inserted within the social relations of class, gender, racism, sexuality, or other axes of differentiation in the country to which it migrates? The manner in which a group comes to be 'situated' in and through a wide variety of discourses, economic processes, state policies and institutional practices is critical to its future. (1996: 182)

The perception of Irish immigrants as *inglés* and their status as British subjects 'situated' them as desirable and at times inserted them into Argentine society in a more advantageous position than that they experienced in Ireland.

Between leaving Ireland and arriving in Argentina the emigrant underwent a process of change that impacted favourably on their reception by the host country. Their status as British subjects, which in practical terms meant little in Ireland as it guaranteed neither work nor satisfactory standards of living, or even a living at all, meant that upon arriving in Argentina this status and their language were vitally important elements in determining social position. An emigrant's 'condición de súbdito británico nacido en Irlanda puede dejar de ser un inconveniente y convertirse en una ventaja al emigrar a la Argentina [...] en el que los anglófilas élites gobernantes hacen culto del Imperio Británico' (Devoto 2003: 49) [condition of being a British subject born in Ireland stopped being an inconvenience and became an advantage on emigrating to Argentina [...] where the governing anglophile elites admired the British Empire]. Thus, Argentine society perceives the Irish emigrant, once inhabiting the bottom of the

social scale, as hailing from 'superior ethnic stock'. In turn, this results in the *inglés*

identity being strategically exploited by many Irish on the pampas. This lasts until the

1870s when the push to differentiate *los irlandeses* from *ingleses* takes on a new

impetus with encroaching Irish nationalism and the founding of *The Southern Cross*

newspaper, when the 'process of differentiation from "*inglés*" marks the Irish-Argentine

experience as distinctive and separates it from models elsewhere' (Kelly 2009: xviii).

Brabazon's narrative reflects no conflict with being referred to as *inglés*, and the

author, though at times differentiating Irish nationals from English in his memoir (49,

53), does not set out to establish Irish difference. This lack of conflict is made easier by

the fact that native Argentines did not distinguish between English-speaking ethnicities.

In fact, Brabazon recounts a number of occasions where the Irish enjoyed protection on

account of their British subject status, one example of which is seen during the English

and French blockade of Buenos Aires (1845-48). The initial impact of the blockade

makes it difficult for Brabazon to find shearing work as many of the English sailors are

grounded (65). More importantly however, he notes that many of Rosas's followers

were looking to kill any English and French they came across: 'At this time mesengers

was sent out by the Consul Mr Hood to tell all inglish subjects to lieve the country, that

he would give them a free passage to Cape Hope Australia, as the natives of the country

[...] all the principle men of Rosas turned out with all there men an boys shouting death

to the inglish and french' (35). Despite the impact of the blockade and resentment

towards the English and French, the Rosas regime did not want any of the *súbditos*

ingleses to be harmed, and he sent out orders to district commanders to that effect.

Brabazon records that this information was published in the newspaper *The British*

Packet. In this case, it suited any English speaker to claim to be a British subject, as the

protection it offered could be exploited and insisting on an Irish identity may have been

detrimental to their safety. This is not proof that Brabazon considered himself an *inglés,* rather, I believe, an indication of the caution visible in many sectors of the Irish community in Argentina, including the Church and its representatives.

Fr Fahy, a consummate diplomat who is fully aware of the necessity of embracing the *inglés* status, writes a letter to William MacCann in February 1848 in response to questions about whether the Irish community enjoyed the protection of the law:

> I answer distinctly in the affirmative. I have never met any British subject that was not most grateful to the government of Buenos Ayres for the protection they enjoyed […] I must add, also, that the respect which British subjects pay to the government and laws of the country, makes them more acceptable to the natives than those of any other country. (MacCann 1853: 231)

In responding thus, he clearly shows his support and gratitude to the government, while at the same time elevating the British subject, and by association the Irish, over other nationalities such as Italians or Spanish on the pampas. This 'alliance' with other British subjects on the pampas offers a distinct and contradictory experience of diaspora. On the one hand it unites Irish immigrants with other English-speaking immigrants while at the same time there are concerted efforts to maintain a distinct Irish community linked through marriage, language and chain migration.

Negotiating the diaspora space

Brabazon begins his memoir the day he set foot on Argentine soil, and in doing so clearly signals a break with his formative years in Ireland as this is the first (or only) known narrative he produced. His account begins at seventeen years of age when he leaves Ireland and sails to Buenos Aires to join his siblings, signifying that his adventures, life story and journey into adulthood begin in Argentina. On the other hand,

this could also be symptomatic of his attempt to deal with displacement, alienation or any homesickness he may have experienced upon leaving Ireland. Even though it was not the forced exile of later years, as a non-inheriting younger son he had little choice but to leave. Despite what would later be called 'exile' by William Bulfin, Brabazon's departure is depicted as an opportunity for a literate, ambitious emigrant to find a better life in Argentina than was on offer in Ireland. There are no descriptions of tearful farewells or any kind of an 'American wake' for him, nor details of how his parents felt upon having another of their children leave home. As the epigraph suggests, this cannot have been easy for his family as it was unlikely they would ever see him again. As Grinberg argues 'that the decision to leave or emigrate is not an isolated fact or of exclusive concern to the person who made the decision [but entails] a series of consequences to the individual's environment as well as to him'(1989: 70). The 'wake', normally of a dead person, exposes the trauma involved in the emigrant's departure as they are not expected to return from 'beyond' the national territory.

Contrary to later nineteenth-century accounts of departure Brabazon does not portray himself as an exile fantasising about their return to a romanticised 'home'. His narrative reflects neither yearning for return nor any glorifying of the homeland or his fellow Irishmen. Nonetheless, this does not signify that he rejects his native land, as Ireland is not written out of his memoir; it is simply not the focus of his observations. What emerges instead is a process in which the author is portrayed as trying to come to terms with a new society, language and modes of behaviour, all of which he filters through his own cultural values. Grinberg notes that newly arrived emigrants react differently to host country and culture: 'Some people respond with manic overadjustment, rapidly identifying themselves with the [native] habits and manners […] others do the opposite; they cling tenaciously to their own customs and language,

socialise exclusively with other nationals, form closed groups that function as actual ghettos' (1989: 89). Brabazon mediates these extremes and inhabits a middle ground, neither rejecting his native land nor cutting himself off from the host culture.

On Brabazon's first night in Buenos Aires, he experiences an initial panic when one of his friends abandons him in a brothel and he hands over the little money he has brought with him to one of the women there. He does not know how to communicate or what he should do: 'my friend disapeared, leaving me alone and me not knowing any spanish i took fright and gave away all the money i had on me'(15). As a new arrival Brabazon is dependent on his brother and other Irish emigrants to help him understand the cultural codes and practices of the host society. Without their help and not being able to speak the language he is cut off from these codes, rendered helpless and penniless as a result. This initial experience, albeit unsettling for Brabazon, spurs him into learning Spanish in an attempt to access new modes of communicating and interacting with the native community. Help with understanding this community and its codes is also found in the links the Irish community maintains with other English-speaking emigrant communities, the Scottish in particular. There was a relatively small number of Irish in Buenos Aires at this time and so this emigrant network is used to help look for work. Korol and Sábato note: 'Para los irlandeses que llegan al Río de la Plata prácticamente sin capital, solo les queda un camino: el trabajo. Como sirvientes y cocineros, como institutrices y niñeras, como peones para cavar zanjas o colocar cercados, consiguen empleo fácilmente al llegar a la Argentina' (1981: 81) [For the Irish who arrived in the River Plate with little or no money there was only one road: work. As servants or cooks, as teachers or nannies, as ditch-diggers or fence builders, they all found work easily on arriving in Argentina].

Finding work immediately serves many purposes, from the economic through to the psychological. Brabazon is left with no money after his panicked encounter at the brothel. Furthermore, he is only seventeen years of age and though his memoir does not explicitly mention it, the transition from rural Ireland to the city of Buenos Aires, even with the help of his family and friends, would have been traumatic and work would help him to stabilise both finances and mental state. Brabazon sets about looking for work and through the emigrant network, finds a post with a Scotsman, Dr Gordon. This helps him combat any initial feelings of displacement and provides him with a wage. Brabazon is ambitious and curious and wants to learn everything. He does not mind whether the work is making bricks or being a carpenter (34). His initial foray into the job market in Buenos Aires is not a particularly encouraging one, however. He stays with the Gordons for only a month and a half as he dislikes the nature of the work which, apart from caring for horses, includes cleaning up after a student friend of Mrs Gordon, a task he is unwilling or too proud to do. Although Brabazon claims he wants to learn all sorts of jobs, he clearly considers domestic service unsuitable or even emasculating as this was an area reserved for female migrants and may have undermined his attempts to restore his self-respect after his initial panicked reaction to the strangeness, and women, of Buenos Aires. This leads to his first encounter with the precarious nature of an emigrant's life in Argentina. Brabazon relates that because of his refusal to clean up after Mrs Gordon's friend, Dr Gordon threatens to intern him in the army: 'because I would not do what he wanted me to do [he] threatened to put me in the Service as he was a great friend of Rosas' (18). That he stands up to Dr Gordon reveals the strength of character of Brabazon but also the fissures in the ostensibly unified *inglés* community. Moreover, this encounter underscores the close links certain sections of that community maintained with Argentine authorities in addition to the

risks involved in negotiating Argentina at this time as this is not an isolated incident. Brabazon later refers again to the threat of being 'put into Service', corroborating not only the volatile nature of work and the power certain elements within immigrant society have, but also Rosas's need for men in the army and the shortage of bodies to fulfil this task.

The pattern and availability of work dominated the emigrant's life. A typical entry in Brabazon's narrative highlights this: 'Oct 5th 1847 – all they mounth of October doing nothing [...] the sheering began in November' (65). With time on their hands, many Irish did as Brabazon did and spent the winter months visiting neighbours and friends and maintaining links: 'I use to pass the winter visiting my neighbours, I had verey good ones, John Brown Nicholas Clinzey and Patrick Onell and my sister Janes place' (109). He enjoys these visits and contact with his co-nationals, a group he describes as being very close and who would regularly help each other out (109). This entry not only reflects the closeness of the community there, but may also account for the slow integration of the Irish. In the vast, sparsely populated grasslands (the population of the River Plate region in 1825 was a little over half a million, with Buenos Aires having 56,000 inhabitants) distance to one's neighbour was considerable, and so journeys necessitated a stay of at least a few days, making it easier to retain native habits, customs and language. As the community tended to bring in co-nationals and intermarry, many of their neighbours were Irish, or were Irish working on an *estancia*. James Scobie records 'an estimated four thousand Irish shepherds in the province of Buenos Aires at the time of the fall of Rosas [1852]' (1964: 85). So one was never far from a co-national. The potential dangers and advantages of the diaspora space then are soon made clear to Brabazon but it is his encounters on the shared space of the pampas, inhabited by other Irish diasporans, European immigrants and those constructed and

represented as indigenous which challenge his cultural values and see him reconfigure cultural identity. In the first of these encounters I will examine the other nationalities he encounters as well as his contradictory perception of who is exactly the 'indigenous' subject.

Mediating cultural values: Europeans, *gauchos* and indians

After two months working in Buenos Aires, Brabazon records that he was offered work by 'Martinez de Hoz, the son of a verey wealthy man that had a large *estancia* or Estate call the Araza'. On February 15th, 1846 Brabazon leaves the city to work on this *estancia* in Chascomús in the eastern part of Buenos Aires province, 123km south-east of the capital. This area of the pampas is populated with various indigenous and foreign minority groups. The very nature of life on the pampas engenders crossings of nationalities, ethnicities and cultural values. Despite being part of a tight-knit community, Brabazon does not cut himself off from other nationalities or indeed, other 'histories'. There is a process of transformation within Argentine society; as Argentina itself develops socially and economically, so too do the communities which make it up. There is constant movement in these communities and not only are the concepts of nationalities or regions fluid (Irish, Scottish or Welsh were *ingleses*, Spaniards became known as *gallegos*), but professions are also interchangeable. There is no fixed location or career for emigrants, as they have to follow the dictates of their new home. So when the price of wool goes up in 1851 'they irish inglish an scotish who use to be carpinters, tailors an shopkeepers went to the camp'(112). Brabazon's narrative captures this evolution and attempts to mediate between the histories and nationalities he encounters.

By the late 1850s 'Irish, Basques, French, and Scots had become familiar faces in rural Buenos Aires province, providing the necessary and adequate labour force for

the expanding industry' (Sábato1990: 27). This multi-cultural workforce all interacted socially and Brabazon recalls the dances:

> First the national hymn, then the marseilles, after that the march of Garibaldi as there was all nations in the place […] shouted out Viva la republica argentina and finished up with the Mambron – se fuera a la guerra, a Spanish march. The music was the guitar, acordion and the flute – they were good workmen and of all nations, in the large kitchen where they use to take there food there was frinch german inglish and indian languages and other dialects spoken. (186)

Before the mass immigration of the late nineteenth century, Brabazon records an Argentina with a thriving, multicultural mix of cultures and languages.

Though other immigrants are recorded in the text, Brabazon's account does reveal a stereotyping which persists right up until the end of the century and we later see reflected in the work of William Bulfin. In this case the racism is constituted around nationality and culture, specifically the 'thieving *gallego*'. A few months into his stay, Brabazon returns from the 'camp' to seek work in Buenos Aires and, whilst there, finds lodging on a boat, which he shares with an immigrant from Galicia. One Sunday, while Brabazon is fishing, he informs us that his roommate steals the 200 pesos he has hidden in a bag. The man gambles away the money and when he is caught is given twenty lashes (38). This *gallego* is one of those brought out from Spain by Don Jaime Llavallol, and who were, in fact, indentured servants.[18] Brabazon tells us the Argentines used to call them 'cambio por cuero de vaca'– useless. These men were to be handed over to the authorities to serve in Rosas's army until their passage was paid off, which many preferred to being treated as slaves (39). The treatment of the Spanish citizens is subject to criticism and Brabazon reveals the disparity between expectations and the reality of the diaspora space. Though Brabazon does not condone what the man

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[18]A common practice in order to expand the workforce. Coghlan notes that Llavallol was a merchant and one of the founders of the Banco Nacional, 41 n. 9.

has done and his discourse perpetuates the stereotype of the 'thieving *gallego*', he also demonstrates an ability to view events and people objectively.

Brabazon's narrative reflects a contradictory perception of who the indigenous or 'native' subject of the host culture is: *criollo*, *gaucho* or Indian. The native identity is seen in all three groups and he describes multiple encounters with subjects from different classes and ethnicities, which show empathy with some subjects while he rejects others. The encounters are alternatively mediated through attitudes to work, dress or habits. One attitude which he disparages in certain natives, mainly the *gaucho*, is the attitude to work: 'Regarding to men in them times they use to do little work only buchers and the killing of cattle and skining hides and fleshing them in the Saladeres […] They use to gather to a place called Bandisita to run races or play cards' (20). This is a view shared by many travellers whose colourful accounts of life on the pampas include observations about the supposed laziness of the people: 'the natives are generally unwilling to occupy themselves in any way except in the ordinary duties of an *estancia* […] the resources of the country are altogether neglected for want of an industrious population' (MacCann 1853: 24). To counter this negative view, Amaral argues that it is important to differentiate between this perceived laziness or cultural trait 'as a consequence rather than cause of the pattern of labour demand' (1998: 171).

The pattern of work on the pampas itself was a contributing factor to the isolation and segregation of the many communities evolving throughout the province. The majority of work was seasonal in nature:

> cattle were rounded up, branded, and gelded in late summer and fall, or in late winter and early spring (Jan-March), calving and thistles were among the main factors accounting for such a pattern [while] the main lambing took place in late March and April with a secondary one in November, and shearing was carried out from mid-October to November. (Amaral 1998: 171)

This left both natives and immigrants with time on their hands in the winter months. The perceived laziness is initially disparaged by Brabazon but he then paradoxically notes of the native that 'rich and poor were equel and very generous and valers fellows, and would die for any person that would do them a good turn, that is the real native of the province of Buenos Aires' (21).

The 'real native' then, rich or poor, shares certain cultural values such as generosity and bravery with Brabazon. This native is different to those from the 'low class' who have 'nasty habits' such as picking the lice out of each other's hair and Brabazon is clearly disturbed by such behaviour (23). Furthermore, though he depicts himself as willing to interact and empathise with the native *gaucho*, he shares the ruling elite's abhorrence of *pulperías* – rural bars. Brabazon depicts them as places where workers gambled and fought, sometimes resulting in the death of more than one man (28). The natives Brabazon wants to befriend are not those who frequent these bars: 'I always look to make decent acquintence, and make friends with the natives, but always kept from bad company and would never go to the *pulpería*' (28). These establishments were viewed as 'the greatest plague of the country' (Sábato 1990: 86) though it is not the *pulperías* that are seen as the plague, rather the *gauchos* who go to them. In fact, there are assiduous efforts aimed at eliminating *gaucho* dress, diet and customs and so reducing the self-sufficient, mobile *gaucho* to a *peón*. Slatta argues that throughout the nineteenth century, the *gaucho*:

> faced the relentless oppression of successive administrations acting on behalf of a powerful landed elite that sought to eradicate rather than educate him […] Established customs of a formerly entrenched *gaucho* subculture conflicted sharply with the new rights and concepts of private property inherent in Argentina's burgeoning export capitalism. (1983: 1)

Their mobility and persistence in moving about the pampas, whether to *pulperías* or to *estancias*, is also at odds with the government's measures to curtail such movement in the hope of maintaining a stable, rural workforce.

Brabazon demonstrates a resistance to this marginalisation of the *gaucho*. Indeed, in doing so he can be seen as part of the counter-narrative to the prevailing view of the *gaucho*. He does this by adopting the *gaucho* dress, specifically the *chiripá,* belt and poncho (28). He also refers to the *botas de potro* which are worn with the horse hair facing out. He notes that the Irish on the pampas adopt this tradition, though they adapt it slightly: 'They inglish and irish use wear them with hair in […] they were comfortable, but they were not verey good for wet weather' (53). Cultural identity then is adaptive and implies an affinity with another group's systems of symbols and meanings. Although Brabazon may not be trying to 'pass' for *gaucho*, his mimicry of *gaucho* dress implies a subversion or disruption of the dominant discourse which positions the *gaucho* as inferior. As McClintock suggests: 'Clothes are the visible signs of social identity [and] can be mobilised for a variety of political purposes' (1995: 67).[19] It is noteworthy that in Brabazon's account, and later in Bulfin's, we see the Irish emigrant share an affinity for *gaucho* dress, if not always for *gaucho* practices. Customs can be taken on and adapted but not every custom is seen as appropriate. Brabazon informs us that he took on all the habits of the native except for gambling (28). This social solidarity with the increasingly oppressed subaltern in Argentine society seems contradictory, if not prejudicial to the emigrant given their somewhat protected status as *ingleses*. This could be a political statement, a symbol of resistance to the marginalisation of the predominantly rural-based *gaucho*, in turn, a reflection of the minority position of the rural-based, Irish farm worker. The rural poor in Ireland were

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[19]McClintock specifically analyses mimicry and the use of clothes in cross-dressing and what she terms racial 'passing'.

also experiencing displacement and marginalisation because of land clearances and evictions which were rising dramatically in the 1860s.[20] Whether Brabazon is expressing a political statement or simply empathy with local customs, what becomes evident from his narrative is the mediation of multiple cultural identities. In particular, his crossings with *gaucho* culture demonstrate that 'there is traffic within cultural formations of the subordinated groups, and that these journeys are not *always* mediated through the dominant culture(s)' (Brah 1996: 209).

While it is apparent that at times Brabazon's perception of the native produces conditions which Brah suggests 'foster sympathetic identification and solidarity across groups' (1996: 186), he also notes the tensions that exist within these groups. Brabazon's text articulates changes in the *gaucho* way of life and attests to a shift in *gaucho* identity from that of valued soldier under Rosas to one of a lazy or incompetent worker. At one stage Brabazon competes with a *gaucho* for a job as *capataz* on an estancia. Though initially the *gaucho* is given the job, he is let go because he hurries to do a job that the *peones* should do. According to Brabazon, the estate owner states: 'I do not want a gaucho or a compadre, said that the young man was not fit to take charge of the establishment that he was to much of a gaucho' (176). This unflattering reaction mirrors that of the British consul Thomas J. Hutchinson (1865-8), who asserted that the *gaucho* 'spent his life smoking, supping mate, and riding from one country store and tavern (*pulpería*) to another to drink liquor and gamble' (Slatta 1983: 13).

Brabazon's opinion of the *gauchos* and Indians he meets at times comes across as superior, a trait not uncommon among the Irish or Argentine community. The degree of involvement with Indians changes over the course of time. They are not represented

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[20] As mentioned in Section One, the 1860s and 1870s in Ireland were characterised by 'land clearances', evictions by landlords trying to consolidate their holdings and create larger, one-family owned-farms. This led to the formation of the Land League, which aimed at reforming land law. See O'Gráda (1999) or Beckett (1969) for more on the post-Famine period and land clearances of the 1860s and 1870s.

in Brabazon's account as a unified group, but treated according to the level of interaction the settlers had with them, hunting or being hunted. At first this takes the form of suffering attacks. When his brother Thomas returns from Tres Arroyos after searching for work, he tells him that no-one would risk setting up a shop as there are too many Indian raids. Brabazon is later present at one such raid and 'that was when we knew what an attack meant' (73). The Indians steal horses, sheep and even clothes, but 'they didnt injure anyone, just laughin and thankin them for bein good workers'(74). A few years later, however, things change, as Brabazon goes hunting with a Spanish friend and some Indians from Tapalquen, a marked shift in earlier patterns of interaction, signifying either the Indian assimilation of new cultural codes or Brabazon's acceptance of theirs.

There are other occasional hints of a superior and conflicted attitude towards the 'native' people. European influence is seen as beneficial with European culture and commodities embodying the idea of progress, or what McClintock terms 'the civilising mission' (1995: 36). After a few years in the province Brabazon says that 'the times was getin better and the natives getin in to the european customs, the farmer was getin more friendly with them' (91). The host culture assimilates some of these new customs and, at times, it seems Brabazon believes that progress is only being made because of this European influence. New fashions from France and England arrive and the first modern car is introduced by an English man (92). However, Brabazon seems unsettled about the benefits of this influence. Although he appears to welcome Europeanisation, he is also aware of its incongruity or misplacement. As he declares in the case of the natives of Buenos Aires, when they see something new, they buy it without thinking about whether it is useful or if it suits them; what was important was to have it (92). One example of this can be observed in a conversation about new leather boots he

overhears between two country men sitting on a doorstep in Buenos Aires. Brabazon recounts in Spanish: 'No puedo sufrir más, me aprietan demasiado. Quisiera tener mis botas de potro y maldita sea la moda. Mejor sería ir descalzo' [I can't take any more, they're too tight. I want my horse leather boots and fashion be damned. It'd be better to go barefoot]. Here we witness the metaphorical constriction or immobilisation of the native because of the imposed codes of European fashion. The 'civilising mission' is rejected and native dress re-appropriated and re-valued. Although there may be occasional conflict in Brabazon's attitude to native customs and habits, there is no doubt as to his criticism of the Irish community's treatment of the *gaucho* and the next part explores how Brabazon interrogates Irish cultural values through the practice (and absence) of hospitality.

Questioning Irish cultural values

If Brabazon condemns the *gaucho* habit of gambling and Indian attacks on settlers, he also challenges the poor treatment and lack of hospitality towards the *gaucho* by members of the diaspora community on the pampas. One of the perceived shared cultural values of the Irish community and the host culture is that of hospitality, something which on the pampas goes beyond etiquette and is, in fact, vital for survival on vast plains. MacCann corroborates the importance of hospitality on the pampas: 'Inns or hotels cannot be maintained on trackless plains, a traveller must therefore depend solely upon the hospitality of those amongst whom he may sojourn' (1853: 51). Brabazon's most damning indictments are aimed at his countrymen and he admonishes them for their treatment of the *gaucho*:

> I have often seen a native come up to an irishmans house for a drink of water or
> a light for his cigar or to ask leave to rest or for to get a drink to ask leave to

> cook a piece of meat and the owner of the house would go out to receive him with his gun in his hand and would not let him get of his horse. …I never would carry fire arms…I have seen my country men that they would not go out to sheer sheep without a pair of pistols in there belt. (110-11)

Whether Brabazon is reflecting the very real dangers of the pampas or the violent nature of some of the Irish there is unclear, though his promotion of social solidarity with the *gaucho* as well as his empathy for their plight in their native land is without doubt.

Brabazon sees himself as a guest in Argentina, and one who owes respect to his host, unfortunately not a sentiment shared by all. He remembers how he 'often told them [his countrymen] it was a bad thing they were doing to deny that bit of hospitality to a man in his own native home, that if it was home in irland, or even a countryman of there own, they would be revenged of him, and that a native would not do that with him. I never denied a travler of a nights rest, or meat or mati' (110). Brabazon is at pains to distance himself from these elements of the Irish community. He expresses empathy and solidarity with the suffering of the native people at the hands of foreigners and even their own countrymen, who he notes treat them as if they were dogs. Not many people would stand for this and he suggests 'if it were somewhere else they woulda kilt the cattle and burnt the landlords' (111). This could be another oblique reference to the violent events happening in Ireland in the 1860s. Estates were being attacked in Ireland in response to land clearances and evictions by absentee landlords in the aftermath of the Famine.

This poor treatment of the native is then strikingly contrasted with how the Irish community treat each other when on the road. On another journey to the city he highlights the hospitality he receives: 'I stopt on the road first at Mrs Robertson a kind and hard working woman, she milked cows and made cheese and then brought it to Chascomus and it well [...] I went to Patrick Killmureys and stopt there that night a

good hospitable man as ever left old Erin' (172). This is the only reference with a slight

overtone of nostalgia for Ireland as well as being the only reference to Ireland as 'Erin',

a romantic term for Ireland often used by poets and writers. It was used in songs and

poems in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and then increasingly

employed in post-Famine emigrant ballads.[21] The use of this term could imply potential

sympathy with nationalist ideology. Though Brabazon's narrative does not reveal any

other nationalistic overtones we do know that there may have been nationalist

sympathies in the family. According to the Brabazon Archive, his brother Thomas

called one of his sons William Wolfe Tone Brabazon after the father of Irish

Republicanism, a Protestant by the name of Theobold Wolfe Tone.

Though Brabazon does not often refer to his own background or problems that

his family had, it is apparent that not all the members of the Irish diaspora community

share the same perspective. Brabazon recounts tales of his countrymen, many of whom

bring regional or familial enmities or personal vendettas to the host country.

Interestingly, this intra-migrant conflict closely parallels that of the *gaucho* culture, with

fighting breaking out over perceived slights and insults, explaining to some extent their

poor treatment of the native. On his co-nationals Brabazon notes:

> They would begin to task up, that there father or grandfather were informers,
> that they transported uncle Mic or Barner, amongst them was the biggest
> hagards that ever left irland trechuros revengefull and cowardly the generality
> came from Ballimore, Drumraney or Putahan. (114)

Brabazon's indictment of the treacherous, vengeful and cowardly nature of some of his

fellow Westmeath men is not solely due to his observation of it on the pampas. He

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[21]See for example, Thomas Moore's ten volume *Irish Melodies* published between 1808 and 1834 which according to one Irish Minister for Arts 'defined Irish culture throughout the nineteenth century at home and abroad' http://folkworld.de/37/e/moore.html or Robert Wright (1975) *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs.*

details his personal experience of injustice in Ireland in one of the only passages in which he alludes to his Protestant background. He describes how his uncle, a land agent, is mentioned in a Catholic service one Sunday in relation to rents or tithes and soon after he is shot and killed, his body dumped on a pile of stones. The family must have had some money as different branches of the family united and between them raised £1000 to be offered as a reward for the murderer's capture (112).

Irish emigrants are neither wholly vilified nor glorified by Brabazon. He engages with all elements of the diaspora community but does not succumb to essentialising the members of that community. Though many emigrants take on native customs there are others who refuse to shed the values or nostalgia for the origin culture. Brabazon's lived experience of diaspora typifies how, as Gilroy states:

> apart from sharing a common genealogy and geography, members subscribing to a common ethnic or national identity who are part of a diaspora, may find the pressure to associate, remember or forget their original culture may vary with the changes they face within the political and economic environment […] which creates differences between members' lived experiences. (2003: 332)

For example, Brabazon observes that not all those who settle in Argentina are the hardworking, solid citizens that many accounts would have us believe, particularly those of William Bulfin, who will be examined in Chapter 5. The Irish sheepherders, he notes, are mostly respectable such as Peter Hanrahan 'but there were others of them wicked divils as ever left Balimore or the Parish of Dumraney [or] Mulingar Prison' (113). Many of his fellow Westmeath men are not portrayed in a good light, a fact which may owe more to his personal prejudices and the treatment of his uncle by the local men. This may also be due to the profile of the Westmeath emigrant who was often an uneducated, landless labourer unlike many of the emigrants from County

Wexford, who were educated, non-inheriting younger sons. The latter receive a better review by Brabazon: 'In general the Wexford people kept themselves respectable' (114).

