ISSN 1753-2396 (Print)
ISSN 2753-328X (Online)

Journal of
Irish and Scottish Studies

Articles

Voices of the Vanquished: Echoes of Language Loss in Gaelic Poetry from Kinsale to the Great Famine

Author: Tom Dunne

Volume 1, Issue 1
Pp: 25-44
2007
Published on: 1st Jan 2007

1 4 9 5

ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Voices of the Vanquished: Echoes of Language Loss in Gaelic Poetry from Kinsale to the Great Famine

Tom Dunne

The first part of my title acknowledges a debt to Wachtel's great study of Inca understanding of the Spanish conquest – *The Vision of the Vanquished*.[1] His main sources were the folk dances that originated in that traumatic time; difficult to interpret, but nearly all that survives from an Indian perspective. The manuscript sources for the Gaelic Irish response to conquest and colonisation, particularly in its most crucial and rebarbative phases, from the late sixteenth century to the Williamite settlement, are, by contrast, rich and varied. Yet the largest and richest Gaelic source, the political poetry of the Gaelic elite, has been ignored by nearly all modern historians of the period (the most important exception being Nicholas Canny). Their historical contexts have also been largely neglected by literary scholars (again with some exceptions, notably Breandán Ó Buachalla), who, when they have commented on them, have been content with scholarly editions, more linguistic than historical.[2] Even more remarkably, the most profound cultural revolution in Irish history since the coming of Christianity – the replacement of the Gaelic language by English, initially as the language of power and elites, but ultimately as the language also of ordinary life – this dramatic and traumatic shift scarcely features in modern Irish historiography. It is, of course, a complex story, and even its main features are difficult to discern clearly. It was a long drawn out process, with still unmapped local as well as class variations, from the gradual abandonment of Irish by the indigenous elites (and indeed the first generations of New English) and its divorce from power – to the far more rapid abandonment of the language by the rural poor in the decades before and after the Famine: millions of individual decisions responding to the harsh realities of economic survival, status and influence. It was a process mediated through – and doubtless softened by – shifting patterns of bilingualism. It was made further invisible by the official policy of

[1] Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished. The Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes* (Brighton, 1977).

[2] See, especially, Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (Oxford, 2001); Breandán Ó Buachalla, *Aisling Ghéar* (Dublin, 1996).

what Patricia Palmer has described as 'occluded translation'. The process she describes continued into the modern period, that is, the official production of monophone texts–e.g. of state trials, or evidence before parliamentary commissions–which has everyone speaking English, even when the evidence shows that Irish was spoken.[3]

This is one reason why Irish historians, who tend to rely so heavily on official sources, have been largely deaf to the voices of Irish speakers. Another is that most of them have difficulty with the use of literary sources, and especially of Gaelic poetry, as historical evidence, despite the fact that it articulated communal rather than individual perspectives. In the form of Bardic court poetry, it was the main political discourse of the old Gaelic and Gaelicised elites, and later, in Jacobite Aisling or vision poetry, it articulated initially the hopes and aspirations of the dispossessed lords, and ultimately those of the rural poor, to the extent that it became a core element of folk culture. As Geoffrey Keating pointed out in his landmark history, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (equally neglected, though a more conventional source) it makes no sense for historians to ignore the poetry, 'do bhrí gurab i nduantaibh atá cnáimh agus smior an tseanchusa' [because in the poems are the bone and marrow of the ancient record].[4] While due account must be taken of issues of *genre* and literary convention, the poetry discussed below gives insights into Gaelic culture and its response to the traumas of colonisation available nowhere else.

It is, above all, the neglect of such sources, and the over-reliance on the official record, that makes possible the current remarkable and depressing fashion among historians of early modern Ireland not only to ignore, but also vehemently to deny, the colonial dimensions of Irish historical experience, during that radically revolutionary period. Instead there have been various attempts to normalise that experience, using *ancien regime* models, or 'modernisation' theories, and culminating in the now ubiquitous 'new British history', launched by Pocock in 1975, which, at its crudest, reduces Ireland to one among the various 'regions' of these islands as they were absorbed into the centralising British state.[5] Like the earlier models, this has produced important

[3] Patricia Palmer, *Language and Conquest in Early Modern Ireland: English Renaissance Literature and Elizabethan Imperial Expansion* (Cambridge, 2001), 54–7.

[4] Geoffrey Keating, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn. The History of Ireland* (4 Vols, London, 1902–14), Vol. 1, 91.

[5] For a good discussion of the Pocockian revolution, see the introduction to D. J. Baker and W. Maley (eds), *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 2002).

new insights, but its approach, always artificial and myopic, has become as crude and disabling an orthodoxy as the old-fashioned, polarised black and white version of colonialism it posits as the alternative. Many of the most vocal proponents of the New British History dismiss the relevance of any colonial model to Ireland – and even more of the insights of postcolonial theory – as if nothing had changed since the early crude formulations of Franz Fanon and Albert Memmi. This ignores the fact that modern writing emphasises above all the evolution of complex hybrid cultures from colonial encounters, featuring assimilation and adaptation, rather than simple rejection and alienation – something not that dissimilar from the better insights of the "New" British History.[6] My work has long been indebted to modern postcolonial scholarship, particularly to Ashis Nandy on hybridisation,[7] and to the insights into the lost voices of the dispossessed or the illiterate rural poor developed initially by Indian Marxist historians in their journal, *Subaltern Studies*.[8] In what follows, I will try to apply some of these insights to a range of Gaelic texts, from the mid seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, which reflect or respond to the slow-burning linguistic revolution I've described – the key cultural aspect of that wider colonial revolution, which transformed virtually every aspect of Ireland during this period. Rather than simply talk about 'voices of the vanquished', in abstract terms, I want to allow some snatches, at least, of what they had to say to be heard.[9]

Of course, in the official record Ireland was never described formally (though often it was informally) as a 'colony', the relationship to England being masked by a series of convenient legal fictions – 'Lordship', 'Kingdom' – ultimately 'United Kingdom'. Likewise the radical, violent process by which most of the indigenous elite were dispossessed, transported internally or allowed into exile and their land given to foreigners, was done ultimately in the form of due legal process and title, so that only the bowdlerised Gaelic place names in the new title deeds pointed to the earlier obliterated reality. And so, for example, we can have modern histories of the Ulster and Munster plantations that ignore Gaelic sources and deny that they were colonial schemes, but instead reduce them to established patterns of population

[6] For an important overview of the transformation of post-colonial studies, see, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993).