That the Irish community is close knit is clear from many references Brabazon makes to wills, marriages, job-finding and job-sharing. Besides the endeavours of Fr Fahy and Thomas Armstrong, there are also efforts to maintain a 'permanent ethnic community' outside of Ireland as can be seen in the figure of the matchmaker. All three authors under study refer to this figure, though with varying degrees of hostility and affection. In Brabazon's account the matchmaker is a facilitator and comes in the form of people like Mrs Killian who owns a guesthouse close to Buenos Aires and knows which of the newly-arrived Irish girls are looking for husbands. In this way the diaspora community staves off full incorporation into the host society. The endogamous nature of the Irish community is also commented upon by MacCann, who refers to marriage in terminology reminiscent of breeding livestock: 'When females do arrive, they are eagerly sought after, and happy is the swain upon whom the fair one smiles: the Irish seldom or never intermarry with the natives' (1853: 196).

To state that there was no intermarriage between the Irish and Argentine or other nationalities is not true however, and it denies the complexity of the emigrant experience. Though not common practice perhaps, Brabazon refers to at least one marriage between an Irishman and a native Argentine. He records buying wool from a native woman whose husband was Irish: 'I then bought another flock, the wool of a thousand belongin to a widow Mrs Colman. She was a native her husband was Irishman, came here with White lock' (50). Here we have a record of one of the Irish men who stayed on after the attempted 1806-7 English invasion or indeed, may have been one of the deserters discussed in Section One. Coghlan (1982) documents a number of marriages between Irish emigrants and other nationalities, including French,

Italian and native in the 1855 census.[22] In fact, in September 1878 Brabazon's daughter Mary marries a *gallego* by the name of Juan Tomás Bargiela Muñoz.[23]

Conclusion

Brabazon's narrative ends abruptly in January 1864, when he goes to Buenos Aires to settle accounts for the *estancia* he is working for. It may be possible that he wrote more and that it has been lost somewhere along the line, but through this portion a clear view of his experience of emigration emerges. By the end of this 'layer' of his story, 1864, we observe a man who has been through many hardships and trials, culminating in the murder of his wife and sister-in-law, but one who feels a sense of belonging to the country he settles in. The family archives document that he later marries another woman from his home county, Mary Wallace, and he actively participates in civic life, becoming a Justice of the Peace in Necocohea.[24] This, Coghlan argues, 'constituye una prueba más de su efectiva integración al medio ambiente nacional' (1981: 12) [offers further proof of his effective integration into Argentine national life].

Brabazon's diary enables us to question the notion of the diasporan subject as backward-looking and the desire to return to the origin homeland as a constitutive element of the diasporic condition. His narrative reveals no such desire. Instead, we find a subject who is curious about the host country, its inhabitants and their cultural practices. Initially, he finds it difficult to access the local codes of communication and, in fact, is overwhelmed and left penniless by his inability to understand them. He recovers quickly, however, and proves to be determined in his efforts to learn Spanish so as to better communicate with the myriad natives of Buenos Aires. His encounters

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[22]Though the census information does not furnish us with details on everyone, there are at least seven recorded marriages between Irish immigrants and Argentines in 1855.
[23]See http://www.brabazonarchive.com.
[24]The archive does not state when their marriage took place. It informs us that that they had no children and that Mary died in 1897.

with these natives substantiate the hierarchical structure of Argentine society which positions the *inglés* identity and Irish migrant above the native *gaucho* and Indian, for example. As a result, we see the Irish and other migrants displace and then replace the native Indian as *estancias* extend across the pampas. Brabazon's narrative also demonstrates alternative forms of authority and power relations between the inhabitants of the diaspora space. At times this works in favour of the Irish in securing jobs, for instance, then shifting to reveal the vagaries of mid-nineteenth-century life in Argentina, which the migrant, just like the native *gaucho*, is also subject to. For example, Brabazon records how he and his brother Thomas were interrogated and detained during the English blockade of 1848 for not carrying the official *papeleta*.

Brabazon's experiences with the native Argentines are also mediated around and through his encounters with other Irish and foreign migrants. Co-diasporans show varying degrees of respect for the values of the host culture and, indeed, Brabazon is highly critical of the treatment afforded the *gaucho* by many of the Irish on the pampas. Though disapproving himself of some *gaucho* practices, Brabazon adopts their dress and offers a counter-narrative to that which rests on the laziness, savagery and uncontrollability of the *gaucho*, whose freedom on the pampas disrupts the notion of 'progress' and the modernising mission of Argentine authorities. Given the parallel displacement of the rural poor in post-Famine Ireland because of land clearances, Brabazon's sympathy for the increasing marginalisation and curtailment of the native Argentine could be read as an indictment of the landlord classes in Ireland. This is not to suggest that Brabazon is an apologist for the *gaucho* as he is also invested in their displacement in terms of wage labour on the pampas.

Brabazon's narrative contributes to our understanding of not only Irish integration but also segregation on the pampas as well as the conditions of work and the

solitary lives many migrants lead. His experience, however, is not as segregated from

the host country as it is for many others. He mediates the cultural values of various

ethnicities, native and foreign, and documents his own and the Irish community's

attempts to negotiate their new existence and status as British subjects in the diaspora

space. This leads to a diasporic identity which does not debouch into essentialised

notions of emigrant identity or nostalgic reminiscences of 'the Emerald isle'. Brabazon

learns the language of his adopted home, works alongside the native *gaucho*, foreigner

and Irish, at times revealing a conflicted and contradictory attitude towards all of these

inhabitants of the diaspora space. He leaves behind detailed observations of life on the

pampas in the mid-nineteenth century that help cast a light on the development of

Buenos Aires province into what it is today as well as the roots of the Irish diaspora

community there. Furthermore, by incorporating elements of the host culture's customs,

specifically those of the *gaucho*, whilst maintaining links to the Irish community

Brabazon reveals himself as a forward-looking diaspora subject. His diary attests to the

formation of a diasporic identity capable of incorporating elements of the host culture

whilst simultaneously contesting the master narrative of Irish emigrant experience as

exilic or based on victimisation. That this identity will change and adapt and become

Irish-Argentine within his lifetime is evidence of this. Indeed, the shifts become

apparent in the next writer's narrative. The following chapter examines how Kathleen

Nevin re-imagines identity in this diaspora space.

Chapter 4: Kathleen Nevin – (En)gendering Diaspora and the 'tainted Returnee'

'Women have left Ireland in search of life opportunities, sexual liberation and career advancement [...]

as a means of personal survival and of contributing to the survival of their family in Ireland [...]

they have left voluntarily and involuntarily, by chance and because others were leaving'.[1]

'It is evident that, having made a little money, they seldom come home to add to

their stores of the old hive from which they were earlier expelled the wax gathered in distant regions.

By the time it is possible, their roots are struck too deep in alien soil'.[2]

1. Introduction

The following chapter focuses on the gendered dimension of the Irish diaspora as depicted in Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back* (1946). Written from within an established diaspora community by a second generation Irish-Argentine, Nevin narrates how the protagonist Kate Connolly leaves Ireland for Argentina with her cousin Bessie and friend Nancy in December 1879 and recounts her travels and experiences over a year and a half in this diaspora space. Demonstrated in Nevin's narrative is the crucial importance of 'how the same geographical and psychic space comes to articulate different histories' (Brah 1996: 180). This chapter seeks to recover the voice of this specific strand of emigration and explore one woman's literary construction of that experience via a fictional memoir. Analysis of Irish women's emigration is underdeveloped, and emigration to peripheral zones such as New Zealand and Argentina, even less so, thereby making Kathleen Nevin's text all the more pertinent in her attempt to condense a personal account and, at the same time, record a multitude of stories and histories. Similar to Brabazon's memoir, Nevin's characters mediate life in

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[1]Gray (2004: 1).
[2]From Rosa Mulholland's article entitled 'An Irish exile's homesickness'. This was first published in Ireland in *The Irish Monthly* and reprinted in *The Southern Cross* Friday, January 13, 1893.

Buenos Aires. We find out about the day-to-day lives of the native *porteño* community and their relationship with the Irish diasporans who share this space. Here, then, we encounter a distinct history of the Irish diaspora experience and relationship to home, this one from a female perspective. The impulse to fictionalise these experiences could be read as a mode of 'provid[ing] an interpretative narrative of past events with a view to better understanding them' (Murray 2012: 9). Moreover, Nevin's fictional narrative also illuminates her own mediation of diasporic identity as a second-generation Irish-Argentine as she engages imaginatively with her mother's memories of migration and her own status as a member of the Irish diasporic community. As a result, Nevin shifts continuously along the fact/fiction spectrum, incorporating historical events and figures into her account of women's migration. Two distinct, but inter-related, strands of enquiry emerge from this narrative and frame how I approach it: firstly, how Nevin conceptualises women's travel and encounters in diaspora space and secondly, her portrayal of the figure of the returnee. This chapter will deal with both strands in three separate parts, the first of which contextualises the perception of female emigrants and provides an overview of Kathleen Nevin's life and influences.

The female emigrant receives conflicting treatment in Famine and post-Famine migration, 'represented as passive rather than active participants in the migration process' (Nolan 1989: 3). Women symbolised an Irishness marked by religion, family and were location-bound. Gray notes that 'women were constructed in relation to "home" and "staying put" […] as symbols of the nation'. Moreover, she adds, in both colonial/nationalist discourse women and Ireland were also identified 'with nature and in need of protection' (2000: 169). For women, emigration was seen as a potential act of transgression, a threat to their national and religious identities, as not only were they travelling outside the national territory and fixed boundaries of the 'homeland', but also

outside of the domestic patriarchal norms which shaped national life and culture in the post-Famine era. These norms, propagated through the Catholic Church, Irish nationalism and the stem system itself 'demanded absolute conformity and proscribed deviations as familial ingratitude, religious apostasy, or even national treason' (Miller 2008: 89). As part of this domestic patriarchy, not only was a woman in need of protection but it was her duty to be the mainstay of religious family life. Thus the possibility that emigrant women would marry in the host country represents a challenge to cultural, religious and family unity, as they may marry outside of their religion, class, or even race. Conversely, as detailed in Section One, Irish women's migration between 1880 and 1920 also represents an attempt to recover the loss of status experienced in post-Famine Ireland and to improve their socio-economic standing as well as chances of marrying and establishing families, if so desired.

This chapter explores how Irish women are represented and positioned within both the origin and diaspora community in addition to how Nevin imaginatively constructs the dual identity of the female emigrant and potential returnee. Mills and Foster argue that 'women have tended to write exclusively about indigenous women in their travel writing – focussing on their "difference" – particularly when cultural customs relating to women have placed them in seemingly subordinate or more disadvantaged positions' (2002: 14). Nevin in fact, writes about both Irish and Argentine women of various classes and the former as protagonists in a subordinate position within an Argentine household. In part two of this chapter, I investigate the challenges this poses to the main protagonist's cultural identity as well as notions of class and place. Furthermore, I trace the character's encounters with multiple forms of otherness (language, culture, landscapes, diasporans and native Argentines) and her feelings of displacement. Finally, I explore the conflicting constructions of home and

expressions of Irishness in her narrative, filtered through the protagonist's notions of class which underline her sense of identity.

Whilst sharing some similarities with Brabazon and Bulfin in terms of the cultural practices of hospitality, work ethic and the use of matchmakers, and as will be shown in Bulfin's case, nationalism and exilic positioning of the travelling subject, Nevin places a greater emphasis on social class, nostalgia and religious faith as modes of representation and in her construction of identity. What becomes apparent from the narrative is a challenge to the protagonist's own essentialising of Irish identity along class lines brought about through the cultural crossings in the diaspora space and encounters with the multiple inhabitants of that space. Moreover, I contend that Nevin's narrative debunks the image of the passive female 'victim' of emigration. Instead, she portrays a diasporan who, whilst initially naive and defensive of certain Irish cultural practices, explores the migration, accommodation and expression of multiple meanings of Irishness. An important part of this reconsideration of Irishness is configured through moving beyond national territory or class as defining characteristics of identity.

Part three focuses on the figure of the 'potential returnee'. Irish identity, as perceived through the diaspora community Kate Connolly interacts with, is constituted along two distinct lines. On the one hand is the generation which arrived in Argentina in the post-Famine period and through to the 1860s. This generation embodies a nostalgic, exilic consciousness, which is rooted in Ireland and a sense of Irish cultural superiority. In this respect, as Gray argues: 'The very idea of exile assures a bounded place and nation to which one is naturally connected. A rooting of a people in the land and soil, a connection between people and the place they inhabit' (2004: 210). While members of this generation such as the cook, Annie Malone, or the landlady Honoria

Brady, construct identity along class lines and as bound to the national territory of Ireland, they have resigned themselves to being unable to return due to various factors. These range from their motives for departure – for many, escaping the poverty and social conditions in Ireland in the 1850s and 1860s – to the length of their stay in the diaspora space. Their continued connection to the 'homeland' and fantasy about an eventual return highlights the paradox in Nationalist Ireland's perception of the emigrant and returnee. The emigrant is 'forced' to leave Ireland but once departed, they became 'un-Irish'. The very act of leaving converts them into Other: 'They were deemed culturally corrupted and potentially corrupting on return' (Nash 2008:32). Their migrancy destabilises their identity by detaching it from one place but does not allow it to be regrounded in(to) another *or* be reattached to where it had come from as it has now become tainted. True and 'authentic' Irishness thus rested on exclusivity and essentialism. It was linked to location and genealogy, to rural, agricultural Catholic Ireland, even if this excluded Irish emigrants worldwide as well as inhabitants of urban, industrial centres like Dublin or Belfast. In sum, this exilic identity is not only an elitist, exclusive category on the grounds of rural governance and religion, but paradoxically excludes these very subjects themselves as it is constructed around the notion of being bound to Ireland but with no possibility of return. Ultimately, regardless of the duration of their stay, they have now become 'tainted' subjects, unfit to be accepted back into the homeland.

On the other hand there is the newly-arrived generation of the late 1870s and early 1880s. Though the majority of this generation could assume an exilic status as they are also from Catholic, rural Ireland, they see themselves as emigrants rather than exiles and view the diaspora space as an opportunity to re-invent themselves rather than as a location which resonates with loss or displacement. We see elements of this more

recently-arrived generation, Margaret Kerrigan, for example, attempting to distance themselves from their backgrounds and move away from reminders of land clearances or the poverty experienced in Ireland, happy to become part of the burgeoning middle-class in Argentina. What distinguishes this generation from the former is their ability to look forwards to a future in Argentina, rather than back to Ireland. The divestment of selected elements of their background does not imply an erasure of their Irish identity or isolation from members of the Irish community, quite the contrary in fact. Instead, there is a move away from romanticising Ireland as a location of eventual return. This community takes on its own agency and many of them take part in local customs and cultural practices, assimilating them into their daily lives while still retaining a distinct *irlandés* identity. Nevin's narrative mediates between these two positions, in a complex process of negotiation which reflects the flexibility of the second-generation subject who, as Phillip Ullah suggests, is 'not doomed to remain on the boundaries of two cultures but [is] able to take an active part in both' (1985: 319).

Crucially, in contrast to Brabazon, this memoir is predicated on the idea of a short stay abroad and an eventual return to Ireland. Thus the initial experience of diaspora differs as the protagonist sets off on her journey in the belief that it will be only a temporary displacement, thereby reducing the 'exposure' to potential corruption. Interaction between the host culture and the Irish community therefore, is informed by this intention to return and so it is particularly apposite to examine the extent of signs of resistance in / accommodation to the host society. In addition, in the final part of the chapter, I explore the perception of the potential returnee put forward by the Irish in both the host and originating country which results in the diaspora subject occupying the contradictory space of location-bound yet potentially 'corrupting' upon return. Naficy asserts: 'The lost homeland is potentially recoverable and it is this potentiality –

however imaginary – that drives the exiles' multifaceted desire to return' (1999: 3).

This 'multifaceted desire' encompasses various contradictions, not least of which is that

return can only remain alluring as long as it remains unrealised. In Nevin's narrative

the *irlandés* identity and community are staunchly defended. Moreover, among sections

of that community the fantasy of Ireland as true and 'authentic' homeland is

unassailable. Crucially however, among the older generation thoughts of return are seen

as fantasy only and Kate's articulation of her intention to return once she has made

enough money is met with disbelief and even hostility. Whether this hostility stems

from her intention to expose the myth (or lie) underpinning their 'exilic status' and

reminds them that they might not be welcome or even wanted in their 'homeland' is

unclear. Among the newer arrivals, on the other hand, return is seen as one of a number

of possible outcomes, though it is not necessarily a welcome return which awaits them.

Nevin depicts the potential female returnee as unwanted in the Irish communities of

both the origin and host countries, a reflection of how women are constructed in Irish

cultural discourse, to which subject I now turn.

The perception of female emigration and return

One of the main features of female emigration is that: 'everything we know about the

history of Irish women in the diaspora revolves around one central set of facts. One-

half of the great Irish diaspora was female' (Akenson 1993: 159). As discussed in

Chapter 1, Irish women tended to travel either on their own or with other women, as is

the case in Nevin's narrative. Despite these statistics, surprisingly little is known about

Irish women's migration and return, although it is a field which has drawn increasing

interest in recent years, with a focus on communities in the United States, Great Britain

and Australia.[3] Research by scholars such as Grace Neville is based on anecdotal

evidence taken from the Irish Folklore Archive and she notes:

> One is struck in all this vast opus quite simply by the silence, the great silence surrounding these female emigrants, all hundreds of thousands of them […] most are eclipsed by their menfolk […] the female composers of emigrant songs remain nameless [...] men's jobs are described in more detail than women's. (1995: 213)

An analysis of *You'll Never Go Back* redresses this omission and recovers the voice of

one particular strand of women's emigration.

Despite the lack of official records on return migration, anecdotal evidence from

the Irish Folklore Archives suggest that women did return and did so in greater numbers

than men, though we do not know if the decision was forced upon them or not. Why

these women returned is intimately linked to their reason for leaving. As highlighted in

Section One, in any analysis of women's emigration, the dowry is an essential element

as it was a crucial component in guaranteeing a successful return and lifestyle. Though

Nancy and Kate do not put this forward as a specific motive for leaving, Bessie clearly

believes her prospects of independence can only be secured by leaving Ireland. Thus,

the dowry became an important push factor behind women's emigration. Among the

many possible reasons for return, ranging from the death of a parent to retirement,

marriage is one which receives most criticism. Schrier depicts this act with negative

connotations: 'quite simply the Irish girls returned in search of husbands, and they did

so with almost a desperate air of intent' (1997: 130). This desperate air could possibly

be explained by the relatively higher age of the female returnee. As money was not

earned easily or quickly, as we see in *You'll Never Go Back*, it necessitated a possible

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[3]For detailed examination of Irish women worldwide, see: Neville (1995), Nolan (1989), Diner (1983) and Miller (2008) for the United States; Gray (1997, 2004) for Great Britain; Fitzpatrick (1995) for Australia and for New Zealand, Akenson (1990).

five- to ten-year absence, something which might also account for Ireland having one of the highest marrying ages in Europe at the time. Nolan points out that by the late nineteenth century 'as restricted marriage and market agriculture penetrated even the remotest areas of the West [of Ireland], almost 90 percent of all female emigrants aged 15 to 35 were single' (1989: 50). [4]

As a possible means of stemming their departure, three distinct images of Irish women emerge from sources such as the Irish Folklore Archives. This collection 'documents Irish oral literature, historical tradition, folk music, song and dance, custom and belief, material culture and Irish life generally' while editor Robert Wright compiles a wealth of emigrant ballads and songs connected to the United States under the following headings: The situation in Ireland; Farewell; The Banished and the Transported; Some Well-Known Emigrants; Hazards of the Crossing; Love; War; Life in America; The Stage Irishman; Nostalgia for and Return to Ireland. The history of these ballads dates back to the seventeenth century. In 1653 for example, 'transportation was used in Ireland as a punishment for those without work or an "honest calling". Such persons were usually sent to tobacco or sugar plantations in America' (Wright 1975: 5). It is the final category, Nostalgia for and Return to Ireland, that concerns me and from these sources emerge the following images: the returned woman who was physically ruined or shamed by emigration; a woman left behind to grieve for her lost sons and daughters; or the returnee 'desperate for a husband'. Despite the statistics showing the huge numbers of women leaving Ireland, in many songs, ballads and stories women were very often portrayed as those 'staying put', weeping for lost daughters, sons, husbands or lovers, and Ireland itself was portrayed as

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[4]Akenson (1993: 278) also notes the changes in rate of marriage. In 1864 18% of women were under 21 when married (71% under 25) but by 1911 this had dropped to 5% under 21 (51% under 25).

the 'Sean bean bocht', the poor old woman.[5] Thus, though they never see the diaspora space, those who 'stay put' are connected to it in what Brah refers to as an 'entanglement of genealogies of dispersion' (1996: 181).

The image which emerges from songs and anecdotes of the female returnee is rarely a positive one. She is often depicted as physically and morally ruined by emigration. In one famous Irish ballad, 'Noreen Bawn', a woman from County Donegal follows in the wake of chain migration and departs for the United States: 'one day arrived a letter, with her passage paid to go […] then she said goodbye to Erin'.[6] Her mother is left behind, grieving her loss like Penelope waiting for Odysseus to return, and like Penelope the mother does not recognise the returned wanderer: 'Weary years the mother waited, till one evening, at her door, stood a gorgeous looking lady, awful grand clothes she wore'. Noreen is seen to have achieved a measure of success in her life outside of Ireland but this is quickly undermined by the next line: 'Whispering, "Mother, don't you know me? Now I've only got a cold". Yet those purple spots upon her cheeks the tragic story's told'. No good can come of leaving Irish soil and success abroad can only come at the expense of your life, thus Noreen dies shortly after returning: 'There's a sorrow-stricken mother weeping o'er that lonely grave. "Poor Noreen" she is calling, "Tis I'm lonesome since you're gone, 'Twas the shame of emigration laid you low, my Noreen Bawn". The 'shame of emigration', whether of leaving her family or the national territory, could not be cleansed other than by death, cold comfort to any woman contemplating emigration and also investing their journey with fear and conflict.

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[5]Shan Van Vocht, a phonetic version of the Irish for 'poor old woman'. This depiction of Irish women as a 'Shan Van Vocht' is later appropriated and turned into a positive image by Irish female activists in the revolutionary years as the name for a short-lived newspaper run by women as examined in Ward (1995).
[6]The lyrics are reproduced in *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, p. 626.

This notion of Irish women as victims and emigration as shame is a prevailing one, underpinned by the hegemonic positioning of the family unit and religious teachings which eulogised patriarchy: 'In general, all children, especially females, were trained to be dutiful, submissive and self-effacing – to subordinate individual motives and desires to customary notions of family welfare and status. "Boldness" in children [...] was thus stigmatised as "sinful" and countered with shame and guilt' (Miller 2008: 113). Whether this 'boldness' entailed looking outside the family unit for opportunities or defying parental authority by emigrating, shame and guilt became emotions associated with stepping beyond familial borders. These emotions are also prevalent in later nineteenth century nationalist discourse. A famous female nationalist, Maud Gonne, refers to the shame of emigration brought about by land clearances in the latter part of the nineteenth century and lays the blame on English shoulders, specifically Queen Victoria. In 1900, when the queen made a visit to Ireland to recruit soldiers for the Boer war, Gonne wrote a famous polemic against 'the Famine Queen', first printed in *L'Irlande Libre* and then in *The United Irishman*, 'which the authorities repressed to prevent people reading it' (Ward 1995: 11). Gonne talks about the evictions in Ireland being carried out in Queen Victoria's name, resulting in thousands of dispossessed Irish men and women who are forced to step beyond the national territory in order to make a living. Strangely, despite pinpointing Queen Victoria as the root of this forced departure, it is not just the queen's shameful actions that are foregrounded, rather the shame of dispossession and the spectre of future shame in the failure to thrive or survive (economically or morally) outside the boundaries of the homeland: 'and if there is Justice in Heaven the shame of those poor Irish emigrant girls whose very innocence renders them an easy prey and who have been overcome in the terrible struggle for existence on a foreign shore' (Ward 1995:12). Here we see women constructed as

victim and prey in the master narrative of emigration. Moreover, the 'foreign shore'
offers no safety or protection and life outside of the national territory entails struggle,
shame and peril.

This final image is also related to the returned woman, who having left to earn a
dowry returns and is then portrayed as acting like a cuckoo in the nest trying to steal
Irish husbands out from under those women who had chosen to stay in Ireland. One of
the benefits of emigration was, as described, the ability to earn a dowry and so have a
say in choosing a husband, a choice only permitted by the act of departure. On the other
hand, this also contributed to the negative reaction these women received on return,
causing bitterness in the local women, who now had to compete with these returnees,
even if they had a dowry themselves. Moreover, as Neville notes, 'those with no dowry
were relegated to the back of the queue, with little or no prospects of a good match'
(1995: 209). Evidence suggests that some women would use any means possible in
order to get married.[7] However, the leper-like status of the spinster, or 'man-less'
woman, added to the reverence for family in Irish culture and may have pushed many
women to enter into what might have been perceived as a 'good match', whether or not
it was desired. In effect, one of the ironies of post-Famine Irish society is that family
was revered in a country which could not support the family unit without emigration,
both for the remittances it engendered or the eventual marriages which were funded by
it. From the point of view of gender, these remittances served a dual purpose:

> Ironically, through their generosity, these selfless sisters and daughters [in
> foreign parts] continued to shore up the economic system that could not support
> them in the first place and which, without their lavish remittances, might have
> been forced into reforms that could have staunched the tide of subsequent female
> emigration. (Neville 1995:207)

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[7]Schrier (1997) cites two cases where women deceived men into thinking they had returned with money
and convinced them to marry them because of this, 193 n. 7.

Despite efforts to the contrary, the pull of opportunity on foreign shores, added to the push of the declining status of women in Ireland in general, and of single women in particular, helped many of the indecisive make up their minds.

All of these images combine to offer a negative image of emigration and the returnee, with returned women bearing the brunt of resentment, displeasure and even envy, especially if they returned financially better off. All of these emotions are further complicated by the extent to which the returnee is perceived to have been tainted by their experiences in foreign parts. As Neville notes from archival evidence about United States emigration, informants:

> often criticise returned female emigrants for being 'uppity' […] for no longer knowing their 'proper'/subservient place, having learnt different manners and risen 'above their station'[…] While for some informants everything returned emigrants, male or female, did was wrong […] returned female emigrants were 'more wrong' still. (1995: 211)

That these women could return and bring with them new concepts of a woman's place in society ('not knowing her place') or different cultural practices in terms of clothes, manners and way of speaking, was a threat to Irish cultural hegemony as well as the security of the Irish way of life. These cultural remittances, defined as 'the ensemble of ideas, values, and expressive forms introduced into societies of origin by emigrants and their families as they return "home" sometimes for the first time, for temporary visits or permanent resettlement' (Flores 2009: 4) were unsettling to the origin society and upset fixed ideas of identity as being bound by place. Consequently, these images of women all fed into the widely-held negative views on emigration and the returnee in an attempt to delimit Irish identity, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century as nationalist ideology took root and fuelled resentment in both those who stayed and those who felt they could not return. These implications are all synthesised and explored in

Nevin's narrative to which I now turn, as she attempts to offer an alternative picture of emigration and the women who leave.

Kathleen Nevin: life and influences

The life of Kathleen Nevin is shrouded in mystery and there is very little biographical information available on her. What little we have comes from sources such as references to the Nevin family in the Bulfin Letters and anecdotal accounts by the editor of the Argentine magazine which Nevin wrote for, *Saber Vivir.* Her father, Thomas Nevin, was born in Clonfert, County Galway in 1853 and lived for many years with an uncle in Banagher, County Offaly.[8] His uncle may have introduced Nevin to Thomas Armstrong as he knew and was friends with him. Nevin set up a shop in the city with an M. Wilson and married Catherine Smyth from Ballymahon, Co. Longford, who emigrated to Argentina in 1880, the beginning of the peak decade for female migration.[9] They had three children; Brendan, (died before 1928), Maria Winifred (died 1976) and the youngest was Catalina (Kathleen) though there is no record of when she died.[10]

As recorded previously, the Nevin family appears in letters from William Bulfin to his wife, leaving us in no doubt as to the close-knit nature of the Irish community in Buenos Aires. Bulfin refers to their 'good friends' Tom and Catherine Nevin coming to dinner with them and remarks that Winifred's behaviour was naughty while Kathleen was a quiet child (26 Oct 1894). Kathleen Nevin appears to have been integrated into both the Argentine and the Irish-Argentine communities, embodying the figure of the Irish-Argentine first referred to in Bulfin's *Sketches of Buenos Aires,* the subject of the

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[8]Information from Coghlan (1982: 739).

[9]Walter (2001: 16) notes that 'between 1881 and 1891 there was a net decline in the thirty-two counties of 30,400 women compared to 29,200 men'.