[7] Especially, Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*: *loss and recovery of self under Colonialism* (Delhi, 1983).

[8] Ranajit Guha, *et al,* (eds), *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asia History and Society* (11 Vols, Delhi, 1982–2000).

[9] My examples are mainly from Munster, and from texts that are in print.

movement and an evolving market economy.[10] The brutal reality is clear, however, in literary texts, such as the colonialist writing of Spenser and other New English settlers or officials, much studied by literary scholars.[11] It is also painfully clear in the Gaelic poetry, initially that produced by professional or would-be professional poets for aristocratic patrons; later in the poetry produced by part-time poets for wealthy farmers and priests, and ultimately in the folk poetry, or 'amhráin na ndaoine' of the Irish-speaking poor before the Famine.[12] Throughout, the dominant theme was that of dispossession – the loss and hoped-for restoration of land – and also to the fore was the related theme of religious persecution. The enemy, described often in extreme language throughout the period, was, interchangeably, the Englishman and the Protestant. It may seem strange that the theme of language loss in the poetry was a secondary and intermittent one, though I believe that the patterns of assimilation and bilingualism referred to provide an answer. Nonetheless it is a crucial thread running through this evolving corpus of poetry and song, and it offers indispensable evidence of a key cultural aspect of a profound colonial experience.

Finally, by way of introduction, I should define what I mean by 'colonialism', having been accused recently by Sean Connolly, of a 'casual characterisation' in this regard.[13] I am happy to use the definition that echoes and re-echoes through the Gaelic texts, as in Keating's account of 'gabáltas pagánach' (Pagan conquest) – 'léirscrios do thabhairt ar an bhfoirinn claoidhtear leis, agus foireann uaidh féin do chur d'áitiughadh / na críche ghabhas le neart'(to bring destruction on the people who are subdued by him, and to send new people from himself to inhabit the country which he has taken by

[10] Michael McCarthy-Morrogh, *The Munster Plantation* (Oxford, 1986); Philip Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster* (Dublin, 1984).

[11] See, for example, Palmer, *Language and Conquest;* Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience* (Oxford, 1997); Willy Maley, *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture and Identity* (New York, 1992); For a discussion of the debate sparked off by his foregrounding of Spenser in *The Elizabethan Reconquest of Ireland* (1976), see Nicholas Canny, "Debate: Spenser's Irish Crisis: Humanism and Experience in the 1590's", in *Past and Present*, No. 120 (1988), 201–9

[12] Tom Dunne, "The Gaelic response to Conquest and Colonisation: the evidence of the Poetry', *Studia Hibernia*, No. 20 (1980), 7–30; '"Tá Gaedhil bhocht cráidhte"; memory, tradition and the politics of the poor in Gaelic poetry and song', in T. Dunne and L. M.Geary (eds), *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland* (Dublin 2001).

[13] Sean Connolly, "Tupac Amaru and Captain Right: a comparative perspective on Eighteenth Century Ireland", in D. Dickson and C. Ó Gráda, (eds), *Refiguring Ireland: essays in honour of L.M.Cullen* (Dublin, 2003), 108.

force).[14] Or, in the words of 'An Síogaí Rómhánach' some years later, around 1650, castigating James I, 'd'órdaigh a dtalamh do thamhas le téadaibh / do chuir Saxanaibh i leabaidh na nGaol nglan / is *Transplantation* ar chách le chéile' (who ordered their land to be measured, who put Englishmen in place of the native Irish, and transplantation of everyone together').[15] The emphasis, time and again, in the poetry is on forced dispossession of the indigenous elites and colonisation of their land by foreigners – a fairly obvious, basic definition – and one underlined by the reiterated hope or prophecy in the poetry right down to the Famine, again to cite the 'Síogaí Rómhánach', template for much that was to follow, 'Goill d'ionnarbadh is Banba 'shaoradh' (to drive out the foreigners and free Ireland).[16] Some of the cultural dimensions of that core definition – and reiterated hope – will be explored in what follows. And lest the vehemence and anger of much of what I will cite gives the impression that I am endorsing or resuscitating a polarised, black and white view of colonialism, I want to make it clear that my argument, instead, is that side by side with rejection of the culture of the new colonists and the colonial state went cultural assimilation and ambivalence, and that the poetry also reflects this.

As Patricia Palmer has shown convincingly in her important book on *Language and Conquest in Early Modern Ireland*, there was a powerful linguistic dimension to the Elizabethan re-conquest of Ireland. 'Anglicisation was neither incidental to the conduct of conquest nor a mere spin off from it. Language was intimately bound up with the ideologies that legitimised colonisation and shaped its unfolding'.[17] This was recognised in its immediate aftermath by Geoffrey Keating, who anathemised Stanihurst for his support for the new official policy of replacing Irish by English. Using the example of William the Conqueror, he contrasted this policy with the ideal of a 'gabháltas Críostúil' or 'Christian conquest' which respected the indigenous language – 'óir ní féidir an teanga do dhíbirt, gan an lucht d'ár teanga í do dhíbirt' (for it is not possible to banish the language without banishing the folk whose language it is).[18] By 'folk' Keating meant the Gaelic and Gaelicised elites, many of whom were, indeed, banished, while most of those who stayed quickly assimilated, and Joep Leerssen has shown how later in

[14] Keating, *Foras Feasa*,, 136–7.

[15] Cecile O'Rahilly (ed), *Five Seventeenth Century Political Poems* (Dublin, 1977), poem 2, lines 91– 4.

[16] Ibid., line 312.

[17] Palmer, *Language and Conquest,* 14.

[18] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, 1, 36–7.

the seventeenth century, the blame for the decline of Irish was put by the poets not on the English so much as on the Gaelic nobility. In the words of the poet Diarmuid Mac Muireadhaigh, 'Ní hí an teanga do chuaidh ó chion acht an dream dár dhual a dídion' (it is not the language which has come into disesteem, but those who should defend it).[19] Keating's classic text, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (a basis of knowledge about Ireland) was itself a proof and product of an abrasive colonialism, defining itself specifically as a response to the misrepresentations of Gaelic history and culture by colonialist writers from Giraldus Cambrensis to Spenser. It was to be the bible of the antiquarianism that formed an important part of the native elite's response to language loss, and underpinned an important strain of 'patriot' sentiment in the eighteenth century. This has been shown in great detail in Leerssen's seminal work, *Mere Irish and Fior-Ghael*, and in Clare O'Halloran's, *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations*.[20] My concern is to seek for traces in the poetry of how the new colonialism, particularly after Cromwell, was experienced culturally.

This has to be seen, as the Gaelic literati saw it, against the background of the earlier phase of colonisation from the neighbouring island since the twelfth century – and going back further, indeed, to the series of earlier invasions, historical and mythological, around which Gaelic history and literature were organised. A twelfth century compilation of texts detailing resistance to the Vikings, while designed as dynastic propaganda, became emblematic of the way that history, from the Normans onwards, came to be perceived as *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (the war between the native Irish and the foreigners).[21] Yet, as Keating in particular was at pains to point out, the Normans were absorbed culturally, and to a considerable degree politically, producing a hybrid society.[22] But it was a two-way process. To quote *Tuireamh na hÉireann* again, 'Do bhí an Gaeul gallda 's an Gall Gaeulach' (the Irish took on foreign ways and the foreigners Irish ways).[23] Bardic poetry reflected that cultural interpenetration, but even when written for Norman families, and

[19] Joep Leerssen, *Meere -Irish and Fíor -Ghael; studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century* (Amsterdam, 1986; Cork 1996. Quotations are from the Cork edition), 204 ff.

[20] Clare O'Halloran, *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, c.1750–1800* (Cork, 2004).

[21] J.H.Todd (ed.), *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh;the War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Dublin, 1867).

[22] See, in particular, Keating, *Foras Feasa*, 1, 35–41.

[23] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Century Poems*, "Tuireamh na hÉireann", l. 280

giving them Gaelic antecedents and connections, it never lost the sense of the core distinction between Gael and Gall. This remained true of the poetry that celebrated the alliance of the Gaelic Irish and Old English, as they now became, against the New English. While praised as 'seanGhaill séimhe' (gentle old English, they were still, after 400 years, emphatically Gall/foreign.[24] Thus, the reiterated use of this Gael/Gall division in the poetry under discussion here reflected a very old literary and political convention.

While significant, it should not be exaggerated, however. Many years ago, I argued that the intense dislike of the new colonists by the poets should be seen more in terms of class, culture and religion rather than ethnicity, much less nationalism.[25] This dislike came to focus strongly on their language, in ways that combined the traditional emphasis on the foreign with a new emphasis on the non-aristocratic background of the newcomers. The word 'béarla' had originally meant simply 'language, speech, dialect', to quote Dineen, but from the mid-seventeenth century, as will be clear from most of the texts I will cite, it came more and more to mean the language of the newcomers, i.e. English. For Dáibhí Cúndún, they were 'bodaig an Bhéarla / *Scum* na Sagsan is na bailtibhba thréine' (English speaking serfs, the scum of the English and the principal towns) and 'bastardaibh Béarla' (English speaking bastards).[26] They were low bred, artisans, 'brosgán brocach do bhodachaibh céirde' (a filthy rabble of churls in trades) in *Éamonn an Dúna*.[27] Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, the Gaelic world's most passionate and graphic witness to the period between the Cromwellian settlement and the aftermath of Aughrim, constantly emphasised their gross materialism, and in his 1652 poem, *Créacht to dháil mé*, he made their language part of this. After the banishment of the native lords, he wrote,

> Biaid féin 'na ndeághaidh go másach magaidh
> d'éis a seárnta i mbláith a mbailte
> go péatrach, plátach, prásach, pacach,
> béarlach beárrtha bádhach blasta.
>
> (His editor, MacErlean, translates this, rather loosely – 'To take their places then will come the fat-rumped jeerers, after crushing them,

[24] Ibid., l..
[25] Dunne, "The Gaelic response", 23.
[26] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Poems*, "Aiste Dháibhí Cúndún", lines, 34 – 5, 207 – 09.
[27] Ibid., "Éamonn an Dúna', lines, 299 – 304.

> their culture and their cities, laden with packs and plates and brass and pewter, with shaven jaws and English talk and braggart accent'.)[28]

English – and English speakers – were often seen as ugly, animal-like (bears and wolves, for example). Ó Bruadair described an English-speaking boor who insulted a female relative of his patron, Lord Barrymore, as having 'truidireacht Bhéarla pléasca is plubaireacht phluc' (his stammering, jabbering English exploding from blubbering jaws).[29] And language was also associated with the other key aspect of the new colonists' cultural abrasiveness – their religion; in the 'Síogaí Rómhánach, for example, the enemy are 'lucht Bhéarla / is Chailbhin chleasaigh bhradaigh bhréagaigh (English speakers and Calvinists, dishonest, thieving and false). In this poem the two are connected in concrete terms, with resentment at the obligatory use of the vernacular in church, 'a n-agallamh glafarnach Bhéarla' (their noisy English).[30] But the main emphasis in the later seventeenth century poetry is on the foreignness and low class origins of the new colonists ('coilínigh', a term used by Keating), satirised by Ó Bruadair in listing their strange plebian names,

> Gúidí Húc is Múdar Hammer / Róibín Sál is Fádur Salm / Fear an bhríste ag díol an tsalainn, / geamar Rút is Goodman Cabbage, / Mistress Cápon, Cáit is Anna, / Ruiséal Rác is Máistir Geadfar.
>
> (Judy Hook and Mother Hammer, Robin Saul and father Psalm, the man in breeches salt a-selling, Gammer Ruth and Goodman Cabbage, Mistress Capon, Kate and Anna, Russell Rake and Mister Gaffer!)[31]

This is a humorous example of a feature of this poetry – the use of loan words from English – that most clearly, perhaps, reflects, even enacts, the linguistic dimensions of an abrasive colonialism. Patricia Palmer writes of 'the role of the sword in advancing the policies of the word', but in the Gaelic poetry you find, instead, examples of the role of the word in advancing the policies of the sword.[32] The poem *Éamonn an Dúna* has the most memorable and sustained

---

[28] J. C. McErlean (ed.), *Duanaire Dháibhí Uí Bhruadair: the Poems of David Ó Bruadair* (3 Vols, London, 1910–16), Vol. 1, No. 5, verse 23.