[10]In attempts at integrating its immigrant community, the Argentine government decreed that children born in Argentina should have Spanish names. There are no dates of birth and no further details on the family.

final chapter. She lived with her sister in Buenos Aires where they both worked as English teachers. Nevin wrote short stories, some of which were published in the magazine *Saber Vivir*, 'una revista grande, cara y lujosa' (Artundo 2008: 170) [a large, expensive magazine], published monthly throughout the 1940s until it closed in 1957.[11] It is unclear whether Nevin wrote her novel or these articles first.

Mills and Foster point out that 'not all women travel in the same way, nor do they write in the same way' (2002: 5). This is pertinent to the narrative under study here as the text involves not just a literal crossing of an ocean but also, as Borm notes of travel literature, 'the multiple crossings from one form of writing to another and, given the case, from one genre into another' (2004: 26). Due to the many similarities between the life of the protagonist and Nevin's mother, Catherine (Kate) Smyth, it is clear that the narrative is semi-biographical, loosely-based on the experiences of Nevin's mother. Crucial, however, is the fact that the Ireland Nevin identifies with is largely imaginary as we do not know if she ever visited Ireland. Thus fact and fiction merge and as a result Kate Connolly also comes from Ballymahon, Longford, leaves Ireland around the same time (1880) with the same number of friends. She meets and marries an Irishman who manages a shop, as per the author's parents' experience. Nevin's narrative is populated with real life figures such as Fr Slattery and the head of the local county family, Colonel Featherstone.[12] This demonstrates how texts like Nevin's 'engage not only with the past and the events that shaped the identity of their subjects, but with the

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[11]In her introduction to the Spanish translation of Nevin's novel, Virginia Carreño comments on the lack of information available about the author and how she found out about the *Saber Vivir* connection by accident: 'Comentando el misterio ante Carmen Valdés, quien fue subdirectora y principal responsable de la revista 'Saber Vivir', prestigiosa publicación de arte en los años 1950/60, exclamó de pronto: ¡Pero si yo conocí a Kathleen Nevin y hasta creo que le publicamos unos relatos!' (*Nunca regresarás* 2000: 10) [When I mentioned this to Carmen Valdes, who had been editor of the prestigious 'Saber Vivir' magazine in the 1950s, she exclaimed that she knew Nevin and even published some of her stories]. Carreño dug up some of the stories, which were written in perfect Spanish, some of which detailed the solitary lives of two English teachers. The magazine is now part the Fundación Espigas collection in Buenos Aires.
[12]Walford (1920: 474) records that the Featherstone family held the county seat at Ardagh House, County Longford since 1776.

narratives and discourses within which these identities were configured. Childhood

memories play a crucial role in this process [and in] examining how fact and fiction

interact during the storytelling process' (Murray 2012: 151).

You'll Never Go Back is written in the form of a memoir and opens with Kate

retrospectively examining her life and how she arrived at this point in it. We are given

insightful observations about the lives of Catholic Irish emigrants in Buenos Aires.

Kate Connolly observes their gatherings in lodgings, difficulties in finding work and

journeys to outlying *estancias*. In many ways these journeys echo those in Brabazon's

memoir and likewise, historical events are witnessed and recorded, with the succession

war of 1880 acting as the central point of the narrative.[13] Nevin also provides us access

to the protagonist's inner thoughts and emotional reactions to her attempts at integrating

into the *porteño* way of life with the help of the Irish and native communities. In this

way Nevin offers us an insight into how she reads her mother's migration and also how

this has penetrated her imagination, highlighting the mutual dependency of memory and

imagination. Though Nevin employs a fictional framework for exploring this migration,

she also draws on the multiple discursive frameworks of travel, biography and memoir.

By combining these I suggest that *You'll Never Go Back* allows for a more complex

exploration of how, similar to the London-Irish, 'the descendents of Irish migrants

negotiate complex personal and cultural identities and positionings. Moreover, by

virtue of being narratives they also reveal the processes of identity formation over time

and space' (Murray 2012: 75). This multiple framework then, allows Nevin to

imaginatively explore diasporic and exilic notions of belonging, home and return. The

importance of the fictional dimension in the diasporic consciousness is supported in

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[13]Bitter disputes between Buenos Aires-based parties in the 1870s led to divisions into two factions: supporters of General Roca or Governor Tejedor. Lynch (1993: 81) notes: 'the great confrontation of 1880 was military as well as political, and it was no mere skirmish: about 20,000 men took part and approximately 2,500 were killed or wounded'.

Brah's analysis of the role of narrative in diaporic communities and her assertion that multiple journeys: 'configure into one journey via a *confluence of narratives* as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through the individual as well as collective memory and re-memory [and] is constituted […] in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively' (1996: 183). Thus, this chapter is concerned with how Nevin 'narrativises' herself, other women and other inhabitants of the diaspora space of Argentina as well as how she articulates her relationship with home and the impact of this on identity formation.[14]

Though little may be known about the author, we are provided with detailed biographical information about the protagonist, whose journey mirrors that of Catherine Smyth. The preface begins with the words 'Kate Connolly remembers'. She is near the end of her life and repeatedly tells the tale of her past to whomever will listen. She appears to be looking back on her life with a faint tone of nostalgia which becomes louder when she questions 'what [her] life might have been like if [she] had stayed at home and never heard of such a place as South America' (vii). Though it is clear that she has spent most of her life in Argentina, she refers to Ireland as 'home', highlighting the contradictory position home occupies 'as a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination [but] also the lived experience of a locality' (Brah 1996: 192). Home for Kate is not only a specific part of Ireland (Longford) but her family. The Connolly family come from the Catholic, rural middle classes, own a farm which left them 'comfortably off' (9) and a social unit reflecting the family unit outlined in Section one. The farm was run by Michael Connolly and his wife and they had three children, a son, Patrick, and two daughters, Kate (the youngest and narrator) and Margaret, both of whom were educated at the local convent school until the age of sixteen. Sending their

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[14]Murray (2012) uses the term 'narrativised' in his exploration of second generation Irish memoir in Britain, drawing on Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity.

daughters to be educated was seen by the local head of the county family, Colonel Featherstone, as breeding 'his children above their station in life' (9). Class distinctions were tightly observed and as the Connollys were not of the nobility or army, it seemed foolish to provide his daughters with an education they would not need. Michael Connolly clearly believed otherwise, and as such he is portrayed as an enlightened character.

That Michael Connolly had relative wealth as well as family loyalty is shown in the family's ability to take in and educate his niece Bessie, whose father had 'got into difficulties in the forage business and left Bessie without a penny' (9). Margaret was the first to leave home and marry when Kate was sixteen and soon after that their mother died. Two years later, Patrick married and brought his wife Mary to the family home, and 'it was never the same again at home' (9). This change in circumstances has a crucial impact on the protagonist's sense of self and home as:

> The home was seen as the source of the Irish nation, where women, as increasingly powerful figures in terms of their control of the household economy, were being perceived as being able to shape an Irish identity […] through their involvement in home industries such as making Irish clothes and lace; and through women's educative role, shaping and influencing Irish youth and manhood. (MacPherson 2004: 201)

Through her brother's marriage, and the subsequent empowerment of another woman, Kate's own empowerment and ability to contribute to this household economy is compromised. It is at this juncture that she meets Maria Brady – a returnee from Argentina – one afternoon at tea in her friend Nancy Dwyer's house. Brady's account of her travels and experiences lead the women to believe that they, too, can carve out a new life in Argentina. Despite resistance from their families, explored in more detail in

part three, all three leave the relative comforts and safety of 'home' and embark upon a journey, with Brady's tales of adventure and riches urging them on.

Nevin's narrative has not received much critical attention, possibly due to being out of print in English, and in the one critical analysis of her work there is available, Murray views Nevin's work as a racialised discourse in which Irish superiority is clearly evident.[15] While Nevin's narrative does at times depict feelings of cultural superiority within the Irish community, and, indeed, on occasions the protagonist's own encounters in the diaspora space seem to reinforce this sense of superiority, I would argue that Nevin's narrative reveals more sympathy and accommodation of the native than resistance to difference. Moreover, she actively refutes some of the more overt positionings of native as 'dangerous' or inferior. This is not to say that there is an inevitable fusion of cultural practices nor does the protagonist relinquish all of her own sense of cultural superiority, instead she claims and maintains often contrary positionings, encompassing both essentialised views of the Irish and native as well as a more open and inclusive attitude to both. Brah argues that 'self-reflexive autobiographical accounts often provide critical insights into political ramifications of border crossings across multiple positionings' (1996: 205) and it is these multiple positionings that will be examined in the following part of the chapter.

2: (En)gendering the Diaspora Space

After the afternoon with Maria Brady, the three women, Kate, Bessie and Nancy, decide to set off for Buenos Aires and the first real hint that they are leaving the 'known' world behind is on their journey out. The voyage acts as an intermediary space, suspended

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[15]See Murray (2009: 69-102) and his chapter on 'Gendering stories in the pampas'.

between the known and unknown and subject to the impressions and misinformation of others on board: 'the emigrant, having left behind the world they know, moves toward a world of which they do not yet have a realistic picture. Far from the shore, they live in an unreal state shared only with their shipboard companions' (Grinberg 1989: 74). These shipboard companions instil fear into the girls. The captain of the boat warns the girls 'against some dreadful men in Buenos Aires whom he called the *natives* […] tough customers and low curs' (12). Buenos Aires is described as unhealthy and the 'native is not to be trusted'. Place and people are portrayed as frightening, savage and unknowable others. Ireland is constructed as rural, safe, peaceful and local, whereas Buenos Aires is constructed (initially at least) as a chaotic urban landscape, full of unfamiliar, dangerous and threatening natives who they can never hope to understand.

After a long voyage of about four weeks from Liverpool, they anchor some distance from Buenos Aires and disembark to a little steam-ship which is to bring them to the dock. Even on this short journey, fellow passengers cannot refrain from warning of the dangers ahead, which range from the people and climate to food and water, highlighting the construction of women as in need of protection noted by Gray earlier: 'A very unhealthy place. When they are not dying from cholera they are dying of yellow fever'. 'Don't drink water that has not been boiled, ladies; and do not on any account walk in the sun'. 'Don't go out unescorted; the native is not to be trusted' (13). Coming from the mainly male passengers, this could also be read not only as 'protecting the female' but as patriarchal attempts to prevent female interaction or intermarriage within the host culture. One gentleman, Mr Jenkins, who was perceived as something of an authority as he had been living there for a number of years, affirms this negative account of the place, stating that 'it was, unfortunately, so; that the native was a poor specimen, physically and morally, and that there was no hope for the country because it

was not a British Colony' (13). This perceived cultural superiority over the native

highlights the 'Othering' of the native. As Brah notes:

> During imperial conquests the term 'native' came to be associated with pejorative connotations [and] implicated a variety of structural, political and cultural processes of domination, with the effect that the word Native became a code for subordination. The British diasporas in the colonies were internally differentiated by class, gender, ethnicity (English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh) and so on, but discourses of Britishness subsumed these differences as the term 'British' assumed a positionality of superiority with respect to the Native. The Native became the Other'. (1996: 190)

That the Irish people on board would not necessarily agree with this assumption

of British superiority and a hint of a more nationalistic Irish outlook can be seen in a

conversation between Nancy and Mr Jenkins. He tells her 'she had better marry an

Englishman, and she said she would not dream of such a thing until we got Home Rule'

(14). Though women had no political voice or association through which they could be

heard, other than for a short time the Ladies Land League, it did not mean that they

could not be 'vital, vocal and enthusiastic participants in discussions of Irish national

identity' (MacPherson 2004: 202). Though filtered through a discussion about choosing

a possible husband, Nancy shows awareness of the political issues that drove the Home

Rule Party, founded in 1870 to lobby for an independent, self-governed Irish state. By

1880, the Home Rule movement was slowly gaining ground, though it would only be

with the support of Gladstone in the mid 1880s that legislation would begin to favour

Irish independence. Though the narrative by no means puts forward a nationalist

agenda, politics is not written out of the account and we later see women taking part in

discussions about Home Rule (83).

It is when they were getting into the tiny boats that Kate notes 'we saw our first

natives, resting on their oars; they were wild-looking shaggy men in coloured shirts, and,

indeed, one could have believed anything of them' (14). However, despite the onboard warnings ringing in her ears, when she has her first one-on-one encounter with a native who helps her get out of the boat 'he was not impertinent. He only grinned and gave me a stool to sit on' (14), the first hint perhaps, that the dire warnings may have been misleading. The pandemonium and chaos of arriving in the busy port punctuates both their introduction to Buenos Aires and Miss Honoria Brady, of whom they know only 'that she was an elderly person, and that she kept a respectable boarding-house at which we were expected to stay until we could find positions with wealthy families' (15). Miss Brady, it turns out, holds the same opinion of the native as the passengers of the steam ship. When Nancy chases a man carrying off her trunk, Miss Honoria 'was shocked and breathless and spoke in gasps: "Oh my dear, never do that again!...So dangerous…You don't know the native!...Extremely violent and passionate...You must on no account touch any of them" (16). Here Honoria reveals her unease and possibly the limitations she feels imposed on her movement and behaviour. Mills and Foster argue that women experience 'constraint on their movement because of the fear of sexual harassment or attack as well as because of society's pressures on women to see themselves as vulnerable and lady-like, with all the physical restrictions which lady-like clothing and deportment entailed' (2002: 173). This manifests itself in Honoria's fear of touching or being touched by a native as their difference is not only threatening but may even be contagious. This 'touch' could also, perhaps, cause physical harm as well as potentially converting the Irish diasporan into the 'corrupted subject' discussed earlier.

Kate, however, shows herself to be resistant to this positioning of the native and her first impressions of the journey from the port to the boarding house in Resguardo display her open and inquisitive character: 'The queer dark shops [...] the horses under

the trams, struggling up the slope from the river, the white houses with such a deal of iron about them – window bars, balconies, iron gates inside the narrow halls, and the glimpses of green inside those gates, making a pretty contrast with the red tiles' (18). The people, she notes, are also different: 'The passers-by looked very solemn, mostly men in dark suits with very black beards and moustaches. I wondered whether it could be possible that they were *all* low curs' (18), an observation revealing her resistance to the negative portrayal of the native that she has received so far. Her wondering, open gaze is then contrasted sharply with Bessie's critical one. Upon seeing 'a tall black woman carrying enormous peaches in a basket' she leaned over to tell Bessie, who was holding a handkerchief to her nose and muttering about disgusting smells emanating from a dead dog. Bessie seems bent on confirming the negative image of the city whereas Kate seeks to absorb all she can of the architecture and people. As she states, 'we had not noticed the same thing' (19), indicating that Bessie's gaze will not stray from the negative positioning of the native culture and customs.

From this point on in the narrative, there is a clear divergence in the construction of Kate and Bessie's attitudes towards their host country and also a clear delineation between 'us', the Irish, and 'them', the natives. Bessie seems willing to accept all warnings at face value and fears that it is a 'dreadful place' that they have come to, while Kate tries to comfort her by saying that they did not mean to stay there forever. She notes sadly though, that Bessie 'made up her mind […] not to like the place, and like it she never did' (22). She is swayed by the warnings and initial bad impression and nothing would convince her that the space she now occupied was not barren of civility and culture. On the morning after their arrival for example, Bessie's first comment upon waking is 'those dreadful mosquitoes!!', followed by 'summer in January, too. I never heard of such a thing!' (26). When Kate tries to remind her that in

fact, they had learnt about this in school, she refuses to believe there is any logical explanation for the difference in seasons but 'just some wrong-headedness of the natives that put the seasons all upside-down' (26). She is unwavering in her determination to view the native as an illogical, inferior other which strengthens her belief in her own cultural superiority: 'the ignoring of the local environment conditions, the local names […] involves implicitly a rejection of the values of that culture' (Mills and Foster 2002: 90).

Nevin's construction of Kate and Bessie reflects divergences in the Irish diaspora community itself. She aligns Bessie with those who still cling to nostalgia for Ireland and portray themselves as culturally superior to the native Argentine while Kate belongs to those who have a more pragmatic view of Argentina and are more willing to adapt and incorporate elements of the host culture, though prone at times to nostalgia too. Their landlady, Honoria Brady, is of the former category. Though having spent most of her life in Buenos Aires, Honoria remains unintegrated into *porteño* life. She maintains her links with Ireland and creates her own diaspora space within Buenos Aires society: 'her house being a bit of Old Ireland on foreign soil. Her guests, with the exception of an occasional English gentleman, Irish: she herself was Irish, heart and soul' (19). Her house serves as what Naficy terms 'nostalgic object 'or 'fetish souvenir'. He argues that these objects and 'the narratives in which they are embedded serve to authenticate a past and simultaneously to discredit the present' (1991: 189). In this respect, it has a dual function: as a familiar environment to orient the new arrivals and assuage any potential loss they might be experiencing and as a reminder to them not to forget their origins nor trust their new environment to reflect their values.

Honoria describes the Irish community 'as rough and ready, but sound at the core' (22). In her house, class barriers are erased and anyone from Ireland is

automatically distinguished as being 'sound' by simple virtue of their nationality, whereas the native is portrayed as distinctly unsound. She does not have a positive image of her host country and lets the girls know this: 'Life in this country has many snares and pitfalls; and the native, my dears, is not to be trusted. My first and last word to you must ever be: Beware of the native!' (22). She perpetuates these warnings whilst offering the girls no concrete explanation as to why this is so. Throughout the narrative we see her react (or overreact) to situations in a manner that borders on the hysterical. At one stage she accompanies Kate to an interview and waits for her on a bench outside the house. When Kate emerges Honoria is not on the bench and she sees her hurrying towards her. Her explanation that she had no choice but to leave the bench because a native had simply sat down beside her, but she could tell by the look in his eye that he meant to be 'impertinent', again highlighting a view of Argentine men as savage and uncontrolled as well as Honoria's fear of the native (81).

In contrast to Bessie's first morning in Argentina, Kate's experience is imbued with a curiosity for what is around her. The day is saturated with smells and sounds far removed from her native land. She remembers 'how strange it was to hear those voices singing out words that meant nothing' (24). Though curious, throughout the narrative Kate occasionally experiences the exile's sense of loss; of familiar rituals, sounds, and even the loss of language. She does not speak Spanish but it is not a frightening or estranging experience for her – rather a new and exciting one. Foreigners can experience 'polymutism' when abroad, a form of estrangement from not only their home culture, but from language itself. Being cut off from your mother tongue can lead to not being able to filter or understand new experiences and consequently to a splitting from the self.[16] At this stage however, Kate should not be cut off from her mother

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[16]Kristeva (1991: 16) elaborates on this phenomenon in *Strangers to Ourselves*.

tongue as she is surrounded by other Irish. She is eager to talk to her friends and explore their new experiences. This does not occur on the first morning as neither is awake and indeed, throughout the narrative Kate finds herself unable to communicate her feelings and impressions of Buenos Aires to either Bessie or Nancy, nor the Irish living in Buenos Aires. This leads to frustration and disappointment. They may have been able to alleviate any sense of estrangement brought about by interaction with this new space, but instead of supporting each other and voicing the differences noticed, 'mutism' is enforced by her companions' silence rather than estrangement engendered by the diaspora space. Bessie does not want to know anything about the new diaspora space and takes the first post available with an Irish family in the camp called Kerrigan. Nancy seems more interested in talking to boys than taking in the local customs (45) but she does, nonetheless, prove herself more flexible than Bessie in terms of openness to the host culture, which she does not reject or ignore. She is curious for example, about how to drink *mate*, a local herbal tea (29).

Nevin's narrative also reveals that while local customs might amaze the Irish, the Argentines also find Irish behaviour shocking at times. When preparing for a dance to be held in Brady's to celebrate Carnival, Nancy offers to go to a neighbouring house to carry some chairs back with the help of some of the boys. Honoria responds 'Boys and girls? Oh, no, no. That's the sort of thing that shocks the natives' (44). It would seem that the concerns of the Catholic press in Ireland in relation to single women and appropriate behaviour mirror those of certain members of both Irish and *porteño* society. Cultural differences become apparent at the dance when Eliza Brady's Argentine partner looks on disapprovingly at the young people's behaviour: 'It was so clear that he disapproved of it to the marrow of his bones. Nobody could imagine him squeezing his partner, nor attempting to tickle her neck' (48). His presence however, remains a

mystery, as he is clearly courting Eliza, whose aunt was 'against native ways' (48). It may be an indication of the slow but inevitable assimilation into the host society, with relationships with natives from the host culture being resisted by the older diaspora subject but embraced by the more recent arrivals.

It is at this dance that homesickness and a sense of estrangement unexpectedly strike Kate:

> I was sitting there with my glass in my hand, people all round me, almost touching me, when suddenly I knew myself to be far away and alone, quite alone […] No one had been neglectful or unkind. Yet I was suddenly frightened, like a child that has lost its father's hand in a crowd. The people around me were strangers, shouting and laughing at each other. The people outside the window bars, going up and down the streets of this mad town, were singing and yelling in a language I didn't know. (49)

The feelings of displacement and fear lead her to question her decision to leave Ireland. Though Nancy was not accessible, one person notices her troubled face and offers to get her a cup of tea, so allowing her time to recover. His name was John Barry and he was from Galway. He tells her that he had been out there for two years and tries to reassure her by saying that 'the first months are the longest. It's alright when you get used to it' (50) confirming that her homesickness is natural and strikes everyone. His kindness and sympathy is accepted warmly by Kate, who, as:

> a newly arrived immigrant, like a newborn baby, is exceedingly sensitive. The need to feel welcome is such that any arrangement that works out or person who shows any interest whatsoever and is cordial and sympathetic makes the immigrant feel loved. In the same way, any setback can make him feel rejected by his new surroundings. (Grinberg 1989: 77)

Thus John's kind attention is welcomed by Kate, and in this character she finds a way out of the estrangement and mutism she experiences as he becomes her interlocutor.

This initial kindness soon develops into something deeper, with consequences for Kate's plans to return.

Encounters with the rural diaspora community

Kate and Nancy are invited by a Mrs Julia Brophy (portrayed as a harsh, acquisitive woman) to her place in the camp. Initially the girls think it is because she is a widow and might be lonely, though it transpires that she simply wants some unpaid labour to do housework for her. On the train journey we are given a glimpse of the expanse of the province and the landscape is presented as alien and empty, a strategy which 'employs the language of aesthetics [and so aligns the narrator] with those in positions of power' (Mills and Foster 2002: 91). Here however, Nevin employs the sublime aspect of the landscape not to locate the protagonist in a position of power but quite the opposite. The landscape is foregrounded as it alienates Kate and she cannot locate anything to ground her. Instead of inspiring her, the landscape provokes tedium:

> The train had crossed the town and had gone puffing amongst the gardens where everything was shrivelling under the cruel sun, and then it had got away into open country […] the farther we went the less there was, until in the end it seemed to me that there was nothing, and my eyes began to ache for the sight of trees or water, or even stones on the flat earth that stretched out to the sky all round us. (53)

When she comments on the tedium of the journey to Mrs Brophy, she quickly repents as the woman launches into a diatribe about how easy it was now compared to thirty years earlier when she had arrived: 'If it was thirty years ago, and you in a bullock cart, just afther havin'a child, an' goin' to a place where there wasn't a house built for ya, nor a well sunk to give ya wather, mebbe it'ud be tedious!' (54). The difference between the pampas then and now is not the only distinction here, as class differences are also

signified by Mrs Brophy's diction, which shows her to be of labouring or peasant stock: 'accent thus plays a distinctive, though ambivalent, role in the race / class positioning of Irish people' (Walter 2001: 164).[17] Nevin's sense of class rather than cultural superiority is highlighted in the fierce criticism she later levels at this woman.

Whilst staying at the Brophy household, the girls learn a little about 'camp' ways, specifically those practices concerning other people. Given the distance between ranches and holdings, certain cultural practices have become engrained in camp folk, and as Brabazon outlined, hospitable behaviour towards strangers is one of them. Mrs Brophy leaves the girls on their own for a couple of days while she attends a wake at a neighbouring ranch and Philip O'Mara, who works for a Mr Matt Hanrahan, owner of the largest Irish estancia on the pampas, turns up at the ranch looking for some lost cattle. When he enquires as to Mrs Brophy's whereabouts, Nancy tells him she would not have been an amiable hostess and would most likely have set the dogs on him. He refutes this notion and explains: 'This country is so big and bare that people must practise hospitality whether they like it or not. It is a law' (65). This practice, though not legally enforced, helps maintain links and civility. As could be seen in the character of Fr Slattery's potential groom however, visits were few and far between resulting in insular, isolated and non-communicative behaviours – social skills were difficult to learn in a vacuum.

Mrs Brophy's son, John, exemplifies the type of character who spends much of his time in the saddle, riding the plains and checking fences. When he arrives back at the ranch, he cuts off Kate's introductions, leaving Nancy to query if he was alright in the head. Philip tells her it is the lonely life and that 'some of these fellows are

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[17] Walter is referring to Irish women in Britain here and she argues that audibility, as opposed to visibility, is one of the most important and contested signifiers of cultural difference for Irish people in Britain, which we witness among the Irish community themselves in this narrative, rather than signifying difference from the native voice.

backward at first' (70). He is a truculent character, living an isolated and lonely life on the pampas, highlighting the need for matchmakers like Fr Slattery. It is not only John Brophy who proves uncivil though. When his mother returns a short while later, she sends Philip O'Mara on his way when she finds out he has not found any cattle (70). The law of hospitality does not include sociability. It is a survivalist mechanism to get people from one place to another, and not, for some, an occasion to socialise. Their short stay at the Brophy house comes to an end abruptly with Philip's departure, and Mrs Brophy informs them that 'a native lady', a Mrs Menchaca, is looking for someone to speak English to her children and teach them to read and write. Nancy eagerly hopes for the position, as her money is almost spent, and this could be an opportunity to learn something of the ways of rural life.

Later that evening, John Brophy's lack of social skills is further demonstrated when he tries to make a pass at Kate and accuses her of 'putting on airs' (75) when she rejects him. An independent, educated and non-passive female is repeatedly portrayed as trying to act better than her class or 'station'. That the attentions of a man with land and money behind him might be unwelcome to her is beyond either his, or his mother's capacity to understand as Mrs Brophy accuses Kate of trying to 'tempt' him and she tells her to leave the next day. We later find out that Mrs Brophy was trying to set up a match with an Irish neighbour who owned a larger plot and so would increase their status and economic position and Kate was not seen as someone who would make a good match, as she had no land. So Kate is asked to leave and she falls into the precarious position of a single, lone female as she is now bereft of both her travelling companions and must to return to the Brady house alone, having 'lost her last link to Home' (72).

Challenges to cultural identity and practices

Bessie and Nancy quickly find jobs as governesses and though the wages are not as high as they hoped, there are opportunities to be had and at better rates at times than their male counterparts: 'In 1872 the Office of Labour advertised for immigrant wet nurses at a wage of 400-500 pesos per month plus room and board. Maids, especially if foreign, commanded 300-400 pesos and were in great demand – a rural *peón* received 200-400 and a soldier 400' (Slatta 1983: 63). Domestic service was an option available to most single women, though Spanish women (*gallegas*) made up most of this sector, with a small Irish minority. The *mucama*, the dim Spanish maid, was a figure of fun and mockery in much the same way that the Irish 'biddy' was made fun of in the United States (Moya 1998: 225). While some women could take advantage of employers' anglophile attitude and ethnocultural preferences to become a mark of status within the homes of the *porteño* middle and upper classes, many other emigrant women were unskilled and earned low wages. As Devoto notes:

> Las mujeres inmigrantes están presentes en el trabajo a destajo (costura, lavado, planchado), en los pequeños talleres (camisería, fábricas de sombreros y cigarros) […] la concurrencia de las mujeres se da en los sectores menos calificados y la remuneración es inferior a la de los hombres aun en el mismo tipo de actividad. (2003: 303)

> [Female immigrants can be found in domestic work (sewing, laundering, ironing), in small workshops (dressmakers, hat and cigar factories) [...] women were mainly found in jobs with little qualifications needed and their pay was less than that of men, even those doing the same type of work]

As an educated woman, Kate at least had the possibility of becoming a governess open to her, and with this a better wage than most earned.

It takes three months for Kate to finally be interviewed for a position with a wealthy native family called Zamora. The interview brings up cultural attitudes to

family and marriage and sees Kate's first real resistance to the host society, though this could also be seen as criticism of certain Irish cultural practices such as the stem-family system or match-making, both of which are factors in Kate's departure. During the interview, Kate is asked about her family and why she did not stay with her father until he died and then with her married brother. Kate gets angry and retorts that she 'wanted to do something for myself. I can't be depending on my brother the day the place is his' (79). She may have also been experiencing guilt at having left her father as a daughter's familial loyalty was ingrained as part of domestic patriarchy. Though the '*inglés*' customs around inheritance are known to the family, they can not understand how 'the eldest son takes everything from his brothers and sisters and leaves them in the street' (79).

That her family and their customs come under such close scrutiny and criticism angers Kate and when the Zamoras ask why her family had not found her a husband she tells them: 'we don't do things like that in Ireland!' (80), which is a blatant lie. She tries to establish difference from the native community in the same way an exile might and romanticises Ireland and its customs, despite having firsthand experience to the contrary. This concurs with Naficy's argument that, while in the host country, exiles 'establish both cultural and ethnic differentiation (from the host society) and cultural and ethnic continuity (with an idealised past and the homeland); in short, what is at stake here is the construction of codes of 'distinction and space'' (1991: 209). The interview process is extremely disagreeable to Kate, who finds the ladies' persistent questioning about her family and her motives for leaving Ireland both shocking and outrageous, cutting too close to the bone and making her question her decision to leave Ireland and her family. By following an individual desire rather than serving the welfare of the family she had broken family bonds and was now subject to guilt and

shame. She had left with two friends in the hope of making money quickly only to find that not only were her two friends far from her, but she now has 'to live under one roof with these unaccountable people, for months, perhaps for years' (81).

The fact that the Zamoras are not 'unaccountable people' at all is soon evidenced and Honoria's warnings about the natives turn out to be prejudices. In fact, Nevin's portrayal of the Zamora family and their love of the Irish accent offers a contrary perspective to that seen repeated in the accounts of Irish women in other diaspora communities. Though domestic service and teaching were main sources of employment, there are many accounts of prejudice against the Irish accent. Neville recounts a tale of an Irish housemaid being dismissed from her New York household because: 'the people said they couldn't keep her because they didn't want the children to pick up her English' (1995: 205). In a similar account by Honoria, she explains how the Zamoras were wary of the Irish because of the experience of a friend of theirs who had an Irish teacher. When the family brought their children out to meet the British Consul, he was amused at the accent and rather colourful language the children had, which did not endear the teacher to the family. Despite Honoria's claim of their prejudice, the Zamoras not only hire another Irish teacher, but they also have an Irish cook and are happy for their children to 'take the accent' (88-9). This acceptance of the accent may also explain why this diaspora space was not as corrosive to the emigrant as the United States or Britain for example, where as Walter has argued, many women retreat into silence, a double silence of avoiding speaking and self-censorship in order to hide this signifier of cultural difference.

Nonetheless, disappointment and feelings of estrangement hover on the edges of the narrative and come into play whenever Kate's moods are affected. After weeks of going to the Sunday gatherings and getting to know John Barry, her friend Nancy

returns and monopolises his attention for the evening. This leads Kate to once again doubt her own judgement and her sense of self is injured by the knowledge that she may have misunderstood their relationship because of her loneliness. She is momentarily blinded to her self and true feelings: 'For a while I was unconscious of my own eyes looking back at me from the mirror' (103). She breaks out of this state with a feeling of disgust for her actions and recovers her sense of self: 'The sight of my own woe roused me. I would not go back to that room looking like a disappointed child' (104). Later that evening, however, she notes:

> What a strange unfriendly town it was that night! Why, I wondered, had I ever thought Buenos Aires bright and pleasant? How soon could I go Home? How soon, by teaching and skimping and saving, should I have a hundred pounds in my empty hands, so that I need not be ashamed to go back? (105)

This is significantly, the first time Nevin mentions any shame at the prospect of return. This hint of the fear of failure, especially after following her own path and not that of the marriage laid out for, introduces a note of guilt and shame into the narrative, just as Kate seems on the point of integrating into the host society. What is unclear, however, is whether that shame is related to the simple act of returning or returning single. This is not elucidated upon in the narrative however, as she soon resolves the misunderstanding with John and resumes her budding romantic relationship with him, beginning to make other friends within the Irish-Argentine community.

Representations of class, religion and home

Evidence of the changes taking place in the diaspora community is visible first of all, in class relations. Kate strikes up a tentative friendship with Annie Malone, the Irish cook in the Zamora household, though she finds her stiff at first. The hierarchical system of

the origin country is not easily relinquished in the host society and Annie does not want to seem that she is getting ideas above her station. However, the diaspora community cannot maintain certain practices from the origin country and the community itself must adapt to survive, and a status that would have been an impediment to forming a relationship in Ireland is superseded by nationality itself. Though Annie states 'no good ever kem of cooks mixing wid governesses' the fact that 'both of us being from Home' (91) forms a defensive line against the natives. Kate is surprised to find that she is not unhappy at the Zamoras, 'only lost, and strange and uncomfortable enough to count the days till I could go back for a few hours to Brady's. That was strange enough, too; my longing for a place that three months before had seemed outlandish and queer' (93). Visible now are the initial signs of integration into Irish-*porteño* society.

The Irish-*porteño* community was by no means ignorant of what was going on within their population or back in Ireland. Both Bessie and Nancy write from the camp with news of the Irish or Argentine families they were working for. Bessie seems preoccupied about the number of sheep and leagues of land each had (92). She was working for the Kerrigans, who were part of the emerging middle classes of the pampas. Kate visits Bessie when she falls ill and finds her disdain for the host country has not changed. She laments the 'long way she had travelled to the country she did not like and to these people who were nothing to her, and how it all led to this illness and would lead, perhaps, to death' (150). She believes she will become a Noreen Bawn-type figure and part of the shamed emigrant dead, a fate she actually avoids. It is on this journey that Kate has her first encounter with the nouveau riche of the pampas, some of whom were very keen to show off their newly earned wealth. During the journey to the house, Christopher Kerrigan tells her about how they had travelled out after the Famine and how hard his family had worked to get where they were. He is proud of what they have

achieved whereas his wife Margaret 'liked to count up what everyone had in the year 1880, not how they had struggled for it since 1848. Her husband's liking for tales of the old days was a trial for this woman' (158).

Many of the Irish women of the camp are shown in an unflattering light. Margaret Kerrigan and Julia Brophy, for example, are depicted as hard women who do not hold much respect for the practice of hospitality. As Kate notes: 'I cannot say that Margaret Kerrigan received me badly, but there was no warm-heartedness about her at all' (150), a statement which contrasts markedly with her treatment in the urban environment. Bessie shows herself to be of the same opinion as Margaret Kerrigan in terms of trying to construct a new identity for themselves and leave behind certain elements and reminders of their poor Irish backgrounds. Both Bessie and Mrs Kerrigan 'thought it was time the Bridgets, Ellens and Maryannes were put aside for something more genteel' (164) and so children are named Violet and Daisy, for example. Though this community may not have to remain silent in order to obscure one signifier of cultural difference, 'a marker which does not so readily disappear is that of names […] the practice of giving children Irish first names may be an even clearer sign of parents' intentional preservation of an Irish connection into several subsequent generations' (Walter 2001: 178). Hence, these families clearly indicate a break in this connection with one element of their Irish identity. Nonetheless, the very nature of chain migration and its regional specificity had an enormous impact on the Irish community. It ensured that it was difficult to erase reminders of one's origins, as there was always someone who could trace your roots. Mrs Kerrigan is at odds with Mulvey, a shepherd on the *estancia*. She feels Mulvey does not afford her husband the respect deserved because of the two leagues of land he owns. Mulvey however, sees things differently: 'Mulvey, whose father had known Margaret's relations at Home, was disposed rather to

remember that they had been "no betther than ourselves, an' mebbe not as good"' (167).

There are numerous indications of wanting to re-invent and redefine who they are and how they should be perceived, from the luxury of having their own governess to using parasols to keep the sun off themselves and so distinguishing themselves from the sun-tanned, working classes (173).

The opportunities and difference of this new land compared to their native country is highlighted in an exchange when Matt Hanrahan, at sixty-eight the owner of the largest Irish *estancia* in the area with over six leagues of land and thousands of sheep, asks Bessie 'Would there be a league of land in any farm y'ever saw at Home? (165). The small holdings and family units discussed earlier, were no match for the expanse of the pampas. Bessie shows some romantic interest in Philip O'Mara but when it becomes clear that he has no desire for herds of cattle or leagues of land, her interest wanes as she shows herself to be determined to marry a rich man and not have to work for others for a living. She ends up marrying Hanrahan, despite his uncultured and rough, drunken ways. Marriages of convenience, as in Ireland, are portrayed as pragmatic arrangements and Bessie is depicted as a practical character who has a strong need to achieve a perceived higher status. Kate is abhorred at Bessie's decision and her own class prejudices are exposed in an exchange she has with Doña Mercedes Zamora, whose comments show her to be very similar in character to Bessie. She tells Kate 'these *irlandeses* are healthy despite the drink…they'll have children, you'll see […] Your cousin is no fool; she has done well for herself. After all, he is her own countryman, and of her own class' (216). Kate is affronted at being seen in the same class as a man she views as unrefined and uncouth but who, in the diaspora space, is re-invented into a 'good match'. Her sense of class boundaries is shaken and she is left unsure how to respond to this.

Kate struggles with the challenges to her sense of identity, feelings of insecurity and the demands for adaptation into the new space but she also struggles with the claims of old and new cultural practices, especially those religious in nature. Though the native Argentines share her religion, even in their expression and celebration of their faith Kate finds herself estranged. It is this estrangement which encompasses one of the most prominent and painful aspects of her absence from Home as she ascribes her faith with elements of her cultural identity, specifically linking her to certain memories, practices and people. After one year into her stay Christmas arrives and she laments 'there was nothing to remind me of Home' (183). When she hears that there is to be a Mission to be held at the Kerrigans, there is a chance to redress this situation. Mrs Zamora advises her to go as: 'They expect everyone of their nation' (185). Here we have the native positioning the Irish as other to their own fledgling nation and a reminder of their difference. This difference is accentuated when she arrives at the Kerrigans and is met by children with 'blue Irish eyes, half bold and half shy. Children from Home they seemed, in spite of the sunburn' (186). The sun is portrayed as the enemy, the transformer of the white Irish body into a brown one, erasing their difference if left unchecked and necessitating the use of parasols to defend them against its transformative powers. The retention of certain Irish cultural values may signify that 'women in diaspora remain attached to, and empowered by, a "home" culture and a tradition – selectively. Fundamental values of propriety and religion, speech and social patterns, and food, body and dress protocols are preserved and adapted in a network of ongoing connections outside the host country' (Clifford 1997: 259). By attempting to preserve these 'connections' outside the host country, the fantasy of an eventual return is propagated.

Being at a mass said by an Irish priest sparks an overwhelming sense of nostalgia in Kate and as she looks around she remarks that the congregation 'might have belonged to the congregation in Mullingar: the men, tall, weather-beaten, and muscular; the women, redcheeked and good natured looking for the most part; they wore bonnets and sober black jackets in spite of the heat' (191). They refuse to let the host country's elements undermine tradition in order to replicate as closely as possible their society of origin, substantiating Naficy's argument around the establishment of codes of distinction with regards to cultural and ethnic differentiation from the host community as well as continuity with the past and a homeland. Furthermore, the mass serves as another cultural mnemonic and as she hears the prayers 'said the way I was used to and not in Spanish or Spanish Latin, as I'd been hearing them of late, I covered my face with my hands and cried softly. I felt that I was kneeling beside Father in the church at home [...] and now he has to go alone, and I was sorry for leaving home' (192). Here we have some indication of the conflict that accompanied emigration and the guilt at leaving parents behind 'alone', which in this case is not true as Kate's brother and his family remain in Ireland. Nonetheless, the fact that she links her father and churchgoing is further indication of the restrictions and duties imposed on women by domestic patriarchy. Kate's regret at leaving is quickly tempered by the realisation that if she had not left, she would never have met John. However, rather than relief she now 'felt torn two ways' (192).

This cleft in Kate's psyche problematises her relationship with home until six months into her stay. One night John offers to walk her home to the Zamora's and she thinks to herself that 'some day he would take me home indeed, to a home that would belong to us both. And I felt the warmth and comfort of it on that dismal day, though it was a place I had never seen' (142). Her imagined home with John supersedes her

'shame' at leaving her father behind. She now expresses what Brah refers to as a 'homing desire', that is desire for a home rather than a specific homeland. This engenders a rethinking of her position and an eventual re-evaluation of her attitude towards the host society and culture. She talks about the Zamora family as: 'noisy and interfering, but otherwise not half as bad as I expected' (115). The boat captain's earlier warnings about the natives are found to be exaggerated. When John asks her to marry him she surrenders her fantasy of an immanent return for a life with him in Buenos Aires and postpones her departure, converting both Ireland and return into a dream or fantasy space.

Kate and John buy a plot of land in Palermo and Kate fantasises about reproducing her mother's parlour and bedrooms in a house in Buenos Aires (184). This could be evidence of Nevin's own experience of her parents' migration as the reproduction of these elements operates as what Naficy calls 'cultural mnemonics, through the circulation of which […] exiles attempt to transmit to their children their native cosmologies and values' (1991: 290). In turn, we see Ireland defined as a constitutive element in Kate's sense of identity, despite her accommodation of certain Argentine practices. Thus, similar to Honoria Brady, it is Irish cultural mnemonics and an Irish home that Kate wants to replicate, not that of the host culture. Though willing to remain in the host country, it will be on her terms and without surrendering certain cultural values, no matter how contradictory they appear. When John tells her that the man who sold them the house, a native called Balbuena, had been deserted by his wife, Kate states: 'I couldn't but think it was just native ways – though I must say the women are good wives. But women didn't do that in Ireland – not even Barney Feeney's wife, who was reported to be black and blue all over from beatings; not that anyone ever

heard it from her' (208). For Kate, appearances have to be maintained and the family unit sustained, even when a woman's wellbeing and safety is in question.

The speed of her marriage and her imminent dependence on her husband's income is highlighted in an exchange with Mrs. Zamora who, when she hears of the marriage, is upset as she will be losing yet another governess: 'For me it will be the sixth time I lose a governess when the children are taking the accent' (124). The actions of the Zamoras towards Kate once again expose the prejudices of Honoria towards natives. The marriage brings up an important issue about the suitability of the chosen partner. The Zamoras insist on acting as her representative in checking out John and seeing he is of good character. As Akenson notes, many emigrants are 'at great pains to assure the family at home that the new spouse was acceptable' (1993: 184). John is a recent arrival and embodies the slowly changing attitude towards their host country and a willingness to embrace aspects of it. As Honoria says of him: 'Mr Barry knows everything about the city [after] only two years his knowledge is amazing, I who came from Home at the age of fifteen [...] cannot find my way about half so well' (84). He partakes in local festivals, speaks the language though he does not quite understand all the 'native' customs. When the city was in turmoil over the succession to President Avellaneda and he could not get in touch with Kate, he says: 'if they were not natives I could have paid a call to make sure that you were safe; but there's no knowing how they might have taken it' (122). In fact, if not quite a paragon, he certainly fares better than the portrayal of other Irishmen in the narrative.

When it becomes clear that Kate and John will be staying in Buenos Aires for some time, the fantasy of return is integrated into their future lives. Kate asks John:

'Are we to live here always now, John, or can we go Home later on?'

'Would you like to go Home, Kate?'

'If we could, some day'.

'We must then, some day'. (130)

As noted earlier the lost homeland is continuously posited as potentially recoverable and it is this drive to return that I now address in the final part of the chapter.

3. The Returnee as 'tainted' Subject

Ironically, as described in part two, the women's journey to Argentina is predicated on the account of someone who *did* go back. In the introduction to *You'll Never Go Back* Kate recalls how her first thoughts about emigrating came about when she met Maria Brady 'an elderly person […] who had been to South America […] and gave us an astonishing account of Buenos Aires – a place we had never heard of and never expected to see' (9-10). Brady's return, in fact, offsets the reproach implied in the chapter's second epigraph for those emigrants who make money and decide not to return to Ireland and share their good fortune. Kate does not relate what Maria told them, only the fact that she had been a governess and supposedly had come home wealthy, though she portentously states, 'it wasn't at all what she had led us to expect [in fact] she was a downright liar' (10). Here we have the returnee complicit in encouraging emigration and in doing so bearing out nationalist fears of the 'potential corruption on return'. A prominent Irish nationalist, Padraic Pearse, claimed the emigrant was 'a traitor to the Irish State' (Edwards 1979: 78) then the returned emigrant potentially more so.[18] Literary output which portrayed emigration bringing success and wealth was censored and nationalists such as Pearse feared that the returnee or stories of

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[18]Pádraic Pearse was a member of the Gaelic League, Irish literary revival and one of the leaders of the Irish Rebellion of 1916.

success and possible wealth beyond the national territory would 'expose the poverty, hardship and injustice that is the reality beneath the nationalist fantasies of Irish society' (Arrowsmith 2003: 108).

Maria Brady is depicted as giving a false or at least, misleading account of life abroad. This is redolent of letters sent to Ireland from emigrants in the United States, some of which disseminated an unrealistic picture of life abroad, where many were led to believe they would pick up money on the streets. Miller notes of a study of letters sent in 1836 that 'nine-tenths of the letters sent home contain exaggerated statements' (2008: 102). However, in keeping with Miller's assessment of Irish expectations of abroad there was also an element of self-delusion at play. Maria tells them she had been a governess to a wealthy South American family and because of this 'everybody in Granard believed that she had made quite a fortune, though she *never* expressly said so' (my emphasis, 10). Interestingly, there is a dual process of homogenisation at play here as throughout the narrative Argentina is referred to as the single entity, 'South America', suggesting an erasure of difference not only between countries of the continent but between the 'natives' of those countries who are homogenised into 'South Americans'. This resonates with the similar homogenisation of the Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English into the *inglés* category in Argentina.

That afternoon Maria Brady recounts her time spent as a governess in Buenos Aires and the three young women, Nancy, Bessie and Kate, begin to see the possibility that they too could 'teach South Americans' (9). Each woman in Nevin's work embodies different features of Irish society and serves as a cipher for highlighting the various roles women can adopt, adapt or reject. There is Bessie, at twenty-seven the 'ageing spinster', Nancy the flighty but also politically-aware woman, and Kate, unsure of who she is and open to new ways of defining herself. Each one has a different reason

for contemplating leaving, but all have complex relationships with 'home': in Bessie's case, she feels she does not even have a home. Moreover, all three girls have lost their mothers, a loss which deprives them of a feeling of security, which is thrown into relief by the fact that the new mother-figure (sister-in-law or stepmother) does not offer an anchor for their identity. These women, then, are deprived of a notion of home as a nurturing and welcoming place. As Ní Éigertaigh argues, home ordinarily serves to:

> orientate us and provide us with a sense of belonging […] it stands for shelter, stability, security and comfort (although actual experiences of home may well fail to deliver these promises). To be 'at home' is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves. (2007: 6)

In essence, these women feel they have lost not just a sense of belonging but the very idea of home. Bessie tells an astonished Kate: 'it was different when poor Aunt Margaret was alive, and before Pat got married; but now! Why that woman [Mary] reminds me that I'm receiving charity every time she hands me a cup of tea! I may well say, indeed, that I have no home!' (10). Nancy, feeling displaced also, adds: 'Well, no more have I a home. A house with a stepmother in it isn't a home, Lord knows!'.

Their marital status is another push factor and, as outlined in Section One, earning money abroad might afford them at least a voice in their choice of partners. Though Michael Connolly is portrayed as a generous man, Bessie seems to hold little hope of a dowry to aid in escaping the repeated taunts of Mary about being an 'old maid'. When she is nearly convinced by a friend to stay in Ireland, it is being referred to once more as 'spinster' by Mary which propels her to leave and to earn her independence abroad (11). Kate is not without her own troubles as she remembers 'how cross Pat's Mary had been when I laughed at the idea of marrying old Barney O'Halloran, the time he proposed to me' (10). There are obviously plans to make a

match for the youngest Connolly daughter and though Kate rejects this man, she would come under increasing pressure to marry someone, not be a 'burden' to her family and overstay her welcome in what would be her elder brother Patrick's home, not hers. Sadly, Kate notes 'it began to appear that none of us were wanted at home' (11). The push factor behind departure in this case then, is a mix of personal ambition and feeling alienated from the family home and society. Instead of passively awaiting their fate, these women become of agents of change. In leaving Ireland and the relative 'safety' of their known environment, each woman takes the opportunity to become independent and have a choice in any future partner if that is what they want.

To say they are unwanted is misleading however, as it is in the face of parental disapproval that they leave. Michael Connolly is not happy about their decision to go to Argentina and he enlists the help of the local priest in efforts to dissuade them: 'he was vexed and tried to reason with us, and called in Fr Molloy to make his Reverence reason with us' (11). The clergy were often appealed to by parents hoping to exploit their standing and influence: 'the clergy were beseeched to use their persuasive powers and the emigrants themselves were either eloquently appealed to on patriotic grounds or else roundly denounced as unpatriotic or soulless creatures, or even traitors' (Schrier 1997: 49). Nonetheless, the church had a vested interest in staunching the flow of emigrants as there were fears that the clergy too would have to emigrate or face a country without a flock.[19] The same preparations were not carried out for male migrants and the salient issue for many women migrants is thus their gender and single status, both of which become the focus of attention in a way that underscores a gendering of migration discourse. In her review of women's emigration to Britain in the early twentieth century Jennifer Redmond argues that: 'whilst persons remain unmarried their conduct

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[19]Schrier (1997) recounts how an 1863 newspaper warned of an impending lack of congregation in Ireland if emigration was not halted, 180 n. 2.

was monitored and concern expressed about any perceived transgressions in behaviour […] intertwined within moralist discourse on many topics [literature, film and improper behaviour at dances] was youth, gender and singleness' (2008: 456). The Catholic press in Ireland was particularly concerned with issues of morality and correct behaviour and referred to the migration of single women from Ireland as either 'an alarming evil' or the single status as 'sinful singleness'.[20] Before their long sea voyage, a mass was said for migrants in which the priest 'had a special word of encouragement for the young Irish girls and told them never to miss saying three Hail Marys every morning to Our Lady, and they would find that she would look after and protect them' (Neville 1995: 202), less they become 'tainted' while on foreign shores.

Similar to Michael Connolly's reaction, Mr. Dwyer 'was furious with Nancy' but neither parent seems able to prevent their child from leaving, possibly highlighting the power Kate's sister-in-law Mary had in the household (as well as Nancy's stepmother). When, after two months of trying to dissuade them, Mr. Connolly finally accepts their decision, Fr Molloy tells him to 'write to the Bradys in Buenos Aires and make arrangements. Let them, if they must go, have introductions to respectable people' (11). Thus their travel and arrival would fit the social mores of the period, framed by the need for propriety. Mills and Foster note 'the emphasis on morality and propriety contingent upon "being a lady", so influential in mid-Victorian Britain, necessitated a similar insistence on socially accepted gendered behaviour even for the most adventurous female travellers' (2002: 2). The Bradys were seen as someone of the same class as the Connollys and thus fit to chaperone and help the girls, to 'claim' them so to speak, as it was inconceivable that they would manage on their own. Therefore, even before departure, women's emigration is mired in issues of morality and posited as

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[20]Louise Ryan (2002: 111) cites the 'alarming evil' in her analysis of gender and Irish identity in the Irish press, while Redmond employs the 'sinful singleness' quote in the title of her article which analyses the gendering of discourses on Irish emigrants.

a transgressive act. Their single status is seen as inherently 'corrupt' or 'sinful' and they are thought of as being lured or seduced into selfishly leaving their homes and families to fulfil a whim or individual desire. That the remittances they would send back often saved their families is overlooked in the efforts to display their departure in as negative a light as possible. Furthermore, unlike her male counterpart, the female emigrant's leaving was framed by prayers to the Virgin and she was encouraged to continue to pray to her in an attempt to cleanse them of the taint of both their singleness and defiance of their family's wishes. Walter points out that post-Famine efforts by the Church in fashioning gender saw the Virgin Mary as a model embodying qualities such as 'duty to family, self-sacrifice, submerged sexuality and the elevation of a caring function above all others' (2001: 18). In this respect, the female emigrant's leaving has the capacity to undermine Irish national identity as both patriarchal and family-oriented, as in this narrative for example, patriarchal authority in the guise of protective parent and clergy is clearly overridden.

In Nevin's narrative a chance encounter with a putatively wealthy female returning *irlandés* from a far-off place inspires these women to leave Ireland in the hope of making enough money to ensure a successful return. They leave in the naive belief that they would simply go to Buenos Aires, contract jobs as governesses, earn money in a year and come back successful, independent women. They consider it a huge achievement to get their names and destination carved on their trunks and even reach Dublin 'which was farther than any of us had been before. I cried, but I realised neither what I was leaving, nor what was in store for me until long afterwards' (12). Their ignorance as to what constituted an emigrant's life is a repeated theme in their journey to and around Buenos Aires.

Resistance to the fantasy

Kate, Nancy and Bessie arrive in Buenos Aires accompanied by Maria Brady's account of riches quickly and easily earned. The first clue that this account is no more than a chimera comes quickly and directly impacts on the fantasy of return as well as highlighting their ignorance of the reality of an emigrant's life. Exactly what they had let themselves in for is exposed when they realise that to fulfil the goal they had set themselves (earning £100) would take five years, not one. Their hostess, Honoria Brady, outlines the three options available to women; domestic service, nursery governess or a position in a school. Working with Argentine families pays better as she says the 'natives are more apt to make your life a burden and to compensate you lavishly [and, though] they would feel more at home among our own [...] those who are now wealthy have had hard lives and drive hard bargains' (27). This is a not a land for the fainthearted and rewards have to be worked for.

It is Honoria Brady who first admonishes them for talking about going home and the three women get their first hint that return may not be as easy as they expected, nor they as welcome back as they hoped. She has no doubt that they: 'should all get married and settle down in the country, which was what happened to most of the young ladies from Home'. (27). This is followed the very next day by a further attack on their return fantasy by the local chaplain, Fr Slattery, described by Eliza Brady as 'a priest that rides about the camp christening and marrying and burying the Irish, so that they needn't be depending on the native clergy' (33). He comes to the Brady house after hearing of their arrival and wants to see how suitable they might be as wives, so extending the endogamous nature of the Irish community. His interrogation of the girls begins with 'Well, what made you leave Ireland, eh? No boys to be had in your part of the country?', reflecting the prevailing view that women left home only in order to get

married. When Kate tells him that they 'came out to find something to do, Father. A cousin of Miss Brady's in Ireland told us about a number of people who came out to this country and made money', he scowls at her and says 'Women don't make money – in this country or in any other. They leave that to their husbands' (34). The notion that women's skills cannot be of service financially or that they should be content with being a wife is prevalent and in keeping with the patriarchal norms of the Catholic Church at the time.

The assumption made is that these women are either paupers searching for husbands or they left Ireland because their families were destitute and they would have to send remittances home. When the girls tell him that they are there to make money in order to be able to go home independent, he tells them: 'Not one that comes out to this country to make a living ever goes back, d'you hear? So let that nonsense out of your head now, and settle down as soon as you get the chance with any decent fellow that'll have you. Mind his house and raise plenty of children for him' (34). This is to be the first of many warning signs. A women's role is quite clearly defined in the church's eyes and when they refuse to marry the unknown suitor, the priest shows scorn for their possible choices and any education they may have had; 'What are you going to do with yourselves, teach, eh? I daresay you're what they call well-educated, like poor Honoria, God help her! [...] It's not learning a man looks for in a woman-least of all in a country the like of this' (36). Argentina's 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised' character is once again hinted at in his comments which also echo those of Colonel Featherstone about the women being bred above their station. After only two days in Buenos Aires, Kate begins to feel uneasy, having been told by two separate people that she will never go home again.

Nonetheless, the fantasy of return is upheld by constant news and contact with friends and family in Ireland and Buenos Aires. We are told letters from Ireland arrived regularly (92) and there is also mention of a newspaper called the *Weekly Star* 'a paper brought out by Mr Felix Considine, and widely read by "our people" in camp and city' (93). There is no historical record of this newspaper though it is possible that it is based on one of the numerous English and Irish-owned newspapers of the time, such as the *Buenos Aires Herald* or *The Southern Cross*, discussed in Section One.[21] The newspaper does not receive much praise from Kate, as it seems to serve to whitewash any scandal or criticism of the Irish community. An example of this arises when Honoria's brother Joseph dies and it is discovered that he had had children with a local woman, who attends his funeral. The woman is referred to by Eliza as 'that native slut' (134). She feels that the family has been shamed, not only by the fact of having a 'native' in the family, but by the three children 'one blacker than the other' (135). This hypocrisy on the part of a woman involved with a native man highlights the contradictions in attitudes towards the native society. Joseph had transgressed cultural boundaries and let his 'Home' community down. Part of the ensuing frustration may have been brought about by the fact that a lawyer had been called so, as Honoria says 'a part of what little we have will go to them by law' (136). Mr Considine's concern however, is with the 'extreme delicacy of [his] position', that is, how to present the tawdry facts to his readers within the 'practice of high-class journalism [where] there are certain niceties, certain conventions to be observed' (137).