[29] Ibid., No. 9, verse 6.

[30] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Century Poems,* "An Síogaí Rómhánach", lines 297–8, 70–6.

[31] MacErlean, *Ó Bruadair,* Vol. 1, No. 5, verses 25–6.

[32] Palmer, *Language and Conquest*, 122.

example, after a long litany of executions, banishments and injustices in the Cromwellian period.

> *Transport, transplant*, mo mheabhair ar Bhéarla (my understanding of English)
> *Shoot him, kill him, strip him, tear him*
> *A Tory, hack him, hang him, rebel*
> *a rogue, a thief, a priest, a papist*.[33]

English is thus the language of power, violence, abuse, and religious persecution, and such phrases recur in the poetry, for example in Diarmaid Mac Sheáin Bhuidhe Mhic Chárthaig's 'Céad Buidhe re Dia'. Rejoicing that the accession of James II has turned the tables on the Cromwellians, or as he calls them in another common reference to cultural difference, 'bodaigh an cháise' (cheese eating churls), he wrote, 'D'éis transplant is gach feall dár cheapadar / d'éis transport le seol tar fairge / . . . Go hiaith Jamaica' (after all the transplants and deceits that were planned by them / after all the transports in sailing ships overseas / . . . to the land of Jamaica.) The conflict between the Cromwellians and native Irish is dramatised in this poem in the stereotypes of colonists 'Seón' and 'Ráif' and their Gaelic counterparts 'Tadhg' and 'Diarmaid'. Indeed it refers directly to the use of the latter names by petty officialdom as terms of abuse, remembering the 'gach méara chéirde ceachartha . . . gan focal san dlíghe, is nach scríobhfadh ainm duit / adúirt Téigs is Diarmaids riamh go tarcuisneach' (those base merchant mayors, who knew not a word of law and could not write their names for you, but called us Teagues and Dermots derisively.) He focused on the connection of power to language, particularly on the challenges called out by sentries. Now that the Catholic Irish have the upper hand – and the poem proclaims divine approval on 'gach aon is Éireannach dearbhtha / is tá gan cheist don chreidiomh chatoilce' (everyone known as a tried and proved Irishman, and who is in faith without question a practising Catholic) – now Seón and Ráif, 'prinntísigh dhíoblaidhe na cathrach' (diabolical city apprentices) can no longer challenge with 'Popish rogue', but are themselves now greeted by 'Cromwellian dog' – as well as 'Mise Tadhg' (I am Teague).[34]

Ó Bruadair echoes this in the poem he wrote in answer to Mac Cárthaigh, 'Cathréim Thaidhg' (The Triumph of Tadhg), who turns the tables linguisti-

[33] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Century Poems*, "Éamonn an Dúna", lines, 129–33.
[34] MacErlean, *O Bruadair,* Vol. 3, No. 14.

cally by challenging 'Cia súd' instead of 'Who's there'. And in another example of the bilingualism operating even at the level of the common soldier,

> adeir Niall Óg re Seoirse, 'Seachain *me* / Advance your pike, léig Tadhg fairíomsa. (Says young Niall to George – get out of my way, advance your pike / let Tadhg in beside me.)

Listing further Gaelic Christian names – ordinary people, rather than the noble roll calls of the traditional 'Caithréim' – he portrays them 'i dtig na gárda (the guardhouse) – 'ag seacaireacht / i gcanmhain nach taigiuir le Sacsanaibh' (chatting in a language that is not pleasant to English ears).[35] These poems endorse the characterisation of the conflict between 'native and newcomer' in 'An Síogaí Rómhánach', as a clash of cultures and languages. Among the crimes of Charles I was 'leis do hiarradh Dia do thréigean / 's gan labhairt i dteanga na Gaeilge / 's gan 'na háit ag cach acht Béarla' (that he required that we abandon God, and not talk in Irish, but in its place only English.) But Eoghan Ruadth Ó Néill, the hero of this poem, 'do rug sé creach gan chead don Bhéarla' (he plundered without permission of English) – and the ludicrously inflated list of his triumphs ends, 'Eoghan Ruadh ar ghuillibh Gaodhal / dá chur suas are uachtar an Bhéarla' (Eoghan Ruadh on the shoulders of the Gael being elevated above the English-speaking nobles).[36]

The Gaelic poets were very conscious of the role played by law in the process of conquest and colonisation, and English (and Latin) legal terms appear more prominently in the poetry from the mid-seventeenth century (earlier occasional references in Bardic poetry, while reflecting the expansion of the Tudor State apparatus, lacked the same sense of persecution). Some of the most visible and interesting ways in which the state power impacted on the literature in Irish were the satires on parliament, notably *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* of the mid-seventeenth century, that is the parliament of the Gaelic lower orders who were free to indulge their social pretensions with the collapse of the aristocratic ruling families.[37] It is also evident in the mock legal summons, or Barántas, a feature especially of comic Munster verse in the mid-eighteenth century.[38] But references to law in the poetry produced in the bitter years of the Cromwellian wars and plantation saw it as a prime instrument of

[35] Ibid., No. 20.

[36] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Century Poems*, "An Síogaí Rómhánach', lines 102–4, 182–3.

[37] N. J. A. Williams, *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* (Dublin, 1981).

[38] Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *An Barántas* (Maynooth, 1978).

alien rule and persecution. Thus, in the widely copied and profoundly influential synoptic history 'Tuireamh na hÉireann' – which brought Keating's schema into the mainstream of popular culture – it was the Reformation 'd'osgail an geata chum peaca do dhéanamh' (opened the gates of sin), but after religious persecution came that of the law:

> Is docht na dlithe do rinneadh dár ngéarghoin: / siosóin cúirte is tearmaí daora, / *Wardship livery* is *Cúirt Exchequer* / Cíos coláisde in *nomine poenae*: / *greenwax, capias, writ, replevin* / bannaí, fíneáil, díotáil éigcirt, / *provost*, soffré, portré, méara, / sirriam, sionascáil, marascáil chlaona. / Dlí beag eile do rinneadh ar Ghaeulaibh / *surrender* ar a gceart do dhéanamh.
>
> (They devised tough laws to persecute us / court sessions and severe law terms / Wardship livery and courts of Exchequer. / College (i.e. Trinity College) rent by sub poena / greenwax, capias, writ, replevin (legal terminology), bans, fines, false accusations / *provost*, *sovereign*, *portreeve*, mayor / sheriff, seneschal, crooked marshals. / And another little law made for the Irish – that they surrender their rights.'[39]