Nostalgia is an integral characteristic of the return fantasy and packing her bags in order to leave the Brady boarding house to go live with the Zamoras, produces a scene of nostalgia for Kate and brings to mind her that 'last night in the kitchen at home,

[21]See Marshall (1996) for details of official publications. Felix Considine and *The Weekly Star* could be based on William Bulfin and *The Southern Cross* newspaper, both well-known to the Nevin family.

with the firelight brightening the blue plates on the dresser and Father pretending to read the paper because it was so heartbreaking to try and talk' (82). She finds a photograph which triggers memories of home. Photographs provide an important means of retaining links with home and operate as another cultural mnemonic. This photograph functions as a mnemonic not just of place but of time. It depicts her family, taken the year before her mother died. Her father is holding one of Thomas Moore's ten volume *Irish Melodies* and her brother is still single.[22] Her sister Margaret and Bessie are also present and Kate yearns for that moment in time which preceded the break up of her family and her leaving home. Naficy points out that 'nostalgia for one's homeland has a fundamentally interpsychic source expressed in the trope of an eternal desire for return – a return that is structurally unrealisable' (1991: 285). The content of the photo and its subsequent desire for return to a specific moment in time is made impossible by the intervening deaths, marriage and emigration of five of the six people photographed. The only constant for Kate is her father, as return to the time and moment of the photo is in no way possible, just as the home portrayed in the photo is also irretrievable (83). Despite having achieved a form of independence in leaving, Kate harks back to a time when she was still enmeshed in domestic patriarchy, which speaks to the complexity of the return fantasy and difficulties in gaining autonomy. Grey argues that women's 'steps towards independence and self-empowerment through migration quickly become retracked into family, kin and ethnic obligations' (2000: 181). The protagonist fights against surrendering to this nostalgia and thoughts of return are temporarily displaced in favour of the diaspora space. This might also demonstrate how Nevin as author and second-generation Irish-Argentine also rejects nostalgia and uses

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[22]Published between 1808 and 1834 these *Melodies* were seen as repositories of eighteenth and nineteenth century Irish culture. Brown (2010: 39) argues that with his *Melodies* 'Moore begins a process in which music can be released from immediate, perhaps subversive, political exigencies and be made the basis of an essentially unthreatening form of national sentiment'.

her characters to mediate the past of her parents and their construction of 'home' as well as the complexities of the diasporic condition.

Conclusion: The Fantasy Interrupted

The circumstances of Kate's journey to Argentina are marked by notions of class and the socio-economic structure of Irish society as well as its cultural practices. For the three women in this novel, nineteenth-century Irish society and their sense of security there was undermined first of all because of the devaluation of women's status in general in post-Famine Ireland. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, home for these women had become a place which resonated with alienation and loss, paradoxically a state more common to the exile's experience of the host country. Rather than surrender to the designs of a sister-in-law or stepmother and to escape the stigma of spinsterhood, these women become agents of their own destiny and refuse to remain passive subjects, thwarting both parental and clerical authority to do so. Nevin portrays each character travelling with a sense of Irishness as being constituted through her rural, class-conscious background. However, Kate's encounters with other sections of Irish society in addition to her interaction with native Argentines enable her to re-consider her conception of Irishness. The members of the Irish community with whom she engages display an awareness of their otherness, both in Ireland and in Argentina. The older generation's insistence on looking backwards to Ireland sheds a light on their continuing strategies of resistance to the diaspora space while the newer generation reveals more accommodation of that space into their lives. Moreover, it is clear that the Irish emigrant identity can be one in which accommodation of other cultural practices does not have to entail corruption of their own. Though in leaving Ireland these women unwittingly become part of the prevailing discourse of the unwanted and potentially

corrupting returnee, Kate rejects this positioning and repeatedly challenges those who would label her as such. Despite the fact that the narrative reveals an occasional hint of nostalgia, it is not for Ireland, but for her father, reflecting a shift in identity-making practices, focussing now on people rather than place. This shift is evidenced in the final pages of the novel.

Kate's dream of an eventual, though postponed return holds true until about a year into her stay, when one of her strongest connections to home, and patriarchy, is severed. She receives a letter which instantly transports her Home:

> before I opened it, I could see the place as if I were standing there […] the road from the town, shaded by trees […] bluebells on either side of the path [...] Father's tall figure crossing the yard – the day before we left home I had suddenly noticed that he stooped. He had grown very silent too, since Mother died. I felt a pain in my heart. Why had I left him? …I was always his favourite; I should have stayed. My heart cried out: "Father, father, I'll go back soon". (223-4)

Her guilt and shame at having abandoned her father and postponing her return is cut short by the news that her father has died. This news however, means that Kate no longer has to struggle with feelings of shame at having postponed her return: she can now feel at peace in her adopted country. The letter and its news mark a new chapter in her life: 'I felt now that I was accepting this country for better or for worse. What need to think of saving and going home, now that Father was gone?' (225).

Kate's statement reflects the multifaceted nature of home:

> on the one hand […] a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings [...] all this, as mediated by the historically specific every day of social relations. (Brah 1996: 192)

Nevin's character's sense of self and home following her father's death is now

inextricably linked to the diaspora space of Buenos Aires. Her ties to Ireland have

loosened and it is her host country which holds her future as she finds a space within the

Irish-*porteño* community which she would make her own. There is a sense in Nevin's

work of the old ways passing and the newer emigrants willing to integrate and

accommodate rather than resist the host country, an opportunity to face forwards rather

than back, indeed become the Irish-Argentine subject which we shall see William

Bulfin construct in his sketches. Though Ireland will not be forgotten, the particular

sights and sounds will now become part of Nevin's cultural memory and we see the

emergence of a new mode of belonging: 'for me [the rivers, fields and trees] would be a

beautiful memory, since those that made them real and gave them meaning were gone.

My childhood and my youth belonged to that memory, my womanhood had begun here

and now' (225). Thus Kate's, and by extension the author's, rite of passage into

adulthood, like both the young John Brabazon and William Bulfin, takes place in the

diaspora space.

Eventually the diaspora community and her relationship with John in particular,

become the site where her new identity will be constructed. The death of her father

diminishes, though does not entirely eliminate, the desire to return and she

acknowledges that with his death, Ireland as Home does not hold the same 'elusive

desire' that it once did. Her experiences in Argentina show her that a sense of

belonging is not fixed or bound by location and 'the double, triple or multi-placedness

of "home" in the diasporic imaginary, does not exclude feeling anchored, or rooted in

the place of settlement' (Brah 1996: 194). Nevin's narrative ends with a view of the

Irish diaspora community as one in-process. Although Argentina is depicted as a

location of dislocation, it is also one which offers hope of new beginnings and new

ways of living out Irishness: 'I would face my life in this strange country among its dark-skinned kindly people; the unknown tongue, the blue sky, the blazing sun, the flat-roofed city, even the solitude of the camp and the sky at night with its unfamiliar stars, I would accept all these and make them mine' (225). The final individual articulation and re-imagining of identity is the subject of the final chapter and the writer William Bulfin.

Chapter 5: William Bulfin – Extending the Boundaries of Irishness

'Delightful is the land beyond all dreams,

Fairer than aught thine eyes have ever seen.

There all the year the fruit is on the tree,

And all the year the bloom is on the flower'.[1]

'Perhaps there is no phenomenon so marked as the magnetism, strong as a lover's passion,

which ever draws the exiled Irishman home'.[2]

1. Introduction

In 1884, twenty-year-old William Bulfin leaves his home in Birr, County Offaly with

his older brother Peter to emigrate to Argentina. After a few years working on various

estancias on the pampas he settles in the city of Buenos Aires and begins to publish

short stories in *The Irish Argentine* and later *The Southern Cross* newspaper under the

pseudonym 'Che Buono'. These stories or 'sketches' as Bulfin titles them, not only

fictionalise his experiences on the pampas and his encounters with other nationalities

and *gauchos*, they also offer advice to his readers on how to deal with local customs and

characters and chronicle historical events.[3] Eight of these sketches were later compiled

and published as *Tales of the Pampas* in 1900. *The Southern Cross* also serialised

Bulfin's return journey to Ireland in 1902, later published in one volume entitled

Rambles in Eirinn in 1907. In this chapter I analyse how Bulfin's 'Sketches' and

editorials published in *The Southern Cross* during the years 1889 to 1906 contribute to

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[1] This is from the myth of *Tír na nÓg*, and is part of Niamh's song to Oisín about the Land of Eternal Youth.

[2] From an anonymous 1907 review of *Rambles in Eirinn* published in *The New Ireland Review*, p.124.

[3] The majority of the articles and stories Bulfin wrote came under the title or subtitle 'Sketches of Buenos Aires' or 'A camp sketch'.

the re-imagining of Irishness and the formation of a distinct Irish-Argentine community and identity.

This chapter is divided into three parts, the first of which explores the nature of Bulfin's sketches and the difficulty in classifying them. I then provide an overview of Bulfin's background, literary inspirations and influences in addition to contextualising cultural and political nationalism in Ireland between 1890 and 1910. The impact of this ideology on the English-speaking communities in Argentina leads to a split in these communities and I analyse editorials from *The Standard* and *The Southern Cross* newspapers which provide details of the nature of that divide. In this second part, I also examine how Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas* vividly capture what Naficy denotes as exilic in discourse: 'the demonstration of ambivalences, resistances, slippages, dissimulations, doubling, and even subversions of the cultural codes of *both* the home and host society' (1993: xvi). These ambivalences and subversions attest to the formation of an Irish-Argentine identity brought about by relationships within the diaspora space, which is 'inhabited not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous' (Brah 1996: 181). Thus I examine Bulfin's encounters with the others he meets on his travels, in particular the *gaucho*. His *Tales of the Pampas* reveals empathy for *gaucho* culture, affinity for the Spanish language as well as signs of resistance to the host culture and society. The collection also evinces the gradual linguistic and cultural integration of the Irish community into Argentine society. As part of this integration process I discuss the impact of the Second Boer War (1899-1902) on Irish and Argentine society. In addition, I examine how Bulfin employs *The Southern Cross* as a tool for carving out a distinct Irish-Argentine as opposed to *inglés* identity.

Unlike Brabazon and Nevin, Bulfin realises the fantasy of return and becomes a 'returning *irlandés*' and part of my analysis entails an exploration of how this newly configured Irish-Argentine and returnee identity are constituted within the paradigm of exile and Irish cultural nationalism. Bulfin's depiction of a transnational identity challenges hegemonic notions of Irishness as being grounded within the borders of national territory. An 'Irish Irelander', Bulfin's writing reflects paradoxes and ambiguities engendered by his ongoing struggle to reconcile his nationalism with his lived experience of diaspora and interaction with the diaspora space of Argentina. This is a space 'where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle even while these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition' (Brah 1996: 208). This chapter examines how Bulfin's sketches imaginatively construct these multiple subject positions as well as contradictory notions of Irishness: national (implying fixed in place), essentialist and homogeneous versus transnational, defined in terms of diversity and multiplicity. I contend that his narratives articulate a version of national identity which contests and unsettles the exclusivist anchoring of Irishness in a fixed place or territory, one of the main characteristics of anti-colonial nationalism and one which in fact undermines his own avowed nationalism. Bulfin's writing attests to a distinct transnational Irish identity, that of the Irish-Argentine.

To this end, the final part of this chapter discusses the contradictory space that Bulfin occupies as a returnee. His return journey to Ireland in 1902 can be read as a rallying cry to all Irish diaspora communities to support the cause of an 'Irish Ireland' and conversely, for Irish Ireland not to forget, nor exclude, those diaspora communities living outside the national territory. This resoundingly advanced nationalist text also

reveals the extent to which the diaspora space of Argentina has pervaded, unsettled and transformed Bulfin's notions of Irishness.[4] The Irish-Argentine community depicted in his narrative is praised for its commitment to both elements of their syncretic cultural identity. Syncretism is also a feature of Bulfin's sketches, an analysis of which is the subject of the following section.

Sketching pampa and *porteño* society

Bulfin travels and resides in Argentina over a period of twenty three years (1884-1907). His sketches chronicle daily life on the pampas and in *porteño* society, recording their polymorphic qualities. The variety in content and genre of Bulfin's sketches problematises classification of his writing. Critics tend to treat the sketches as either literary journalism which reports on historical facts, events and people with what John Bak calls 'emphasis on authorial voice' (2011: 1) or literary negotiations of diasporic identity written in an emotive or dramatic mode.[5] David Spurr distinguishes literary journalism from fiction 'by the conventional expectation of its grounding in an historical actuality; its relation to this actuality is understood to be primarily metonymic and historically referential rather than metaphoric and self-referential' (1993: 2) and indeed, many of Bulfin's sketches fit this expectation. A significant number, however, contravene this convention and use rhetorical devices of myth, symbol and metaphor more usually associated with fiction (Spurr 1993: 3). Other examples are found in *Tales of the Pampas*, which are loosely based on his experiences travelling and working in the province of Buenos Aires and follow 'the paradigm of a multicultural mosaic shaped by the immigrants […] Irish rogues, Spanish aristocrats, Scottish bookkeepers, Galician

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[4]Advanced nationalists, as opposed to those in the Irish Parliamentary Party, wanted complete independence from Britain, not simply Home Rule, as the IPP fought for. I will return to this struggle in part two of this chapter.
[5]See, for example, Kelly (2009) for criticism of Bulfin's editorials for example, and Juan José Delaney (2004) for a literary critique of the sketches.

shopkeepers, estancia hands of gaucho origins, and of courses, Irish shepherds' (Murray 2009: 91). Clearly, a different, more appropriate framework is required. From literary journalism to fiction, the multiple crossings of genre and its grounding in travel, diaspora and questions of identity have lead me to approach Bulfin's sketches in terms of literary travel narratives as a frame for interrogating his work.

Bulfin, like Nevin, crosses genres in his writing and his narratives reflect 'the hybrid nature of the travel book and travel writing, the role of the fictive and referential, as well as other works of representation' (Borm 2004: 13). While *Tales of the Pampas* uses literary techniques in its exploration of the 'exotic' space of the pampas, the collection of sketches also shares with *Rambles in Eirinn* characteristics and topoi attributed to travel texts, such as romantic descriptions of landscape or observations of customs and people in addition to the demarcation of identity and difference.[6] In fact, Michael Kowalewski asserts that the travel narrative 'borrows freely from the memoir, journalism, letters, guidebooks, confessional narrative and most importantly, fiction' (1992: 7). Moreover, travel narratives, while 'subordinating other aspects of the writer's life, […] typically chronicle or reconstruct the narrator's experience of displacement, encounter, and travail and his or her observations of the unknown, the foreign, the uncanny [and offer] occasions for both the reimagining and the misrecognising of identity' (Smith and Watson 2001: 207). This critical approach is not meant to be an all-encompassing, definitive tool with which to analyse Bulfin's sketches. Instead it is a heuristic device with which to explore representations of identity, subject positions, questions of diaspora and travel and the impact of diaspora space on identity (trans)formation.

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[6]J.J. Delaney (2004) notes that *Tales of the Pampas* was included in a series of 'other "exotic" books like *The Ipané,* by R. B. Cunninghame Graham; *In Guiana Wilds,*by James Rodway; *A Corner of Asia,* by Hugh Clifford; *Negro Nobodies,* by Noèl de Montagnac and *Among the Man-Eaters,* by John Gaggin' (17).

Bulfin's sketches are populated by a multitude of characters, from beggars and coachmen to accountants and bankers. He bears witness to life in the capital city and offers his readers advice about local customs and how to navigate the dangers and pitfalls.[7] On his bicycle trip around Ireland in 1902, the sketches which make up *Rambles in Eirinn* comment on tourism, the state of the education system and economy, deforestation and land ownership as well as focussing on descriptions of landscape and customs. Moreover, as the Irish movement towards political independence and away from English rule gained strength, the desire to establish a distinct Irish presence in Argentine society becomes a central characteristic of Bulfin's sketches. This was not only to distinguish the Irish from the *inglés* community into which they had been subsumed for decades but also to set them apart from an ever-increasing number of new immigrant communities in Argentina.[8] His sketches interrogate notions of identity, belonging and home, especially in his encounters with others in the diaspora space of Argentina.

Bulfin has recently received increasing critical attention from historians such as Helen Kelly (2009) and literary critics such as Laura Izarra (2004, 2011), Edmundo Murray (2009) and Juan José Delaney (2004), who trace the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina. Izarra depicts Bulfin as 'a double agent of historical transformation within his own community: in his sketches and short stories he creates a new locality, a new "home"' (2004: 348). While I support the argument that his sketches, and, from 1896, his editorship of *The Southern Cross*,

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[7]A few examples of the concerns of the community, according to Bulfin, can be seen in the following articles: 'The *Corrador* and his work' about debt collectors and the nature of the elite in Buenos Aires (1 Jan 1892); 'Mr Larcher's cure – a medical and non-medical story of Buenos Aires' about the state of medical care (11 March 1898); 'How police news is written' an excoriating account of how the native press reports crimes, in which he criticises the use of foreign words in their articles, making them long-winded and obtuse (15 April 1898).

[8]From census data in 1869 and 1895, Kelly (2009) notes that the Irish born community increased by only 2.91%, from 5246 to 5407, whereas the Argentine born went from 3377 to 13210. This accounts for over 70% of the total 18617-strong community in 1895, which pales in comparison to the overall increase of 80% of foreign born in Argentina in the same period.

contribute greatly to the re-invention of the Irish community in Argentina, the question

of whether he constructs Argentina as a new 'home' is more problematic. Among many

definitions, home can be a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination [or] the

lived experience of a locality' (Brah 1996: 192). In Bulfin's case, notions of home and

belonging are tied up in what some critics call his 'combative anti-British nationalism'

and 'fervent cultural nationalism'.[9] Certainly, new links are forged with and within the

diaspora space and I direct my attention specifically to how his sketches move beyond

inherited notions of national identity based on territoriality. I argue that what is

apparent in his narratives is not so much Argentina as a new 'home(land)' as a

movement away from place as a primary referent for identity construction. In doing so

Bulfin challenges prevailing Irish nationalist sentiment which rooted 'authentic'

national identity in national territory. This, as Gray argues, signifies that 'emigrants [...]

are rendered invisible and "inauthentic", thereby disqualifying emigrants from the status

of "true" Irishness' (1999: 199).[10] Therefore, in order to remain part of the nation, and

to ensure his descendants would also be part of it, Bulfin had to redefine the borders of

that nation and expand it to include the diaspora space.

The contradictions inherent in Bulfin's sketches are further complicated by his

depiction of diasporic experience as exilic, which in turn is 'inexorably tied to

homeland and to the possibility of return' (Naficy 1999: 3). Within late nineteenth-

century nationalist ideology, the concept of emigration as economic opportunity was

eschewed in favour of emigration as economic 'refuge', with the figure of the emigrant

one forced into involuntary exile. Though Brah (1996) suggests that not all diasporas

are inscribed with a desire for a homeland, it is clear from Bulfin's writing that he

sustains an ideology of return. Throughout both *Tales of the Pampas* and *Rambles*

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[9]See Ryle (1999: 5) and Kelly (2009: 179) respectively. See also Murphy (2001: 45-70).

[10]For an analysis of the complex patterns of Irish nationalism see chapters 7 and 8 of Boyce (1995) and for an examination of cultural nationalism and its genesis Hutchinson (1987).

Bulfin's representation of the returnee complies with what Salman Rushdie calls the 'dream of glorious return' (1988: 205). This runs counter to prevailing nationalist sentiment and the image of the returnee analysed in the Introduction, which censored literary output which portrayed emigration bringing success and wealth. Nonetheless, Bulfin's promotion of return is paradoxically conflated with the fashioning of an Irish-Argentine identity. Bulfin is, therefore, a contradictory figure, occupying several subject positions ranging from emigrant to exile to returnee. His life in exile, as he terms it, is linked to how departure is viewed in his native land. As Naficy asserts: 'we must consider the paradigm of exile as it operates within the exiles' native culture, because it is through that paradigm that they think and experience their lives in exile' (1991: 286). The paradigm of exile as it operated in Ireland between 1890 and 1910 is inextricably connected to nationalism and the struggle for independence.

The essentialist nature of Irish identity as constituted within Irish nationalism becomes undermined in Bulfin's sketches by travel, the diasporic experience and affinity with indigenous elements of the host country. However, I do not mean to imply that Bulfin promotes an all-inclusive approach to Irishness, as his writing also upholds certain essentialist tendencies in his bias and prejudice towards the Anglo-Irish and hints of anti-Semitism. In addition, there are occasions of assumed cultural superiority over those he encounters both on the pampas and on his travels in Ireland. Though moving away from place as a key referent for Irishness, he nonetheless delimits the boundaries of national identity within the framework of exile, religion and language, the foundations of which we can extrapolate from his background and literary influences.

Biography, literary inspirations and influences

William Bulfin was born in Derrinalough House, Birr, County Offaly in 1864. He was the non-inheriting fourth of ten sons and studied at the Royal Charter School (Classical Academy) and the Presentation Schools in Birr. He finished his formal education at the Galway Grammar School (Murphy 2001: 47). In 1884, just two years after Gladstone's Land Law granting the three Fs (fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale), Bulfin emigrated to Argentina with his brother Peter, encouraged by his uncle, Fr. Vincent Grogan, the Provincial of the Passionist Fathers.[11] Fr. Grogan may have been attempting to continue the work of Fr. Fahy, whose death in 1871 had been followed by a sharp decline in Irish emigration to Argentina. In addition, his order had a monastery in Carmen de Areco, situated just north of the river Salado in the northern part of Buenos Aires province. This is one of the main centres of Irish settlement and it is most likely through Fr. Grogan's connections that Bulfin secured work on an *estancia* near there run by a Longford man called John Dowling.[12] While working for the Dowling family on the pampas 'for three years he had to sleep in the open air with the sky for a roof. During this time he read voraciously in history, poetry and romances; between his experiences and observations he was able to store away the material which was to serve him well for his Argentinean tales and sketches' (Callan 1982: 393).

In an echo of the matchmaking practices depicted by both Brabazon and Nevin, it is on the Dowling estate that Bulfin meets his future wife Anne O'Rourke, who was a governess to the Dowling children.[13] They were married in 1891 and moved to the city

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[11]Though we know Bulfin emigrated with his brother, there is no further mention of him in any of his writing or letters to his wife Anne, which may indicate he re-emigrated to the United States or returned to Ireland.

[12]See Delaney (2004) for further details on other Irish settlements within the area.

[13]Anne was from Ballymore, County Westmeath, which Brabazon was so scathing of because of its supposed miscreants and criminals.

of Buenos Aires, where they had five children between 1892 and 1901.[14] In the initial

years there he 'supported himself teaching English and working for H.C. Thompson, a

furniture maker and retailer at 380 Artes' (Murphy 2001: 51). His teaching work was at

the National College and he refers to the income he earned in a letter to his wife Anne,

dated July 16, 1894: 'they want me to give at least two hours in the morning and at least

one hour in the afternoon with one day in the week two hours in the afternoon for $200

a month'.[15] David Rock argues that one of the main characteristics of immigration at

the time was the 'considerable social mobility' (1975: 12) and the Bulfins' trajectory in

becoming part of the burgeoning middle classes of Buenos Aires certainly attests to this

phenomenon.[16]

Bulfin started writing articles for *The Irish Argentine* under the pen-name

'Bullfinch' and later for *The Southern Cross*. His stories about life in the city are

entitled 'Sketches of Buenos Aires' and these form the majority of his articles. His first

story for *The Southern Cross*, 'Piebald Horse', appeared on May 19, 1891 under the

pen-name Che Buono, a misprint of Cui Bono?[17] He was a regular monthly contributor

of 'Sketches' until 1896 when his articles appeared fortnightly. This increased to

weekly contributions by the end of 1896 when he became the editor and owner of *The*

Southern Cross, which he managed until handing over to his friend Gerald Foley in

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[14]Their five children were all born in Buenos Aires: Eamonn (1892-1968), who fought in the 1916 Irish rebellion and was arrested with Bulfin's younger brother Frank and later deported to Argentina as an "undesirable alien" (Murphy 2001: 66), Mary (1894-1930), Ana (1897-1923), Eibhlinn (1899-1984) and Catalina (1901-1976). Catalina (Kid) was sent to boarding school in Offaly and worked for Austin Stack (Minister of Home Affairs) during the War of Independence (1921-22). She carried dispatches for the Republican side in the Civil war until she was arrested on April 2, 1923 and released in October. In January 1926 she married Sean MacBride, an anti-treatyist on the run (McCoole 2003: 144-5).

[15]I am grateful to Dr Laura Izarra for providing me with copies of some of the letters between Bulfin and his wife between 1890 and 1904. The letters were entrusted to Dr Izarra by the Bulfin estate and she is currently compiling them into a volume to be published in 2014.

[16]Rock surmises this from the growth of the middle classes, the amount of remittances and levels of savings.

[17]Bulfin recounts how his first article appeared in the paper after many rejections: 'the editor was out of town and instead of going into the basket, the article went into the paper. It was signed *Cui Bono?* but the printers interpreted my hieroglyphics in a different way; and as the nom de plume was printed at first so it has remained' (*TSC* Jan 6, 1899: 13).

1907.[18] On 6 January 1899 he published an article entitled 'Time to write about something else' and his 'Sketches' became less frequent as he concentrated on a series of stories about the 'camp' entitled 'A camp story'.[19] These would form the basis for his *Tales of the Pampas* and reflect the perspective and ideology of one of Bulfin's main literary influences: Charles Kickham.

Kickham was part of the Fenian Brotherhood and was arrested in 1865 with other Fenian leaders such as Michael Davitt, discussed in Section One.[20] He was sent to prison after an abortive uprising, though he was released in 1869 due to ill health. Shortly after his release he wrote *Knocknagow* (1873) which was 'aimed at the expanding émigré market and an increasingly literate domestic middle-class audience' (Ward 2002: 123). Like Bulfin's later *Rambles in Eirinn*, Kickham's work was first serialised and published in newspapers in New York and Dublin.[21] Kickham's novel portrays rural Catholic life of both the middle and peasant classes in the period between the Famine and the land wars of the 1870s and concomitant evictions and land clearances. It reproduces what Ward terms 'the stereotypes of Victorian sentimental fiction […] populated with virtuous, home-bound, suitor-seeking, middle-class heroines; various virile, chivalrous and manly young men; wiser and more reflexive parent figures; amusing and persecuted peasant types'(2002: 123-4). These persecuted types are faced with evictions from the land they have worked for generations but Kickham believes

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[18]*The Southern Cross* was published in English weekly until the 1950s when it began publishing in Spanish on a monthly basis. This changeover is an indication of the slow assimilation of the Irish community into the Argentine host society.

[19]Bulfin's 'Sketches' also appeared in publications outside of Argentina and the Bulfin Papers show receipts for multiple stories for which he found a publisher in the United States. One receipt from the New York publisher Doubleday, dated 22 August 1901, records 'a draft for $300 in payment for the four pampas stories for *Everybody Magazine*'. These records come from the collection of *The William Bulfin Papers* held at the National Library of Ireland in the Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation. The are referred to throughout the chapter as the Bulfin Papers and MS followed by the source number. These receipts are included in MS 13817 (1).

[20]The Fenian Brotherhood was a secret and revolutionary society founded in 1858 by James Stephens whose goal was to end colonial English rule in Ireland. David Boyce notes that Kickham was 'one of the most fervent anti-parliamentarian Fenians' (1996: 176).

[21]*The Emerald,* New York and *The Shamrock* in Dublin. See Ward (2002). Bulfin also dedicates chapter XVIII of *Rambles in Eirinn* to promoting Kickham and his literary career.

these evictions should not cause them to lose hope. In a rallying cry that evokes both the fixed nature of Irishness and exilic nature of emigration, one of his characters states 'the Irish people will *never* be rooted out of Ireland […] those of her people who are forced to fly are not lost to Ireland' (1873: 617). We later see this sentiment paradoxically resonate and be contested in Bulfin's sketches.

Naficy argues that 'exile encourages nationalism because it affirms belonging not just to a place but to […] a community of language, customs [and] dispositions' (1991: 296). While initially nationalism and exile share an element of overcoming estrangement, they soon diverge as 'intense focalisation on and overinvestment in the fetish (home and nation) demands that the fetish and its synecdoche remain pure, unsullied, unambiguous, irreproachable, and authentic [leading] to a short-sighted form of nationalism and racially prejudiced stances' (Naficy 1991: 296). This short-sightedness can be seen in what is not addressed in either Kickham or Bulfin's narratives. There are few references to the tensions in families or the need to leave and possibly send money home because of the inability of the Irish state to provide a living for its population. It is far simpler to blame British imperialism for Ireland's difficulties and depict those who leave as victims of that imperialism rather than as people seeking out new opportunities. The emigrant is posited as victim or exile and attitudes and habits sanctified in Kickham's novel and later in Bulfin's writing 'inform, exacerbate and underpin the thought patterns and attitudes of the Catholic Irish within Ireland and the Catholic Irish of the diaspora' (Ward 2002: 124).

The emigrant/exile dichotomy is not an easy one to negotiate, however, as Bulfin's attempts to narrate this experience have to appeal to a broad Irish readership; from the Irish in Argentina (Ireland born and Argentine born) to readers in Ireland as well as diaspora communities elsewhere. There is evidence that *The Southern Cross*

had a readership in Ireland among the communities of Westmeath and Longford, which were the source of the majority of Irish emigration to Argentina, though likely very small in number. Kelly notes that the newspaper was a source of information for distant family and friends and cites a letter from the Rattigan family who mention reading about a wedding in Buenos Aires in *The Southern Cross* (2009: 175). Bulfin's brother Robert was a member of the diaspora community in Birmingham and in a letter to his brother dated September 26, 1907 he records that: 'I get the *Southern Cross* every week and before time to properly digest it, some of the Irish are waiting for it, particularly the Sinn Féiners. But, I do not expect you will have many orders for it, the Birmingham Irish are notedly skinney'.[22] The diversity of these groups and the many factions with varying degrees of politicisation had to be manoeuvred with care. Hutchinson points out that 'between 1869 and 1900 the Irish mind was dominated by a movement for political autonomy that mobilised with increasing momentum large sections of the Irish population at home and in the (British) diaspora. Cultural and political nationalism developed in close conjunction but with conflicting nationalist ideals' (1987: 151). The conflicting ideals were manifest in two strands of cultural nationalism; the first a language movement, the second literary.

Cultural and political nationalism in late nineteenth-century Ireland

The language movement concentrated on the Irish language as a tool to re-establish an Irish identity which would radically separate it from England. To that end, in 1893 Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) and Eoin MacNeill (1867-1945) established the Gaelic League, a language association characterised by a return to the historic language of Ireland. The stated aim of the League was 'to preserve the Irish language and with it the

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[22]MS 13811(3). Sinn Féin was founded by Arthur Griffith in 1902, when the Transvaal Committee reformed to better represent the separatist ideology of the movement.

nationality, the traditions, the national spirit with which the language is so bound up'

(*An Claidheamh Soluis* 1899: 234).[23] *The Southern Cross* became 'the standard bearer

of the Gaelic League in South America' (Murphy 2001: 52). The paper printed articles

in Irish even though there were few *gaelgoirs* (Irish speakers) in that community. The

eastern counties of Wexford, Westmeath and Longford did not have a strong Irish-

speaking tradition and few people, Bulfin included, spoke Irish.

Nevertheless, Bulfin identified closely with the aims of the Gaelic League and in

1899 set up a branch in Buenos Aires, 'which had raised awareness and improved links

with Dublin's nationalist factions' (Kelly 2009: 181). These links were critical for

creating a network within the diaspora as branches of the League appeared in other sites

within the diaspora as well as creating a direct link and contact through remittances to

Ireland.[24] This helped to sustain the image of the homeland at the forefront of the

diaspora consciousness. The Bulfin Papers contain letters showing regular

correspondence between Hyde and Bulfin, as well as letters to Arthur Griffith, a fellow

journalist who established *The United Irishman* newspaper in 1899 and a founding

member of Sinn Féin.[25] This correspondence links Bulfin to not only the language

movement but to the advanced nationalist separatist cause, a defining characteristic of

his *Rambles in Eirinn*. *The Southern Cross* promoted and encouraged membership of

the League and money was raised to remit to Ireland.[26] This source of income, small

though it may have been, succeeded in bringing the diaspora community in Argentina to

the attention of Dublin nationalists and thanks to Bulfin's efforts, the Irish community

in Argentina entered into the Irish political consciousness.

[23]The official newspaper of the League.

[24]Ní Bhroiméil (2001) notes that even before the Gaelic League was founded in 1893 there were various Societies in the United States whose purpose was to teach Irish. In 1873 the Boston Philo-Celtic Society was the first. The League ran into problems in the United States because of its mandatory Irish classes and Ní Bhroméil outlines the differences in how these societies evolved.

[25]See MS 13,810 and MS 13,811.

[26]Kelly notes the first remittance of £51 was sent in July 1899 and in 1904 £150 was sent (2009: 182).

Bulfin's contribution through *The Southern Cross* to the Irish language is praised at a dinner hosted for him in Dublin, while he was travelling in Ireland in 1902. One of the speakers that night was Pádraic Pearse, a prominent member of the Gaelic League, Irish literary revival and one of the future leaders of the Irish Rebellion of 1916. Pearse paid tribute to the contribution Bulfin and *The Southern Cross* had made to the Irish language: 'Níl páipéar a rinne an oiread ar son na Gaeilge agus a rinne an *Southern Cross,* níl páipéar in Éirinn is féidir a chur i gcomórtas leis' (Murphy 2001: 55) ['No newspaper has done for the Irish Language what *The Southern Cross* has and there isn't a paper in Ireland that can compete with it']. His attitude towards this emigrant contrasts markedly with his assertion of their 'betrayal' made eight years later, indicating not only the increasing intensity of the movement towards independence but also the extent that Bulfin's stories and newspapers reflected that nationalist agenda. In 1910, emigrants were described by Pearse as traitors to the Irish cause of independence: 'let us plainly tell the emigrant that he is a traitor to the Irish State, […] and a fool into the bargain' (Edwards 1979: 78-9). This Irish language movement encompassed 'the production of dictionaries, language primers and Irish journals to the idea of a general regeneration of a Gaelic community with its customs, sports, dress, music, dancing, storytelling, crafts, festival and political institutions' (Hutchinson 1987: 121). In essence this was a form of what Hutchinson terms 'linguistic nationalism'. Both Hyde and MacNeill came late to the Irish language. They were among the minority in Ireland and Miller estimates that in 1901 'only 14% of Ireland's people still spoke Irish' (2008: 107). Bulfin, who did not speak Irish, incorporates words and expressions into his sketches at times, possibly in an effort to represent himself as 'authentically' Irish and to conform with membership of the Gaelic League, which had the recuperation of the Irish language as its stated aim.

The second strand of cultural nationalism was the Anglo-Irish literary revival. Though also language based, this movement 'chose the vernacular now emerging from the bilingual peasantry, an English rich with Irish idioms and rhythms […] to nationalise the dominant English culture from within' (Hutchinson 1987: 128). Activities such as Celtic arts and crafts, Irish drama and a mystical revival were all part of this movement, which was elitist in character and spearheaded by WB Yeats. This strand was 'essentially literary [and] made a limited impression on the Irish Catholic tenant farmers who were still the political and social substance of Ireland' (Boyce 1995: 246).[27] Bulfin aligned himself with the former strand of nationalism and *The Southern Cross* became a tool with which he could expound his views, which were not necessarily shared by his readers. Bulfin sets out to maintain links with Ireland through the promotion of the Irish language and cultural practices in his newspaper, and he likewise uses his sketches to purposely connect the Irish and the native Argentine in order to carve out a distinct Irish presence in the diaspora space, inscribed in an Irish-Argentine identity. He fosters a sense of solidarity with the indigenous *gaucho* while contradictorily including a subtext establishing Irish difference from both the *gaucho* and other nationalities on the pampas. In his *Tales of the Pampas,* Bulfin inserts himself into what Josefina Ludmer (2002) refers to as the *gaucho* genre and it is this genre and his *Tales* that I examine in the next part.

2. Establishing Solidarity and Difference in *Tales of the Pampas* (1900)

Bulfin's years working and travelling around Buenos Aires province provided him with ample material to write his sketches, from which he compiled the eight stories for *Tales of the Pampas* about characters who are mostly unmarried Irish sheep and cattle herders

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[27]For more detail on the complex strands of cultural nationalism see Boyce (1995).

or *gauchos*, living lives of isolation on the Argentine pampas. Characteristics of the travel narrative such as relationships with place, local people and the desire to work out what home means by seeing it from abroad are mediated through Bulfin's cultural nationalism as well as through the inhabitants of diaspora space, in particular the native *gaucho*. His *Tales* reveal an empathy with *gaucho* culture and, similar to Brabazon's memoir, Irish assimilation of certain elements of that culture. Bulfin also links the nativist subject position to the Irish one, a position which is resisted at times by both Irish and *gaucho* inhabitants of the diaspora space.

Tales of the Pampas was published in 1900 and is partly informed by one of the major themes in Argentine society and literature, that of barbarism versus civilisation, with the figure of the *gaucho* at the centre.[28] The *género gauchesco* or *gaucho* genre as Ludmer defines it, characterises the popular in gaucho literature as 'referring to the rival folk culture of subaltern and marginal sectors like the gaucho; this culture […] includes not only the folklore that it inherited from the Spaniards and transformed, but also its customs, beliefs, rites, rules, and common laws' (2002: 3). This genre has its origins in the eighteenth century with the publication in 1773 of the fictional travelogue of *Lazarillo de ciego caminantes desde Buenos Aires hasta Lima* by Concolorcorvo.[29] The *gauchos* in this text are referred to as *gauderios* and the depiction of them varies from welcoming to barbarous. While travelling in Tucumán the narrator relates how he happens upon a group of *gauderios* and that 'a todos nos recibieron con agrado y con el mate de aloja en la mano' (74) [they greeted us all kindly and with a welcoming mate].[30] However, after witnessing their eating and sleeping habits (74-80), which he finds barbaric, the author points out 'esa gente, que comparte la mayor parte del

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[28]For an examination of this theme see Masiello (1992) or Swanson (2008).
[29]A contested pseudonym for either Calixto Bustamante Carlos or Alonso Carrio de la Vandera. See http://www.biografiasyvidas.com [accessed 10 April 2013].
[30]Chapter VIII of the narrative also records some of the *versos groseros* [crude verses] that the *gauderios* sang.

Tucumán, fuera la más feliz del mundo si sus costumbres se arreglaran a los preceptos

evangélicos' (76) [These people, who make up a large part of Tucumán, would be the

happiest in the world if their habits were more in line with Evangelical or Christian

principles].

Within the nineteenth century the assumed barbarity of the *gaucho* was

addressed in Diego F. Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1845). Sarmiento, who served as

President between 1868 and 1874, staunchly supported European immigration as a

method of civilising and improving the rural native. He believed the *gaucho* to be

'almost animal-like in his habits and mentality [if] strong, valiant and energetic […]

content to live in filth and indeed scorned physical comfort, lived for the moment and

was incapable of planning for the future' (De Laney 1996: 443). This contempt for the

gaucho elicited a literary response and apologia in 1874 with the publication of the

poem *El gaucho Martín Fierro* by José Hernández, though it was not until 1913 that the

poem became the nation's great epic poem.[31] Another contributor to the barbarous

nature of the *gaucho*, W.H. Hudson, remarks in his own *Tales of the Pampas* that 'the

gaucho is, or was, absolutely devoid of the sentiment of patriotism, and regarded all

rulers, all in authority from the highest to the lowest, as his chief enemies, and the worst

kind of robbers not only of his goods but of his liberty' (1916: 257).[32]

The *gaucho* is a complex figure in Argentine culture, branded as a lawless drifter

or criminal and marginalised by successive governments' attempt to eliminate their

customs. By the 1880s the previously independent *gaucho* horsemen were reduced to

[31]De Laney (1996: 445) notes that the series of lectures on the poem by poet Leopoldo Lugones was instrumental in establishing the poem.

[32]Francis Bond Head (1826) comments on the hospitality he encountered in *gaucho* company in *Rough Notes* and his sketches of pampas life make what Walker refers to as: 'a valuable contribution to pampas lore and place Head high on the list of *gaucho* apologists' (1994: 269). Charles Darwin also referred positively to the *gaucho* in the *Voyage of the Beagle*: 'Their appearance is very striking; they are generally tall and handsome […] their politeness is excessive: they never drink their spirits without expecting you to taste it' (1989[1834]: 73-4).

dependent *peones*. In an ironic twist however, by the turn of the century the *gaucho* figure with whom Bulfin is now empathising has undergone a transformation which is strikingly similar to that of the figure of the Irish peasant in the literary revival.[33] Now, 'the long-scorned *gaucho* [was] transformed into a nostalgic, idealized, domesticated symbol of Argentine national virtue' (Slatta 1983: 179). Towards the end of the nineteenth century many Argentine intellectuals blamed the country's problems, specifically that of materialism, on the European immigrant and not, as De Laney suggests 'the impersonal forces of economic, technological and social change [and they] believed the path to national renewal lay in a return to values of the Argentine cowboy' (1996: 435). Despite acquiring a modicum of acceptance and respectability the figure of the *gaucho* was still associated with the marginalised sectors of society. Thus Bulfin unites both the Irish and *gaucho* subject position in an attempt to articulate a new sense of belonging, one which is predicated on being part of the underclass and not subsumed into the dominant host culture, thereby preserving a separate Irish presence.

That Bulfin respected and admired the *gaucho* way of life is clear from his sketches, but that respect and admiration is tempered by an ambivalence in both his narrative voice and subject position. This ambivalence is revealed in his occasional construction of the *gaucho* as other, and at times, culturally inferior. Moreover, he uses the voice of the *gaucho* to construct himself and the Irish in Argentina as valued, if different. Bulfin relates most of his sketches in a first person narrative, with the narrator an intrusive character who has a role, though not central, in the plot. Bulfin as narrator remains on the periphery of the narratives, signifying an interest in the stories but also a reluctance or inability to commit himself fully to them, possibly indicating the 'ambivalences' Naficy refers to as characteristic of exilic discourse. This impacts on

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[33]The figure of the Irish peasant was idealised in the literary revival, especially in the works of W.B Yeats for example. See George Watson (1994) for a review of other writers who contributed to this idealisation.

how Bulfin as narrator treats his subject(s). There is a contradictory perception of the

gaucho in evidence throughout his stories. They are part of a racialised discourse where

'attention is shifted to the forms in which class, gender, sexuality or religion, for

instance, might figure within these racisms, and to the specific signifier(s) – colour,

physiognomy, religion, culture etc – around which these differing racisms are

constituted' (Brah 1996: 185). Bulfin's sketches veer between establishing solidarity

with the host country on the one hand, and upholding Irish difference from other

nationalities on the pampas on the other.

The mix of admiration for *gaucho* culture is contrasted with the need to

distinguish them from the Irish who share their diaspora space. One of the ways this is

done is through language. For example, in 'The Fall of Don José', Bulfin links the Irish

language question to narrative style. In this sketch about a cook from the city being

chastised by the inhabitants of the 'camp', there are two narrators, possibly suggesting

that 'the aim of the author to assign greater omniscience to the Irish "eye"' (Murray

2009: 90). Bulfin and others are around a camp fire and are encouraging an old *gaucho,*

called Domingo, to tell them the story of Don José. Bulfin as lead narrator controls the

framing narrative, but the actual content is presented from a *gaucho* subject position.[34]

Bulfin writes 'I am sorry for your sake that I cannot give it to you as it fell from him in

his graceful Spanish […] and alas too for the art of the *gaucho* storyteller! – who can

hope to emulate it [...] to catch even a gleam of it in any other language than Argentine

Spanish?'(172). On the one hand, Bulfin shows his appreciation and recognition of the

beauty of the specifically Argentine Spanish as well as the story-telling ability of

Domingo but on the other, he presents knowledge of that language as truly integral to

fully understanding the story. Consequently, the foreigner, the Irish on the pampas or

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[34]This stylistic technique is very similar to that employed by W.H. Hudson in his chronicles of the pampas. In an appendix to the story 'El ombú' he states the story 'is pretty much as I had it from the old gaucho called Nicandro in the narrative' (1916: 245).

English in Ireland, cannot penetrate the other's language and so must hand narrative control to the 'native' speaker.

This surrender of narrative voice elevates the *gaucho* subject position, thereby undermining the hegemonic position of cognitive and cultural superiority of the traveller over the travellee whilst ambivalently positioning the voice of the other as incomprehensible to anyone who does not share their subject position and language. Here the foreigner is an educated character 'who appreciates the customs of the *gauchos* but who does not belong to their class' (Murray 2009: 91). This attitude is then seemingly reversed when Bulfin links the *gaucho* to Irish nationalist elevation of the rural over the urban. Domingo relates how the cook presumed himself superior to the *gaucho* and fashioned himself as a Don, a title normally reserved for *patrones*. Domingo says 'In his heart of hearts [the cook] despised us all. He looked down upon us [*gauchos*] as a pack of barbarians […] The Spanish he spoke was not camp Spanish; it had the twang of the town' (175-6). Here we see the urban/rural divide embodied in the poor treatment of the *gaucho*. The 'twang' of the town is another example of this divide as the cook's use of language does not reflect the concerns or lexis of the camp.

Bulfin also takes the opportunity to reaffirm the difference between Irish and English subjects and the former's repeated rejection of the latter. Domingo recounts how the bookkeeper, Tomas Mackintosh, Scottish or Irish we presume, 'always swore at us because we called him an Englishman – but it was all the same to us. In the camp, any man who speaks English is an *inglés*. We *gauchos* are not fond of any distinctions in reference to any folks but our own' (182-3). Here we have an indication of *gaucho* disdain for the foreigner who presented such a threat to them. Their lifestyle already threatened, the arrival of foreign labourers to the pampas further marginalised the *gaucho* as the 'elite leadership, culminating with the Generation of the 1880, led by

Julio A. Roca, elected to supplant the native with the foreign – in culture, livestock, and people – on the new pampa of sheep, wire, and wheat' (Slatta 1983: 160).[35] However, far from being presented as a threat, the Irish are imagined by Bulfin as allies and Mackintosh is recruited to help Domingo bring down the unpopular Don José. In fact, Mackintosh is represented as more than just an ally, but as a leader. It is he who comes up with a plan and who instructs Domingo, possibly hinting at an implied superiority over the uneducated *gaucho*.[36] In his treatment of the *gaucho* in these tales, Bulfin encodes the practices of resistance and accommodation of the diasporan but leans towards the latter. His ambivalent narrative voice reflects his position of an Irishman living among, but not fully part of, the rural *gaucho* community. Izarra notes that in his sketches Bulfin is 'an agent in the process of "becoming" a "foreign native", that is, a foreigner completely adapted to the indigenous culture though still being a foreigner' (2004: 347).

Further examples of this contradictory attitude come through in three related stories, 'Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse', 'The Defeat of Barragán' and 'Campeando'. The common thread is the search for some missing cattle. In 'Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse' the Castro in question is a man who Bulfin shadows in the hope of learning something of his world. Castro was *capataz,* Bulfin's immediate superior, and Bulfin describes him as: 'typical of his class – gaucho from head to heel and in every part of his body […] a good-looking fellow despite his swarthy skin' (98). Castro's skin colour is of note and establishes his difference to Bulfin. Castro not only looks different, however, but his language also betrays his inferior education. When Castro and Bulfin are first charged with searching for the lost cattle, they leave through the camp gates, which are guarded by an Irishman, Mike Lowrie. A subtle stereotyping

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[35]The tensions between *gaucho* and *gringo* turned violent on numerous occasions, resulting in massacres like that at Tandil in 1872.

[36]Part of the plan involves Mackintosh teaching Domingo how to read a watch.

or jibe at the Irish use of Spanish as well as an oblique criticism of their work with sheep is implied when Castro responds to Mike Lowrie's anxiety about the escaped cattle, by 'affecting linguistic accomplishments [he states] mucho cow gone-mucho sheepy aqui for you, eh?' [37] Mike, 'not to be outdone in culture, defended his reputation in *Castro's* language with fine effect' (my emphasis, 99). The contrast between Castro's broken, idiotic Spanglish, and Lowrie's ability to use Spanish to 'fine effect' denotes a linguistic superiority over the *gaucho.*

Establishing difference is not the only agenda in 'Castro Telleth'. In this story Castro recounts how an Argentine horse made its way back from Italy to Argentina, which speaks to the ideology of return which informs the story. This return can be filtered through either the Irish or *gaucho* subject position. In keeping with his exilic discourse, Bulfin wants to remind the Irish on the pampas that the desire to return can be fulfilled. However, from the *gaucho* perspective, the return of the immigrant would mean the reduction of the threat to their way of life. Castro says of the horse: 'How could he combat his desire to come back?! Impossible for him to stay away' (107). In the story, Castro elaborates upon the concept of *querencia*, which is 'home, the home of the horse and the cow, just as one's native land is home, just the same' (101).[38] By having Castro utter these words Bulfin demonstrates how closely *gaucho* philosophy reflects his exilic desire. Thus through this story, we see the desire for home compete with the possibility of belonging in Argentina and the borders of Irishness momentarily shrink back to those of national territory.

This story also reveals evidence of the changing face of the Argentine pampas and its impact on the *gaucho.* The fencing off of land was introduced to the grasslands by the end of the nineteenth century and so in theory, curtailed free passage and the

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[37]As mentioned earlier, the *gauchos* looked down on shepherds as they had no need of horse-riding skills and the fencing off of land for sheep pens threatened their way of life.

[38]The Spanish *aquerenciar* means to get accustomed to something and *querencia* a place cattle are used to.

right to roam whenever and wherever one wanted. Being able to move freely on horseback was an integral part of *gaucho* life. However, Bulfin portrays the external restrictions as being circumvented when needed. While out riding with Castro they come across wire fences which have been cut. Whilst Castro ostensibly disapproves of this, Bulfin surmises that:

> No more than to his fellows did a wire fence convey any idea of the right of property: it merely constituted an impediment. There had been no wires long ago and festive *gauchos* could gallop for countless leagues, unchecked. The fences that had come with progress were nuisances. It would not do to openly condemn them, for that would be an outrage on *gaucho* etiquette and prudence. The only thing consistent with good breeding and discretion was to preserve a non-committal attitude towards the innovations and then cut them whenever the operation could safely be effected. (97-8)

This passage also speaks to the 'nostalgic and idealised' *gaucho* figure which was becoming the prevalent image in turn-of-the-century Argentina, paradoxically precisely when the *gaucho* had all but disappeared from society. Revisionist versions of the *gaucho* in editorials and magazines, De Laney notes, focussed on the positive qualities of the 'honourable, noble, generous and hospitable *gaucho* [who] when forced to kill did so with honour' (1996: 456).[39] Moreover, for Bulfin, it is these qualities in addition to the subversion of rules imposed by a dominant culture upon a marginalised section of the population which resonate with his nationalist sentiment. His admiration for how the *gaucho* circumvents these rules clearly positions him as a *gaucho* sympathiser.

In 'The Defeat of Barragán', Bulfin again shifts emphasis and in this tale he depicts *gaucho* practices as something which might not be fully understood by an outsider. Barragán is an *alcalde*, a mayor who has abused his authority and the local people. Castro defeats him in a horse race and then proceeds to challenge him to a knife

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[39]The publication of Ricardo Guiraldes' *Don Segunda Sombra* in 1926 was the defining novel of the genre.

fight. Izarra suggests that 'así Bulfin contrapone a Castro, el gaucho bueno por naturaleza, a Barragán, el gaucho malo de Sarmiento' (2011: 129) [thus Bulfin juxtaposes Castro, by nature the good *gaucho*, with Barragan, the evil *gaucho* of Sarmiento]. When Bulfin enquires as to why Castro needs to fight, Castro replies that it is part of *gaucho* custom to repay insults but that 'you don't understand these things yet, or you cannot see them as we see them' (141). There is evidence however, of 'slippage' here, as Castro states that 'you don't understand *yet*'. I believe Bulfin is hinting at a possible shared understanding or at least a hope of one, which is at odds with his nationalist sentiment.

Bulfin's interaction with the native inhabitants of the shared diaspora space is seen to subtly destabilise his notion of identity as fixed and unchanging. Indeed, identity is adaptable and can take on foreign elements and characteristics without compromising a sense of Irishness. We see this illustrated in the last section of the tripartite story, 'Campeando', when Bulfin and Castro are still on the journey to find the missing cattle. In this story, Bulfin is rebuked by the same Mike Lowrie referred to earlier, for spending too much time in *gaucho* company and becoming *gaucho* in his ways. Mike tells him 'you're getting too much of the country into you […] galavanting round the seven parishes sucking mate and colloguering (mixing) with the *gauchos* […] you'll get a bad name for yourself' (164). Mike reiterates nationalist sentiment that no good can possibly come of assimilation and if Bulfin is not careful he could become corrupted by foreign ways and so risks being unwelcome or even unable to return to Ireland. Bulfin does not conform to this view however, and a clear indication of the transformation being wrought by his relationship and affinity with the *gauchos* is contained in his response to Mike's criticism: 'Mike was as good as gold, and meant well by me. But he failed to convince me' (164). Here Bulfin contests Mike's

restrictive perspective about the dangers and potential corruption brought about by interaction with the indigenous inhabitants of the shared diaspora space. Although Bulfin's depiction of the *gaucho* contains ambivalences and contradictions, more often than not he links them to the Irish and represents the Irish choosing their company over other nationalities on the pampas.

If the portrayal of the *gaucho* fosters solidarity with the Irish, the portrayal of the other nationalities who share the diaspora space reflects a racialised discourse aimed at creating divisions among the multiple subjects on the pampas. In 'Castro Telleth', Castro says to Bulfin that Tavalonghi, an Italian hide buyer, 'made a fortune out of *your* countrymen' (my emphasis 104). The Spanish of the pampas are categorised as *gallegos*, and similar to Brabazon's account the *gallegos* are depicted as crooks or crooked. There is also reference to the Spanish upper classes using the New World as a proving ground. The story 'El High Life' refers to the unnamed son of a Spanish nobleman who is sent to Argentina to be transformed into a man. El High life is seen as arrogant and naïve and he comes to an untimely end because of his inability to understand the lifestyle and working culture of the pampas. In this story, Bulfin, once again, links the *gauchos* and the Irish in their experience of absentee landlords. El High life 'had been consigned with care, to our major-domo, Don Fernando, by that potent and, to a great extent, unknown and mysterious, entity whom we referred to as the *patrón*. Not to be treated the same as ordinary *peones*' (68). However, despite his respect for the *gaucho* way of life, he lets slip a comment about the *gauchos* that reveals his (unconscious) sense of superiority. When El High Life enters the cookhouse during a storm, Bulfin writes that it was to be near the fire but: 'partly I suppose to indulge in his vicious hankering for – I was going to say low company until I remembered that I was not speaking for myself' (78).

As is to be expected, the depiction of the English on the pampas is not a complimentary one. Bulfin portrays English characters as either deserters or cowards. In the story 'A Bad Character', the character in question is an English sailor, called Sailor John, who 'was very unpopular. He was dishonest. He despised the Irish and the Gauchos. He was a liar. He was quarrelsome. In fact, he was a hard case any way you took him, everything about him was eloquent of collapse' (13-14). Bulfin transposes the nationalist agenda and support for Irish independence to the diaspora space of the pampas. Not only is the English character described as morally inferior, but Sailor John's criticism and disparaging of both the Irish and *gaucho* serves a double function. First of all, it differentiates the Irish from the English community/subjects and secondly, it links the 'oppressed' Irish subjects in their fight for autonomy with the equally oppressed *gaucho*, strengthening the Irish community's claim in the diaspora space.

'A Bad Character' also contains one of the few allusions to the presence, or in this case absence, of another inhabitant of the shared diaspora space: the Indians of the pampas. At this stage *La Campaña del Desierto* (1879-80), the concentrated campaign by General Roca to erase the Indians, had almost totally succeeded and Bulfin notes that 'Not since the Indians had been cleared out of the district had there been such a disastrous season' (65). The Irish, as well as many other immigrants from the 1880s on, settled on what was previously Indian land. As Susan Wilkinson notes, Irish settlers went to those areas which had once been inhabited by Indians and so were 'beyond the pale of European settlement'.[40] The lands were initially seen as only fit for sheepherding, though they later became prosperous cattle farms.

I now turn to the last story in the volume, which contains the most overt display of nationalism and resistance to the host culture of the eight stories. 'The Course of

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[40]This expression derives from the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland in the seventeenth century Irish history and denotes the 'safe zone' of Ireland. It is an ironic feature of Irish emigrant life that many had come from 'beyond the pale' in Ireland to yet another border in Argentina.