Particularly noteworthy in this list are the laws – some of them recent – through which land transfer was facilitated – the surrender and regrant system, above all, but also the Courts of Wards, established in 1622 and the provisions made for Trinity College in the Munster and Ulster Planations. Similarly, Cecile O Rahilly pointed out that the description in the poem *Éamonn an Dúna* of the schoolteachers gathered up after the Cromwellian victory, 'iad mar ghadaithibh ceangailte ar théadaibh / 's ag dul ó phórt go pórt *convey* ortha' (tied together like thieves, going from port to port under convoy) is a translation of the official order, that prisoners 'bee sent with sufficient convoy from garrison to garrison'.[40] Colonial law was dangerous; it could cost you your land, your freedom, even your life. Hence the obsession with it and the attempts also to deflect it with humour. The fact that the courts operated only in English put the Gaelic Irish in double jeopardy, and was a major incentive to learn the language. This was captured best by Dáibhí Ó Bruadair in his 'Caithréim an dara Séamus' (The Triumph of James II) – who gave Irishmen 'éadai is airm óirleachais' (deadly weapons and uniforms) and so freed them 'ar fhórleanaibh'

[39] O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth Century Poems* , lines 312–22.
[40] Ibid., 169.

(from tyranny). Under him the true clergy live in peace, and the Irish speaker need no longer fear the courts:

> atáid ar binnse Dálaigh, Rísigh / 'sdá n-áileadh aoi do Nóglacaibh / le héisteacht agartha an té nach labhrann / béarla breaganta beoiltirim
>
> (On the Bench now are seated the Dalys and Rices, and a sage of the Nagles is urging them to listen to the plea of the man who can't speak the lip-dry and simpering English tongue.)[41]

In an earlier poem he satirises the pretensions of the upstart Irish, who, though they have but a feeble command of the language, insist on speaking 'gósta garbhbhéarla' (a ghost of rough English).[42] These themes, and the pressures and dilemmas of language change, especially in relation to the law, are still a core concern of novelists from a Catholic background – Gerald Griffin, John and Michael Banim, and William Carleton – from the 1820s to the 1840s.[43]

In considering Ó Bruadair's fulminations against the role of English, it is important to bear in mind that he also wrote and doubtless spoke the language, and could even boast of his 'Béarla glic' (dextrous English), although also at times expressing insecurity about his ability 'dochan an ghoillbhéarla do labhairt go líofa' (to speak the foreign tongue fluently).[44] Virtually every important poet after Ó Bruadair was also bilingual, though the reflex continued of apologising for an inability 'to write correctly in the *English* language', as Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín wrote in the preface to his important synoptic history, *Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland*, published in 1717.[45] The poets lived in a world that was ever more monolingual in terms of power and status. Their craft was tied to a language that was rapidly marginalised, and as the patronage they depended on contracted to nothing, their main concern

[41] MacErlean, *Ó Bruadair*, Vol. 3, No. 14, v. 19.

[42] Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 3, v. 1.

[43] See Tom Dunne, "Murder as metaphor: Griffin's portrayal of Ireland in the year of Catholic Emancipation", in O. MacDonagh and W. F. Mandle (eds), *Ireland and Irish-Australia* (London and Sydney, 1986); "The insecure voice: a Catholic novelist in support of Emancipation', in L. M. Cullen and L. Bergeron (eds), *Culture et Pratiques Politique en France et en Irlande, xvie-xviiie siècle* (Paris, 1989).

[44] MacErlean, *Ó Bruadair,* Vol 2, No.7, v. 3; Vol. 1, No. 10. See Vol. 2, No. 5, for his poem in English, "To all my friends in Kerry".

[45] Vincent Morley, *An Crann os Coill: Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, c. 1680–1755* (Dublin, 1995), 39.

for much of the seventeenth century was, in the words of Mathgamhain Ó hIfearnáin, 'Ceist, cia do cheinneochadh dán?' (who will now buy a poem?)[46]

As the case of Ó Bruadair illustrated so graphically, the poets were pushed down the social scale, from a privileged elite to menial or marginal positions, as farm labourers or itinerant teachers, in what he called, 'An Longbhriseadh', or shipwreck of the Gaelic world.[47] While there are many poems fulminating at the failure of the remnants of the Gaelic and Old English aristocracy to protect the literary heritage and the language, there were many others attacking the pretensions of those among the lower orders who were upwardly mobile in the more fluid society that followed the collapse of the highly aristocratic Gaelic system.[48] The colonial revolution may have destroyed the old elites, but it created opportunities for others, and one of the most interesting ways in which Gaelic poetry reflected the anglicisation process was its focus on the use of English by this socially ambitious group. They are also satirised mercilessly in a remarkable prose work, *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis*, which features a meeting in the 1630s of rural landowners in Kerry, using a crude version of parliamentary procedure, and dedicated to promoting their economic interests. Their leaders are those with 'teanga mhaith Bhéarla' (good English), as they imagined or those who could impress the assembly with a garbled version of it, like Tomás, who negotiates with an itinerant pedlar in tobacco, a new luxury item to which they are addicted. This dialogue is a remarkable early example in an Irish language text of the comic Hiberno-English, which was already a staple of the English stage.[49]

The sense of a connection between the poets' loss of power and status and the rise of English-speaking peasants can be seen in Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig's poem 'Faisean Chlár Éibhir', from the mid-seventeenth century:

> Is cor do leag me cleas an phlás-tsaoilse: / mogh in gach teach ag fear an smáilBhéarla / 's gan scot a neach le fear den dáimh éigse / ach 'hob amach is beir leat do shár-Ghaelgsa'

–which Joep Leerssen translated as: 'The situation that brought me down is a trick of this deceitful world / with a churl in each house that is owned by a

[46] Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry* (Dublin, 1970), No. 37. See also, Nos 28, 30 etc.
[47] MacErlean, *Ó Bruadair,* Vol. 3, No. 25.
[48] Dunne, "The Gaelic Response', 24, 28–9.
[49] Williams, *Pairlement,* especially lines 1240–63; J. O. Bartley, *Teague, Shenkin and Sawney: being a study of the earliest Irish, Walsh and Scottish characters in English Plays* (Cork, 1954).