True Love' is ostensibly a story about the perils of contracting a matchmaker and leaving your fate in the hands of others. It represents the Irish in Argentina as exiled from their native culture and eternally resisting assimilation into Argentine society. As exiles, Bulfin attempts to 'establish both cultural and ethnic differentiation from the host society and cultural and ethnic continuity with an idealised past and homeland' (Naficy 1991: 209). Bulfin argues that although they had 'made their pioneer homes in the track of the frontier cavalry regiments that were fighting back the Indians' they did not truly belong to that society as 'whether millionaires or labourers, all are Irish in thought, in sympathy, and in character' (205-6). In this story, Bulfin ruminates on their exilic state and though a long passage, his nationalist rhetoric abounds:

> Exile has, of course, modified some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others…has, to some extent, increased their natural sensitiveness and deprived them of some of their spirituality, as well as taking the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism. Spanish phrases and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use; but the brogue of Leinster and Munster has remained intact. Spanish and Creole customs have, in a greater or less degree, insensibly woven themselves into their life; but they are unwilling to admit this, and their struggle to preserve the traditions of the motherland is constant and earnest. (206-7)

On the one hand Bulfin acknowledges that the majority of Irish in Argentina speak English, despite what Delany regards as the 'hyperbolic and idiosyncratic use of Irish (Gaelic) terms, artificially mixed with the language of Bulfin's characters: 'begora', 'avick', 'alannah', 'oncha', 'musha', 'pisherogue' (2004: 166). Bulfin recognises the process of integration that the Irish are slowly going through, though the extent of that integration is greater than he wants to admit. Despite the smattering of Irish words, in the end it is the Spanish/Spanglish words that take precedence in these stories. Delaney notes that:

> From *camp* to ¿Quién sabe? Bulfin reproduces an Irish-*porteño* way of speaking, which results in a mix of Irish-English, Spanish and certain Gaelic voices. His stories show that the Irish were doing with language what they had already done with their lives, namely they were trying to adapt it to their new situation. (2004: 168)

This adaptation challenges the exilic state and desire for homeland that Bulfin espouses elsewhere. He consciously fosters a sense of Irish difference in the conflicting hope of retaining the status of exile but also of forming a distinct diaspora community, connected to other Irish diaspora experiences but unique to Argentina. Nonetheless, Bulfin's emphasis on the exilic nature of that experience is mitigated by the close ties with the native *gaucho* and the changing needs of Irish community. By insisting on practices of resistance and retaining defined allegiances to the homeland identity, Bulfin would jeopardise the achievements of the Irish community and risk alienating its descendants. This is supported in a lecture he wrote for the Irish Beneficent Society in 1899 in which he notes that the:

> exile soon becomes reconciled to the altered circumstances of his life; and, although his native land has lost none of its charm for his memory, he has, at the same time, found such compensations for his exile in the country of his adoption that the home of his youth is not set up for worship in the family circle, nor is its praise continually dinned into the ears of his children in such a way as to wean their sympathies and affections from their surroundings. (MS 13804/8)

The stories in *Tales of the Pampas* reveal that Bulfin was more concerned with establishing a distinct Irish presence, one whose affinity with the *gaucho* distinguished them from other nationalities on the pampas, in particular from the English. What is more, despite his nationalist ideology and positioning as an exile, what emerges from Bulfin's *Tales* is the gradual integration of the Irish into the diaspora space. This is a direct challenge to his Irishness and if Bulfin is not to be perceived as an emigrant who is 'culturally corrupted' the boundaries of that Irishness need to be extended to include

the diaspora space. He presents this space as one which is sensitive to the demands of his advanced nationalist ideology and as such he links the *gaucho* to an anti-colonial stance, which might offset any potential corruption. Furthermore, his sketches show that Irishness is not destabilised by interaction in the diaspora space, rather it is strengthened by its connection to another marginalised and subordinated group from within the host society itself. Brah proposes that 'border crossings do not occur only across the dominant/dominated dichotomy, but that, equally, there is traffic within cultural formations of the subordinated groups, and that these journeys are not *always* mediated through the dominant culture(s)' (1996: 209). I contend that Bulfin, in a manner more explicit than John Brabazon, links the minority subject position the *gaucho* occupies within the Argentine state to that of the Irish in Ireland. He empathises with the *gaucho* subversion of authority, their collective resistance to the exterior control of landowning elites and their elevation of the rural over the urban, all of which echoes the resistance to colonial rule in Ireland. In addition, *Tales of the Pampas* draws on Bulfin's cultural nationalism by foregrounding the question of language and its link to identity construction, similar to what the Gaelic League was doing in Ireland.

Nonetheless, this process is a struggle for Bulfin and Argentina as 'home' is resisted, though the diaspora space is depicted as a potential site for diversifying and expanding the borders of Irish identity without compromising a sense of Irishness. Though *Tales of the Pampas* reveals an ambivalent attitude towards integration, there is a clear evocation of a distinct Irish community; one that Bulfin argues needs to be permanently detached from its English ties. Events in South Africa – namely the Second Boer War (1899-1902) – would help bolster his call for a separate Irish and Irish-Argentine community.

The *inglés/irlandés* divide and the impact of the Second Boer War (1899-1902)

There were multiple factors which directly impacted on how the Irish community

evolved in Argentina. These extend from the political movement for independence in

Ireland and efforts to de-anglicise Irish identity to the need for nation-building policies

and practices in Argentina brought about after the consolidation of the state in 1880 and

the impact of immigration on the host society.[41] Because of the influx of immigrants

throughout the 1880s and 1890s there was a growing concern about the problem of

integration as the majority of migrants retained their language, cultural practices and

allegiances to a foreign state or homeland. Apart from economic and political

difficulties 'the nation's leaders feared the impact of the newcomers and their alien

ideas upon the native population' (Slatta 1983: 178). Thus, in line with Eurocentric

positivist Argentine state policy during the 1880s, a new strategy was proposed to

'attract immigrants who wish to settle permanently and instil in the hearts of foreigners

a firm sense of [our own] national identities' (Kelly 2009: 163). In an effort to form

some sort of control over this fast-growing, plural society for a brief period from 1898

to 1899 'a novel entity known as the Patriotic League took the lead in training,

mobilising, and indoctrinating civilians' (Rock 2002: 174-5).

Bulfin recognised that in establishing a distinct Irish identity he would have to

link it to the Argentine nation or risk the Irish community being alienated and excluded.

The Gaelic League in Ireland was advocating the de-anglicisation of Irish identity so

divesting the Irish community of its English ties was in accordance with Bulfin's

advanced nationalist principles. These ties would not prove easily sundered, however,

and would take careful handling given the divisions in the Anglophone community.

These divisions were, broadly-speaking, along the lines of employment and class and

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[41]For more on nation-building in Argentina in this period see Bethell (ed.) (1993), Devoto (2003) or Rock (1975, 2002).

generally 'Irish and Scots were farmers and English of managerial and clerical class'
(Ferns 1960: 340). Another demarcation within the Irish community was the pro- or
anti-British debate. Boyce argues that 'it was hostility to England that provided a
driving force behind nationalism in Ireland' (1995: 215). This force was epitomised by
the diverging editorial stances of the two main Irish-owned newspapers in Argentina,
The Standard, founded by Edward and Michael Mulhall in 1861, and *The Southern
Cross*, founded in 1875 by Patrick Joseph Dillon, a Catholic priest, examined in Chapter
2 of the thesis.

A notable aspect of the community Bulfin was addressing was the decreasing
number of Irish-born immigrants and the increasing number of second and third
generation Irish-Argentines. Between 1865 and 1890 the Irish-born community
increased by only 2.91 per cent, from 5,246 to 5,407, whereas the Argentine-born went
from 3,377 to 13,210 (Kelly 2009: 45). Bulfin concedes that many in that community
would not necessarily have the same perspective on Ireland and Irish affairs as those
born in Ireland. Nonetheless, he repeatedly links the two countries in his sketches. The
term 'Irish-Argentine' featured prominently in a series entitled 'Connor's Way' which
ran from October 26th to December 23rd 1900. The protagonist is portrayed as a
second generation Irish-Argentine. This is an identity of which he is proud and he
renounces any links to an English identity. When asked if his parents were *ingleses* he
responds, 'No, they are Irish, I am Irish-Argentine, understand, not English'.[42]

Using *The Southern Cross* as a tool, Bulfin adroitly establishes a distinct Irish
presence in Argentine society, paradoxically linking an Irish nationalist stance with
loyalty to the host country. Keen to demonstrate how the Irish community has retained
its ties to the homeland, Bulfin's editorials emphasise the resilience of the diasporic

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[42]Contained within the Bulfin Papers is the unpublished manuscript of 'Connor's Way', re-edited into a
text called *Man of the Pampas* which Bulfin submitted to two separate publishing houses, Lothrop
Publishing in Boston and Paul R Reynolds in New York in 1902. MS 13817 (1).

imagination 'in which happenings in the homeland continue to matter' (Nash 2008: 9).

In this case, it is the Irish nationalist admiration of one colonially-subjected people for

another which Bulfin attempts to reproduce. He takes the opportunity through his

editorials in *The Southern Cross* to delimit Irish identity and disassociate it from its

inglés counterpart in addition to bolstering the notion of an Irish-Argentine presence.

The Boer War assisted his attempts as it 'acted as a catalyst for Bulfin to attack the

political position of the pro-British *Standard* whilst simultaneously asserting Irish

nationalism' (Kelly 2009: 183). Throughout the war, *The Southern Cross* presented a

pro-Boer stance, while at the same time encouraging the movement towards

independence in Ireland. This movement itself was beginning to split into two distinct

factions and 'as constitutional politicians were drawing together […] a noticeable gap

was defining itself between the newly-emerging separatists and the reunited Irish

Parliamentary Party' (Mathews 2003: 100). That Bulfin identified with the first faction

is evident through his editorials and later, his *Rambles in Eirinn.*

The conflict between Britain and the two colonies, the Orange Free State and

Traansvaal, over mining rights and reactions to it on both sides of the Atlantic reflected

nationalist and imperialist outlooks. Mac Éinrí argues that 'Irish advanced nationalists

identified strongly with the Boers as another culturally and linguistically oppressed

white people within the British Empire. The question of the treatment of indigenous

black Africans did not enter the matter at all' (Mac Éinrí 2008: 264-5). It invigorated

the independence movement in Ireland and:

> generated racial-Imperialist fervour in Britain and much of Protestant Ireland,
> produced a revulsion from British culture among the romantic Irish intellectuals
> (particularly in the Irish diaspora in Britain) and a corresponding identification
> with native Ireland, sympathetic to the cause of the small Boer nation.
> (Hutchinson 1987: 144)

There were pro-Boer riots and unrest in Dublin on August 17th 1899 and in 1902 Irish

nationalist Members of Parliament expressed their sympathy with the Boers,

considering them to be, like Ireland, victims of British duplicity and oppression. Two

Members of Parliament in particular, John Dillon and Michael Davitt, were vehement in

their opposition:

> On January 20, 1902, John Dillon once again expressed his outrage in the House
> of Commons against Britain's "wholesale violation of one of the best recognized
> usages of modern war, which forbids you to desolate or devastate the country of
> the enemy and destroy the food supply on such a scale as to reduce non-
> combatants to starvation" [and] Michael Davitt, even resigned his seat in the
> House of Commons in "personal and political protest against a war which I
> believe to be the greatest infamy of the nineteenth century".[43]

Arthur Griffith established the Transvaal Committee in September 1900 to show

support for the Boer cause and McCracken argues that the basic idea behind the pro-

Boer movement was 'the belief the Boer aspiration for national identity mirrored

Ireland's own and that consequently to support the Boers was to advance Ireland's

cause' (1989: xv). Not all nationalists were pro-Boer however. Opposition to the Boers

came 'not only from authorities in Dublin Castle [but also from] the unionist population,

a section of the nationalist population, and the Irish soldiers fighting in the British army

in South Africa' (1989: 100). There were huge recruitment drives, with Belfast a

principal recruiting ground and despite the support for the Boers, around 17,000 Irish

troops fought in the British army as opposed to the 500 who fought alongside the Boers

(Mac Éinrí 2008: 265). The defeat of the Boers in 1902 came at a huge cost – it took

over 450,000 British troops to defeat them and the invincibility of the British army was

tarnished (McCracken 1989: 145). In 1907, the Boers were granted limited self-

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[43]McCracken (2002), Mark Weber's 'The Boer War Remembered'
http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v18/v18n3p14_Weber.html [accessed 29 June 2011] and also see Mac Éinrí (2008)
for detailed reactions in Ireland to the war.

government and one of the consequences for Ireland was that the Boer revolt

profoundly influenced nationalists with regards to utilising a tradition of physical force.

Mac Éinrí also draws attention to the replication of the very title of Orange Free State in

the new Irish Free State post 1921 (2008: 267).

Reactions to the war were equally divisive in the diaspora community in

Argentina and newspaper coverage of the Boer War extended that divide. In an

editorial of 13 October 1899, Bulfin opines:

> In the Argentine republic, the Irish people and their children, with a few
> exceptions, sympathise with the Boers, against the policy of Mr Chamberlain.
> [...] the protests of Irish nationalists against the war is not a wish to see their
> misguided countrymen in English regiments shot down [but] are directed against
> the injustice of a powerful nation like England, which, without just cause, is
> preparing to exterminate an entire people.[44]

Later, in the same editorial, Bulfin acknowledges the changing nature and composition

of the Irish community and he refers to sentiments of the Irish-Argentine community for

the first time. He writes 'we cannot and do not expect Irish-Argentines to feel as

strongly on Irish affairs as Irishmen, although in many cases to their honour be it said,

they are no less true to Irish national principles than to Argentine'.[45] The Irish diaspora

community in Argentina is imaginatively re-constructed here into an Irish-Argentine

one. On the one hand Bulfin reassures the native authorities of their loyalty to their

adopted home while at the same time quite clearly reinforcing his community's ties to

the homeland. We later see Bulfin echo these reassurances in *Rambles in Eirinn* when

he writes these diasporans, or exiles as he constructs them, into the national landscape

and reminds those in Argentina that they have not been forgotten in Ireland.

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[44]The two newspapers' war of words contained numerous editorials and articles written in support for
both sides. See Kelly (2009) for more detail.
[45]In that edition of the paper, the amount of money raised for both the Boer War fund and the Gaelic
League was published.

It is essential that Bulfin acknowledges that the Irish-Argentine community are loyal to Argentine principles as the Boer War was causing some concern in the Argentine government. As discussed earlier, the influx of immigrants was causing friction in Argentine society especially in the unstable early 1890s when 'multitudes of destitute and stranded immigrants roamed the streets of Buenos Aires' (Rock 2002: 145). There was unrest and conflict throughout the early 1890s as European colonists lost the right to govern themselves and became subject to provincial and state taxes.[46] By the late 1890s this conflict had been resolved but the war in South Africa re-ignited tensions as there were parallels between the position of immigrants within Argentina and those within South Africa, that is, 'a small pioneering nation of independent-minded farmers, ranchers and merchants [...] who lived by the Bible and the rifle'.[47] Overall immigrant numbers, especially among the Italian and Spanish communities, were significant and the Argentine government remained strongly aware of the crisis in South Africa.[48] Roca, president during the war, 'adopted a strongly pro-British position. In late 1899 he donated eight hundred horses to the British army fighting the Boers [and] Argentina perceived potential similarities and saw in South Africa a model they should avoid' (Rock 2002: 173, 2003: 437). Bulfin's pro-Boer and anti-English stance in *The Southern Cross* ran counter to the Anglophile leanings of the Argentine government. This Anglophilia is reflected in the increasing British investment in Argentina which, 'in 1880 was a ninth of their total in Latin America, by 1890, it was a third' (Rock 1975: 144). Therefore, though Bulfin exacerbates existing divisions within the English-speaking communities in Argentina, he was careful to articulate these

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[46]Rock (2002), chapter four, details the tension in the provinces of Argentina as well as the political factions fighting for control of the cabinet in the this period.

[47]Weber, 'The Boer War Remembered', [accessed 29 June 2011].

[48]Rock (1975: 10) records that of the 4,758,729 registered population in 1895, over 1 million were Italians and slightly under 1 million were Spanish. The Italians, however, noted the newspaper *La Nación* 'developed an impressive level of unity with Argentina and [the newspaper] contrasted the situation in Argentina with South Africa' (Rock 2002: 175).

divisions in terms of Irish-Argentine reactions. Linking the two communities was crucial in order not to alienate the native authorities nor indeed, second-generation members of the Irish community. As we have seen, these links are formed and mediated through the figure of the *gaucho.*

In his *Tales of the Pampas* Bulfin manifests not just empathy for the *gaucho* way of life, customs and habits, but links their marginalised status to that of the Irish. Their efforts to counteract their increasingly-restricted freedoms resonate with Bulfin's anti-colonial nationalism and so he links the two and by doing so carves out a space for the Irish community in Argentina. This community is depicted with strong ties to the figure of the *gaucho* who is in the process of becoming the Argentine values of loyalty, honour and nobility incarnate. Similarly, Bulfin aligns *The Southern Cross* and its readers with the 'underdog' in the South African conflict, once again positioning the Irish in Argentina with the marginalised and oppressed. His nationalist, pro-Boer stance serves the dual purpose of reminding those readers of *The Southern Cross* in Ireland and other diaspora communities that affairs in the homeland still matter and impact on the Irish communities outside the national territory, thereby helping them remain 'authentically' Irish. Moreover, he excises the *inglés* identity from the Irish, instead cleaving it to an Argentine hybrid, which will not only alleviate any Argentine government fears of a separatist Irish cause but those of the community itself.

The Boer War was in its final stages when Bulfin decided to return to Ireland with his family in July of 1902. Nonetheless, the issues involved were more pertinent than ever as anti-British sentiment grew in Ireland and the cause for independence gained momentum. In the next set of sketches Bulfin demonstrates his commitment to that cause. What is more, he articulates, and indeed incarnates, what neither Brabazon nor Nevin can: the act of return. That the returned subject is positioned as neither

corrupt nor unwanted, in stark contrast to Nevin's narrative, is a defining element of his return journey to Ireland. Bulfin spends seven months travelling around Ireland and writing a series of travel sketches which would make up *Rambles in Eirinn*. Though a staunchly nationalist text which romanticises the Irish landscape, as we shall see, Bulfin's experiences of the diaspora space and the figure of the *gaucho* follow him on his return to Ireland. The boundaries of the diaspora space consequently expand to incorporate the national territory as it is inserted into Bulfin's narrative and his portrayal of the national landscape.

3. Sketches of Ireland – The Exile Returns

In the summer of 1902 Bulfin returns to Ireland to settle his family at his ancestral home in Derrinalough, Co. Offaly. While in Ireland, he cycles around the country and writes about his return and travels for the readers of *The Southern Cross*.[49] Bulfin's sketches of Ireland draw on many themes ranging from tourism and the deforestation of the land to the economy and the state of education. Throughout his sketches, his nationalist agenda, criticism of colonialism and hopes for an Irish Ireland are foregrounded. However, sewn into his 'combative anti-British nationalism' (Ryle 1999: 5) is his contestation of Ireland as the primary referent for identity construction and *Rambles* reveals a subject who closely identifies with the diaspora space and its inhabitants. Bulfin's sketches serve as a link between the diaspora space of Argentina and the Irish-Argentine community there and the bounded territory of the homeland.

By writing Argentina into his travel sketches of Ireland, Bulfin attempts to construct a transnational Irish community and identity and extend the boundaries of

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[49]The first sketch entitled 'At sea' was published June 21, 1902 and subsequent sketches entitled 'In Eirinn' were published over the following seven months. Due to popular demand his articles were then reprinted in nationalist Irish newspapers such as Griffith's *The United Irishman* and the New York *Daily News*. The popularity of the sketches lead to its publication in 1907 as *Rambles in Eirinn.* I will hereafter refer to the narrative as *Rambles.*

Irishness to include this space. Ryle, in fact, argues that *Rambles* was integral in the construction of this identity and 'was part of the cultural work which sought to bring [this] community into being' (1999: 115). Drawing on Benedict Anderson's work, Ryle argues that the printed word plays an important part in process of 'imagining communities'. The 'imagined community' that Bulfin is addressing is the worldwide Irish diaspora, not only in Argentina but the United States, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain. Bulfin is at pains to reassure these diasporans that they have not been forgotten and would, in fact, be welcomed back to Ireland.[50] Bulfin does this first through his sketches and then the later published travel narrative.[51] Thus, in the final part of this chapter, I analyse how Bulfin, in his references to the diaspora space and its inhabitants, evinces and solidifies a transnational Irish-Argentine identity. He achieves this through correlations in the topography of the diaspora space and that of the national territory in addition to traditional features of rural Irish culture, in particular oral culture such as songs and story-telling and even nostalgia for the diaspora space. However, I also examine the contradictory nature of his sketches and how the movement beyond one essentialist, bounded, fixed belonging, is replaced by the equally delimiting boundaries of race and blood as seen in his encounters with elements of the Anglo-Irish and Jewish communities in Ireland.

Rambles opens with the returned exile on the deck of a ship awaiting the first sight of 'home', setting the tone for the fulfilment of the fantasy of the 'glorious' return and warm welcome that awaits all potential returnees. However, the paradigm of exile which encompasses this fantasy return is threatened by the very act of fulfilment, as the fantasy, 'the operative engine of actively maintained exile, must remain unrealised […] the exile must roam and pant to return but never actually achieve it' (Naficy 1991: 288).

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[50]See *Imagined Communities* (1983).

[51]*Rambles* proved to be an enormous success and went through seven printings by 1920 and was translated into Irish in 1936.

In fact, as discussed in the Introduction, Irish mythology depicts the return as a potentially fatal act. When Oisín returns from *Tír na nÓg* it is on condition that he could never actually *set foot* on Irish soil. When he does, he ages and dies. Thus Bulfin is in danger of undermining the exile status he has appropriated, the very status it is crucial for him to foreground in order to avoid being treated as a 'tainted returnee'. To this end, Bulfin takes care to present himself and the diaspora community as exiles. In fact, in his preface to *Rambles* he fuses the Irish-Argentine community to an exilic status. He informs us that he wrote the sketches 'more or less hurriedly, as opportunity offered, here and there on the road [...] with the sole object of sharing the writer's thoughts and feelings with certain Irish exiles on the other side of the world'. In an inversion of the Oisín myth of journeying from Ireland to the magical land of eternal youth, Bulfin positions Ireland as the fantasy land and the epigraph opening this chapter is now related to the depiction of Ireland: 'it was going to be like a visit to fairy-land, before we reached Dublin at all; for like most returning exiles, we were up long before sunrise, watching…for the first glimpse of Ireland' (2).

The dual nature of the emigrant/exile identity is carefully manipulated to depict a community which has retained its connection to the homeland, thus maintaining 'cultural and ethnic continuity with an idealised past and homeland' (Naficy 1991: 209). This same community is one which may have done well abroad but success was not easily attained and the exile had to negotiate the vagaries of life in exile as to present life outside of Ireland as attractive would 'incite to emigration' (Arrowsmith 2003: 101). A crucial element of *Rambles* is to reassure the diasporic subjects that they have not been forgotten nor are their memories of Ireland false; though here Bulfin is assuming that the emigrants' memories are happy ones. This imagined or 'nostalgic past is itself ideological in that [it is] a construction created by exilic narratives' (Naficy 1991: 289),

to which Bulfin contributes in his sketches. A large part of the popularity of *Rambles* can be attributed not only to its fiercely anti-English tone but also the depiction of departure from Ireland as exile. Reviews of the work focus on the exile's omnipresent desire for 'home'. The chapter's second epigraph, from an anonymous reviewer in the *New Ireland Review,* highlights the exilic component to the work and reinforces the mythological need of every person to leave Ireland to one day, like Oisín, set foot on Irish soil once more: 'perhaps there is no phenomenon so marked as the magnetism, strong as a lover's passion, which ever draws the exiled Irishman home' (124).

One of the vagaries of life abroad which Bulfin depicts is the climate. The visit to 'fairy tale' Ireland is accompanied by comments on the weather and how even the climate welcomes the returnee. Bulfin juxtaposes the Irish and Argentine climates and resistance to the diaspora space can be seen in his description of the heat and the damage it does to the foreigner. Though Dublin is 'shockingly hot […] after seventeen sweltering years of the sunny South I found it just charming. I laid my seven blessings on the Irish sunshine which never blisters, and on the perfumed winds of the Irish summer which are never laden with flame' (1). This is one of the few passages where Argentina is unfavourably compared to Ireland, as Bulfin rarely criticises his adopted country. He is aware of the need to maintain good relations with Irish-Argentine society and of course, readers of *The Southern Cross*, many of whom were still working in the scorching heat of the pampas. Bulfin later comments on the rain that 'it does not come heralded by dust and thunder and accompanied by lightning, and roaring tempests, like the rain of the tropics […] it comes on the scene veiled in soft shadows and hazes, and maybe a silver mist caresses you rather than pelt you' (80). Thus the return to Ireland is presented in positive terms and accompanied by the welcome of even the weather.

Rambles, like *Tales of the Pampas,* captures slippages and resistances and reveals a diaspora subject caught between two cultures 'mediat[ing] in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement' as Clifford asserts (1997: 255). The contradictory nature of Bulfin's sketches see him depict Argentina as a site which encompasses a transnational Irish identity and community whilst he simultaneously seeks to reassure the inhabitants of that community that 'home' is still as they imagine it: 'Other lands look lovelier from far away. But Ireland never is so beautiful as when the eye rests upon her face. You need never be afraid that you are flattering her while painting her from even your fondest memory' (1907: 4-5). Thus, Bulfin's return functions on various levels: a renewal of his nationalist fervour; a vindication for those who leave and return; approval for his exploits and efforts on behalf of the Irish community in Argentina; raising awareness of the value of that same community and; to a lesser extent, the strengthening of the *inglés-irlandés* divide.

Reassuring the exile of a welcome return is accompanied in the narrative by the need to demonstrate to those in Ireland the value of the foreign-born Irish community. Bulfin acknowledges that time and new language can 'soften' native Irish ways but he argues that this does not necessitate them losing a sense of Irishness. The diaspora community maintains important allegiances and connections to the homeland, whether through associations such as the Gaelic League or support for the Irish independence movement. Though the community is thousands of miles from the national territory, it has not forgotten Ireland. During his travels, Bulfin takes the opportunity to meet members of both strands of the Irish literary revival, Arthur Griffith and Douglas Hyde as well as W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Maud Gonne. Through forging new connections, Bulfin reinforces his commitment to his origin culture. Nonetheless, he repeatedly draws attention to the diaspora space in his travels.

One example of this can be seen in Bulfin's reminders to the reader of the diaspora community's allegiance to their Irish identity. When discussing a love song he hears on his travels, he notes 'I have heard it sung in two hemispheres – by the winter firesides of Leinster and under the *paraíso* trees around the homes of the pampas' (22). Here we see that memories of place and songs are linear – that is, there is a shared oral cultural tradition and the Irish diaspora community maintains and cherishes these links. That the shared culture is an oral one may speak to Bulfin's lauding of the rural over the urban, as demonstrated in his *Tales of the Pampas*. The diaspora community of the Pampas were largely from rural Irish society and Bulfin is keen to show that this community has not erased its past and their traditions live on abroad. However, upon seeing the de-populated regions of Ireland Bulfin questions why people are leaving: 'if there were a family to every 50 acres those plains would have a population of thousands and thousands. At present there are tracts of the Pampas more thickly peopled. And there is ample room on the Connacht ranches for all the emigrants that ever left Ireland for the great stock runs of the South' (53). If there is room for the native Irishman, then their departure can only be posited as a forced one, thus changing the nature of their leaving from emigration to exile.

In support of Bulfin's criticism of colonialism, he takes every opportunity to differentiate and criticise the 'English' way of travelling and seeing. He distinguishes 'Irish Ireland' from that of the famous scenic routes such as the Lakes of Killarney which are visited by English tourists. He cycles through areas of the country not favoured by tourism and offers a Utopian vision of what a land free from colonialism would look like. Ryle notes that 'his topographical choices do not simply reflect a search for novelty […] he wishes to call into question that whole way of seeing the land' (1999:115). One of Bulfin's criticisms is that many guide books and travellers

constantly compare landscapes to countries they have visited and fail to recognise what is unique or interesting about a place. The guide book he carries with him is of 'foreign manufacture [and] made no mention of Tara, (the ancient high seat of Ireland) probably because its author was ignorant of its existence' (73). As an alternative guide book to Ireland and one which steps outside the well-worn tourist routes, *Rambles* had huge appeal and nurtured the belief that only 'Irish eyes' could truly perceive the essence of the Irish landscape.

On the other hand, despite being critical of the practice of comparing sites, Bulfin falls into the same trap. Upon sighting the Curragh (an area of bogland in the West of Ireland) nostalgia for Argentina enters his narrative, suggesting stronger ties to the diaspora space than an exile might desire. Bulfin muses:

> I never see the Curragh without being reminded of the Pampas. It is very like a slice of a camp taken out of Arecifes or San Pedro. The land rises and falls in long and gentle undulations. There are no hills or vales, no hedges or walls – nothing but the shallow depressions and the billowy ridges […] I ran into a flock of sheep […] sufficiently large to be suggestive of a corner of the wide sheep runs far away. (190)

Here we see the Curragh displaced by the Pampas and Bulfin is now seeing Ireland through Argentina, an inverse of what most travel accounts by Anglophones in the 'New World' do. This mediation of the Irish landscape through an Argentine one strongly suggests that Argentina has become crucial to how he perceives his environment and identity. Moreover, by deliberately tying the topography of Ireland to a landscape thousands of miles away Bulfin is striving to unite the diaspora community with the homeland in one communal diaspora space and in doing so extend the boundaries of Irishness beyond the national territory. This is not the only evidence of nostalgia for Argentina and how it has become crucial to how Bulfin renders himself as subject,

potentially even displacing Ireland as 'home'. On his travels he is asked where he is from and instead of laying claim to his Irish roots in Derrinalough, Offaly, he twice responds 'south, seven thousand miles' (199, 414), revealing how integral Argentina has become to his concept of home as well as his identity construction. He is proud of not only his status as a returnee but also, it seems, of his adopted country.

A further signifier of the changes wrought in Bulfin is played out upon his travels to County Longford. This is the provenance of many of the Irish in Argentina and Bulfin is eager to share news of relatives and friends. He writes 'there was not a house in view but had sheltered someone who had emigrated to the Argentine republic, and I knew it. I had only to sit on the wall and begin to talk about Buenos Aires and the Irish of Argentina to gather an audience' (310). The welcome he receives is warm and sociable. What is striking, however, is that Bulfin does not remark on the fact that it is now he who is marked by difference and may even be seen as 'exotic' to those he meets especially as this is precisely how he presents himself. His return is then complemented by evidence of other return migration to some Longford towns like Tang. We are neither informed as to why these people returned nor what the impact of it is, though he intimates nostalgia for Argentina through the enthusiasm of some returnees to practise their Spanish. In one house he recounts:

> I stayed with them for more than two hours. A few of them remembered their Spanish and plied me with it. There were brothers and sisters of men I had met on the pampas, and nieces and nephews and even parents as well. I gave a good account of everybody. Some of them didn't deserve it maybe, but no matter. I sounded all their praises. (413)

As he does in *Tales of the Pampas*, Bulfin whitewashes the Irish community in Argentina, a not unexpected occurrence. What is unexpected, however, is his insertion of the *gaucho* into the narrative of his Irish travels.

Though not as prevalent as in his *Tales of the Pampas* the indigenous *gaucho* is featured in *Rambles* and once again, favourably depicted. The subversion of authority and resistance to outside control portrayed in *Tales of the Pampas* are given renewed fervour when seen against the background of colonialism in Ireland. Bulfin reiterates his admiration for the *gaucho* and he wonders if they could help to clear out the 'interlopers' (English graziers) from certain Irish counties, County Meath in particular. On his travels in Meath, Bulfin meets the local drovers who are slowly replacing the 'grazierocracy', as he terms them, and even though he praises their knowledge of the land, he complains about their lack of hospitality. He vows never to cycle through Meath again, stating: 'I tried to console myself with the thought that if I had a few score of the dusky riders who are often my comrades in a certain stock country far away, I could clean out Meath in a week, graziers and drovers and cattle and all' (83). The 'dusky riders' are valued above the 'native' Irishman and are seen as potential allies in plans to clear the English off the land. Bulfin identifies closely with the *gaucho* and he evinces a sense of belonging to that 'stock country' and his narrative once again produces solidarity with the *gaucho*. Nonetheless, that solidarity extends only as far as the *gaucho*. When faced with the Anglo-Irish class Bulfin vociferously criticises those he terms 'interlopers'.

A regatta in Connacht gives rise to an encounter with landlordism and Bulfin exploits this event to disparage the Anglo-Irish class and highlight what he sees as their isolation from the masses. They live what he deems to be decrepit and decadent lifestyles. Bulfin records a series of repeated conversations which denote a stagnant and exclusivist class, using their accents as a marker of their difference and foreignness to

Ireland (63-4).[52] He is saddened by the encounter and states that 'they impressed me as being hopelessly aloof from their country and their time. There was nothing about them to show that they regarded themselves as being Irish people. In dress and accent and social conventions they had fashioned themselves by English models' (65).[53] There is a distinct cultural divide within sections of the population, reflecting somewhat the nature of the diaspora community in Argentina. Bulfin judges those who conform or take on what he deems to be English attributes as un-Irish. The rhetoric of essentialist nationalism underpins his racialised discourse, contrasting markedly with his depiction of the Irish adoption of *gaucho* dress and attributes, which does not transform or corrupt the Irish subject. This divisive discourse is also reflected in Bulfin's praise for all that is rural, while he offers only negative comments on cities such as Limerick and Belfast, which he calls 'English' towns. Here Bulfin reverts back to an essentialist version of Irishness which excludes the urban as he 'never felt so lonely as in "English town" in Limerick' (253) and Belfast did not 'strike [him] as being an Irish city. It seemed to have a foreign complexion' (126). His rejection of Belfast may be linked to that city's reputation as a principal recruiting ground for the British army during the Boer War, specifically for the Royal Irish Rifles (McCracken 1989: 101).

One final example of Bulfin's delimiting of Irishness can be seen in his treatment of a Jewish pedlar he meets. Bulfin is 'sorry to hear' (309) that Jewish pedlars are more common in Ireland now and the conversation is redolent with anti-Semitism, something McCracken suggests was 'imbibed from the Irish community then living in Paris. Advanced nationalists stood firmly in the anti-Dreyfus camp' (1989:

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[52]The conversation went: 'Lovely day, isn't it?' 'Chawming,'. 'Nice regatta'. 'Rawtha'. 'Have you noticed how little interest the country takes in this thing?' 'Most extraordinary'.
[53]Douglas Hyde gave a speech in 1892 on 'The necessity of de-anglicising Ireland', in which he argued that Ireland should follow her own traditions in language, literature and even in dress.

xviii).[54] The pedlar's smile was 'oily', his humility 'insinuating' (307). Though the pedlar states he is from Dublin, Bulfin recounts the story in broken 'Hamburg' English and repeatedly stresses how his Jewish looks and accents denote his difference. Bulfin's exclusivist vision of Irishness disqualifies on the grounds of cultural and political loyalty, accent and class, and 'Irishness is presented as a secure, desirable condition, beyond the reach of those who are disqualified by caste, cultural or political allegiance, and now by blood' (Ryle 1999: 127). With no seeming irony in trying to lay claim to a transnational Irish-Argentine identity while simultaneously demarcating Irish identity as exclusive, the ambivalences and ambiguities of identity are not extended to those of other races, 'the stamp of which was indelibly set upon his every feature' (Bulfin 1907: 308).

Criticism of the Anglo-Irish and English policies regarding the Irish economy and tourism are visible throughout the narrative and his travels. While clearly propagating a nationalist, anti-English agenda and support for an Irish Ireland, his narrative's subtext links the Irish diaspora community in Argentina topographically and more importantly, in its maintenance of traditions, customs and pride in homeland. Irishness clearly exists on Argentine soil. Return is seen as feasible and the returnee a welcome figure, a depiction at odds with the prevailing discourse and one which would become imbued with more negative connotations as the century progressed. Contrary to Naficy's assertion that the dream of return must remain unfulfilled, for Bulfin the return is realised and in his narrative the fantasy does not disappoint. In fact, the opposite is discovered and the exile can be guaranteed that the years of yearning for the lost homeland have not been in vain: 'How often during the cloudless dog days of the Pampas had I yearned for a cycling tour through Ireland! And how often the thought

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[54]In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was falsely accused of treason, stripped of his rank and deported to the penal colony on Devil's Island. The Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906) divided intellectuals all over the world and unleashed racial violence. See Read (2012) for more detail.

would come to me that if ever my hopes were realised the fruition would prove flat and stale compared with the pleasures of anticipation. But it was just the reverse' (1). Bulfin's careful positioning of Irish departure from Ireland as 'exile' along with his support, both financial and editorial, for Irish nationalism seem to have counteracted any potentially negative effects of his time in the diaspora space.

Bulfin's sketches function on multiple and contradictory levels. Similar to Nevin's narrative, they reflect the dual orientation of the diasporic condition with regards to belonging and feeling loyalty to the place of settlement whilst also fostering and maintaining relationships beyond that space. With respect to the importance of the paradigm of exile, this marker of difference is crucial to Bulfin's expression of Irishness yet the intrinsically solitary, individual nature of the exile is converted into a communal (diasporic) condition in his discourse. What is more, Bulfin subverts the paradigm of exile as it is configured in an Irish context, that is, as the inability to return to Ireland unscathed or uncontaminated and thus diminishing Irishness. Bulfin's return unsettles and disrupts this notion as he both is, and is not, a corrupted returnee. He is rendered so by not only 'realising' the fantasy but being warmly received and praised for his contribution to the advancement of the Irish nationalist cause while paradoxically, laying claim to Argentine roots and integrating its landscape into how he sees the world. Ultimately, though fiercely nationalist, Bulfin romanticises both Ireland and Argentina in his travels and actively promotes a transnational sense of Irishness, drawing the diaspora space into the national territory. In a sense, Bulfin proposes exile itself as a condition from which one can 'recover', both physiologically and psychologically. His narratives advocate multiple modes of belonging, substantiating both Gilroy and Brah's claim that home and identity can be multi-located and, indeed, as Brah points out, the

multi-placedness of home 'does not exclude feeling anchored, or rooted in the place of settlement' (1996: 194).

Conclusion

When Bulfin returns to Argentina in 1903 to organise his business interests, he corresponds with members of the Literary Revival like Douglas Hyde and sends more money to support the Gaelic League. He also tries to further his literary career and Murphy notes that 'for the next three years he travelled back and forth between Ireland and Argentina with some stops in New York where he had a literary agent' (2001: 63). Recognition of his contribution and years of service to Catholic immigrants came in 1906, when the Vatican honoured Bulfin with a Papal Knighthood, the Order of St. Gregory. By 1907, it is clear that he is back in Ireland as the preface to *Rambles* is signed Derrinalough.[55] It is possible that with the enormous success of *Rambles* Bulfin felt that he could now make a living as a writer in Ireland. This wish was not fulfilled however. In an echo of the tragedy of Oisín's return, after just three years in Ireland, Bulfin dies in 1910 at the age of 46.

William Bulfin is a paradoxical and complex figure. His journey to Argentina is underpinned by his nationalism and sense of departure from Ireland as exile. These two markers are crucial to understanding his experience of the diaspora space and its inhabitants. Within the exile/nationalist paradigm Irish identity is constructed as rural, Catholic, and firmly rooted in the national territory of Ireland. By moving beyond the national borders Bulfin risks becoming the 'tainted subject' discussed in the previous chapter and therefore he positions himself, and the Irish community in Argentina, as exilic subjects who look backwards to Ireland and retain strong ties to the homeland.

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[55] 1907 was also a peak year for the Gaelic League and their campaign to have Irish established as a matriculation subject in the new National University of Ireland. Bulfin answered Padraic Pearse's call for boys to attend the all-Irish St. Enda's school and sent his son Eamonn.

Over twenty-three years Bulfin propagates a distinct Irish identity in Argentina. At first, he attempts to distinguish this presence by its anti-English nature and the establishment of societies and associations which maintain elements of Irish culture at the forefront of daily life. Aspects of the Irish Literary Revival are reproduced in the pages of *The Southern Cross* and Bulfin is instrumental in the establishment of the Gaelic League. These efforts serve to demonstrate the diaspora community's loyalty and continued 'looking back' to the homeland as a point of reference for identity construction. The Irish community in Argentina, however, is by no means a homogeneous group and the divisions visible in Irish society are reproduced in the diaspora space. The *inglés* identity which Bulfin desires to move away from is seen by many as a means to improve their status. What is more, by the end of the century, Argentina was heavily dependent on British investment and its Anglophile leanings and pro-British stance during the Boer War made it clear that an *inglés* identity was not only advantageous but more in line with the host country's policies.

Irish identity is not solely constituted around an anti-English stance, however. Bulfin also links it to that of the indigenous *gaucho.* In doing so he reveals the ambivalent nature of diasporic experience. Despite his positioning within the paradigm of exile and nationalism, it is significant that the act of living among the inhabitants of the diaspora space and their multiple cultural discourses is centrally a transformative one. His cultural nationalism is challenged by his experiences, in particular his encounters with the *gaucho*. The figure of the *gaucho* witnessed in Brabazon's account of his life on the pampas has undergone a transformation by the end of the century. While Brabazon's depiction reflects elements of those of Concolorcorvo and Sarmiento, it is clear that he respects their loyalty and laments the poor treatment they receive from

the other inhabitants of the pampas – including the Irish.[56] Bulfin's sketches move

away from a negative image of the *gaucho* and instead foster a strong sense of solidarity

with this marginalised group. His writing attests to the changing nature of pampas

society and the increasingly-restricted freedoms of the once autonomous *gaucho.*

Furthermore, Bulfin contributes to the romanticising of this figure, paralleling the

movement towards revisionism within Argentine literary circles.

Tales of the Pampas reveal a diaspora subject who empathises with the

indigenous inhabitants and who challenges the potentially corrupting impact of those

inhabitants and the shared space. Within these tales the exilic subject reflects practices

of resistance as well as essentialising tendencies with regards to identity. Nonetheless,

what becomes clear is that the diaspora space can accommodate multiple forms of

cultural identity and Irishness is re-shaped because of this. Bulfin re-imagines Irish

identity as that in which the national territory is neither anchor nor primary referent for

identity construction, instead extending it outward to encompass the myriad diaspora

communities worldwide. His return journey to Ireland encapsulates various elements of

his re-imagining. Not only does his narrative of return prove that the fantasy can be

realised, it serves to reassure diaspora communities around the world of their welcome.

Bulfin rejects any hint of 'taint' engendered by living in the diaspora space and

demonstrates how the returnee can in fact contribute to national life. Though *Rambles*

in Eirinn is Bulfin's ode to Irish Ireland, his experiences in the diaspora space are not

forgotten. Indeed, they are written into his travels and, similar to how Bulfin expands

the national territory of Ireland to include the diaspora space, his narration of the Irish

landscape includes elements of that same space.

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[56]For example, both Concolorcorvo (79) and Brabazon refer to the 'disgusting' habit of 'comer piojos' -
eating lice.

Ultimately, Bulfin's sketches reveal an empathy with Argentina and its inhabitants and result in a contestation of the hegemonic construction of Irishness as fixed and rooted in the physical boundaries of national territory. As Gilroy suggests, cultural identity is not something 'inevitably determined by place' (2003: 304). Though place as the primary referent for identity construction is contested, the boundaries of Irishness only extend so far. Whilst rejecting one essentialism, Bulfin's *Rambles* reveal another. Ethnicity and language become new signifiers of identity. Despite laying claim to a transnational Irish-Argentine identity, it is only outside the borders of the national territory that this hybridity is seen as welcome. The Anglo-Irish or Jewish sectors of Irish society are seen to be the unwelcome or 'corrupted' subjects. In Argentina on the other hand, Bulfin's legacy, a transnational Irish-Argentine identity, is brought into being and his children reflect the dual elements of this identity. His son Eamonn fought in the Easter Rising of 1916 and is cited as being the one who placed the Irish flag on top of the General Post Office on O'Connell St. (Murphy 2001: 64). When captured it was his Argentine birth which saved him from a death sentence. Eamonn was imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs prison then sent to finish his sentence in Argentina, later becoming Eamonn De Valera's first representative of the Irish Republic in Argentina.[57] This second generation member of the Irish diaspora demonstrates how the boundaries of Irishness had indeed extended beyond the national territory.

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[57]For more details on Eamonn Bulfin see http://www.irlandeses.org/dilab_bulfine.htm

Conclusion

'Irish people have been simultaneously viewed as insiders and outsiders [...] have been inscribed within a repertoire of stereotypes that have become so common place as to be almost taken for granted'.[1]

' To emigrate is to change, to become "Other", different, plural'.[2]

This thesis has focussed on the literary representations of nineteenth-century Irish emigrant identity by three members of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina. The corpus spans a period of over sixty years, from 1845 to 1907 and encompasses the genres of diary, fiction and travel literature. Seventeen-year-old John Brabazon from County Westmeath and twenty-year-old William Bulfin from County Offaly, embark upon journeys from middle class, rural Ireland to Buenos Aires in 1845 and 1884 respectively. They both secure work on various *estancias* and move around the pampas region of Buenos Aires province, cataloguing their adventures and interactions with the other inhabitants of that space. Kathleen Nevin, on the other hand, takes an imaginary journey into the past and reconstructs her mother's memories of migration at twenty-two years of age from County Longford to the city of Buenos Aires in 1880. These three writers have revealed how diasporic identities and subjectivities are constructed over time and space in an ongoing transformative process and engagement with literary and diaspora spaces.

As conveyed in these narratives of travel to and within Argentina, this transformative process is configured within and counter to the powerful hegemonic discourse of Irish emigration as exile. The trope of exile as intrinsic to Irish migration patterns has long characterised departure from Ireland, though often in a paradoxical

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[1]Louise Ryan (2004: 354).
[2]Ward (2002: 245).

manner. Exile is alternatively employed in nationalist rhetoric to place responsibility for Irish problems onto English shoulders or to differentiate the Irish from broader immigrant communities in common destinations such as the United States or United Kingdom. Moreover, it has operated as a marker of difference to compensate for any sense of loss or displacement experienced in the many global areas of settlement. This exilic discourse is often juxtaposed with a discourse which conceives those who depart as 'tainted' subjects who can potentially corrupt the 'pure' and essential nature of Irishness, configured as anti-English, rural, male, Catholic and, critically, territorially-bound. The central concern of this thesis has been an interrogation and reconsideration of this stereotype of Irishness and the Irish emigrant. As part of this reconsideration it has analysed the role played by the concepts of home, return and exile within the diasporic imagination. The thesis has assessed the consequences this has on identity formation as constituted in the literary, journalist and ethnographic works under study, although it does not mean to ascribe representative status to these voices. Instead, I contend that an examination of these individual narratives demonstrates the plurality of migrant experiences, encapsulated in each writer's response to their host environment and the generic choices they make in order to frame this response. They testify as to how identity and Irishness are configured in multiple modes within diverse literary spaces.

This work has engaged with the increasing use of diaspora as an analytical category within which to explore discrete patterns and characteristics of Irish migration. I have drawn upon a framework of diaspora theory which amalgamates the two distinct strands of enquiry around the notions of diaspora, home, return and exile. These strands are exemplified on the one hand by the traditional approach of critics such as William Safran, whose understanding of diaspora is predicated on the extent to which diasporas

comply with a specific model. This model proposes that, among other factors, a myth

of return, a lack of acceptance by the host society as well as continued links and

loyalties to a homeland are constitutive elements of diasporas. The second reading of

diaspora, a post-modern one, emphasises the hybridity inherent to cultural and identity-

formation practices and underplays the importance of the myth of return as well as the

role of the national or homeland on diasporic formation. I argue, like many other critics,

that these strands are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the notion of the transnational

subject is not a recent one, as the three authors under study have attested to in their

writing. Instead, by merging the two strands to examine the transnational nature of

diaspora as well as the continued role national loyalties play, I believe we come closer

to accessing the complexity of experiences of diaspora.

In particular, this thesis has explored the narratives of Brabazon, Nevin and

Bulfin through various paradigms, one of which is that of diaspora space or 'the

intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of

economic, political, cultural and psychic processes' (Brah 1996: 188). This confluence

of processes is accompanied by Brah's notion that this space 'is "inhabited" not only by

those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are

constructed and represented as indigenous' (1996: 181). Another paradigm is the

conflated construction of home as both mythic place of desire and lived experience of a

locality. Concomitant to these paradigms is that of exile and how this has been

configured within Irish cultural discourse. Accordingly, this thesis has examined the

'resistances, accommodations, doubling and slippages' evident in the three writers'

response to the diaspora space, elements which critic Hamid Naficy declares integral to

the diasporic and exilic conditions.

With regards to the increased use of diaspora as an analytical tool, scholars such as Akenson, O'Sullivan and Mac Éinrí have highlighted gaps in research around Irish diaspora. Not only is there a need for further investigation into the impact of gender and class on Irish diasporic formations but also into formations in non-Anglophone communities, a vacuum this thesis has attempted to address in part in order to recover the forgotten or excluded voices of the Irish in Argentina. Furthermore, another highly significant gap is research into return migration. In fact, within diaspora studies in general there is a need to formulate and synthesise debates and arguments around reverse migration and the figure of the returnee. This thesis has taken an important step towards this end by conceptualising portrayals of the returnee in Irish cultural discourse as well as in the discourse of the diaspora community. These portrayals have consequences for the host and origin society, as feelings of resentment and bitterness can develop around this figure in both societies, resulting in alienation and a sense of victimisation. One of the central research questions of this thesis then, is how the emigrant and returnee are perceived in Irish cultural discourse and to assess its impact on the narratives under study.

In order to respond to this question, this research was divided into three parts: an Introductory chapter and two Sections. The Introduction set out and contextualised Irish movement worldwide so as to pave the way for an interpretation of the distinctiveness of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina. It also compared the migration patterns to Anglophone destinations such as the United States and examined the master narrative of Famine emigration in both Ireland and the United States. This narrative characterises departure as exile, resulting in victimisation, displacement and loss of homeland. Contradictorily, the image of the returned Yank in Irish cultural discourse is that of an unwelcome and potentially corrupting figure. This negative

depiction is underscored by ballads, plays and folklore archives. Crucially, emigration to Argentina falls outside that exile paradigm despite attempts by various elements of the Irish community (William Bulfin included) to construct it as such. Furthermore, the Introduction outlined the historical texts produced about this community as well as the few critical studies of the three authors I have examined. Finally, it delineated the critical methodology adopted, as discussed above.

Section One, entitled 'Irish Routes/Roots in Latin America' historicised nineteenth-century movement out of Ireland. Chapter 1 argued the case for the exceptionality of the Irish experience, first in Spain, and then to countries such as Brazil, Chile and Mexico. Irish encounters and journeys in these areas benefit from the absence of the anti-Catholic prejudice which so delimited experiences in the United States and United Kingdom, for example. The perceived desirability of the Anglophone Irish emigrant in these countries, and later in Argentina, marks Irish intersections with Latin American society and history as an essentially transformative experience. In the crossing to Latin America, in of itself a less perilous journey than that to the United States, the English-speaking Irish emigrant is converted into an *inglés* - a status which in Ireland made little difference to a subject's socio-economic condition or living standards. Paradoxically, in Latin America this status proves advantageous and provides for better social mobility than in Ireland. In addition, Chapter 1 outlined the profile of the nineteenth-century emigrant, examining the push/pull factors behind departure, the specificity of migration patterns as well as the changing socio-economic conditions after the Famine of 1845-52. Women, in particular, were impacted adversely by these changes and we see unique migration patterns emerge in relation to women's movement out of Ireland compared to that of the European context. One notable defining element is that almost as many women as men left Ireland in the time period

under study, in comparison to the 30 per cent of those in European patterns. This statistic sits in stark contrast to the depiction of Irish women as static, lacking agency or those left behind passively awaiting for men to return.

Chapter 2 explored the area of the only non-Anglophone country to attract a significant Irish settlement in the nineteenth century: Argentina. As the root of the Irish legacy in Latin America, Argentina's socio-economic and political conditions are integral to understanding how this country became the destination of about 45,000 Irish-born migrants, with descendants numbering around 350,000. What distinguished the Irish experience in this country is their skill in sheep farming as well as their perceived value or 'desirability' as British subjects. Consequently, this chapter traced the Anglophilia of the Rivadavian administration as well as the protection *ingleses* were afforded under the Rosas' regime. The Irish community that emerges in Argentina is heterogeneous, with a mix of predominantly Catholic but also Protestant migrants, containing nationalist and unionist elements. These elements alternatively proclaim or disavow allegiance to Ireland, Britain and Argentina - some claiming multiple modes of allegiance. The initially *inglés* community slowly evolves throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Members of this group, such as Fr Fahy for example, attempt to distinguish the Irish community from the wider *inglés* community of Scottish, Welsh and English natives with an insistence on an increasingly Irish model of Roman Catholicism, a model which incorporated wakes and keening rituals for examples. This marked them out from the broader community but also problematised the clergy's relationship with the native Catholic hierarchy, who were distrustful of the number of Irish churches appearing on the pampas. The *inglés* identity gives way to a hyphenated Irish-Argentine identity by the end of the nineteenth century. This cultural identity

reveals the dual allegiances and nature of diaspora and the methodology I employ in that it suggests loyalties in both the area of settlement and in the origin society.

Three diasporic voices were examined in Section Two, 'Unsettling Notions of Home, Return and Identity'. The diary of Brabazon, Nevin's novel and Bulfin's travel sketches explore questions of cultural identity and belonging in their writing. Moreover, they all write from within or counter to the hegemonic discourse of the Irish emigrant as 'tainted' subject – from inside Ireland and, at times, the diaspora community in Argentina. This Section examined the extent to which each writer confronts or reproduces this discourse with its essentialisms and stereotypes of the emigrant. Chapter 3 focussed on how John Brabazon mediates cultural identity in Argentina from outside the master narrative of the emigrant as anti-English, an exile and a victim. Like the majority of the Irish population at the time he willingly adopts an *inglés* identity, which is conveyed as highly beneficial to the Irish emigrant in Argentina. Brabazon documents his encounters with other inhabitants of the pampas, be they native Argentines or other migrants, and his writing reveals a subject who rejects the exile paradigm, without disavowing an Irish cultural identity. Instead, he incorporates elements of Argentine customs and values into his sense of self, and interrogates his own as well as his co-nationals values and practices. He depicts certain Irish practices, specifically with regards to the treatment of the native *gaucho*, as hostile and disrespectful. Even though Brabazon writes from outside the paradigm of exile, this is not to suggest that his diary expunges the negative experiences he undergoes. He records how he is initially rendered penniless because of not speaking Spanish, he is threatened with military service by a Scottish immigrant and he suffers the death of his first wife. Nonetheless, these experiences do not engender bitterness towards the diaspora space and are balanced by the positive interactions with his family, friends and

native Argentines as he negotiates life on the pampas. Brabazon is a forward-looking subject with ties in multiple locations.

Chapter 4, on the other hand, explored the gendered facet of the Irish diaspora. Kathleen Nevin, a second-generation diaspora subject, demonstrates the significance of narrative and memory in the construction of the diasporic imaginary. Nevin engages with these dimensions in her exploration and re-invention of her mother's past and migration experiences through the prism of an aged Irish woman's memoir of how she had come to Argentina. Within Nevin's narrative, the monolithic discourse of the emigrant, and in particular the female emigrant, as a tainted subject is evidenced in both the origin society and the Irish community in Buenos Aires into which the protagonist, Kate Connolly, is subsumed. Nevin constructs her protagonist as a curious and open-minded individual as opposed to the inflexible older generation of Irish emigrants who romanticise Ireland and are fearful of the 'native' Argentine. She explores the challenges posed to Kate's cultural identity by the diaspora space and its inhabitants. Although she mediates Argentine and Irish cultural values and embraces elements of *porteño* society, it is ultimately an Irish home and cultural practices that she wishes to reproduce on Argentine soil. In a similar manner to Brabazon, this reflects the dual orientation integral to diasporic identities. As an Irish-Argentine, Nevin displays loyalty to both the space of Argentina and the values and practices her parents taught her.

The final chapter of this thesis analysed the travel sketches of William Bulfin and his encounters with multiple cultures, languages, nationalities and natives on the pampas as well as the city of Buenos Aires. Writing from within the paradigm of exile, Bulfin's experiences in the diaspora space prove, ultimately, to be transformative. Though his narratives are imbued with nostalgia for Ireland and his editorials strident in

his attempts to erase the *inglés* dimension from the Irish community, in the end the identity to which he lays claim is not the monolithic construction of an Irishness fixed within the borders of the national territory. Instead, Bulfin is, perhaps unwittingly, converted into a transnational Irish-Argentine subject who embodies the dual forward and backward-looking nature of the diasporic condition. Chapter 5 also examined Bulfin's depiction of return as he alone of the three writers fulfils the 'unrealisable' fantasy. It is during his travels in Ireland that the extent of his transformation becomes apparent. This is evidenced in how he inscribes both Argentina (the pampas at least) and the figure of the *gaucho* onto the Irish landscape. On the other hand, despite his unsettled notions about the rooted element of Irishness, his encounters with the Anglo-Irish and Jewish inhabitants of Ireland demonstrate that though the borders of Irishness may be extended to diaspora spaces, they remain closed to those who do not respond to other essentialisms, especially with regards to religion.

This thesis has engaged with the narratives by three distinct voices of the Irish community in Argentina through a conceptual framework which prioritises questions about the relationships between home and return, emigrants and exiles or past and present. However, as a methodological tool this type of analysis could prove invaluable to re-conceptualising Irish experiences elsewhere in a comparative context. The use of Brah's notion of diaspora space as well as the central questions of who travels, why and how both home and return are perceived in the discourses which mark that movement, whether from within the host or origin communities, can serve to illuminate how migrants render themselves subjects. In fact, the ongoing relevance and value of these theoretical concepts are apparent in Murray's 2012 *London Irish Fictions: Narrative, Diaspora and Identity*. Murray's work explores contemporary fiction and memoir by Irish migrants and second-generation London-Irish writers through an engagement with

the theories of Brah and Paul Ricoeur. Though the issues at stake in the nineteenth-century Irish-Argentine community are more complex, particularly given the singularity of that formation, nevertheless, it is evident from research such as this that questions of how various past and contemporary diaspora spaces as well as their inhabitants impact Irish history, identity and representation are far from fully answered. For example, a comparative study of how home and the figure of the returnee are depicted in Irish emigrant letters from multiple global destinations could open up a valuable field of study. Moreover, this form of analysis is not limited to the time frame or spaces under study, nor indeed to the Irish. Instead it broadens the parameters for reconsidering the experiences of all globally-dispersed people and could be applied to the investigation of literary texts depicting migration experiences of other nationals, in a comparative or individual context. A comparison, for example, of the commonalities and disjunctures of distinct migration experiences, or inter- and trans-diasporic subjectivities, could allow for a new understanding of both past and present diasporic experiences.

With regards to diasporic experiences in Argentina, Brabazon, Nevin and Bulfin have demonstrated the flexible and permeable nature of emigrant identity, while to varying degrees espousing or questioning essentialisms and stereotypes of the Irish emigrant. In each narrative, this identity has been configured around shared belongings, whether to a place, class, ethnicity, religion or gender, but it is also constructed as capable of accepting and incorporating differences within those very same categories. Ultimately, the narratives of all three members of the nineteenth-century Irish diaspora community in Argentina lay claim to modes of belonging and an Irishness which extend beyond the borders of the national territory. These alternative modes of belonging help to unpick the entangled and paradoxical relationship between home and return and allow us to reconsider entrenched assumptions about Irish emigrant identity.

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