speaker of nasty English, and / no one paying any heed to a man of the poetic company / save for "Get out and take your precious Gaelic with you".'[50] For Ó Bruadair, whose distrust for the Cromwellians as 'Bodaigh an Bhéarla' (English-speaking churls) clearly had a class as well as cultural basis, those of 'céadta áta dá rádh mar ghallaibh' (hundreds proclaiming themselves English), who are mouthing 'garbhbhéarla' (rough English), were mainly those 'le mórtas maingléiseach' (full of ostentatious pride). Such a 'scoturra glic' (cute Irish yeoman), he wrote in another late poem, would say 'nach doirche Dutch' (that Dutch was no more obscure), if he encountered 'éigse chothrom' (correctly written Irish verse).[51] This is also a complaint of Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín in a 1716 poem,

> Má éirgheann bathlach go beachtaithe in éadach nua / is go bhféadfadh hata do cheannach má daor a luach / is Béarla a labhairt is gairid go ndéarfadh an fuad / dar *faith* má mhairim, beidh gairim Uí Néill dom ua.
>
> Tá an éigse balbh ós acu tá scéal gach slua, / ní fhéadaid camadh 'na teangain chun Béarla a lua; / tá an méid seo mhaireas do mhaithibh na nGael, monuar, / gan spéis in aiste nó in aithris na n-éacht do chuaigh.
>
> (If a rustic rises all done up in new clothes, and can buy a hat, however, expensive, and speak English, before long the thief will say, by faith, as I live, my grandson will have the title or name of O Neill.
>
> The poets are dumb as they have the news of all those who can't twist their tongues to speak English. Those that live of the Gaelic nobility, sadly, have no interest in a poem or an account of past heroic deeds.)[52]

By then, as Vincent Morley has shown in relation to Mac Cruitín's early verse, and Éamonn Ó Ciardha has established across a remarkable range of texts, Gaelic literature had, quite literally, gone underground.[53] The poets

---

[50] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, 203.

[51] MacErlean, *Ó Bruadair,* Vol. 1, No. 5, v. 7; No. 3, v. 1; Vol. 3, No. 30, v. 3.

[52] Morley, *An Crann os Coill* , 27.

[53] Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766: a fatal attachment.* (Dublin, 2000).

may have been 'dumb' in relation to the dominant English culture, but they had become active propagandists, even recruiters in the Jacobite cause. Ó Ciardha's work has demonstrated once and for all, the importance and potential of Gaelic literary texts as historical sources, as well as establishing that Jacobitism, up to now little regarded by Irish historians, was 'the main political culture on the island' down to the late 1760s. In two recent contributions I have tried to show that, while Jacobitism began as a conservative aristocratic ideology of 'return, renewal and restoration', to quote Breandán Ó Buachalla, the 'powerful millennial message of individual and communal liberation'[54] at its core was embraced by the rural poor in the fifty years before the Famine, to articulate their grievances against landlords, tithe proctors and the local agents of the imperial power – and that this is evident particularly in the popular folk songs, or *Amhráin na nDaoine.*[55] The bridge from aristocratic to popular was the coded, mystical and prophetic form of the ubiquitous *Aisling* or vision poetry, the dominant form of political verse in Irish, from its aristocratic formalisation by Aogán Ó Rathaille to the demotic of Raftery and his contemporaries. In the Aisling, a 'spéirbhean' or spirit woman appears to the poet, explains that she represents Ireland and gives (usually) a message of hope that her Prince, the Stuart Pretender, was on his way with an army to demolish the colonial settlement and restore the old lords and the Catholic clergy and the learned classes – later amended to the establishment of fair rents, or even the abolition of rents, and of tithes and the tyranny of petty officialdom. Clearly it developed new and evolving elements of what has come to be called a 'subaltern culture', but my concern here is with the remarkable continuities it displays with the seventeenth-century political verse we have been considering. In particular, the persecution it rails against is described not only in colonial terms, but in terms of cultural and linguistic conflict, and the golden future it prophecies is not only specifically a Gaelic but a de-Anglicised one. And yet, in the early nineteenth century, the poets also have to acknowledge that Anglicisation has progressed inexorably to the point that the very existence of the Irish language itself is in doubt.

Perhaps the most remarkable continuity in the way conflict was described in Ireland from the twelfth century to the Famine and beyond was the contin-

[54] Breandán Ó Buachalla, "Irish Jacobite Poetry", *The Irish Review*, No. 12 (1992), 40–9.

[55] Dunne, "Tá Gaedhil bhocht cráidhte"(see above); "Subaltern voices? Poetry in Irish, Popular Insurgency and the 1798 Rebellion", in *Eighteenth Century Life.* Vol 22, n.s. 3, November 1998, 31–44.

ued use of the key formulation 'Gael re Gall' – native against foreigner. Thus, it could be used both by Máire Bhuí Ní Laoire to describe an affray between local Whiteboys and Yeomen at Céim an Fhia, and by Raftery to describe the achievement of Catholic Emancipation, which he defined as 'Cead ag an nGaedhealbheith chomh h'árd le Gaill'[56] (permission for the Irishmen to be as important as the foreigner). Seán Ó Braonáin characterised the sense of persecution, a constant in Gaelic poetry since the mid-seventeenth century – and a rich vein in O'Connellite rhetoric – in terms of the lot of the 'Gaelfhuil' (those of Gaelic blood) being 'gráin is galar is Gallaibh dá dtraochadh' (hatred and disease and foreigners wearing them down).[57] Reverting to the theme of law and persecution, one poem even claimed, 'Beidh ann seisiúín ceathrúnach idir Gaeil is clanna Gall' (the Quarter Sessions will be held there between the natives and foreigners.)[58] In this period also, there is an interesting shift from the use of the traditional 'Sacsan' (Saxon) to 'Sasanach'(Englishman) in describing the foreigner. In a well known *aisling* by Máire Bhuí, the 'spéirbhean' proclaims, 'go bhfuil Sasanaigh is a n-áltha as an áit seo le ruagairt / Agus Clanna Gael 'na n-áitreabh' (the English and their brood will be driven from this place and the native Irish replace them).[59] Likewise, a poem, possibly by Raftery, in praising the Ribbonmen, promised, 'Beidh talamh ina luach agus Clanna Gael suas / Agus Sasanaigh buartha cráite' (land will have its true value, the native Irish triumphant and the English sad and distressed).[60] An even more marked feature of the pre-Famine period is the greater frequency and virulence by which the 'Gall' are anathematised in sectarian terms.

But the categorisation of the foreign enemy in terms of language also continues throughout this period. For Aogán Ó Rathaille they were 'dream an Bhéarla'; for Eughan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, 'gallaibh an bhéarla'; for Ó Braonáin the task of the Stuarts was 'díbirt aicme an Bhéarla' (the expulsion of the English-speaking tribe) and so on.[61] Such usage took on new meanings as the pressure for language change filtered down to the rural poor, ever more aware of the

[56] D. Ó Donnchú (ed.), *Filíocht Mháire Bhuí Ní Laoghaire* (Dublin, 1931), 55–8; Douglas Hyde, *Amhráin atá leagtha ar an Reachtúire, or Songs ascribed to Raftery* (Dublin, 1903), 266–71.

[57] P. de Brún, *Filíocht Sheáin Uí Bhraonáin* (Dublin, 1972), No. 17, v. 2.

[58] Tomás Ó Concheanainn (ed.), *Nua-Dhuanaire, Chuid 111* (Dublin, 1978), No. 13, v. 4.

[59] Ó Donnchú, *Máire Bhuí,* 59–60, "An Crúiscín Lán', v. 5.

[60] Ciarán Ó Coigligh, *Raiftearaí: Amhráin agus* Dánta (Dublin, 1987), 105–6. See 8–9 on the authorship of this poem.

[61] P. S. Dinneen, *Dánta Aodhgháin Uí Rathaille* (London, 1900), No. xxxv, lines, 177–8; P. Ó Duinnín, *Amhráin Eoghain Ruaidh Uí Shúilleabháin* (Dublin, 1901), No. 13, line, 1060; de Brún, *Ó Braonáin*, No. 15, v. 3.

encroachments of the rapidly bureaucratising colonial state. It was particularly marked in those poets still connected to the learned tradition, and fearful for the very survival of the language itself – a theme I return to. It recurs constantly in the work of Micheál Óg Ó Longáin, for example, who castigates 'aicme an Bhéarla' (the tribe of English), 'búir-bhoirb Bhéarla' (rough English speaking boors), 'Daoscar an Bhéarla' (English speaking rabble), 'fanatics an Bhéarla' (the fanatics of English), 'gramaisc an Bhéarla' (low-bred English speakers). In one of his 1798 poems he has 'aicme an bhéarla bhracaigh bhréin / ag tachtadh Gael le claonta dlí (the foul corrupt crew of English speakers, choking the native Irish with crooked laws) – again that key connection. In a formulaic piece, reflecting his sense of hopelessness after the collapse of the rebellion, he urges 'Clanna Gael' – 'múchaidh, millidh, brisidh, réabaidh, / dúnta is tithe chine an Bhéarla' (extinguish, destroy, break the forts and houses of the English speakers).[62]

Ó Longáin also exemplifies an interesting development in the *Aisling*, or vision poem, that is, the connection of the language issue with the 'spéirbhean' or vision woman, representing Ireland – and hence associating it with patriotic sentiment. Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, in the middle of the eighteenth century, had emphasised in several of his well known *Aislingí* that the *spéirbhean* spoke Irish – in one case, indeed, she answered 'i labharthaibh Gaeilge séimh gan coimhitheacht' (in sweet Irish, without foreign influence).[63] This is an interesting formulation by a man who composed verse in English as well as Irish, and in his occasional role as schoolteacher proclaimed his expertise in teaching English. By Ó Longáin's time this formulation had become a commonplace, and in a late poem, after emphasising that the 'spéirbhean' spoke 'i dteangain deas Ghaeilge' (in nice Irish), he records as her first complaint that she was 'greadaithe ag graithin an Bhéarla' (scourged by the English-speaking mob).[64] Seventeen years later, in an *Aisling* written to commemorate Daniel O'Connell's release from prison, in September 1843, Aodh MacDomhnaill, has the *spéirbhean* complain of the Irish people, 'mar thréig siad an teanga Ghaeilge' (how they abandoned the Irish language)[65] – something even the

[62] Tadhg Ó Murchú, "Micheál Óg Ó Longáin; a shaoghal agus a shaothar" (M.A. Thesis, and edition of Ó Longáin's poems, University College Cork, 1946), 181, 191, 199, 206, 217, 181 (the 1798 poem); Rónán Ó Donchadha, *Micheál Óg Ó Longáin: File* (Dublin, 1994), 103.

[63] Dineen, *Eoghan Ruadh*, , No. 44, line 3133. See also No. 5, line 457.

[64] Ó Murchú, "Ó Longáin", 213–4. See also, Ó Donnchadha, *Ó Longáin,* 70; James Fenton, *Amhráin Thomáis Ruaidh* (Dublin, n.d.), No. xxi, v. 4; de Brún, *Ó Braonáin,* No. 42, lines 26–8.

[65] Colm Beckett, *Aodh Mac Domhnaill: Dánta* (Dublin, 1987), No. 8, v. 2.

hitherto monoglot rural poor were doing in very large numbers, with the encouragement of both Church and State, as catastrophe threatened and emigration was already a way of life. But the *Aisling* itself had long reflected the relentless spread of bilingualism in the development of macaronic versions – indeed one of Ó Longáin's early political poems, 'Lá is me ag taisteal', which he linked to a Whiteboy outbreak, is an *Aisling* which alternates between verses in Irish and English[66].

Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin could also switch suddenly to English – and, indeed, Latin – as in the humourous 'Barántas' or mock-legal challenge to the person who stole his hat, in a verse that captures very well the sense of threat that was associated with legal English:

> As I am informed that pilfering roving / Rakes gan dearmaid (without doubt) Juris quoque contempores / fé mar mheasaim-se (as I suppose) / Nightly strollers haunt these borders / Déanaidh faire ceart (keep a good look out) / To apprehend aon chladhaire faolchon (wolf-like ruffian) / Claon-sprot cealgach (deceitful rabble)

He also managed in a series of dazzling verses the remarkable feat of marshalling the rebarbative names of the Cromwellians and Williamites to fit the baroque internal rhymes that were his signature – for example:

> Lysaght, Leader, Clayton, Compton is Coote, / Ivers, Deamer, Bateman, Bagwell is Brooks, / Ryder, Taylor, Manor, Marrock is Moore / Is go bhfeicim-se traochta ag tréin-shliocht Chaisil na búir. (And may I see the Boors subdued by the mighty descendants of Caiseal)[67]

Now the foreign names are not of the comical Cromwellian rank and file mocked by Ó Bruadair, but those of local Protestant landlords. Máire Bhuí echoes this in describing the enemy faced by 'Clannaibh Gaeil', or the local Whiteboys at 'Cath Céim an Fhia':

> Is gairid dúinn go dtáinig lámh láidir ár dtimcheall / Do sheol amach ár ndaoine go fíor-mhoch f'ín gceo, / An Barrach 'na bhumbáille, Bárnet agus Beecher, / Hedges agus Faoitigh is na mílte eile leo.

[66] Ó Murchú, "Ó Longáin", No. B1. See also, Diarmaid Ó Muirithe, *An tAmhráin Macarónach* (Dublin, 1980).

[67] Dineen, *Eoghan Ruadh*, No. 39, No. 17.

> (Before long a strong force surrounded us and sent our people out in the early fog – Barry the bum-bailiff, Barnet and Beecher, Hedges and White and thousands of others besides.) [68]

The evolution of the *Aisling* from being a vehicle for the hopes of the dispossessed Gaelic elites for a restoration of the *status quo ante* by the dismantling of the new colonial order, to being a voice for the smaller ambitions of the rural poor in terms of rents, tithes and justice, can be seen in the way that Ireland after a Stuart victory was imagined. For Aogán Ó Rathaille at the start of the eighteenth century, restoration focussed strongly on the ambitions of the learned class – including, 'Gaodhalg 'gá scrúdabh 'n-a múraibh ag éigsibhi / Béarla na mbúr ndubh go cúthail fá néaltaibh' (Irish studied in their fortresses by wise men and English of the black boors hidden under a cloud).[69] Over a hundred years later, Máire Bhuí Ní Laoire reflected the interests of her class in telling the 'spéirbhean' that if her promises were true, 'Beidh talamh gan chíos, gan íoc, gan cháin is gan phléidl / Beidh cruithneacht is im is saill ar an gclár againn féin (We shall have land without rent, without tax or dispute. We shall have wheat and butter and fat meat on the table for ourselves.)[70] In her part of West Cork, even among the relatively prosperous farmer class to which she belonged, Irish was still the language of the community, differentiating it from 'aicme an Bhéarla'. They did not perceive the language itself to be under threat, as the dynamics of the market economy accelerated the pace of anglicisation.

Concern for the survival of Irish was confined to the remnant learned class, like the scribe Micheál Óg Ó Longáin, whose passionate advocacy of the language was mainly on the basis that it was the depository of a great literary tradition. I have argued elsewhere that the revivalist movement he was associated with, led by the first professor of Irish at Maynooth, Pól Ó Briain, had little interest in the popular culture of the living language, and can been seen, together with the contemporary vogue for manuscript collection and translation as part of the commodification of Irish, at the very time that its last significant communities of speakers faced virtual extinction.[71] Yet, though dedicated to the protection of the literary tradition, the process of revivalism and translation developed instead in ways that

[68] O Donnchú, *Máire Bhuidhe,* 55–8, v. 3.
[69] Dinneen, *Ó Rathaille,* No. xxviii, lines, 13–16.
[70] O Donnchú, *Máire Bhuidhe*, 37–8, v. 7.
[71] Dunne, "Tá Gaedhil bhocht cráidhte", 109–10.

seriously distorted it, particularly when that process became part of a diffuse project of cultural nationalism. A key text in this was James Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831), in which so-called 'translations', especially of Jacobite verse by various hands, turned its visceral anti-foreign, anti-settler, anti-Protestant sentiments into a bland pastiche of romantic patriotism that owed more to English than Irish literature.[72] Thomas Davis, generally regarded as the father of Irish cultural nationalism, approved of this approach, believing that the Jacobite originals were 'too despairing', 'their religion bitter and sectarian'.[73] Pondering Davis's view that 'the vehemence and tendencies of the Celtic people' might be better represented, Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League and collector of songs in Irish, and Father Dinneen, lexicographer of the revived Irish and first editor of Aodhgán Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, among others, determined that what Hyde called 'the Celtic poetic genius' was 'essentially a lyric one'.[74] A complex, largely inadvertent process of distortion and denial culminated in Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland* (1924), in which this staunch Republican, who rejected the compromises of the Treaty, systematically excluded the aristocratic, pragmatic political tradition of the Bardic poetry, and the royalist, equally pragmatic perspectives of the Jacobite poets and songsters, and turned the literary tradition once again into a miasma of lyricism and sentimental nostalgia.[75] None of this will surprise those familiar with modern post-colonial scholarship, which has demonstrated time and again that nationalism has not been an answer to colonialism but a product of it, offering not an explanation or antidote, but a distortion. The fate of the Irish language can be seen as the most significant consequence and proof of the Irish colonial experience. Its suffocating embrace by nationalism has both accelerated its decline and distorted its political and cultural contexts– but, *sin scéal eile* (that's another story).

University College Cork

---

[72] James Hardiman (ed.), *Irish Minstrelsy, or Bardic Remains of Ireland, with English poetical translations* (2 Vols, London, 1831). See, for example, Vol. 2, 32–63.

[73] Thomas Davis, "Songs of the Nation', in *Thomas Davis: Essays and Poems, with a Centenary Memoir, 1845–1945* (Dublin 1945), 97.

[74] Ó Duinnín, *Eoghan Ruadh,* Introduction, xxxvi–vii; Douglas Hyde, "Gaelic Folksongs", in B.Ó Conaire, (ed.), *Douglas Hyde: Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin, 1986), 104–21, especially, 114.

[75] Tom Dunne, "Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland,* and the politics of the Gaelic world', in T. Dunne and L. M. Geary (eds), *History and the Public Sphere: essays in honour of John A. Murphy* (Cork, 2005), 161–75.